

FIREside

The House Magazine of the Thermax Group Volume 42 No. 4 October-December 2012



Editor
A.M. Roshan

Assistant Editor
Natasha Rodricks-Naidu

Design
Shashi Karmarkar

Production & Circulation
Vilas Bade

Printed at
Vyoma Graphics, Pune



Cover

It was only yesterday we treasured them – these cassettes and video tapes and long playing records. Their music and stories defined our growing up years. As they endlessly replayed our yearnings, we didn't mind their scratchy tunes and flickering images. For they gave us enchantment without pause.

Today they are minor details in the junk heap from bygone years. Only some have gained the mystique to be displayed as objects worthy of a collector's gaze. In the meantime, technology marches on in ever new avatars, too impatient even to notice epitaphs scribbled for its earlier selves.

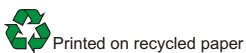
Photo : Sameer Karmarkar

Back Cover
**A.S. Bhatena's
letter to
young
recruits**

Comment

“An expert is someone who has made all the mistakes that can be made, but in a very narrow field.”

– Niels Bohr



Correspondents : J. Natesan Heating Vikas Tripathi Cooling Prasanna Hiwase Services Sourabh Kekre B&H Arjun Baidyaray Power Varsha Patekar Enviro Chetan Sathe WWS Amit Shah Chemical N.Haridas TECC Kavita Naidu HR Sneha Patil IR S.Chandak Administration Aditi Vakil BTG Jenny Alexander Finance Asmita Kshirsagar RTIC Kirti Pitale Mumbai Rama Subramanian Delhi Swati Aditya Kolkatta Laxmi Gupta Chennai Ami Patel Savli

Fireside is the quarterly house magazine of Thermax Limited, Pune. For private circulation only. Company related news/features may be reproduced only with the permission of the Editor. Address : Thermax Limited, Thermax House, 14 Mumbai Pune Road, Wakdewadi, Pune 411 003, India. Tel : (020) 25542263 Fax : (020) 25541226 *Fireside* is also hosted on the website : www.thermaxindia.com Email : roshan@thermaxindia.com □ natasha.naidu@thermaxindia.com

CONTENTS

2 What's New ?

Thermax bags the contract for NMDC's 80 MW captive power plant ■ Biggest order for WWS from a steel plant ■ New manufacturing facilities for bi-drum boiler and steam efficiency products ■ Latest from the solar energy business front ■ Enviro set for its biggest retrofit job in the utilities sector.

6 Expressions

Meher Pudumjee compliments employees who have completed 25 years of service; and exhorts employees of companies to do their bit to make the environment safe for women at home and at work.

8 Up Close

Ashish Vaishnav shares his China experience and talks about the way ahead for Thermax's global business, in a chat with A.M. Roshan.

10 Round up/Limelight

Unny receives Asia Innovator Award 2012 ■ Gajanan Kulkarni takes over as the Company Secretary of Thermax ■ Navras, a musical performance in Shanghai ■ Thermax football team bags Champion's Trophy ■ RTIC team rafts down Kundalika ■ Thermax felicitates its veterans ■ Savli team reaches out to school children ■ Customer seminar on solar thermal options ■ and accolades for our employees and children.

19 Focus

Spotlight on the Employee Co-operative Credit Society, Thermax's 43 year old institution.

21 Signposts

Paul Theroux on the pleasures of railways and how mass tourism is turning journeys into predictable and safe like-home experiences. Excerpted from a 1976 essay in his book 'Sunrise with Seamonsters'.

27 Voices

Sampada Kulkarni shares her experience as a volunteer with an NGO that reaches out to victims of human trafficking.

28 Slice-of-life

On sending online assassins for the kill ■ Stories written in just six words ■ and a newspaper example of how to add insult to injury.

Thermax to build 80 MW captive power plant for NMDC

Thermax has won a ₹ 503 crore EPC order from NMDC (National Mineral Development Corporation) for setting up a captive power plant for its new three million ton per annum integrated steel plant in Central India.

Thermax will design, engineer, construct and commission the project on a turnkey basis. The supply of equipment includes three 160 ton per hour boilers that use multiple fuels – blast furnace and coke oven gas from the steel process and light diesel oil – and two 40 MW each steam turbines. Steam from the boilers will be used to blow air into the blast furnace and to generate 80 MW of power. The order also includes water demineraliser plant, cooling water system, air conditioning and ventilation system, compressed air

system, fire fighting facilities, emergency DG set, etc. This project is designed as a zero discharge plant. An effluent treatment plant based on reverse osmosis will recycle water.

Says Unny, “Award of this contract is another testimony to Thermax’s ability to configure a complex energy solution at an economical cost. We won it against competition from both domestic and international players.”

Till date, Thermax has contracted over 75 turnkey power projects based on various fuels including domestic and imported coal, washery rejects, petcoke, waste heat from various processes, renewable energy including biomass and solar, waste gases, naphtha and natural gas.

**WHAT'S
NEW?**

*An earlier project
executed for the client :
water management*



Biggest ever order for Water Business from a steel plant

Thermax’s water business received its single largest order valued at ₹ 93 crore for one of the steel majors in South India for its expansion project.

Thermax WWS will design, build and commission a complete water management system for the steel unit’s captive power plant. The system comprises cooling towers, re-circulating water pump house, demineralisation plant, effluent recycling plant with recycling, and side stream filtration system for the 2x60 MW plant.

Yard piping along with associated civil works and piping system are also covered under the scope of the project.

This is a repeat order from the client. Earlier, Thermax had installed systems for mill scale filtration, which today recycles 20 million litres of water every day for process requirements, after cleaning it of pollutants (mill scales). The WWS team also installed a 7x350 cubic metres per hour side stream filtration plant for the cooling tower.



The Heating team with Phero and Unny. And the facility: increasing demand

Thermax reinforces its manufacturing strength

Heating Group's new bi-drum boiler plant at Savli

The new manufacturing plant for bi-drum boilers has started functioning at Thermax's Savli facility in Gujarat. Inaugurated by Phero Pudumjee, Director of Thermax, Unny flagged off the initial set of boilers from the plant on December 12th by signing off their invoices.

Bi-drum boilers in the range of 8 to 35 TPH, popularly named *Powermax*, are integral to the portfolio of Thermax's Heating Division that specialises in packaged boilers. They are extensively used by industries ranging from paper, distillery, food and edible oil to tyre, textile and pharma for their steam and



power requirements.

The new facility is in response to the increasing demand for the product. It was created in a year's time by a special task force headed by T. Remesan and supported by N.V. Belsare, Bhaskar Pathak and team. The facility can turn out 100 boilers a year.

The event was attended by Thermax's senior management and manufacturing teams.



IBR approved products at new Chakan Facility

The Service SBU of Cooling & Heating, focusing on steam efficiency products and solutions has set up a manufacturing unit in Chakan near Pune. The facility, equipped to produce 20,000 components in its first year of operation has received IBR approval to design and manufacture the following products : high pressure steam traps, strainers, condensate monitoring systems, modules, moisture separators and pressure reducing stations.

The manufacturing plant is equipped with

automatic machines for hydro-testing, air leakage testing, marking and component washing. It also has lapping, honing and demagnetizing machines. The records for manufacturing and testing, stored digitally can be retrieved easily.

Following the approvals, the SBU has successfully executed its first high pressure steam trap order for HPCL under IBR. The team is geared up to supply high pressure steam line accessories to the power and oil & gas sectors.

**Thermax's
growing
capabilities
in solar
energy
projects**

*Project for
lighting : grid
connected*

Power from St. Xavier's solar photovoltaic installation



Thermax's Solar SBU is steadily building a client list for both solar photovoltaic (PV) and solar thermal applications.

It has successfully commissioned a 40 kWp (kilwatt peak) PV based solar power project for lighting at St. Xavier's college, Mumbai. The grid synchronised project, aesthetically executed to blend with the building's rooftop is already a reference installation. Xavier's project comes in the wake of another PV based 30 kWp Power generation project installed at five centres of Prajapita Brahma Kumaris in South India. Three of these are with battery back-up and two are grid synchronised. With this order, Thermax's

solar PV installation base has touched 215 kWp. Darpana Academy of Performing Arts at Ahmedabad has also placed an order for a 5 kWp PV Power plant.

The SBU has made a breakthrough with a 10 kWp installation for Unilever's Khamgaon (Maharashtra) facility. The team is confident that this order will enable them to canvass business from other corporates who want optimal and clean energy solutions.

