



Planters Welfare Association

(AN ASSOCIATION OF MUTUAL BENEFITS)

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Thirty - Sixth AGM held at The Delhi Gymkhana Club Ltd. on 15th December 2024

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EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

President: A. Batra

Vice – President: Capt V.K.Mehra

Ex- Officio: V.Lall

Secretary : R.K.Patney

Treasurer: B.Chhabra

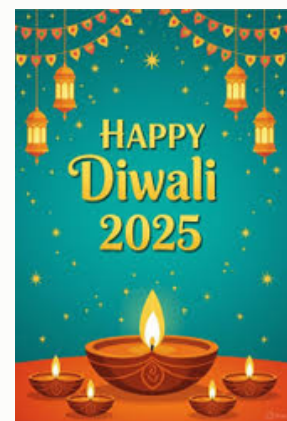
Members : A.K. Saxena / R.Wazirchand / A Ganguly / S. Chaudhary

Members Meeting (Socials): Mrs. Nirmla Lall, Mrs. Rani Patney, Mrs. Sunanda Chhabra, Mr. Rajiv Wazirchand

Member Mailing: Mrs. Rani Patney

Editor: Ashok Batra

Period 2 – October 2025



MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Dear Members, Spouses, Families and Friends,

This would be my last message to you as President, as you all are aware that our 37th AGM is coming up on Saturday 13th December at the Delhi Gymkhana Club, and my tenure comes to an end, signalling a new setup in the E.C., with fresh horizons to look forward to for the next two years.



The past two years has been an eye opener for me, forging great friendships with many of you, reigniting with old contacts and acquaintances, building new ones, and learning so much from many of your experiences. I really can say, that I have never met so many, than you gentlemen and spouses, who still have the dedication and professionalism after retirement, and continue to live life to the fullest, with such joie de vivre.

My sincere and grateful thanks to each and every one of you, for the kind support and encouragement that I have received in carrying this mantle; it has made me a wiser and more enlightened person, and enjoyed every moment.

While thinking about the future of our PWA, I cant help thinking about a couple of things; one is our finances, where presently we are healthy, but we need to think carefully to where we can raise sponsorship , especially for our yearly AGM's, which comes to between 2.75 to 3 lacs each time. Each of us need to use our contacts to raise even small amounts which add up, so as not to burden our usual well-wishers for large sponsorships, due to the trying time that our Industry is going through for the last few years. Another is the age of our present E.C. My appeal to you all, especially our younger members, we need your experience and fresh ideas, to rise even higher. Believe me, it's a great way to occupy a bit of your time.

Wishing you and your dear family all the very best for the forthcoming festive Seasons; Take good care with the Winter approaching, as the weatherman predicts a further severity.

With warm wishes from Radhika and me.

Ashok Batra



MEMBERS MEETING (SOCIAL) FOR THE YEAR 2025 – 2026

The Events held and the up – coming Activities for the year 2025 – 2026, are as under:

S. No.	Date	Venue	Venue booked by
1	Sun 10th August, 2025	DSOI, Dhaula Kuan, New Delhi (Lunch)	Capt. V K Mehra
2	Sun 14th Sept 2025	DSOI , Palam Vihar , Gurgaon (Cancelled since Minimum number required was not achieved)	Mr. A.K.Saxena
3	Sun 02nd November, 2025	Indian Airforce Aakash Mess, India Gate , New – Delhi (Neelamber) (Lunch)	Mr.R.Wazirchand
4	Sat 13th December, 2025	Annual General Meeting - 2025 at Delhi Gymkhana Club ,New Delhi Party Cottage - 1 (Lunch) (SPONSORED EVENT)	Mr. A.Batra
5	Sunday January, 2026	Hosted & sponsored at their Farm House by Mr. & Mrs Narotam Sayal	
6	Sun 15th February 2026	Masonic Lodge , Connaught Place New – Delhi (Lunch)	Mr. Sunil Khanna
7	Sunday April , 2026	Delhi Gymkhana Club , New - Delhi (Jamun Tree) Lunch)	Mr. B .Chhabra

Event for the month of August 2025

The event held in the month of August 2025 was a roaring success, and thoroughly enjoyed by all. All the arrangements made by Capt. & Mrs V.K.Mehra were excellent, and was enjoyed by all the attendees - Great comrades, super and delicious lunch menu's by the EC Ladies.

We wish to add, that 59 pax attended the event although confirmation from 72 were received. In spite of giving a lower minimum number for catering, it resulted in a loss of an additional amount, which is most unfortunate.

Regret received from members after confirmation, of such a magnitude may kindly be avoided, as it poses unwarranted challenges to the organisers. It can also prove to be awkward to raise debit notes on those regretting late, or not at all - as per our rules, besides a monetary loss.

Event for the month of September 2025

We are also distressed to mention, that the Event to be held at DSOI , Gurgaon, during the month of September 2025 had to be cancelled, under duress, as the minimum number required by the Institute were not available. Adequate notice by way of a Circular, followed by two reminders were also sent, as done for all our Events. Confirmation from less than 40 pax were received. Members may please note that this was the first time since the inception of the Association, that the decision of cancellation was taken . The Association had to bear the loss of the non-reimbursable Booking Charge.

While members often request for increased numbers of Events, the reality is that the participation has been low, hence you will appreciate, that increasing the numbers of Events is not possible, at this stage.

NOTE -

Members are reminded that all who confirm and do not attend the event will be billed. The Association is in no position to bear such losses.

NEW MEMBERS

- 1.Mrs. Aditi Chandra - 126, Tennyson Ave, Palo Alto , C.A 94301 , U.S.A , Mobile : + 1 – 612 – 607 – 9219 , e mail : aditichandra76@gmail.com
2. Mrs Saumya Chandra – C – 2050 A , Shushant Lok, Phase -1 Gurgaon 122009 Mobile: 9873179826 , e mail : saumyachandra17@gmail.com
3. Major Ranjen Bhatia (Retd) – GF -1 / 95 – B , DDA Flats (MIG) , Vikaspuri , New – Delhi – 110018; Mobile : 9711440904 , e mail : ranjenbhatia@gmail.com

OBITUARY – (DECEMBER 2024 – APRIL 2025)

With great sorrow we inform our members of the sad demises of the following -

Our Member :

- Mr. Arun Tandon
- Mr. H.N.Chopra
- Mr. B.B.Malhotra
- Mr. Harjit S. (Bunny) Mehta

Near & dear ones :

- Miss Bhamini Pahwa d/o Mr. Atul Pahwa
- Sister of Mrs. Dipika Nanjappa
- Father of Mr. Rohit Malhotra
- Mother of Mrs Renu Mehra w/o Mr. K.K.Mehra
- Mother of Mrs Ritu Wazirchand w/o Mr. Rajiv Wazirchand
- Son in Law of Mr Y. N. Chaturvedi

Friends:

- Mrs. Sreelata Dhir w/o Mr Amarjit Dhir (Ex Tata Tea)
- Mrs. Gurtu w/o Late Mr. H.N Gurtu (Ex Duncans)
- Mr. Phillip Rajit Ninan (Chairman Paramount Tea Marketing Pvt Ltd)
- Mr. P.K.Banerjee (Ex Andrew Yule)
- Mr. Jimmy Nichlos (Ex Manager Kumargram Tea Estate)
- Mr. S Prakash (Ex Williamson Magor)
- Mr. Narender K. Jain (Ex Badulipar)

LETTERS EXPRESSING OUR CONDOLENCES WERE SENT TO THE BEREAVED.

