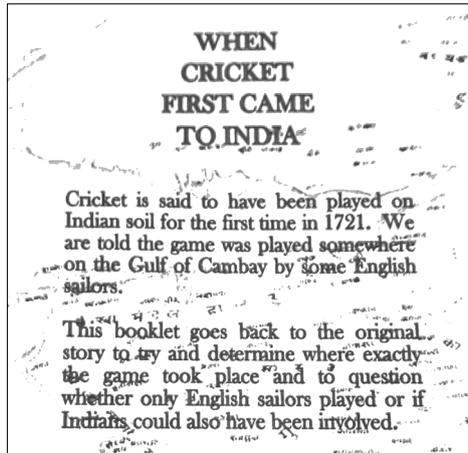


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FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK

Glimpses of Lucknow's Historical Past

World Heritage Day 2023 brought two heritage lovers from Lucknow to share their collection of old letters that their ancestors wrote showcasing the interesting events, history as well as the daily life of this once famed princely state. Read more about it in Ms. Arati Desai's article that encapsulates an evening that held the audience spell bound.

Cricket fans would love to delve into Ms. Sandhya Gajjar's substack about the connection that Baroda has on the international as well as the national scene. Many of the little known facts about this game will gladden the hearts of the sports loving community in our city.

Are you a shopaholic or a need based shopper. Either way its difficult to imagine life without a bazaar and our city boasts of some of the most interesting bazaars that bring vibrancy to the streets. We bring you an interesting article by Ms. Pranjali Ambekar on how the bazaars of Vadodara fit into the urban landscape of our city.

We would love to receive feedback from our readers about what they would like to read in future issues and if you have something special to share about heritage, do send in your articles and photos too.

We look forward to seeing you at our upcoming events in large numbers.

Happy reading

Avi Sabavala

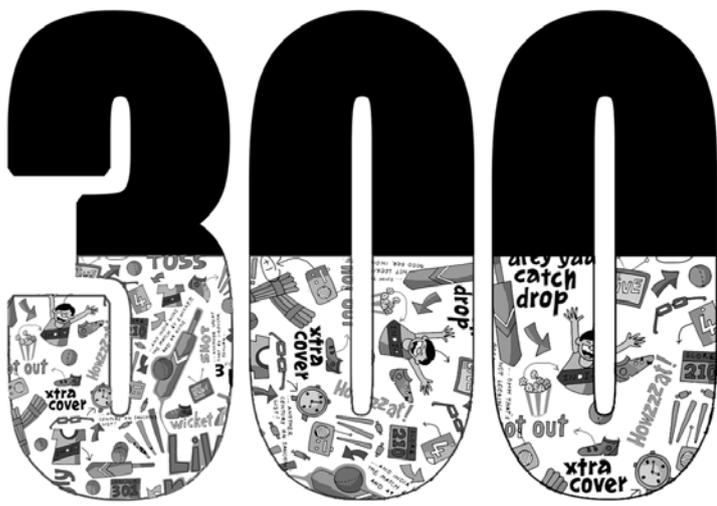
Letters from Lucknow

Heritage trust held its annual Virasat lecture on the 14th of April in celebration of the World Heritage Day which is celebrated on the 18th of April worldwide. Held at the Laksmi Vilas Palace Banquet Hall to an audience of more than 100 heritage enthusiasts, the Letters from Lucknow, was a performance in Hindi, English and Urdu. The endearing performance by scientist Saman Habib, and Sanjay Muttoo, a media professional from Delhi, transported a rapt audience through the history of the land of Lucknow. This reading of private letters sought out so many facets of the city, its people, and relationships. The letters that the performers read were all real and went back to the time of the Sepoy Mutiny in 1857 moving down history till the present date. What was exceptional was the unknown stories and experiences of well-known personalities which came to life in the performance.

The narrative was enhanced with a treasury of visuals of original manuscripts, letters and photographs as well as audio clips, which captured the audience throughout this amazing journey through the history of Lucknow.

Arati Desai





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anniversary of **Cricket** in India? Forget *Lagaan*...

The IPL finals are just over. Gujarat Titans (the name does not indicate that the players are largely Gujarati or even from the state of Gujarat; yes, the captain is a Gujjubhai and

from our small town, alright) did top the league lists but when push came to shove, Dhoni's yellow team turned the tables. And the one to do so was another Gujjubhai, though not from my small town but another small town! Three cheers for small towns, then! So what better time than now to do some *gupshup* on this crazy sport that sends people in crazier frenzies?

The colonial game first found support amongst the princely states when the young Maharaja's and Princes took to it as fish to water. Baroda was no different. Sayajirao Gaekwad III's youngest son, Shivajirao was an excellent cricketer. Many say that if he had not passed away so young, he would have eclipsed the great Ranji. It was for him that the Maharaja laid down the picturesque Motibaug ground in the Laxmi Vilas Palace campus. (His descendants, I am told, live in the Shiv Mahal Palace on the edge of Race Course.)

