



Sands of Time

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SOJOURN AT ETTINGTON PARK

In the early days, Jamsetji Tata and his sons conducted their overseas activities from Jeremiah Lyons and Company in London. In 1904, three years before the site of the steel plant was discovered, Jamsetji passed away. He urged his cousin R. D. Tata and close members of his family to carry forward the work he had started. They not only continued, but expanded his work.

In 1905, Burjorji Padshah was busy in London, with the floating of the Iron and Steel Company. At that time he felt the need for a full-fledged London office to represent the Tata Group in Europe. Burjorji Padshah's proposal was approved by Tata Sons and Tata Limited London was established in March 1907. From that day, Tata Limited, has played a pivotal role in the realisation of Tata Steel, Tata Power, the Indian Institute of Science and in supporting the Group's operations in Europe.

Every generation has its memories. Norman Leonard Hammond familiarly known as "Mac" in Tata Limited was requested to write the history of the Company from the time he joined in 1925 until his retirement in 1976. The following are excerpts from his oral history of Tata Limited (1939-1942), when it was located at Ettington Park.



Ettington Park in the 1940's. The main building and the other rooms on the left behind the tree.

During the War years from (1939-1942), Tata Limited moved from Thames House, Millbank, London to the safer location of Ettington Park, situated in Warwickshire about six to seven miles from Stratford-upon-Avon. Norman Redford selected the property, which was suitable for

business purposes and big enough to house the Staff and any family with them also.

It was a Victorian neo-gothic mansion, set in 40 acres of landscaped gardens and park land, bordered by the River Stour. It was originally the home of

In this Issue

SOJOURN AT ETTINGTON PARK	1
A NEW BEGINNING	5
THE NATION'S ADVANCE CAN BE MEASURED BY THE STATUS OF ITS WOMEN	6
A DAY OUT AT SKINDLES	8

SOJOURN AT ETTINGTON PARK...



Norman Leonard Hammond

the Shirley family and has been associated with them since the Domesday Book. They are one of Warwickshire's oldest families whose lineage, by uninterrupted male descent, can be traced back over a thousand years to the Domesday Book of 1086 and beyond.

The Manor House of Ettington, or more anciently known 'Eatingdon' derived from "Ea" in old English, signifying water, and "Dune" an ascending ground, is built at the extreme end of the parish, on the north-eastern bank of the river Stour, which is the division between the counties of Warwick and Worcester.

There was a large kitchen garden, stables, a farm run by Mr. and Mrs. Wells and their children David and Pat, a large park three quarters to a mile long. There was also the remains of a church which in the old days, was attended by the villagers. A disused grass tennis court was also visible hundred yards from the house.

Sixty yards from the front of the house flowed the River Stour and over this was a small bridge leading to a path, which would take you across the fields to the local village about a mile away.

There were two resident families on the Estate, they were Mr. and Mrs. Pat Haylock, and Mr. and Mrs. George Mumford and their boy, and they looked after the produce in the kitchen, garden and general maintenance of the property and grounds.

The approach from the main road for about half a mile was through a rough winding road through forestry, and this became a somewhat tricky journey when it was pitch black and car lights, were masked for the duration of the War.

Rabbits abounded in plenty and there were deer and some snakes, particularly in the underground passages, which ran underneath the lawns (probably used when the family wished to make a quick exit in times of political or religious strife). On the ground floor of the house was a portico and entrance hall, which had a large open fireplace. Over the fireplace was the family motto "Loyale Je Suis" which was considered a very sensible motto as one could be "loyal" to any reigning King or Queen!

The ground floor also consisted of a very large lounge, a library, music room, a dining room, a billiard room, a study, a gunroom, a small reception room, a small chapel, a large kitchen at the back of the house, a small outhouse containing the generator, which created the lighting, and heating for the house.

In the lounge and dining rooms were some very fine paintings by well-known artists such as Hogarth, Lawrence, etc.

There were about 20 bedrooms on the first and second floors and at the back of the house.

The Staff of Tata Limited occupied the various rooms. K. P. Mehta, Norman Redford, Saklatvala, and C. H. B. Lee were in the lounge.

