



Message from the Secretary

Dear Members,

2017 has been a challenging yet exceptionally successful year for MAUK. During the year, we achieved a great deal with many measures introduced to improve the administrative side of the organisation. Health and safety policies were revamped and the safety and security at Kerala House were upgraded. The overriding themes of the year were *Strengthening the Administration, Complying with Legal and Statutory Obligations, Improving Communication and Transparency, Implementing Policies and Practices for Good Governance and Taking MAUK Closer to the Community.*

The new Board elected by members at the 2016 AGM (held on 06 November), set an ambitious and bold plan to transform and modernise MAUK to meet the changing needs and demands of our community and to reclaim its rightful position as the leading service-oriented, non-religious, apolitical Malayalee organisation in the UK. The new Board, with the wider vision of promoting community cohesion, social integration and understanding and acceptance of the diverse social fabrics of multi-cultural, cosmopolitan London, also set out to make MAUK more inclusive and welcoming to the local community. In 2017, we have achieved plenty in fulfilling this rejuvenated vision. However, we admit that there were some setbacks and obstructions that prevented us from fully achieving our goals. This was due to our time and efforts being diverted to tackle unforeseen and undue challenges thrown at us. (by paramanaries) However, instead of allowing this to taint our drive and energy, we approached added challenges such as these with dignified professionalism, tact and resilience and have merely concluded them as a 'stumble' rather than a 'fall'.

Robust and practical decisions were taken to strengthen the foundation of MAUK. New practices were introduced to enable decision-making at MAUK to be more transparent and collective. We have implemented long-overdue policies to ensure statutory and legal obligations are met. This year, we maximised the use of electronic media to ensure efficient and timely internal communication- speeding up decision-making process collectively. Electronic and social media were also used extensively to promote MAUK and its activities to our members and the wider community with great efficiency and response. Communication to MAUK from all over the world via all mediums (telephone, email, social media, website) was responded to within 24 hours in most instances. The above measures, along with consultation meetings and forums, paved the path for MAUK to reconnect with the community and re-establish its prominence as a leading organisation for Malayalees in UK.

In 2017, following an anonymous complaint sent to Newham Council, we were forced to review our practices at MAUK Music and Dance School and update our policies. You can read more about this in the Director's Report under Educational Services - MAUK Music and Dance School. Another incident that once again forced MAUK to review and update its policies happened during the Football competition that was held as part of Keralolsav 2017, when a teenage player was

injured and needed hospital treatment following an altercation with a rival team. We express our gratitude to the parents of the injured teenager for cooperating and helping MAUK upgrade its health and safety policy for future competitions.

One of the priority tasks given to the Board at the last AGM was to update the MAUK constitution. While we have made some progress including collating all the notions passed at AGMs since 2004, we had to put this matter on hold to deal with other priorities. Simplifying the rulebook into plain and simple terminology and committing contradictory rules needed legal consultation for which we could not find time this year. We apologise for this shortfall and forward the completion of this task to the next Board.

The year ended with the successful coordination of the X-mas gathering by The Friday Club during which we raised over £500 to be split between MAUK Elders Service and Newham Food Bank. Unfortunately, MAUK officials had to evict a couple of members from the event due to their unruly behaviour, which led to one of the evicted member questioning the Secretary's behaviour during the incident and call for his resignation through many social media platforms. The Board has appointed the Chair and Vice Chair to investigate this matter.

During 2017, as Secretary, I have provided five Members/Volunteers with character references and have mediated for MAUK members on four occasions. I have also represented the Malayalee community at the High Commission of India, other statutory forums and community organisations. We have also received many enquires and requests for UK visa and employment as well as financial help for many charitable causes. Unfortunately, due to financial and legal constraints, we were sadly not able to assist with these requests.

Finally, I sincerely thank all those who have contributed to the success of MAUK in 2017 despite many differences in opinions. I request for all of your continued support to ensure that MAUK continues to be at the forefront addressing the needs of our community.

On behalf of the Members of the Director Board, I submit the following report, which is a synopsis of the main activities and services for the year 2017 for your kind appraisal and approval.

Yours faithfully,

Sreejith Sreedharan
Secretary

Director Board Report for the Year 2017

- Governance -

Director Board

MAUK is a Registered Charity and a Company Limited by Guarantee. Therefore, members of the Board of Directors have the responsibility as Charity Trustees and as Company Directors.

Elections

As we are holding 2016 AGM and 2017 AGM on the same date, the Director Board is proposing to only elect required numbers of Directors to replace the ones who have vacated the Board in 2017.

At the Board meeting held on 06 January 2018, the following resolution was also passed in regard to the election of Directors. The 2016 AGM will elect ten directors whose term expires in 2017. However, elections will be postponed at the 2017 AGM to enable those who were elected to the Board at the 2015 AGM held on 06 November 2016 to serve their full 2-year term. The new Director Board has the option to co-opt Directors to fill vacancies created by resignations during 2017. These co-opted Directors will hold office for the remainder of the previous director's term in office (till the 2018 AGM, which will be held in 2019).

The above resolution will ensure that half of the Directors are rotated each year as specified in Rule 38 of the Articles of Association of MAUK

The Annual General Meeting will be electing only the required number of directors to the Board. The first meeting of the Board will then elect the officials and decide on the roles and responsibilities of the various directors.

Resignation and Termination

The following Directors resigned from the Board in 2017.

