



INTACHER

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Quarterly newsletter of INTACH, Bengaluru Chapter

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THE QUARTER THAT WAS

A walk through Malleswaram

The week of 19th November is celebrated as World Heritage Week and to mark the occasion, INTACH Bengaluru chapter organised a Malleswaram Parichay on November 24th. The Parichay started at Panchavati, the former residence of the late Sir CV Raman, who was born in the month of November. Meera Iyer, Convenor, provided an overview of the development of Malleswaram as a planned suburb immediately after an outbreak of plague in the older parts of Bengaluru in the late 19th century. We then walked down to Canara Union-an important landmark in the sporting and cultural history of Malleswaram. Malleswaram is also known for its educational heritage, and our next stop was at the Government Girls High School, housed in the former residence of Mysore University's first Vice Chancellor, HV Nanjundayya. We then moved on to explore the religious and spiritual side of Malleswaram, stopping first at the Kadu Malleswara temple, which predates modern Malleswaram by a few centuries. We also visited the Sri Dakshinamukha Nandi Tirtha temple which has an interesting history. The temple disappeared from records around the 1920s and was only rediscovered in the 1990s while excavations were in progress for a real estate development. The walk ended at the Dhobi Ghats where the rows upon rows of fluttering garments provided a surprising oasis of calm amidst the bustling locality that is Malleswaram.



- by Sanjay Varma, member of INTACH

Begur and its inscriptions

Saturday, 3rd November 2018, turned out to be an enchanting morning, in which INTACH Bengaluru helped me and another 20 Bengalureans find the earliest known inscription in which the name Bengaluru is inscribed, from about 1100 years ago. The Parichay began at the Panchalinga Nageshvara temple complex. Epigraphist HS Gopala Rao ran his finger along the lettering engraved on the stone in haLe-gannada (the old Kannada language)

and showed us where 'Benguluru' is written-very clear to the Kannada-literates amongst us, once he showed it to us! There is little doubt that this inscription in the Nagareshvara temple is from circa 890CE. The "Benguluru" inscription's modern-day discovery was by R. Narasimhachar, who wrote in the Mysore Archaeological Survey's report of 1915, "...the inscription testifies to the antiquity of Bengaluru, the modern Bangalore, which must have existed under this name in about A.D. 900. We may now discard the story of Vira Ballala (1173-1220) having gone to the hut of an old woman and eaten bengaluru (boiled beans).."



Another herostone from 890CE, describing the death of the local chieftain Nagattara, had been moved much earlier to the protective environs of the Bengaluru museum. INTACH, however, believes in placing monuments in context. To the extent that their resources permitted, they have managed to extricate three of the historical stones from their sad environs and mounted them in a safe spot along the precinct wall, complete with the story of each in Kannada and English. The all-important "Benguluru" inscription has a protective pergola to boot, all of this with the support of Advait Hyundai. So, since May 2018, INTACH can boast now of at least some of these stones respectfully mounted where citizens can view them and can learn from them. **Bravo INTACH!**

- by *Prajval Shastri, Astrophysicist, Member of INTACH*

A talk on Muziris

On a pleasant December evening, we had the pleasure of listening to the story of the excavation of Pattanam - an ancient port city in Kerala, which is believed to be the famous Muziris described in Greek and Roman records. Dr. PJ Cherian, former director of the Kerala Council for Historical Research, enthralled the audience with the details of the project and also provided a great perspective on archaeology as a change agent for the society.



Dr. Cherian explained how the recent excavations at Pattanam have helped in discerning that the ancient port city was a local city and not a city established by Romans or Greeks as it was believed till now. A short movie on the project provided visual glimpses of the work carried out. Dr. Cherian showed us pictures of some of the artefacts discovered in Pattanam including the famous wooden canoe. He also explained how a port city should not be looked at in isolation because it is connected to many other ports. We learnt that more than 4 million pottery sherds were unearthed in the excavation. We also learnt about the religions, languages, scripts existing more than 2000 years ago and also about the epics and stories of Sangam literature such as Silappatikaram and their influence on the world in Pattanam.

It was a pleasant surprise for us to see the venue filled to the brim with people for this talk. It vindicated our belief that subjects such as archaeology do have an audience in our city. Our sincere gratitude to Dr. Cherian's for enthraling our audience in his inimitable style. And thanks also to our venue partners, The Bohemian House, who provided us the space which was decorated beautifully with festive lights.