The Steel Department women were in the Billiard Room, the Accounts and Mills typists were in the Library. The General Accounts were in the Study, the Shipping Department in a room at the back of the house, General Office in the Gunroom. Miss High the telephonist and Miss Scarborough were in the Reception Room.

All meals were had in the Dining Room where Mr. and Mrs. K. P. Mehta and Mr. and Mrs. Redford and their son Ian and

A memento presented to Norman Hammond by J. R. D. Tata on the 75th Anniversary of Tata Limited in 1982.



SOJOURN AT ETTINGTON PARK...

daughter Kathleen sat at separate tables and the rest of the Staff sat round a very long dining table.

The Staff were well settled in Ettington Park, the married couples in their own rooms and the single girls in a long room, which was called the Dormitory. The single lads were on the second floor as well as Mrs. K. P. Mehta's house cleaner and two village girls, who did the house cleaning and helped the cook.

The Staff were kept very busy during office hours as the requirements for India were still many and Tata Limited also made purchases for Tata Chemicals, National Radio and Engg. Co., Indian Standard Metal Co., and Pickers Limited.

J. R. D. Tata would be present for important conferences in London or Ettington Park. As a consequence the Steel Company supplied pig iron to various steel works in the UK; David Colville Ltd., in Scotland, John Summers & Sons in Chester, Dorman Long in Middlesbrough, Stewarts & Lloyds in

Corby, and Llanelli Steel Works in Wales.

Alabaster, Stray and Clogg were Tata Limited's Auditors for many years. During the War, Fred Stray would come to Ettington Park for a week or so and do the complete audit. When asked if the books were balanced and were told we were five pounds out, he would shake his head and say: "All is not what it may seem. Skimmed milk masquerading for cream."

On occasions the routine of the office was temporarily upset when Mr. Wells' bull would appear in front of the house or cows drifted by.

Marriages in the Staff seemed to occur quite frequently. Edgar Gardner married Edith High, Eddie Whatling married Margery Linge, Len Hammond married Frances Scarborough and Beram Saklatvala married Vera Matthews.

Saturday was a general exodus from the house, mostly to Shipston-on-Stour or to Stratford-upon-Avon by bus.



Another view of Ettington Park taken in 1946.

On one occasion Lady Ratan Tata came to England and brought Naval Tata's two boys, Jimmy and Ratan, and took them on holiday to Bognor, where Lady Tata bought a small portable radio for each boy.



*The picture on the left shows the Tatas Cricket Team at Ettington Park in the early years of the War:
Back Row from Left- George Mumforn (Assistant on the Estate), Dickie Blackie, Jim Durrant, K. P. Mehta, C. H. Lee.
Front Row from Left- Phillip (helped on the Estate), Norman Hammond, Edgar Gardner.*

SOJOURN AT ETTINGTON PARK...



An etching of 18, Grosvenor Place, by Denis Flanders, where Tata Limited is located today.

The history of 18, Grosvenor Place is rather interesting. Originally all this was farm land and when James II was hard-up, he sold it to a man called David. It was open country until about the middle of the Victorian period. Grosvenor Place was built between 1850 and 1860. It belonged to the Victorian era of architecture. It really is a Victorian gentleman's residence with the usual four stories and basement.

Another time, rumblings were heard coming from the driveway and suddenly two trucks appeared with Officers and vans with troops. Apparently, they were on manoeuvres and wanted to know if they could camp overnight. It was arranged that the Officers bed down in the front portico and all the troops to camp in the fields around.

In 1942, Lee and Whatling went to London and opened a small office at 125 Piccadilly, to order materials and engage personnel for Tata Aircraft. They were assisted in this matter by W. S. Shackleton and Co., who were on the same floor and were specialists in the Aircraft industry.

The Germans were using their "V" bombs on London. When they stepped up their night bombing on various cities it was decided that two men should patrol the outside of Ettington Park for say, two or three hour shifts during the night time. On the night of the raid on Coventry we heard a number of planes returning and the whole area lit up as hundreds of incendiary bombs exploded. All the Staff ran frantically around with buckets of sand to stamp out the flares.

Some time afterwards, a number of Officers and men of the Pioneer Corps., arrived to prepare a Prison Camp on

some of the Park land (which included the cricket pitch) and after the camps were established the Italian prisoners arrived. They settled in and made a concert hall, and were very deft at making finger rings from odd bits of metal.