MEMBER'S DIRECTORY

The up dated Members Directory ,is circulated periodically to all members . It is available for viewing on our website - www.pwa.in

WEBSITE – www.pwa.in

Has been regularly brought up to date. You are requested to view this periodically to keep in touch with the activities and happenings at the Association. Please do give your comments to enable us to improve this further. We have noted that the hits are very low . Much efforts are made to keep this updated , not to mention the costs for its upkeep.

SUBSCRIPTION:

Mode of Payment of Subscription –

a) **Cheque** - Cheque favouring PLANTERS WELFARE ASSOCIATION, may please be forwarded by Courier/ Speed Post to our Registered Office (Residence Of Mr. B.Chhabra) Addressed to Mr. B.Chhabra , D- 247 (GF) , Defence Colony , New – Delhi 110024
Mobile no – 9818025579.

b) **Bank Transfer** – The required details are as under –
1 – Name of Beneficiary – Planters Welfare Association
2 – Saving bank account - A/C no 004601050068
3 – IFSC Code - ICIC0000046
4 – Bank & Branch- ICICI Bank, New Friends Colony , New – Delhi 110025



A TOUCHING TRIBUTE TO BUNNY MEHTA BY GURINDER (INDI) KHANNA

Brushed Away by an Elephant

What can one say when one loses a VERY dear friend, one who was way more than a brother. Bunny (Harjit Singh) Mehta and I were colleagues way back in 1975, both young assistants in Malayalam Plantations. While the two of us never worked on the same estate or, for that matter not even in the same district, we just appeared to hit it off and almost naturally gravitated towards each other and became good friends. A relationship which remained strong till such time as I was with Malayalam Plantations and then simply withered away post '79, when I relocated from the south to Assam and then later moved on to Dubai, which was followed by a five-year sojourn in Sri Lanka.



Fast forward to 2005, which is when we moved in lock, stock & barrel to permanently plant ourselves in the Nilgiris. Bunny was then the manager of Nonsuch Estate, a prime property in the district. It was almost as though the intervening quarter of a century had never existed. Back we were to meeting each other regularly, hobnobbing about all sorts of innocuous stuff. Whenever together, we were always well fortified with plenty of liquid sustenance sloshing around in our innards, which naturally led to conversations slowly creeping up in volume to, quite often, end up in crazy and meaningless arguments.

A couple of years after we built and moved into our “Khanna da Thikana” (which loosely translates into the permanent abode of the Khanna’s) the Mehta’s started the construction of their house all of 400 meters away as the crow flies, bang across us on the opposite side of a narrow valley. Which led me to promptly initiate a tree planting drive so that “I don’t have to see your undies drying, fluttering around in the breeze every time I look out of my office window”!



Quitting his job at Nonsuch in 2015, by which time his house across the valley had been completed, my friend established and started a small homestay style resort (the Tamarind Tree) in Masinagudi, a village on the periphery of the Madhumalai wildlife reserve. Totally ill-equipped to manage an establishment of that nature, in just a couple of years, while he shelved the idea of running the resort, the small personal house he had built on the property became Bunny's hidey-hole and temporary escape from his wife, Anju. Almost naturally, in short time and whenever I needed one, also became my temporary refuge from my other half. All of 75 minutes away from my Thikana, I'd regularly ride down to Masinagudi on my trusty Bullet to spend a couple of carefree days there shooting the breeze with my buddy.

Gradually and without my even realizing that this was happening, Bunny became my sounding-board which 'matured' into him ending up taking on the role of my agony aunt. A role which he happily accepted. Our constant banter was, needless to say, punctuated with good old earthy Punjabi expletives which also formed the start and the end of each sentence. Invectives which animatedly pulled in mothers, sisters, aunts and any other sundry relatives which came to mind, not just of others but also our own. Neither of us ever realized or even cared that we were 'somewhat over the top' with our abusive language till the day, enroute from Bangalore to home, Muskan and I broke journey for the night in Bunny's hermitage. Muskan, who had accompanied me to Bangalore found herself uncomfortably wedged between her 'two fathers'. Two drinks down the hatch and with her ears ringing and scarlet red from the dulcet Punjabi flowing out as fast as the rum (Bunny's being some fancy whiskey) was flowing in, Muskan was like a cork out of a champagne bottle, heading off to her bed to smother her ears between two pillows.

With not even the slightest shade of grey in between, Bunny's relationships were strictly Black & White. While I qualified as being a star performer in the former category, God AND the courts were required to help those who fell into the latter one. For us, the whites, the gentleman would move heaven & earth to selflessly help out should any assistance of any kind ever be required.

A flamboyant dresser, Bunny would regularly attire himself in orange coloured chinos, with PINK socks, peeping out from under the trouser cuffs. While I'd refuse to even be seen dead in that circus joker apparel, that gxxxxx (look that up in Google) carried it off nonchalantly.

There is so much and so much more to share that I could just go on relating stories and anecdotes, which would have carried on multiplying had fate not intervened.

Out on his regular evening walk, whenever he was down there, in a remote area behind Masinagudi, there having been no eyewitness to the freak accident which did him in, and while this is personal conjecture, it has been pieced together from seeing his injuries and the later autopsy report.



Coming around a blind bend, he was probably startled by a herd of elephants up close. Wheeling around to escape in the opposite direction he may have tripped over some root or rock, to fall down head-first, banging his head hard on some boulder. Shouting out for help, since his body had no signs of elephant violence (goring or trampling), the most likely explanation is that one of the elephants must have walked across and simply brushed Bunny away with its trunk.

Which 'gentle push' in itself would be sufficient to crack a couple of ribs. A vehicle passing by having dispersed the elephants, the driver got Bunny into the van and drove him to the nearby primary health centre from where, seeing the seriousness of the injuries, he was put in an ambulance to be taken to a larger medical facility. He never got there.

