



In this issue of our newsletter, we look at a number of different topics. Following from our previous topic of guests and visitors, a young friend describes her cycle tour around Auroville, and we look at two new projects showing the diversity of work in the community. We start with the Mother, describing one of the reasons for Auroville's existence.

An International University Centre - The Mother 1952

The conditions in which men live on earth are the result of their state of consciousness. To seek to change these conditions without changing the consciousness is a vain chimera. Those who have been able to perceive what could and ought to be done to improve the situation in the various domains of human life - economic, political, social, financial, educational and sanitary -- are individuals who have, to a greater or lesser extent, developed their consciousness in an exceptional way and put themselves in contact with higher planes of consciousness. But their ideas have remained more or less theoretical or, if an attempt has been made to realise them practically, it has always failed lamentably after a certain period of time; for no human organisation can change radically unless human consciousness itself changes.... Also, in this effort to improve human conditions, there have always been two tendencies, which seem to be contrary but which ought to complement each other so that progress may be achieved. The first advocates a collective reorganisation, something which could lead to the effective unity of mankind. The other declares that all progress is made first by the individual and insists that the individual should be given the conditions in which he can progress freely. Both are equally true and necessary, and our effort should be directed along both these lines at once. For collective progress and individual progress are interdependent. Before the individual can take a leap forward, at least a little of the preceding progress must have been realised in the collectivity. A way must therefore be found so that these two types of progress may proceed side by side.

It is in answer to this urgent need that Sri Aurobindo conceived the scheme of his international University, in order to prepare the human elite who will be able to work for the progressive unification of mankind and be ready at the same time to embody the new force which is descending to transform the earth. A few broad ideas will serve as a basis for the organisation of this university centre and will govern its programme of studies.

The most important idea is that the unity of the human race can be achieved neither by uniformity nor by domination and subjection. Only a synthetic organisation of all nations, each one occupying its true place according to its own genius and the part it has to play in the whole, can bring about a comprehensive and progressive unification which

has any chance of enduring. And if this synthesis is to be a living one, the grouping should be effectuated around a central idea that is as wide and as high as possible, in which all tendencies, even the most contradictory, may find their respective places. This higher idea is to give men the conditions of life they need in order to be able to prepare themselves to manifest the new force that will create the race of tomorrow. All impulses of rivalry, all struggle for precedence and domination must disappear and give way to a will for harmonious organisation, for clear-sighted and effective collaboration.

To make this possible, the children should be accustomed from a very early age not merely to the idea itself, but to its practice. That is why the international university centre will be international; not because students from all countries will be admitted here, nor even because they will be taught in their own language, but above all because the cultures of the various parts of the world will be represented here so as to be accessible to all, not merely intellectually in ideas, theories, principles and language, but also vitally in habits and customs, art in all its forms -- painting, sculpture, music, architecture, decoration -- and physically through natural scenery, dress, games, sports, industries and food. A kind of permanent world-exhibition should be organised in which all countries will be represented in a concrete and living way. The ideal would be for every nation with a well-defined culture to have a pavilion representing that culture, built in a style that is most expressive of the customs of the country; it will exhibit the nation's most representative products, natural as well as manufactured, and also the best expressions of its intellectual and artistic genius and its spiritual tendencies. Each nation would thus have a very practical and concrete interest in this cultural synthesis and could collaborate in the work by taking responsibility for the pavilion that represents it. Living accommodation, large or small according to the need, could be attached, where students of the same nationality could stay and thus enjoy the true culture of their native country and at the same time receive at the university centre the education which will introduce them to all the other cultures that exist on earth. In this way, international education will not be merely theoretical, in the classroom, but practical in all the details of life.



The Mother

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An International University Centre - Continued

The first aim will therefore be to help individuals to become aware of the fundamental genius of the nation to which they belong and at the same time to bring them into contact with the ways of life of other nations, so that they learn to know and respect equally the true spirit of all the countries of the world. For, in order to be real and workable, any world-organisation must be based on this mutual respect and understanding between nation and nation as between individual and individual. Only in order and collective organisation, in collaboration based on mutual goodwill, is there any possibility of lifting man out of the painful chaos in which he finds himself now. It is with this aim and in this spirit that all human problems will be studied at the university centre; and the solution to them will be given in the light of the supramental knowledge which Sri Aurobindo has revealed in his writings.

Concerning the principles which will govern the education given at the Sri Aurobindo International University Centre, it has been mentioned that each nation must occupy its own place and play its part in the world concert.

This should not be taken to mean that each nation can choose its place arbitrarily, according to its own ambitions and cravings. A country's mission is not something which can be decided mentally with all the egoistic and ignorant preferences of the external consciousness, for in that case

the field of conflict between nations might be shifted, but the conflict would continue, probably with even greater force.