To prevent the guards from feeling isolated from their families, they were invited to a social or dance evening in the house and a cup of tea.

One evening, Mrs. Mehta suggested we have an Indian evening, and she gave all the women a sari to wear.

After the Italian prisoners left, the German prisoners arrived. They were far more unfriendly but were good workers on the farms. Needless to say, the Staff had nothing much to do with them.

Edgar Gardner, who had been called up in the R.A.F., returned to Ettington Park being released on medical grounds. Mrs. Jeapes was a music teacher and Miss Olive Bristow (came to work for the Accounts Department) was also a fine pianist. They would with Mrs. Carmen have their musical evenings. Mr. Mehta and Mr. Redford were keen philatelists. Mr. Mehta had a fine collection of world stamps and Mr. Redford only collected Great Britain stamps.



The photograph on the right shows the Staff of Tata Limited in July 1947.

Due to the shortage of petrol and general transport restrictions, the Staff were not able to see much of Warwickshire or its neighbouring counties, Worcestershire and Gloucestershire.

In 1945, Tata Limited prepared to move their office to 125, Piccadilly.

A NEW BEGINNING

1.3.07

My dear RD,

I am now busy about the London Office. First, (E. M.) Slater is regularly with me. He began by coming late and going early. I quietly represented to him that one of his duties will be to see that there is somebody at the office every day during office hours – 10 to 5; and how could he enforce regular hours unless he himself gave more time. He said that he meant to be regular when he took over charge from me; but he has since been coming full time. Also, he told me that he wishes our terms with him to be kept strictly private....

I have also agreed that he may take a Directorship if he can get one. Kilburn (& Co.), R. Miller, E. Miller, Chalmers are all very well pleased that Slater has joined us. At first, Slater seemed slow but he has now read up the bulk of the correspondence and has picked up the threads very well. He knows my views of all the parties; and I take his advice on nearly every part of our correspondence; and his advice seems always sound. What I write in the other letter about Gilbert & Wallace is derived from him; and he is helpful to get information as to what is thought by people about our Schemes. I have taken him to (Mr.) Holland (Solicitor) also.

The office room lease will be for one year only; but we shall take over the rooms only when we are ready to begin work. I received your wire sanctioning the name Tata Ltd. When I sit with Holland to work it out, I find lots of difficulties confronting me. For example the courts here have ruled that unless the Memorandum of Association states explicitly that the Company can draw bills and can be drawn upon for bills, it cannot do so; therefore the Memorandum appears to be copious and take full powers for everything before hand. The alteration of the Memorandum is an expensive process the cheapest way being to liquidate the Company and form

another. Again, there is the question how our Company is to be managed. Creditors and banks will require to know Slater's authority on various points. The conclusion we have come to is to have a Board of Directors composed of the following: DJT (Dorabji Tata), RDT (Ratanji Dadabhoy Tata), RJT (Ratan Tata), BJP (Burjorji Padshah), Fardunji Kanga and (E.M.) Slater as Managing Director and Secretary. The last alone will carry any salary or fee. There will be a provision in the Memorandum stating that a resolution signed by one Director and the Managing Director should have the validity of a resolution at a meeting of Directors. Slater would thus have wide powers given him by the Board and instructions given him outside those powers. Another provision will be that 4/5th of shareholders can insist on buying out 1/5th or any suitable fraction at par; and that Directors can refuse to register any transfers, at their discretion. But when any of the beneficial shareholders writes to retire from your firm, he cannot leave the London Branch without selling his shares. Perhaps a private agreement between partners relating to this emergency may meet the difficulty. For the present my idea is to have 10 shareholders; 3 of them will be the 3 Tatas, and 7 others here with the normal of a single share back. The shares may be taken to be pounds 1 each, with 4 paid up and there will be 10,000 shares in all but there will be powers to increase the capital. It is not impossible that before this reaches you, I may not have registered the Company, if so will you give your approval of these arrangements or suggest changes?

I propose to open a bank account with the National Bank of India on behalf of the new Company to the extent of pounds 1,000 in current deposit do you think that will suffice...

With kind regards
Yours sincerely,
B. J. Padshah



Copy of letter written by Burjorji Padshah to R. D. Tata dated March 1, 1907, regarding the establishment of Tata Limited, London.

