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## From the Editor's Desk:

### The Vadodara Peoples Heritage Festival 2021 draws the Citizens of our City!

The Heritage Festival 2021 was welcomed in with great enthusiasm by Barodians from all walks of life. From walks to talks and from cycle rides to home museums, the Heritage Trust unveiled exciting events that included the old favorites to new innovative initiatives that piqued the interest of both the heritage enthusiast as well as served as introduction to the first-time participant.

This issue is dedicated to the Heritage Festival 2021 that captured the exciting moments at our events. Encouraged by the enthusiastic response, we had some repeat programs in December, viz., the Heritage Cycle Ride and the Bhooley Bisre Food Walk that saw participants braving the new Omicron virus strain to sample the city's hidden treasures. Needless to add, all programs followed the necessary COVID protocols.

Read and see more about the events in the following pages.

As we enter the year 2022, we wish all our readers a very happy healthy and prosperous New Year and look forward to seeing many more of you in our programs in 2022!

Stay safe and take care,

Avi Sabavala



Jaisnghrao Library, (1882 AD - )  
Kothi, Vadodara



wishes you a very prosperous &

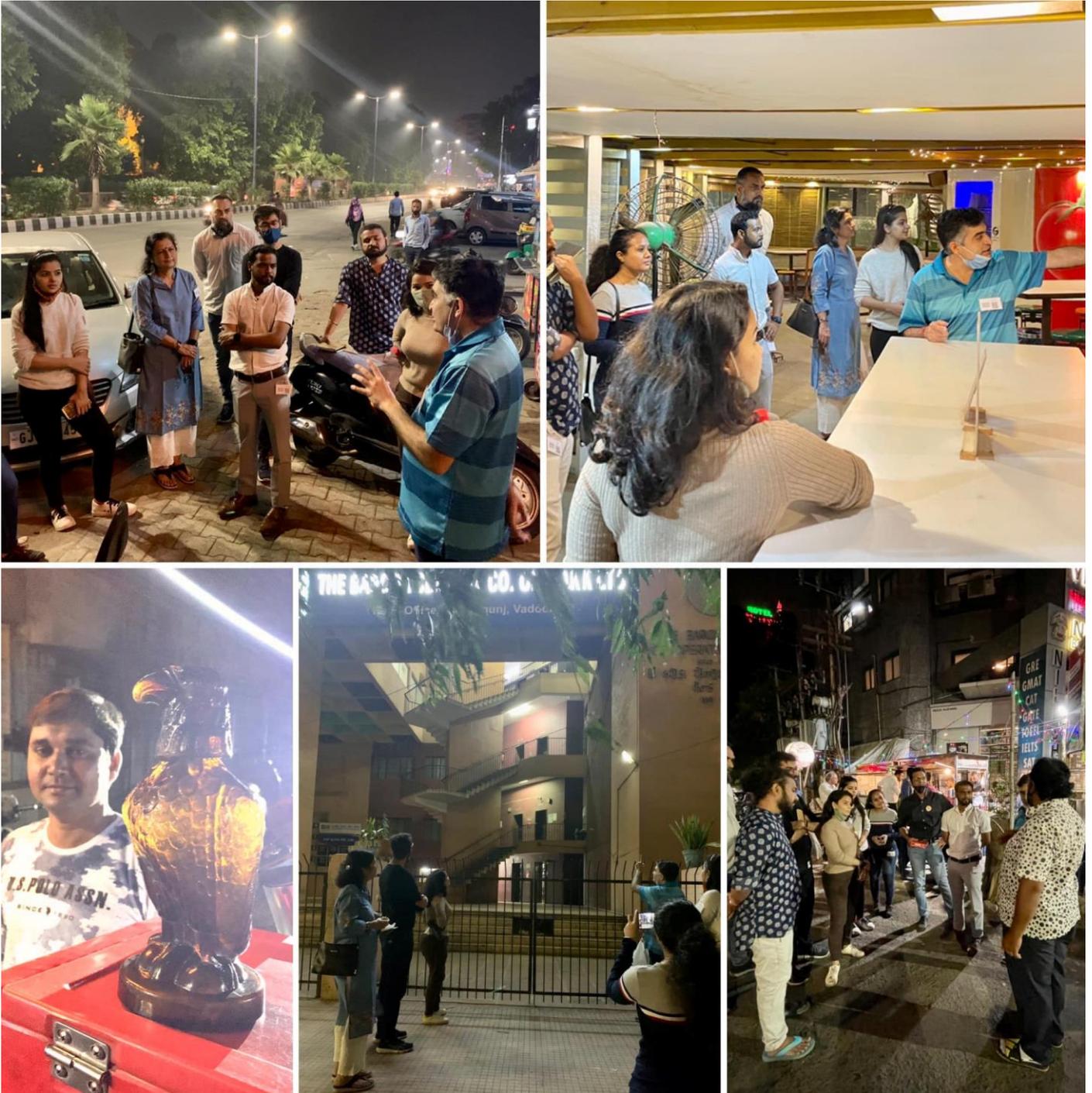
**HAPPY NEW YEAR !!!**

**Happy New Year !!!** to all  
from the Heritage Trust  
Team  
Source : Shivani Pikle

## The Bhooley Bisre Treats

Over 25 foodies registered for the Sayajiganj nostalgia and joined the two walks arranged by HT on the 19th & 25th November respectively, led by Adil Marawala. The importance of Sayajiganj in the commerce scene of Vadodara calibrated the evolution of the food shacks, restaurants, hotels, lodges and sweet shops. Some died, some renamed, some evolved while some continue to provide the old-world charm. The local fare was tried at pre-decided stops. The walk was interspersed with stories and experiences of the participants and the raconteur in Adil. Beyond the satisfied hungry bellies, the participants took back nuggets of history, nostalgia and some food for thought.

Sameer Gaiwad



Top: Glimpses of Bhooley Bisre Treats – The Food Walk @ Sayajiganj  
Image Source: Sameer Gaiwad

## The Heritage Cycle Ride

The Heritage Trust of Baroda planned this cycle ride on the 20th November morning where 27 cyclists covered a 15 km loop in the city visiting some heritage structures invisible to plain sight and a few stepwells. This ride was guided by Sameer Gaikwad. Starting from Yavateshwar temple behind which Sayaji vav exists, the cyclists visited Jaisinhrao Library, the Kothi-Kacheri precincts, Raopura Tower, the Nyaymandir and then stopped at Lehripura gate to take a stock of the damaged structure. The troupe then went past Mandvi towards the Gendi gate and onward and beyond Pratapnagar to the Qutubuddin tomb (Hazira) followed by the Koyali stepwell on the opposite side of the road. Next stop was the Navgruh stepwell below Pratapnagar bridge followed by the Khandoba temple on RV Desai Road and the Vav nearby. The final location was Siddhnath Talaav surrounded by temples. The cyclists resumed their homebound journey after 2.5 hours of immersion in the 500 year old history of their city.

Sameer Gaikwad