Mr K. G. Nair - Personal reasons

Mr Jainlal Soman – Personal reasons

Mr Jaison George – Personal reasons

Mr Harilal Vasavan – Time constraints

Also, the Board has asked Mr Biju Gopinath to resign due to his failure to fulfil MAUK duties, which was caused by his time constraint managing a successful business. The Board is still awaiting a response from Mr Gopinath.

In December, Mr Raveendran Nair has tendered his resignation disagreeing with the Boards management of MAUK staff, which was in place for the last five years.

2017 Management Structure

To ensure efficient and effective management, the services and activities of MAUK were divided into the following three teams.

Sports, Arts and Culture – Planned and coordinated all one-off sports and cultural activities.

Regular Services – ensured that all activities and services provided by MAUK on a weekly or monthly basis was managed smoothly.

Support Services – Provided management of promotion, sponsorship and marketing as well as managed public relations and membership.

Each of the above teams was allocated a Team Lead and Assistant Team Lead. Also, each director within the team was given a specified project to lead and was free to choose their volunteers and team members to manage their tasks. This system provided Directors with the freedom to headhunt volunteers and experts required for completing their task as well as gather diverse opinions and views.

Membership

There was a slow and steady rise in MAUK membership. 12 new members were added this year. Although plans were in place for a major membership campaign, it did not materialise due to other unexpected tasks taking precedence.

Janani – MAUK Annual Souvenir

The Chief Guest at the Onam Celebrations published MAUK Annual Souvenir 'JANANI'. Readers commended this year's edition for the outstanding quality of its contents and the professional design and layout. The souvenir mainly featured creative work of UK Malayalees and gave a brief insight into MAUK's services and activities. The Board expresses its appreciation and gratitude to the Chief Editor, Mr Manampoor Suresh, as well as other editorial board members- Priyan Sathyavrathan, Jose Antony, Sreekala Nair and Muralee Mukundan for publishing a superb edition. Anil Raj, a prominent designer for many news magazines in Kerala, including Kerala Kaumudi and Kalakaumudi, did the design and layout for this year's Janani. He is also the leading designer for State and Central Governmental publications. The souvenir was printed at one of the leading printers in Kerala - Sterling Print House, Ernakulam. We also thank our sponsors and advertisers for their financial contribution, which enabled us to distribute printed copies of the Souvenir free-of-charge.

You can also download the 2017 Janani at

http://mauk.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/Janani_final-2-proof.pdf

Dhrishyakala Silver Jubilee Souvenir

A special edition annual souvenir was published to mark the Silver Jubilee of Dhrishyakala - MAUK Drama Troupe. The Souvenir features an insight into Dhrishyakala productions and artists as well as, articles by prominent personalities in the field of Malayalam drama. Sasi S Kulamada, one of the founding members of Dhrishyakala and its pillar of strength, was the main contributor and editor of the Souvenir. The design and layout were done by AANU Technologies, Thiruvananthapuram. Copies were distributed free-of-charge at the Silver Jubilee celebrations.

You can download the souvenir at

<http://mauk.org/publications/dhrishyakala-25-th-anniversary-souvenir>

Website

MAUK launched its revamped state-of-the-art website at the Onam celebrations. In addition to MAUK information, the new site has additional features to get community members involved. The community section of the site will highlight the achievements of our community, feature creative work of members, carry information of forthcoming events, announcements etc. We urge community members, organisations and businesses to make use of these facilities. There's also a blog section to which members are invited to contribute.

The new site was developed AANU Technologies, which is a Kerala based company. We have also entered into contact with the company to maintain and update the site. We will also use the site as an archive for MAUK. Therefore, the site is hosted on a cloud-based server to enhance security thereby preventing data loss.

Social Media

MAUK increased its presence on social media with our Facebook page 'mauklondon' being our main means of publicity. Details of MAUK events, activities, reports and photos of main events are regularly updated on this page. This page has also become one of the main mediums for people from many parts of the world to communicate with MAUK.

We are also present on Twitter - @mauklondon and on YouTube - mauklondon, which are being gradually promoted.

Communication

Internal and more importantly external communication methods were revamped and made more efficient. Use of personal email to communicate with stakeholders was stopped, and all external communication is now done thorough official email addresses. info@mauk.org was promoted as the main email ID for all to contact MAUK. Mail to this address is forwarded to six Senior Management Team (SMT) members thereby increasing transparency, efficiency and keeping them in the know. This system also allows other members of the SMT to follow up communication in the absence of the member who was initially dealing with it and is good for continuity when Directors change.

Media Partners

MAUK continued to maintain a good rapport with various print, online and visual media that is targeted at Malayalee community. On almost all occasions, our press releases and reports have been published unedited by our media partners, and we are grateful for their continued support. We express our gratitude to Garshom TV, Anand Media, MagnaVision, UKmalayalee.com, Britishmalayalee.com, Kerala Link, Manoramaonline and London Malayalam Radio.

MAUK Logo

There is no record to show who created the iconic elephant and coconut tree logo and when it was designed. Repeated use over the years saw the clarity of the logo diminish hence, this year we commissioned the renowned Artist Jose Antony to recreate the logo in digital quality.

- Kerala House -

New activities and a rise in private hire saw a significant increase in the usage of Kerala House in 2017. This increase in usage has also seen the running cost of Kerala House increase.

Hiring of Kerala House

We made it cheaper to hire the main hall by reducing the minimum hours of booking from 8 hours to 4 hours. The current rate of booking the main hall is £25/hour for members and £30 for non-members. A discounted rate of £15 is applicable for cultural and community purposes that are beneficial to the local community. All hirers must pay a deposit of £200 and complete a booking form agreeing to the terms and conditions of Hire.