- by *Basavaraj Biradar, Playwright, Freelance Writer, Member of INTACH*

INTACH in schools

“They put us in jail at Tipu Fort and asked us how we felt being prisoners!” This is perhaps the most vivid memory that students of Class 8, Government Urdu Model Primary School (GUMPS), Farooqiya Nagar, carry after they were taught history with a slight twist. Exploring the heritage of Bengaluru, students of this school learned all about Tipu Sultan through a unique exposure visit planned for them by INTACH.

Partner schools of Mantra4Change hosted INTACH’s module on teaching local history in government schools for the first time through which students explored Bengaluru’s rich history through a 6-week course, which included a heritage walk.

“They came with different materials to our class, including old photographs, and videos and maps so detailed that we felt like we were a part of that time,” said students of GUMPS, Farooqiya Nagar. The field visit was the most exciting component of the program. Students were taken to Tipu Fort where INTACH volunteers Pankaj Modi, Pallavi Murthy and Meera Iyer, took the students into the nooks and corners of the vast expanse. Students were shown how prisoners were fed, how Tipu strategized his conquests, and how every part of the architecture held relevance to the way of Tipu’s life.

“I had visited Tipu fort earlier, but through this visit, I got to know a lot more through their explanations. I found that the kids were eager to know more and more. I found them literally learning things with their mind and heart that day,” said Ms Ayesha, a teacher from GUMP School who went along with the students.

“Now, if you go to the students and ask them about



Bangalore, they have a much better understanding of the city that they live in. We realized this towards the end of their classes itself. Initially, we were doubtful of being able to finish the lesson plans we made, but the kids were so excited and keen to learn things, it made the entire module a lot of fun to share with them,” said Pallavi Murthy. After the successful completion of the pilot at Farooqiya Nagar, INTACH conducted another session at RM Education Society, Goripalya, this time with students of class 7. Mantra4Change and INTACH are eagerly looking to scale this program and ensure many more students get the opportunity to understand their own local history, which in some ways will help students develop a greater interest in the subject itself.

- by Muhammad Rafi, Associate Program Manager, Mantra4Change. Used with permission from <https://mantra4changeblog.wordpress.com/2018/11/21/opening-doors-to-explore-heritage/>



Update on Fort High School

The restoration of this 1907 school building is proceeding briskly. Those of you who have walked or driven past it may have noticed the scaffolding on



some of its walls. Right now, deteriorated plasterwork is being reworked using lime mortar which is prepared on site. The rafters of the first floor roof are being inspected and replaced or repainted as necessary. Cornice and arch moulding are also being repaired and reconstructed.



heritage value. Based on several rounds of discussion with the trustees, it was decided to functionally adapt the lower floor into a dining hall and redesign the upper hall as the wedding hall. The entrance lobby will no ascend into the wedding hall through a feature staircase and spread onto a courtyard through a transitional verandah. Major carpentry works for the repairs of the doors and windows are also being carried out using available sections of wood acquired from site. Utility areas are being expanded by dismantling some of the partition walls, so that kitchen staff will have greater space and a better working environment. An exciting discovery during plaster removal was of some beautiful brick masonry arches in the ground floor. We modified our original lobby design to retain and highlight these lovely arches.

- by Shikha Desai, Architect, INTACH

Work begins on Sajjan Rao Choultry

Most of you must have seen the elegant Sajjan Rao Choultry which stands on Sajjan Rao Circle. Built in the year 1934 by Sajjan Rao, it has always served as a wedding hall. Sometime in the 1970s, the double-storey structure was fitted with an RCC slab so that the single hall could be divided into two floors, the lower functioning as a wedding hall and the upper as a dining hall. Earlier in 2018, the trustees approached INTACH to restore the building and adapt the building keeping in mind modern needs. It has been exciting to redo the building for better use of space, while keeping in mind its

THE QUARTER THAT WILL BE

In addition to our usual monthly Parichays, here are some of the things you can look forward to from INTACH Bangalore.