Just as each individual has a psychic being which is his true self and which governs his destiny more or less overtly, so too each nation has a psychic being which is its true being and moulds its destiny from behind the veil: it is the soul of the country, the national genius, the spirit of the people, the centre of national aspiration, the fountainhead of all that is beautiful, noble, great and generous in the life of the country. True patriots feel its presence as a tangible reality. In India it has been made into an almost divine entity, and all who truly love their country call it "Mother India" (Bharat Mata) and offer her a daily prayer for the welfare of their country. It is she who symbolises and embodies the true ideal of the country, its true mission in the world.

One would like to see in all countries the same veneration for the national soul, the same aspiration to become fit instruments for the manifestation of its highest ideal, the same ardour for progress and self-perfection enabling each people to identify itself with its national soul and thus find its true nature and role, which makes each one a living and immortal entity regardless of all the accidents of history.

The Mother, 1952

Auroville International UK – Looking at ourselves.

In an article in our previous newsletter, one of the founders of AVI UK gave the story of the early days of the organisation. In recent months, we have been looking closely at our work to see if the work we do is still what is needed to support Auroville, and how we can improve. The work of the organisation is mainly twofold: Giving information about Auroville by means of newsletters, e mail, on the phone and at meetings and public presentations; Fundraising for Auroville projects and being a channel for funds.

Most people these days find information about Auroville on the Internet. There is a good Auroville website (www.auroville.org) and a large amount of information can be found there. There are many occasions, however, when the right answer can't be found, so an e mail or a phone call to us can often provide the help needed. We always welcome questions about Auroville: how to get there, or recommendations about where to stay, or what work opportunities there may be. We even get involved in more personal advice about whether Auroville might be the right place to go and live,



An AVI UK meeting and presentation at the Auromira Centre.

or what books to read on the Sri Aurobindo's yoga. Often a series of phone calls strikes up a friendship with the enquirer, and we meet them at our meetings. It is often rewarding when we hear back from our correspondents after their trips to Auroville, or even meet them there!

Fundraising is a tricky subject. In days gone by, we have been quite successful in raising funds through the European Commission for projects in Auroville, and hundreds of thousands of pounds of funding has flowed through our accounts for work in Education and Environment. However, we have made many attempts in recent times to obtain funds from the EC and from DFID (UK Government), without success, and the cost and effort involved in these applications have been substantial. Many individuals however continue to give to Auroville projects via AVI UK. As we are a registered charity we are able to

collect Gift Aid from the government (amounting to 25% of the donation), part of which we are able to channel to the project.

We receive very little funds from subscriptions or directly to our organisation, so our scope for funding projects in Auroville, and for organising events in the UK is limited. Any organisation needs funds for its operation, and AVI UK is no exception. This funding at the moment comes largely from Gift Aid, and from a small administration charge for processing donations. We would like dearly to expand our work for Auroville, and to help the many projects, large and small, presented to us by friends in Auroville (some of which we present in these newsletters). Any suggestions for improving this part of our work would

be very welcome.

In our recent committee meetings, we have discussed how we can better serve our friends here in the UK, so we have decided to produce a survey. One of our members has kindly written an online survey, which we invite anyone to complete. We include a paper copy in this newsletter. Any information you give will be treated with strict confidentiality, and we will only contact you again if you specifically ask. The survey can be found on www.aviuk.org/survey. We look forward to hearing from you.

My Auroville Adventure

Auroville Cycle Tour - by Roshni

I've visited Auroville a few times, and always felt like I'd like to delve deeper and get to the spirit of the place. Well, what better way than a cycle tour, organised by Ambre, a charismatic French lady who has lived in Auroville for over 20 years. The tour lasts three days from morning to mid-afternoon and is packed with visits to a range of projects located all over Auroville.

Day 1

We meet at Centre Guest House, and spend half an hour rummaging through rusty bicycles. When I finally find one it's pretty wobbly and I'm told 'don't expect perfection, it's all a part of the adventure'. I think - I'm really going to like this tour.



This is followed by a brief introduction to Auroville by Ambre, and then each participant shares what brought them here. The range of interests that draw people here reflects the rich myriad of projects going on. Interests include organic agriculture, non-violent communication, theatre, community living, art, sustainability, and some want to see how a new consciousness is manifesting itself here.

For our first visit we are whisked off down the bumpy red mud roads to visit a Japanese American Aurovilian who has been here since the beginning. We alight from our bikes feeling pretty sore, but excited nonetheless.

He says that when he came here there were about 20 people in Auroville (now the number stands at about 2500). He talks about the creation of Auroville and how the social structures of Auroville have been influenced by the different nationalities and their social and cultural backgrounds. According to him, the Americans (of which there were a significant number in the early days) were more prone to an individualistic approach and liked to do their own thing, while the French were more likely to form communities. Some Aurovilians feel that because the family structure in the West is becoming weaker, people are looking to community living - perhaps looking for another family.