Thermax's credentials are backed by SPIA ratings, given by ICRA — a leading rating agency. In September, Thermax was recognised a channel partner by MNRE for off-grid and decentralized PV solutions.

*Solar dishes at the
Chakan plant :
prestigious project*

Work progressing on the solar thermal project for Mahindra & Mahindra, Nagpur



In the solar thermal space, the group is executing a prestigious project for Mahindra & Mahindra's farm equipments division, Nagpur. It will deploy 132 compound parabolic collectors (SolPac NI30) to provide hot water to wash and degrease components. This is the second project that Thermax is building for Mahindra. The earlier one, successfully

commissioned at the company's Chakan facility involved 70 parabolic dishes for LPG vapourisation and cooling for their paint shop processes. The success of these projects will effectively position Thermax to win other projects in the automotive sector where costs can be slashed by combining thermal and solar energy.

CRITICAL PACKAGES FOR RELIANCE'S SOLAR THERMAL POWER PROJECT



Thermax team installing the steam turbine : proven experience

Thermax's Power Division is providing critical equipment packages for the 125 MW solar thermal power plant developed by Reliance Infrastructure Limited in Rajasthan.

For this project, the largest in India, coming up at Dhursar, Pokhran, Areva provides the solar field and Siemens the turbine. Thermax's large power plant group will supply:

Balance of turbine island : Supply and erection of heaters, deaerator, power cycle pressure piping, pumps and other accessories within the power block area.

It also includes erection of moisture separator and the entire range of equipment housed in a technology building.

Mechanical balance of plant : Supply and erection of systems for main and auxiliary cooling water; compressed air; heating, ventilation and air-conditioning; fire fighting; instrumentation and civil works.

Thermax was chosen for its varied experience in the execution of power projects, sourcing and integrating equipment from across the world and its project execution capability.

Thermax Enviro bags its biggest ESP upgradation project

Thermax's air pollution control business (Enviro) has bagged an order for retrofit and upgradation of a BHEL electrostatic precipitator (ESP) installed in a power plant (1 X 210 MW) in West Bengal. This is its largest order in the utility power plant sector.

The ESP installed in early 1980, due to changes in coal quality and operating conditions, is not able to meet current emission norms of the Pollution Control Board (PCB). The power plant decided to upgrade the system to improve efficiency and availability, and to ensure compliance with

PCB norms. However, the retrofit inside a running power plant faces several challenges: limited space for expansion and access; a very short shut down period.

The Enviro experts will increase the size of the ESP and its collection area by revamping it and installing 12 additional fields to reduce particulate emission below 90 mg/Nm³.

The Enviro team will make maximum use of the existing foundations, support structure and ducting parts. Thermax will provide state-of-the-art ESP design under technical license from its technology partner, Balcke Dür, Germany.



In today's world of rapid change, it is difficult to imagine anyone completing 25 years of anything – in sports, organisations or even in a marriage! Many companies have started recognising employees who have spent just five years with them. Against this backdrop, I am delighted that Thermax has the ability to retain employees for over 25 years. It has been our practice to spend a day with those completing this milestone and hear their experiences. On the same day, we also invite their spouses for a felicitation programme.

Since we did not have a celebration for nearly three years, we had almost 85 people who reached this landmark, this year! It was a time to rejoice, thank and reminisce about the good times and think through what Thermax should retain from the past and where we need to change.

Twenty five years relates to $25 \times 300 \times 10 = 75,000$ hours invested by an individual – a major part of a productive lifetime. My sincere congratulations and thanks to each and every one of you. We are extremely happy and honoured to have you with us at Thermax. My thanks to all the spouses who play an important role in the lives and decisions of our employees. We are very grateful to all of you too. It makes us all feel very good to see your children well educated, many of them (especially women) becoming professionals; possessing your own home, a car and going on holidays.

At the felicitation, it was very touching to hear the various stories narrated. They felt aligned to an institution that is value based and values its employees. Everyone felt extremely proud to be part of an organisation that values freedom, empowerment and is not ostentatious; that believes in continuous training, where people can make mistakes without being made to feel small. The culture of innovation within the company helps people to take initiative without feeling scared. Our heightened attention to safety on the shop floor as well as at our customer sites was praised, as it reassures our people that the organisation truly cares. I was amused to hear that

Thermax's brand and credibility even help our employees to get bank loans a lot easier. It was extremely heartening that many of our people are involved individually and as a family in some social service or the other. They see a role model in Anu and are very keen to help others less fortunate than them.

One of our employees shared a thoughtful story. Over 20 years ago, he was told by his supervisor about 10 rupees lying on the shop floor. Though he looked for the money, he could not find it; his supervisor picked up a bolt from the ground, saying it was worth ₹10. That statement made a great impact on him through all these years.

Such anecdotes again remind us that we need to keep alive this 'soul' of Thermax. It is difficult to replicate this culture, this feeling of support and togetherness, nurtured by all of us. I would urge our people, especially those who have completed 25 years, to be the mentors and practitioners of our culture. No amount of talking can help, but culture can only spread through the osmosis of 'doing' – leading by example, by meaningful acts that communicate better than words. Since we have grown very rapidly over the past few years and almost 60% of our workforce is less than five years old, preserving the 'soul' of this organisation is the responsibility of all of us.

Culture is always a mix of good practices and some areas that need improvement. It is important that we enjoy what we do, give our best, take new initiatives to constantly improve and strive to get better each day. Our training could be a lot more rigorous, both within Thermax as well as for our Channel Associates, so that the customer is delighted with our services. We need to focus more on job rotation and career planning. Another element brought out during our conversation was that we tend to use equipment until breakdown; can we shift tracks to bring in more of preventive maintenance? Time and again, we heard that our handling of customer complaints needs improving. Let us focus on getting processes done



“It is difficult to replicate this culture, this feeling of support and togetherness, nurtured by all of us.”

'right first time' so that there is very little reason for complaint.

In our culture, it would be good to aim, consistently, for 'excellence' in everything we do – in our products or our processes. Would love to see this nurtured as part of our culture, that would make our own people and our customers see and feel the difference. If it has to become ingrained in our DNA, we have to start measuring it by asking the right set of questions and by giving it as much importance as order booking and invoicing.

We had three ladies who had completed 25 years, however only Veena from our Chemical Division could make it to the function. Listening to her, as also to some of our other women at the Ladies' Open Forums, we felt very happy and comforted that Thermax is an organisation where women genuinely 'feel safe'.



This brings me to the events that have made headlines for the past few weeks and have been very disturbing for parents of daughters and women in general. All that we hear, read and see is very disappointing and distasteful for the human race. After hearing the Delhi victim's story, I couldn't help thinking about the fact that nobody bothered to stop and help the two helpless, bleeding and naked individuals on the streets of our capital city. What have we been reduced to? Are people so scared of helping another human being, for fear of being blamed for the incident or have we just become too callous to care about others? This is something each of us needs to reflect on. I agree with the fact that the police force are at times of little support; that our justice delivery system is deeply flawed; that several of our MPs and MLAs have criminal records. And, of course, our society's prejudices about the role of women and our patriarchal attitude to gender equality play a big role in creating such a regressive mindset.

If each of us in our companies could make the environment safe for our women at home and at work, we would be doing our

small bit. As you all know, at Thermax we have a documented and strictly followed 'sexual harassment policy'. I would like to reiterate some of the key points that we heard at a talk we had organised on the subject for our employees a few years ago: sexual harassment is to be considered as perceived by the woman; if a woman is not comfortable with lewd emails or jokes, SMSs, remarks, or is asked for favours she does not feel comfortable with, that would constitute sexual harassment.

We have had a few cases where some men have been given written warnings, one employee was even asked to leave the organisation. However, women also have a responsibility. We need to be tougher, trying not to let every little remark upset us, as also not using this as a tool against someone who does not see our value in the organisation or does not promote us. We also need to be able to garner confidence to confront men who make us feel uncomfortable and speak up.

Beyond office, within the family many a time we women allow and perpetuate these practices. I was shocked to read that most often the perpetrators of molestations and rape are people known to the woman and the family. Parents who have been told about such cases in confidence ask their young daughters to keep mum and fearing social stigma, continue as if nothing ever happened. It is a very delicate subject, but the more society talks about it openly, condemns it and has quick and severe punishment for wrongdoers, the better off we will all be.

