



INDIAN NATIONAL TRUST FOR ART CULTURE AND HERITAGE

The INTACH Gurgaon Chapter : e-Newsletter MESSAGE



Ms, Yasmin Contractor
Convenor, INTACH
Gurgaon Chapter

Dear Friends,

As the year comes to a close, it's a time to reflect on the events and activities of the past 12 months. The Gurgaon chapter of INTACH had a busy and productive year, with a variety of events and projects that brought together students, educators, and community members to celebrate and learn about India's rich cultural heritage.

In January, the chapter held a poster making competition called "Heritage in our Hands," which was attended by 110 students. The competition featured a keynote speech by Ms. Rekha Shankar on the heritage art of India, and the national winner was Divya Goel from DPS Sushant Lok, with regional winners including Rishita Verma, Urvi Verma, and Aanya Goel.

In February, the chapter hosted an online talk on mural painting in India by renowned photographer, art historian, and filmmaker Mr. Benoy K Behl. He provided interesting insights into the cave paintings of Ajanta, among others.

March saw the restoration of the French Major's tomb at Mohyal Colony, which was completed in collaboration with the Heritage Division of INTACH. A small ceremony was held at the site to mark the occasion, with Mr. Remi Vacher representing the French Embassy as our guest of honor.

April was a busy month as the chapter celebrated Heritage Week in collaboration with Sushant University. The week featured an exhibition and workshop for students and faculty, as well as various other activities.

In August, the chapter held an interschool Heritage Quiz competition at Rotary Public School, which saw 18 schools and over 90 students participated. Amity Sector 46 were the regional winners.

In September, a capacity building workshop for conducting Heritage Walks was taken by Ms. Swapna Liddle for Gurgaon Chapter members. It was greatly appreciated by all.

September also saw the three-day INTACH national convention for the conveners at the Ashoka Hotel, New Delhi.

In December, the chapter organized a trip to the Harappan site in Rakhigarhi for chapter members. The year concluded with the annual general body meeting on December 18th.

Looking ahead, the chapter is excited for the opportunities and possibilities that the new year brings. We hope to continue our efforts to promote and preserve India's cultural heritage, and to engage and educate our community about the rich history and traditions of our country.

Best Wishes
Yasmin Contractor

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CAPACITY BUILDING WORKSHOP FOR HERITAGE WALKS WITH MS. SWAPNA LIDDLE

28TH SEPTEMBER, 2022



Rakhigarhi: Trip into the past with INTACH Gurgaon : Report By - Ms. Tapasya Samal

INTACH Gurgaon chapter has been striving to reignite the excitement around heritage in the district through events for its members, both existing and prospective. After a long gap, the chapter is reviving events with physical interaction with heritage, people and places. In line with this, a tour to the archaeological site of Rakhigarhi was organised by the chapter, attended by thirty-three heritage enthusiasts, many of which were members of the chapter. The group braved the cold chill of a Sunday morning to assemble and drive together in a bus towards the quaint village of Rakhigarhi located in Haryana's Hissar District.



Fig 1: The origin of Archaeological mounds and their storytelling thereafter, with Dr. Saharan at mound M1; Ms. Tapasya samal

Some four hours later, when the weather turned good the group assembled under a tree with Dr. Appu Saharan and Mr. Balram Kumar (Director, Astitva Heritage) to get the gist of the story at Rakhigarhi so far. Both the gentlemen with their education in archaeology presented a hypnotic narrative loaded with interesting facts and some technical information, making it relevant to the wide range of audience in the group. Rakhigarhi holds remains of the pre-Indus Valley Civilisation settlement dating back to 3500 BCE, but most of these remains exist under the surface of the village topography, some under homes and others under agricultural lands. Hence the largest Harappan site in the world was unveiled to the group by the tour narrators through small windows, weather exposed bits and pieces of the civilisation connected to the physical attributes of the past through informed judgement.



Fig 2: The method and madness of an actual excavation through a test pit at mound M1; Ms. Tapasya Samal

'Shri Suraj Bhan of the Department of Ancient Indian History and Culture, University of Punjab and Acharya Bhagwandeva discovered pottery, chert blades, sling-balls, terracotta cakes and bangles, characteristic of the Matured Harappan culture, at Rakhigarhi, about 11km to the south of Jind', many moons ago.

Some of these objects are found scattered around the mounds, perhaps exposed after erosion of soil or as a by product of agricultural activities. The group was guided around the barren mounds M1-M4 through the interesting storytelling and scientific references made by the tour guides.



Fig 3-4: Beholding a glimpse of the Harappan 'large' bricks and some broken pottery at mound M4, Source: Ms. Tapsaya Samal

The settlement has since 1800 CE been built over or layered with a layer of habitation that forms the core village now. This settlement has a few surviving traces of the Harappan city layout though evolved and is also site of some interesting buildings standing testament of time. One such structure perhaps dating from a late Mughal or post Mughal period (19th century) was also included in the tour. This house had construction in Lakhori bricks, lime mortar, some later additions in inner courtyard from maybe 20th century and some traditional cooking methods resembling the practices from Harappan period.



Fig 5-6: Inside the 19th century Haveli a keep warm 'oven' that ran with heated terracotta balls, The exterior of the Haveli showing an ornate yet exposed brick multifoliate arched entrance; Ms. Tapasya Samal

The group pestered the tour guides with questions regarding the excavations, the lifestyle of the villagers and the stories from the Harappan remains, but the most interesting questions surrounded the method of identification of the specific period of remains. This quest was met with a visit to the 'parrot wall' or the exposed part of mound M4 which is infested with bird holes, where Dr. Saharan pointed out to a method of layering in the construction as seen in the cross section.



Fig 7: Part of the group at the exposed wall section showing layers; Source: Hemant Kumar Ruia.

The group had pit stopped for refreshments at the Rakhigarhi Resort and Farm, where at the end of the Heritage Walk, few interesting archaeological objects from personal collections of villagers were exhibited and interpreted. The sumptuous lunch of local bajre ki roti, sabzi and assortment of chutneys filled the cultural gaps for the group. Needless to say the trip back was more quiet introspection by the group of the highlights of the day and the upcoming event of the AGM on the following Sunday.



Fig 8: The Haryanvi lunch at resort and the archaeological objects demonstration, Source: Maj. Atul Dev

REFERENCE:

Ghosh A. & Archeological Survey of India. (1967). Indian archaeology 1963-64: a review (First edition 1967). Archaeological Survey of India.

Annual General Body Meeting : 18th December, 2022 Report By - Ms. Tapsya Samal



Fig 9-10: The members at the end of the meeting and Ms. Gupta being felicitated by Gurgaon Chapter Convenor Ms. Yasmin Contractor.

The 18th of December 2022 witnessed the first offline AGM held at the Heritage City Community Centre attended by existing and new members of the chapter. The event began with Convenor INTACH Gurgaon Ms. Yasmin Contractor welcoming all attendees and presenting ideas for the chapter's activities in the coming year. As she enlisted various activities, mostly focussing on intangible heritage, she sought the support of some of the chapter members for helping with them. The highlight of the day was a talk by Ms. Archana Garodia Gupta who provided an insightful session surrounding Begum Samru, the erstwhile ruler of Sardhana who left an imprint on the Gurgaon-Delhi region.



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"Happy New Year to all members of INTACH Gurgaon!

May this year bring us
many opportunities to preserve and celebrate
the rich cultural history of our country.
Here's to a year of successful projects and meaningful
contributions to our shared cultural heritage."

Happy New Year

2023