Top: Glimpses of Heritage Cycle Ride  
Image Source: Sameer Gaikwad

## Tracing Routes – A Heritage Walk

“It was beyond my expectations. Never had an idea that these villages had such beautiful houses and that too functional ones till today. The Dharmaj streets were so spic and span that we Barodians probably need to learn from them. Our host Alpita Patel provided with all the history and necessary information and also mentioned that it is not easy to restore/renovate and maintain these properties if one is not staying here. But her hard work and passion to preserve the heritage is really appreciable. The sad thing is that these houses are being demolished. Few heritage homes had beautiful wooden carvings which are worth seeing.”

Mita Savla



Rhodesia House, Dharmaj

Source : Mita Savla

## The Coin Story – A Walk Through at the Coin Museum

Displaying close to 10,000 coins, including many that date back to 6th century BC, Shri Mudra Nidhi Coin Museum is located near the Ajwa-Nimeta Garden. This museum is said to be one of the country's first private coin museum. A guided tour of the museum by Mr. Zubair Motiwala, heritage and coin enthusiast took place on the 22nd of November.



Top: Glimpses from The Coin Story

## Why I like doing the Kothi Heritage Walk

When we at Heritage Trust first planned doing Walks in and around Baroda, our attention, rather obviously, focused on the Walled City. We were not sure whether we could have someone who would conduct the Walks on a regular basis, so we created a Do-It-Yourself folded chart that had the map with four Walks, each marked in a different colour, on one side; and detailed descriptions and photos of important heritage buildings to see, on the other side. These charts were freely distributed and though now we have run out of them, the more modern GACL's mobile app, VadodaraByFoot (sponsored by Vadodara Municipal Corporation and GACL Education Society) can be used, free of charge, for a number of Walks across the city. (<http://vadodarabyfoot.com>)

However, while DIY charts and mobile apps are useful and offer the convenience of doing the Walk anytime the Walker has time, there is truly nothing like a Walk led by an informed guide who can brighten up the Walk with many interesting and juicy details about the heritage precincts and buildings and make the Walk informative and a morning well-spent!

I began to explore new possibilities for a heritage walk in the city when the parking availability at the Nazar Baug grounds that allowed for Walkers to drive in right till the Mandvi at the centre of the Walled City, was no longer possible. I did a recce with a possible Walk beginning at Kothi, taking it right to the Laxmi Vilas Palace Gate and turning in at the hockey ground, walking past the Khanderao Market, turning left towards Dandia Bazaar, walking till Tower and from there back to Kothi along the Raopura main road. There were numerous heritage buildings along the way that reflected wonderfully on how the city developed and grew. It would offer opportunities for lots of interesting information tid-bits that would keep the Walkers engaged and interested. However, this was too long a Walk and it would go on for well over three hours which would be too tiring for everyone. I had to find a way to edit it to make it a Walk not more than an hour and a half.

