

SAVE THE DATE!!!  
16<sup>th</sup> September  
Young Sindhi 18+  
Arabic Nights  
22<sup>nd</sup> October Diwali Show,  
Sindhi Centre  
28<sup>th</sup> October Diwali Ball  
Guoman -Tower Hotel  
18<sup>th</sup> November Quiz Night



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Visit www.sindhiassociation.org.uk

# SINDHI SAMACHAR

News Bulletin for Sindhi Hindus in the UK  
SEPTEMBER 2006

## NOTE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Since I last wrote to you we have held a number of events, which have brought the community together – the Summer Independence Day mela, the trip to Blenheim Palace & the Mephil night. They were met with resounding success and helped to raise some funds for the running of the Sindhi Centre. People seem especially receptive to the Mephil night with the Sindhi Centre bursting with music lovers. Come 1am it was difficult to get everyone to go home! The Independence Day Mela was good fun as always with noticeably a lot of Young Sindhis running the stalls and taking part in our competitions.

Diwali is around the corner. Most of you will already know we have acquired the Guoman Tower Hotel, Tower Bridge for our upcoming community celebration on 28<sup>th</sup> October. It is a wonderful location. The committee have been working hard to make sure it is a fun filled and memorable event. We have enclosed a Diwali Pack with this newsletter for each household. Remember to book early to avoid disappointment.

Do remember you can refer to our website [www.sindhiassociation.org.uk](http://www.sindhiassociation.org.uk). This newsletter will be available in electronic format. You can download spare copies of the Diwali pack too and also click on our newlink too for regular updates on what is going on. As always your feedback is welcome.

*Chungo.* See you all at the Diwali ball.

Gul Chugani, *President of SAUK (Registered Charity 282 447)*

**"Regardless of the mythological explanation one prefers,  
what the festival of lights really stands for today is a  
reaffirmation of hope, a renewed commitment to friendship  
and goodwill, and a religiously sanctioned celebration of the  
simple — and some not so simple — joys of life",  
Times of India.**

Diyari - [www.diwalfestival.org/diyari.html](http://www.diwalfestival.org/diyari.html)

The Festival of Diwali among Sindhis is known as Diyari. While most of the customs for the celebration of Diyari are similar to others, Sindhis have also developed some special functions over a period of time such washing Gold/ Silver coins in unboiled milk and water. During Lakshmi pooja, sweet in form of Chikki made of jaggery and peanuts is offered. After the Lakshmi aarti, Sindhis follow the custom of picking one coin from the lot and gently hitting the teeth with it. During this ritual the following phrase is spoken, "Lakshmi aayi, Danat vaai" meaning Goddess Lakshmi has arrived and poverty has gone away. This also has a message that after all you cannot eat the wealth. They keep their house open throughout the night to welcome Goddess Lakshmi.

On the day of Diyari, Sindhis do not indulge in cleansing exercise and the broomstick and vacuum cleaner are not used. To make up perhaps, decorations begin well in advance and the entire household is cleared, cleaned and washed. However on the festival day of Lakshmi pooja the broomstick is not put to use. Many Sindhi households also have three matkas in which sweets, dry fruits etc. are kept symbolizing the need to save. Sai Bhaji ( a delicious dish of spinach and Gram Dal ) with rice, sweet with jaggery is a must in the Sindhi household on Diyari.

# IMPORTANT DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

**NEXT EVENT OPEN TO ALL:  
16<sup>th</sup> September Young Sindhi UK 18+ - Arabic Nights**

**16<sup>th</sup> September:** Young Sindhi 18+

Arabic Nights. Contact Neel: 078355 008 350

**22<sup>nd</sup> October:** Diwali Show, Sindhi Centre

**28<sup>th</sup> October** Diwali Ball at Tower Bridge (see the Diwali Pack)

**18<sup>th</sup> November** Quiz Night at the Sindhi Centre.

Form your own teams and tough it out. Who is the smartest Sindhi? Prizes to be won. Tickets £12.

