



INTACHER

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Quarterly newsletter of INTACH, Bengaluru Chapter

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THE QUARTER THAT WAS

A new office for INTACH, Bengaluru Chapter

We are thrilled to inform you that we now have a new office! Our new digs are conveniently located very close to Jayanagar 4th Block, just about half a kilometre from the Jayanagar Metro Station, and - most important - with several eateries nearby!!

We are in the process of building up a library. Heartfelt thanks to Anil Gokak, Shashikiran Mullur, Harish Padmanabha, Sathya Prakash Varanashi and others who have donated some wonderful books to the library. We already have a nice collection of books on architecture, art, art history, history, music, nature and culture. If any of you would like to donate books on these or any other topics of heritage interest, well, we now have a good and loving home for them where your books will also be accessible to interested members of the public.



- Team INTACH at our new office!

We plan to organise talks or film shows for small audiences in our office every two months or so for INTACH members and others.

We are all very excited with this new milestone for the chapter. Drop by anytime - our address is at the back of the newsletter.

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Stay against demolition of Janatha Bazaar

On 22nd March, the High Court granted an interim order against the demolition of the Janatha Bazaar building on KG Road. This handsome 83-year-old building is the only known building outside Lalbagh designed by the famous horticulturist, architect and planner GH Krumbiegel. It's also the place where the state's first department store, Janatha Bazaar, was opened in 1966. The government plans to raze this and replace it with a 14-storey complex. The building, also called the Asiatic building, is listed as a heritage building in the draft Revised Master Plan 2031. In the last few months, more than one bureaucrat has dismissed this building with a,

HC stays demolition of Janatha Bazaar

BENGALURU, DHNS: The Karnataka HC has stayed the demolition of the 83-year-old Asiatic Building housing the Janatha Bazaar on KG Road.

A division bench headed by Acting Chief Justice L Narayana Swamy passed the interim order in response to a PIL by The Indian National Trust

for Art and Cultural Heritage (INTACH), which had moved the court seeking directions to protect the building.

The court also issued notices to the state government, Karnataka PWD, the BBMP and the BDA in this regard.

INTACH has also sought for directions to declare the build-

ing a heritage structure under the Karnataka Town and Country Planning Act (KTCP).

The petitioner has contended that the tenancy agreement between the Karnataka Public Works Ports and Inland Water Transport Department (Karnataka PWD) and the occupants of the building expired

in 2014 and had not been renewed. But the PWD asked the occupants to vacate the building and issued eviction notice.

In the notice, the chief engineer (C&B) South, PWD, proposed a 14-floor commercial and multi-storied parking complex on the location.

» **Janatha Bazaar, Page 3B**

“That?? Huh! That is hardly heritage!” So it is with some considerable relief that we greeted the court’s interim order against any precipitative action on Janatha Bazaar.

A talk by George Michell on Islamic of architecture of Northern Karnataka

In early February, INTACH organised a talk on Islamic architecture of North Karnataka by Dr George Michell, a world-renowned scholar of south Asian architecture and in particular, the architecture of the Deccan. From the 14th-16th centuries, as the Delhi Sultanates grew larger and more unwieldy, breakaway generals established the Bahmani, Baridi, Adil Shahi and Qutb Shahi. Bidar, Gulbarga and Bijapur in north Karnataka showcase the Islamic art and architecture of this period. Supported by photographs by Antonio Martinelli, Dr Michell brought alive architectural details such as the soaring arches of the great mosque of Gulbarga, well-preserved timber work common to both Vijayanagar and Bahmani architecture, painted walls reminiscent of Turkish carpets of that era, blue and gold ceramic tile inlays like those at Samarkand, intricate mother-of-pearl inlay in basalt imitating Bidriware, and the calligraphy and reliefs that are seen in the tombs, mosques, madrassas, palaces and forts of the old fortified cities of this region. This highly evolved art and architecture rivalled the best in the world, said Michell; these were not peripheral kingdoms but wealthy and cosmopolitan enough to engage with artists, artisans and scholars from across the world. For an untutored listener like me, it was a revelation that we have at our doorstep architecture comparable to those that I had travelled the world to see. Thank you, INTACH, for making my travels more informed through programmes like this. We look forward to more.