We have to remember that violence against women and our society's gender inequality affects everyone, bruising the quality of our lives. So the movement for women's dignity has to be taken forward by the political class, civil society and organisations, by both women and men.

Wish you all a very happy and productive new year.

Meher Pudumjee

EXPRESSIONS



**"If each of us
in our
companies
could make the
environment
safe for
our women at
home and
at work,
we would
be doing our
small bit."**

Ashish Vaishnav, Global Head of Thermax's Cooling Business shares his experience of nurturing Thermax's first overseas manufacturing hub in China, and talks of the importance of unlearning while building businesses in new markets. In conversation with A.M. Roshan

“Markets for clean energy are growing everywhere.”



'The challenge is to to sustain our

On the road to the airport, I am waiting in my car for Ashish to arrive. He has a 9 PM Delhi flight to catch and we have decided to meet for our session, enroute. If this sounds like jet set corporate journalism, please banish the thought. Thanks to a messy situation, entirely of my own making and too complicated to explain here, we have decided to snatch an hour for our session before he boards the plane.

This interview was to have taken place nearly two years ago, when Ashish was still the Country Head of China. Preoccupied with the affairs of the fledgeling China plant, Thermax's first overseas manufacturing facility that he and his team had set up from scratch, Ashish preferred a later date. Now, back in India as the Global Head of Thermax's Cooling business, he is ready.

Ashish gets into my car and we move on with his cab following us. We decide to check into some café on the way, talk and go our separate ways. I can already hear the boarding announcement, and so as we ease into the traffic near Pune's Holkar bridge I begin the standard check of my candidate's early years: Air force background.

Growing up in Amritsar, Allahabad and other Indian towns. High school at Nagpur and Mechanical Engineering at Walchand College in Sangli.

Joining Thermax as a graduate engineer in 1988, Ashish began his career on the shop floor. Word came that a new product was being developed in collaboration with Sanyo, for which a new manufacturing facility was to be readied. The core team consisted of a manager and young Ashish. For a trainee, "it was a clear sign of the culture of Thermax - trusting, providing opportunities to young people and empowering them." This was the beginning of Thermax's vapour absorption cooling business. Ashish telescoped his career with Thermax for me, "I have had the good fortune of witnessing our first Indian chiller plant inaugurated by Mr. Aga in 1989, and 19 years later, the inauguration of our China plant in 2008, by Meher."

As part of the team that began the manufacturing of chillers for Thermax, new requirements and vendor development took him to the Materials function, where he had a three year stint. He learned a lot about manufacturing, materials and above all, about the power of team work. Then came four years in sales in Bombay as part of the Western Region, and back to Pune in 1997 as the domestic sales head.

We see a small restaurant on the way and I pull up. No tea and coffee as it is almost dinner time, but we have the place all to ourselves. We settle down with a chilled mango drink and Ashish talks about those early years. "We are fortunate that from the beginning Thermax got into the right business - that of energy and environment. Plus the fact that our growth had never been limited by an India centric vision. Even during late 80s and early 1990s we had strong export ties with markets like Russia's." Cooling became Thermax's global business face from a very early stage. During this phase, Ashish could work with Thermax business leaders like Ramani and Shastri.

build local muscle global businesses¹

“And Mr. Aga’s inspirational presence was always there, though we were quite young at that time.”

In 2002, by the time Unny took over to turnaround an ailing Cooling business, there was serious talk of moving beyond exports, and of creating a manufacturing hub in China, the world’s biggest market for absorption chillers.

Ashish reached China in 2004 with his wife, Vaishali and his daughters, Noopur and Aradhana, who were respectively 6 and 2 ½ years old. Did he ever feel lonely in Shanghai those first few weeks? “The reassuring presence of my family helped a lot in those alien conditions, and the encouraging support from Thermax was always there for me. Still, the sheer size of China can make you feel lost. I felt like a small boat in an ocean.” There was also the language barrier and the “issue of mindsets, ours and theirs.”

But China offered a larger picture of what India is also going through – young people in search of better opportunities, the dreams of getting rich quicker, a fast growing urban culture. For Ashish it was a revelation that in China, contrary to the Indian experience, “you don’t need English to succeed.”

Ashish feels that to do business in China, or for that matter, in any overseas market of significance, there is no alternative but to go “native” in terms of language and through systematic localisation – of your workforce and other resources. Thermax’s plant near Shanghai has a dominant 140 odd Chinese workforce. He indicates his phone where he still maintains a Chinese dictionary. “I am proud to say that Thermax could build excellent relationships with the local government in China, which is very important. We have been awarded at the city and the province levels and our organisation is well respected in the community.”

I ask Ashish to comment on Thermax’s global ambitions. “The challenge is to build the local muscle to sustain our global businesses. We have to work hard to be a true multinational.” He feels that we may

need to take a hard look at many constraining factors that limit our growth, including local networks and compensation packages.

Moreover, he says, it is tough, anywhere, to overcome the gravitational pull of the culture of one’s society.

Ashish was in China for nearly eight years, “almost 1/3rd of my professional life so far.” What has been the biggest lesson learnt in China? “It is the Chinese perception of someone’s national brand that determines your position. You are identified as an Indian and India, unfortunately, is not seen as a technology nation.” I can sense a touch of despair as he compares Chinese urban infrastructure with our cities, “We have a long way to go. It is amazing to see their infrastructure coming up with the speed of lego blocks.”

So, how did he cease to be a stranger in China? “By doing as the Chinese do”, Ashish says with his trademark hearty laugh. “In China, everything is based on relationships and they are often forged on the dinner table.” He says he had to unlearn many things and that included his distaste for alcohol. “I drank with the Chinese,” he says matter of factly. I observe ruefully that, another time, we could have met over something more potent than mango juice. But he shakes his head, “Sorry bhaiyya! Here, I am back to my teetotaler life.”

He is upbeat about the prospects for his business in the Indian and global markets. With the looming eco-energy challenges related to climate change, “markets for clean energy are growing everywhere,” he observes and adds that we have to be nimble footed. He is clear that success depends on two things: “Our ability to rotate people in international markets and how we get local people on board by creating a fertile environment for managing talent to back up the impressive progress made on the technology front.”

It is 7.45 PM and as we walk towards our waiting cars, Ashish says it has been a special day for his group as a patent for one of their innovations came through. I compliment him before he heads towards Delhi. He bids me a cheerful *Zaijian* – See You Later!

UP CLOSE

Asia Innovator Award for Unny

It was a proud moment for Thermax when MD and CEO, M.S. Unnikrishnan, received the Asia Innovator Award at the 2012 Asia Business Leaders Awards (ABLA) instituted by CNBC. The Award was in recognition of his “inventive thinking in business and his leadership in an organisation that has innovation at its core.” Unny is the first Indian to be honoured with the Innovation Award in the 11 year history of ABLA. In her congratulatory message beamed to Thermax work centres worldwide, Meher complimented Unny for “bringing honour to not just everyone associated with Thermax, but to the country as well.”

The 2012 Awards function, held at the Kempinski Hotel in Bangkok in November 2012, acknowledged exceptional CEOs across the region. The winners under various categories were selected from a list of 1000 and narrowed to a handful of Asia's best after analysing company performances and conducting face-to-face interviews. The eminent panel of judges included



At the award function in Bangkok : inspiring people to innovate

management strategists, academics, company leaders and executives from CNBC. The judges noted that Mr. Unnikrishnan has made it a priority to foster a culture of innovation at Thermax, setting a goal for 30% of the company's revenues to come from innovations in the last five years.

In his acceptance speech, Unny dedicated the award to the “5000 innovators at Thermax who innovate in processes and technology, customers who keep challenging us, and Thermax's promoters who inspire people to innovate.”

Gajanan Kulkarni is Head - Legal and Company Secretary

Gajanan Kulkarni took over on 1st January 2013 as Vice President - Legal and Company Secretary of Thermax.

Gajanan has 30 years of varied experience in



organisations including Bank of Maharashtra, Bajaj Auto Finance Ltd., Krupp Industries India Ltd. and Kirloskar Group. Before joining Thermax, he was Vice President and Head - Legal & Company Secretary with Kirloskar Brothers Limited.

A commerce graduate with a Master of Law from the Pune University, Gajanan is a Fellow Member of the Institute of Company Secretaries of India(1983) and ICS A from London(2001).

Gajanan enjoys reading and trekking. He is also interested in wild life photography and Hindustani classical music.