Later on, the group each picks an angel card. An angel card is a small card showing a quality on it, for example abundance, gratitude, love etc. Everyone resonates with their angel, and we have a deeper

sharing. A beautiful moment.

Our next stop is Rita, a South Indian lady who works and lives on Centre Field. She is a land steward and maintains the forest. Centre Field was barren like the rest of Auroville, but now is a lush mixture of indigenous and foreign species that were planted earlier on. Rita is trying to phase out the foreign species and re-establish the tropical dry evergreen forest which is native to the region. Like most Aurovilians Rita has multiple 'jobs'. She rescues stray dogs and cares for them, and also has a small farm adjacent to her home. The afforestation that has been done in Auroville is truly astounding and it feels as though the trees have been there forever, but of course it's only been 40 years.

Our last stop for the day is at the Town Hall with Rolf, an artist now working in the town planning section L'Avenir. This session offers an insight into how Auroville is developing on a macro scale; infrastructure, housing, and land are some of the themes. Housing is a hot topic, as there is a shortage of places for newcomers to stay. There is currently a surge of construction work going on in the residential zone, with houses and flats cropping up left and right. It is a struggle to build affordable housing - India's growing economy has seen construction costs shoot up by 20-30%. The town planning team are rolling up their



A tour in progress, led by Ambre

sleeves and seem determined to get some practical solutions to Auroville's challenges.

Day 2

We spend the second day trying to dodge the rain as we speed from one session to another. Our first stop is the youth camp - a happy jumble of teetering four storey tree houses, swings, oversized benches and other experiments. Everything is made out of wood, and by the youth members. We meet youth member Max, whose previous abode was one of the tree houses at the front of the camp. He's moved elsewhere as the parties kept him up a bit too late every night. Max is a student from Germany, and instead of training in the army, opted for social service in Auroville. He says he'll go back when the winter in Germany is over. The youth camp serves pizza every Friday and all are welcome. What age do you need to be to qualify to be a youth member? Max replies, our youth range from the age of 5 to 50 - everyone's welcome. The motto of the youth group seems to be fun, fun and more fun!

Day 3

The third day of the tour sees torrential downpour and we resort to getting around on motorcycles. The rain is so heavy that most of us get wet through our waterproofs!

The first visit of the day is at the organic farm Discipline on the outskirts of the green belt. The farm is run on principles of permaculture and no chemical pesticides are used. They grow an impressive range of vegetables and fruits managing to break even. An open well at the farm shows that rainfall is the highest since 26 years!

We next visit Bijou - a handmade jewellery venture run by an Aurovilian employing local village women to do the

craftwork. The designs are original and popular - they exhibited a small collection last year in New York and managed to sell out. They will be returning this summer with a larger range. The lady in charge spoke a bit about her experiences in Auroville, whenever she has tried to implement projects or ideas. A great energy and determination, with a clear goal is required to make anything happen. At the same time there seem to be brick wall after brick wall impeding your progress, until one day, sometimes after many years, suddenly everything falls into place. This seems to be a phenomenon experienced by others in Auroville as well. The flame of human aspiration and effort must burn brightly and persistently until the time is right.

Our last meeting is with Peter, an architect who has been an Aurovilian for about 20 years. Peter is a member of Dreamcatchers - a group of architects who meet to generate ideas, but not in the usual way of hot discussion, but out of silence. Their creative process is to manifest something out of a higher inspiration. For me, this is something that touches the heart of Auroville - that we realign ourselves, seeking answers not through intellectual sport but from a higher consciousness than our own.

I thoroughly enjoyed my time on the cycle tour, and it gave me a great insight into Auroville and left me thirsty for more since I know that I have only scratched the surface of what is happening here.

Roshni Patni

Cycle Tour Cost = Rs1800

Time: 3 days, 9am to 4pm

Contact: ambre@auroville.org.in

Auroville Census

Residents of Auroville 2011 (Aurovilians and Newcomers). Breakdown by nationality

Nationality	number
Indian	940
French	324
German	234
Italian	125
Dutch	84
U.S. American	80
Russian	54
Swiss	43
British	43
Spanish	43
Israeli	36
Korean	36
Belgian	27
Swedish	19
Canadian	19
Ukrainian	15

Australian	13
Austrian	8
South African	8
Japanese	7
Argentinian	7
Tibetan	6
Hungarian	6
Slovene	5
Brazilian	5
Sri Lankan	4
Nepali	3
Belorussian	3
Iceland	3
Portuguese	3
Taiwan	2
Ethiopian	2
Latvian	2

Colombian	2
Bulgarian	2
Irish	1
Danish	1
Thai	1
Kazakh	1
Lithuanian	1
Algerian	1
Moldova	1
Egyptian	1
Finnish	1
Ecuador	1
TOTAL	2221
Adults	1711
Children	510
Male	887
Female	824

Obituaries

Bhavana

It is with great sadness that we announce the passing of our dear friend Bhavana.