- by Usha Srinath



A fund-raiser with George Michell

The morning of the talk on Islamic architecture, a small group of people had the privilege of visiting the Veerabhadra temple in Lepakshi with George Michell. George, who is working on a book on Lepakshi, had very kindly agreed to take a small group to the temple and also make it a fund-raiser. The team at INTACH decided to raise funds for the sprucing up, developing and highlighting of the area around the two sluice gates at the Kempambudhi kere in Gavipuram, more about which later. Seeing the historic Veerabhadra temple with one of the authorities on south Indian architecture was both an eye-opener and a pleasure. George has a way of bringing history and architecture alive, sharing his knowledge generously and with gentle humour. Thank you, George, and thank you, those who came on the trip. It was a great day!

Open Day at Fort High School

We had an Open Day at Fort High School on 23rd February. There were hand-on interactive learning opportunities with masons, conversations on the structural and technical aspects of the conservation there, and a talk on careers and scoped in architectural conservation. About 230 people attended the programme, including architects, students, media, and other interested people.

Paani ki Kahani - Our Water Heritage



On 10th February, we organised an essay-and-painting competition for school children, on the theme Paani ki kahani - Our Water Heritage. The event began with an informative and entertaining talk on water and rainwater harvesting by the inimitable S Vishwanath aka Zenrainmain. Vishwanath had the kids spellbound with his facts and visuals of wells through history, stepwells and other wells around India, rivers and conserving water. Following the lively talk, students gave vent to their creativity, producing some very creative artwork and evocative essays.

This being an all-India competition, entries have been sent to New Delhi. Ten winners will be identified from the country. These lucky ten will get an opportunity to visit Ahmedabad and its surrounding regions. Results will be declared sometime in April.

Documenting an old beauty

Architectural documentation is an important part of INTACH's building up a knowledge base of the city's heritage. It builds data both at the city level and at the scale of the building. It is also important for academic research and pedagogy.

On a busy lane in Cubbonpet stands a lovingly

maintained 100-year old house. We began documenting this 2-storey beauty in late February. We carefully drew and measured the striking mosaic flooring in each room, recording all its patterns - flowers, diamonds, stars, triangles and borders. We measured the carved wooden doors and windows. We documented the staircase at the entrance with its hand-made balusters. A beautiful border of wooden patti concealing the exposed electrical wiring added a further charm to the stair room. We loved its aesthetic value and recorded its dimensions too.



Documentation is a complete experience of the architecture, aesthetic and spirit of a building. The process of recording and measuring takes us up-close, literally and physically, to the building. We move closer to the walls, we find the corners and edges, we look for the beginning and end, we look for the boundary and we look for the centre!

Our team comprised myself and Mamtha, both architects, and Suraj, Manali, Dhruval and Nithya, interns from KSS Architecture college. As we worked, we discussed heritage homes of Kerala, Gujarat and Punjab, how to campaign for their preservation, how to raise awareness among owners and how to build a community which cares for heritage. Where does heritage awareness begin - in the heart, in the mind, or in economics?

- by Pallavi Murthy, architect, INTACH volunteer

Retracing a battle

On Sunday, 24th March, a group of keen Bengalureans, as well as the British Deputy High Commissioner Dominic McAllister and his wife Nellie, assembled at Mysore Bank Circle for an unusual walk. The walk retraced the Battle for Bengaluru which took place in March 1791, between the armies of the East India Company and the kingdom of Mysore. Our walk leader Meera Iyer showed old maps of the two forts that Bengaluru once had. Comparing these with modern satellite images of the area was like seeing a ghost come alive, as the walls of the old fort had made way for streets with buildings on either side. Walking through the narrow, winding lanes we stopped at places where different stages of the battle had taken place. The hustle and bustle of the market made us wonder whether people knew the significance of the place. The walk ended at the Delhi gate of the Bengaluru fort. The silence within the stone walls which had witnessed that fateful battle, so seminal in changing the history of a sub-continent, seemed all the more poignant.

- by Geeta Verghese, member, INTACH

THE QUARTER THAT WILL BE

In addition to our usual monthly Parichays, here's a sneak preview of what you can look forward to from INTACH Bangalore over the next few months.