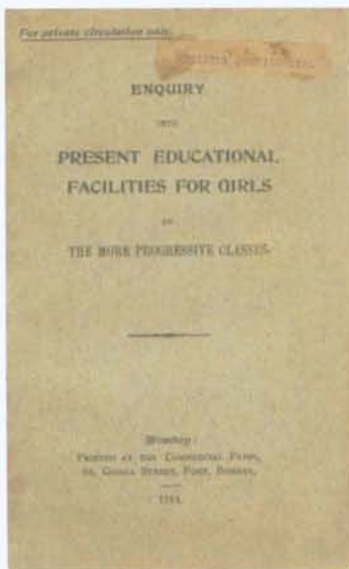
"Spotting talent is the first step. Attracting it is the next. Holding on to talent is even more difficult."

J.R.D. Tata

R. D. Tata (left) and Burjorji Padshah (right).



THE NATION'S ADVANCE CAN BE MEASURED BY THE STATUS OF ITS WOMEN



At Sir Dorabji Tata's instance, in 1914, an enquiry was carried out into the present educational facilities for girls of the more progressive classes. Extracts from the Memorandum drawn up by the Board of Education, London, on the views of Sir Dorabji Tata with reference to the education of girls in the Bombay Presidency is reproduced below:

It is commonplace on every platform and in every debating society that a nation cannot be more civilised or more enlightened than its women. The force compelling boys to school is much stronger than in the case of girls, who can still, more easily, and, as some think, more happily, get through life uneducated.

Dorabji Tata was dissatisfied with the present arrangement for the education of girls in the upper and more progressive classes of society in the City and Presidency of Bombay. He considered that the chief defect of female education in India was that it did very little for the formation of character. The object of education should be to imbue girls with a sense of responsibility for duties, which as wives, mothers and members of society they will have to perform. He was anxious that something should be done to improve matters, but was clear that nothing really effective is likely to be accomplished until the whole question of what is required and how that need can best be supplied has first been examined. Dorabji Tata was also anxious that special attention should be paid to the question on the part that should be played in the general education system by the training of girls in the

management of their homes.

Speaking of the importance of girls' education and of the respect who have come out into public life are listened to, a distinguished judge of such matters says: "If there is any country in the East about which it would be safe to prophesy that women will take a leading part in the regeneration of the society, it surely is India. There are treasures of devotion still unseen and undeveloped which, as life becomes less secluded, will be used not merely for domestic but also for the public good. The Indian nature has an instinctive reverence for those gentler qualities which make true womanhood so beautiful."

The experience gained from boys' schools, are favourable to the laying now of sound foundations for girls' education, the movement, sometimes described as the Renaissance of Girls' Education, which has been going on in England. It is in girls' schools that the English educational quickening first took place, and among women teachers that experiments in method are tested. It is here also that the maximum of zeal and vitality is found. The formative period of women's education in India falling later than that of boys will have the benefit of this movement. If a national system can now be struck out in tune with the best aspirations of the several communities, and in line also with modern scientific ideas of education untold goodwill come to future generations.

A model school, or schools, founded now in any of the big cities, but especially in Bombay, where public opinion is most ripe, would have far reaching effects.

"In Tatapuram, the Tata Oil Mills Company was one of the pioneers in employing women in the laboratories and in the administrative offices. At the outset there was considerable resistance to this development and on the day the first woman employee was appointed as a clerk in the main office, the poor girl was harassed by the incessant ringing of call bells by her fellow male clerks as a sign of protest and sabotage! Today, the employment of women is taken as a matter of course."

J.R.D. Tata

THE NATION'S ADVANCE CAN BE MEASURED BY THE STATUS OF ITS WOMEN...

What is wanted is a conspicuous lead, the tracing of a new furrow in which others can follow, a model school in which character-training is of first importance, and everything else, mental discipline and domestic arts alike, are subordinate.

According to recent returns there were said to be 135 High Schools for Girls in India. The investigator visited over 100 Institutions. Most of these had some kind of High School Department, but often it only amounted to an occasional girl passing the Matriculation Examination, and many schools bore little resemblance to schools described by the same name in England.

