



# Sands of Time

Newsletter of Tata Central Archives

Volume II, Issue 3

October 2003

## Honouring an Extraordinary Man

July 29 - the Birth Anniversary of J. R. D. Tata is a special day for the House of Tata. Besides offering floral tributes to this remarkable gentleman, the Tata Central Archives extended an invitation to the students of the J. N. Petit Technical School to visit the ongoing exhibition on J. R. D. Tata.



The students of J. N. Petit School being taken round the exhibition.

We were amazed at the response. Over 400 students of VIII and IX Standards trooped in. They were overwhelmed by what they saw. Groups of children taking notes and discussing amongst themselves visibly motivated by what they had seen. They had the privilege of seeing medals like the Bharat Ratna, the Padma Vibhushan, the UN Population Award, etc. The children were ecstatic. They were fascinated with the artefacts which were on display, particularly



The students admiring the replica of J. R. D. Tata's workshop.

the attire worn by J. R. D. Tata. After their tour of the Exhibition Hall and J. R. D. Tata's Office Mr. H. Raghunath conducted the customary quiz on the House of Tata. It was



Mr. H. Raghunath conducting a quiz on the House of Tata.

surprising as to how much knowledge they had assimilated in such a short time. Over

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## Tata Chemicals Archives Inaugurated

The Tata Chemicals Archives was inaugurated by Dr. J. J. Irani and Mr. Prasad Menon, Managing Director, Tata Chemicals



Dr. J. J. Irani and Mr. Prasad Menon inaugurating the Archives.

Ltd. on August 30, 2003. The Archives is located within the town area in the "Kapilram Vakil Smarak Bhavan" which was built in memory of Mr. Kapilram Vakil, founder of the Okha Salt Works.

Former employees who have their second and third generation working in Tata Chemicals, executives, employees and leaders and members of the workers unions were present on the occasion. The list of invitees also included members of the third generation of Mr. Kapilram Vakil. They came from Probunder, Jamnagar, Ahmedabad and other places.

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We're on the Web!

<http://www.tatacentralarchives.com>



## "I am twenty one today ....."

Extracts from a letter written by J. R. D. Tata to his father R. D. Tata dated July 29, 1925.

Dear Papa,

..... So I am twenty one today! How terrific! One more year has fallen on my shoulders. I have been looking back, and also deep in myself with the merciless eye of conscience and have been trying to find out whether during this last year, I have become better, whether I have gained in experience or wisdom. I haven't found out much yet! However if resolutions are any good I am simply packed with them. Resolution to be less of an ass, cooler, healthier, hard working and serious minded. With your help and the help of God, I hope next 29th of July to look back, and be satisfied. If only you are satisfied with me, my aim will have attained. As for this year you will judge when you come whether I have improved since I left India. I hope anyway I am more disciplined and quieter!.....

... I have received yesterday evening a letter from Guaranty Trust Co saying they have received a check of 10 Pounds in my name from Lloyds Bank. I guess it is a present from you for my 21st birthday and I thank you dear Papa with all my heart. I am writing to the bank to convert them into francs (1000 f) as I will use them for the Bugatti. I think a Bugatti or a beloved mistress are the only two things I would go mad over as I do (until I am married of course). I don't know if I am wrong but I think you will prefer me to be mad on the first than on a possible second one. Goodness, if ever I go mad on both, you had better cut me off with a Shilling! Meanwhile thank you again a thousand times dear Governor for the 1000 f....

... Papa chère, I hope you are keeping always in very good health, and keep dancing too!

Jehangir

Letter written by J. R. D. Tata to his father R. D. Tata

"... Everything you see, hear or say everyday you must take notes or write to me as I preserve all your letters so that they may be useful for reference in future ..."

R. D. Tata  
to J. R. D. Tata

## Honouring an Extraordinary Man

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ninety per cent of the questions asked were answered correctly.

the exhibition.

St. Mira's College and the Indira Institute of Management Studies were not far behind. Mr. R. M. Lala who happened to be in the Archives when the students of the Indira Institute of Management were present addressed them briefly. He also presented gifts to the winners of the quiz. Students of Activity High School came to see the exhibition all the way from Mumbai.

Over the past three months over 1,200 students have visited the Archives.



Children of the J. N. Petit Technical School being taken round the exhibition by the TCA staff



Students of Activity School going round the exhibition.

T Shirts were then presented to the winning teams and Bookmarks for each correct answer.