We have upgraded the waste bin to 1100 litres. Hirers now have a choice to take their rubbish with them at the end of their function or pay £15 for the usage of the bin.

Safety upgrades

Kerala house also saw a significant upgrade in health and safety measures. To meet our statutory obligations in regard to fire safety at Kerala House, we brought in a specialist to assess and upgrade fire equipment. We have also contracted them to service the fire equipment annually. For the first time since 2008, fire extinguishers were serviced and new ones purchased, fire evacuation policy was implemented, and adequate signage displayed

CCTV system at Kerala House was updated by EC-Tek, a company based in Ilford. All existing cameras were replaced with digital cameras, and three new ones were added to eliminate all blind spots. A new CCTV policy was also introduced.

Electronic Door entry system

We have implemented electronic door entry system to keep tab of usage of Kerala House and increase safety and security at Kerala House. The work was undertaken by Security and Communication System (SCS) at a discounted rate. The new system will record accurate usage of Kerala House thus enabling to identify and keep a record of who has used Kerala House. We have also installed a number lock on the door leading to the cellar enhancing security and safety.

Office and Board Room

The first-floor rear room has been set up as a dedicated office and Boardroom with access limited to authorised personals. New tables and lockable storage and filing cabinets were purchased to store important and restricted documents securely. The CCTV recording unit is also stored in this room inside a locked cabinet secured to the wall.

Life Members Booking of Kerala House

The following life members used their free booking of Kerala House in 2017:

Sanjeev Anandan

Mohandas Madhavanandan
Jayan Pillai

Prominent personalities who visited Kerala House in 2017:

1. Sree Ramakrishnan – Kerala Speaker
2. Poly Varghese - Artist
3. Painkulam Narayana Chakyar - Artist
4. Najeem Arshad - Playback singer
5. Roopa Revathi - Playback singer
6. Vipin Xavier - Playback singer
7. AK Balan - Kerala Minister
8. Sunny Joseph - Kerala MLA
9. K Krishnankutty - Kerala MLA
10. A Pradeep Kumar - Kerala MLA
11. Kalamandalam Vijayakumar - Artist
12. Kalamandalam Kuttykrishnan - Artist
13. Kottakkal Devadas - Artist
14. Kalamandalam Balachandran - Artist
15. Kalamandalam Mohanakrishnan - Artist
16. Sadanam Ramakrishnan - Artist
17. Kalamandalam Rajashekar - Artist
18. Kalamandalam Barbara Vijayakumar - Artist
19. Keli Ramachandran - Filmmaker
20. Prabha Varma - Poet, Journalist
21. Dr. Kavitha Balakrishnan - Poet, Professor

- Arts & Cultural Services -

Drishyakala Silver Jubilee Celebrations

Dhrishyakala, the highly acclaimed drama troupe of MAUK, celebrated its Silver Jubilee on 11 February 2017 at Plashet School auditorium in East Ham. Dhrishyakala staged its latest production 'Nira Nirayo Nira' to mark this momentous occasion. The drama set to the backdrop of the worrying trend of converting paddy farming into flats and buildings in Kerala was written by the award-winning writer Shri Rajan Kizhakkanel and directed by Sasi S Kulamada.

Dhrishyakala was founded in 1989 and is perhaps the longest-running and most successful Malayalam Drama troupe outside India and the Middle East. To date, Dhrishyakala has staged over 20 different dramas at over 30 venues across the U.K. It has won the most number of awards in Drama competitions held in East Ham, Croydon and Southall during the 1990s.

The day also saw the Chief Guest Hon. Stephen Timms, MP for East Ham honour the 90 artists of Dhrishyakala from yesteryears by presenting them with a memento. Prominent members of the local community, including heads of various community organisations and businesses, were present for this momentous occasion. A special edition Souvenir was also published at the function. PJ Entertainments and Udaya Restaurant, East Ham sponsored the event.

2017 was declared as 'UK-India Year of Culture' with a year-long programme of events to mark

cultural ties between the UK and India. Therefore, it was an entirely fitting and remarkable that the Silver Jubilee of Dhrishyakala was also celebrated in the same year. The achievements of Dhrishyakala beautifully epitomises the flourishing cultural links that the India diaspora has maintained in the U.K.

The stature of Dhrishyakala was gained through the sincere contributions of many individuals. However, the vital role of Sivanandan Kanwasramath, Baldwin Simon, Noushad AR, Sreevalsalan Pillai, Aslam Habeeb and Sasi S Kulamada deserves special mention.

Onam 2017

UK's most prominent Onam celebrations - MAUK Swayam PONNONAM 2017, transcended the full capacity audience at Ilford Town Hall to an enchanting and mesmerising world of music and dance, blended with tradition and nostalgia. The celebrations unfolded on Sunday 17 September 2017 from 2.40 pm to 8.40pm with the traditional welcoming of King Mahabeli and the Lighting of the Lamp by MAUK Directors. The opening ceremony followed by an array of cultural programmes including Thiruvathira, Margamkali, Oppana, Cinematic and Classical dances, Chenda fusion and Dandiya performed by MAUK's in-house artists alongside established local artists.

Chakyar Koothu, by the renowned Pinekulam Narayana Chakyar, was a welcoming addition to the variety of cultural programmes staged. Chakyar Koothu was included in this year's Onam celebrations as part of MAUK's commitment to promoting non-popular traditional Kerala Art forms.