Fireside welcomes Gajanan to Thermax and wishes him a mutually rewarding career.



The winners : dazzling footwork

Champion's Trophy for Thermax football team

The Thermax football team trumped 16 others to lift the Champion's Trophy in Seven-a-Side Football Tournament. Organised by Life Rock event management, the tournament was held on consecutive weekends in October in Pune.

Thermax topped their group by beating Symantec, Persistent and drawing with Tech Mahindra. Then, they beat Synercon in the semis and Mphasis in a nail biting final.

Rohith Kumar unleashed a spectacular volley to score the only goal in the match. Benedikt Danquish, an intern from Germany with the Cooling division dazzled with his elegant footwork, and won Best Player of the tournament.

Fireside congratulates the winning team of Shibu Mathew, Rohith Kumar, Jomson Perayil, Benedikt, Tushar Kadam, Kshitij Sharma, Vidyasagar and Lijo John.



The picnickers on the beach : new friends and a good time

A group of women from Thermax took off on a well deserved break at Thal Beach near Alibag in November. Leaving bosses, parents, husbands and kids behind, the ladies from divisions across the company had a good time as they made new friends. They showed off their

dance moves, competed at games, swapped news, frolicked on the beach, tucked into a sumptuous seafood spread and enjoyed the unlikely company of turkeys, a peacock and geese. Naturally, they cannot wait for the next all-girls picnic to let their hair down once again.

Felicitating Thermax's veterans

On 26th December, Thermax felicitated employees who had completed 25 years with the company. Held at the RD Aga Community Center, the event honoured 89 veterans accompanied by their spouses. Earlier, at a dialogue organised at the venue, they reminisced about their experiences in Thermax, the company culture and values that influenced them and to which they themselves have contributed.

Anu, Meher and Phero personally felicitated each employee. Unny thanked them for staying with the company in good and not-so-good times, while urging them to continue striving for excellence in their work.

The evening ended with a grand dinner.



Anu and Pheroz honouring a couple, and a view of the audience : contributing to the Thermax culture



Abhangs in Shanghai



A musical performance in progress : celebrating navras

Like every year, the Maharashtra Mandal – Shanghai celebrated the Ganesh Chaturthi festival in September. For this year's theme, they chose navras, the nine essential emotions or mental states of humans, stylised by performing artists. Their 250 strong Indian audience was treated to a dance, abhangs – Marathi devotional poetry – and a one act play based on the navras theme.

Diwali with a difference



The chocolates and (inset) the students who made them : spreading smiles

Breaking away from traditional Diwali sweets this year, a group from Power Division supported an enterprising venture while indulging their sweet tooth. They sourced chocolates made by the students of Niwant Andh Mukta Vikasalaya (NAMV), an organisation that focuses on the higher education and learning needs of the blind.

For the past three years, the blind and partially blind students have been running this part time business during Diwali to fund

their hostel, academic and miscellaneous expenses. Almost 900 kgs of chocolate are sold to clients like Forbes Marshall, Infosys and HSBC.

Imtiaz Uddin from Power came across NAMV through an acquaintance. He purchased a few of the elegantly packaged chocolates for himself, and his colleagues followed suit. Says Imtiaz, "We are glad we bought from the students and helped them. Hope we could put smiles on a few more faces."

Rafting on the Kundalika

On a recent overcast morning, Thermax's Research, Technology, Innovation (RTIC) team waited expectantly on the banks of the Kundalika river for a siren to go off. With life jackets, helmets and oars at hand, they watched as the Mulshi dam released water into the river. For the next few hours, they manoeuvred their rafts through small waves and intense current, the adventure ending with a swim in still waters.

Besides this adventure, an early morning trek, a game of volleyball, antakshari and



All set for adventure : thriving on risks

dancing around the campfire the earlier night, made it an outing the team in is no hurry to forget. Says Dr. Sonde, RTIC chief, on the white water rafting adventure, "RTIC thrives on our willingness to embrace risks. Perhaps this experience honed the team's risk taking capability, because after all, *dar ke agey jeet hai!*"

A gentle reminder of customer care



The conference room of Power O&M : inspiration from Gandhi

A pencil portrait of Gandhi now presides over discussions in the Power O&M group's conference room. No, the team is not tripping on Gandhigiri, but they find his presence a reassuring reminder of how a customer oriented business ought to be run.

Surabhi Chavda from the Power team gifted

the hand drawn portrait to Venky, the head of Power's O&M business. Though initially he wanted to hang it in his cabin, on second thoughts, felt that more people could find inspiration from Gandhian ideals of customer service. Thus the portrait found its niche in the Conference Hall.



A student receiving a new bag : useful gifts

Enticing the young ones to school

The Savli team of Thermax decided to be part of the *Joy of Giving* week in October and wondered what gift would be most useful and appreciated.

They found their answer in 73 primary school students in Radhanpura village near Savli. On an earlier visit, they found the children weren't interested in going to school and their parents did not insist. Savli's good Samaritans realised that a few enticements

could at least motivate the children to take more interest in school. They raised ₹ 47,000 among themselves and purchased school bags, water bottles, notebooks and drawing stationery for the six to ten year olds.

Not surprisingly, the children were excited with their gifts. Their parents, teachers and principal appreciated the gesture.



B&H SuperKings and Desi Girls : cricket winners



Crickomania reaches fever pitch

For the ninth consecutive year, Crickomania, Thermax's inter department Cricket tournament, whipped up pure excitement and fun. 54 teams from across the company took part in a series of matches for the coveted trophy. Once the final ball was bowled, Desi Girls and B&H SuperKings took the final honours. Runners up, Peace Riders (Women's) and Chemical Warriors (Men's) put up a gutsy and close fight.

Yogita Ghadage from Desi Girls was honoured as the Best All Rounder among

women, while Pramod Yenare from Chemical was the best among men. B&H Superkings' Afroz Shaikh and Chemical Warriors' Vishwas Rokade were declared best batsman and bowler respectively.

Matches were held on the Dr. D Y Patil College ground, Pune on all weekends in November and December. Observes Nandu Nalawade from the organising team, "The 800 players, fans and spectators, whose numbers increase each year is a big enough motivation for us, organisers."

Top safety award for Savli plant

Thermax Savli plant bagged the Gold award in the Greentech Safety Award 2012 for Safety and Health practices. S.D. Gosavi, Pragnesh Parikh and B.K. Mathur accepted the award from R.C. Nayyar, Principal Secretary (Labour) Punjab Government.



Thermax team receiving the award : excellence in safety management

Organised by Greentech Foundation at Srinagar, the awards ceremony recognised excellence in fire and safety management. Other participating organisations included Skoda, Ambuja Cements, L&T, Mahindra, Gujarat Narmada Valley Fertilizers & Chemicals and Essar.



Customer Seminar on solar thermal options strikes the right chord



The seminar in progress : cost effective and eco-friendly solutions

Escalating fuel prices provided the context for reminding old and new customers about Thermax's solar thermal heating solutions. The seminar in Chennai, organised by the Heating business, was the first in a nation-wide programme. Representatives from 43 companies participated in response to the invitation from the local Thermax Channel Associate along with Channel Sales. They were briefed how solar thermal heating combined with existing

process heating equipment could reduce energy cost or help plan for energy efficiency in greenfield projects.

Customers actively participated in discussions about effectively harnessing solar energy, product technicalities, system layout options, their integration with processes and photovoltaic power solutions.

This seminar underlined Thermax's offer of cost effective and environment friendly solutions.



Charity runners at the stadium : "photo finish"

An enthusiastic Thermax team that included spouses and kids took part in the 27th edition of the Pune International Marathon on 2nd December. Along with several other organisations, they participated in the 3.5 km AIDS Charity run that happens on the sidelines of the full

marathon. The group displayed banners and chanted slogans which invited attention to the welfare of the girl child. A victory dance at the Nehru Stadium, followed by vada pav and tea gave the finishing touches to a memorable Sunday morning.



Rahul

Rahul obtains a Master's degree

Rahul Raut from WWS completed his M.Tech. in Chemical Engineering with first class from the Bharti Vidyapeeth Deemed University, Pune. His project for the course, 'Desalination through membrane distillation', was later published in the 'International Journal of Advanced Engineering Research and Studies.'

Rahul, who joined Thermax in 2009, enjoys dancing and cricket.

