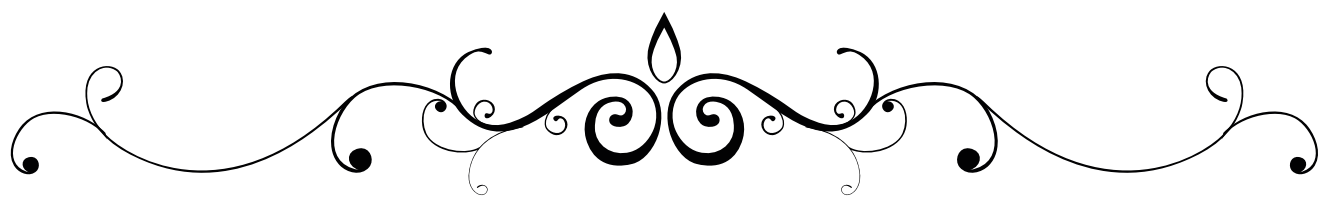




Welcome
to the wedding of

Jayanthi & Andrew



Monday 26th October 2020
Manchester



Welcome

Wedding of Jayanthi Sekar & Andrew Hills

15:50 on Monday 26th October 2020

at

Heron House
47 Lloyd Street
Manchester
M2 5LE





Our lives have been great fun in our early/mid-20s. Fortunately Andrew met Veronica during their PhD years at the University of Sheffield, and Jay met Eve when she started her Masters at the same University. Veronica and Eve knew each other already and eventually Jay was introduced to Veronica. Over the years of learning about each other, one fine day we two were introduced to each other.

We must say that we are lucky and we feel at home since we met at Mughli Charcoal Pit for our first dinner together with Veronica and Roberto. Food was just okay but we bonded over a mango lassi and kick started talking on 23rd February 2019. This piqued following a late night walk into Fletcher Moss Park where, under the trustful guidance of Roberto, we avoided falling into the pond and made it back to their house, where Andrew was staying for the weekend. We all shared a light-hearted chat into the small hours before Jay caught a taxi home.

The following day, we all met up again — this time within the city centre — where we wandered around giving Andrew a tour of Manchester before he returned to Sheffield. Walking through China Town, Andrew and Jay talked about the commonalities in Chinese and Indi-



an spiritual beliefs amongst conversation that flowed. This was eventually followed by a walk back to Piccadilly station, however, this was not before a much-treasured group photograph of us at the foot of a statue situated in Albert Square.

After a few days, on 27th February 2019, Jay came to Sheffield and we had our second dinner together with John, Eve and Christina. That's when John did us a massive favour in saying that Jay likes Hobbit, Jay likes this and that, etc. In digging a metaphorical hole, he had indirectly hinted that we should both get to know each other. Following John's advice, Andrew walked Jay back to the station and we talked whilst we waited for the next train. Little did we know the train was actually right in front of us at the time and open to be boarded, we sat at the chilly platform talking until the service was called.



Although our relationship wasn't perfectly defined at that moment, we knew that there was a spark. What followed was many WhatsApp messages being sent back and forth followed by sharing an endless, but finite, list of things we can do together through the power of Google. We both agree that this little act bought us closer together and gave us an opportunity to understand our interests, likes, dislikes, future plans and so on. We still maintain this list: occasionally adding new adventures and ticking those we accomplish.

It wasn't long before conversation turned to the next gathering: a movie and possibly cake tasting at Birdhouse Tea Bar & Kitchen in Sheffield. However, changes were afoot and the location changed to Manchester, meeting up with John and Roberto to watch Captain Marvel. Andrew met John and Roberto who, at the time, were discussing conversations to have with Mormons and the three of us walked into the Starbucks in Piccadilly Gardens to wait for Jay. After a while, Jay appeared and John revealed he had been carrying a rather large sandwich maker in his backpack to pass on to Jay. As Starbucks wasn't the best of places to present and hand over such devices, we left and made our way to The Odeon cinema. Following procurement of tickets, John and Roberto floated the idea of getting lunch or, rather, that Jay and Andrew take the opportunity to get a meal and use this time to better get to know one another.

Yes! This is, again, an example of the gentle encouragement by our friends in setting us up on a date and then all four of us watched the movie together. The movie was great and the company was double great. After the film, we had to go our separate ways but not before John relinquishing the sandwich maker and hinting that Jay's "man" can help carry it. Ah yes! Even the sandwich maker was in on it!

That evening, we stayed up until the early hours of the morning talking and working our way through a box of Hotel Chocolat chocolates, ranking them and describing what we thought of them. Following completing the box on that night, we vowed not to devour an entire box in a night's sitting again

(and something that we would generally advise against it to others too, in case the very sound of it is tempting). Andrew left Manchester the next day, catching the bus to Manchester Airport. Unfortunately, being unfamiliar of the area and it being quite dark, Andrew made it as far as the back of Wythenshawe Civic Centre, believing it to be the airport terminal!

