

Annual Report of The History Society 2022-23

Staff Advisor: Mrs. Sangeeta Luthra Sharma

Academic Year: 2022-23

Events Organised

Name of Event	Nature of Event	Speaker	Date	Particulars
The Madness of the <i>Majzūbs</i> in Sixteenth Century Mughal India	Lecture	Mr. Anurag Advani	01.09.2022	In this lecture, Advani explains the phenomena of madness among Sufi saints called <i>majzūbs</i> in 16th-century North India, arguing it to be central to their performance of spiritual ecstasy, wisdom and miraculous behaviour. He shows how <i>majzūbs</i> challenge our understanding of tariqa based Sufism in early modern South Asia.
Animate India: Humans Other animals and histories of the environment	Lecture	Dr. Mahesh Rangarajan	22.09.2023	In this lecture, Dr. Rangarajan looks at recontextualising history where animals hold more than symbolic value and assesses the implications of choosing a national animal, protecting one animal over the other and how this influences the course of what has been relegated as more 'mainstream' history.
Media and the British Empire: Themes and Perspectives	Lecture	Dr. Chandrika Kaul	29.10.2023	In this lecture, Dr. Chandrika Kaul attempts to look at a different perspective of the British Empire, particularly the use of media like the radio, quarterlies and other newsletters by the Empire in order to establish the legitimacy of British Raj. She focuses on the portrayal of Gandhi in the media.

The Child Sati in early 19th century Bengal: Tales from the Archives	Lecture	Dr. Tanika Sarkar	07.11.2023	Using a narrative and a legal framework Dr. Sarkar draws attention to the often ignored age factor in the sati debate and its subsequent abolition in Bengal. She provided a comprehensive analysis of the archival evidence with respect to the same while also problematising the notion of a monolithic, progressive, colonial administration.
<i>Dastan-e Taqseem-e Hind:</i> The Partition of India	Cultural Performance	Pratap Sen and Rohan Chopra	10.11.2023	The History Society, in collaboration with The Internal Quality Assurance Cell, organised a Dastangoi performance. The performance used the Urdu storytelling format to present a riveting tale of the Partition that amalgamated information from news reports, archival material, documentaries, academic monographs, memoirs, poetry and personal anecdotes.
Translating Guru Nanak: In Words and in Colours	Lecture	Dr. Nikki Guninder Kaur Singh	17.01.2023	The event was held in collaboration with Virsa, the Punjabi Literary Society. In this lecture, she discusses alternate translations of the poems of Guru Nanak. She also tries to translate Guru Nanak's poetry as showcased in the 'language of colours' in the 1733 Janamsakhi paintings. She also addresses the universal relevance of poetry in the literary and visual medium both.
Queering the Self, Decolonising History, Democratizing the Present	Lecture	Dr. Dibyesh Anand	24.01.2023	In this lecture, Professor Anand uses multiple narratives and different sites of investigation to put forward a new way of progressive thinking and practice that brings together the personal, the political and the international as embodied within the queer self. He also addresses the importance of challenging the divide between academia and activism.
Archaeology of Northeast India: On-going research in the Naga Metamorphics and	Lecture (online)	Dr. Tiatoshi Jamir	08.02.2023	This lecture was held online in collaboration with the North East Society. Dr. Tiatoshi Jamir discussed the problems in tracing the origins of agriculture and the emergence of complex societies due to the lack of well-excavated sites with reliable dating evidence. The long-standing concern of a regional transition from predominantly hunting-gathering

Naga Hills Ophiolites, Nagaland				and foraging to agriculture with a localised neolithization process from the region's archaeological dataset were also addressed.
The Political Life of Memory: Birsa Munda in Contemporary India	Lecture	Dr. Rahul Ranjan	21.02.2023	In his talk, Professor Ranjan discussed his newly published book, <i>The Political Life of Memory: Birsa Munda in Contemporary India</i> , which examines the representation of Birsa Munda's political life, memory politics and the making of anti-colonialism in contemporary Jharkhand. It offers contrasting features of political imaginations deployed in developing memorial landscapes. This talk was arranged in collaboration with the Internal Quality Assurance Cell and the Center for Gender, Culture and Social Processes.
Satyam Jha Memorial Paper Presentation Competition	Paper Presentation	Ms. Alia Zaman Dr. Ruchika Sharma	23.02.2023	The presentation series is dedicated to Satyam Jha, a student of History at St. Stephen's college, member of The History Society and a friend to many of us, whom we lost to COVID-19 in 2021. This year's theme was "Histories of Care: Invisibilised, Domesticised, Marginalised Service" and the participants received valuable feedback from Ms. Alia Zaman (Political science department, St Stephen's College) and Dr. Ruchika Sharma (Assistant Professor, Department of History, Gargi College).
Windrush Cricket: Caribbean Migration and the Remaking of Post-War England	Lecture	Dr. Michael Collins	19.04.2023	Introducing his eponymous forthcoming book, Dr. Collins envisions cricket as a sociocultural activity where meaning and identity was made and expressed. He examines the highly politicised and symbolic nature of cricket and how that revealed tensions between post-war Caribbean migrants or settlers and the England-born, within the wider trans-Atlantic diaspora. He also discusses how the rise of the black English cricketer exposes the challenges of evolving Englishness within the framework of a postcolonial and "multicultural" society.

