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The Mahatma,

exhibition at

Alembic City on 2nd

October 2019

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From the Editor's Desk

The small town of Bhadran located just 50 kms from Baroda in Anand District holds some interesting facts and old structures reminiscent of the old Gaekwad era. Under the reign of the Gaekwads, it held an important place in the governance of the kingdom.

Executive Committee Members of Heritage Trust made a visit in the form a preliminary exploration for organizing a heritage walk during the coming Heritage Week in November. We were warmly received by the members of the Bhadran People's Cooperative Bank who facilitated our visit. The bank is an old institution by itself and boasts of having zero NPAs. Today the town has a large Gujarati diaspora and while many of the beautiful old buildings remain, modern construction has also made its way into the town. Mr Sameer Gaekwad has penned his interesting experience on Facebook which we are sharing with our readers especially those who do not use this site. In addition, we also bring you an informative article in Hindi (yes, we are going multilingual) on Bhadran written by Kumar Gaurav Mondloi who holds a Master's degree in Heritage Management from Ahmedabad.

Ms. Swapna Kothari explores the part of the old city around the iconic Sursagar Lake that is surrounded by some of the most historic structures of our city. Read about the importance and contribution that these institutions make to the social, cultural and educational life of Barodians.

Intangible heritage is an important part of the socio-cultural aspect of a community. Customs and traditions related to cuisine are a special way to connect with people across cultures. In the coming months, Heritage Trust plans a series of Culinary festivals for our members to enjoy the varied gastronomic delights of various communities. The first such event was the Parsi Cuisine Festival on September 1st. Mr. Rakesh Manocha shares his thoughts with our readers on the experience and mood during the event held during a heavy downpour of rain.

We have planned a number of programs for the Heritage Week in November. So do remember to mark your calendars and join us for these interesting events. We would also welcome our readers sharing their experiences of these events.

Festivities are in the air. We just celebrated Ganesh Chaturthi and are looking forward to Navratri, followed by Dussehra and Diwali. On behalf of all of us at Heritage Trust, we wish our readers a Happy Deepawali and Prosperous New Year.

Avi Sabavala

Parsi Cuisine ' event comments

They came. Oh, yes, they came. Through the pouring rain. They came in slippers, t-shirts and shorts. But they came. And they weren't disappointed. I refer to the participants of the Parsi Food Festival where the WhatsApp group was full of puns about Crocs(shoes) taking on the Crocs (from the Vishwamitri).

The Parsi Food Festival held on September 1st 2019 had to be postponed from earlier dates due to the incessant rains and floods which played havoc with the venue, the 97-year-old Contractor's Parsi Agyari at Sayajigunj. So much so, that there was reluctance to hosting the event considering stains on the walls due to flood waters. It poured that day too, hours before, but the show went on that day.

The program started with President Vikram Singhal talking about Heritage Trust followed by Avi Sabavala, Nikitin Contractor & Faisal Dabhoiwala speaking about the Parsi History, the venue and the food. What followed was a gastronomic delight. For the non-vegetarians, there was ...chicken, ...eggs and ...fish - the last one came wrapped in the leaves in which it was cooked. I ate too much.

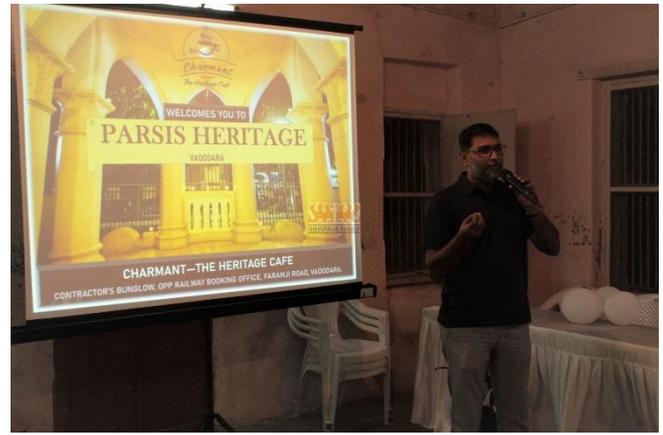
I can't tell you much about the vegetarian food but what I do know is that I only heard murmurs of appreciation during the entire course.