In August over 200 students of the Vidya Niketan School run by the Telco Employees Education Trust visited the exhibition. A painting of J. R. D. Tata by Master Vikas Rajendra Chote, who is a student in the school was presented to the Tata Central Archives. This painting now forms a part of



Mr. R. M. Lala presenting a T shirt to one of the winners of the quiz contest.



Painting of J. R. D. Tata by Master Vikas Rajendra Chote



## Phenomenal Women

### Lady Meherbai Tata

Lady Meherbai Tata has a prominent and a unique place amongst the pioneers of the women's movement in India.

She was born on October 10, 1879 in Bombay. In the words of Stanley Reed, former Editor of the Times of India: "Meherbai was of medium height. Of regular feature, clear cut, and clear-eyed, with that flush through the faintly tinted live skin which painter tell us is the perfect complexion, she was the most striking figure even in the great gathering of Bombay society. She was well endowed with brains, learned and accomplished. She was devoted to all outdoor games; a proficient tennis player, she was equally at home in all forms of exercise."

In 1890, Jamsetji Tata went to Bangalore at the invitation of the Dewan of Mysore, Sir Sehadi Iyer, in connection with the establishment of the research institute. It is on one of

these visits that he came in close contact with the Bhabha family. H. J. Bhabha was then the Inspector-General of Education, Mysore State. Jamsetji seems to have had a hand in the selection of Meherbai Bhabha as his daughter-in-law.

The beautiful Meherbai married Dorabji Tata the elder son of the Founder, Jamsetji Tata on February 14, 1898.

She played in several tennis tournaments and won over sixty prizes. She shared Dorabji's love of sport and won the triple crown in the Western India Tennis Tournament. Together they scored many successes in the All-India Championships. Lady Tata always wearing, as foreign reports phrased it, 'Eastern dress', 'the Saree', not the easiest of garments in which to play a winning game on the courts! She was a good rider and drove her own motor car.

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**Lady Meherbai Tata**  
(1879-1931)

"Without education and knowledge the status of women in India can never be raised and unless the women are allowed to and are capable of taking their full share in the life of the country the Indian Nation can never rise to be one of the great nations of the world ..."

*Lady Meherbai Tata*

### Mrs. Leela Moolgaokar

Mrs. Leela Moolgaokar, was an eminent social worker who was born on October 10, 1916. The wife of Mr. Sumant Moolgaokar, former Chairman of Telco she was an extremely active and distinguished person in her own right.

Starting as a radiographer at the St. George's Hospital, Mumbai, Mrs. Moolgaokar pioneered the voluntary blood transfusion service in India. In recognition of her selfless service to this cause, she was appointed by the President as Special Officer on duty for Blood Transfusion Service of the Directorate General of Health Services, New Delhi. This post was later upgraded to Assistant

Director General for Blood Transfusion Service. She started the Federation of Bombay Blood Banks with the idea of evolving a uniform code of conduct as regards collection, utilisation and benefits to be extended to voluntary blood donors and to carry out research in blood transfusion.

Leprosy was another area in which she worked ceaselessly. The plight of persons suffering from this disease moved her immensely and with the help of the late Prime Minister, Mrs. Indira Gandhi she was able to repeal the Indian Lepers Act, 1898 in Maharashtra which restored human dignity to leprosy patients.

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**Leela Moolgaokar**  
(1916-1992)



## Phenomenal Women

### Lady Meherbai Tata

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King George V invests Lady Tata with the Commander of the British Empire.

As for the part played by Women in India today I have no words to express my admiration of their courage, their steadfastness and determination ... I have always held that when a women of a country take their just share in the affairs of their country that country and that nation must rise to be one of the great Countries and nations of the World.

Meherbai Tata



Mrs. Leela Moolgaokar being sworn in as the Sheriff of Bombay.

Many a woman would have been content to be a great society lady but Lady Tata however was made of different stuff. She was ever willing to utilise her opportunities to promote the education and well-being of her Indian sisters. She was one of the founders, first of the Bombay Presidency Women's Council and then of the National Council of Women. She was consulted on the Sarda Act designed to outlaw child marriage. She campaigned for the higher education for women against the purdah system and the practice of untouchability.

With regard to women's education she got full support from her husband Sir Dorabji Tata who encouraged her to take over the local school with the object of developing it into a model school. They brought an expert from England to survey the whole field of girls education in India. This survey took over a year and the book was for many years the *vade mecum* which the Board of Education in Whitehall placed in the hands of all women inspectors or teachers proceeding to India.