Born 13 September, 1943 in upstate New York, Bhavana (then Dee) left the US in the mid- 1960s for what she called “the university of the road”, arriving in Auroville in 1971.

She lived in Aurobrindavan, Fertile Windmill, and Bliss, started leather and crafts units, and worked at Matrimandir. In 1983, Bhavana founded Auroville Village Action Group, pioneering the development work that, for her, was essential to manifesting the dream of Auroville. Besides fundraising and administrative work, Bhavana helped many young Tamilians develop their skills, remaining available to them for counsel throughout her life.



Shifting to Vérité in 1993, she helped develop the Integral Learning Center, cheerfully attended to guests, and held daily meditation and Savitri reading. She also introduced many to Vipassana through organizing retreats.

Over the years, Bhavana represented Auroville in India and abroad, and served in various working groups. Most recently, she was a trustee of Village Action and Animal Care and executive of Vérité Guest House.

Diagnosed with cancer in January, Bhavana accepted it as Yoga, exploring conventional and alternative treatments while preparing for a conscious transition.

Bhavana died on 11 May, 2011 in the community she loved and served joyfully for 40 years, and was buried in Vérité’s “wisdom tope” under the words that meant everything to her: Love and Oneness.

Zena Daysh

Zena Daysh, the founder of the Commonwealth Human Ecology Council and a tireless campaigner for a better human habitat, has died after a short illness. She was 96.

Her passionate interest in human ecology (study of the relationship between humans and their natural, social, and built environments) led to the creation of the Commonwealth Human Ecology Council (CHEC) in 1969. Zena founded the Council in order to influence the thinking of Commonwealth governments in creating policies in support of ecological and sustainable communities. CHEC is a human ecological network that has established links in almost half of the Commonwealth countries. CHEC was instrumental in the funding of many Auroville projects, in particular Village Action, and Zena was a



staunch supporter of Auroville, having met the Mother in around 1971.

In 2003, Zena won the UN-Habitat Scroll of Honour award for a lifetime dedicated to improving human settlements around the world and was given an honorary doctorate by the University of Waikato, New Zealand in 2009.

"Zena Daysh was a tireless campaigner for the cause of better human settlements around the world," said UN-Habitat Executive Director, Dr. Joan Clos. "She was one of those great visionaries whose vigour and drive half a century ago helped galvanise international consensus which subsequently led to the establishment of the UN Centre for Human Settlements, as UN-Habitat was first called," he said.

New Projects in Auroville

Auroville Institute of Integral Health Inaugurated

On February 21st 2011, the morning sun streaming through the shade of the cashew trees fell on freshly swept ground. The silent crowd amid the flowers and incense witnessed foundation bricks gently placed by nurses, doctors, architects, therapists, and members of the Community of Auroville. This historic moment was taking place only as Auroville was about to celebrate its forty-third birthday. Finally, a complete health care system is now inaugurated. Located on the Crown Road between the new

library and the Arka Community, this Institute for Integral Health is a key element in the life and infrastructure of the city-in-the-making.

The mission of the new institute is to provide cradle to grave care by adopting the recently emerging health care model called the integrative practice of medicine. This model is based upon the collaboration of multiple systems working together to provide comprehensive holistic care:

These include the western allopathic, naturopathic, traditional Asian and energetic methods of healing as well as others. By combining the various diagnostic and treatment strengths of diverse systems, the integrative model effectively addresses what many systems do not. It does this by providing low cost health care that both prevents and treats disease.

An integrative model of medicine holds the truth that the human being is more complex than merely the combination of biology and physiology. One way to look at it is, that we are more like a garden than a machine. In a machine, you can separate each individual part from one another and still clearly understand its function. However, for a garden to be healthy and flourish vast ranges of multidimensional relationships need to be held in balance; the soil, the seeds, proper sunlight, temperature, and nutrition are a few of the relationships that need to be balanced. This is not to say that standard allopathic medicine does not have its place; it just needs to be understood where that place is. Its diagnostics and emergency care are one example of its effectiveness. However, in the realm of most chronic diseases, it has been clearly demonstrated that the allopathic way is far from effective; side effects from toxic pharmaceuticals, high costs, and its futility in the prevention and treatment of chronic illness are now well recognized. Without a doubt, a new model based upon a more holistic understanding is needed now.

The new model emphasizes that the “patient” has a major responsibility for his/her health through leading a healthy balanced life as well as developing a deeper awareness for his/her role in caring for our planet.

The recently emerging integrative model of medicine recognizes that there is no irrelevant part of the whole picture. It then offers comprehensive holistic care by embracing and utilizing the strengths and weaknesses of a wide variety of medical systems and traditions. All the modalities practising in this collaborative way see the importance of holding the entire picture in consideration. This can be accomplished by:

Health Navigation: A trained Navigator serves the purpose of helping guide the patient and the practitioners in the process of creating integrative treatment plans. The



Navigator facilitates this process by possessing a familiarity with traditional and complementary medical systems as well as the patient’s unique situation. They then guide the patient and practitioners by designing and keeping to an evolving treatment plan.