Asmita completes PG diploma in IP Rights

Asmita Marathe has completed her PG diploma in Intellectual Property Rights with first class from Symbiosis Law School, Pune. She is a Gold medalist from the Pune University for her M.Tech. programme, and also a Certified Energy Auditor.

Asmita, who works with RTIC, started her career with Thermax in 2007. Currently, she is pursuing a Ph. D. from the Department of Technology, Pune University. Asmita loves travelling and exploring new places.



Asmita

Dhruv completes Medical degree



Dhruv

Dhruv, after completing his MD from Delhi's Safdarjung Hospital in 2012, stood first in the entrance test to pursue Doctor of Medicine (DM) in Neurology. Son of Dr. Vibha and Vikram Zutshi from TBWES, Dhruv will be doing his specialisation from the Maulana Azad Medical College, Delhi University. He loves football and Formula 1 racing.

Manasi is Gold medallist in Karate

Fourteen year old Manasi has won the Gold medal in Maharashtra State Level Karate Championship 2012. She has also been training in taekwondo at the Maheshdada Sports Foundation, Bhosari.

A 7th standard student at the C.K. Goyal School, Pune, Manasi, is the daughter of Nirmala Tilekar from Heating. She loves reading and travelling.



Manasi

Prabhava, budding scientist



Prabhava

Prabhava's working model of a novel distributed power generation system for rural electrification was chosen among the best at INSPIRE's regional level exhibition in Mumbai. Sponsored by Department of Science and Technology, the programme motivates children to take up careers in Science.

Recently, Prabhava participated with his model at the INSPIRE's national event in New Delhi.

A Class 7 student of Kendriya Vidyalaya, Dapodi, Pune, Prabhava is the son of Anitha and Dr. N.S. Kini from RTIC. He is also studying Hindustani classical singing.

Tanmayi, a trained Bharatnatyam dancer

Tanmayi has been learning Bharatnatyam from Guru Swati Daithankar for the past nine years. She recently had her Arangetram at Tilak Smarak Mandir.

Tanmayi, a final year B Com student at BMCC College, is also learning French from Alliance Francaise, Pune and has cleared the first two levels. She is the daughter of Rashmi and Rajesh Lonkar from WWS. Tanmayi feels strongly about animal welfare.



Tanmayi

Suraj wins prize for body building



Suraj

Suraj Chavan of WWS has bagged second prize in the body building competition organised by the Industrial Sports Association. He is inspired by his uncle, a professional body builder.

Suraj, who joined Thermax in 2011, has earlier worked with Bajaj Auto and Flash Point Equipments. He loves reading and cricket.

Ritika bags a prize in karate

Ritika bagged the bronze medal in the 2nd Maharashtra Ashihara Karate Championship 2012 in Pune. The 12 year old is a black belt holder and has been practising karate for the last six years. She is also a first prize winning swimmer at the district level.

Ritika, an 8th standard student of Jnana Prabodhini Navnagar Vidyalaya, Nigdi is the daughter of Rupa and Prashant Keni from B&H division. She loves reading and cycling.



Ritika

In praise of a Thermax institution

Thermax's 43 year old legacy of thrift and co-operation



In 1983, two years after Bajaj launched its moped – the M50 – the waiting list for prospective buyers touched almost four lakh. Remember, those were the days of the licence raj when one had to queue up for everything from gas connections to telephone lines. Among the patient hopefuls were some employees, who approached officials of the Thermax Employee Co-operative Credit Society. Was there a way to speed up delivery of their vehicles? They found their answer in B.F. Gagrat, the legendary Thermax Director. Fronted by Gagrat, the Society, as it is informally known, approached Rahul Bajaj. 50 lucky employees couldn't believe their good fortune when Bajaj sanctioned new mopeds for them. It was one of the many instances of the Society living up to its promise of serving its members.

The Society was formed in 1968 with the objective to encourage thrift and co-operation. It wanted its members to save more for their future and be able to get loans at reasonable interest rates. The Society also wanted its members to be able to buy essential commodities, personal care products and seasonal goods at competitive rates.

Encouraged by Mr. Bhathena and Mr. Gagrat, the Society was formed under the Co-operative Societies Act, 1960. To become members, permanent employees of Thermax and its joint ventures used to contribute a minimum of ₹ 2 per month. It is now ₹ 500. Membership has risen from 238 in 1973 to a little over 1500 today.

In its 43 years, the Society has stayed true to its objectives, as the financials would testify. Members have invested



₹ 8.60 crore in fixed term and monthly recurring deposits. They have taken loans of ₹ 7.80 crore over the past years to finance weddings, new houses, medical and other emergencies.

Each month, Society members drive a hard bargain with traders and manage to sell good quality commodities like wheat, rice, sugar, edible oil, pulses and personal care products at 15-20% less market cost. Serpentine queues form outside the distribution centre during summer and the festival season to stock up on jam, fruit syrups, bed sheets, blankets, shawls and dry fruits. The Society used to sell fireworks at Diwali too, until five years ago when Anu Aga intervened. Anil Patil, a committee member recalls, "When she heard of the sale, she asked us a very direct question – why are we inviting our



Office bearers of the Society : democratically managed

FOCUS

At a Society Sale : best deals

employees to buy things that will only add to pollution? We saw she had a point and decided to stop selling fire crackers since then.”

Once a year, the Society sells electronic consumer goods like TVs, washing machines, laptops, food processors and water purifiers through a loan facility. For the best possible deals, Society officials enlist the help of other Thermax departments. This year, for solar heaters, they worked closely with the R&D team on technical specifications, and then with Finance and Materials to negotiate the best rate. They installed 182 heaters, and have also sold energy efficient household products like gas geysers and induction cookers. In last year's sale in November, goods worth ₹ 90 lakh were sold.

There is a Retirement Benefit Fund for members. And in case of death or permanent disability, members are supported through the Benevolent Fund. Charulata Tikone, another member recalls earlier years, when they heard of some colleague's sudden death, members would immediately take some cash to the bereaved family. Many times, this money paid for the last rites and funeral expenses. “It doesn't happen so often these days because people have enough savings; but it was greatly appreciated in those days.” The Society has also helped victims of drought, earthquake and floods through its Social Welfare Fund.

The managing committee has nine democratically elected directors and two nominated by Thermax. Thermax has always played a parental role by guiding the group in its nascent stage, with the Industrial Relations department providing infrastructure, basic amenities and casual labour. Chandrakant Darawade from IR, nominated by Thermax, explains, “Ours is one of the best functioning societies in the State. The office bearers work honestly with the real intention of doing good. They often work late without overtime. We have made good progress. ”

Progress amply reflected in balance sheets, and at every Annual General Meeting of shareholders. Authorised share capital has grown from ₹ 50,000 in 1973 to ₹ 3.50 crore in 2012. The ₹ 7000 interest they received on loans in 1973 is now 70 lakh. Medium term loan limits have risen from ₹1000 to ₹ 2.50 lakh.

Jayant Kunte, an accountant with the Society

for the past 35 years proudly states, “The Society's financial books are maintained properly. There have not been any adverse comments on our balance sheets from either Government auditors or Chartered Accountants. We have been consistently graded 'A' for our auditing practices.”

By reserving 25% of profit each year, zero cost of infrastructure and minimal cost of operation, the Society has been able to give higher dividends to their members. It was 15% in 2012. Companies like Thyssen Krupp, Tata Motors, Alfa Laval, Atlas Copco, SKF, Bajaj Auto and Skoda India have visited to learn about the Society's computerised systems and efficient operating procedures.

Says Ravindra Mahajan, the current Chairman, “We credit the smooth running of the Society to the selfless service of all past office bearers. Without their support, the management and the co-operation of members, this legacy would not have survived all these years.”



Robinton Aga at the Silver Jubilee function : quality management

In 1993, speaking at the Silver jubilee anniversary of the Society, Rohinton Aga was pleased to see quality management principles on display in the running of the Society. He also complimented the office bearers and members for adhering to the two main objectives for which the Society was formed - low interest loans and inculcating the practice of saving.

With plans for the Golden Jubilee celebrations for 2018 underway, this institution, seeded in austere times, remains a reassuring presence in today's times of inflation and credit card fuelled extravagant living.

Paul Theroux, in a celebration of train journeys, explains what it means to really travel – not to aim for the repose and immobility offered by mass tourism, but to move away from home to scarcely visited places. Excerpted from his 1976 essay:

Stranger on a Train: The Pleasures of Railways

There are two sorts of people who like trains, and I am neither.