A talk by Dr Vasant Shinde



- Houses in Dholavira

April 18th is World Heritage Day and what better way to celebrate the event than with a talk on one of the world's largest and most intriguing ancient civilisations, the Harappan Civilisation, also known

as the Indus Valley Civilisation. We are happy to announce that eminent archaeologist Dr Vasant Shinde, Vice-Chancellor of Deccan College, who leads the excavations at Rakhigarhi, has graciously agreed to give an INTACH talk that will draw on archaeological evidence from Harappan and later-period sites. The talk will be sometime in the month of April. We will let you know as soon as it is finalised!

Workshop on Art History



Coming up in late April, this short course will give you an overview of Indian art history, on the rich and varied traditions of lithic sculpture in India, with a special focus on temples in and around Bengaluru. Look forward to visual-intensive classroom lectures supported by a field visit (or two). The course lead will be Dr Sarada Natarajan. Dr Natarajan has taught art history at several universities and colleges including the University of Hyderabad, the Shiv Nadar University and the Foundation for Indian Contemporary Art among others. She researched Indian art historiography for her PhD, which she obtained from MS University, Baroda. Her recent post-doctoral work on agency and facture of medieval Indian sculpture was supported by The Forum Transregionale Studien, Berlin.

INTACH in schools

Come June, we will be starting on our programme teaching local history in government and low-fee private schools. Interested in teaching? Get in touch!

VOX PRINCEPS

Where eminent Bengalureans or others speak about their work, motivations, life, heritage, conservation, and the city



Eswar Ganjam is the Chairperson of Ganjam, the store for handcrafted diamond jewellery. The establishment has been in existence since 1889, so it is with some justification that they describe themselves as a 'true blue, heritage brand'. Mr Ganjam wears his 129-year-old family heritage lightly. Dressed unostentatiously, the soft-spoken Mr Ganjam is simplicity personified. The INTACH team met with him at the Ganjam flagship store recently. Excerpts from the chat:

About the beginnings of the business

We lived in Chickpete, near Arcot Srinivasachar Street. Our house was built in 1889. My grandfather, Ganjam Nagappa, built the house. He came here from Ganjam, in Srirangapatna. It was a nice, big, old house, with pillars. We lived there till about 1959.

At first, the shop was in the house itself. This was the case till about 1940 or 1942. I was hardly 4 or 5 years old then but still I remember some things from that time - the old chairs, for example, that were in

the house, and the tables. We still have them!

My father Subbaramaiah joined the business in 1918. My father says that one day, when he was about 17 or 18 years old, my grandfather locked the safe, put the keys on my father's janivara (sacred thread) and said, "Now you look after the business!"

On his joining business

I completed my matriculation from Bangalore High School in 1953 and then joined the business. I was hardly 14 at the time! In the business community, you have to join the business early. You see, you have to listen to people, you have to listen to the elders at home. That's learning. It's like a school. After a certain age, you don't listen and you don't want to. Your outlook changes. So my father said, "You sit here, next to me. This, here, is a school. You have to learn to talk to people, to handle cash, to handle people." We used to do everything - clean the table, clean the office, keep the milk ready and so on.

And we used to go on a bicycle to the customers' houses to collect money. You have to wear a good coat and dress properly to go to a customer's house. Put on your coat and then cycle up to Malleswaram 18th Cross to collect money! You have to go ten times to collect money. Some houses, we've gone 50 times to collect money! You can't leave it, whether it is Rs 50 or Rs 50,000! Nice things to remember!

Some highlights in the family business

We used to supply diamonds to the Maharaja. In 1942, we were appointed to the Mysore Maharaja by a royal decree, that was a special thing.

About his early days in Chickpete

We were the only family in that street in the diamond jewellery business. The other families were Shettys and Marwaris. Behind our house were weavers who made silk ribbons. It was a very nice community. People still call us for marriages and other functions though we left the place so long ago. Recently, my friend called up and said, "I can never forget your house. I remember studying by the light in your house. And I can never forget the bisibele bhath that you mother used to serve me." He is my age, but he still remembers us with great affection.

We still continue some of the traditions that we had then. For Ramanavami, we still make and distribute panaka for half a day, starting from 9 am till 2 in the afternoon.

Growing up in Chickpete

We used to play bugri, goli and such games in the school fields. For cricket and football, we used to go to the Central College grounds. In the dry season the Dharmambudi kere used to dry up; then we would play on the lakebed for two months. When it filled up again, we used to be a little unhappy because we didn't have a place to play! And of course, we used to play on the road.