Patient Care Conferences: Weekly meetings with the practitioner team as well as the Navigator to discuss any day-to-day clinical issues. In these meetings, any of the practitioners may present a case they are having difficulty with and get the teams input. Or specific clinical topics may be chosen for discussion.

Shared medical record: Part of the practice of Integrative medicine is for each patient to have one medical chart that is shared for his or her entire care. This allows for the medical treatment to be seen by each provider in relationship to the whole picture. This chart then also serves as part of the process in educating all providers about their colleague’s systems of medicine.

The site includes about 2.5 acres for the complete facilities to be built in two phases. In the first phase the major structures will be constructed and can be completed by the end of 2011. These include the out-patient clinic which will shift from its location in the Kailash community, the administrative wing and therapy rooms, and the in-patient rooms for recovery and end of life care. The in-patient facility will be managed by Auroville Health Care Services and will include home care outreach and the Hospice model.

The second phase is generally an expansion of existing facilities while adding the capabilities of X-ray, ultrasound and other technical features. It is the intention to build a green building which means increasing the efficiency with which buildings use resources-- energy, water, materials--while reducing impacts on human health and the environment throughout the building’s life cycle. It accomplishes this through better design, construction, operation, and maintenance. The target completion date for the full facility is the end of 2013.

Building will begin immediately as funding is secure for about Rs100 lakhs (€180,000). This amount of funding will get the first phase well underway but an additional equal amount is needed to complete the project and include all the equipment and furnishing.

Truth is supreme harmony and supreme delight. All disorder, all suffering is falsehood. Thus it can be said that illnesses are falsehoods of the body, and consequently doctors are soldiers of the great and noble army fighting in the world for the conquest of truth. *The Mother*

On Track for Sustainable Transport

As cities increasingly choke on pollution and congestion, the drive toward sustainable public transport becomes imperative. Auroville, the city of dawn, is no exception and has from the beginning longed for public transport. The first brochures and town plans



Prototype track laid in Auroville

boasted with projections of elevated monorails in the Disneyland style. Forty-three years later, everyone is still laboring through the dust on broken roads and paths with their own bicycle, moped, motorcycle, car, or rented vehicle. Only recently has Auroville Community Transport (ACT) been able to manage a couple of buses for day trips to the nearby city of Pondicherry and weekly to the outlying Auroville settlement of Sadhana Forest.

The growing inundation of visitors to Auroville especially to view the Matrimandir in the centre of the town, now requires a fleet of electric vehicles to bring them from the Visitors' Centre to Matrimandir. These vehicles are doomed because they are no longer produced and spare parts unavailable. These "buses" were chosen for their silent, non-polluting operation into the Zone of Peace which surrounds the Matrimandir. Their efficiency, however, is not the best due to the bad roads and short-lived batteries.

Mobility management in the city

In March, Karl-Heinz Posch, an Austrian mobility planner, ran a one week workshop on traffic and mobility issues in Auroville. A few days later he summarised the process and outcome of the workshop for interested Aurovilians. Here are some of the main points.

The objectives of the workshop were to look at Auroville's long-term vision for traffic and mobility management within the city area and to see what the implications of this vision are for us today. The first day began with a practical example of how mobility patterns can be changed. A new shopping and entertainment complex in Zurich which had 2,300 employees and 19,000 visitors per day was told by the city authorities that it could

The dream of Carsten, an engineer from Germany, and Sukrit and Akash, Auroville-born mechanics, is to build a solar tram for Auroville. They actually got started on the project a couple of years ago by setting up a hundred metres of track next to their electro-vehicle research and production plant. They identified the parts needed which



Solar tram prototype operating in Germany

are available from the Indian Railways system, and also located a special electric motor that is used by an electric automobile manufacturer. They model their tram on a successful invention made in Germany called the "solarbahn" www.solarbahn.de. This tram runs on solar energy from its own independent system. On the roof are photovoltaic panels that generate electricity stored in batteries that power the tram.

Presently, the proposal is to fund a pilot project of one kilometre from the Visitors' Centre to the Matrimandir. This will initially serve to carry the visitors to and from the Matrimandir before the current system has to be replaced. It will provide all the research needed to build a sustainable public transport system for all of Auroville. The project will be on track as soon as more funding is available. The complete pilot project cost is about €62,000.

Contact Martin for more information on either project.

only have 850 parking spaces. This meant that the centre had to find ways of discouraging people from using cars. They achieved this by improving public transport to and from the centre, by designing the centre in such a way that it was comfortable to move around on foot and by providing a home delivery service for anything purchased there.

The lesson for Auroville is that careful planning can influence mobility patterns, so any new development needs to take mobility into account. For example, a new youth hostel facility is now being planned for 150 people but this doesn't mean that it requires parking for 150 motorized vehicles. Some of the residents can be encouraged to use cycles by, for example, ensuring cycles are provided and well-maintained and that there are well-shaded cycle paths in the vicinity.

