

HISTORY OF MATHERAN HILL STATION IN INDIA

Рассматривается история селения Матеран, расположенного в окрестностях одноименной горы недалеко от Мумбая. Деревня и окружающий ландшафт выступают своеобразным топомоном, в котором отражаются трансформация социокультурной ситуации и отношения к проблемам экологии в Индии на протяжении XIX–XX вв. Со времени освоения крошечной горной местности давление на экологию в горных окрестностях сильно возросло как за счет местных жителей, так и за счет туристов. Автор – свидетель социально-экономических подвижек поселения и изменений в окружающей среде.

Первые сведения о Матеране встречаются в отчете полковника Делэмэйна, искавшего место для военного санатория и относятся к 1829 г. Предложение разместить лечебницу именно здесь было отклонено британскими военными властями по причине недостаточного количества источников питьевой воды. В 1850 г. Хью Пойнц Мэлет, управляющий Тхань, предпринял очередную попытку исследовать окружающие горы, в том числе Матеран. Главным условием освоения горного Матерана и создания здесь поселения было обнаружение источников воды. В результате дополнительных экспедиций были найдены источники Малета, Харрисона, Пойсонби, пруды Симпсона и Ходока и др. Со временем население Матерана и количество приезжающих туристов увеличивались, поэтому потребность в воде росла, и на озере Шарлотты было построено много плотин, превративших его в один из основных источников водоснабжения. Однако полностью решить проблему водоснабжения так и не удалось, за многие десятилетия она даже усугубилась – исчезло значительное количество источников в районе рынка и в некоторых других местах. Сегодня в Матеране воды не хватает, ее подают по расписанию, либо доставляют на заказ.

Флора и фауна гор Матерана также нуждаются в защите в связи с растущей в окрестностях урбанизацией. Быстрый рост городского населения и коммерциализация этой горной местности – это вызов природной среде. В горах хороший воздух, много прекрасных видов, которые ранее были скрыты густыми лесами. Изменение климата приводит к уменьшению количества ливней, росту интенсивности зимы и увеличению летних температур воздуха. Максимальная температура летом может достигать 30–35°C, зимой – 16–18°C. Заметьте, что джунгли уменьшаются и деградируют, а это ведет к повышению температуры по сравнению с тем, что было пятьдесят лет тому назад, когда автор рос в этих местах.

В 2003 г. правительство объявило Матеран и окружающую горную местность экологически чувствительной зоной, в связи с чем начались проверки законности строительства домов. Однако это привело к конфликтам с местным населением, поскольку рост количества семей требует освоения новых площадок для возведения жилья. Кроме того, сокращение лесных угодий приводит к утрате источника средств к существованию.

Автор констатирует, что в горных районах Индии санаторно-курортная отрасль долгие годы находилась в застое. Среди наиболее острых проблем Матерана, нуждающихся в срочном решении можно отметить следующие. Во-первых, строительство хороших дорог (те, что есть, не выдерживают проливных дождей в период муссона). Во-вторых, разграничение стеной в ключевых горных местах природных зон и зон под застройку. Это подкрепит меры по обеспечению безопасности туристов и населения от потоков дождевой воды, стекающих к морю с Матерана и соседних отрогов. С этим тесно связан следующий, третий пункт. Необходимо организовать сбор и хранение воды, что позволит решить проблему питьевой воды в течение лета для деревень вблизи Матерана. В-четвертых, чтобы защитить красоту горной местности исключительно важно развить экологическое сознание у местных жителей и туристов, посещающих Матеран. В-пятых, необходимо подумать об экологичном транспорте и рикшах с электроаккумуляторами, для развития туризма и создания дополнительных рабочих мест.

Горный Матеран находится в переходном периоде, здесь не было вентиляторов и кондиционеров, но теперь эти средства нужны для повышения комфорта как живущих здесь людей, так и гостей региона – им должны быть доступны все современные удобства.

Матерану нужна стабильная модель развития, чтобы он продолжил свое существование, чтобы увеличивался лесной покров, чтобы к горной цепи Матерана было легко добраться. Матеран нуждается в серьезном внимании к развитию образования, здравоохранения и занятости местного населения.

Ключевые слова:

горы Матерана, джунгли, лесной покров, муссон, население, незаконное строительство, непрерывное водоснабжение, племенной, туризм, экология.

