

# SOCIETY TO SAVE ROCKS



## Genesis of the SOCIETY'S NEWSLETTERS

By Amita Talwar



October 1996. Almost a quarter century ago, the first newsletter of Society to Save Rocks was published, to be shared with the 47 rock enthusiasts who had become members of this unique initiative by a group of environment conscious citizens of Hyderabad. The newsletters were also mailed to the Press and some concerned government officials.

Going through the first issue again today, after twenty five years was extremely nostalgic for me. It reminded me of the inaugural ceremony on the Rocks near DurgumCheruvu with Laxma Goud, our first President. To think that so many people who were with us for that lovely ceremony are no longer with us made me sad. Asha Dua, Pradeep Sinha, Narendra Luther, Hasan Bhai, R. Rajamani, Prabha Rao, Veena Varma have all moved on, leaving an indelible place in our hearts.

The important purpose of bringing out the newsletter was to keep the members informed of the forthcoming events and the awareness programmes launched with the concerned government officials. I would like to share the cover page of the inaugural issue which was on a single sheet, with large arrows highlighting the points! The NEWSLETTER and October 1996 seem to have been typed later!

Continued on Page #2



Continued from Page #1

Technology took over and in October 2009, the digital version was published on our website.



The other thing that took me down memory lane were the five digit BSNL numbers of the Office Bearers. One wonders how we communicated without emails and our current appendages - cell phones.

The second edition brought out in January 1997 had quickly grown along with the programs and was on two sheets. It became a Quarterly Newsletter and the following issues included photographs, poems on rocks etc to keep the members and the Press informed about the additional activities.

The Newsletters in the new millennium carried a lot more photographs and information of the diverse activities of the Society. Members were kept updated about the greeting and postcards, T Shirts printed, Rockumentary, excursions, music concerts, essay and poetry competitions, photo books etc. The two page newsletter doubled in size as the activities grew and glossy 4 page avatar was published in

July 2001.

A dash of colour was added to the Newsletter in October 2006. The photographs and headings were now in colour and the new look was appealing and attractive. Technology took over and in October 2009, the digital version was published on our website. The newsletter could be accessed by people from anywhere in the world and the effort and costs of mailing saved. Currently fifty printed copies are sent by post to a few members and government officials. The rest are shared by email.

In case you have missed any issues you can access them on [www.saverocks.org](http://www.saverocks.org). Do keep track of this wonderful, important initiative of the Society to Save Rocks through the Newsletters and enjoy our very special environs.

## Society's CULTURAL FOOTPRINTS

By Aparajita Sinha, Vice President

Twenty years ago Jubilee Hills still had open spaces and there were many spectacular rocks there. One could go for long walks and spot wild creatures like rabbits and pangolin and of course many varieties of snakes and other reptiles. Our kids loved climbing those rocks after school.

These rocks of the Deccan plateau are not just aesthetically pleasing. They have geological, historical and recreational value. The Society arranges rock walks and has on occasion also organised "rock" concerts. Music "in the rocks" can be a particularly uplifting experience. As members of the Society found out! One of the Society's favourite spots is the area and rocks around the Secret Lake of Jubilee Hills. Many legends surround this IINTACH AWARDED site. We held our first

concert in what later became the parking for the Durgam Cheruvu tourist resort.

October 25, 1996: At our first concert, Deepak Bhattacharya, a lawyer by profession and Deepa Naha, two very talented vocalists, performed beautifully. We had put up a shamiana for the occasion. The event was supported by Andhra Pradesh Times.

August 7, 2001: Our next concert was a "baithak" by Vidya Rao, the well known thumri singer from Delhi. Vidya gave a truly memorable performance in the home of founder member Amrita and husband Nikunj Akhruwalla; their drawing room had rocks as part of a wall, which formed a natural backdrop for the singer and demonstrated how rocks could be an architectural feature in homes and offices.