The success of the event can be gauged with just the fact that the entire event was sold out within hours of its announcement. The postponement did result in dropouts and the rains also played spoilsport, but the hall still managed to get packed with no empty seats.

Thanks, Avi, Nikitin, Faisal and the Kudianwalla family for the program.

Rakesh Manocha

Top to bottom: A glimpse into the culinary delights event and Parsi Heritage, looking into the Cooverbai Hall, Nikitin Contractor giving a background on the cuisine, peeking into the kitchen before the food got served, and Avi Sabavala giving an insight into the Parsi heritage across India. Source: All photos of Bhadrans by Sameer Gaikwad





On this page: Patra ni macchi, a traditional *thaal* with lip smacking delicacies, keema papeta nu pattice in the making, Alka Smart, secretary of the Trust offering her gratitude to all present and for the amazing serve, and finally the Bheeda Par Eedu

Source: All photos by Sameer Gaikwad except for the amazing *thaal* and egg dish photos.

Do you want to get invited to our next culinary exploration? We intend to cover Marathi, Sindhi & Bohri cuisine soon. Come be a part of the Trust and become a member to support this local initiative of a heritage with a twist! Membership details on the last page!



The Bhadran Walk

In the mid of August, as part of the Heritage Trust initiative, a few members did a recce of a small but a progressive village called Bhadran in Anand district, just 30km away from Baroda. This was facilitated by Jeetendrasingh G Gaekwad and Shariq Nawab.

Called as Paris of the Baroda state, we walked through the village and witnessed how the glorious past has shaped its today. Amongst the many initiatives that were taken by the ruler - Sayajirao Gaekwad, the emphasis on education of children back in the late 1800's and early 1900's struck us the most. It boasts of public libraries - and exclusive ones for children & women. Because of the head start in education, this small village produced great thinking minds and entrepreneurs (Ramanbhai Patel and the family of Cadila's come first to the mind).

That they're still functional cooperative bank is 120yrs old also speaks volumes. Its managing committee were our proud hosts that day. It boasts of many public utility facilities such as the Town Hall, Twin Water Tank-towers, built a century ago are still in use after maintenance and upkeep. The power house that used to supply electric power to the village has since become dilapidated.

Bhadran also has the distinction to be the first village/town in India to have fully wall to wall paved roads with underground sewers. This village was also very active during the freedom movement. Walls proclaiming Quit India are framed and preserved. And to think that they initiated a flourishing Club culture encouraging various sports and games as social activity is commendable indeed.

Since the region is dominated by the Patel's who are into farming - they made (still make) money on cash crops such as tobacco.

Top to bottom: Kanya Vidyalay, Town Hall, Library, Club House. Source: All photos of Bhadran by Sameer Gaikwad

Here's a quirk from the past. With education in the 1900's came the need to utilize the skill or pursue higher studies. The king came up with a unique suggestion that with every child sent abroad who will earn foreign exchange, the state will employ the younger sibling with a job providing a fixed income (those years ₹7 to ₹15 per month). And that's how the migration of Patel's abroad started and today they are the face of NRI's.

Today most old homes and mansions are either left unused or given on rent - with their owners having shifted to larger cities or abroad. But the properties in the village are still looked after by its non-resident families who fund for its maintenance & upkeep and the existing residents are proud of it.

Being only about 30 mins drive from Baroda, Bhadran is easily accessible. One can park near the Town hall and stroll through the village and experience the history first-hand. Those who are fit enough can also plan a fun cycle-ride. The trip should be memorable is guaranteed - and if you cannot, enjoy the pics.

And don't forget to pick up the famous Magg (millet) snacks from Bhajji's.