Loughton Mayor and MAUK member Cllr Philip Abraham, who was the chief guest at the function, highlighted the exemplary service that MAUK continues to provide to the Malayalee community.

The main attraction of this year's celebrations was the Ganamela by MAUK Nisari Orchestra featuring famous playback singers Najeem Arshad, Roopa Revathi and Vipin Xavier. Following sweet melodies, Onam songs and violin fusion by Najeem and Roopa, Vipin rocked the stage with a mix of Malayalam, Tamil and Hindi fast numbers. The atmosphere was ecstatic when MAUK's young dancers took the stage while the singers performed the popular track that has transcended borders - 'Jimikki Kammal'.

With such diverse and captivating programmes, this year's Onam celebration is one to be remembered for a euphoric celebration of past and present, traditional and modern by both young and old. We thank all those who have contributed to the grand success of this year's Onam by providing their valuable opinions, time and effort, performing on stage, assisting with publicity, helping with fundraising and most of all, being present on the day. We request your continued advice, guidance, support and blessings.

Read full report of Onam 2017 at <http://mauk.org/arts-culture/mauk-onam-2017>

Chenda Troupe

MAUK Chenda Troupe, which was founded in 2011 under the training and guidance of Vinod

Navadhara, has grown into the leading Chenda Troupe in the country. Over the years, the Troupe has performed for many prestigious events including the 50th Anniversary Celebrations of The Commonwealth, Olympic Torch Relay and at leading Temple and Church festivals. Our Troupe is a regular feature at The Independence and Republic Day celebrations at the High Commission of India.

In 2017, the Troupe performed a total of 11 shows throughout the UK including at the High Commission of India Republic Day Celebrations, Chariot festivals of Murugan Temple and Mahalakshmi Temple in East London, Portsmouth and Eastbourne Church Festival and for MAUK Annual Day and Onam 2017. We also collaborated with Sangeetha Chenda Troupe to perform at Tunbridge Wells Mayors Show and for the Kathakali shows in Barking and Croydon.

Over 40 male and female artists of various ages performed for the Troupe over the last six years. We thank Vinod and our dedicated team of Chenda players for their passion and commitment in raising the popularity of this traditional instrument and for being the leading Chenda Troupe in the field currently.

Nisari – MAUK Ganamela Troupe

In 2017, the troupe has performed on many stages across the UK including Mazhavil Sangeetham in Bournemouth, Sangeetha Malhar in Southampton and Wilsraj Show Horsham and Coventry. Nisari artists also had the opportunity to play alongside playback singers Biju Narayanan at Croydon and Northolt, Najeem Arshad, Roopa Revathi and Vipin Xavier at Onam Celebrations at Ilford and Croydon.

Promotion of Traditional Kerala Arts

MAUK has always been at the forefront of promoting Kerala arts and culture in the UK. However, admittedly, our efforts to promote the diverse ritual, folk and ancient art form of Kerala required improvement. The main reason that led to this was the cost implications of taking up projects that are not popular with the general public. The 2017 Board made a sound and apt decision that MAUK should play its part in the preservation and promotion of these declining art forms and provide opportunities for the community to experience these valuable art forms. To contribute to this objective, MAUK has upped the profile and scope of 'Kattankappi' to cover discussions and discourses on these art forms, included Chakyarkoothu as part of the Onam Celebrations and presented Kathakali to a novice audience.

Kathakali

The Kathakali performance took place on 11 November 2017 at The Ripple Centre in Barking. The evening commenced with a Chendamalam by 40 artists from our chenda troupe in collaboration with the chenda team of Croydon-based Sangeetha of the UK. This in itself was a rare and novel experience for the audience.

Renowned artists from Kerala performed the story 'Dakshayaga' authored by Irayimman Thampi to an awe-struck audience. The visual treat was equally matched by the live music, which created an ecstatic atmosphere.

Leading artists in the field - Kalamandalam Kuttykrishnan, Kottakkal Devadas, Kalamandalam Balachandran, Kalamandalam Mohanakrishnan, Sadanam Ramakrishnan, Kalamandalam

Rajashekar, Barbara Vijayakumar and Kalamandalam Vijayakumar, who were in the UK as part of the Kala Chethana Kathakali Troupe National Tour, were given a standing ovation by the audience, which is a rare sight at Malayalee functions.

MAUK would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge the immense contribution that both Kalamandalam Vijayakumar and Kalamandalam Barbara Vijayakumar have made in the promotion of Kathakali in the UK.

Kattankaappi

As mentioned earlier, the profile of Kattankaappi was boosted, and the task to promote Traditional Kerala Arts was added to the remit of Kattankaappi. 2017 was a very fulfilling year that saw the launch of many new and unique projects to promote literature and non-resident Kerala writers. A total of 10 episodes of Kattankaappi were held including:

Vasantholsavam – based on Poet Kalidasa's Rithusamharam

Greeshmasangamam – with Poet Anitha Thampi as chief guest.

Musical Evening – With accomplished Musician Poly Varghese who open the world of Hindustani, Bol and Kabeer music to the audience.

Malayaliyum Manavikathaum – discussion forum held in Hayes (Middlesex) in partnership with River Indus Group.

Prabha Varma – an evening with renowned Malayalam poet Prabha Varma

Kathakali Awareness – to accompany MAUK's Kathakali Show in November, Kattankaappi ran a month of awareness programmes.

