



# SANDS OF TIME

Volume I Issue 2

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Tata Central Archives Newsletter

*Dear Colleague,*

*The first newsletter "Sands of Time" of the Tata Central Archives has received a good response from Tata employees, Business Archives and other institutions.*

*The Archives has organised its second exhibition on "Sir Dorabji Tata Trust and its Philanthropic Institutions". This exhibition presents the business and social aspect of the Tata Group to the younger generation.*

*One of the main functions of the Archives is to collect important documents of various Tata Companies and arrange and catalogue them in a systematic manner. This helps in preserving the history and heritage of Tatas and retrieving the relevant information for Tata employees and research scholars. We have been successful in identifying documents of the Tata Power Co. Ltd., Tata Chemicals Ltd., Tata Steel, etc.*

*The Business Archive in our country is at an infant stage. We would like to encourage more and more business organisations to set up their Archives to preserve their past. One of them - Indian Tobacco Company which was established in 1910 has sought our help to build its Archives.*

## EXHIBITION ON "SIR DORABJI TATA TRUST AND ITS PHILANTHROPIC INSTITUTIONS"



*Sir Dorabji Tata and Lady Meherbai Tata.*

An exhibition on "Sir Dorabji Tata Trust and its Philanthropic Institutions" - the second in a series of Tata exhibitions planned to present the business and social aspect of the Tata Group to the new generation - was inaugurated by Dr. J. J. Bhabha, Vice-Chairman and Managing Trustee, Sir Dorabji Tata Trust, at the Tata Central Archives, Pune on April 24, 2002.

Mr. T. R. Doongaji, Managing Director, Tata Services Limited, Mr. R. M. Lala, Hon. Director, Tata Central Archives and Mr. Sarosh Batliwalla, Secretary and Chief Accountant, Sir Dorabji Tata Trust and several dignitaries were present on the occasion.



*Dr. J. J. Bhabha inaugurating the exhibition. Seen behind Dr. J. J. Bhabha (l to r) are Mr. T. R. Doongaji, Mr. R. M. Lala and Mr. Sarosh Batiwalla.*

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Like his father and brother (Sir Ratan Tata), Sir Dorabji believed that wealth must be put to constructive use. Less than a year after his wife died in 1931, he put all his wealth down to the last pearl-studded tie-pin into a trust which was to be used 'without any distinction of place, nationality or creed', for the advancement of learning and research, the relief of distress, and other charitable purposes. Three months later he died. This was the beginning of the Sir Dorabji Tata Trust.

Between 1936 and 2002 the Trust established seven pioneering institutions : Tata Institute of Social Sciences (1936); Tata Memorial Hospital (1941); The Tata Institute of Fundamental Research (1945); The National Centre for the Performing Arts (1966); The National Institute of Advanced Studies (1988); The J. R. D. Tata Centre for Ecotechnology

(1998); and The Sir Dorabji Tata Centre for Research in Tropical Diseases (2000).

From each of these institutions a torrent of ideas, of learning, of research has cascaded down the years and has found expression in the training of social scientists, cancer specialists, and distinguished scientists. Discoveries, investigations, publications, research papers are just a fraction of the fall-out of the Trust's activities. What has flowed from this foundation is the new life for India's millions and an extension of the frontiers of her knowledge for the benefit of future generations.

The exhibition showcases photographs, letters, memorabilia and other relevant documents focussing on the Trust's contribution to Indian society.