7.30pm start time. Contact:

Mahesh (aka Madhu): 020 8346 9325

Angelie: 07956 403 897

Satish: 020 8952 5100

Arun: 0789 1555 146

**31<sup>st</sup> December** New Year Eve Celebration

## SSG Events (over 50's)

**17<sup>th</sup> September** – South Indian Meal

**15<sup>th</sup> October** – Diwali celebration

**19<sup>th</sup> November** – trip to Stag Lane Gurdwara

**17<sup>th</sup> December** – Christmas lunch at the Sindhi Centre

**Contact Kalpana Tekchandani** for more information about SSG events  
tel: 020 8203 5460

## NAVRATRI - NINE NIGHTS

Navratri takes place from Saturday 23<sup>rd</sup> September until Sunday 1<sup>st</sup> October this year.

You can sponsor the Navratri programme of events at the Sindhi Mandhir - £51 to sponsor one of the nights. Speak to Didi Rani at the Sindhi Mandhir (tel 020 8450 1341) or Bina Mulchandani (tel 020 8343 4943). Remember to bring your own dandies!

## COMMUNITY NEWS



### Death

**Let us remember Mrs Sushila Bhagwandas Mahtani – a woman of strength, courage and wisdom.** Born in Sindh in 1920 & passed away on 9<sup>th</sup> June 2006, Jakarta, Indonesia.

Survived by her 3 daughters and son (Koushlya G Panjwani, Gope B Mahtani, Shobya J Lalwani, Rakhee T Keswani). Our love goes out to family and friends.

### Births

Congratulations to Reena & Vimal Pau on the arrival of beautiful baby Rahul!!!

### Engagement

Congratulations go out to Ravi son of Sheila & Ranjit Gidwani and Sumi daughter of Veena & Gul Chugani.

### Marriage

Congratulations to Shankar Melwani and Dimple Keswani. Wishing the couple happiness and prosperity.

**Email us if you wish to make a special dedication to a beloved friend or family.**

## YOUR SAUK COMMITTEE

For those who could not attend the last AGM here is a reminder of who are on the SAUK committee. You can speak to any of the people below if you want to get involved with anything. Expertise and constructive advice is always needed. You can email us by writing to [info@sindhiasociation.org.uk](mailto:info@sindhiasociation.org.uk).

### THE SAUK TEAM

**President:** Gul Chugani

**Vice President:** Angelie Bharwaney

**Chief Executive:** Shyam Kripalani

**Secretary:** Kishen Ramchandani

**Joint Secretary:** Sandhya G. Panjwani

**Treasurer:** Mahesh (Madhu)Vaswani

**Events Chairperson:** Kalpana Tekchandani

**Events Vice Chairperson:** Naresh Mahtani

**Legal Advisor:** Sushma Hathiramani

**Religious Events Co-ordinator:** Deepa Dalani

**SSG & New Projects:** Geeta Lakhiani

### OUR TRUSTEES:

Anil R. Shivdasani

Bhagwan Mirchandani

Chandru Malkani

Jyoti Vaswani

Lal Lalwani

LK Pagarani

Murli Mukhey

SP & GP Hinduja

GH Raisinghaney

Shewak Mirpuri

Jyoti N. Vaswani

Mahendra Vaswani

Santosh Vaswani

Murli Mukhey

# VOICE OF AN ELDER

## What Does Being Sindhi Mean to Me?

Geeta Raj Daswani

This is in response to the article by **Jaya Matta** who featured in the May 2006 newsletter.

**It is a very good sign that our youngsters are in search of their existence as being Sindhis.  
The youngsters should be guided in right direction and in the right manner to find the answer.  
The Sindhi Community exists because it has a different culture and it will exist provided we save our  
language. Culture goes hand in hand with language.**

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Once on holiday, I met an Australian lady, talking about our respective countries. In a nutshell I told her about Sindhis settled in India thought they don't have a piece of their own land.

The lady suggested, "Why don't you people take help from governments like England and get your land back? You cannot survive without your state." Well this was her political statement. Not going in details let us talk about our Community.

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Wherever we are settled, we can borrow the land but should not trade our own culture. In every state of India there are Hindus and Muslims speaking same language, but observing a set of different customs and traditions. For the Hindu Sindhi Community it is saddening that they did not get their own state, they sacrificed their own sweet land for the independence of India (Bharat). We Sindhis are proud of this sacrifice. Sad thing is this sacrifice is not acknowledged by any community of India.

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Any community's existence depends on having its own land on which its language, literature, customs and traditions flourish. And these altogether make a culture.

Sindhi Hindus and Sindhi Muslims share the same language and literature, saints and darveshs, writers and philosophers but our customs and traditions are different.

