

Gerald Durrell

English author

Commemoration in Jamshedpur , his Birth place

Durrell was born 90 years ago on 7 January 1925 in Jamshedpur. His father, Lawrence Samuel Durrell (1884-1928), was a very prominent contractor who, after being involved in the building of the Darjeeling railway, came to Jamshedpur.

As an engineer, he built TISCO General Office, Tata Main Hospital, the Tinplate Co., the Indian Cable Co., the Enamelled Ironware Co. and undertook contractual work with them to build the earlier European Bungalows. He stayed at D/6 type European bungalow opposite Beldih Lake and describes it as sprawling and comfortable, with cool, shuttered rooms, a large veranda with bamboo screens against the heat of the sun, and a sizeable garden of lawn, shrubs and trees.

After the death of his father in 1928, his mother, Louisa Dixie Durrell (1886-1964), returned to England with her three younger children – Leslie (1918-1983), Margaret (1920-2007) and Gerald (1925-1995) Lawrence (1912-1990), the eldest, had already moved to England .

Gerald lived with his family on the Greek island of Corfu from 1935-1939 where began to collect and keep the local fauna as his pets and which was also the basis of his book *“My Family And Other Animals”*.

Home-schooled Gerald honed his descriptive skills in writing about animals. Many of those who appeared for the Senior Cambridge exams will recall *“My Family And Other Animals”* as a prescribed text book.

His greatest achievement was the founding of the Jersey Zoo in 1959 as a center for the conservation of endangered species, and the creation of the Jersey Wildlife Conservation Trust (now the Durrell Wildlife Conservation Trust) in 1963. Durrell ran the Zoo from its foundation until his death; his wife Lee is still Honorary Director of the Trust.

His brother, Lawrence Durrell, was a famous novelist, poet, dramatist, and travel writer, too. His first novel was *‘Pied Piper of Lovers’* while *‘The Alexandria Quartet’* was the most famous.

We wish to celebrate that Gerald’s journey began from Jamshedpur.

Here are a few events proposed :

1. Choosing the zoo as a venue since it focuses on animals.
2. The installation of a commemorative of Gerald at the Durrell Bungalow, with appropriate signage.
3. To start the events rolling by instituting a debate for youth on an appropriate theme.
4. Book-reading and appreciation of Durrell book.
5. Launch of the Durrell Corner at Loyola school with a collection of books, videos, magazines and pictures
6. Conducting an essay writing environment for school children using Animals as a guide to learn non-verbal communication culminating in the publishing of a book.

7. An opportunity for Lee Durrell to speak about the vision of Gerald Durrell to a select audience and to the Forest Conservators of the area
8. Commemorating the Bungalow where Gerald was born which looks the same