January 7, 2004: Probably our most successful concert was by the popular Indian Ocean band. This was also organised at Durgam Cheruvu. By now the lake resort had been set up by APTDC

under the able guidance of then MD, Anjaneya Reddy. The lake and surrounding rocks was already a designated heritage site of Andhra. The singers from Delhi were blown away by the ethereal beauty of the lake and gave one of their most inspired concerts of popular hits like Des Mera and Jhini to a “rocking” audience of 1500 youngsters. We had more than one sponsor for this event, one of the biggest being a private promoter of hotels and tourism.

August 27, 2005: To coincide with World Theatre Day on August 27 the Society organised a performance by a Bombay group who put up The Blue Mug - a play with a difference. Rajat Kapoor, Vinay Pathak, and Ranvir Shorey were part of the star cast. Without using props, the actors told personal stories and engaged the audience directly as they talked. Funny, heartbreaking and touching by turns, the play was absorbing enough to make the audience both laugh and cry. These events are a sample few, there were several others over the years.



One could go for long walks and spot wild creatures like rabbits and pangolin and of course many varieties of snakes and other reptiles.

## OTHER FEATHERS IN OUR CAP!

The uninterrupted monthly Rock Walks of the Society ( finds mention in the Lonely Planet under Things to do in Hyderabad ) have reached close to 300 and have remained the backbone of the Society's outreach. At the 2008 Enviro Mela, the Society got local environment groups on one platform to dialogue for Hyderabad. More recently the annual Hyderabad Rockathon held for 8 consecutive years from 2012 attracted city outdoor enthusiasts. Our Rock Runs, Rock Photo Exhibitions and presence at the Hyderabad Literary Festivals converted many a lay citizen into rock supporters. Important too are the numerous awareness lectures, workshops, film screenings, book launches and programmes like Story Telling for the next generation.

Reprinted from *The Wire*, 2021 issue >> -----



### Every Rock TELLS A STORY

By Prof. C.P. Rajendran

Every rock has a story to tell if we know how to decipher it. Within the unique composition and arrangement of materials that compose different rocks, one can find the signatures of the processes that formed them – representing various chapters in Earth's dynamic history.

The rocky landscape of Hyderabad and its surroundings display different kinds of 'stone arrangements', as Aboriginal Australians known for their special connection to rocks would have defined them. Sculpted by tectonic and climatic agencies over millions of years, these large, rounded rocks are often found standing alone, atop hills or perched precariously on each other in a titanic embrace. They may look inert, but billions of years worth of Earth story is preserved in each of them. These rockscapes tell us spectacular stories of our planet's origin.

The story of Earth starts around 4.5 billion years ago. Studies have found that some rock types around Hyderabad are up to 2.5 billion years old – a time that saw the emergence of continental crust with a granitic composition, dominated by lighter minerals – in contrast to the darker basaltic rocks that typically floor the oceans. This profound change in crustal composition coincided with the changes in Earth's tectonic regime, especially the initiation of the movement of continental plates.

[C.P. Rajendran](https://science.thewire.in/the-sciences/every-rock-tells-a-story/) is an adjunct professor at the Institute of Advanced Studies, Bengaluru. (Read the full article at <https://science.thewire.in/the-sciences/every-rock-tells-a-story/>)