While he's gone way too soon, it was the way this loving partner & father, a fiercely loyal friend and the perennial rebel would have liked to go – brushed away by an elephant!



Sleep well my friend till, with wide grins similar to the above, plastered across our respective mugs, we meet again to carry on from where you've left me – to abuse each other in chaste Punjabi.

THE ELEPHANT BOY OF TEA

Many will remember Sabu, the first Indian actor who made it to Hollywood and became the legendary Elephant Boy. This is the story of The Elephant Boy of Tea, son of an ex-patriate planter.

Arthur Mansfield Nuttal was born in 1906, at Digulturrang TE, which was planted out by his father.

His great grandfather was Maj General Sir Arthur Nuttal of the Gurkha Brigade. Arthur's parents became estranged when he was very young and his mother returned to England leaving the toddler behind. His father died soon afterwards. The Miri bungalow servants adopted the abandoned child and raised the white baba in their village.

Soon the young lad, brought up in the Miri traditions, became an expert at kheda operations, training of elephants and a talented shikari. Assam in those days was prone to malaria and kala- ajar, which periodically surfaced in epidemic form. The youngster fell violently ill and was brought to Digulturrung in a critical condition. The Bara Sahib seeing a white boy and learning of his antecedent had the patient admitted in the estate hospital.

Planters on hearing of the English boy, gone native, decided to get him back to their civilization. Colleagues of the boy's father helped to send Arthur to St. Paul's School, in Darjeeling. However, the lad so much at home with the local tribesman and the wild animals of Assam, especially the elephants, was a total misfit "among" his own. The English language and the western culture he was being educated in was totally alien to him. Not being able to express his inner feelings he developed a violent temper and was quick with his fists, traits that made teachers and students leave Arthur alone. The loner not academically inclined, but excelling in sports and games, left school before completing his final studies and returned back to Assam.

With the tea industries expanding rapidly contractors were engaged to clear the jungle for plantations. A renowned contractor was Walter Smiles, later knighted to become Sir Walter. The gentleman, who engaged elephants for jungle clearance, employed young Nuttal and put him in charge of the herd, a job he loved. But the fiery temper, which develops when one is brought up in a disturbed environment, surfaced and Nuttal fell out with his employer. It was with a heavy heart that he said goodbye to his beloved elephants.

He joined the Railways as a temporary ticket collector at Makum Junction. Those days the Railways had a three-tier salary system, for Europeans, Anglo Indians and Indians. Arthur was paid the middle wages. Finding out that he was entitled to the European scale Nuttal applied but got no justice. The refusal of the higher scale was on the grounds that although he was a white man he lived like a native. In frustration he resigned.

A planter seeing Arthur in Makum offered him an apprentice's post in Moran T.E. By dint of hard work Arthur Nuttal was promoted to the covenanted ranks and proved to be a diligent planter. He was very energetic and able to realize good work from the labourers without friction. He was adept at all garden work. Could do a full nirrick in pruning and pluck as well as the best plucker. His weakness was friction with fellow planters, especially seniors, poor administration and hostility to paper work. He was nicknamed Nutty Nuttal by his colleagues for his eccentricities.

He went to England on leave, his first trip overseas. While in UK he met and married an English lady. It was only after marriage that he was taught to live like a foreigner. The English mem that turned Nuttal into a "British sahib" was, however, unable to curb the fiery temper, even when he became the Acting Superintendent of Moran Tea Company.

In the 40's Assam came into the orbit of World War II. The Japanese Air Force bombed many areas and their land forces moved rapidly through Manipur into the Naga Hills, then a district of Assam Province. Planters evacuated their families out of the war zone. The tide turned only after the Battle of Kohima when the Japanese were defeated and started retreating.

When the Superintendent of Moran Tea Company went to leave his family in Darjeeling, Nuttal, the Acting Superintendent spread the rumour that his senior had run away. The rumour cost Nuttal his job.

With a family to support, the couple had two kids; Arthur Nuttal accepted work as a temporary garden assistant with the Makum (Assam) Tea Co in '44. In 1947 he was promoted as Senior Assistant and put in charge of Top Side division of Margherita TE. In 1951 he was transferred to Namdang Tea Co where he received his billet in Bogapani.

Bogapani, in the 50's, was in the midst of a thick jungle infested with wild animals. News of a rogue tusker, creating havoc at the Bogapani railway station, was reported with Government orders to destroy the pachyderm. Nuttal went to inspect it. He looked at the rogue and declared that it was not wild. He slowly approached the animal, talking in mahout's language. Soon he had the animal following him and led the tusker away from the railway tracks, where a train was held up. When forest personnel queried as to how the sahib knew that the elephant was not wild he pointed to the faint chain marks on the animal's feet.

Nuttal was Manager of Bogapani from 1951 to 1959. During his term he cleared the estate of encroachers and started the out garden Nazirating, then infested with tigers. For killing a man-eater, he was given a small plot of land by the forest authorities for a shikar camp. The story goes that every time Nuttal went for a shoot he moved the Nazirating boundary pillars thus acquiring 100 hectares of prime forestland for the company. To clear the jungle two retired sirdars were given the timber as bakshis. Once the trees were removed, he distributed the land to the workers and allowed them to cultivate ahu paddy for two years. With the land levelled Nuttal started planting. Today, even after half a century, Nazirating has some of the finest teas.

The fiery tempers never abated and lead to Nuttal's final downfall. He quarrelled with the Superintendent and was dismissed. In 1959, aged 53, he left India for England with his family for good. Arthur Mansfield Nuttal passed away in the 80's. The story does not end here.

During his bachelor days Nuttal frequented Shillong where a Khasi lady befriended him. Out of that friendship a male child was born. When the boy was of school going age Nuttal had him admitted to Dr. Graham's Home, Kalimpong, with the instructions that the boy must never be told of his father.

The youngster grew up and went off to England where he married and settled down. Just a few years back he, with his wife, came looking for his roots. In Shillong he met Mr Peter Furst, an ex-patriate and the last European Superintendent of the erstwhile Makum Namdang Company. Peter, who had worked under A.M.Nuttal as an assistant, on retirement settled in Shillong, where he still resides.

The visitor from England asked Peter to narrate about his father. It was with rapt attention that the couple listened to what Peter had to say. When he finished the lady quietly remarked that her husband was just like Arthur Mansfield Nuttal, a father the son never knew. ALI. N. ZAMAN Ex Manager Bogapani (1988 – 1997).

ALI. N. ZAMAN
Ex Manager Bogapani
(1988 – 1997)

Credit courtesy :
Tea Buddy , Wonderful true-life story recounted by A.Zaman
Reprinted courtesy of Koi-Hai.com.

A tiger and a goat sharing chai?*

In 1915, Narandas Desai launched Wagh Bakri tea with Mahatma Gandhi's blessing.