Matheran is located at 18.58° north latitude and 73–18°, east longitude. Matheran hill station is near to Mumbai one of the largest mega city of the world and consists of three different hill ranges. The Western Range, which is the smallest of the three, extends North to South from Porcupine to Louisa Point measuring more than a mile in length. The Middle Range is the biggest, extending from Hart Point in the North to Chowk Point in the South. It is about four miles long and a mile wide. It is on this range that most of the bungalows were built during the British period. The third Eastern Range runs from Panorama Point in the North-West to Garbut Point in the South-East, this covers two and a half to three miles in length, the total area is near about eight square miles. Measuring from Chowk point to Panorama Point the distance is about six miles. The surface is uneven and not suitable for agriculture [2].

Matheran has layer of latrine, which is permeable and absorbent in a high degree, the rain water drains quickly down the valley joining the springs and rivers. The plateau of red rock is about 2700 feet above the sea-level. In some parts it is bare, and less forested, whereas in some parts the natural terraces are covered with different trees, shrubs and twigs of different species. There are big boulders; masses of rock are of great size. The process of weathering continues as one move in the jungles one can see rounded stones after several decomposition. Heulandite is plentiful, Crystals of quartz are sparkling during the night are common in certain areas on the hill [4].

Brief History

In the east from Mumbai harbour at extreme distance is seen Matheran Mountain, which is partially hidden behind Prabal hill. Matheran is the smallest hill station in India. However with increasing pollution in Mumbai and around the visibility of the hill from the Mumbai harbour has become difficult.

According to the story by the Dhangars, the local community whose ancestors were wealthy chiefs and owned great flocks of sheep in the Deccan region, but because of the cold climate of the regions had damaged their assets, they replaced their flocks with herds of cattle which would survive in this environment; the barren tracts of land in the Deccan was unfit for pasturage, therefore wandered in the fertile plains of the Konkan region. The aboriginal tribes were pushed further inland and retreated towards the hills during the Aryan invasion. Some of the tribal's were forced to climb the hill of Matheran, and after find-

ing better place they settled on the hill. But Matheran resented this intrusion and soon after claimed the lives of the parents. In the jungle is the secret of their resting place, and this is still in the memory of their descendants, which the Dhangars called as "The Mother's Wood". The old song of the Dhangars explains their story.

"Mathe pite gamavila, *Matheran nav pavala*".
("When the parents died, It was called Matheran").

(*Mathe*) in Marathi which the local men pronounced with the 'th' hard as mata, means 'Mother'. 'Mathe pite' literally means, 'mother, father,' i.e. 'parents'. 'Ran' is 'wood' or 'forest'. But when the 'th' is pronounced with soft sound, 'mathe', means 'a head or crest,' and Matheran is translated as 'a wooded head' or 'forest crest.'

Prior to 1850 the hill was grazing ground for the cattle and later held from Government at a rent of Rs 50 per year. In 1860 i.e. ten years later it was established as a sanatorium. The Survey Department decided to detach these uplands and merged them to form the village of Matheran. Then boundary lines of Matheran were extended to the demarcated lines of the villages of Bikra, Neral, Boregaon, Wurrosag, and Sondewadi in the Karjat taluka and Maldoonga in the Panvel taluka.

Matheran had remained *unexplored* to Europeans, and was used for the rare visit of a refugee from the British justice after the cession of the Konkan. The Dhangars used the hill for grazing the cattle, Matheran till then was unoccupied. On all sides of the hills, close to Matheran foot hills i.e. from Peb to Vishalgad, each mountain had become the monopoly of the leaders of the thief's, especially during the tumultuous times of the Moghul and Maratha wars. The summit of Matheran was easy for access and therefore was rejected for fortifications by both Moghals and Marathas. But Matheran did not see any serious conflict on the hill. Although there was trouble around the hill. Later Mumbai emerged physically and politically strong because of the Maratha power. Sir John Malcolm was determined to bring about the conciliation and peace in the region. He sent detachments of British soldiers to search the districts and make the region free from any conflict.