The next generation of the Gaekwads all played cricket at various levels, reaching selection in the Baroda Ranji Trophy team in the *laissez faire* manner in which team selections were made in those days; but most enjoyed playing local league games. Mamasahab Ghorpade, an all-round sportsman, with an in-depth intellectual understanding of the game and a National Selector, often played for New India Industries as he was a close friend of Mr. Ghia, the owner. New India had a small cricket ground behind their factory on Jetalpur Road. They fielded a strong team in local matches with J H Vin, Limaye and Kadam (all playing for Baroda in the Ranji Trophy in those days) forming its strong backbone. The Gaekwad brothers – Ranjitsinh and Sangramsinh -- played for Motibaug Cricket Club or sometimes, the Baroda Rayon Cricket Club. The eldest brother, Fatehsinhrao, was more into cricket administration.

Since this ground was quite close to my home, I would often cycle there on winter weekend afternoons to watch a really good game. At one such game, the batsman had played a low hook shot and the ball was up in the air and hurtling towards me. It would be a four, there was no question. The one fielder in the way of that ball (Sangramsinh), moved quickly backwards and before you could say, "Aai la!", he just twisted his torso and plucked the ball out of thin air! You could literally hear the collective gasp that went up from the handful of spectators along the boundary line, followed by a long applause. Remember this was at a time when physical fitness was not really as important as it is these days, the outfield was hard and dusty, and one could rarely see turn-and-tumble acrobatics during catching or stopping the ball from crossing the boundary that is such a familiar part of the game now.

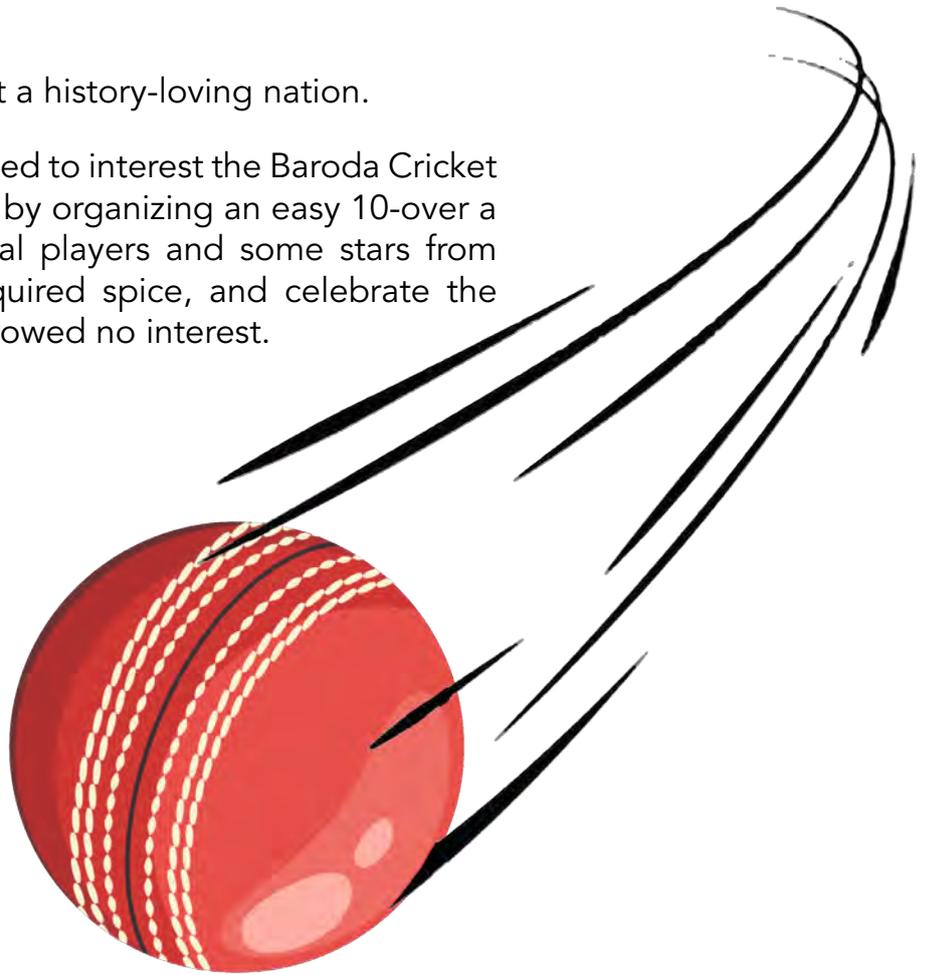
Anyway, so much for local cricket to create the ambience ...