» Upcoming in July

# ROCKS MATTER

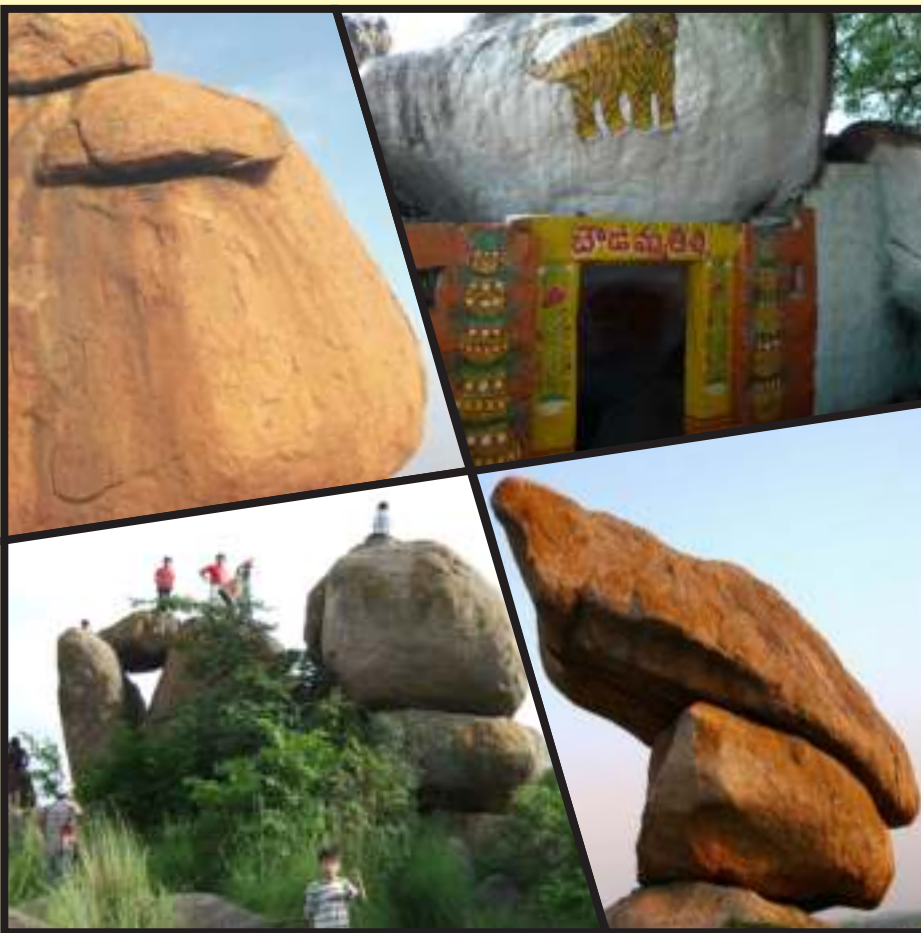
A virtual Photo Exhibition by the Society to Save Rocks

2 JULY – 24 JULY



Join us for the official Exhibition Opening on 2nd July 2021 | 6:30 pm IST  
Chief Guest: Ms. Karin Stoll, Consul General, German Consulate General Chennai  
Join us here: <https://tinyurl.com/rocksOpening>

www.saverocks.org @saverocks @SaveRocks  
goethezentrum.hyderabad goethezentrum\_hyderabad goethezentrumhyd hyderabad.german.in



## MILESTONES

9 Rock Areas declared Heritage Precincts

« 1998

» Registration of Society to Save Rocks

Released a Scientific Rock Survey of 3 Districts in AP

« 2004

» Received Certificate of Excellence and Best NGO in Tourism Award from the Government

Commenced the Annual Hyderabad Rockathons

« 2012

» 15 more Rock Precincts declared Heritage Precincts

Annual participation in The Hyderabad Literary Festival

« 2016

» Film Documentary "Hyderabad City of Rocks"

Tied up with Hyderabad Runners for Rock Runs

« 2018

» Featured in the AGORA Biennale of Bordeaux / France

Publication of 3rd Edition of Coffee Table Book, now called "Marvels of Nature Rockscape of Telangana"

« 2020

» Partnered for the National Geo Heritage Day with a Run on Necklace Road

2021

» HELPED ROCKS SURVIVE TO TELL THEIR OWN TALE with the backing of many more awareness programmes



By Somini Sengupta  
Aug. 17, 2007

» The New York Times  
» 17-08-2007

HYDERABAD, India — They rise unexpectedly between glass office towers or at the base of a 12th-century fort. Sometimes they are perched precariously, one on top of another, as though they were the left-behind playthings of a civilization of giants. More and more, they are broken into bits, first by dynamite, then painstakingly by hand, so that the earth can be flattened and new office towers can come up.