Inspired by the idea of unity, he chose a tiger (Wagh) and a goat (Bakri) to symbolize rich and poor, strong and weak — sharing the same cup.

Narandas Desai of Durban, South Africa, abandoned his land of over 500 acres to escape apartheid. Returned to India in 1915 with a letter of introduction from Mr. M K Gandhi, the famous social worker. Set up a tea trading company based on principles of harmonious living. Called it, Wagh Bakri Tea. Wagh is tiger. Bakri is goat. In Indian folktales the Wagh eats the goat. In Narandas Desai's imagination, both could peacefully come together to drink tea. Today Wagh Bakri Tea is one of the largest tea trading companies in the world and sells its own brand of tea. Its latest turnover is over Rs. 2,000 crores. It sells more than 50 million kilos of tea annually.

It wasn't just about tea. It was about breaking barriers.

This is how meaningful marketing tastes.

FLYING IN ASSAM

This was happening till the 1964 when the Government of India put a suspension. After World War II , lot of used aircrafts were available for sale and many of the Tea Planters were Ex Royal Airforce . There were airstrips in the estates as well as the Polo grounds were used.

Sharing below two accounts from the memories of Bill Charlier , A planter working in the Assam Tea Estates in the period 1940s - 1960s.

In the early fifties, there we a few of us who had small planes of various descriptions. Some of them were ex - US Military.

Williamsons had their own flight of two Austers and at one stage, had a Dragon Rapide , an eight seater. They had a professional pilot called Johnson who unfortunately crashed not far from Mohanbarrie Airport, killing himself and the mechanic.

The Austers were flown by Stew Campbell and others whose normal duties were Garden Assistants. Stew was an ex Fleet Air Arm pilot. There was another unfortunate accident in Golaghat District where Mackenzie managed to fly into some trees on take off from a garden strip, killing himself. He was in an Aeronca Super Chief.

For myself I had various aircraft, from Piper Cub (L4), Stinson Sentinel (L5), and an Aeronca Super Chief. The Assam Company helped me maintain these aircraft etc. and they were used on occasions by the General Manager and Visiting Directors, and sometimes outside companies.

This continued until 1964 when the Indian Government, in its wisdom, decided that foreigners flying about in Assam was not a good thing, due to the Chinese Situation and the increase of Airforce activity. My license was suspended, which was probably a good thing because the company had decided that I had enough to do as the manager of DumurDullong . They had trained a young new Assistant in England to take over the Company flying. He did arrive and I tested him and personally would not have put him in charge of a bicycle

The enclosed pictures Photo 1 and 6 were taken in the cold weather, in 1952 at Gelakey on the small strip made from a garden road. In one picture with me, is Birdie Richmond of Lakmijan, a very keen photographer on our return from a flight over the North Bank and up into the foothills of the Himalayas. The picture was taken at a height of 16,000 ft. with no oxygen. We didn't stay long at that height!

There were another couple of notable figures in flying - Joss Reynolds of Panatola, and Peter Atkins of the North Bank. They both had light aircraft.

When my middle son George was a few months old, he developed a nasty go of Whooping Cough. My Chief Medical Officer, Tom Poole, suggested that I take him up in the plane to 10,000 ft. and fly for an hour...a perfect cure. Within 24 hours it was almost gone. The altitude allows the lungs to expel the mucous that causes the cough. On occasions I used to drop messages over bungalows, on little parachutes. Otherwise, without telephones it would take days to communicate with neighbours.

PLANES IN ASSAM IN THE FIFTIES

In the early fifties, on various wartime airstrips, there was a great deal of surplus American aircraft, from Piper Cubs to Dakotas. On one such strip, eighty miles outside Calcutta Balu Ghat you could have bought a Dakota for as little as Rs 15000. In fact a lot of small airlines were started with these.

I managed to get my hands on a Piper Cub L4 in the Dooars for a pretty good price - around Rs 3000. I had this plane when I was an assistant at Doomur Dullong and Gelakey. I used the Mackeypore wartime grass strip because there was no strip at Gelakey. The manager of Mackeypore, Cappie Davis, was instructed by the General Manager Tim Healy to construct a temporary bamboo hanger because the Company had shown some interest in the use of the aircraft to inspect estates.

Unfortunately I had very little use of either. In a windstorm, the hanger collapsed on the plane. It was pretty badly damaged so I dismantled it and took it to Atkhel Factory Bungalow where I was living at the time. I mounted the engine on a couple of steel girders and ran it regularly, to everybody's consternation.

Not long after this a civilian Aeronca Super Chief was for sale in Upper Assam. It seemed to belong to a Mahwari who had taken it in place of a debt!!!!(The person concerned shall be nameless). Its condition was not very good. But as luck would have it I had seen an advert in the Statesman that the Lucknow Flying Club were looking for Piper Cubs in any condition. I made contact with them and in a very short time a person arrived to see me. They were interested in making a deal.

It was agreed that I crate the Piper and send it by river steamer to Lucknow. In return they would completely overhaul the Aeronca and give a free loan of a Stinson Sentinel L5. This was done and in about three weeks the Stinson arrived and the Aeronca went off to Lucknow.

The overhaul took about eight months during which time I had the unrestricted use of their aircraft. It was a good plane, but expensive on petrol, having a 260hp engine, compared with 90hp in the Aeronca.

Eventually the Aeronca was ready and flown back to Tezpur where we exchanged aircraft. They made a very good job of the overhaul. The plane was like new. I continued to fly it until the time of the Chinese problems. Then the Indian Government decided that private flying was not to continue in Assam. The Aeronca ended up being sold to a dealer in Calcutta Airport.

The History of Tea Garden around Guwahati

From - *Assamese Mirror*

Friends, are you surprised to read the heading ?

I am giving below some information's about a few tea gardens that existed in and around GUWAHATI, which I collected from THE ASSAM TRIBUNE,----

In the remote past there were several tea gardens in and around GUWAHATI.

In many parts of the present city there were tea estates mostly owned by the indigenous people.

The biggest among those tea gardens was the CHUNCHALI T. E. and it was owned by a BRITISH gentleman P. C. DOMREN.

This T. E. was established in 1859. Part of this tea garden was acquired to set up the GUWAHATI REFINERY, and its residential colonies.

DOMREN'S first wife, who was an ENGLISH lady died at the CHUNCHALI T.E. and later he married a local woman. DOMREN took the CHUNCHALI GRANT, measuring 5000 bighas of land from the government on lease for 99 years.. The T. E. was wound up around 1950.

The bungalow of DOMREN is still there near the residential quarter of the general manager of the GUWAHATI REFINERY. It was situated on a compound of 75 bighas of land.