In Matheran the group of dark-skinned men and women with their tangled locks and chains of beaded ornaments were seen near the main market place or in the Bazaar area on Sundays and other festive occasions, presently this has undergone change and lot of modern impact can be seen on tribal's of the region. Many of them are following urban styles. Today one can still observe the tribes struggling

up the steep hill side, with either load of grass, wood, berries, flowers, vegetables, jungle fruits etc. for day to day survival. These people have claimed that their ancestors were the first possessors of this land they live now.

I quote from Oliver, James Douglas in his book, "Glimpses of Old Bombay," say: "Matheran was not yet dragged from her obscurity, but a ray of light flashes on its darkness in 1822". Colonel Delamain writes: "Very rich scenery. In every direction noble mountains. To the north Mathç Ran, bearing at first view a stupendous square fort on the top, but it is natural".

It was in 1829, seven years later Colonel Delamain's Report that Malet had joined the civil service and was appointed collector of Khandesh (District in Bombay presidency till 1906), In the summer of 1830 he was on visit to Mahableshwar (well known hill station of British India) and in one of the meeting over the breakfast with Sir John Malcom who was the Governor of Bombay was exploring the idea about the hill for the purpose. During the meal the official correspondence was handed over to Governor. In one of the correspondence there was a communication from commission of officers who had been sent by him to get a detailed report on the two hills Prabal and Matheran, the intention was to establishing a military sanatorium for local troops. The officers declined both the hills unfit for said purpose because of lack of water supply. Later, the idea was dropped by the Governor of Bombay, it was after twenty years i.e. in 1850 when Malet became the collector of Thana, that he was able to recall the discussion of Governor in Mahableshwar on exploring the hill [3].

Early Local History of Matheran

In May, 1850, Hugh Pointz Malet from the Bombay Civil Service became the collector of Thana. In one of his halt at the Chowk village Bungalow while on his way to Pune. During this work in the region, Malet pointed his gun towards the hill and asked the local tribal people what is on the top ? and after getting positive response from tribal person decided to explore the hill. Next day he was guided by the Patil of Soondee-warra; now pronounced as Sondewadi and decided to climb the hill. Malet walked by the small footpath which passed through the Amraee, or Mango Groves on the westward side of Chowk Point. This path is still used by local tribes in the region to come to hill, the path joins the hills near the column of huge black rock, where single jambul tree survives by the name as "One Tree Hill". The hill was surveyed by Malet and his guide and made their way to the small run-

ning stream. He walked through the valley and collected two bottles of spring water and soil from the old bazaar area and gathered laterite stone for scientific investigation. This was to decide whether the top of the hill is fit for human habitation or not. Malet then walked down from the hill by the path that goes along the opposite side of the Chowk. He carried with him water, soil, and stones. Under Sphinx Point – the Mango groves (Amraee) of earlier days, the local people called it as the Ram Bagh (Garden). From here Malet and the guide went different way, Malet after returning from hill expressed his satisfaction with what he observed on the hill.

In September 1850, Malet decided to send up to the Patel supplies of sheep, fowls, rabbits, etc., and sent message about his coming on the hill again and to wait for him. Madhoo Rao, the son of the village chief, along with the hill-people started building a hut on site no.2, and within the duration of six weeks a hut was put up for the collector of Thana. Malet occupied the hut on the 1st of November, 1850, and built office-tents around it. He stayed for a month and cleared the footpaths to the several points.

In February 1851, Malet visited the hill the third time and was accompanied by Captain Harry Barr who was unknown to Madhoo Rao. Barr also climbed the hill several times to get acquainted with the hill. Captain Barr selected site no.13 and built a house after the monsoon in 1851. In 1851, Malet constructed three more bungalows, two were temporary on site nos.1 and 9, and one was made of stone known as "The Byke." It is now converted into hotel known as Byke Hotel. Mr. Fawcett identified a flat surface near Echo Point to build a house. This was made of iron framework and walls constructed of bamboo. Earlier the constructions were temporary, but later were made of stone and lime. In 1852, Malet was able to obtain a grant of Rs.500 from the Government of Bombay for developing the path going to Chowk. In 1852 Captain Day was deputed by Government to survey the hill, explore road to Neral, the survey was also taken up later by Captain Ponsonby who marked sites for church and other public buildings, hospital and jail etc. He completed the survey of Neral road. In 1853 Major Peacock further continued survey of the hill and contributed to clearing jungles, opening out several views on the hill, making new paths, sites for private houses. The roads were later expanded by Dashwood Graham. In 1864 again there was surveying by Colonel Francis who gave final sanction to what was already done and lithographed map of the hill was printed by Government. Again

58 | In 1900 new survey was made of the hill. The foundation of the church was laid in 1858, and the building was completed within three years. Later many new additions came with the fine window given by Michael Scott, and it was consecrated by Bishop Harding in 1865.