Screening of 'Aarunam' – Documentary about the Legendary Kathakali artist Nellikodu Vasudevan Namboothiri was screened at Kerala House and was followed by a question and answer session by the director of the documentary Keli Ramachandran.

UK Malayalee Writers Meet – The first ever gathering of Malayalam writers in the UK was held at Kerala House on 19th November 2017. Around 50 writers from across the UK took part. Artist and Poet Dr Kavitha Balakrishnan was the chief guest at this event.

Kattankaappi has its dedicated website - www.kattankaappi.com. In 2017 the site launched a novel concept called 'Marar Critic Engine'. Budding writers can publish their creative work for peers to provide constructive criticisms.

Kattankaappi events are planned and coordinated by MAUK Volunteers Priyan Sathavrithyan, Muralee Mukundan, Jose Antony and Manampoor Suresh. MAUK Board does not intervene in the editorial aspects of Kattankaappi.

Malayalam Library

Plans to set up a Malayalam Library at Kerala House are well underway. Kerala minister of

Culture the Hon. A K Balan officially inaugurated the library on 22 September 2017 during his visit to Kerala House. The library hopes to prove a collection of acclaimed books in Malayalam, creative work by renowned Malayalam authors alongside works of British Malayalee writers and poets.

- Social, Sports and Leisure Services -

The Friday Club

The Friday Club, which was launched on 15 November 2014, has been providing a weekly platform for families in East London and surrounding areas to socialise, interact and have fun. Activities of the Club include board games, playing cards and other games, cookery, karaoke, etc.

The Friday Club meets every Friday at Kerala House from 7 pm to 11 pm. Members of MAUK pay £2/adult as entry fee and non-members are charged £3/adult. Children participate free-of-charge. Participants also take turns to cook, and the cost of food is shared each week.

This year, as part of Friday club, we started a Homework Club for children aged 4 to 11 years old, but this service was stopped due to the low take up. The Club also organised a Christmas family gathering on Saturday 16 December 2017. Activities of the evening included a variety dances and songs by children, dinner and dance, raffles and family games. Unfortunately, MAUK officials had to evict a couple of members from the event due to their unruly behaviour, which led to one of the evicted members questioning the Secretary's behaviour during the incident and called for his resignation through many social media platforms. The Board has appointed the Chair and Vice Chair to investigate this matter.

The evening managed to raise over £500 which will be split between MAUK Elders Services and the Newham Food Bank. MAUK would like to thank Life Member Mr Harilal Vasavan for coordinating the event and raising funds.

Coach Trip

Due to overwhelming demand from members for group trips and tours, MAUK organised its first coach trip this year following a few years break. The one -day family trip to Great Yarmouth seaside town took place on Saturday 22 July 2017. The trip was a great success with seats being fully booked instantly and participants enjoying the experience thoroughly with many suggestions for longer European trips for next year.

Sports Competition

This year, MAUK has scaled back on various sports competitions it organises every year for the Malayalee community due to time constraints and to avoid duplicating the excellent service that the newly formed London Sports League (LSL) is providing. LSL with its base in East London specialises in organising competitions in various sports including cricket, football, volleyball, pool etc. for the UK Malayalee community. We are exploring the options to work in partnership with LSL to provide better Sports and Leisure service for our members.

More details of LSL can be found at <https://www.facebook.com/groups/1894098487532223/>

UK Malayalee Cricket (UKMCL)

The UKMCL was set up by MAUK, Kerala Catholic Association and Kerala Cultural and Welfare Association in 2004 to cater for the growing needs of Malayalee Cricketers and provide them with specialised services. As in previous years, UKMCL Awards were presented at the Onam function to the League winners - Global Cricket Club. The runners-up were Croydon-based Griffins Cricket Club

More details about UKMCL is available at <http://ukmcl.com>

Card Competition

MAUK Annual 28 Cards competition was held on 18 August 2017 at Kerala House. This year's winners were Jainlal Soman, Pushkas Vasu and Narayanan Nair. The runners-up included R Sambasivan, G Suresh Kumar and Dineshnan Shobanan. Both teams were awarded trophies at prestigious MAUK Onam celebrations.

Keralolsav 2017 – *When we all smiled in the same language*

A staggering 950 adults and approximately 400 children witnessed the euphoria at Keralolsav 2017, Malayalee Association of the UK's all-day outdoor event sponsored by Swayam Property Services. On Sunday 2nd July 2017, at Flanders Fields in East Ham, MAUK encapsulated the vision behind this year's theme 'Celebrate Diversity'. Although the event was called 'Keralolsav', and an ambience of Kerala was created, MAUK emphasised that the real purpose of the event was much bigger than this. Keralolsav ultimately aimed to unite communities and promote community cohesion beyond merely Malayalees. This year, MAUK reached out whole-heartedly to the broader community, instilling an inclusive approach, where everyone present felt welcomed, included and a part of the beautiful celebration of diversity. Flanders Fields was divided into seven different zones to accommodate the various stalls and activities of the day. The zones included Beauty Treats, Kids Corner, Street Food Stalls, Local Business Stalls, Ready, Set, Go- track and field events, Play like a Champion – Football and Cricket competition and The Stage.

An unfortunate incident occurred that obligated MAUK to review and update its policies, during the Football competition, when a teenage player was injured and needed hospital treatment following an altercation with a rival team. We express our gratitude to the parents of the injured teenager for cooperating and helping MAUK upgrade its health and safety policy for future competitions.

The main sponsor of the event was Swayam Property Services. The iconic logo of Keralolsav 2017 was the concept of the renowned Malayalee artist Mr Jose Antony.

