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From the Editor's Desk

The month of November saw the celebration of the People's Heritage Week. It is an opportunity for citizens to showcase their enthusiasm for the past be it in terms of exhibiting their unique collections, works of art or having heritage walks to explore the city. This year too saw numerous city-wide events taking place on every day of the week.

Heritage Trust organized the Virasat Lecture on November 18th, 2018 with a very unique theme. This time, it was the well-known Dr. Ganesh Devi who opened up the little known world of the origin and development of Language. This issue carries a short summary of his talk.

Our city boasts of a number of unique buildings that lend an aura of old world charm. Our old city is a great mixture of modern day bustling commerce coupled with interesting history. From beautifully carved old temples and dwellings and a unique flavor of the Poles, they are part of our living heritage cared for by residents who have kept the traditions alive. Along the busy road that connects Mandvi to the Champaner Gate lies one of the most iconic buildings in the area – the Central Library. We carry an article that gives more insight into its history and uniqueness. If the exterior is beckoning, the interiors will ensure that the visitor – read-aholic or casual browser will be sure to stay and explore more. We would like to see more young people make use of the treasures waiting to be opened and read.

Future issues of Dharohar will be covering more of our structural heritage especially the lesser known monuments. We would also welcome readers to contribute articles and photographs.

The world has just celebrated Christmas with expectations of happiness and peace. We will soon bid farewell to 2018 and ring in 2019 with plenty of hope, expectations and even New Year resolutions for a better future. We wish all our readers A Happy, Prosperous New Year 2019 and we look forward to interacting with you in the coming months.

Avi Sabavala



A place or location becomes synonymous with buildings and sites that people can identify and are well aware of. The banyan tree is an example of how Barodians connect it to the identity of the city. Banyan trees, the Laxmi Vilas Palace and Champaner, all narratives of history, in their own respect have become symbols of Baroda. Within the city of Vadodara, there are numerous heritage buildings and sites that we know of but several go unnoticed, not only by those who pass them by but also by the authorities. It is our endeavor to bring about awareness about such historically significant buildings and incorporate them into the history of our city, not only by archiving but bringing them into the dialogue of preservation and restoration. In this issue we are focusing on the Central Library.

In 1911 Maharaja Sayaji Rao Gaekwad established the first state aided free public library, The Central Library. Located in Mandvi near the Champaner gate within the old city, the Library began with a donation of 20,000 books from the Maharaja, HH Sir Sayaji Rao Gaekwad III's collection from the Laxmi Vilas Palace. Being the pioneer that he was, the Maharaja also introduced a network of libraries in towns and villages in the state during his rule.

This four storey building which has a unique resemblance to the Library of Congress, Washington D.C., USA, was executed by J.Snead and Co., USA the same company which designed the Library of Congress. The stack room is the main gem of the building which has 350 slotted angle racks with a capacity of housing 3.5 lac books. Designed like a long warehouse, the stack house has long glass paned windows to maximize the use of natural daylight. While the ground floor has stone Kota tiles, the upper 3 floors are fitted with huge glass tiles which ensures that the metal armature and the shelves do not succumb to the extremities of summer or winter. The Library is built to be earthquake resistant and during the 2001 earthquake, not a book moved from its place.

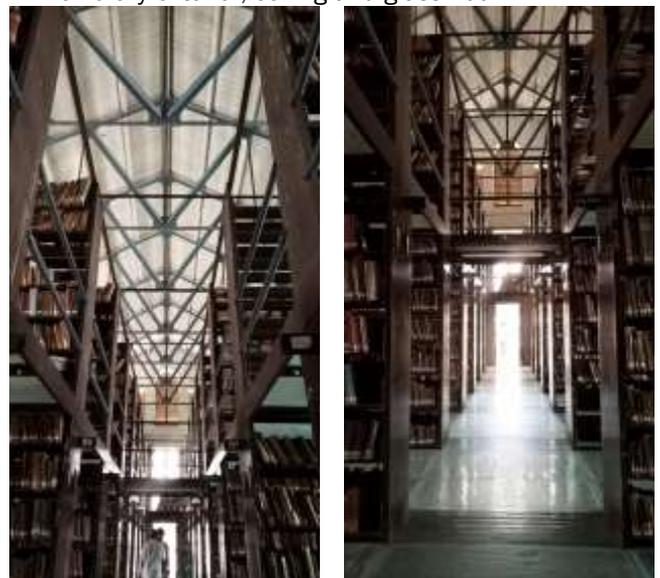
With almost 3 lac books on its shelves, the reading rooms still have Barodians come for their daily dose of reading. Among some of its priceless books is a copy of Indian Princes Edition of the Empress of India Memorial Volumes (1887-1901) which is the largest book in the Library measured at 2 feet by 1.5 feet. This book is subscribed to Maharaja Sayajirao Gaekwad.

One of the oldest public libraries in India, the Central library boasts of being one of the finest examples of living heritage in our city. Currently the Central Library is being managed by Directorate of Libraries, Government of Gujarat. With a current membership of 8000 members, the library has been modernized as well as computerized. In 1985 a new block was added behind the old building to mark 75 years of the library. In 2017 digital versions of 21,000 books were formally released ensuring their preservation for the years to come.

We do hope that more Barodians especially the youth will visit the library and partake of its treasures.



The library exterior, ceiling and glass floor



Events in the last quarter

The Future of Memory: Humans, Heritage and Aphasia – Padma Shri Dr. Ganesh Devy

The Viraasat Lecture on The future of Memory: Humans, Heritage and Aphasia by Dr. Devy took us on a trip which started from the time when language was still nonexistent and traversed over a period of time, to when, once again we have lost the memory of language. During his intriguing lecture, he defined and related memory, humanity, technology, language and cultural amnesia with each other to bring forth the current day scenario of how we, as humans, are today. His talk impressed the spellbound audience and left them with thoughts about what should be called Heritage today. No, not just the monuments and such but all from our everyday living beings like insects, plants as well as the regular craftsman, whom in time to come may cease to remain a part of our collective memory.

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.

Patron Member

Rs. 100,000

Donor Member

Rs. 25,000

Life Member

Rs. 10,000

Ordinary Member

Rs. 1000 / year

Student Member

Rs 200 / year

Corporate Patron Member

Rs. 2,00,000

Corporate Donor Member

Rs. 50,000

Corporate Member Rs. 25,000 / year

Have an idea you would like to explore?

Want to collaborate or organize a tour?

Get in touch with us!



Dr. Devy in discussion with an enraptured audience, and Mr. Bhadoo, VMC commissioner, below addressing the heritage of the city



Publications

Looking for books? 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