The first is the railway buff, for whom trains are toys. With the mind of a child and the constitution of a night-watchman, he has been elderly in that pipe-stuffing British way since he started to smoke; he enjoys running his thumb along the coachwork and jotting down engine numbers on a greasy note-pad, and though he smiles bizarrely when the whistle blows, he doesn't climb aboard: he is going nowhere.

Put your feet up – get the bennyfit, say the second sort. Their knowledge of trains is non-technical. They like the space, the convenience; they like fuddling and fussing from carriage to carriage, juggling cheese rolls and pale ale, or just sitting, dozing, darning socks,

doing the crossword and gloating out the window at the traffic jams... They are going to work, or home for the weekend, or to the coast for a bit of fun. They aren't travelers – in a sense nothing alien is human to them; they are non-drivers and Season Ticket-holders – they love chatting: in the area of small talk they are the world's true miniaturists. They have, each of them, a destination.

I know I am not a railway buff, and I prefer not to travel with a destination in mind. Mine is the purest form of travel, a combination of flight and suspended animation. I enjoy getting on trains; I loathe getting off. For instance, last summer in Massachusetts my brother told me a hurricane was on its way. Even the tireddest and most mooching West Indian hurricane, when it reaches New

SIGNPOSTS



England, causes floods, broken windows, power failures and a kind of fricassee on the television screen. I helped my brother secure his stables, bought a biography of the writer of weird tales, H. P. Lovecraft, and boarded the train for New York. In New York I caught 'The Lake Shore Limited' for Chicago and en route my book proved an invaluable conversation piece, since most of my fellow passengers took the title, Lovecraft, to be that of a sex manual. I spent an afternoon in Chicago and at bedtime, instead of looking

The train offers the maximum of opportunity with the minimum of risk. A train journey is travel; everything else – planes especially – is transfer, your journey beginning when you arrive.

for a hotel, took 'The Panama Limited' to New Orleans: dawn in Winona, breakfast in Jackson, mid-morning in the swamps of Louisiana, a vision of the Jurassic Age....In New Orleans, I walked to the French Quarter, ate five dollars' worth of oysters and a few days later was on my way back home through the deep south – perhaps Alabama? it was very dark – and the steward was moving through the Lounge Car shouting, 'Last call.. for dinner! If you don't come now you ain't going to get no dinner, and you ain't

going to hear this no more!'

The hurricane had passed.

That week was pure pleasure. I had wide berths, a good book, an afternoon in Indiana and a morning in Mississippi. Durant, Mississippi, is not Mandalay, which is a pleasant surprise, because Mandalay is unremittingly dull. And I had good company. To get an Indian on 'The Howrah Mail' talking you have first to answer a number of his questions: nationality, occupation, marital status, destination, birth sign, and how much you paid for your wrist watch. They are prying questions, but they license you to be similarly inquisitive. No such preliminaries are required on American railways. To get an American talking it is only necessary to be within shouting distance and wearing a smile; your slightest encouragement is

enough to provoke a non-stop rehearsal of the most intimate details of your fellow traveler's life. In one sense, this is the third degree turned upside-down: instead of being tortured with questions you are tortured with replies. This sounds like criticism; I mean it as praise, for conversationally I am a masochist, and there is nothing I like better than putting my feet up, tearing open a can of beer and auditing a railway bore in full cry.

It is well-known that the train is the last word in truth drugs. All the world's airlines have failed to inspire what one choo-choo train has: the dramas of 'The Orient Express' and a whole library of railway masterpieces. A rail journey is virtually the only occasion in travel on which complete strangers bare their souls, because the rail passenger – the calmest of travelers – has absolutely nothing to lose. He has more choices than anyone else in motion: unlike the air-traveler strapped in his chair like a candidate for electrocution, he can stroll, enjoy the view and sleep in privacy in a horizontal position – he can travel, as the natives do, the six thousand miles from Nakhodka to Moscow, in his pajamas; unlike the person on ship-board, he can restore his eyes with landscape, eat whenever he chooses and never know the ghastly jollity of group games – and he can get off whenever he likes. He can remain anonymous, adopt a disguise, or spend the five days from Istanbul to Tehran canoodling in his couchette. The train offers the maximum of opportunity with the minimum of risk. A train journey is travel; everything else – planes especially – is transfer, your journey beginning when you arrive.

I am speaking of long journeys, good services, comfortable seats and berths. British Rail, in its characteristic frenzy of false economy, removes the dining car, abolishes coffee, foreshortens the train, and continues to ensure that your ticket is examined no less than five times. A long, fairly pleasant train journey is possible in Britain if one takes the sleeper to Glasgow...

Stranger on a Train: The Pleasures of Railways

But they order these things better in India. You can leave Jaipur at midnight and, after changing to 'The Grand Trunk Express' in Delhi, not arrive in Madras for four days – which can be extended to a six-day rail gala if you go on to Rameswaram at the tip of India's nose, or a full week if you make the short crossing of the Palk Straits and take 'The Talaimanner Mail' in Sri Lanka for Colombo. And it's another day on a pretty train from there to Galle.

'The Orient Express' used to be a four-day affair, but why stop in Istanbul when six days and three trains later you can be in Meshed, close enough to Afghanistan to hear gunfire in Herat? Turkish trains have plush bedrooms, Iranian trains serve kebabs, 'The Frontier Mail' out of Peshawar dishes up curry, everyone gets a banana with his morning tea on 'The Golden Arrow' to Kuala Lumpur; Thai trains have shower rooms (a huge stone jar, a dipper and a well-drained floor), Russian trains have a samovar in every coach, and ones in Sri Lanka have special compartments for you if you're a Buddhist monk. There is a telephone booth on the Amtrak 'Metroliner' between New York and Washington and a pop-group on 'The Coast Starlight' (Los Angeles– Seattle). 'The Vostok' (Nakhodka–Khabarovsk) serves caviar; you can buy roasted sparrows and grasshoppers on most Burmese railway platforms, and everyone in the dining car of 'The Izmir Express' (Ankara–Izmir) is presented with a loaf of bread: tear off a hunk, attack your portion of stewed eggplant, Imam Bayildi ("The Imam Fainted")...

When people tell me nothing ever happens on trains I ask them what they mean by nothing. In December, 1964, on a long train journey from Bulawayo in Rhodesia to Lusaka, Zambia, I witnessed two strangers meeting. The man was an Afrikaner, the woman English, both middle-aged and sunburnt, both headed for the Copper Belt. Their courtship began in awkward formality and progressed archly to joshing; they clinked glasses, they exchanged

reminiscences. When we crossed Victoria Falls they were holding hands, and that night the man confided to me that he was going to ask her to marry him: 'If she'll have me,' he added, as if daring me to laugh. He had not slept with her: the Africans on the train (and now, in Zambia, they had penetrated to the bar, wearing papooses and cowboy hats) made him self-conscious. But it was not really sexual reticence – it was part of the Bwana's Code. He said he'd have plenty of time for that once they got to Chingola. Their arrival in Lusaka was festive, their eyes were shining with gin: she had agreed to marry him.

The courtships on 'The Orient Express' were brief. Within hours of meeting, the Italian cancer specialist and the Belgian girl were barricaded in a single compartment. On 'The Van Golu Express' hippies copulated standing up in the lavatories with the door ajar...

And on the Trans-Siberian Express there was a boy traveling with his father. The father was mortally ill, his face the color of clay, and throughout the trip to Sverdlovsk he remained in his berth under a thick wrapping of brown blankets. The boy sat opposite, drinking sweet Russian champagne. He invited me in, but after one drink I left. The compartment had a smell of death about it, the clammy decay of a tomb; and the combination of the champagne drinker looking out at the snowy forests of Central Russia and his father dying in a narrow berth were more than I could bear. Stretcher-bearers – men wearing harnesses – appeared on the platform at Sverdlovsk; the old man's face was waxen and the boy told me in German, 'I think he is dead.'

Courtship, copulation and death: it is all the proof I need that the most intense experiences we know are enacted on trains. I have never seen anyone give birth on a train...



My memory of trains does not go back very far, and yet – though it was only twenty-five years ago or so – it was another age, when the tracks were the frontier of every American town and the expression 'to come from the other side of the tracks' was a warning of slums, tenements, children who picked fights, men with runny noses, 'people,' my mother said, 'who'll molest you.' My first solitary train journey was in when I was

eight. My father put me in my seat and told me not to move.

He gave me a book.