For Easter, we decided to tick a few boxes in our list: a trip to Munich and the beautiful Neuschwanstein in Germany. Not only was the trip an opportunity to explore a country neither of us had been to before, it was also a time for us to better understand each other. To add to the experience, neither of us could read or speak German so imagine our amusement when we were both called to help a native with directions on our first day! Fortunately, through a mixture of broken English, French and German, we conversed and managed to help the person. Following this incident, we did pick up a few words but wasn't asked anything after that... how typical!

We came back to the UK with the desire to revisit Munich and the Bavarian mountains but also much closer with a better understanding of one another. Not long after the return, Jay returned to her weekly dance practice comprising rehearsals for the Natya Utsavam 2019 biennial dance school production.

Eve, John, Veronica and Roberto came to explore the Wythenshawe market and watch the show. Jay performed in two choreographed dances for the day, each with a different costume. There was, in fact, a third dance — the finalé — that had taken Jay by surprise. Not to miss an opportunity such as this, she promptly handed over her jacket and dashed for the backstage entrance. Within moments she



was on the stage, making her way to the front and partaking in the dance!

As the weeks passed, Jay and Andrew caught up with friends at a weekend — often in Manchester, but sometimes in Sheffield and, on the one occasion, Leeds. Andrew often travelled to Manchester of a weekend and back to Sheffield for the working week, and every weekday, we would have phone and video calls. This routine changed in September when Andrew spent his annual leave in Manchester and never left. In his defence, everything naturally fell into place and it felt the next step in the relationship.

As part of Andrew's birthday, Jay and Andrew travelled to London, watch Shakespeare's *Midsummer Night's Dream* at the Globe Theatre — a highly recommend production — and stayed overnight in a hotel within the City. The following day, we travelled to St. Pancras station to meet Andrew's Mum.



As is customary, food was the first port of call, alongside a coffee and... quite possibly more food. We then headed to the National Gallery in Trafalgar Square.

We surprised Mum with a visit back to Kent — insisting that we sit with her on the train to make sure she was getting back safely. Only when the doors closed and we sat opposite her, stowing our luggage did it dawn on her we were travelling with her! Our timing, to Network Rail's standards, was impeccable for we had managed to coincide our visit with rail maintenance meaning that an hour train journey was extended to a 30 minute train journey followed by an hour of being on a bus replacement service. Dad was unfortunately having to wait for us at the station and it was fast approaching



midnight. We made a dash for our hotel, slept and met up again in the morning. After only having conversed over FaceTime, this moment was the first time Jay met Andrew's parents in person. There was also Bailey to contend with — a rather inquisitive and energetic Labrador puppy that was under the mistaken impression he was weightless and was under the firm belief that everyone wants to play with him. Regardless, the trip was delightful, if not short, but we returned for Christmas where we spent more time with Mum, Dad and “do you have a biscuit?” Bailey.



Between September and December, Andrew had secretly purchased an engagement ring. I say secret in as much that we went to Trafford Centre, looked at a number of designs for inspiration, got sized up and left the end product and occasion as a mystery. On the 1st January 2020, Andrew proposed to Jay following a visit to the *Sri Venkateswara* temple in Birmingham.

After a few weeks, we started to think about the wedding and narrow down a few dates. We met up with other friends who, like us, were also getting married this year. News spread of our plans to family, friends and relations.

Early in the year, we learnt that Jay's brother, Murali, was heading to Limerick, Ireland for a two week business trip. This was also a perfect opportunity for us to meet up and have a weekend holi-



day. We scrambled to book flights and apply for Jay's visa once we learnt of the dates he was planning to be in Ireland. Jay received her visa on the 20th February and on the 21st we were on the plane heading to Dublin! Such was the last-minute notice, we had started planning for the eventuality that Andrew would meet Murali on his own. Fortunately, everything worked out and were able to find Murali wandering around Penney's in Dublin. The weekend visit took us from the Guinness factory — where none of us drink alcohol — to the Cliffs of Moher and some very scenic sights across south west Ireland. We then made our way back home via Dublin, leaving Murali to his work in Limerick.

On our return, we started putting our wedding plans together and had booked Tuesday 2nd July for the event. Soon after, news started to spread about a virus and within a couple of weeks, the UK was facing lockdown. We then received the news that we would be unable to go ahead with the planned date and we started to think about other plans.