Her address at Battle Creek College, USA was her first considered

pronouncement of the Indian situation as a whole. She gave her American audience an excellent bird's-eye view of the history, the art, the religions and the races of India, the Indian States and their rulers, and touched upon the condition of women, their ignorance and the customs which stood in the way of their development.

Meherbai took a very active part during the War in raising contributions. She was also an active member of the Indian Red Cross Society which she helped generously. In 1919, her services to the war efforts and women were recognised when she was created a Commander of the British Empire which she received at the hands of King George V.

Lady Tata passed away on June 18, 1931. In April 1932, Sir Dorabji Tata founded the Lady Tata Memorial Trust for research into leukaemia. A much smaller trust, partly from public donations, received at the time of her death the Lady Meherbai D. Tata Education Trust, for the training of women in hygiene, health and social welfare was also set up in the same year.

### Leela Moolgaokar

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As Chairman of the Tata Relief Committee she personally supervised the relief operations during the Koyna earthquake, the floods in Bihar, the Maharashtra drought, the tidal wave in Andhra Pradesh etc.

During her tenure as the Sheriff of Bombay she personally looked into the problems of women in jail and ensured that basic amenities were given to them.

She constantly worked for the upliftment of women and children as Chairman of the Central social Welfare Board, Government of India, and as Chairman of the Bal Varsha Pratishthan.

She was awarded the Padmashree by the Government of India in 1963.

Mrs. Moolgaokar passed away on May 20, 1992.



## Those were the Days...

*Mr. D. S. Framroze applied for a job at the Taj Mahal Hotel in 1906. During the course of his tenure at the Taj he came into contact with not only famous people but also interesting ones.*

*It was during this part of his career that in 1927 he went on a tour to the U. K. and the Continent along with Sir Dorabji and Lady Meherbai Tata.*

*In 1939, Mr. Framroze, who by this time was General Manager, left the service of the Taj and joined the Sir Dorabji Tata Trust as Assistant Secretary. For years he was the also Chairman of the Indoor Games Sub-Committee and the Social Activities Sub-Committee of the Tata Sports Club.*

*Reproduced below are excerpts of an article written by him which was published in the Tata Monthly Bulletin of 1955.*

In 1903, I then a lad in my teens, was thrilled to read glowing accounts of a very big hotel being opened at Apollo Bunder the Taj Mahal, by Mr. J. N. Tata, on western lines. An European administrative staff, a brigade of French cooks under a French chef and foreign maids! In 1906, I applied for a job at the Taj and was lucky enough to secure one.

In my early days I recall an incident which brought me in personal touch with Sir Ratan Tata. He arrived at the Taj on horse-back. Being the only person in the entrance hall I immediately stepped down to hold the horse as he dismounted. He smiled and thanked me. A few days later I came to know that Mr. Tata had appreciated my little courtesy resulting in an increase in salary.

As time rolled by I came in contact with all the members of the Tata family and directors, and it was always a pleasure to organise special functions for them. I was called on to give my best services in looking after the comforts of distinguished guests at the Hotel which included Indian Princes and world-famed artistes.

In 1915 an innovation was made with the approval of Sir Dorabji and Sir Ratan Tata in undertaking upcountry caterings. The first occasion was the wedding of the Prince of Rajpipla, where I took complete charge of the guests' camp and arranged a big banquet. As a result of the success, orders for caterings from various Indian States poured in. One of the biggest

undertakings was a banquet for five hundred persons in Delhi in 1917. It was given by the Princes of India in honour of the Indian Delegation to the Imperial War Conference. His Excellency Lord Chelmsford was in the chair. The cost of the banquet was one hundred rupees per head with wines, exclusive of transport costs. About a hundred special menus were printed for the guests of honour containing hand painted portraits of Lord and Lady Chelmsford, H. H. The Maharaja of Bikaner, Mr. Meston and Lord Sinha. The banquet was held in a magnificently decorated shamiana erected in the Secretariat grounds. His Highness the Jam Saheb (Ranjit) would have no one but the Taj to organise it. Later His Highness wrote a personal letter to Sir Dorab paying glowing tributes to the excellent services rendered by the Taj.

In 1927 I was sent to Europe to study hotel management. I accompanied Sir Dorabji and Lady Tata to Europe. One night at dinner in Geneva I was astounded to see over-sized strawberries served with cream just three huge ones in a champagne glass! Lady Tata smilingly asked me whether I had seen anything like it before.