The Islamic heritage of the Deccan



Come February, INTACH hosts a joint talk by two eminent scholars, George Michell and Helen Philon. They will speak on the Islamic heritage of northern Karnataka. Dr. Michell trained as an architect in Australia and then obtained a PhD in Indian Archaeology from the School of Oriental and African Studies, at the University of London. Since then, he has undertaken several research and documentation projects in south India. He is best known for his seminal research in Hampi, where he has worked for several decades along with Dr. John Fritz. Generations of scholars have trained under them. Dr. Michell has authored more than 50 books on the art and architecture on south India. Dr. Helen Philon is an archaeologist and historian who has obtained her PhD on Islamic art and architecture from the



School of Oriental and African Studies. Don't miss this talk which will be held at the Max Mueller Bhavan / Goethe Institut on Saturday, February 9th. Copies of Helen and George's recent book *Islamic Architecture of Deccan* will be available at the talk. We will send you more details about the talk shortly.



Temple do's and don't's

Have you ever visited an old temple and winced at some inappropriate additions made? This is what prompted INTACH member Cavery Bopaiah to press for a manual or handbook, a how-to on temple restoration. We hope to begin work on this important project in the coming quarter.

VOX PRINCEPS

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

Conservation and restoration require several different kinds of technical skills. Among the key people involved are conservation architects, structural engineers and contractors who have experience in heritage projects. F B Balehosur has been a contractor specialising in heritage restoration for over 20 years. Over this long career, he has worked on restoration projects around the country for various agencies including the Archaeological Survey of India and INTACH. He grew up in Dharwad and studied in Hubballi. His career now takes him around the country. He is now working with INTACH's architects on the restoration of Fort High School in Bengaluru. Excerpts from an interview with him.

What made you interested in the field of restoration?

At one stage in my career as a civil engineer, I wanted to do some research. So I quit Konkan Railway and joined ACC's Architectural Conservation Cell (which no longer exists.) As part of this job, I had to visit Mysore every week since ACC was then working on the conservation of the Jayalakshmi Vilas Mansion there. That was my first exposure to heritage buildings and I was fascinated by it. I was attracted to the idea of making a sincere effort to restore historical buildings and monuments which are associated with heritage and culture. I also had this dream of giving employment to as many people as I could. So I quit my job and became a contractor working on heritage buildings. In fact, my first restoration work was at the Bengaluru Fort where I worked on a portion of the wall that had collapsed. After that, I was called to Bhuj to work on a market and a masjid which had collapsed after the earthquake. Those were my first, small jobs.

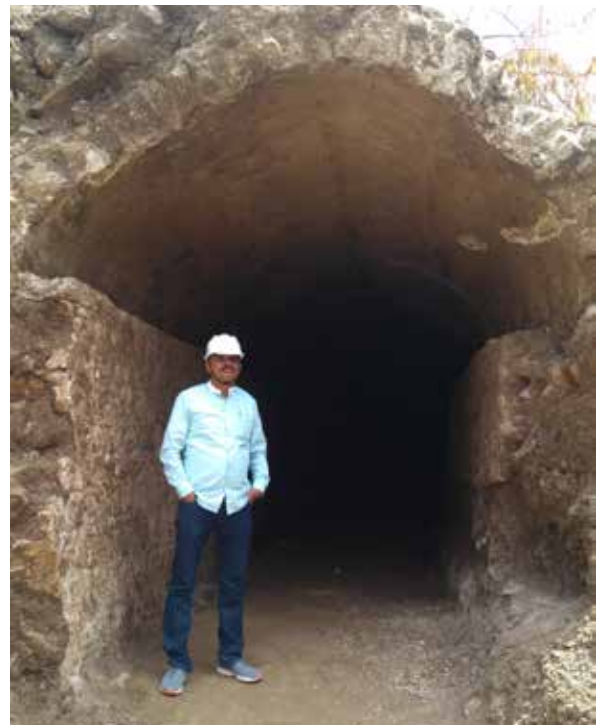
What are some of the significant projects that you have worked on since then?

I have worked on the restoration of the 17th century Rajmahal and Ranimahal at Chanderi (M.P.). In Goa, I worked on restoration of the 16th century Juvem Fort which involved reconstruction of arches, walls

etc. and also laying of a pavement to the monument. I have also worked on the Old Secretariat Building at Faridkot in Punjab, and the Bassian Kothi, near Raikot, and many others.