Mrs. Malet was the first English lady to reach Matheran; she was carried up in a common chair belted with ropes to poles of bamboo. Between 1853–1854 four buildings were constructed. In 1854 summer Lord Elphinstone who was the Governor of Bombay, for the first time came to Matheran with his office staff. He was satisfied with the surroundings on the top of the hill and returned after the monsoons. He made commitment for making wide roads, the storing of water, and other development work on the hill. He had the accuracy in making the roads possible along the natural paths because this would require less maintenance. He constructed a house at the top of the hill and selected the site for Elphinstone Lodge and built a hut on the place. He laid the foundation of the bungalow which covered the area over thirty seven acres. He made effort to construct a bund by him in the valley that separated the Panorama ridge from the body of the hill. But it washed away in first rains, for the construction of bund a large number of prison labourers and elephants were used to speed up the work. According to J.Y. Smith, it would have been a fine ornamental sheet of water formation in this area and its banks would have been transformed into gardens. Further Captain Fuller had suggested constructing a high bund, a little down in the valley but it was not attended seriously. After that smaller reservoirs were constructed but it was not successful because of the topographical reasons because the springs ceased to run in the season. The reason was uneven surface, the ground, space, porous soil, and fissures in the rocks were unsuitable for storage [4].

The old route to Matheran prior to 1854

Before the railway line was laid between Bombay and Pune, Matheran hill was not linked with railways. People from Bombay came to Appollo Bunder or Mazgaon Bunder harbour and used the steamer, yacht, or boat upto Ulva Bunder. From Ulva to Panvel by tonga (horse cart) and then to Chowk village (near Karjat) by cart. In 1781 “Chowk witnessed a stiff battle between British troops under Captain Mackay and a large force of Marathas under Parashram Bhau.” Douglas also mentions the fact that Wellington dated very lengthy dispatches from his “camp at Chowk”. The journey by sea was four hours, which is twelve miles south-east of Panvel on the way to

Pune. In order to avoid the number of creeks and twisting streams, one had to bridge over. This made a considerable long way round, sweeping round to the north-east of Kalyan.

From Chowk had to climb up the Shivaji ladder or via Rambag route to the top of the hill. These routes were first opened by Mr. Malet, and prior to Malet the tribals were aware of this surrounding region. It was a journey of 22 miles but after 1854 Matheran became easily accessible to people [3].

Present Route

From Mumbai's Victoria Terminus of the Central Railway, which is presently known CST (Chatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Terminus), one can reach Neral Station by Karjat local train, the journey is two hours; and from Pune, almost 3 hours. The entry to Matheran is from Neral (small town at the foothills of Matheran, and 133 feet above the sea-level). Neral is junction, small railway station built during the construction of the Great Indian Peninsular (GIP) Railway line covering a distance of 65 miles from Bombay and 66 miles from Pune. Today local people from Neral commute from Neral to Mumbai daily for work and education, the population is growing and it was the centre of business in rice, timber and coal during British period.

The Neral–Matheran Light Railway which is also known as toy train is attractive tourist coming from all over the world, This train is similar to toy train of Shimla, Darjelling, and Ooty. The Matheran railway was built by Sir Adamjee Peerbhoy and Abdul Hussein Peerbhoy, in 1907. One can also walk from Neral to Matheran. During my childhood days I would climb up and down the hill, especially in Monsoons, when train comes to halt in the first or second week of June because of heavy rains, there was no alternative transport for local population of Matheran rather than walking the hill up and down for different work purpose. Some would take horse, but it is really difficult journey because of improper roads, most of the construction and household goods, cooking gas cylinder is either carried on horse / or donkey's back, and this results in goods getting costlier. During 70's when most of family members came from father's native village Bavada in taluka Khandala District Satara, we would take rest for awhile to start journey to hill, sometimes when it is late and use to get dark by evening by the time we reached Neral. Walking late in the dark was not advisable, my father would advise us all children that we can sleep at Neral railway station. He would get something to eat from the small Udipi hotel, i.e. mainly wada pav (local burger / or Missal

