



Archive Volunteers planning out the year's work in January in the remodeled Reception Centre

Avatar's Abode Trust Archives Annual Report



| July 2021 | Archive Committee Convenor's Annual Report 2020-2021

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Archiving continues through the Covid 19 pandemic

This has been another productive year for the Archives Committee and the archive volunteers. Although the covid-19 pandemic curtailed activity early in the year and the number of active volunteers was reduced much has been achieved.

The re-roofed Reception Centre with internal partition wall has proven to be an excellent workspace with good natural lighting. The sitting area as you enter the building is used daily by the volunteers and provides a focal point for sharing the progress on different projects of the work and for morning tea. See picture above.

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ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT

Storage and display environments are humidity controlled throughout the year and temperatures are controlled from September to May. Monthly monitoring of data loggers in all archive rooms confirms that we are maintaining both the temperature and humidity within acceptable limits.

FIRE PROTECTION

Activation of a smoke detector and intruder alarm system in the Reception Centre and bookstore is a significant improvement in protecting the collection from fire and arson. The installation of an external fire hydrant and two fire reels and hoses around the Reception Centre plus a sprinkler system now provides good protection from bushfires.

ARTEFACTS AND RELICS

A dedicated volunteer manages the preservation of the artefacts and relics. She has now completed detailed cataloguing of over 100 items and rehoused all items into archival boxes or placed them on display.

DOCUMENTS

A volunteer has completed scanning all 51 boxes of documents in the Francis Brabazon collection to searchable pdf. Scanning of five boxes from other collections is continuing.

PUBLICATIONS AND FILMS

Preservation of over 2000 items in the publications collection and cataloguing all new publications is managed by one volunteer. This year we completed the scanning and rehousing of all the Meher Baba Australia newsletters from 1983 to 2005. The same volunteer also monitors the condition of over 100 8mm and 16 mm films permanently stored in a deep freezer.

LP AND 78 RPM RECORDS

A volunteer with decades of experience in the record industry has now cleaned and re-sleeved over 400 records from Francis' collection.

PEST MANAGEMENT

All archive rooms are carefully monitored monthly in winter and fortnightly in summer for insects and pests and traps and baits are used as required.



Fire reel and hydrant that the local fire brigade can connect to

PHOTOGRAPHS

A new project this year has been the rehousing of over 2000 photographs. All photographic prints, negatives and slides are being rehoused into archival photographic sleeves, numbered, and sorted. Hundreds of negatives, slides and photographs found in and donated to the collection have been scanned including a rare photo of Baba at Avatar's Abode. Photoshopping of selected images has commenced.

AUDIO-VISUAL ITEMS

Over 550 compact cassettes, 36 CD's, 88 DVD's, 49 VHS videos, and 135 reel-to-reel audio tapes have now been catalogued and rehoused into archival boxes.

ARTWORK

All artworks on display are regularly monitored and cleaning and preservation work is undertaken by a skilled volunteer with a background in this field. Expert conservation work is needed on some items and the Preservation



Needs Assessment planned for August 2021 will highlight the conservation priorities.

Exhibiting the collection

With overseas conservators unable to visit due to covid 19 we were fortunate to have Katie Pye visit in November and work closely with the artefact and relics volunteer on the further preservation and display of Baba's coat. It is now beautifully presented in a large display cabinet in the Baba House Archives room.

Newly arranged displays with an associated printed catalogue were prepared for anniversary. All items in the displays in the Baba House Archive room have now been individually numbered and a catalogue provides information on each displayed item. New museum quality iGuzzini LED lighting has significantly improved the conditions for display and has received enthusiastic feedback.

The Reception Centre was used for a display of correspondence spanning over 30 years from Mani to Cynthia Borg (Adams) during the anniversary and was well received.

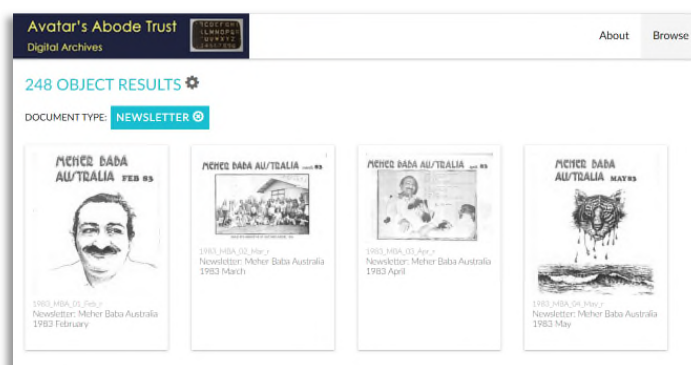
Sharing the Collection on the internet

Over 350 items from the collection, including 248 searchable Meher Baba Australia newsletters have been published online on the Avatar's Abode Trust Digital Archives and can be accessed via the Trust website at https://www.avatarsabode.com.au/avatars_abode_trust_archives.html