In every school visited, an attempt was made to get accurate information on the following points: the curriculum; the physical development of the girls; the staff; the voluntary activities of the girls; the aim of the school; cost; and buildings.

An attempt was also made to discover the views of the parents and the effect of the schooling on the girls' home life afterwards. A few schools keep a record of work done by the girls after they leave the school. As a rule each girl just passes "her hour upon the stage and then is heard no more."

A curriculum wholly devoted to domestic subjects would not in the hands of the present teachers produce the much talked of, much sought "Good wives and mothers." Cookery lies no nearer to the heart of education than does Geometry. I doubt if it is half so valuable. It is contact with the liberally educated woman who makes every subject serve her one end, the building up of character and the increasing of mental grasp, that

educates the child. Proposals for getting better results in secondary schools must however be made later.

The following conclusions were arrived at at the end of the enquiry:

- Girls' education has come to a critical point. The old order is changing, giving place to a demand for an education more closely related to the needs of adult life. There is a great deal of talk and a great deal of real enthusiasm, but there is a shortage of leaders.
- Few Indian women are ready to do original or constructive work in education, and the best type of qualified Englishwoman has not yet begun to come to India except to do Mission work.
- The spontaneous Indian movement, which is the most hopeful element in education today, does not desire propagandist missionaries. What it needs is able women imbued with a spirit of service, silent as to their religion, except in so far as their actions speak for them.
- Bombay Presidency is clearly the place for a forward movement in women's education to take place. The conditions in Bombay are more favourable than elsewhere for a model school in which to test how far an education largely Western in form can be used as a preparation for Eastern life.
- Considering the small number of women who go to college, good schools are even more important than colleges for women.



Sir Dorabji Tata.

"I was stunned by the idea of this young man (Dadabhai Naoroji), that the best and perhaps the only way he could repay the poor was by personally helping to educate young children of poor families who otherwise would not have any education at all. The idea of this young man calling on people with a friend, persuading parents and guardians to allow them to sit on their verandahs and to teach the three R's to their girls is to me extraordinarily beautiful..."

J.R.D. Tata
on receiving the
Dadabhai Naoroji
Memorial Award for 1988

A DAY OUT AT SKINDLES



Lady Meherbai and Sir Dorabji Tata on Board going down the Thames to Skindles.



A photograph of Hotel Skindles, Maidenhead taken in the 1950s.

In the late 1920s and the 1930s, Tata Limited had many visitors and representatives of Tata Companies to whom they gave assistance as required by way of finance, hotel bookings and travel arrangements.

The most notable of the visitors were Sir Dorabji and Lady Meherbai Tata accompanied by their personal doctor, his personal assistant, Mr. Muzumdar and his valet, Mr. Warlikar.

Sir Dorabji and Lady Tata were keen tennis followers and were debenture holders of the All England Lawn Tennis Club. These debentures entitled them to two Centre Court seats during the Wimbledon fortnight. For a few years they did not come

to England and Tata Limited were allowed to apply for the Wimbledon tickets.

They were also Members of various Clubs. Sir Dorabji had also been a member of the "The Crocodile Club" at Cambridge and one year he presented them with a memento on which was inscribed "To the Young Crocs from an Old Croc".

In 1930, Sir Dorabji and Lady Meherbai decided that it would be nice for the Staff to have a day's outing with them. It was arranged that they would go down the River Thames to the well-known Skindles Hotel at Maidenhead, where they had lunch, played Rounders with gusto and went on the river in punts according to their preference. A thoroughly enjoyable day.



The Staff of Tata Limited, Back Row: Miss Burton, Miss Hickford, Mrs. N. Redford, Miss Sheppard, Mrs. Mehta, Lady Meherbai Tata, Mrs. Kitchen, Romer, Miss Stark, Jeapes, Miss Jeapes, Miss Bridle, Whatling, Smith, Whitaker. Second Row: Mrs. Carmen, Mrs. Romer, Mrs. A. Redford, Sir Dorabji Tata, Lady Ratan Tata, Mrs. Whitaker, Miss Linge, A. Redford. Front Row: Mrs. N. Redford, Hammond, Bert Beare, N. M. Muzumdar, Miss Stowe, Edgar Gardner, C. H. Lee, K. P. Mehta.

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