In the 1960's, many large cities were encountering major traffic problems. Pedestrians and cyclists felt unsafe on streets which were designed primarily for the car and roads were often gridlocked because of the sheer number of vehicles. The first response to this was traffic segregation: separate lanes or spaces were created for cars and pedestrians. However, a Dutch mobility planner noticed that segregation was not reducing the number of accidents. On the contrary, because cars no longer needed to worry about pedestrians and other 'hazards', they tended to travel faster, which led to more accidents.

Consequently, he and others developed the concept of a 'shared space' where streets and squares are carefully designed in such a way that the space is shared by cars, cyclists and pedestrians with a minimum of barriers, traffic lights and other restrictions. Such a space causes everybody to be more conscious of the needs of others while allowing easy, 'organic' mobility. Shared spaces, it turns out, are often safer and more efficient at easing traffic flow than

of the workshop focussed upon redesigning these sectors with sustainable mobility in mind. Some of the ideas included removing inner fences between communities to create more of a feeling of neighbourhood and to make these area more pedestrian-friendly; improving pedestrian and cycle paths within these neighbourhoods; and creating collective parking spaces for motorised vehicles away from the residences.

The final day of the workshop was about monitoring present mobility trends in Auroville. A recent survey of people passing by the Solar Kitchen junction logged 5% pedestrians, 5% cars, 20% cyclists and 70% motorcyclists. The question is, do we wish this trend to continue? Karl-Heinz noted that our city is small. The length of the outer ring road is 8 km, the Crown Road is 4.4 km long. Walking from the Matrimandir to the Crown takes 5 minutes, and it takes about 7 minutes to walk from the Crown to the outer ring road. The whole city can be crossed by cycle in approximately 20 minutes. For Karl-Heinz, the message is clear. "If you wish to reverse present trends and make Auroville low-car and low-motorcycle intensive, you need to make this primarily a cycling and pedestrian city. But you have no time to waste. Start planning for this today."

This would mean that far more energy and resources be spent on promoting cycling and walking in the city. Suggestions for realizing this included doubling the budget for cycle paths; extending the network of well-surfaced cycle and walking paths; fewer barriers on these paths; a

central cycle repair shop; all guest houses should provide cycles for visitors; better maps of the cycle and pedestrian network; removing fences between communities; and 'densifying' development so that people do not need to travel so far between home, work, shops etc.

And what about public transport? A study of 2001 envisaged a key role for public transport in the future

city. Karl-Heinz is less convinced. He notes that public transport systems generally require a population of at least 50,000 in a fairly densely urbanized area to be viable. "So my own opinion is that public transport will not reach a higher share than 5% in Auroville over the next 10 – 15 years, and it may never get a bigger share." He notes, however, that shuttle buses, like those already running between Auroville and Pondicherry, could be viable.

As for electric vehicles, he acknowledges that they are quiet and locally non-polluting, "but if everybody uses them and they are ridden as fast as they are now, you won't have a very nice city environment."

Alan (From Auroville Today)



Parking at the Visitor's Centre

highly regulated traffic lanes, so it's no surprise that they are being implemented in more and more cities in the West. Karl-Heinz worked with other Aurovilians to design an area around the Solar Kitchen which could operate as a kind of shared space. In this concept, the Crown would be shared by cyclists, pedestrians and non-polluting public transport and would become a Crown Street, broken up by trees and plazas, meandering through the dense urban fabric of the city. Pedestrians would be prioritised so it would be a place where children could play.

Karl-Heinz pointed out that attractive street spaces depend upon a certain density of urban development which does not yet exist in Auroville. However, in parts of the Residential Zone a beginning has been made, and day four

Auroville International

Report on recent European AVI meetings in Berlin

Since 2009, European members of AVI have met each year in Berlin over a long weekend to discuss common issues, in particular their collective participation in the International Zone of Auroville.

Plans for the creation of the International Zone in Auroville have been on-going for many years, and a concept which has gained much support has been that of continental areas, where nations from each continent can collaborate, and pavilions from these nations can be built. Continental areas have been defined for Africa, Asia, the Americas, Oceania and Europe. There has been much discussion about how each of the nations of Europe may collaborate, and how that collaboration may be given form in the International Zone. In 2009, we were able to come to some firm agreements, which were as follows:

1. We agree on a common European approach, but agree to retain individual national pavilions.
2. We would like to create a symbol of Europe to be situated in the European area of the International Zone.
3. We wish to participate in the creation of a European festival and conference to inaugurate and celebrate the creation of the European area. We wish this festival to contain an interaction with local people. AVI groups will prepare a concept, which will be presented to Auroville groups at the AVI meeting in Auroville in February.
4. We agree to participate in the creation of a European “plaza”, having common infrastructure and common facilities which have yet to be decided and agreed amongst European groups.
5. An important aspect of the European zone will be the development of a place for education and research, according to Mother’s wish that Auroville should be a place of unending education. Structures and activities will be developed accordingly.
6. We aim for the creation of a guest facility in the International Zone in support of the education and research activities.