pav, very common for labourers / poor families). Eating in the hotel was very costly, At times I have experienced sleeping at the Neral railway platform on benches or below the benches kept for passengers. In the monsoon this was to escape the cold and keep us warm enough beneath the bench. Lodging was just out of reach, we could not afford to stay in lodge, I just one day made request for the same and insisted my father that I want to experience to stay in lodge, and he replied that my demand is increasing. After that I did not ask him about lodging any more, he told me once you become big man, you can prefer staying in hotel, today for me the memories of going to Matheran has changed. We had to request the railway police to allow us to spend some time on platform to rest, and tell him that it has become dark and cannot travel to Matheran at odd hours, it was only on this condition that policeman would say yes. But the joy for my family to reach the hill was at peak. Early in the morning the railway police would come and wake us up, and shout, wake up, you have to go to Matheran. We would start the journey to hill early morning before the sun is on the head and try to reach by noon on the hill. This would take four to five hours to climb the hill.

Exit from the Neral station and take left. At distance is a mosque where the road is divided. The right road goes through the village. Take the left and walk up to Maruti temple, then the right, but not the right side for us. Then the straight road after walking for large distance to reach the Jumma-Patti Station (a small stop between Neral and Matheran) at a height of about 830 feet above the sea-level. Next stop is Water Pipe Station is at the end of the fourth mile at a height of about 1658 feet. Reaching this place one can experience the change in weather, which is cool compared to plains, and cool breeze blowing. The Jumma-Patti and the Water Pipe are small stops, there are no passengers alighting or boarding, but small halts for the train engine which in early days needed fuel supply of coal and water. Passengers can get tea, coffee and soft drinks, batata wadas, wada pav, potato wafers, (local snacks) but now everything is available in packed and branded form all this has transformed the tiny Hill station till the train goes up and down the hill.

The distance between Neral and Matheran Post Office is seven miles. The roads are wide and steep because of which driving car is difficult. There are no vehicles allowed inside the town and is strictly prohibited by the Government from colonial times. Only horses/ and Rickshaws (hand pulled) are allowed. Permission to ply ambulance in heart of town is given

on emergency medical grounds. The late E. K. Khan, then Municipal Councillor, had applied for a license for running pony carriages on the road from Neral to Matheran. He had given demonstration for the same but the executive engineer of Thane made a report to the effect that unrestricted use of the horse-drawn vehicles is not recommended except under certain conditions. Thus there is absence of vehicles in Matheran. In 1980s private taxi service was started, but this was not completely recognised by the Road Transport Office, Unless the Government builds proper roads, keeping in mind the topography of the ghat and clearance from concerned authority and departments. presently there is registered union of taxi drivers at Neral matheran taxi stand. Today there are more than 300 taxis plying on the Neral-Matheran Hill. Presently the road is in getting built but not in good condition, and the Maharashtra Government Public Works Department, Forest Department, and RTO have to come together to provide better services to the hill people and tourists. This will benefit the overall development of Matheran hill station, this has already taken time of more than hundred years. Recently mini bus service from State Transport from Neral to Matheran is available.

Presently, the Neral village has a long irregular row of houses/shops on both sides of the road. Recently the road widening is done for about half a mile from the the Neral station, it was difficult to walk in the morning and evening from the market road, many tribals from the nearby villages and padas (settlement of tribals) bring their local produce to sell in the local market. One can observe the taxiwallas waiting outside the station asking passerby "Saheb/Madam Matheran Jana hai". (sir/madam want to go Matheran) The taxiwallas are local Muslims and Hindus. There are many taxies plying between Neral and Matheran and taxi fare is 80 Rs per seat for both locals and tourists.

The commerce of Neral was husking rice, coal, wood and supplying to the local residents on the hill and other places. It was the market for the timber trade of the surrounding region. This teak was used for building purposes and was obtained on the slopes of the hills, and ravines of Matheran, and Prabul. Presently access to timber is difficult because Matheran and surrounding region is declared as Eco-sensitive zone as a result does not permit to cut any trees without the prior permission from the forest department. But equally raises important issue of those tribal's who are directly dependent on forest produce for their survival.