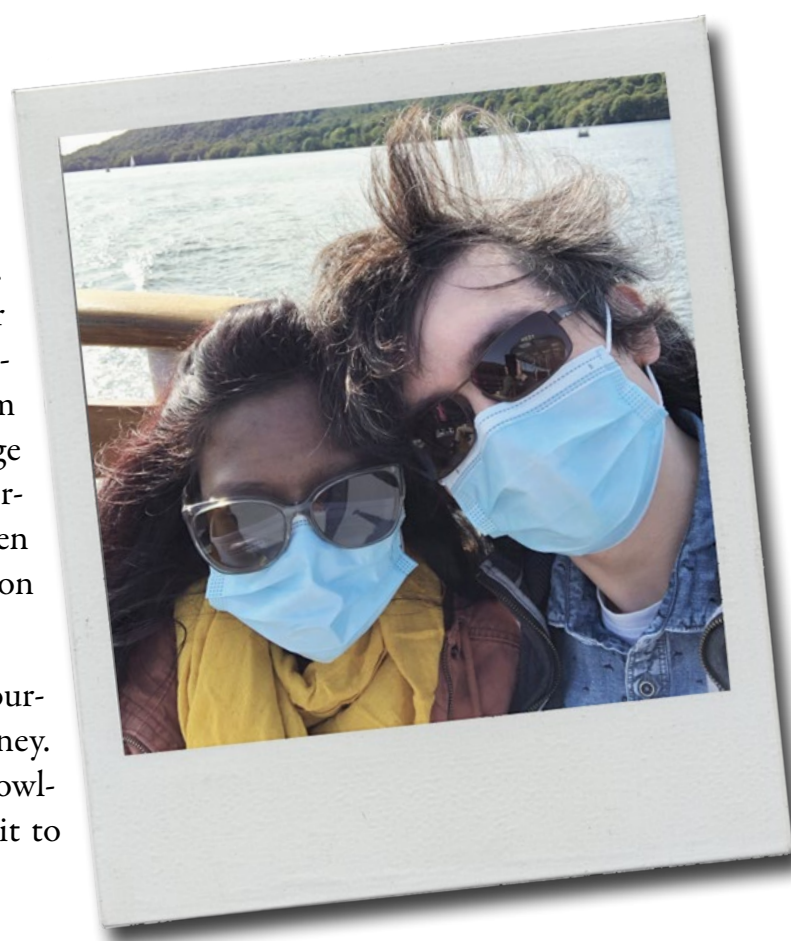
Being stuck indoors throughout the week made us want to extend our exercise regime so we started to explore the local area and, not before long, started walking out to Handforth and Wilmslow. We researched the area and found a few housing developments that caught our eye. We applied for one — taking advantage of offers — and even got as far as signing contracts. As the country started to come out of lockdown, the house developers started to reassess their project plans — ours was late on the timescale and therefore illegible to the offers we had seized. We were upset, but not that upset — we hadn't really lost anything and, if anything, we had gained something: a closeness that grew stronger throughout the lockdown period.

We wondered how the rest of the year would unfold and it wasn't long before we learnt that weddings were starting once again. We set a date for the wedding, ordered our wedding rings and raced to get

registered.

Towards the end of summer, when the situation became less severe, we took a trip to the Lake District with Eve, John, Veronica and Roberto. The change of scenery was an opportunity for photographs (thank you Roberto!), and the company was merry. The occasion also took us from RSBP Leighton Moss, where we could see a large variety of birds, to Grange-over-Sands that overlooks Morecambe Bay — the estuary that then forms the River Kent. We managed a boat ride on the Windermere lake

We thank our family and friends for their encouragement, love and support throughout our journey. We start our next chapter together with that knowledge and, as we look to the future, we can't wait to share future adventures with you.





Our Rings

Our love of all things Hobbit related led us on somewhat of an unexpected journey. What started with a “what if” turned into realising the idea. The background of the rings in the story is about the one ring to “rule them all” — a reference to a single ring to rule above all other rings — and the ring is engraved with the Elvish poem, written in Tengwar:

၎င်းတို့အားလုံးကို
 တွေ့ရန်
 တို့အားလုံးကို
 အမှောင်ထဲတွင်
 ချုပ်နှောင်ရန်

When translated, this reads:

*One Ring to rule them all.
 One Ring to find them,
 One Ring to bring them all
 And in the darkness bind them.*

On a dark winter evening, we were talking about the Lord of the Rings and joked about the possibility of having wedding rings in the style of “The One Ring”. A search revealed a place in New

Zealand, namely Jens Hansen, were manufacturers of the “official ring” — the same company used in producing the rings used in Peter Jackson’s retelling of Tolkien’s story. We laughed at the idea and life continued. But the idea stayed with us — we would bring it up occasionally after several weeks and then the idea would sink back to the back of our minds.

When we started to think about the wedding plans, the idea come up again and we explored the option of an Elvish love poem set: turning the poem from the story into a love poem.

Our rings are engraved on the exterior with the Elvish love poem:

တစ်ခုကို ဖော်ပြရန်
 တစ်ခုကို ချုပ်နှောင်ရန်
 တစ်ခုကို ဖြေဆိုရန်
 နှစ်ဦးစလုံးကို ချိတ်ဆက်ရန်

This roughly translates to :

*One ring to show our love,
 One ring to bind us,
 One ring to seal our love,
 And forever to entwine us.*

Inside the rings, we each have an engraving — again in Elvish — that marks the beginning of our journey together:

၂၀၁၉ ခုနှစ် ဇန်နဝါရီလ ၂၃ ရက်နေ့

which, translated, is:

23/02/2019 I love you always and forever







<https://wedding.hills-family.uk/>