AVI Meeting in Berlin June 2011

These agreements were communicated to our friends in the International Zone group in Auroville, and there was considerable interest in our work, particularly on the idea for an European festival which it was thought could be held in 2012 – perhaps close to the important date of 12/12/12..

In 2010 and 2011, we continued these discussions, touching on wider issues concerning the International Zone, such as protection of the land, and the concern about the encroachment by local villages into the area. In 2010 we visited the “Gardens of the World” in the former East Berlin area, a beautiful and inspirational creation of gardens and pavilions representing different countries of the world, which we unanimously agreed could greatly inspire the creation of the International Zone in Auroville.

This year, our discussions centred on the search for the soul of Europe, though the attempts to discover the individual’s relationship to his or her own nation soul, with a presentation from Georg from Germany entitled “Introduction on the true relationship between individual, nation and humanity on the way to a spiritual age”. Thomas, also from Germany, gave an inspiring presentation entitled “The spiritual map of Europe”, discussing our common spiritual heritage.

We also discussed more concrete plans for the creation of an European Symbol, and plans for an European Festival in 2012, which will be followed up during our planned AVI meeting in Auroville in February 2012.

A cultural visit this year was made to the historic area of Potsdam and its beautiful palaces, including Sanssouci, the former summer residence of Frederick the Great.

Overall the meetings have been a great success, with the opportunity for participants from nations of Europe to discuss common aspirations, and to plan concretely how to work together with each other and with Auroville in an area of interest which means so much to us all.

Martin

Next AVI International Meeting

The next AVI international meeting will be held in Ethiopia in October. If anyone wishes to attend, please let Martin know (address last page). If anyone has any contacts in Addis Ababa, could they also let Martin know, as we are keen to speak to anyone there who may be interested to hear about Auroville, or help us with our arrangements there.

Matrimandir

Matrimandir Newsletter – Spring 2011

Forty years of building Matrimandir

2011 marks the 40th year of the construction of the Matrimandir.

On Feb 21st, 1971, at a dawn ceremony, the foundation stone of Matrimandir was placed in the earth between the Banyan tree and present site of Matrimandir. Sunil's moving music was played, and the Mother's recorded message that she had given for this occasion:

The land was bare. Warm winds swept across the empty plateau, raising clouds of orange dust. The sky was wide and cloudless. But the air was full of an intense Promise and an unmistakable Presence. The seed of a marvellous golden Future had been planted. As young trees began to reach upwards in scattered locations on the plateau – newly planted by the first pioneers in their campaign to bring life and nature's soft richness back to the denuded land - so too the seed of Matrimandir germinated, took root, and began to grow.

The first step was the preparation of the ground for the intended construction. A large crater had to be dug into the earth to lay the foundation slab of the building. This digging was bravely started by a handful of Aurovilians, breaking the hard red soil with steel crow-bars; they carried baskets of the

earth out of the growing crater under the intense South Indian sun.

But the work was long, and it became clear by November of 1971 that a more intense labour force would be needed to move the project forward at a reasonable speed. Soon, some 400 earth workers from nearby villages were camped on the

spot to excavate the 20,000 cubic meters of soil that had to be removed.

By early 1972, the excavation work was over and at dawn on 21st February, Mother's 94th birthday, a moving ceremony was held deep down in the crater to mark the beginning of the construction of the Matrimandir.

March 14th, was the actual date when that work began with a handful of Aurovilians. On this occasion, the Mother had given the message on this page.

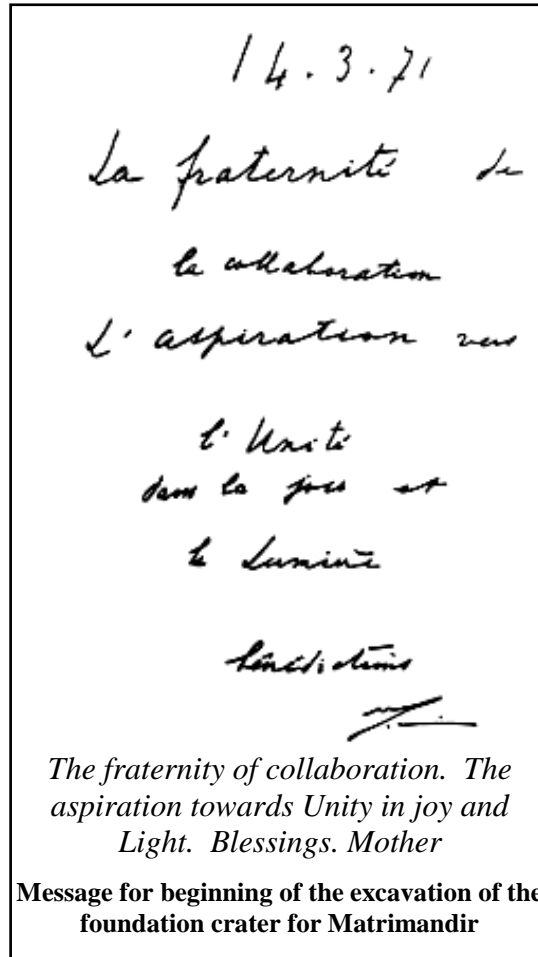
The 40th anniversary this year was marked by a gathering of some of those who had participated in the early years of building Matrimandir, a few of whom were present during the very first days of the digging the foundation crater.