At the entrance of the Matheran town there is small halt to the old forest road. During the British days few police and clerk under the instructions of the Plague Department would present a record book, where the person had to enter his name, address, and the number of servants with them. After ten days latter one had to remain present at the Superintendent's Office for medical inspection. This is old small toll bar, today known as Dasturi Naka. Matheran Municipal council collects tourist entrance tax to the hill station, this adds to revenue of the hill station of Matheran

Just below the entrance of Dasturi point, at turning of the ghat is small temple of lord Shiva, where every passerby would bow before the god for completing and starting of the journey on the hill few devotees would perform rituals and break coconuts, lit Agarbatti and offer flowers, and garland the stone god for safe journey. This was the practice of the Dhangars and latter other natives also started worshipping. A panoramic view of the valley and surrounding regions can be seen. Beyond the toll station, the road goes to Bazaar and other end of the hill. At intervals there are openings in the jungle through which one can see views of the Gharbut valley, enclosed on either side by the broad headlands of Chowk and Garbut.

Mrs. Oliver, while reading a book entitled "For what we have received", by Francis Toye, then eminent London music critic and then Director of the British Institute in Florence, had mentioned of the Toye's short stay "at Matheran, a modest hill station but a few hours distant", (i.e. from Bombay) 1920. Like almost all Europeans, the Toyes loved Matheran. "Living there", Mrs. Toye said, "was like living on Lewis Carroll's tray in the sky"... "After the oppressive heat of Bombay the temperature seemed deliciously cool; there were pleasant walks in pleasant woods full of monkeys. Above all Matheran is associated with the fact that there I wrote the best of my songs, the only one in fact that has achieved any measure of international fame. I had picked up a periodical containing Belloc's 'Tarantella'; the main musical idea came to me in Delhi or Calcutta but at Matheran, thanks to a room and a piano in a bungalow placed at my disposal by a kindly Bombay merchant. I was able to fix and complete it. How happy we were during that fortnight!" [3].

Matheral Hill

In 1870 the proposal for beautification of Matheran was sent to hill station committee. The earlier Bombay Gazetteer mentioned that Matheran hill top had "an estimated area of 5,000 acres, nearly eight square miles." But

another Government survey conducted long back mentioned it to be 1,816 acres and 30 gunthas, i.e. about three square miles. This assessment includes few of the slopes, but this made a big difference.

"Matheran top is uneven tableland with rocky headlands. These headlands are known as Points." The six prime ones are Panorama, Hart, and Porcupine in the north and the Gharbut, Chowk and Louisa in the south end. There are also small openings on the roadside along these points. These are known as Monkey, Maldoonga, Monnie, Mary, Peb, and Our Point that are between Hart and Porcupine; Coronation Point in the west; Landscape, Echo, Danger, Celia, and One Tree Hill, between Louisa & Chowk. Alexandra, Myra and Beatrice Cliff between Chowk and Gharbut. The flat landscape came to known as Artist Point. On the elevated ground is Governor's Hill, with Barry Mount on the Panorama side. Besides the main road leading from Neral, there are several miles of bridle paths running in different directions to the Points and crossing each other over the entire hill surface. These paths are broad enough for two ponies to go side by side. It starts near the Hermitage, and passes Landscape Point taking the lower road. The point is named after Mrs. Fawcett. After walking few feets the road ends in a narrow neck of windswept rock. Below were disconnected masses of rock. It was called as Supurichi Sond, or pillar head by the natives. In the south is the view of the Varosha Valley. Along with the huge flat wall of Prabul on the right, and thereafter the stretch of Matheran on the left, on other side the outfall of the Charlotte Lake, with Danger Point rising above it. The Belvedere Path was named by Dr. J.P. Barry, skirting the cliff edge nearly as far as One Tree Hill. In the centre there is bare cleft rock of Ishalgad rising. The village of Chowk with the Chowk bridge on both sides of its river, nestles among the trees in the plains at its base" [3].

In the northward is the Malanggad range, which is lonesome hills. In the west, over the lower altitude of Vanga and Morpa, there is dusty plain, excluded and broken by numerous creeks and water-ways, stretching out to reach the sea; beyond the coast line of the island-dotted harbour, at far distance is Mumbai. From Panorama Point one gets a fine view, both Louisa and Porcupine can be reached easily. As mentioned by Oliver, Louisa point is a rare place in India where the Brocken Spectre event occurs [3].