- Sameer Gaikwad



Top: Clock Tower, Top (r)- One of the water towers, a now defunct Bhadran Railway Station, and an ornate residence



गुजरात राज्य भारत देश में सांस्कार, सांस्कृतत, धरोहर तथा अपने गौरवशाली इततहास आदद हेतु जाना जाता है। इसी सन्दर्भ में गुजरात की सांस्कार नगरी के नाम से प्रतसद्द वड़ोदरा का उल्लेख ना हो तो गुजरात की पहचान अधूरी है। गुजरात सल्तनत के बाद वड़ोदरा के तवकास तथा शासन की बागडोर गायकवाड़ शासकों के पास आई। गायकवाड़ शासकों में सयाजीराव तृतीय का समय स्वर्णभम समय कहा जाता है, और उनके राज में सुशासन की सैकड़ों योजनायें तथा नीततयाँ बना कर लागू की गई थी। इन नीततयों का पररणाम हमें भूतपूर्व गायकवाड़ राज्य के लोगों तथा उनके अधीन रहे शहर, कस्बों तथा गावों में देखने तमलता है। ऐसा ही एक अनूठा कस्बा है आणन्द तजले में तस्थत 'भादरण' तजसकी स्थापना का उल्लेख दांतकथा के अनुसार इस्वी सन 740 में हुआ था। उस समय में यहाँ श्री भद्रकाली माताजी का प्रागट्य हुआ था और उसी समय से यहाँ माताजी का पौरायतणक मांददर है जो समय समय पर जनसहयोग से तवस्तारपूर्वक भव्य बनता गया। भादरण का नाम पूर्वभ में भद्रपुर था जो बाद में अपभ्रांश हो कर भादरण हो गया। गुजरात के चरोत्तर क्षेत्र में बसा भादरण पाटीदार समाज के छह गाम में से एक है। गायकवाड़ शासन में भादरण एक 'महल कचहरी' के रूप में जाना जाता था। ऐसा कहा जाता है की इस जगह से महाराज श्रीमांत सयाजीराव गायकवाड़ तृतीय का बहुत प्रेम था और यहाँ उन्होंने अपनी ओर से तवकास तथा सुतवधाओं को जल्द से जल्द पढुवाने की सदैव कोतशश की और इसे मॉडल टाउन जैसा तवकतसत कर अपने अतधकारर्यों को भादरण का अध्ययन करने भेजते थे। उन्होंने यहाँ १९११ में दी भादरण पीपल्स को-आपेरस्टव बैंक की स्थापना की जो इस क्षेत्र की सबसे प्रथम को-आपेरस्टव बैंक थी और आज भी इसकी बैंककांग सुतवधाएँ चालू हैं। इसके अलावा राज्य की ओर से यहाँ शासकीय दवाखाना, कुमार शाला, कन्या शाला, प्रौढ तशक्षण सांस्था, अन्नक्षेत्र, सयाजी वाटर वर्कसभ (जल

प्रदाय हेतु), तालाब का गहरीकरण, टाउन हाल, पुतलस थाना, पुस्तकालय, कर्लोक टावर, भूतमगत जल तनकास व्यवस्था, रेल्वे लाइन जैसे आधुतनक सांसाधनों की सुतवधाएँ आजादी तमलने से पहले तक प्रदान की गई थी, तजन्हें हम आज भी देख सकते हैं। इन ऐततहासक इमारतों, सांरचनाओं, उनकी स्थापत्य शैली तथा भव्य जगहों को देख कर हम यह अंदाजा लगा सकते हैं की भादरण अपने स्वर्णभम समय में कैसा रहा होगा। खेती आधाररत समाज वाला यह स्थान तम्बाखू के उत्पादन के तलए देश भर में तवख्यात है। यहाँ मुख्यतः पटेल-पाटीदार समाज के लोग तनवास करते हैं और यहाँ तशक्षण- साक्षारता की दर ज्यादा होने तथा गायकवाड़ राज की तवदेश में अध्ययन करने हेतु भेजने पर बने गई नीततयों से कई पररवार पुरे तवश्व भर में बसे हुए हैं। भादरण में स्वतांत्रता को ले कर भी काफी गततवतधयाँ होती रही तजसमे पुरुषों ही नहीं मतहलाओं ने भी अपना योगदान ददया। भादरण के श्री रततलाल गोरधनभाई पटेल 27 वषभ की आयु में अडास गोलीकांड में 1942 में शहीद हुए तजनकी समाधी भी भादरण के कर्लोक टावर के सम्मुख तस्थत है। इसके अलावा साइमन कमीशन के तवरोध में घरों की बाहरी दीवारों पर तलखे हुए नारे भी दो जगह देखे जा सकते हैं, तजन्हें पांचायत द्वारा कांच लगा कर सांरतक्षत दक्या गया है। इसके अलावा यहाँ 1925 में गांधीजी का रातत्र तवश्राम भी यहाँ हुआ था और सरदार वल्लभभाई पटेल के पैत्रक गाँव करमसद से नजदीक होने से उनका भी यहाँ कई बार अगमन हुआ। भादरण वतभमान में अध्यातत्मक जगत में प्रतसद्द तत्रमांददर की स्थापना करने वाले दादा भगवन का जन्मस्थान है। यहाँ और भी कई प्रतसद्द हतस्तयों का तनवास तथा जन्म हुआ है तजनमे कैतडला ग्रुप का सांस्थापक पररवार, कैसर तवशेषज्ञ पद्मश्री डॉ. देवेन्द्र पटेल आदद शातमल है। इततहास के रोचक दकस्सों से भरपूर इस स्थान के आस-पास भी कई सारे स्थल ऐसे हैं जो अभी तक कई लोगों ने नहीं देखे हैं तथा ऐततहासक महत्त्व रखते हैं, तजनमे करमसद, बोचासन आदद शातमल है। यहाँ की सांस्कृतत, ऐततहासक इमारतें तथा सुशासन को देखने तथा महसूस करने यहाँ जाया जा सकता है।