Throughout planning and preparation stages as well as on the day, MAUK had overwhelming volunteer support, which is undoubtedly paramount to the ongoing success at MAUK. The passion, commitment and teamwork of the core group were the catalysts of the sensational results. Keralolsav 2017 was the most extensive outdoor gathering MAUK have organised to-date, and MAUK has most definitely raised the bar of what to expect from the next outdoor event. We thank everyone for their invaluable contribution.

Read full report of Keralaosav 2017 at <http://mauk.org/sports/keralolsav-2017-report>

Onasadhya

This year's Onasadhya was held on Saturday, 09 September 2017 at Trinity Centre. Just over 300 patrons were treated to a delicious homemade traditional vegetarian feast with 18 side dishes served on banana leaves. As with previous years, tickets for the Sadhya were sold out, and the Sadhya was served in four sittings (an hour apart) starting at 12:30 pm.

MAUK's Onasadhya is unique for two main reasons. Firstly, we cook our own Sadhya, and secondly, we use the profits from the Sadhya to serve an equivalent number of Sadyhas to children and elderly in charities across Kerala. This year we provided Sadyhas at Karunalayam, Attingal, Anandatheeram Chathanoor, and Snehaniyam Chathanoor.

Keeping in line with tradition, the preparation for the Sadhya began earnestly two weeks before the date with participants of the 60+ Sisters Club making pickles and ginger curry for it to attain the right flavour, taste and texture. Shopping for the Sadhya is done on Thursday evening and Friday morning with items not readily available ordered weeks in advance and shipped from Kerala. The day before the Sadhya, Kerala House resembles a typical Malayalee wedding house with MAUK's army of volunteers preparing and cooking some of the side dishes for the big day. Volunteers cook other side dishes at home. On the day itself, cooking of the main items such as Rice, Sambar and Aviyal starts at 6 am at Trinity Centre kitchen under the supervision of a professional chef. Our effort in ensuring high-quality dishes are prepared traditionally is what separates MAUK's Sadhya from other Onasadhyas in the UK.

International Women's Day

This year's MAUK International Women's Day (IWD) celebration was one with a difference. On Saturday, 25th March 2017, over one hundred ladies attended the all-day free event held at Kerala House, which resonated the IWD theme for this year- #BeBoldForChange. The ambitious vision for this event was to build on the previous successes of MAUK IWD events but also offer a new, refreshing approach with an aim to attract new faces- particular ladies from the younger generation and the broader community. Ultimately, the aspiration was to inspire and empower all the ladies who attended to perhaps take up a new hobby, try a challenge, make healthy lifestyle changes, learn something new, treat themselves, be safer in the streets and to take care of their mind, body and soul.

There were lots in store from 10 am including a variety of appealing workshops such as Yoga, Bharathanatyam, Mohiniattam, Bollywood Dance, Exercise to Music, Self-Defense for Women, Mindfulness and Health Check. Also, since the following day was Mother's Day, there were also opportunities to treat mothers to some well-deserved pampering, indulging and luxuries including Hair & Beauty treatments, Saree Sales, Cake stall and Henna. There was also an awe-inspiring Art Gallery featuring a collection of creative pieces by artistic ladies in the community. For lunch, Idiappam was served with the much-favoured delicious home-cooked traditional Kerala-style chicken stew and vegetable stew.

The evening unfolded with a sensational stage show with chief guest, Cllr Rokshana Fiaz inaugurating the programme by lighting the lamp. Other performances included singing, dancing, skits, kavitha (performance poetry) and kadhaprasangam (story-telling) presented by performers ranging from 7 years to 70+ years.

Read full report of IWD2017 at <http://mauk.org/iwd/mauk-international-womens-day>

- Elders Services -

60+ Sisters Club

In 2006, the Late Mrs Girija Nair, who was a dedicated MAUK volunteer, started the Sisters Club with a vision to provide friendship and support for women over the age of 60. At present, MAUK senior Director Rajeswari Sadasivan, with the able help of many including Radha Rajan, Radha Ashokan and Prasanna Vijayakaran efficiently manages the Club.

The Club has over 25 regular active members who gather every Tuesday from 1 pm to 4 pm at Kerala House to take part in various activities including singing, poetry, dancing, light exercise sessions, food tasting, training for cultural shows, day-trips, etc. Members of the Club have formed a strong bond and are a support network for each other. One of the most amazing aspects of the Club is the admirable interaction and bond between Malayalam speaking and the non-Malayalam speaking members, despite the language barrier. The benefits of 60+ Sisters Club are evident in the eagerness of the members to frequently attend the activities of the Club and their improved mental and physical well-being.

This year, the Sisters Club members were treated to four one-day outings. All four trips were over-subscribed- highlighting the immense interest of the Elders in going on trips with their friends. MAUK would like to extend our gratitude to Ford Community Transport scheme and Halal Restaurant in Aldgate, who have made these trips possible.

Read full report of the trip at <http://mauk.org/club/60-sisters-club/service-becomes-worship>

Elders Club

The Elders Club meets every Thursday at Kerala House. Participants of the club enjoy a variety of activities including card and board games, exercise classes, knitting, arts and crafts, etc. The Club held an Onasadhya on 07 September 17, where a special Onam feast was served to its members. The Club's Xmas gathering was held on 05 December 2017.