The **Porcupine Point**. From the left side from here, there are steep and narrow small path descending to a small cluster of Thakar

huts on the plateau, this was named after its first settler, Hussa. A short distance beyond this opening the road is again dividing. On the left there is an old jambul tree, then on the cliff edge, is called “**Coronation Point**”. It was designed by Major J.B. Smith and opened on the 1st of January 1903, the day of the Coronation ceremony of King Edward the Seventh. The view extends from the base of Chanderi on the right, and extends round to the southern slopes of Prabal. The low hills in front are Vanga and Morpa. From here one can see scattered huts of tribals on the plateau below.

The name of **Porcupine** was probably because of the finding of some of these little animals in the region here. ‘**Palki**’ **Point** it was mispronunciation by earlier coolies and tonjon-wallas of English name. The Malanggad range becomes fore-shortened, and glimpses of the plains beyond can be seen through the gaps of its rocky, broken masses. The long headland of **Panorama** on the east and on its lower steep is the Maldunga forest. I have visited this forest areas several times and there are few tribal huts. The **Cathedral Rock** is at extreme range in isolation and is inaccessible and barren. In February mostly a village fair is held on its top, and hundreds of pilgrims go up the hill. On the full moon day, a large number of Muslims and Hindus come together to worship the Bawa’s Shrine. Some natives of Matheran also participate, which was chiefly among the Dawads (stone cutters). Who had migrated to Matheran as labourers while building the hill station. There are others who have no time, and the inclination to make the long journey to Malanggad, and they come to Porcupine Point, to offer prayers, there is celebration of Urs local village fest and religious service is carried out, facing towards the distant hill where the tomb of Saint is located. I was regular to this village fest and offer prayers.

At this point, there is also a path leading down to the opening made, which was named as “Malet Point” by Colonel Hay in 1898 which is also known as “Our Point”. This is a rocky extension, cut away on the side of a deep gorge, and is bounded on either side by the long scarps of Porcupine and Monkey Point. On some way down the hill side is the source of Malet Spring also called by the natives “Tipachi Pani”. Below is the Maldunga forest, the platform under the edge of the cliff on

the left Thakars in the summer prepare a ladder made from the long tendrils of the Umbli creeper. This was to collect honey and the fire was lit to honey comb by burning little grass. This drives away the bees which is dangerous because the bees may attack the person who is extracting honey. The honey is removed out of the wax, and filled into bottles and sold in the local market now there are few who come with this honey bottles to market.

Our Point, is on the opposite side of the ravine which is called Peb Point. These two points are situated east and west, Peb has the shade in the morning, while the towering hillside casts its long shadows over Our Point from an early hour in the afternoon. **Monkey Point**. **Hart Point**, behind which stands out in dark relief the back ground of Panorama ridge, with the high shoulder of Governor’s Hill midway.

Kaleraika Peda (Black Forest Plateau) is the indigenous name for **Hart Point** and Mr. W. Hart of the Bombay Civil Service was the Secretary to Government in 1858, who named the Governor’s Hill which gives view of the country surroundings. This place was associated with Lord Elphinstone. In all probability the name was given in honour of Sir Richard Temple who made Matheran his headquarters instead of Mahabaleshwar, because his presence was required in case of any emergency in Bombay especially during the severe famine which occurred during his Governorship. The Mount Barry after Dr. Andrew Barry, earlier Superintendent of Matheran is part of the same ridge, which is located above the Dasturi, overlooking the plains, with Gharbat Point on the right.

Some spots on the roadside have been given the name of Points and have been honoured with the names of the wives of the Superintendents who made them. These are called as Myra, near Harrison’s Spring; Celia, above the Lake; Monnie, near Ponsonby Spring; Mary, near Simpson’s Tank; and Beatrice Cliff; near Gharbat Circus. The Birdwood Walk is a path leading off from the Race Course. This was made under the supervision of Mr. Birdwood who frequented the hill and lived in his own house, named as Underwood. **Alexander point**. The point was named after Captain Alexander, of the Roth Huzzars, a brother-officer of Captain Given’s. This dates back to the early ‘Malet’ days [3].

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