The most unfortunate thing for Sindhi youngsters is that their parents never sit with them and teach them about their own culture and heritage; reason could be that parents themselves are ignorant.

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Urdu speaking rulers dominates Sindhis in Pakistan; In India Sindhis are ruled by not only by Hindi speaking but sixteen other provincial language-speaking rulers. So is the case with NRI Sindhis. The result is today Sindhis are not only Sindhis but they have become Gujarati Sindhis, Maharashtrian Sindhis, Bengali Sindhis, English Sindhis, French Sindhis, Spanish Sindhis, and American Sindhis and so on and so forth.

Visiting Sindhi temples, tikanas, Sindhi centres, Sindhi conferences and Sindhi Sammelans will save our unique identity.

Take an example of the Gujarati Community in any country, they are outside their Gujarat for over 3 or 4 generations, yet they still speak their mother language, they observe their auspicious days, and they celebrate their holy ceremonies.

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We Sindhis are killing our own existence, instead of being ashamed we feel proud to speak in foreign language, even when two Sindhis speak among themselves. If this is the way we go we will vanish from the planet and we will read only in history that there used to be a Sindhi Community settled on the Sindhu River where the Vedas were written. What a shame! Now is the time for youngsters to take the reins in their hands to research their rich heritage, which the parents should have done long before.

To save our Community, we have to save our language, literature, customs and traditions first. We may not have our land at least we can remain as Sindhis. I think it will be beneficial and appropriate to hold an open discussion among youngsters guided by someone.

The real threat to our existence is to deny to being called Sindhi, not to speak our language and not recognise our culture. Any question regarding being a Sindhi, you are welcome to contact **GeetaRaj**

**E-mail: Geetadaswani@aol.com**

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### **Nisha Gurbuxani, a member of the Host Committee, writes about**

## *YSA Retreat V (San Francisco)*

Three years ago my brother asked me if I wanted to go to the YSA retreat in Washington, DC. I responded, "YSA? What does that stand for?" He smiled with the response, "Young Sindhi Adults." I was confused by his reply, because although I am proud to be Sindhi, I have not avidly sought to attend Sindhi events. Moreover, outside of a few Sindhi Sammelans and other gatherings "Sindhiness" was more saturated in the Sai Bhaji I ate for dinner, in my knowledge of our history and in other drops of cultural capital that I picked up a long the way. As a result, I was hesitant to agree to anything before I knew more details. However, as I read more about the YSA retreat, I became enamored by the various facets of the weekend. The daytime was filled with sessions focused on Sindhi culture and various topics, as well as social networking opportunities. The nights were filled with chances to mingle varying from a banquet to going out in the town. After learning more about the retreat I decided to see what it was all about.

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**The DC retreat was an amazing experience, and the first thing I noticed was how affable and open all the members were, especially the two directors, Amar and Anil Vaswani. They greeted every member with such warmth and enthusiasm, and made it a point to become familiar with each person. I made great connections, and was able to keep in touch with a lot of Sindhis even after the retreat. After the event, I was excited about the next Retreat in Toronto, and listened to my brother Vishal ask again, "When are you bringing the retreat to the bay?" This year, Retreat five was held in my hometown, San Francisco. I knew I wanted to help plan the retreat, and decided to be on the host committee; this gave me an opportunity to be creative and work**

with a group of amazing bay area Sindhi's. The host committee and the directors worked as a unit to cover every aspect of the retreat from session topics to program logistics and ice breakers. Our theme "Raising the Bar," further challenged us to set the bar higher than before. The theme was followed by a record number of emails telling members about the retreat and asking them if they could "feel it." The host committee became closer throughout the planning phase, and weeks prior to the retreat worked non-stop to ensure the retreat's success.

Thursday night, the day before the retreat, members already flooded the hotel lobby with smiles and introductions. We walked together as a group to a near by hot spot, where members talked and danced the night away. Friday came in a flash. The day was filled with sightseeing and registrations and later on at night we started the retreat with a social soiree. Sindhis participated in a "Sindhi kitchen" icebreaker followed by lounge music from world renowned D.J. Cheb Sabbah and an auction of Priya's artwork- pictures, which displayed images of women's empowerment. By the end, everyone was looking forward to what the next day had in store.