MAUK Elders Club started in 1998 following a wave of redundancies from local companies, where a large number of first-generation Malayalees worked. The service was initially based at Trinity Centre in Manor Park and was funded through small grants from Newham Council. The activities of the Club were shifted to Kerala House when funding from the council ceased. The Club has always been a focal point for Elders in the community to meet and catch up.

Thalamura

After a long break, members of Thalamura regrouped for a Xmas gathering 08/12/17. Thalamura, which is being coordinated by MAUK Volunteer Suresh Sukumaran meet every alternate Fridays from 1 pm to 6 pm at Kerala House. Thalamura aims to bridge the gap between the first, second and third generation Malayalees in the UK through informal gatherings and social activities.

150Club

150Club is an exercise-based prevention programme for members of the local community who are at risk of being Diabetic. The 150Club scheme is an initiative by NHS Newham Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG), Newham Council and the 150Club partnership - made up of the West Ham United Foundation working with the council's leisure trust activeNewam and the Staywell Partnership, which includes MAUK.

150Club exercise programme takes place twice a week at Kerala House on Tuesday at 1.30-2.30 p.m. Members of the local community who wish to join 150Club activities should request their GPs to refer them to enrol to the programme.

Befriending Services

MAUK befriending Service is an outstanding and compassionate service that is run as part of the Elders Service to ensure housebound Elderly people are not forgotten. Participants of the Elders service make visits to their homebound peers for a chat & tea. The service also offers support with shopping, attending appointments or even to accompany them for a short trip to park.

If you know of anyone who could improve their wellbeing by this service, please email their details to info@mauk.org or call us on 07960 212 334, and we will be happy to visit them.

- Educational Services -

MAUK School of Music and Dance

The School currently provides music and dance classes at Kerala House and is providing an essential service at an affordable cost. Typically, our fees are 25% less than others providing similar service in the area. Our aim of providing quality and value-for-money classes in mainly Dravidian arts had open the world of dance and music to many in the community regardless of their age and skills and encouraged them to take up dance and music as a hobby or to further their skills. The students of our School also attend musical and dance examinations of external exam bodies like Trinity College of Music, Oriental Fine Arts Academy of London (OFAAL) and Oriental Examination Board London (OEBL), which could lead to UCAS points.

In 2017, we were forced to review, update and implement policies surrounding the management of MAUK Music and Dance School. Following an anonymous complaint sent to the local authority, we thoroughly investigated the allegations made with the advice and guidance of RADO. The investigation concluded that the accusations were unfounded and baseless. However, this was a boon in disguise, which enabled the Board to conduct a study on how to better manage the MAUK School. The study helped us to gather opinions of students and parents, update outdated policies, introduce new ones and implement the good practice of managing the School. The key recommendations of the study were to make directors, teachers, student, parents and volunteers be made aware of MAUK policies and put them in practice; a task we are in the process of implementing. The study also proposed making the school's services assessable to the wider community, creating a unique identity for the school and handing over the day-to-day management of the school to a governing body made up of parents, teachers, directors and experts from the field. The present Board requests the next Board to take necessary steps to implement these changes to make the school more successful and

increase standards.

It gives me immense pleasure to inform members that MAUK School Principal Mr Vinodkumar Sukumaran who was on MAUK work permit has received permanent residency status in the U.K. Vinod has now resigned from his position as an employee of MAUK to pursue wider opportunities in the Malayalam music field. He is currently teaching at MAUK as self-employed and is also a registered and active MAUK volunteer. Vinod has requested me to convey his gratitude to MAUK members and past and present Board members for the unwavering support and help that aided him in fulfilling his duties as an employee of MAUK.

Bharathanatyam Classes

The classes take place every Saturday from 9 am to noon under the tutelage of Ms Santosh G Nair. Students are progressing well and have been graded by OFAAL and OEEL examination board. The students performed at the Onam 2017 and many events organised by other community associations.

Mohiniattam Classes

In 2017, MAUK started Mohiniattam Classes under the tutelage of the exceptionally talented Ms Kalamandalam Sruthi. The class that was taking place at Kerala House on alternatives Saturday from 7 am to 9 am is currently suspended as the teacher is on long-term leave.

Chenda, Mridangam, Chenda Classes

Students attending the percussion instrument classes are on the rise with many non-Malayalee students now attending the classes. One-to-One tuition, weekday evening and weekend classes have provided more opportunity for students to attend at their convenient time and learn at their own pace. Mr Vinodkumar Sukumaran runs the classes.

Keyboard & Guitar Classes

The number of students attending the keyboard and guitar classes has increased. The classes now take place on Saturday and Sunday afternoons. We have students from the age of 5 to 60 years. Well-known musician and music composer, Mr Albert Vijayan, train the students of MAUK

Annual Day

Music and Dance School Annual Day took place on Saturday, 10 June 2017 at Brading Crescent Community Centre in Wanstead. Over 100 Students from MAUK School of all ages and skills performed on stage to an appreciative and encouraging audience. The performers were all awarded 'Certificates of Achievement' on the day by their Gurus. This annual show is conducted to provide our students with a platform to showcase what they have learned over the year in an informal setting and to boost their confidence to perform on stage. A nominal fee of £5/adult is charged to cover part of the cost with the rest of the cost covered by the School fund. This year home-cooked dinner provided by supporters of the School at cost price was served at the venue

Educational Awards 2017

The Chief Guest The Worshipful Mayor of Loughton, Cllr. Philip Abraham presented the prestigious MAUK Educational Awards at the Onam celebrations. Alisha Giby won the Award for the best GCSE results from Southampton. Katelyn Lakshmi Dharmajan came a close second. Pranav Pillai from Clayhall won the award for the best A-level results while Anjana Swayam Kumar from Ilford won the second prize. TecTex International sponsored cash award for the first prize winners of both GCSE and A-Levels.