Which of these is your favourite?

My favourite project is the restoration the 16th century St. Anne's Church in Goa which I worked on in 2009-2012 with the INTACH Head Office. The church was built of laterite stone masonry with arched roof. The building had a lot of structural cracks and portions of the walls had collapsed. Even the staircase had collapsed and there were cracks in the dome. It was a very challenging project.



What do you find challenging in restoration work?

My mentor, Ramesh Bhole (now an assistant professor at School of Planning and Architecture, Bhopal) told me that there were two basic principles of restoration: 'Like for like' (using materials that are as similar as possible to the original) and, 'Repair not recreate.' Finding like for like materials can sometimes be a challenge. For example, getting chadurabille (a thin, square clay tile, traditionally used in south India) or lakhori bricks is sometimes a challenge as kilns to make these products are now non-existent. Getting craftsmen for specialized jobs is also difficult as

many traditional crafts are now not being inherited. Another challenge is to get skilled masons for lime related work and to train them. Most masons prefer working on cement mortar since that is easier to work with and has a greater room for error. Even a 30 percent compromise will not really affect the safety of the structure. Lime mortar on the other hand requires more careful work, more patience and there is no room for error. Everything has to be 100 percent in restoration! We all have the responsibility of not diluting conservation principles in the name of early completion of projects.

What about the restoration of Fort High School? Any challenges there?

Here too, we were not able to get chadurabille so we had to take regular bricks and cut them into chadurabille....sometimes we have to do jugaad! It was also a bit challenging to work on a roof at 50 feet with no wooden boardings or GI sheets. And of course, carrying out all the work when the school is still functioning is a difficult task, as we have to try not to disturb the ongoing classes.

What are the issues affecting this field, from your point of view?

There are more unprotected monuments than protected monuments (under Archaeological Survey of India or state governments). These unprotected monuments are to be restored by NGOs like INTACH. There is a modern trend of converting old palaces to heritage hotels in some parts of India. Unfortunately, they are using modern incompatible materials indiscriminately. This to be avoided and modern interventions to be minimized. Another problem is that component rates are prepared by PWD and CPWD personnel who don't have knowledge about conservation items. This leads to difficulties for us. There is a need to form a national committee to prepare specifications, rate analysis etc.

FAMILY ALBUM

Where INTACH members introduce themselves

Sathya Prakash Varanashi



Sathya Prakash Varanashi, a former Convenor of the Bangalore Chapter of INTACH, belongs to the first generation of academically trained conservation architects of India, consultants before him being practicing architects who happened to enter this field due to personal passion. Academically speaking, Sathya studied architecture, did a Masters in Urban Design and then pursued heritage conservation in the U.K. with an INTACH scholarship. The last degree became his first passion. He was the site architect for the Benares Ghats project, one of the earliest INTACH projects. It was then that he worked under conservation architect Prof A.G.K. Menon, whom he considers his mentor. He became a life member of INTACH in 1986.

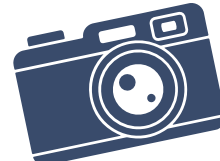
His insights on Indian urban and built heritage have evolved thanks to the varied opportunities he got during the last 35 years - nationwide travel, discussing with people, seminars, documentation, project assessments, formulating proposals, writing, committee memberships, advisory roles, class room teaching, guiding students' projects, event organising and being the former convenor of INTACH Bangalore chapter.

YOUR TAKE ON YOUR CITY

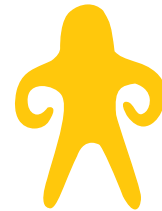
Member and Co-Convenor Aravind C shot these pictures near the Kempambudi kere. In one picture, you can see one of the two sluice gates of the kere-these are the old sluice gates dating from when the kere was first made, and which would once have regulated water into the irrigation channels. Today of course, the sluice mechanisms are no longer functional and the irrigation channels carry no water. Nevertheless, these are among the few sluice gates still remaining in Bengaluru; sluice gates in other keres have mostly been destroyed. The other picture shows the steps leading down to the kere and rooms near them.



Aravind says, "This is one of the very few remainders of Kempegowda's Bengaluru. The entire area where the sluice gates are located looks beautiful in the golden light of the morning sun."



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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[BENGALURU CHAPTER]

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