The kere was a lovely sight. The kodi (overflow weir) was on the railway station road and when it overflowed, it was an unbelievable sight. Water used to flow in the streets of Cottonpet! Sometimes, water used to flow 3-4 feet high, into the shops on the main road.

Very few houses in that area had large compounds. There were hardly any trees. The temple had a peepal tree, that's it! But every single house had a well. And the wells had good water 365 days of the year. In the monsoons, some had so much water you could just dip your hand in and take it, they had that much water in the city.

In all of Bengaluru, in the city part, there were only 4 or 5 cars! We had one and Mandi Harianna (a respected merchant in Mamulpete) had 3 or 4. Our car also functioned as an ambulance! If at midnight or 1 am, a pregnant lady perhaps or someone else needed to go to the hospital, they used to call on us and we used to take them to Victoria Hospital in our car. Otherwise, the only other option would have been for them to take a jhatka gadi (horse-drawn carriage).

The spirit of giving

My father was highly respected in that area, highly respected. He was very helpful, very charitable, very popular. If someone in the area had a problem, he would take it on himself to go to the concerned officials, talk to them. If the roads were not okay, not cleaned for example, he would get it done. When there were inoculation drives against cholera for the community, all that used to happen in our house. For everything, my father was the key person to take care of the entire locality.

My elder brother Bhimaji joined the business in 1942 or so. He passed away in 1968. The Anathasevashrama (an orphanage) in Basavanagudi was started by him. Sevashrama hospital in Jayanagar was also started by him. He was the President of the hospital all his life. He did a lot of charitable and social work.

Flights of Fantasy

Everyone in the family has always been interested in classical music, especially Carnatic music. We began Flights of Fantasy, an annual music programme, in 1974 or so to encourage and promote classical music. We have been organising it annually ever since then. We've invited all the artistes in India, I don't think we have left anybody out, both south Indian and north Indian.

FAMILY ALBUM

Where INTACH members introduce themselves



PeeVee describes himself as a people photographer, a tree-hugger, runner, lake lover, and cyclist! He is also a creative entrepreneur, having co-founded Thalam, a creative space, and Creative Ville, a communications agency. His photographs have been published in various Indian and international media. He has also exhibited at art galleries across India.

In September 2012, Timeout Bengaluru (a global lifestyle magazine) named PeeVee “One of the 13 local heroes for culture in Bangalore”. Among his recent projects are documentation of the Inscription Stones of Bengaluru (as part of a Sahapedia Frames Grant in 2018), documenting the temple town of Tiruvannamalai in Tamil Nadu (as part of ETP’s Project 365) and a short film on Bengaluru’s lakes called The Bangalore Lake Diaries.

PeeVee has been a friend of INTACH since 2008, when he coordinated a photography exhibition held in the fort, Lalbagh and Cubbon Park simultaneously. He has also organised photography workshops and worked on photography for several INTACH exhibitions including Towns of our City (April 2017), Bengaluru Then & Now (Dec 2015) and Namma Halasuru (Nov 2014).

PeeVee provides creative and photography services to several startups and MNCs including Intel Semiconductor, Yahoo and Bosch among others. He also does fashion photography, model shoots and wedding photography.

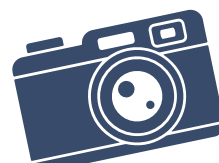
YOUR TAKE ON YOUR CITY

INTACH member Ramesh Dasary sent us this lovely picture of Devanahalli Fort. Most Bangaloreans know of Devanahalli only for tis airport. But in fact, there is an entire historic town there with a small fort that is well worth seeing.



Says Ramesh, “A tale of Devanahalli Fort that would have remained just another of the many little forts that dotted the outskirts of Bangalore in the days of yore if it hadn’t been for Hyder Ali distinguishing himself on the battlefield here.” It was while Hyder was distinguishing himself here that his famous son Tipu Sultan was born.

Join us on one of our Parichays to Devanahalli to know more about the history, architecture and stories of Devanahalli!



Have an eye for photography? Send us your best shots of the city with a note about why you like that particular capture and we’ll feature it in these pages.

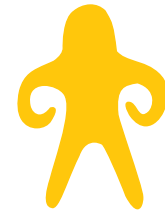
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INTACH Bengaluru Chapter
245, 9th A Main
3rd Block, Jayanagar
Bengaluru - 560 011
Phone: (080) 4206 4839
www.intachblr.org
intach@intachblr.org