MAUK follows strict selection criteria, with the winners being chosen after careful and rigorous inspection of the evidence submitted by the candidates. Mr Nagappan Sivasamy, who is a subject lead at a local school, is in charge of this process, and MAUK Directors do not interfere or influence the process. The entries received this year were all extraordinary with only minor point differences between them. MAUK is extremely proud of the educational achievements of our young generation and would like to congratulate the students and their parents for such outstanding results. We hope to include the profiles and interviews of these young achievers in our 2018 edition of Janani. The Board would like to Thank Mr Sivasamy for his support and assistance.

- Community -

Inspirational Individual Awards

The Inspirational Individual Award was introduced to give well-earned and deserved recognition to exemplary role models in the community who have made an inspirational achievement and contribution to the community. Two outstanding ladies from the community were each presented with the 'Inspirational Individual Award':

Mrs Sheeba Anil- for her commendable efforts and astounding achievements to sincerely serve the community through her successful business Swayam Group of Companies

Miss Neethu Haridas- for being the first female footballer from the Malayalee community in the UK to have graced the game and reached league level thanks to her tenacious desire to succeed.

If you wish to nominate someone who qualifies for this award, please email their details to the Board at info@mauk.org explaining why you think they deserve this award.

MAUK/ Girija Nair - Volunteer of the Year Award

The Volunteer Award was initiated in 2003 to celebrate, acknowledge and appreciate the instrumental contributions of MAUK Volunteers. The award was renamed MAUK Girija Nair Award in 2014 to honour one of MAUK's steadfast and inspirational volunteers.

Mrs Radha Rajan was presented with the Volunteer of the Year Award 2017 at the Onam celebrations for her contributions in managing MAUK Elders Service.

Read more at <http://mauk.org/girija-nair-volunteer-awards>

Malayalam Mission

Kerala House played host to the inaugural meeting of Malayalam Mission (MM) on 22 September 2017. This momentous occasion was blessed with the presence of Kerala minister of Culture the Hon. A K Balan, who inaugurated MM UK chapter. He was accompanied by 3 MLAs - A. Pradeep, Sunny Joseph and K Krishnankutty. The minister also inaugurated MAUK's Malayalam Library, which will be located at Kerala House.

Kerala Speaker's Visit

Over 70 community members attended the gathering at Kerala House on Friday evening, 18 November 2016 for a reception that was arranged for the Hon. Speaker of Kerala Assembly, Shri P Sreeramakrishnan. Although the reception was organised in just three days notice and on a weekday evening, the turnout was higher than expected. MAUK chair Mr Sudheeran Vasudevan expressed his delight in welcoming the Speaker to Kerala House and reminded that Shri Sreeramakrishnan was the 3rd Kerala Speaker to visit Kerala House. He further reminded that MAUK building was named as Kerala House on 2nd October 1996 by the then Kerala Speaker the Late Shri G Karthikeyan.

The Hon. Speaker praised the resilience and hard work of Malayalees abroad and stated that the high living standards enjoyed in Kerala were partially due to the investment of the Malayalee community abroad including that of British Malayalees.

The Speaker's address was followed by a Question and Answer session moderated by MAUK secretary Sreejith Sreedharan. During this session, the Secretary introduced the guests present from other community organisations including Progressive Malayalee Society, Sreenarayana Guru Mission, Kerala Catholic Association, UK Malayalee Cricket League and Retired Members Association.

MAUK Director Anilkumar Edavana presented the Speaker with a copy of the book and DVD published as part of MAUK's flagship project 'Our Story: Onam', which teaches children in UK primary schools about Onam and Kerala culture.

MAUK Team Leader Nishar V Nadh concluded the meeting with the vote of thanks. Following the meeting, light dinner sponsored by Thattukada, East Ham, was served. The official photographer of the event was Anu Sojan of A & S Media.

- Finance -

Sponsorship and Donations

Government funding for NGOs has dried up over the years with whatever limited available financing prioritised on projects that tackle concerns of the wider community rather than tailor-made services and activities for specific communities. With this shift in priority, organisations like MAUK are evermore dependent on sponsorship from businesses, donations from kind-hearted individuals and fees from service users. Despite a severe crunch in income, we have ring-fenced our spending on Elders Services. This year alone, we spent £3,000 from MAUK fund to maintain Elders services.

Despite the challenging economic climate, MAUK has managed to increase the amount it has raised through sponsorship, especially for its major events like Onam and Keralolsav. We have also received a grant of £500 from London Borough of Newham, the first since 2014.

The Board takes this opportunity to thank our Main Sponsor of 2017 – Swayam Property Services for their continued support. We also thank our co-sponsors State Bank of India, Green-Stop Grocers, Udaya Restaurant, Crosspay Digital Money Transfer, Textec International, John Paul Solicitors, Neil Travels, Joy Alukkas, Sam Travels and Vita-Grey Contractors

We also take this opportunity to acknowledge the invaluable contributions of our supporters at Barclays Bank and Royal Mail.

Annual Accounts

The externally audited accounts for the year 2017 are shown at the end of this report.

- Resolutions -

If members wish to introduce any resolutions, please inform the Company Secretary seven days before the AGM. The resolutions should be proposed and seconded by two members of MAUK. It is a requirement that all three members are present at the AGM when the item is discussed.

- END -