Caring for the Banyan tree

The Banyan tree at the centre of Auroville is about 100 years old. It was certainly there long before the inauguration of Auroville and stood alone on the empty plains. It was, it seems, a favourite spot for travellers to rest for a while in the shade, en route to the markets in Pondicherry. The central trunk of the tree is now two meters in diameter and may live – so we hear - for some 400 years!

There are a few dozen secondary trunks which will support the canopy when the main trunk reaches the end of its life in that distant future.

One problem we are facing today is that the central trunk has become hollow due to age, and inside it, as well as higher up in some other cavities in the canopy of branches, fungus rot has set in. Over the years this problem has been treated with



Excavation of the foundations for Matrimandir

natural remedies, to slow down the natural process of age-related decay. To make sure the central trunk can reach its maximum old age, our gardens team is undertaking another treatment for the fungus problem.

The places under attack must first be cleaned by gently scraping the layer of fungus and accumulated dirt to carefully remove them. Then the surface is brushed and sprayed with a special natural anti-fungicide mix. This mix, tested extensively at other places in India, is made by boiling seeds of the castor tree with needles of the casuarina tree. After drying, the treated cavity is coated with a paste made up of one part fine sand, one part clay powder, and one part fine red soil. A bit of vermin-compost is also added!



So, our gardens team, armed with ladders, scrapers, buckets and enthusiasm, went to work for several days on the Banyan at the end of March. One person even had the job of fully entering into the hollow in the main trunk of the Banyan to clean out the fungus accumulated there. It was a wonderful exercise, and one that will have to be repeated each year in order to keep this great Banyan strong and healthy. Anyone wishing to have the exact recipe for the preparation of the anti-fungal spray described here may contact us for further details; we will be happy to send you a complete description of the process.

The gardens team working on the Banyan Tree.

*Let the Matrimandir
be the living symbol of Curroville's
Aspiration for the
Divine*





Other News

Next UK Meeting

SUMMER AUROVILLE MEETING and Auroville Presentation

The meeting will be held on Saturday 6th August at
Auromira Centre,
126 Whitton Avenue East,
Greenford, Middlesex, UB6 0PY
Tel: 0208 903 6504

The nearest underground station is Sudbury Town
(Piccadilly Line)

Details are given on our website, www.aviuk.org.
Anyone interested in Auroville is very welcome to come
along. We look forward to seeing you there.

London Meetings

Regular London meetings have been suspended for the time
being. If anyone is interested in helping to re-start these
meetings, or might be willing to host them, do contact
Martin – details below.

Next International Meeting

The next Auroville international meeting is planned to be
held in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia in October 2011. It will be a
chance for Aurovilians and members of AVI groups from
around the world to meet, and to present Auroville to
interested people there. If anyone wishes to come, or has
connections in Ethiopia, please contact Martin at the address
below.

AVI UK Website

AVI UK has a website. It can be found at www.aviuk.org.
Please take a look, and find out more about what we do.
There is more information about our projects, about making
donations and how you can participate. News of
forthcoming events can be found at the top of the home
page.

We have a facility to make secure credit card donations
online. These can be made for any purpose, either by
choosing from a menu, or by sending an e-mail. Gift Aid
tax relief can be arranged automatically, when a donation is
made. If anyone has ideas for inclusion, please contact
Martin on info@aviuk.org. We would welcome any
contribution.

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You can make a donation to AVI UK or to any Auroville
project with a credit or debit card via our web site. Just go
to www.aviuk.org/fundraising.htm. Otherwise please send a
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Auroville, to the address above, and not to Auroville
International UK.

Next issue

If you have anything to offer for inclusion in the next
newsletter, please contact Martin. We would welcome any
offerings from those who have visited Auroville recently or
any thoughts which you would like to share.

Newsletter by E-mail

If you would like to receive the next issue by e mail, please
write to Martin at info@aviuk.org. This will save on paper
and our postage.

Address

For all correspondence please write to our Secretary, Martin Littlewood, whose address is:

30 The Green, Surlingham, Norwich,
Norfolk, NR14 7AG Tel. 01508 538300, E mail: info@aviuk.org

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