» Illustrated Weekly 08-09-1990, By Laxma Goud

Though the majority of people in our country are illiterate, it's not they who are damaging the environment, because the rustic is by and large aware of the environment and the boons it showers on them. If you ask a villager to axe a full-grown tree, he would never agree to do such a thing, even at the behest of his master, because heart of hearts he has a strong feeling that he should protect the tree in order to survive. This has been imbibed in him from early childhood.





# ROCK WALKERS

## REMEMBER

By  
Nihar Gokhale,  
Mumbai



Rocks were everywhere. As a child growing up in Hyderabad, I saw them from inside trains, or piled along highways leading out of town, or half-submerged near lakes. The boulders and hillocks seemed mysterious and out of reach. Rocks were the great unknown in my tiny world. The Society's monthly rock walks were what

broke the ice, and allowed me for the first time to come in contact with the rough and benevolent surfaces of the great rockscapes. The walks opened up a new world where I could now crawl up, climb down, creep underneath, and marvel at the dramatic ways in which rocks create landscapes. At the walks (and at the post-walk tea and biscuits), I learnt how the young and the old could share the same marvelous feeling. Yet, it is silly to think the rock walks made me feel like I ever 'conquered' rocks. Danger lurked everywhere –sudden falls and poisonous scorpions awaited every wrong move. I often found myself staring down a steep gap between two rocks, swallowing my fear, and jumping across. Sometimes, a few of us would wander away from the main walk group and end up too far, and I would fear being lost as we found our way back to the cars in the gathering darkness. Even now when I face a moment of fear or uncertainty, my mind plays back to one

of these moments from rock walks, and I tell myself that I can do it again now, and that it always feels good afterwards. Through these experiences, rock walks taught me to be reverent of natural landscapes, and of knowing my human limits before nature. The sight of chipped and half-blasted rockscapes brought home the reality that machines could wipe out nearly anything, even the mighty and dangerous rocks. Rock walks no doubt shaped my interest in the natural world and my sense of morality as an environmental journalist and as a citizen. I am grateful to the Society and its rock walks and to my rock-enthusiast parents Amol and Hina for introducing a child growing up in Hyderabad to the mysterious rocks and their life lessons.

Nihar is Associate Editor, Land Conflict Watch

When we left India at the beginning of May 2008 after having lived in Hyderabad since January 2006 we took home with us a treasure trove of memories. Among the most lasting must surely count our exposure to the ancient rocks of the Deccan through our participation in the activities of the Society to Save Rocks. When I looked back through my letters and photos from that time I realised that our stay in Hyderabad was in fact bookended by rock walks. On 15 January 2006, exactly a week after our arrival, we joined a walk to Fakhruddingutta, and on 20 April 2008, just 10 days before we left Hyderabad, we were treated to the magnificent formations in the Mahendra Hills on the Secunderabad side of the Twin Cities. Between these two outings rock walks also introduced us to the unique landscapes of places such as Nandi Hills, Ibrahimpatnam, Moula Ali and Mahboobnagar. Inspired to explore on our own, we undertook Sunday drives to, amongst others, Himayatsagar and Osmansagar, Bhongir and Yadagirigutta. Of course we soon realised that rock walks and the Society were not just about enjoying beautiful landscapes. Preserving those landscapes was an urgent task demanding an ongoing effort. This was brought home to us most forcibly when a return walk to Fakhruddingutta in June 2007 presented us with the shocking sight of a huge area that had been destroyed since our previous visit to make way for what is euphemistically called development.

It should be obvious to everyone that once a rock formed over billions of years has been smashed to pieces it can never be recovered. However, from what we read in the Society newsletters and see on social media it is clear that many, if not most, decision makers remain unconvinced of this fact and of the importance of the Deccan landscape as the literal bedrock of the ecosystems sustaining the plants and animals that sustain us all. We commend the Society to Save Rocks for its dedication to this cause over 25 years and would like to thank everyone involved for their hard work to preserve this precious heritage for future generations.