Despite late nights, members woke up early to attend educational, cultural, religious and social sessions. My Aunt Mohini Didi, a beacon of Sindhi culture and religious tradition, taught two passionate sessions focused around these topics. She explained the diversity in Sindhi religious beliefs and general Sindhi cultural characteristics, while encouraging young Sindhi's to preserve their culture through language. In addition, the Host Committee performed a Sindhi Skit, which explained the story of Jhulelal, Our Patron Saint. As Sindhi folk music played in the background and blue dupattas lined the stage, the Host Committee danced in Indian costumes and clothes while speaking Sindhi. As the audience laughed at the acting, Mohini Didi explained the story in English. Another presenter Dr. Scott Levy also taught two informative sessions based on Sindhi Business highlighting the Shikarpuris as expert Merchants.

The entrepreneur panel brought three speakers who humorously spoke of their personal experience of breaking tradition and choosing to think outside the box. Another highly interactive session focused on online dating. Online versus face-to-face meetings, getting to know the opposite gender and cohabitation were key themes. During the Real Life partition panel Elders discussed vivid memories of being exiled from their homeland. Silence and intense emotions filled the room, as they described the tragic scenes they witnessed during partition. The Insight Panel on homosexuality participants discussed the challenges of being both South Asian and homosexual through poignant moments in their lives, such as coming out to their parents and siblings. Some family members accepted their sexuality, while others struggled to understand and support a decision that clashed with certain cultural expectations like marriage.

The banquet night is still fresh in my mind as members dressed in Indian formal attire while socializing in a banquet hall decorated with scenes of San Francisco. The background of the stage was draped with an impressive and colorful display of the breath taking San Francisco Skyline. The cultural diversity in the city was also reflected in the Chinatown display of red lanterns and fans, while in another corner north beach sat in a café setting reflecting Italian influences. The room was filled with energy as members ate, talked, and took countless pictures.

Afterwards, they sat for some entertainment, as the host committee performed a skit that addressed various topics from what it means to be Sindhi to dating and forming friendships, and even "Sindhi Idol." Finally, the retreat ended in style as members danced and talked the night away. After the bhangra, hip-hop, and Hindi music faded, elated chants of Jhulelal echoed in the hall long after the party ended. The YSA retreat brings Sindhis from all over the world together for one weekend. Indeed they become closer and use all their sense to look, learn, and feel what it means to be Sindhi. / Visit [www.youngsindhiadults.org](http://www.youngsindhiadults.org)

## GURU NANAK JAYANTI

Guru Nanak Jayanti is on November 5<sup>th</sup>. This is the birthday celebration of the first Sikh Guru. It is a very important festival for Sindhis. We would typically listen to a complete recitation of the Guru Granth Sahib (the Sikh holy book). This is called *Akhand Path*. If you visit our London Sindhi Mandhir you will see we have the GGS there in full view. In India the processions and parades, which are held on this day, are very colourful. Food (*langar*) is distributed to everybody regardless of colour, creed or caste. This is what Guru Nanak Dev propounded.

*Names used in the Guru Granth Sahib to allude to God*

Deen Dayal	Daata	Narain	Thakur
Jagdish	Govind	Gopal	Gosain
Gurdev	Khudaa	Khasam	Kartar
Kareem	Kant	Hari, Har	Swami
Sahib	Satgur	Saain	Ishwar
Allah	Akal Purkh	Onkar	Rahim
Rabb	Ramiya	Ram	Madho
Murari	Bhagwan	Bhagwant	Bhagauti
Balram	Beethla	Banwari	Babul
Pranpati	Parmesar	Parvadgaar	Prabhu
Pritam	Parbraham	Patsah	Nath
Nirankar			



If you wish to feature in this community newsletter you are welcome to contact us via email. Advertising and sponsorship opportunities are available. This Newsletter is produced by: Sindhi Association of UK, Sindhi Centre, 230A Kenton Road, Harrow, Middlesex, HA3 8BY/ Tel: +44 (0) 20 8909 2151 / Fax: +44 (0)20 8909 2144 Email: [info@sindhiassociation.org.uk/](mailto:info@sindhiassociation.org.uk/) Editor: Sandhya G.Panjwani



INTERNATIONAL DIWALI  
CELEBRATION HOSTED BY  
SAUK

SATURDAY 28<sup>th</sup> OCTOBER  
QUOMAN - TOWER HOTEL  
TOWER BRIDGE, LONDON

TICKETS NOW AVAILABLE  
£55 per person  
YOU CAN PURCHASE YOUR  
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