In December 2014, a short, thin, and an immensely enthusiastic Englishman from Cambridge by the name of John Drew came to see me in Baroda, on the recommendation of Dr. J Birje-Patil, my erstwhile professor at the University, then in the USA. Drew is a poet and author but his keen interest is in the history of cricket. He is also an ardent researcher, following a lead relentlessly till he gets to the bottom of it all. Birje wanted me to help him find and fit the last couple of jigsaw pieces on his theory that Cricket first came to India when a game was played in December of 1721, somewhere near the Gulf of Cambay, on the banks of the river Dhadhar, near Jambusar, not too far from Baroda. That would make it Cricket's 300th anniversary in India in 2021. A committed Indophile, Drew was hoping that a cricket-loving country like India would make something of it.

It didn't, unfortunately. We are not a history-loving nation.

Sameer Khera of Heritage Trust, tried to interest the Baroda Cricket Association, to mark the occasion by organizing an easy 10-over a side match at Jambusar with local players and some stars from the Baroda team to add the required spice, and celebrate the momentous occasion. But BCA showed no interest.

Actually we made a mistake. We should have gone to the Right Honourable Jaybhai Amitbhai of BCCI, and sold him the idea of how Cricket came to India, setting foot FIRST on the blessed land of GUJARAT! Now that man would have caught on the import of that fact in a jiffy, and got the other Amitbhai, in his deep sexy baritone, invite the cricketing world to Gujarat, *Jambusar mein cricket nahi khela to kahaan khela, hein?*



Well, back to John Drew. His curiosity was tweaked by a 1737 book, *A History of the Indian Wars* by Clement Downing, an Englishman who came to India in 1715 hoping to be employed by the East India Company but ended up being a gunner in the Mughal army. He left India in 1723 after which he is supposed to have written this book, 'a rambling narrative ... full of vivid incidents told in convincing detail.' that first game of cricket on Indian soil. Downing was serving as Lieutenant under Captain Herring of the ship *Emilia* and its escort, a galley named *Hunter* that was sent towards Cambay in December 1721 to protect small merchant vessels from pirates who had successfully attacked such ships off the coast of Surat. The two vessels negotiate the silted-up estuary of the Dhadhar river and moored the ships near Jambusar Port, until the tide would come in and the ships would be able to sail out easily. The captains and sailors disembarked the vessels planning to go to nearby 'Jambouzeer', Cambay, or the Tankaria settlement. Drew believes that it is on the Dhadhar riverside, just where the agricultural land begins, that must be the likeliest site of the sailors' camp and where they played that first game of cricket on Indian soil.

So, now that the 'ground' was somewhat identified, the next question was who formed the teams that played the game? From Downing's complex narrative, Drew gathered that there must have been about 20-25 Europeans (mainly English) and 35-40 Indians (Kolis, largely, Bhandaris and Gogharis, maybe some from the Maratha army. Downing notes that Gogharis were the most courageous men in the empire, and Kolis were known for their independence of spirit and industriousness as farmers).

The game was still relatively new, even in England. Also, in those days, playing games were seen as a recreation and form of exercise for those in active military service, the main form of employment then. But Christmas was approaching and Lt. Rathbone from *Emilia* was interested in shooting a few peacocks for Christmas dinner after taking permission from the locals. So a game of coarse cricket was organized on the scrubland with a curved bat, a 2-stump wicket and bails, (roughly devised by the ship's carpenter from the wooded plantations on the shore); what Drew wonders is, what did they do for a ball for underarm bowling? No one knows.

The game was played for many days watched by large numbers of the locals, mainly the Kolis (brandishing their swords in imitation of the batting gestures made by the players!). Important persons from the nearby towns and villages also arrived to see this new game, in noisy processions but in peace. The game appeared to have established a spirit of conviviality and when the Company men went to town for provisions, especially the peacocks, they were welcomed happily, even more so when they paid whatever was demanded for the provisions (Rs 20 each for two bullocks, Rs 2 each for two sheep, a dozen fowls, several sacks of flours and some butter!)

So did the game hook the Indians, 300 years back? Maybe, maybe not.

But writes Drew, When cricket surfaces in India a century later, the political context has changed and the game is beginning to be used in other ways by those beyond a boundary. But that is in the future ...

And what a future! Even the ladies are playing and raking in the cash. Cricket is no longer a game; it is a huge industry.

Sandhya Gajjar

(This article was first uploaded on Sandhya Gajjar's Substack on May 31, 2023. It is part of a larger series, Small Town Someone, where she uploads a new piece every week. If you have enjoyed this piece and would like to subscribe (it is free, for the time being) to Sandhya's Substack, please send her an email on sandhyagajjar@gmail.com and she will send you the links. Thank you.)



Bazaars of Vadodara

What comes to your mind when you hear the word “bazaar”?