A dedicated volunteer who manages a photographic database has assisted with the cataloguing and selection of more than 330 photographs which have been uploaded and can now be searched by keyword and viewed on the Zenfolio website at <https://avatarsabodecollection.zenfolio.com/> A short summary of each photo is included.



Pilgrims at the anniversary viewing the display in the Reception Centre of Cynthia Borg's letters from Mani



Early newsletter from 1983 on the Digital Archives



Picture of all the Australians from a gallery on the East West Gathering on Zenfolio.

Cataloguing the Collection

ARTEFACTS AND RELICS

Detailed cataloguing of over 100 artefacts and relics has been completed. Individual cataloguing sheets are printed out and stored with each item. It is expected that cataloguing of all artefacts and relics in the collection will be completed in the coming year.

DOCUMENTS

Over 1450 documents have been uploaded to the Collective Access database and most are waiting to be catalogued. Two volunteers have completed the detailed online cataloguing of over 100 of these documents.

PHOTOGRAPHS

There are now over 3000 images in the database and detailed cataloguing continues. People around the world who are looking for images for new publications can now request access to the collection.

ARTWORK

A local Baba lover artist is assisting with recording the provenance and artist biographies for all artworks on display in Baba's House, and the cottages and which are in the collection. A printed catalogue has been prepared.

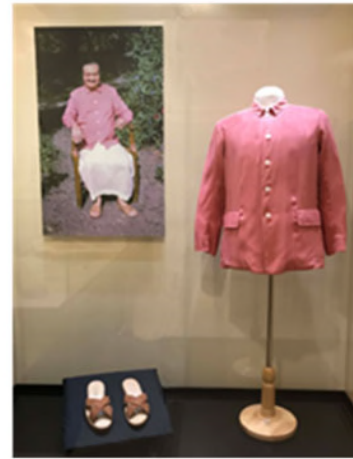


Painting by
Robert Rouse

DOCUMENT TRANSCRIPTION

Three interstate volunteers have provided valuable expertise in continuing the transcription of documents where it is difficult to read the original. Transcription of 120 documents has been completed and 64 of these have been uploaded to the database.

Artefacts and Relics Catalogue



Collection in
Baba House Archives Room

New catalogue for the items displayed in
the Baba House Archives Room

When His close mandali and family are no more, these treasures will be the tangible connection to His physical Advent. In days to come the world will awaken to the fact of His Advent and will be hungry for anything and everything personally associated with Him.

Mani S. Irani

Preservation Needs Assessment

Lydia Egunnike, formerly Senior Conservator at the State Library of Queensland, will be visiting the Abode to begin a preservation needs assessment of the archives in early August. This will be followed by training for volunteers interested in learning how to preserve collection items. This project has been supported with a Sunshine Coast Council Heritage Grant through the Collection Care program



Miniature letter from Mani to Cynthia Adams (Borg) displayed during the anniversary

Information Technology

Our IT volunteer continues to provide regular IT support with monthly updating of all computers and management of monthly back-ups which are stored off site.

Another local volunteer has provided valuable IT support with the online database and assisted with uploading documents from the collection to the database and Sevn McAuley continues to provide database design support from Asheville.



Cards Meher Baba and His disciples played with for relaxation in Meherazad during the 1960's. Displayed in the Baba House Archives room.

Accessions to the collection

The following items have been gifted to the collection over the past year.

- LP records from 1973 to 1980
- A kilim belonging originally to Baron von Frankenburg.
- Table lamp used by Francis at Avatar's Abode
- Letters between Bernard's mother Joan and the Baron and with Francis dating from 1940
- 3 framed pencil drawings of Meher Baba by Patricia Saunders,
- The car seats from the Peugeot that Baba used in 1958.



Baron's Kilim

Committee Governance

Sue Jamison joined the committee this year and Nadya Keating resigned. The committee meets quarterly and includes Jaya Foley (Director), Sim Symons, Kay Walker, David Bowling (Convenor), Jeannette Young and Francis Thompson. The Trust approved a new Archive Collection Web-Sharing Policy this year and this provides an important policy framework for decision making on items to be shared via the internet.