Throughout the trip from Boston to Hartford – no distance at all, really – a huge black man in a railwayman's uniform appeared at intervals and said, 'Not yet, sonny.' It was summer, and soon there were tobacco fields out the window – large, still, spade-shaped leaves in rows that reached to Connecticut. I held my book, but I didn't read it; and I didn't stir until at one station my aunt appeared and knocked on the window and the black man whom my father had tipped in Boston said, 'Off you go.' My uncle

said I had shown I was a man for having gone all that distance alone and gave me a brass padlock as a present. I have been catching trains ever since.

When travelers, old and young, get together and talk turns to their journeys, there is usually an argument put forward by the older ones that ...fifty or sixty years ago... the world was innocent, undiscovered and full of possibility. These older travelers look at the younger ones with real pity and seem to say, 'Why bother to go?'

It is a ridiculous conceit to think that this enormous world has been exhausted of interest. There are still scarcely visited places and there are exhilarating ways of reaching them. You can fly to Merida in Yucatan from New York and spend an interesting week

among the ruins But there is a better way to go, as a stranger on a train, via Peachtree Station in Georgia and New Orleans to Nuevo Laredo and Mexico City. The train is the answer; for the bold and even the not-so-bold the going is still good.

I began by saying that there are two sorts of people who like the railway buff and the joy-rider. There are also two sorts of travelers.

There are those whom we instantly recognize as clinging to the traditional virtues of travel, the people who endure a kind of alienation and panic in foreign parts for the after-taste of having sampled new scenes. On the whole travel at its best is rather comfortless, but travel is never easy: you get very tired, you get lost, you get your feet wet, you get little co-operation, and – if it is to have any value at all – you go alone. Homesickness is part of this kind of travel. In these circumstances, it is possible to make interesting discoveries about oneself and one's surroundings. Travel has less to do with distance than with insight; it is, very often, a way of seeing. The other day I was walking through London and saw an encampment of gypsies on a patch of waste ground – the caravans, the wrecked cars, the junked machines, the rubbish; and children wandering through this cityscape in metal. This little area had a 'foreign' look to me. I was curious, but I didn't investigate – because, like many other people, I suppress the desire to travel in my own city. I think we do this because we don't want to risk dangerous or unpleasant or disappointing experiences in the place in which we live: we don't want to know too much. And we don't want to be exposed. All these are the characteristics of a person with a traveling mind.

The second group of travelers has only appeared in numbers in the past twenty years. For these people travel, paradoxically, is an experience of familiar things; it is travel that carries with it the illusion of immobility. It is going to a familiar airport and being strapped into a seat and held captive for a number of hours – immobile; then arriving

It is a ridiculous conceit to think that this enormous world has been exhausted of interest. There are still scarcely visited places and there are exhilarating ways of reaching them... The train is the answer; for the bold and even the not-so-bold the going is still good.

Stranger on a Train: The Pleasures of Railways

at an almost identical airport, being whisked to a hotel so fast it is not like movement at all; and the hotel and the food here are identical to the hotel and the food in the city one has just left. Apart from the sunshine or the lack of, there is nothing new.

For many years, in the past, this was enjoyed by the rich. It is wrong to call it tourism, because businessmen also travel this way; and many people, who believe themselves to be travelers, who object to being called tourists. In this sort of travel, you take your society with you: your language, your food, your styles of hotel and service. It is of course the prerogative of rich nations – America, Western Europe, and Japan.

It has had a profound effect on our view of the world. It has made real travel greatly sought-after and somewhat rare. And I think it has caused a resurgence in travel writing.

As everyone knows, travel is very unsettling, and it can be quite hazardous and worrying. One way of overcoming this anxiety is to travel packaged in style: luxury is a great remedy for the alienation of travel. What helps calm us is a reminder of stability and protection – and what the average package tourist looks for in foreign surroundings is familiar sights. This person goes to China or Peru and wants to feel at home. Is this a contradiction? I suppose it is... I was once in Siberia, and I recall an Australian saying to me in a complaining 'It's cold here!' In Peru an American woman said to me, 'I hate these hills – they're too steep.' We were in the Andes. And not long ago, in China, a woman said to me, 'I've been all around the world – Madagascar, the Galapagos Islands, Arabia, everywhere – and I didn't walk. I never walk, I hate to walk. I never go to places where I have to walk. But I've been everywhere.'"

This is actually quite extraordinary. For that woman, travel is a sedentary activity. She has been carried across the world. She is the true armchair traveler.

It is easy to laugh at her, but her kind of traveling is very popular. Travel nowadays is

seen to be a form of repose: most people you see in travel posters are lying down in the sunshine, or sleeping in a lounge chair, or just sitting. In a sense, Abroad is where you don't have to do anything but loaf. I realize that a great confusion has arisen because we regard travel and a vacation as interchangeable. For a person with two weeks' vacation, travel – in its traditional sense – would be unthinkable... I don't blame people for craving that, but I do object when it is regarded as travel.

The British-family-in-Majorca stereotype is often mocked. True, it may be described as a strange new sort of adventuring: travel as immobility. ...But the British are not the only people who do this. The Japanese now expect to find Japanese restaurants and Japanese courtesies in the countries they visit: it is comforting to go ten thousand miles and find that it is just like home – which accounts for the proliferation of McDonald's restaurants and Holiday Inns and the identical (and easily exported) national paraphernalia of travel.

When a person says, in a foreign place, 'I feel right at home here,' he is making a statement about the nature of travel, not the texture of the place he's in. I found it extremely pleasant to have a cheeseburger and a beer at the Inter-Continental Hotel in Kabul, Afghanistan; but I would have been a fool for thinking that this in any way represented a kind of Afghan experience. I don't belittle this sort of travel, which I regard as *Traveling As A Version Of Being At Home*; but it is wrong to mistake it as the sort of travel that allows a person to make discoveries.

Many people travel in order to feel at home, or to have an idealized experience of home: Spain is Home-plus-Sunshine; India is Home-plus-Servants; Africa is Home-plus-Elephants – and Lions; Ecuador is Home-plus-Volcanoes. It is not possible for people to travel in large numbers and have it any



other way. In order to process and package travelers in great numbers a system has to be arrived at. This system, in an orderly way defeats the traditional methods of travel and has made true travel almost obsolete. In order for large numbers of Americans to visit Bangkok, Bangkok must become somewhat like America. The change in China, since the arrival of foreign travelers, has been enormous; and the result has been some very un-Chinese-looking hotels, food, buses, and so forth. It seemed to me in China that these holiday-makers would, in the end, bring about a different sort of cultural revolution.

To a great extent, travel today is praised for its familiar, unshocking, homely and even immobile characteristics. But although you can get a bed on some airline flights to the Far East, and there is a toilet on long-distance buses, and bingo on Round-the-World cruises, it is the train that most gives the comforting illusion of Being Home.

A train offers protection, freedom, privacy, stability. It is possible, on a train, to entertain the notion that you

are standing perfectly still – it is the world that is moving. The apotheosis of this notion is the Dining Car.

Dinner in the diner,
Nothing could be finer,
Than to have your ham-and-eggs
in Carolina!

In other words, why go all the way to Carolina if you can't enjoy the comforts of home? The French literary critic, Roland Barthes, wrote an essay in which he advanced the view that what Thomas Cook offered in the Wagon-Restaurant was 'not so much food as a philosophy'. The Dining Car offered a 'mirage of solidity' – 'starched linen, massive flatware', napkins, tablecloths, flowers, baskets – to convey the illusion that there are vast cupboards, gardens, washing facilities – everything associated with these

props – somewhere on the train. The journey, Barthes says, is 'sublimated'.

Barthes calls this the 'decor of leisure'. He is of course talking about a French dining car, with its five courses and wine, but a version of this operates on most long-distance flights.

This strikes me as being a very ambitious kind of passivity: Eating-While-Traveling, Sleeping-While-Traveling, Making-Money (or Doing-Business)-While Traveling, and – as I said earlier – Traveling-to-China-or-Peru-Without-Leaving-America. This is a powerful simultaneity (And you might also say that the train's future is assured precisely because it allows such passivity. It is totally sedentary travel at its most comfortable.)