- गौरव मण्डलोई मोगावां

The Urbane Column

From the happening urbane Fatehgunj to the transit dedicated Chhani road, Baroda offers a spectrum of spaces to the keen eye for study. An envisioned lush green or open space however seemed to be a constant theme during the Gaekwadi rule. With renewed interest in reclaiming urban lands, which over the years became considered too compact and dense for livability or new public amenity, these are now being revisited with proposals like heritage precinct revitalization, market redevelopment or lake front rejuvenation and so on.

Of these old city precincts, one very central in location and host to a variety of action, sees hordes of citizens cross it daily to access other places of the walled city or visit one of its many landmarks- yet it remains just that- a place you pass by. Not knowing of its true treasures or the potential it once boasted, Chandan Talav or Sursagar as we know it now, was once but just a small catchment area. Along with the land around, it could possibly have seen the beginnings of becoming the first unplanned but recreational public space of the city, when acquired by Sureshwar Desai in the 17th century.

The lake was equipped with ghats and the like, under royal patronage in the 19th century, and this along with the area around it known as the Sursagar precinct forms an important study in urban layers. It boasts of an all-inclusive built and natural heritage package of an excellent mix with 'education, municipality, law and religious edifices- with individual bathing ghats' lined along or near the Sursagar tank. The Sursagar is surrounded by a dense fabric of ingenuity and with the walled city on its east, a walk in the area on a pleasant cool evening is still reminiscent of a distant past.

Once lined with a shaded avenue along the lake, over the years with visarjans of many kinds and a skyline being punctuated by statues and concrete mundane buildings, the lake and its surrounds has lost its charms. An owner with the only house retaining its architecture and view of the lake and beyond it of a cultural institute, put it, "...the view at night with the distant lights, we sleep to a quite plight, that we might once be forgotten... yet the charm of our home dragged you from afar with appreciation of something we might lose once again...".

Fact: Patrick Geddes, an urban planner invited by Maharaja Sayajirao Gaekwad III to the city in the 20th century for a major urban transformation, considered the city's water bodies amongst the finest tank park systems in the country and had 'urged for the careful preservation of this fine chain'. For the Sursagar tank, he tagged it as 'one of the cleanest city tanks in the country'.

The old city area doesn't rhyme with what today is suburbia, but unfortunately seems to now be regarded as one. It was once upon a time the central knit to the entire tapestry of the city. The lake and its precinct just beyond these fortifications, accessed by the Lehripura Gate on its east and the fire brigade area on the west, would have been developed with its (present day) landmarks over the course of the 18th to 20th century. Keeping in mind the lake's location, and the Wadas of the sardars built between the walled city and the railways further northwest- the precinct got its eclectic mix of importance over this period.



An old view of the lake, note the shade avenue of trees in the background with institutes behind it.