Considerate they were to their subordinates, Lady Tata was also kind enough to ask some of her friends to show me round London as I was new to the place. They also arranged for an invitation to be sent to me as a member



D. S. Framroze



Taj Mahal Hotel, Bombay



## Tata Chemicals Archives Inaugurated

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**Dr. J. J. Irani and  
Mr. Prasad Menon  
viewing the photographs  
on display.**

The Archives showcase the story in pictorial form of Tata Chemicals from the laying of the foundation stone of the Okha salt works by H.E. Diwan Saheb of Baroda, Rao Bahadur, V. T. KrishnamaChariar in



*The Archives located at the Kapilram Vakil Smarak Nidhi.*

1927. The Okha Salt Works merged with TATA Chemicals Limited in 1939. It also contains commissioning of new plants and equipments, the culture of Mithapur, the schools and hospitals etc.

It also consists of the replica of the foundation stone of the Okha Salt Works.



*Dr. J. J. Irani and Mr. Prasad Menon viewing one of the paintings on display.*

Artefacts and a portrait of Mr. Kapilram Vakil which was painted in 1936 in London where he was awarded his degree are also on display.

The Tata Central Archives provided the necessary consultancy to Tata Chemicals to set up these Archives.



*Dr. Irani writing his comments in the visitor's book.*

## Those were the Days ...

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of their staff to an evening reception given by Sir Atul Chatterji in Geneva, and to a Banquet held at the Cecil Hotel in London presided over by Earl Winterton.

A general letter of recommendation to hotels in Europe from Sir Dorabji Tata, as Chairman of the Board of Directors, the Indian Hotels Co. Ltd., was a great help to me wherever I went and in many hotels in London and in Europe I was treated as a guest.

On my return to Bombay I did my best to introduce some of the new things I had seen. Lady Ratan Tata once remarked that if nature had made me "tall and robust" there would be no need for foreign managers! In 1931 I was appointed General Manager of Taj Mahal Hotel and Green's Restaurant. It was at this stage that Mr. J. R. D. Tata took personal interest in the renovation of the

hotel. In 1931, a proposal for reconstructing and air-conditioning the dining room was put forward to Mons. Del Torre, a French interior decorator. To do this necessitated the removal of the ornate iron brackets supporting the ceiling. As our architect thought this was dangerous, the idea was almost given up. When I suggested consulting another architect Mr. Tata readily agreed. At that time I knew Mr. Tilden Pattinson, Agent of the G. I. P. Railway who put us in touch with one of his Consulting Engineers, Mr. Hood, (the present General Traffic Manager of the G. I. P. Railway), who after a thorough inspection of the building suggested the insertion of a few steel beams to the ceiling of the dining room which solved our problem. Thereafter the scheme for a modern dining room, as designed by Mons. Del Torre, was carried out and this room was redecorated.



**The Taj Mahal Palace  
Hotel.\***

\* Courtesy: Mr. Homi B. Irani - for making available a copy of the postcard featuring the Taj Mahal Palace Hotel from his personal collection for inclusion in this Newsletter.



## Adieu Mr. K. M. Gherda

Mr. and Mrs. K. M. Gherda were felicitated by the staff of the Tata Management Training Centre (TMTC) and the Tata Central Archives (TCA) on September 30, 2003.



Mr. Gherda addressing the gathering.

At an informal get-together Mr. V. J. Rao, Director, TMTC and Mr. H. Raghunath, Archivist, TCA spoke a few words about Mr. Gherda's contribution to the House of Tata. A memento was also presented to Mr. Gherda on behalf of TMTC and TCA.

Prior to the function Mr. & Mrs. Gherda paid a visit to the Archives where they spent almost an hour meticulously going round the exhibition. The following comments of Mr. Gherda were recorded in the visitor's book : 'One more visit but always you learn more.'



Admiring the awards of J. R. D. Tata which are on display.

At the request of Mr. Raghunath Mr. Gherda also picked up the names of the five winning contestants who had answered the quiz question published in the last newsletter.



Mr. Gherda picking the names of the winners of the quiz which appeared in the last issue of Sands of Time.



Mr. and Mrs. Gherda with the staff of TMTC and TCA

### WINNERS OF THE QUIZ

**Mr. P.B. Mancherji**  
Ex-Godrej Employee,  
Mumbai

**Mr. Duleep Matthai,**  
Bangalore

**Mr. Roja T. Pillai**  
Tata Institute of Social  
Sciences, Mumbai

**Ms. Jamuna Kumari**  
Jamshedpur

**Ms. Meher P. Edibam**  
Tata International Ltd.,  
Mumbai

**Mr. D. Behara**  
Tata Refractories Ltd.,  
Belpahar

Your T Shirts will be  
couriered to you shortly.