His things are the tangible things that keep His presence alive in our hearts by helping us remember Him. Every little thing keeps His Presence fresh in our hearts.

These little things make the Unapproachable approachable.

Eruch Jessawala

Our Volunteers

Working with the archives collection is an enormous privilege and the fragrance of Baba's visit to and connection with Avatar's Abode is often present as we work together.

The opportunity to share the wide range of items in the collection digitally means the whole world-wide Baba family can appreciate the wonderful legacy handed down to us by the early Baba lovers in Australia.

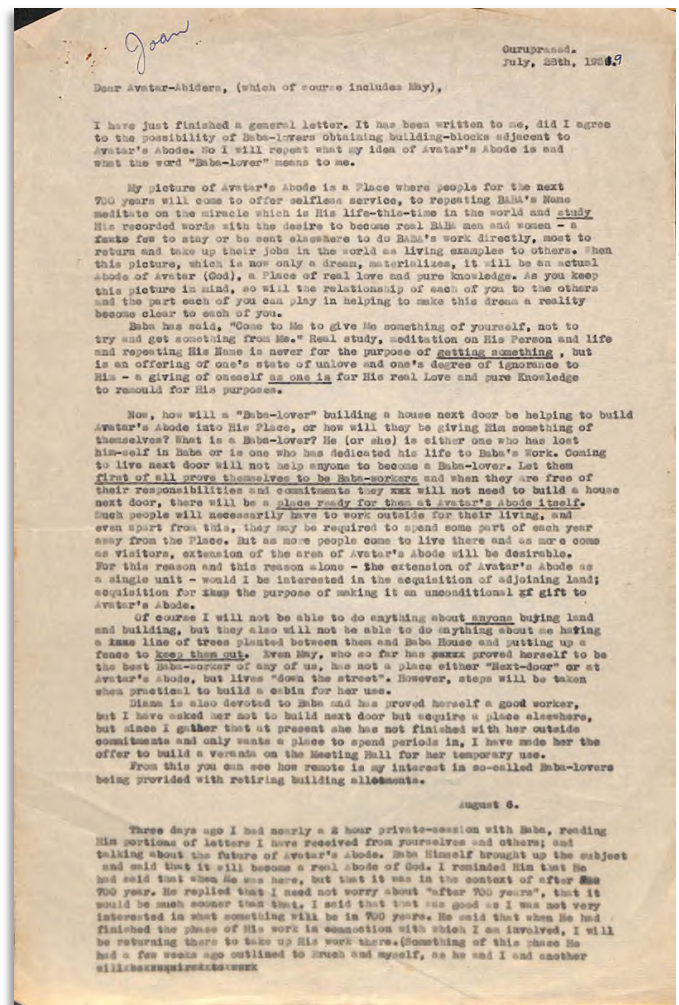
The archives also provide a wonderful opportunity for Baba lover volunteers to work together cooperatively on the loving care, preservation, display and sharing of the collection.

Our dedicated volunteers who commit hundreds of hours per year to this work have created a collegial atmosphere where we find many opportunities to deepen our connection to the Beloved.

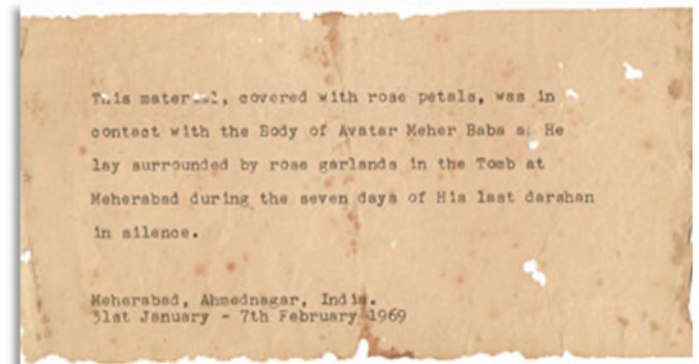
Our goal is that the work being undertaken will ensure future generations will have the opportunity to savour the sweet presence of Beloved Baba at Avatar's Abode.

The ongoing support for the archives by the Avatars Abode Trust Directors is much appreciated.

David Bowling
Archives Committee Convenor



Letter to Avatar-Abiders from Francis 28 July 1959



Note sent with the shroud that covered Baba's body