Source:

www.historyofvadodara.com

A well-defined example of a historic urban landscape- the Sursagar precinct still boasts of intonated brick buildings that make use of the topography spot on. Jubilee Bagh, a public park with a Bronze Buddha little further to its north is the perfect traffic island to the commuters while providing much-needed respite to the residents in the evening. To this day fond memories of playing in the park in the evening send people to a reverie of thoughts. Moving down to its eastern edge, the Mangal bazar- a busy stretch of dense settlements with commercial activities in inner-lanes and their by-lanes, providing items from clothes to utensils and everything in between, continues burning its lights well past sunset. This eastern undulating yet longstanding skyline ending at the Shri Chimnabai Nyay Mandir however is marred by the brutalist styled Padmavati Chaugan, which not only blocks the designed grand view of the court complex, but is a stark contrast to the fine grain of its immediate neighborhood. The Chaugan was built on the green space that added to the vista of the Nyay Mandir, and came up primarily to accommodate the shopkeepers who once lined the *talav* in close proximity. The Chimnabai Mandir built as a market and later converted to a town hall (in 1896) for more than a decade, stands tall at the south eastern edge of the lake and would have once attracted citizens of various kinds. Later on, it' garnered attention from the 'tucked in shirts and buttoned coats with the characteristic black gowned' lawyers, but now lies abandoned. Only until recently it was the hubbub of activity and pivot to the precinct leading to and from the inner city, along with the building adjacent to it- the Fozdaari Court, a.k.a Lal Court (1950). This annex court built to offload the main court, stands on a land, which was supposed to have been a corner green space. Behind the Bhagat Singh Chowk and forming the outer ring of the precinct is an interesting mix of architectural spaces including turn-of-the-century lodges and religious spaces including the Zakariya masjid and the radio house-beyond which lies an intrinsic network of ware specific markets.



A snap from the western edge looking onto the changed landscape along the southern side of the lake and the Nyay Mandir in the center of the photo, and the Training college and Music school on the right of this frame.

Source: Rahul Gajjar for Once Upon A Time... there was Baroda

Beyond this corner, turning south west along the Pandit Gajananrao Ambade Marg (jal tarang artist) begins the educational zone, which has in an interesting way not only addressed the site architecturally but also seen change in its uses that proved to be beneficial to many. The brick buildings, Female Training College and the adjacent Faculty of Performing Arts, on its southern edge boast of an elevation with a permanent panoramic view of the lake, as they were built to always be a floor above the ground line in the area. Something that the newer constructions are unable to keep up with, and opt for direct ground connectivity.

The institutes addressed the interface with a finely detailed and low heighted brick compound wall that celebrated both the building and its connection to the lake. The wall details can today be seen used in almost all of the Maharaja Sayajirao University' compounds. The music college boasts of exquisite wood work in its building and arcades setting off the tone on the brick background with inspiration felt in each corner. Beyond these are residential concrete structures providing for not much of a relief to the barren road stretch. At the offset of the western corner once used to be the city's central fire station, the Agni Shaman Kendra (1953-2017), which unfortunately fell prey to 'smart' developments like road widening- which is ironic given the fire trucks still stand there till date.

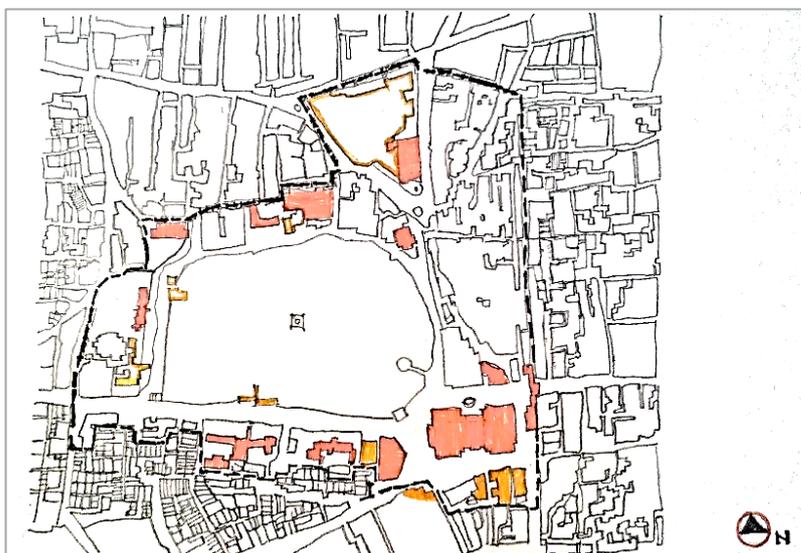
Behind high walls, beginning the western side of the lake is the compound that hosts the Maharani Kanya Vidyalaya running along this entire short side.