By Hanna Boeke  
South Africa



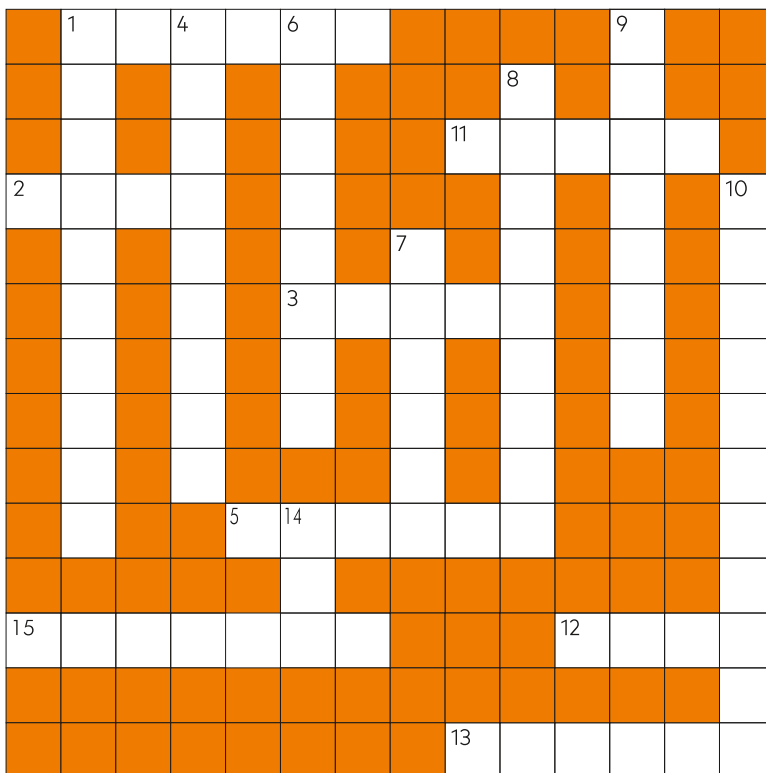
The spectacular rock formations of the Deccan Plateau are one of many fond memories we have of our time living in Hyderabad. These rocks contribute to a unique landscape, and on encountering them while traveling about the city, provide a refreshing change from monotonous streets. It was hard not to be impressed by the scale of these fascinating structures. On monthly Rock Walks and survey trips outside the city it was possible to reconnect with the natural world that is centered around the rocks. The flora that thrives in these rocky environments is often covered with spines or thorns but is still attractive. There are also interesting historical features at some of the destinations. We also made many wonderful friends through the rock walks. Unfortunately, we occasionally encountered quarrying operations that had destroyed some of these magnificent rocks that had existed for hundreds of millions of years. Once destroyed, a valuable resource has vanished. As the Society is celebrating

By John Ellingboe - Manhattan, USA



its 25<sup>th</sup> year, it is a good time to consider the value of the rock formations and their preservation. One can see from the crowds in a place like KBR Park that people need and value the natural environment, including the rock formations. The preservation of more rock-centered areas within Hyderabad and the surrounding area would provide additional opportunities for people in other areas to experience the rejuvenating influence of a park environment. One goal of several mayoral candidates in New York City where we now live is to ensure that every citizen has access to a park within 15 minutes of their home because of the known beneficial effects on health (mental and physical). Hyderabad can aspire to a similar goal where these parks would incorporate one of the remaining rock formations. We look forward to our next visit to Hyderabad and will make sure it coincides with a scheduled rock walk!