A major part of the T.E. land, including the bungalow land, is now occupied by other people.

CHUNCHALI

Also had a branch garden named TAPESIA and it was located near SONAPUR.

This garden is now the location of the ASSAM DON BOSCO UNIVERSITY campus.

Near CHANDRAPUR, there were 4 tea gardens.

However they were smaller in size. Those T.E.s were CHANDRAPUR T.E., PANIKHAITI T.E. , LONAMATI T.E. , and MITANI T.E.

The CHANDRAPUR T.E. belonged to RAI SAHEB CHIDA NANDA CHOUDHURY of PAN BAZAR, a prominent ASSAMESE business man.

Several industries later come up on the plot of land belonging to this T.E.

The PANIKHAITI, LONAMATI and MITANI T.E. s were owned by MANIK CHANDRA BARUA and ANANDA RM DHEKIAL PHOOKUN.

Their company was named BAROOAH- PHOOKUN DROTHERS.

The company had its own vessel to carry their tea and timber to CALCUTTA.

The vessel was named BAROOAH-BAHADUR. But unfortunately, the vessel sank in the PADMA river in one of its CALCUTTA bound voyages.

Together with this, untimely death of ANANDA RAM DHEKIAL PHOOKUN, the first company set up as per the EUROPEAN model, died a premature death around 1880.

Due to health problem, MANIK CHANDRA BAROOAH also abandoned the LONAMATI, PANIKHAITI and MITANI T.E. and purchased a small T.E. located on the KHARGHULIHILL from a BRITISH tea planter, Ned CAMPBELL in the early part of the 20th century. It was named LATASIL T. E.

This T.E. faced closure following his death in around 1915.

The RAJ BHAVAN of the state is located on a part of the land belonging to this tea estate.

Adjacent to LATASIL T.E., there was a T.E. named RAMSA HIL T.E. It belonged to RAI-BAHADUR KRISHNA CHANDRA CHAUDHURY of UZAN BAZAR.

This was closed a few years back.

There were two more T.E.s-- BASISTHA and WOODLAND.

The GUWAHATI CENTRAL MILITARY HOSPITAL is located on a part of BASISTHA T.E. land.

This T.E. was owned by RAI-BAHADUR MAHENDRA MOHON LAHIRI'S family of FANCY BAZAR.

It was closed down one or two years after independence.

WOODLAND T.E. was located on the present day SANTIPUR HILL SIDE and its contiguous FATASIL HILL area.

This T.E. occupied a vast area of today's SANTIPUR. It belonged to the SARASWATI family of PANBAZAR.

Their family firm RADHAKISHORE SARASWATI & CO. was the first company to introduce ASSAM silk outside the state. WOODLAND T.E. was virtually closed down before the WORLD WAR, that is, in the mid 1920s.

However, the first T.E. of KAMRUP district was set up on a hillock near NAGARBERA in the early 1850s by Rai-Saheb Chidananda Choudhury of PANBAZAR.

.But the soil of the area was found unfit for tea plantation and the venture was abandoned.

The Rogue Tusker

In the annals of Travancore colonial era plantation history, few wild elephants have inspired as much dread and legendary status as the rogue tusker known as "George".

Active in the Neriya Mangalam region in the Northern Forest Division during the early 1920s, George became infamous for his violent rampages through rubber plantations and his lethal attacks on unsuspecting passers-by along the forest tracks.

What set George apart was not just his aggression, but his peculiar behavior. Locals recounted how he would stand motionless for hours in the middle of forest paths, ambushing lone travellers. By night, he would raid plantations and farmlands, leaving a trail of destruction. Between 1923 and 1924, he was reportedly responsible for the deaths of nine laborers. In a particularly brutal episode that same year, George killed a hunter and two of his assistants. During this encounter, he was shot in the left hind limb, an injury that seemingly intensified his aggression.

Alarmed by the mounting casualties and damage, Messrs. Le Mesurier, a colonial officer and avid game hunter, sought permission from the Travancore government to eliminate the rogue. Permission was granted in 1925. Le Mesurier, accompanied by a tracker and helper, set camp in Neriya Mangalam and awaited the tusker's next move.

One night, after a tip-off from local villagers, the hunting party pursued George into the forest. Climbing a tree roughly 20 feet from the elephant, Le Mesurier aimed for George's ear, but the shot went astray, striking the neck instead. Enraged, George charged at the hunters. A second shot pierced his ribs, causing him to flee into the jungle.

Hours later, in an open clearing, George reappeared charging once more. This time, Le Mesurier's bullet struck George in the eye, bringing him to the ground. A final shot to the head ended the reign of the rogue.

The measurements of George's remains were striking:

- Height: 9 feet 9 inches
- Tusks: 5 feet 3 inches long



Mr. Le Mesurier with the elephant's tusks.

Tusk weight: 80 pounds (the pair)



For centuries, China was dominating the global tea trade. But on January 10, 1839, in a crowded auction room on Mincing Lane, London, that monopoly was busted. Eight humble chests of tea from Assam made history and changed the dynamics of the industry.

Gautam Saikia

June 30, 2025

Assam, Tea

The historic London auction in 1839 and the story of how Assam tea broke the centuries-old China monopoly

By Gautam Kumar Saikia

For centuries, China was dominating the global tea trade. But on January 10, 1839, in a crowded auction room on Mincing Lane, London, that monopoly was busted.

Eight humble chests of tea from Assam made history and changed the dynamics of the industry.

Here is how it started:

On November 21, 1836, the Calcutta Courier reported a historic first: the arrival of five boxes of tea prepared in Assam by Chinese tea-planters.

Made from tea plant leaves, cultivated using indigenous seeds, the samples reached Calcutta through Mr. Gordon, Secretary of the Tea Committee. When Viceroy Lord Auckland tasted the tea, he declared it of good quality. In hindsight, that was the first official endorsement of Indian tea.

More samples were sent from Assam two months later. To provide an opportunity for Chinese experts to train Assamese workers, these teas were prepared out of season.

The application of advanced Chinese techniques for manufacturing of tea in Assam proved to be a breakthrough.

Charles Alexander Bruce documented these early cultivation methods in his 1838 pamphlet, revealing the conditions in which Assam's tea grew: "The tea plants of Assam have been found to grow, and to thrive best, near small rivers and pools of water, and in those places where after heavy falls of rain, large quantities of water have accumulated, and in their struggle to get free, have cut out themselves numerous small channels.

"This kind of land is called Coorkah Muttie. I have never met with the tea plants growing in the sun, but invariably under shade, in thick woods, or what we call tree jungle and only there and in no other jungle whatever. The largest tea tree I ever met with was twenty-nine cubits high, and four spans round: very few I should say attain that size."