The northern edge provides for a shift from the large civic and institutional and has a variety of new concrete monotone in the beginning edge. Old spaces are being converted to mixed use structures, yet they lean against the walls of yesteryear buildings, one of which is the Maharani Chimnabai Stree Udyogalaya (1938-9) constructed out of a desire to help women become self-sufficient by Maharani Chimnabai II, now lies tucked away behind high walls and not accessible from the lake side anymore. The other is Tarkeshwar Mahadev Mandir, built in memory of Princess Tarabai, adoptive sister of Maharaja Sayajirao Gaekwad III. Again, built on a high plinth for scintillating views, it no longer has an entrance from the lake side, and like the Shri Venkatesh Balaji temple on the north- are hidden spaces of the precinct, not many people know of. The immediate edges of the Sursagar hosts a series of religious edifices at different sides and are occasional traffic breakers to those who are — not in the state to follow the traffic flow.

Fun Fact: There used to be a promenade in the lake leading to a platform where people could sit on benches and later was converted to a restaurant called the Sagar- From Once Upon a Time... there was Baroda

Besides the religious, are the social civic spaces like the art-deco styled Pratap Cinema and the Prince Cinema, single screen movie halls just off the Munshi lane and opposite the Mangal Bazar. With the Mahatma Gandhi Nagar Gruh this node completes the intersection of art, culture, civic and more, around a water body and in a hastily changing environ.

As density becomes looked at with a renewed lens, looking at the built and ecological heritage of a place comprehensively would allow one to deal with certain issues like lack of land for public amenities. Historic old city precincts, which were planned to give a cosmopolitan nature should be revived holistically and spaces addressed before rapid and haphazard changes in certain pockets changes the urban landscape of the city.



A map of the considered area in the column- the Sursagar precinct. The pink shaded structures are those that give the precinct its multi-layered character and are historic built. The yellow outlined ones are built, or open spaces and are secondary in nature to the predominant heritage. These together form an old city precinct that needs holistic changes.

Source: Swapna Kothari

Become a member

As a non-profit, we rely on your support as our member and encourage you to send more heritage enthusiasts our way.

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Rs 200 / year

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Rs. 2,00,000

Corporate Donor Member

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THINGS I HAVEN'T USED AS A BOOKMARK



Humor- Have you 'bookmarked' our website yet? Source: as credited on image

What are the plans?

Each year the Trust celebrates the National Heritage Week 17-24th November with events aimed at generating awareness and appreciation for our heritage.

This year with the weekends in our favor we plan to have the following events between the 16th -24th November 2019- so don't forget to follow us on facebook or Instagram for more details:

1. A rare prints' exhibition from a private collection;
2. Heritage walk to the wonderful Bhadran and another B' initialed city near Baroda!
3. Walk through the pristine 'central park' of the city with experts leading the way;
4. Another culinary delight very close to the roots of the city explored in palatial settings;
5. To end it, Laila Tyabji, renowned craft expert- would be here for a Viraasat Lecture on the 24th November.

Publications

Looking for books as gifts? The Trust has published more than half a dozen books, four of which have been on Pavagadh. Three other books on Baroda, one of which is for children, and is still available in print. These would make great corporate gifts in the coming festive season.

Available:

Once Upon a Time...there was Baroda- Rs. 3000/- copy

Children's book on Baroda (Gujarati) - Rs. 20/copy

Heritage Week Future Events:

The Mahatma, exhibition at Alembic City on 2nd October 2019; along with a short play and a kathak performance partnered with Page2Stage at Alembic City on the same date. Come celebrate this year's heritage week from the 16-24th of November 2019