## International Scholars Consult Archives

Dr. Priti Ramamurthy a professor in the Department of Women Studies at the University of Washington visited the Tata Archives. Her research is on the emergence of ideas and practices of modern womanhood in India through international commodity and cultural flows. She plans to write one or two essays on the subject of the Modern girl in India. Records of the Tata Oil Mills Company Limited and Lakme Ltd. were of particular interest to her.

Ms. Jahnvi Phalke, from Georgia Institute of Technology, Atlanta, who is working towards a Doctoral dissertation on the history of Physics in India (1938-1970) and represents the Georgia Institute of Technology, Atlanta consulted the records in the Archives. At the Archives, Jahnvi consulted the records of the Indian Institute of Science and the Tata Institute of Fundamental Research.

"The exhibition on J. R. D. is thoughtful and comprehensive. It gives a good sense of J. R. D.'s personal life, business ventures and role as a leader of Modern India."

Priti Ramamurthy

### ANSWERS TO LAST QUIZ

During World War II J. R. D. Tata got together a group of industrialists and technocrats to create a plan for the economic restructuring of the country after the War. By what name was this plan known? One of the signatories of the plan was awarded the J. N. Tata Scholarship in 1905.

Correct Answer: Bombay Plan and the name of the signatory was Sir Ardeshir Dalal



## 71st Anniversary of J. R. D. Tata's Historical Flight



The Maharajah interacting with the children.

We're on the Web!

<http://www.tatacentralarchives.com>

For any further information, please contact :

Mr. H. Raghunath  
Archivist  
Tata Central Archives  
TMTC Campus  
I, Mangaldas Road  
Pune 411 001  
Maharashtra, India

Phone: 91+20+4122019  
Fax: 91+20+4002704  
Email: [tca@tata.com](mailto:tca@tata.com)

"Our heritage and ideals, our codes and standards - the things we live by and teach our children - are preserved or diminished by how freely we exchange ideas and feelings."

Walt Disney

To commemorate the 71st Anniversary of JRD Tata's historic flight from Karachi to Mumbai via Ahmedabad on October 15, 1932, the Air-India flew 340 Special Passengers over Mumbai in a Boeing 747-400 aircraft "Ajanta"- with a message of love and hope.

Flight AI-071 was organized on the request of social service organizations - Make A Wish Foundation, Indian Cancer Society, Jyoti Seva Sangh - Apang Seva and Sulabha Trust for Special Education and Research. Most of these special passengers were either terminally ill or mentally and physically challenged.

The children, many of whom have never had the opportunity of traveling in an aircraft, arrived at the Chhatrapati Shivaji International Airport well in advance of the time of departure. As passengers, they went through the normal procedure of being checked-in, issued their boarding card and security check, before emplaning. They were welcomed on board by Air-India's

courteous cabin crew and introduced to the Air-India 'Maharajah', Mr. Yezdi Irani. The plane then took off on its magical route over Mumbai. Captain D. Majumdar, made announcements on the flight route information from time to time during the flight. Flight AI-071 was made eventful by the presence of a surprise visitor from Bollywood on board. He was Mr. Jaaved Jaaferi.

This unique message was conveyed by Air-India to these special passengers through Inflight Supervisor, Shariar Karim, and his band of sixteen cabin crew. On board, the children were deeply engrossed in the Drawing Competition specially organised for them. Prizes and mementoes were distributed on board.

This was one flight which the children and Air-India will not forget for a long time.

Article and Photograph Courtesy Air - India

## Digitisation

Keeping abreast with technological developments the Tata Central Archives (TCA) is now going digital.

Owing to the sensitive nature of the records in the possession of the Archives an in-house scanning cell is being set up on its premises to facilitate the scanning of various records which cannot be given out for job work.

Annual reports and house journals of major Tata Companies are being scanned since both these contain the history of the Tata companies.

Taking a lead in this direction is Tata Sons Limited who have already forwarded to us their annual reports

from 1918-1940. These reports contain the original signatures of the then Directors of Tata Sons Ltd. - Sir Dorabji Tata, R. D. Tata, Lady Ratan Tata, Naoroji Sakthivala, J. D. Ghandy, B. J. Padshah, and John Peterson etc.

Tata Steel, Tata Power and Tata Chemicals have also agreed to send us their annual reports and house journals.

If you would like your company to have a copy of records to be digitized - scanned and OCR (optical character recognition), with full text search facility you are welcome to contact the Tata Central Archives.