I am not sneering at these odd forms of travel, or these homely recreations. I am calling attention to the phenomenon because it is so far from the traditional notion of travel as going away. And it is very important to understand what is happening to travel and tourism, and to all the present-day versions of the Grand Tour, because only by examining them can one see why people get on donkeys and ride across Ethiopia, or hitchhike to India, or go slowly down the Ganges, or simply disappear in Brazil. The interest in travel today, which is passionate, arises out of the fact that there is a form of travel prevalent that is now very easy – people want to find an antidote for the immobility that mass tourism has produced; people want to believe that somewhere, somehow, it is still very dangerous, bizarre, anxiety-making and exotic to travel, that one can still make discoveries in a glorious solitary way. Mock-travel has produced a huge interest in clumsy, old-fashioned travel, with its disgusting food and miseries and long nights. It has also given rise to a lively interest in travel literature, and the affirmation that the world is still large and strange and, thank God, full of empty places that are nothing like home.

– Excerpted from
Paul Theroux's Sunrise with Seamonsters

People want to find an antidote for the immobility that mass tourism has produced; people want to believe that somewhere, somehow, it is still very dangerous, bizarre, anxiety-making and exotic to travel, that one can still make discoveries in a glorious solitary way.

BREAKING THE COCOON



There I was, in a cocooned life as a student in 2010 at the IIT Bombay campus enjoying zero traffic, four meals at the hostel and free internet. My life was simply perfect until that email changed everything – ‘Required: Volunteers to teach victims of human trafficking’. I would have ignored the email but for ‘human trafficking’- I wasn’t sure what it meant. So inquisitive, I googled the information and was taken aback by what I read.

The Wikipedia definition says, ‘human trafficking is the illegal trade of human beings for the purposes of commercial sexual exploitation or forced labour.’ 95% of the trade involves women and minor girls.

Emotionally unsettled and curious, I agreed to volunteer. Seven of us were to work with an NGO which rescues and rehabilitates victims of trafficking. We were to teach them English, Science and Mathematics every weekend at the NGO, Rescue Foundation, in Boisar, 100 kms from our campus. My friend who was managing the activity categorically said that it would be a hard journey travelling two hours in an overstuffed general compartment and changing trains twice. This information didn’t go down too well. Five volunteers dropped out, leaving only two of us.

The first day was torture-getting up at 5AM, reaching the station, taking the local to Dadar and sandwiched among men waiting to grab a woman in the Boisar express. I felt hundreds of eyes scan every nerve in my body. The stink from the toilet and the train’s snail’s pace made the three hour journey extremely suffocating. Off the train, it was another 45 minutes before we reached the NGO.

To be honest, I was scared to interact with the girls. Just looking at their hostile faces made me feel like turning around and junking the whole idea of being a super girl. No one looked friendly. To them, I was an intruder. And weren’t they right? Here were around 80 children, teenaged and 20 year olds girls getting accustomed to their plight and each other’s sadness. And there

I was, in nice clothes, straightened hair and the most outrageous of all things, a smile on my face! My friend intervened just in time to introduce me. I shyly began to ask their names and get introduced. And the ice was broken.

It took time to understand their hatred and offer them love. Eventually we became friends and sisters. Apart from teaching, I acted as a translator to an Italian lady who was working with them. Their stories gave me a glimpse into their lives, drastically different from mine.

These girls have never known what it meant to live without fear, to love and be loved in return. I refused to believe parents would sell their daughters, fathers would rape their young girls and husbands would get paid for forcing their wives into sex with other men. But this was the reality of their lives. And it strengthened my determination to be of some use to them. I was no more intimidated about the awful train journey; instead I found myself waiting for the weekend visits to the girls. In the 10 months I spent with them, I saw a little transformation - in their smiling faces and their hopeful eyes. Like 18 year old Shehnaaz, who I taught English. My biggest reward was a birthday card written by her in English, “I can’t give you any birthday gift since I don’t have any. Actually, you have given me the best gift- a wonderful sister. Thank you. Keep smiling.”

Many of the girls have been shifted to other foundations; some who were given vocational training have been rehabilitated. A few have disappeared and the Foundation is trying to track them.

The greatest lessons I have taken away from this experience are empathy, patience and courage. I learnt to relate to them by stepping into their shoes and imagining what they went through. I learnt to give them time to trust me while earnestly trying to be of help. And lastly, I learnt to courageously step out of my comfort zone to reach out to someone in need.

VOICES



Sampada Kulkarni
RTIC



Gamers hired by father to 'kill' son in online games

A man in China hired virtual "assassins" to hunt down his son in online video games and kill off his avatar, according to local media. Mr Feng was concerned about the amount of time his 23-year-old unemployed son was spending online. He hoped his actions would deter his son from playing the games. His son eventually asked one of the gamers why they kept targeting him...

Prof Mark Griffiths, a gambling and addictions expert at Nottingham Trent University told the BBC. "I don't think these top-down approaches work. Most excessive game playing is usually a symptom of an underlying problem."

Father and son are said to have reconciled but World of Warcraft expert Olivia Grace said she did not think Mr Feng's actions would necessarily act as a deterrent. "Being killed by someone happens all the time. "People are just like that online."

From the BBC website

Six-Word Story

Hemingway, with his creation of the six-word story, combined poetry and drama into a short form that has grown in popularity while remaining difficult to achieve. A few of the best that have been written :

For sale: Baby shoes. Never worn.
— Ernest Hemingway

Longed for him. Got him. Shit.
— Margaret Atwood

"Apple?" "No." "Taste!" "ADAM?" Oh God.
— David Lodge

They awaited sunrise. It never came.
— AS Byatt

Funeral followed honeymoon. He was 90.
— Graham Swift

Wedding ring for sale. Stones missing.
— Glozboy

From The Guardian's editors and readers

SLICE
OF LIFE

And this correction in a newspaper

CORRIGENDUM

We apologize for the error in the last edition, in which we stated that 'Mr Fred Nicolme is a Defective in the Police Force'. This was a typographical error. We meant of course that Mr Nicolme is a Detective in the Police Force.'

— The Derby Abbey Community News

Giving Joyfully and the Wish Tree

The Joy of Giving Week in October found many volunteers among Thermax employees. Over 300 of them raised ₹ 7 lakh for Akanksha. Through Goonj, a voluntary organisation, they donated clothing and sanitary cloth. Staff at the corporate office spent time with ninth standard students of K C Thackeray Vidya Niketan School and briefed them about possible careers in Finance, Human Resources and Engineering. Kind gestures which surely will spill into the New Year.



People from various locations also put up their fervent wishes on wish trees.

**One magic wish granted. What would yours be...
for yourself, your family, your company or your country?**





About a human and fragile enterprise

A.S. Bhathena's welcome note to the young men (read as women too) joining Wanson India which would eventually become Thermax in 1980.



Dear friends

In welcoming you to our fold let me try and acquaint you with our company's basic philosophy and attitudes to enable you to understand us and enjoy being one of us in the shortest possible time.

Since our company has been getting involved only with essential items needed for the country's economy and as our goal has been clearly defined, we try to encourage entry of only those young men who are earnest, competent, mature, sensitive to their surroundings, pleasant and positive in their attitude towards life, with a capacity to laugh at themselves, and above all show evidence of management muscle at senior levels. The fact that you are now within our fold would indicate that you do have most of these qualities in good measure.

This being a human enterprise and therefore fragile, we would like to handle it with great care. We generally trust people and like to be trusted; playing the role of a policeman all the time is distasteful to us. Delegation of authority is what we encourage. We like to work in freedom in the belief that you would enjoy doing your work in such an atmosphere and would like to be trusted with the responsibilities. In such an environment, your contribution is likely to be the maximum and making a living would be incidental.

You will therefore see in Wanson (India) an absence of authoritarian rule, long drawn printed manuals. Incidentally, may I suggest you use your freedom with great finesse, so that eventually you become more conscious of your responsibilities than your rights.

While all of us may not be equal in every respect, we endeavour to give equal opportunity to everyone to grow with our organisation. Accidentally, we may have employed Brahmins or Kshatriyas, Vaishyas or Shudras, Muslims or Christians but we would very much like to see them all turned into Kshatriyas (warriors) in a ceaseless fight against poverty, disease, communalism, despondency and indolence all around us.

We are an expanding all-India organisation and our growth rate is rather impressive but please do not let success go to your heads; we have yet to learn a lot. Please, therefore, help us remain students all our lives. Quality of life is what we are seeking. Simplicity and moderation in all walks of life is what we cherish; try to be YOURSELF at all times.

Yours sincerely

for Wanson (India) PVT. Ltd.

A. S. BHATHENA

Managing Director