## GLIMPSES OF THE EXHIBITION



*Dr. J. J. Bhabha viewing one of the panels in the exhibition hall.*



*Sir Dorabji Tata and Lady Meherbai Tata*



*The panel on Lady Meherbai Tata.*



*The Sir Dorabji Tata Collection at the Chhatrapati Shivaji Vastu Sanghralaya formerly Prince of Wales Museum.*



*Dr. J. J. Bhabha viewing the panel on the Tata Institute of Social Sciences.*



*A panel on the Tata Institute of Fundamental Research.*



## IMPRESSIONS

This remarkably well assembled and presented record of the many great men who in their turn added their individual contribution to what they inherited from the pioneering and dedicated spirits, like Jamsetji N. Tata and his esteemed father Nusserwanji Tata, and his great successors, starting with a noble, idealistic and inspiring leader in the person of J.R.D. Tata, who made his own individual contribution in the historic development of civil aviation, and lived to be a great Chairman of the Tata Group of Companies and many of the most important Tata philanthropic and educational trusts, should instil in visitors, young and old, the motivation and will to do whatever they can in the service of the people of India and indeed of human kind in general.

Jambhed J. Shetty  
25/4/2002

I am deeply touched after going round the Dorab Tata Exhibition, which has brought out several facets of the first Chairman of Tata Steel & many other enterprises. "Very well done" to the Tata Central Archives. JJI

JAMSHED J. IRANI.

24 May 02

## THE STORY OF A QUERY

by Arvind Mambro\*

Answering queries from institutions and individuals pertaining to the House of Tata is one of the important jobs of the Tata Central Archives. These queries can be simple or complex but they are always important for the querists who raise them and it is our duty to try and answer them.

One such query was received by the Archives in September 1993 from Dr. Robin Bidwell of the University of Cambridge, England. The letter which he addressed to the Tata Press Limited (now Tata Infomedia Limited) read as follows: "In 1918 the Commercial Printing Press, Bombay ... printed a book *The Land of the Date* subtitled 'A recent voyage from Bombay to Basra and back...' by C. M. Cursetjee, B.A. (Oxon). I have not been able to identify him through any of the normal methods of research and my last hope is that your Company is the same as that of 1918 and that you may have some record of him."

In his letter Dr. Bidwell further made an observation, "His (Cursetjee's) book gives no indication that he was travelling on official duty and it seems odd that someone should have visited the war zone of Mesopotamia for no obvious reason."

Dr. Bidwell had liked Cursetjee's book immensely and he wanted to know more about the author. As Tata Press did not have any information

dating back to the 1910's, it directed the query to our Archives.

After going through various records in and out of the Archives, we came across some information on C. M. Cursetjee. There was no conclusive proof that this gentleman was the author of the book which Dr. Bidwell had mentioned. But there were some pointers.

We sent the details of Cursetjee to Dr. Bidwell saying that we thought that his educational background, his temperament, the financial position and the writing ability all point out to his possible authorship of the book. Before coming to this conclusion, however, more research would have to be done, we suggested.

Within the next few weeks Dr. Bidwell replied that with the help of our letter he found details of Cursetjee's educational qualifications at Christchurch and Lincoln's Inn which he visited. On the basis of his research he concluded, "I think there can be little doubt that he was the author of *The Land of the Date*."

He concluded his letter with these words, "I hope that I have some other good reason to write to the Tata Central Archives as it seems so helpful and efficient."

\* Former Chief Archivist, Tata Central Archives.



## OUR HERITAGE



An original painting of **Sir Dorabji Tata** by **M. F. Pithavala** which has been displayed in the exhibition. This portrait was painted by him in 1926.

Pithavala had the honour of painting a set of water-colours which was presented to her Majesty Queen Mary (the then Princess of Wales). He also painted portraits of many eminent personalities including Governors, High Court Judges, Industrialists and Merchant Princes.

### FORTHCOMING EVENT

**The Tata Central Archives proposes to hold its next exhibition on "J. R. D. Tata" at the end of July 2002.**

**This exhibition on J. R. D. Tata would be open to the public for four months.**

### AN APPEAL

**The Tata Central Archives is an evolving institution, which needs to be kept updated continually. We would welcome any letters, documents, photographs and memorabilia related to the Tatas from companies and individuals. For any further information please contact - Mr. H. Raghunath, Archivist.**