Kaalchakra: The Annual Festival of the History Society (21st-23rd March, 2023)

The theme for Kaalchakra 2023 was 'Histories of Education and Exclusion: Knowledge in a Pedagogical Enterprise'. The festival seeks to explore creation of knowledge systems, exclusionary character of knowledge and how knowledge is written into education. Through our events, the society wishes to analyse the means of knowledge-dissemination through text, tradition, oral culture and performance. The theme wishes to explore how a knowledge-base made colonial power operational and in effect, created colonial subjects. The same proposition may be analysed post-independence where educational institutions articulate concerns of the nation-state and emergent identities through curricula revisions. Furthermore, it encourages discussions on the 'social' character of learning, with emphasis on variance in the translation of information and its reception by students of different backgrounds in different provenances. This allows the discussion facilitated by the theme to shift to questions of availability, access and quality in theory and praxis.

Name of Event	Nature of Event	Speaker	Date	Particulars
History as an Enterprise: Knowledge, Pedagogy, Dissemination	Keynote Lecture	Dr. Meena Bhargava	21.03.2023	In her talk, Dr. Bhargava discussed the presence of the present in conceptualisations of the past, especially as seen in the negative connotations inherent in the term 'mediaeval'. Using several examples such as the Masjid-i-Jami, she problematised the still prevalent notion of the mediaeval period being 'Muslim' as propagated by colonial scholars such as James Mill while also drawing attention to indigenous methods of chronicling and writing history such as the Arabo-Perisan court chronicles. Hence, Dr. Bhargava emphasised the perils of periodising and compartmentalising History.
Histories of Education and	Panel Discussion	Dr. Naresh Keerthi, Dr.	21.03.2023	The panel discussed varying modalities of knowledge production

Exclusion		Pankaj Jha, Dr. Anita Rampal and Dr. Uma Chakravarti; moderated by Dr. Naina Dayal		and dissemination across Indian History, from the Upanishads to NCERT. Dr. Keerthi spoke of the evolution of the concept of vidya and how the same corpus can be inclusive and exclusive while also constructing dichotomies of productive and meaningful knowledge. He drew attention to what he terms moments of 'epistemic humility' wherein knowledge must be practised, not merely produced. Dr. Pankaj Jha highlighted how knowledge is not a collection of information but how language is deployed to depict power-laden themes and the fundamental contradiction between institutionalised education which is disciplining and its goals, which are emancipatory. Dr. Chakravarti emphasised the importance of critical thinking in reconceptualising history without biases while Dr. Rampal spoke of the classroom as a site of creating democracy and social justice, drawing on her experiences in constructing syllabi.
Clio's Friends: Entangled Histories of the Public	Lecture	Dr. Ranjeeta Dutta	22.03.2023	Dr. Dutta spoke about the parallel pedagogies of the public and those in academia. Through her talk, she explored the ways in which history is living in the public by looking at the hagiographies of the <i>vaisnava</i> saint - Ramanuja. She spoke about hagiographies being rooted in the Bhakti tradition and consequently drawing from the public sphere. She also spoke about ideas of the people being reflected in temple inscriptions and other mediums beyond hagiographies. Lastly, she ended her discussion by reminding us of the importance of intertwining academic and public discourse in the present day to produce more holistic discourse.
Autobiography as Knowledge: Education, Exclusion and the	Lecture (online)	Dr. Meenakshi Thapan	22.03.2023	Dr. Meenakshi Thapan discussed the varying experiences of education, drawing on Dalit autobiographies such as that of

Making of Counter Publics				Omprakash Valmiki, V. Moon, Baby Kamble, Sharankumar Limbale etc. She discussed how education is often a painful and poignant experience in Dalit consciousness wherein the exclusionary character of institutionalised education and its systemic violence against the Dalit voice. She also drew attention to how Dalit autobiographies could be subversive and yet, normalising of these experiences. She encourages the discussion of Dalit autobiographies within educational spaces to metaphorically expand and perforate the rigid boundaries of institutional education.
<i>Geet, Gharane, Ghungroo</i>	Cultural performance	Nivedita Mahapatra (Kathak), Pratyusha Chakrabarti (Classical Vocal and Rabindrasangeet), Deepanshu (padhant) and Satvik (tabla)	22.03.2023	Indian Classical Music and Dance are often understood as being more than performing art. Many practitioners see it as their personal way of worship, the path to spiritual elevation - something that has or provides spiritual and religious sanction. As with other things that are 'classical' (and constructed in opposition to that which is popular or folk) a certain degree of social capital is attached to its production, consumption and dissemination. Another aspect of this idealised and sanitised notion of what has always retained a strong economic element, at least since its professionalisation, is the idea of the unblemished, merit-based transmission of knowledge from the guru to the <i>shishya</i> . Through their pieces and discussion regarding the same, the performers highlighted the less than ideal concerns that sometimes govern knowledge transmission and even performance appreciation in Kathak, Hindustani classical and Rabindrasangeet.
Women of St. Stephen's: Gendering University Spaces and Exploring Experiences	Panel Discussion	Ms. Saba Dewan and Advocate Vrinda Grover from the batch of 1985, along with Dr. Maya	23.03.2023	Professor Narain began by contextualising the experiences of the panellists through a detailed timeline that flagged international developments, local feminist undertakings, landmark activities within college and current strides in Indian education that informed the