‘Chaos’, ‘ambiguity’, ‘disorder’ are the words which might come to an individual’s mind while talking about bazaars. But why do the bazaars in India give us an impression of disorder?

Lively, thriving, and ever-growing chaos in a bazaar or a shopping street has its own smell, sound, movement, pace, feel and a distinctive rhythm. Throughout the ages, bazaars and shopping hubs in India have attracted people from different backgrounds, cultures, and classes. Daily changing patterns and cultures have been developing alongside bazaars. Thus, creating a unique lifestyle, an identity of its own and depicting the local way of life of the people residing around.

Markets have been acting as the centre of exchange in the Indian towns and cities. Indian cities usually engage in informal vending either on streets or near old city landmarks which depict the cities and their ‘Indianness.’ Markets are examples of a regular point of convergence because they reinvent themselves in the same spots every day.

Talking about the city of Vadodara you will find quite a few well-known places where the buying and selling activities take place, namely, Mangal Bazaar, Nava Bazaar, Khanderao Market, Madar Market, Hathikhana Wholesale market and many more. Retail practices in our city have seen years of developing, shifting, and transforming. Not to forget the seasonal or yearly markets like Tibetan Market, Holi and Diwali festival markets where the city streets and important junctions are bustling with crowd. These street vending practices in the city, act as a continuation of the culture of informal vending in the bazaars.

This story however, is an excerpt from one of my visits to the bazaars in the old city area of Vadodara, when I was researching about bazaars and markets of the city. Bazaars and markets of the city? Do you think there is a difference between ‘bazaar’ and ‘market’?



The old city of Baroda, when the city was smaller and people resided around and nearer, the bazaars were everyday stop for their basic needs as well as were affordable. Temporary set ups of bazaars, functioning on particular day of the week were also one of the typology functioning. Streets sprawling across the old city darwazas had hundreds of stalls and vendors selling their products. Usually functioning on Friday, the bazaar was known as Shukravari Bazaar. The purpose of the bazaar to only function on a particular day of the week was that everyone gets everything at the same place on the same day.

One of my experiences of these old city bazaars was at Mangal Bazaar. Surrounded by Sursagar lake, Nyay Mandir and Lehripura Gate the bazaar is the busiest pocket in the old city. As you enter the bazaar you will witness a sequence of activities, chaos, bargaining between the seller and the local resident of the city, everyday place-making, and constantly yelling vendors "Dhaaiso ka ek," "Teenso ka do" and bells and whistles trying to grab your attention. Bazaars in India are an interesting example of coexistence and peaceful collaboration. The following series of photographs depict the local essence of the bazaar.



As you further move towards the Mandvi gate from the Lehripura gate with the constant bustle of vehicles and vendors, you encounter Madar market, a wholesale cloth market at a walking distance of 1km. Another market typology that had come up during the older times was the selling of specialized products. Developing as a local identity the specialized markets sold specific products which were usually run by vendors of specific communities. The markets like these frequently functioned in built or planned areas and acted as a hub at landmarks, nodes, or locations in the city. The market attracts visitors from all over the city as well as tourists for buying specific products. Don't forget to visit the market for all your ethnic cloth needs the next time you visit the area.

Changing times have brought the cities to swell and spread away from the centre of the city. Cost factor and the need of specialized local products is only what causes people to travel all the way to old city bazaars. As people do not prefer to spend as much time shopping or commuting to the old city bazaars, the concept of street vending proves to be more convenient for people now a days. Vendors on the street usually attract commuters and people on the go. Buyers stop, buy, pay, and leave. Street vending and other temporary set ups selling daily need products have become favourable for people living in urban areas of the city.



The story does not end here. Temporary markets such as seasonal, weekly or festival markets functioning at on the streets in important areas of the city provide you with a completely different experience. You encounter street vendors who have occupied the spaces as well as some vendors on foot trying to sell the same item. One of the examples for this activity can be the Holi festival market at Chakli Circle or any stretch of roadside space with multiple vegetable vendors lined up. Packed with all sorts of vending activities on one side and heavy flowing traffic on the roads these set ups act as a major crowd magnet affecting the pedestrian and vehicular traffic, where you are constantly worried about your parked vehicle at the roadside.

A sense of imitation is seen in the vending practices at the city level as a continuation of the culture of informal vending in bazaars and the city areas adapting to this practice. These temporary activities functioning at a particular frequency around the year have been an important factor to identify the particular vending spots that are being occupied. People tend to find a place to live and work, whether it is in an old city or a new city, a dense urban region or a place with lots of open space. However, what differentiates is the nature and manner in which functions are performed.

Make sure to give yourself a chance to visit the local bazaars and markets in your city, and I am sure even though you are visiting the same place you will experience a different world altogether every time you visit.

Pranjali Ambekar