Bruce described the black tea processing method: leaves were withered in sunlight, hand-clapped and heated briefly in iron pans over straw or bamboo fires. No definite fermentation process was followed. After hand-rolling, the tea was dried on charcoal sieves in multiple stages, allowing cooling periods that facilitated fermentation. This technique continued for several years. This might be considered primitive today, but it worked!

By 1837, Assamese workers expanded cultivation throughout the Muttuck region under Chinese supervision, with the quality steadily improving.

On December 12, 1837, a large sample of Muttock tea made from Assam jats reached the Government of India. The Governor-General declared it “marketable quality” if it could reach Europe undamaged, recommending trial shipments to London’s Honourable Court of Directors.

The first commercial shipment proved nearly catastrophic.

Twelve boxes arrived in Calcutta on January 31, 1838, but improper packaging had damaged the tea during transport from Assam. On March 20, 1838, The Tea Committee reported to the Government of India: “Owing to deficient packing and dampness during transport, a considerable portion of the tea amounting to what would have filled five boxes more, was either wholly spoiled, or so much deteriorated, that no process could restore it to anything like fair quality.”

The committee rejected all that portion “unfit to be sent home” with the goal of “deeming it primary that the first sample transmitted to Europe maintain its quality” rather than arrive damaged and face “the severe test of examination by the tea inspectors in London.”

Captain Jenkins, Commissioner of the Assam valley, dispatched the tea to London in May 1838. The shipment reached England later that year. After refiring to prevent spoilage, only eight chests weighing 350 pounds total (158.757 kilogram) were offered at Mincing Lane’s commercial sale rooms for auction with each chest to be sold separately.

On January 10, 1839, London witnessed the first public auction of Indian tea. London’s tea brokers had never seen anything like it and Mincing Lane’s commercial sale rooms buzzed with unprecedented excitement.

Some accounts captured the drama:

“The first importation of tea from the British territories in Assam, consisting of eight chests, containing about 350 lbs., was put up by the East India Company to public sale in the commercial sale rooms, Mincing Lane, on 10th January, 1839, and excited much curiosity. The lots were eight: three of Assam souchong and five of Assam pekoe. On offering the first lot (souchong) Mr. Thompson, the sale-broker, announced that each lot would be sold, without the least reservation, to the highest bidder.”

What happened next stunned everyone.

The first bid was 5s. per lb., a second bid of 10s. per lb. After much competition it was knocked down for 21s. per lb., the purchaser being Captain Pidding. The second lot of souchong was bought by the same gentleman for 20s. per lb. The third and last lot of souchong sold for 16s. per lb., Captain Pidding being again the buyer.

But Captain Pidding was just getting started.

The first lot of Assam pekoe sold after much competition for 24s. per lb., every broker appearing to bid for it. Captain Pidding secured it. The next three lots fetched 25s., 27s. 6d. and 28s. 6d. per lb – all to Captain Pidding. For the last lot (pekoe) a most exciting competition took place: there were nearly sixty bids made for it. It was at last knocked down at the extraordinary price of 34s. per lb.”

The room erupted.

Captain Pidding had just paid 34 shillings per pound, nearly 34 times the production cost, for tea that could be made for one shilling per pound. He now owned the entire first importation of Assam tea, prompted, according to reports by “the public-spirited motive of securing a fair trial to this valuable product of British Assam.”

The Court of Directors understood the auction’s true significance. Despite the tea’s compromised quality due to re-firing, they had received “very favourable reports” from “respectable brokers and tea dealers” across Britain.

More importantly, they recognized that “it can only be considered as a fancy price, occasioned by great excitement and competition created by the novelty of the sale.”

Captain Pidding’s dramatic purchases achieved their purpose. Within weeks, serious commercial interest emerged.



Photos: Gautam Saikia

Messrs. Stearns and Rowley offered the first private contract in Indian tea history “for five hundred or a thousand chests at 10.5 d to 2s per lb.

Their assessment was professional and promising, noting that this is “as good tea as may be usually imported from Canton, the only difference appearing to us being in the method of curing or drying the leaves. We character the tea in question as preferable to but middling tea or brisk slightly burnt flavour (not objectionable) and possess strength.”

A second shipment of 95 packages followed in late 1839, with 85 chests auctioned on March 17, 1840. Quality had improved dramatically: “The tea was evidently much better than the last, and was valued from 2s. 11d. to 3s. 3d. per lb. It still fetched a fancy price nearly all selling between 8s. and 11s. per lb,” reported the East India Company.

Messrs. Twinings and Co. summarised public opinion: “Upon the whole we think that the recent specimens are very favourable to the hope and expectation that Assam is capable of producing an article well suited to this market.”

Sixteen years after the discovery of Assam tea in 1823, that historic auction in Mincing Lane changed everything.

What began as eight chests selling for “fancy prices” broke China’s tea monopoly and launched an industry that would transform global tea trade.

Today, Assam produces more than half of India’s tea, a direct descendant of those first experimental leaves that Captain Pidding bought for 34 shillings a pound, not for profit, but to give Indian tea “a fair trial.”

His intuition, indeed, paid off beyond anyone’s wildest imagination.

(Note: s denotes shilling, d- pence and lb- pound. Before decimalisation in 1971, the UK sterling currency was divided into pounds, shillings and pence. One pound was made up of 240 pence, with 12 pence to one shilling and 20 shillings to one pound)

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The Joy of Meeting Joy.

Last month I spent two magical days with a captivating woman, Joy Eve, in her sprawling Victorian house not far from London. Joy is an artist. She also loves to garden. Her oil paintings in the house and the colourful flowers in her garden are a visual feast.

But what led me to Joy was her birth in Darjeeling in 1930.

In April 2015, I started to think of an Englishman I knew in my youth. Geoffrey James Ower-Johnston owned Rungmook and Cedars Tea Estate in Darjeeling. My parents were friends of Geoffrey and his wife, Janet, in the 1970s, and Dad worked for him briefly. In April 1981, after we had left Darjeeling, we heard, with shock, of Geoffrey’s murder by plantation workers.

The horror of Geoffrey’s death struck me again last year, and so did the iniquitous possibility that his history would be forgotten.

I put out feelers on the Internet and made new friends online, some as eager as I to know about Geoffrey’s history. One friend in Darjeeling, whom I haven’t yet met, visited Geoffrey’s grave in the Old Cemetery in Darjeeling and sent me pictures. He translated an entire book about Geoffrey from Nepali into English for me. Another friend in England shared photos and memories of Geoffrey and Janet, who had been almost like parents to her in Darjeeling in the 1960s.

I dug into historical records of British tea planters in Darjeeling at the British Library.