		John from the batch of 2006; moderated by Professor Nandita Narain		realities of the students in university spaces. Ms. Grover and Ms. Dewan jointly recalled their experiences of normalised sexist practices such as ‘Chick Charts’ that aimed to rank women based on attractiveness. They spoke of the communal nature of these charts in the aftermath of the 1984 riots. They detailed their process of collectivising struggle against sexist practices across Delhi University. Dr. Maya John spoke about her experience as the first female Student’s Union president of St. Stephen’s College in 2006. She provided an account of the challenges she faced during the election and her term. She framed her discussion in the context of ‘access’ and also touched on the fight against arbitrary gendered curfews, poor and unsafe neighbourhoods in North Campus and the inaccessibility of campus residence.
When Folklore takes over!	Cultural Performances	Kapil Pandey	23.03.2023	Mr. Kapil Pandey conducted a narrative storytelling session. His story-telling format saw the coming together of an old Rajasthani folktale, modern day Marwari folk songs and humorous anecdotes from his life. He recounted an endearing story of a young woman who challenges her husband’s troubling habit of shooting arrows through his wife’s nath or nose-ring. He interspersed the story with short musical interludes. With his tambourine and guitar, he drove home the hyperbolic imagery of folktales in an entertaining manner. He closed the session with a poem he had written and invited comments and questions from the audience.

Edited Articles

Along with events, The History Society also published student-written articles on its online blog

at <https://historicallyspeakingssc.wordpress.com/> . The articles published were as follows:

Name of Article	Name of Author	Date of Publishing
An Overview of Entente Tank Production in the Great War	Jeevan Joseph	02.09.2022
Past Forward	Abhishek Nayak	10.09.2022
Where does Meaning Lie?	Mayukhi Ghosh	03.10.2022
Caste in Freedom: On Post-Partition Refugee Rehabilitation in Delhi	Jyotika Tomar and Tarini Agarwal	07.11.2022
Performing Exclusion: Locating the <i>śāstra</i> in the Nāṭyaśāstra	Pratyusha Chakrabarti and Nivedita Mahapatra	22.11.2022

Tarikh 2023

The latest edition of *Tarikh*, the Annual Journal of the History Society was published on 6th of May, 2023. This edition of *Tarikh*, looks at a comprehensive understanding of material histories by exploring the ‘social lives’ of things, thoughts and spaces. The social character of mankind has taken on the characteristics of a transferred epithet; it imbues objects of its interaction, thoughts of its creation and spaces of its occupation with meaning such that, it may be argued, they lead their own social lives. Tracing these social lives prevents a reductive understanding of spaces, objects and material commodities where they have often acquired an inert or mute character. *Tarikh* seeks to encourage questioning of seemingly benign considerations- inclusion/exclusion of new members on a poster, renaming of public monuments, ‘restorations’ of glorified pasts and more at a time when every opportunity is grasped to inscribe them with new symbols of power and make them allegories of the dispositive. Essays in this volume of *Tarikh* tackle the many histories written into things, thoughts and spaces and how they interact with each other in an attempt to broaden the spectrum of what we may term ‘history’ and invite many histories, even of non-human entities, in an effort to democratise and make the subject more polyphonic. *Tarikh*, published under the Creative Commons 4.0 Licence may be found at: <https://historicallyspeakingssc.wordpress.com/tarikh/>

Rewind, the Podcast of the History Society

Rewind, the official podcast of The History Society is a collection of conversations on diverse aspects of history featuring distinguished historians, writers, curators, and individuals working at the intersection of history and other disciplines.

Name of the Episode	Date of Publishing
Sakshi Sharma in conversation with Dr. Paula Austin	23.10.2022
Pratyusha Chakrabarti in conversation with Dr. Rochona Majumdar	08.01.2023
Mayukhi Ghosh in conversation with Dr. Deepra Dandekar	02.03.2023

Walks

Hauz Khas Walk - 25.02.2023

The Talks and Walks vertical organised a walk to Hauz Khas led by Sakshi Sharma and Pratyusha Chakrabarti and accompanied by Dr. Sudipto Basu. The theme 'Underlying Urbanisms' covered the historical and evolving significance of the structures of the complex in the urban milieu and placed the complex within a larger complex of urban needs such as education, religious centres, access to water etc.