So instead of going all the way till the Palace Gate, I cut the Walk to turn into Dandia Bazaar with detailed visits to Aurobindo Ashram, Tambekar Wada, and Suryanarayan Mandir. The Kothi precinct itself is a fantastic space and a wonderful start to the Walk – most Barodians only drive or walk past the area, rarely bothering to go in and check out the beautiful buildings. Dandia Bazaar area, having once been a predominantly Marathi neighbourhood, is home to several Wadas, once homes to very well-to-do Marathi families where the men were generally top officials in the

Gaekwad court, now mostly in a run-down condition. One can still see typical double-storeyed houses with verandahs (as seen in Shivaji Park area in Mumbai) though very few survive now. When I do Walks, I like to introduce Walkers to known traditional street food joints in that area. So the lane near the GPO always offers something for everyone, including steaming cups of tea to finish off the last leg of the Walk which is always Atul Shah's amazing Home Museum that really needs to be seen to be believed!

Sandhya Gajjar



Glimpses from the Kothi Walk

Source : Kavita Shah

### Being Raja Ravi Varma – A talk on the works of Raja Ravi Varma

The Heritage Trust ended the National Heritage Week event calendar with a talk, Being Raja Ravi Varma, by illustrated author Mr. Vikrant Pande. This event was hosted by the Alembic group at the Alembic City Amphitheatre on the 27<sup>th</sup> of November in the evening. Apart from having written several well received books, the author has translated the novel, Raja Ravi Varma - a novel, by Ranjit Desai from Marathi to English. Interestingly it is on the basis of this book that filmmaker Ketan Desai adapted his screenplay for his famous movie, Rang Rasiya.

Though much has been discussed and written about the life and work of this celebrated artist, Mr. Pande gave several new insights and perspectives to the personal life and art of Raja Ravi Varma. Discussing the priceless legacy the painter has left behind, the importance of the oleograph, several unknown facts like who were actually the models of several of the painters works was also talked about. This delightful talk ended with a question answer session and left many even more intrigued by the person and the paintings of Raja Ravi Varma.

Arati Desai



Glimpses from 'Being Raja Ravi Varma' Talk

Source : Avi Sabavala

### 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. 100,000

#### Donor Member

Rs. 25,000

#### Life Member

Rs. 5,000

#### 5 Year Member

Rs. 500

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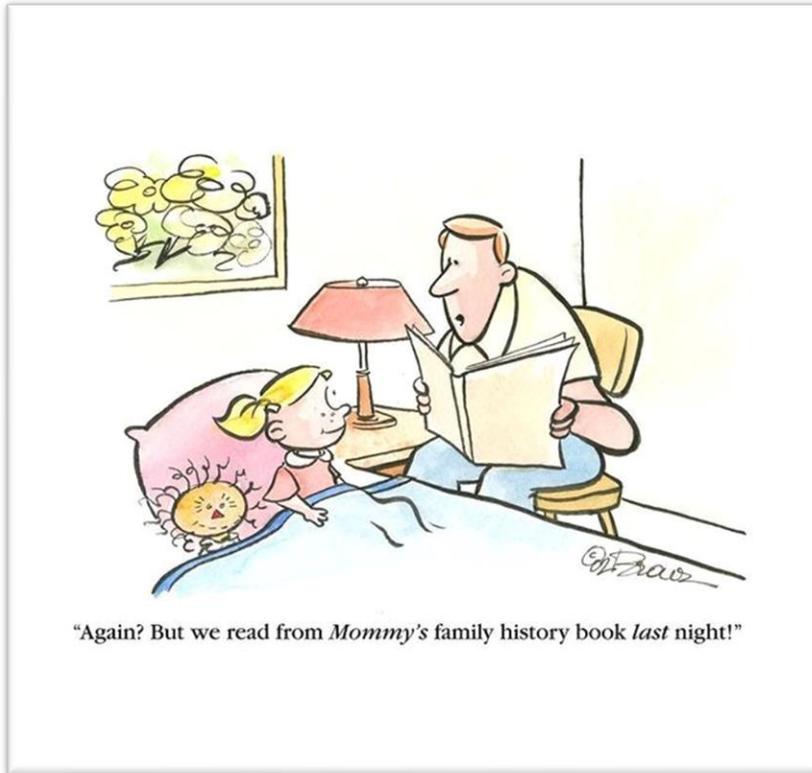
#### Corporate Member Rs.

25,000 / year

Have an idea you would like to explore?

Want to collaborate or organize an event virtually?

Get in touch with us!



"Again? But we read from *Mommy's* family history book last night!"

Heritage Humor : History repeats itself...



Click of the Quarter

Source : Mita Savla

### 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

#### Future Events:

We hope to come back with physical events soon, but till then we will be planning for online lectures- look out for announcements on our social media!