Geoffrey’s grandfather, James Johnston, joined the Darjeeling tea industry in the mid-1800s. His son, James Ower Johnston, inherited his plantations. In 1951 James Ower Johnston gave Rungmook and Cedars to his 22-year-old son, Geoffrey, and left for Durban, South Africa, to join his wife, Gladys Maud, and daughter, Joy.

Piecing together information from the British Library and from people who remembered Geoffrey, I wrote a short article. But there were still unanswered questions and no one to answer them. Janet had returned to England straight after Geoffrey’s death. She died there in 1996. They had no children. I found the baptismal record for Geoffrey’s sister, Joy, but had no idea what her married name was and where to look for her.

The editor of Koi Hai, a Website for people who had worked in north-eastern India, generously published my article online.

On New Year's Day, 2016, I got an email message from an old tea planter friend of Dad's. Having seen my article he put me in touch with Janet's closest friend from Darjeeling, now living in England. She told me that Joy lived close to London and to write to her, which I did.

Since I had so many questions Joy suggested I visit her when next in the UK. She sent me copies of grandfather James' death announcement in a Calcutta newspaper in 1891, and of a letter her 'Pa', then aged ten and spending his school holiday at a vicarage in the UK, wrote to his parents in India not knowing, as he wrote, that his father had just died.

Seven months after I first wrote to her, I was meeting Joy at the train station near her village. I didn't know what she looked like but needn't have worried. The resemblance to Geoffrey was striking. Joy welcomed me into her home, told me family stories into the early hours of the morning, and shared family memorabilia. She tactfully corrected errors in my Koi Hai article.

After over a year of searching, to have sat with Joy in her garden, listened to stories of her and Geoffrey's childhood, pored over old photos and precious documents such as Geoffrey's birth certificate and school-leaving report, seems unreal.

It was a joy to meet Joy.
"Mandakini"

Stories from Mandakini
September 6, 2016

The Tea We Forgot: How India's Ancient Brew Culture Was Erased by Colonial Myth.

Two centuries before the British "discovered" tea in China, European merchants in India were already sipping the aromatic leaves for their health

In 1850, Joseph Lionel Williams completed an intricate engraving that would become a defining image of India's tea industry. Nine carefully detailed scenes (shown below) showed the "different stages in the process of making tea" across Indian plantations, workers pruning bushes, plucking leaves, and operating the drying facilities that would transform raw vegetation into the beverage that fueled an empire.

The engraving appeared in William Rhind's *A History of the Vegetable Kingdom*, a comprehensive botanical reference that celebrated British ingenuity in establishing tea cultivation across their colonial holdings. To contemporary viewers, the images told a familiar story: civilized Europeans had discovered the secrets of tea in China and, through superior organization and technology, had successfully transplanted this knowledge to India's fertile soil.

There was only one problem with this narrative. It was largely fiction.

Two centuries before Williams put pen to paper, a German nobleman named Johann Albrecht von Mandelslo was already documenting a thriving tea culture in India that had nothing to do with British colonial enterprise. His 1638 account, buried in scholarly archives and overlooked by popular historians, reveals a startling truth: tea wasn't brought to India by the British. It was already there.

The Merchant's Medicine

In April 1638, Mandelslo found himself aboard the English ship *Swan*, sailing from the Persian Gulf toward the bustling port of Surat. The young aristocrat had been traveling through Persia as part of a diplomatic mission, but the journey had taken a severe toll on his health. Weakened and struggling, he turned to the ship's provisions for recovery: "good sack, English beer, French wines, arrack and other cordials."

But it was tea—described in his journal as *Thé* that proved most therapeutic. Mandelslo consumed the beverage "twice or thrice a day" and credited it as "an important contributory factor in the restoration of his health." This wasn't a curious European experimenting with an exotic novelty. This was a sick man turning to a medicine that ship's officers already knew worked.

When Mandelslo arrived at Surat, he discovered something even more remarkable: the English merchants stationed there were not only familiar with tea but considered its health benefits common knowledge. The East India Company factory, operating under President William Methwold, had already integrated tea consumption into daily commercial life. This wasn't cultural diffusion happening in real time - it was evidence of an established practice.

"This was the period," a later editor would note, "when this famous beverage was gradually making its way among the upper classes in western Asia and Europe." The keyword here is *gradually*. Tea culture wasn't imposed from above or imported wholesale from China. It was spreading organically through existing trade networks, merchant communities, and cultural exchange.

The Sophisticated Palate

Fifty-four years later, another European observer would provide even more detailed evidence of India's established tea culture. J. Ovington, chaplain of the English factory at Surat from 1692 to 1693, found tea consumption had evolved far beyond simple medicinal use.

"Tea, with some hot spice intermix and boiled in the water, has the reput of prevailing against the headache, gravel and griping in the guts," Ovington wrote, "and 'tis generally drunk in India, either with sugar-candy, or, by the more curious, with small conserved lemons."

The sophistication here is striking. This isn't a crude attempt to replicate Chinese tea ceremonies. Indian tea culture had developed its own distinctive characteristics: spice integration, specific sweetening practices, and flavour enhancements that reflected local tastes and available ingredients. The "more curious" consumers who preferred conserved lemons suggest a refined palate and aesthetic sensibility that had emerged over decades of cultural development.

Ovington's account also reveals something else: tea's medical applications had become sophisticated and specific. Different preparations targeted different ailments, from headaches to kidney stones to digestive problems. This level of therapeutic knowledge doesn't develop overnight—it emerges through generations of experimentation and cultural transmission.

The Great Forgetting

So how did this rich history disappear from popular consciousness? How did we come to believe that tea culture in India began with Robert Fortune's dramatic espionage missions of 1848-1851, when a Scottish botanist posed as a Chinese merchant to steal closely guarded agricultural secrets?

The answer lies in the nature of colonial storytelling itself. The British Empire wasn't just a political and economic project, it was a narrative project that required constant reinforcement of European superiority and indigenous inadequacy. The idea that Indians already possessed sophisticated tea culture, complete with medical knowledge and aesthetic refinement, didn't fit the story Britain needed to tell about itself.

Fortune's missions, which genuinely did revolutionize tea production by introducing Chinese plants and processing techniques to India, became the entire story rather than one chapter in a much longer book. The industrial scale of British tea production, with its mechanized processes and plantation systems, overshadowed the artisanal traditions that had preceded it.

This wasn't malicious historical revisionism so much as the natural tendency of powerful institutions to center themselves in every narrative. The East India Company needed to justify massive investments in tea infrastructure. Victorian botanists needed to celebrate European scientific achievement. Colonial administrators needed to demonstrate the civilizing benefits of British rule.