### Rock Crossword by Ravi Setlem »



#### Across

- ..... Current Secretary of the Rock Society. (6)
- ..... - E- Mubarak - Rocksite in the forests behind Taramati Baradari (4)
- ..... Ali. Shrine of this saint sits atop this rocky hill (5)
- ..... cheru - Rocksite in PBEL's neighbourhood (6)
- ..... Grave is found in the two rock clusters of Allabanda Hills and Gangabowli pahar (5)
- Mount ..... This mountain is famous for volcanoes (4)
- ..... This iconic Hindi movie was shot in the rocky terrain of Ramanagara (4)
- ..... are formed when molten lava cools (7)

#### Down

- ..... gutta, Hill named after a famous saint. Home to a dargah, temple and worshipping spot of Meher Baba (10)
- ..... Sinha, Rock activist, Film personality (9)
- ....., ..... Rocksite with Shrine on top in cantonment area. Popular with athletes for steps training (4,4)
- Narendra ..... Historian, Author - Late President of The Rock Society (6)
- The Hyderabad ..... An annual event held in collaboration with GHAC (Great Hyderabad Adventure Club) which is a daylong affair with adventure activities (9)
- Mount ..... has the faces of four US presidents sculpted on it. (8)
- ..... Fossils are found in these rocks (11)
- ..... temple is nestled in the rocks near Medak (3)

The first 3 solved crosswords, scanned and **emailed to [secretary@saverocks.org](mailto:secretary@saverocks.org)**, will be awarded prizes. Participants are requested to mention contact number and address in the email.

## Events

- Although the corona times cramped our plans to hold an event every month of our 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary year, we did manage to mark Earth Day on 22nd April with our film "Hyderabad- City of Rocks" being circulated on the facebook page of both Lamakaan and Sacred Space.
- For World Environment Day on 5<sup>th</sup> June, the Society, for the first time, held an online Rock Quiz designed by Committee Member Sajid Mehmood which was well attended. The lockdown seemed the perfect setting to get people thinking about the rocks of the world and learn about them in the process!
- Committee Member Sangeeta Varma was invited by Little Flower High School, Hyderabad to address the students of the Inter Montfort Schools English Elocution Competition meet on 5<sup>th</sup> June. 15 schools from different cities attended the programme. Sangeeta spoke on Environment, importance of Rocks, Society's role and screened our documentary, all of which was appreciated by the organizers and participants.

Rock Walks are conducted on the third Sunday of every month. They are announced in the press and social media and on our website.

Everybody is welcome. Walking shoes and long pants should be worn. Please enroll with G.R.B. Pradeep at 9866752114.

Participants are expected to follow adequate Covid 19 protection rules.

## Rock Walks in July - September 2021

Day & Date	Place	Time & Meeting Point
Sunday, July 18, 2021	Ghar-e-Mubarak	7:00 a.m. Royal Function Hall, Narsingi. Return approximately 11.00 a.m.
Sunday, Aug 15, 2021	Venkateshwaragutta	8:00 a.m. - Near Katta Maisamma Temple, Shamirpeta Lake Bund Return approximately 01:00 p.m.
Sunday, Sept 19, 2021	Bhongir Fort	8:00 a.m. - Uppal Police Station, Uppal Crossroads Please bring lunch. Return approximately 03:00 p.m.

## Managing Committee

President:			Padmini B. Patell	9912865299
Vice President:	Aparajita Sinha	9849 655 363	Dr. Sudheer Bhan	8106072537
Secretary:	Frauke Quader	9849 936 248	Dr. E. Sathya Prakash	9440057846
Joint Secretary:	Sangeeta Varma	9849 044 624	Amardeep Singh	9246150207
Treasurer:	G.R.B. Pradeep	9866 752 114	Sajid Mehmood	9810528070

## New Membership Fee From 01-04-2021

Class	Admission	Annual Subscription
Active (Single)	₹ 100.00	₹ 500.00
Active (Couple)	₹ 100.00	₹ 600.00
Student (Under 18 Years)	₹ 100.00	₹ 200.00
Life (Single)	₹ 3000.00	July Rock Walk Destination
Life (Couple)	₹ 5000.00	
Institution	₹ 10000.00	
Corporate	₹ 50000.00	

## Welcome to our New Members

Neha Chopra, Life & Aadya Jolly, Student

Arun Krishna, Active (Couple)



Editors: Frauke Quader & Padmini B Patell