In this context, acknowledging that tea culture had flourished in India for centuries before British arrival became not just inconvenient but counterproductive. It was easier to begin the story with Fortune's daring theft than to grapple with the complex realities of cultural exchange and indigenous knowledge.

Networks of Knowledge

The evidence that Mandelslo and Ovington preserved reveals something more profound than simple historical correction. Their accounts illuminate a world of sophisticated trade networks, cultural exchange, and knowledge transmission that operated independent of European control or even awareness.

Tea had reached India through the same routes that carried spices, textiles, precious metals, and ideas across the vast expanse of the Indian Ocean. Persian merchants, Arab traders, Chinese diplomats, and Indian commercial networks had been exchanging goods and practices for centuries before Europeans arrived on the scene.

The Persian connection is particularly illuminating. Contemporary accounts describe elaborate tea consumption practices in Persia, noting that "Persians are great frequenters of the Taverns or Tipling-Houses" where they consumed tea using sophisticated preparation methods. These weren't crude imitations of Chinese practices but distinctive regional adaptations that reflected local tastes and social customs.

This reveals tea culture not as a Chinese invention that spread outward through European mediation, but as a complex, multi-centered phenomenon that developed simultaneously across different societies. Each region adapted tea consumption to its own cultural patterns, medical traditions, and aesthetic preferences.

The Weight of Revision

Acknowledging this forgotten history does more than correct the historical record, it fundamentally challenges how we understand cultural transmission and technological development. The standard narrative of European innovation and non-European passivity crumbles when confronted with evidence of sophisticated indigenous practices that preceded colonial intervention.

This has implications far beyond tea history. How many other "European innovations" in colonial settings were actually adaptations or systematizations of existing local practices? How often have we credited European "discovery" of knowledge that had been developing for centuries through non-European networks?

The 1850 engraving that seems to document the birth of Indian tea culture actually documents something quite different: the industrialization and systematization of practices that had existed in various forms for over two centuries. Those carefully organized plantation scenes represent not creation but transformation, the conversion of artisanal, culturally integrated practices into mechanized, profit-oriented production.

Reclaiming the Cup

There's profound irony in the fact that tea, perhaps more than any other commodity, came to symbolize British imperial achievement. The afternoon tea ritual, the Indian Tea Association, the vast plantations of Assam and Darjeeling, all became emblems of European organizational superiority and commercial acumen.

Yet the documentary evidence suggests that Europeans were latecomers to a tea culture that had already developed sophisticated medical applications, refined aesthetic practices, and complex preparation techniques. British colonial tea production represented not the introduction of tea to India but its commercialization and export orientation.

This doesn't diminish the genuine innovations that colonial tea production introduced, improved cultivation techniques, processing machinery, quality standardization, and global distribution networks. But it places these achievements in proper context as one phase in a much longer story of cultural development and exchange.

Understanding this history also helps explain certain puzzles about contemporary Indian tea culture. The integration of spices, the preference for strong brews, the emphasis on medicinal properties, these aren't recent innovations or corruptions of "pure" Chinese or British traditions. They're the continuation of practices that developed over centuries of cultural evolution.

The Lesson in the Leaves

Mandelslo's forgotten account offers more than historical correction, it provides a model for understanding cultural exchange that doesn't center European experience or assume European innovation. His 1638 observations reveal a world where knowledge moved through merchant networks, diplomatic contacts, and commercial relationships that operated according to their own logic rather than European direction.

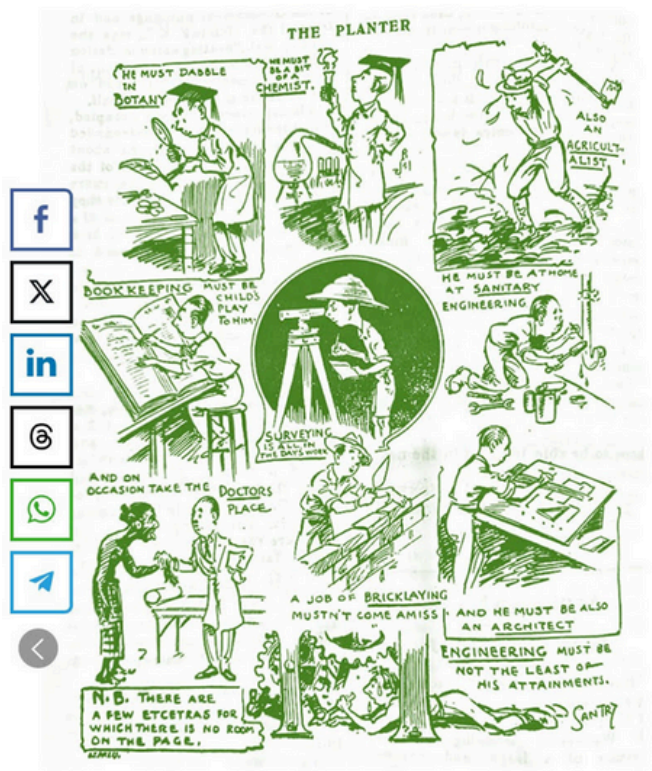
This perspective doesn't diminish European contributions to tea culture but situates them within a broader pattern of human innovation and exchange. The British industrialization of tea production becomes one significant development rather than the founding moment of Indian tea culture.

Perhaps most importantly, this history reminds us that cultural practices we now take for granted often have deeper, more complex origins than dominant narratives suggest. The tea we drink today, whether in London, Delhi, or New York represents the accumulation of centuries of experimentation, adaptation, and refinement by countless individuals whose names never made it into the history books.

The next time you sip a spiced chai or a delicate Darjeeling, remember that you're participating in a tradition that stretches back not just to Robert Fortune's daring espionage or the East India Company's commercial ambitions, but to the Persian taverns that Mandelslo observed, the Surat merchants who shared their knowledge with European traders, and the countless individuals who discovered that this particular leaf, prepared in just this particular way, could heal the body and comfort the spirit.

In the end, tea culture, like most human achievements, belongs not to any single nation or empire but to the vast network of human curiosity, experimentation, and exchange that has always connected us across the artificial boundaries of race, nation, and time. Mandelslo's cup of tea, consumed in 1638 for his health aboard an English ship sailing to India, reminds us that the most important discoveries are often the ones we make together.

The author thanks the Wellcome Collection and Oxford University Press for preserving and making available the historical documents that made this research possible



Who is a Planter? (Source: The Planter magazine, November 1920)

The Stylish Glamour of Bygone Tea DaysBlend of East & West

The bygone photograph of Butch Datta & Nandini Datta from the Dooars & Assam Tea Days
Credit courtesy : Koi hai com



Ex Army Officer Started Noida's Most Iconic Garage Tea Stall

<https://www.facebook.com/share/v/1Cskr6aqKL/>

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