



The Times

WM

The McLeod Russel
House Journal

January 2016



Another new year – another wonderful opportunity to better our lives, fulfill our dreams, appreciate life’s gifts and brave the challenges it sends our way, cherish our family and friends, and live life to the fullest!

In this issue, we feature two of the Company’s ‘treasures’ in Assam – Baghjan T.E. and Hunwal T.E. – and the Junglee Howdah, a unique ‘gem’ from Chuapara T.E. in the Doars.

As the Company’s efforts to improve the quality of life in the estates and their surrounding areas continue, we focus on the projects in the Mangaldai Circle estates which have made a positive impact on the lives of the local populace.

We also bring you latest updates from Udaan, a centre of learning and recreation for underprivileged children in Kolkata, sponsored by the Company, as well as the latest medical project – Laparoscopic Cholecystectomy – at Dirial Central Hospital.

Depression can creep into our lives insidiously so one of our Medical Officers advises us on how we can avoid being overwhelmed by the stresses and strains of life.

From overseas, our contributor from the Uganda estates recalls his experiences when he had first joined Tea; our writer from Rwanda is delighted to report on the popularity of Gisovu teas in Yorkshire, and our correspondent from Vietnam tells us about the Company’s newly acquired and recently renovated factory.

A retired planter now settled in the UK narrates an incident from the 1970s when sympathetic airport officials allowed his family to hang clothes out to dry while waiting for their flight – unthinkable in these times of strict security!

How many people can say they’ve foster-parented a baby elephant? These are rare and marvellous experiences unique to the tea estates, just as the term ‘kamjari’ is. A planter tries to explain the meaning of this word from ‘bagaan’ parlance for the benefit of our non-planter brethren.

A rare coincidence this time – both father and son are featured in the same issue; the

talented father in Cameo and the brilliant son in Shabaash.

An experienced rose-grower gives us tips on cultivating this universal favourite while an expert at baking shares three useful recipes based on sponge cakes.

The Dehing Patkai Reserve Forest, the only rainforest in this region, borders Dirok T.E. in Margherita Circle. A young planter from Dirok recounts experiences with the denizens of this forest – his wild ‘neighbours’.

“Work hard and play hard” being the mantra of the Planter, the club is the hub of his social life. Many tea clubs are located on the Company’s estates, Moran Polo Club being one of them.

The tea pot is still an essential component of the tea-drinking process on the estates as well as in many parts of the world. Over the years potters, artists and manufacturers have tried their hand at designing and making pots of unusual shapes out of unconventional material. Some are functional but others are purely ornamental. Take a look...

If “each cup of tea represents an imaginary voyage,” may your imagination take you on many a wonderful journey throughout this year as you relish your myriad cups of tea...

Cheers!

Sarita Dasgupta

Features

Issue – 17 January 2016



01 Cover: Baghjan ‘Beel’
Photograph: Mr Rajeev Mehrotra

02 Editorial / Features

03 Treasury
Baghjan T.E. ~ Sarita Dasgupta

09 Phu Ben Communique
Khanh Hoa Factory ~ Sakina Hussain

13 Shabaash

14 The Memsahab’s Guide to Gracious Living

The Sponge Cake ~ Priya Shekhawat

16 African Beat – Uganda

The Exciting Evolution of Tea Rehabilitation and Growing in the Rwenzori Days ~ Alfred Omoya

20 Beneficence

27 The World Around Us

Dehing Patkai Wildlife Sanctuary ~ Gaurav Dey

29 Melange

32 Narration

Novelty Teapots ~ Sarita Dasgupta

36 Treasury

Hunwal T.E. ~ Rupa Saikia

42 Gardening

A Rose by any Other Name...
~ Rangoli Wats

44 African Beat, Rwanda

Supplier of the Year Award – Gisovu T.E.
~ Surender Jhijaria

47 Cameo

Gautam Bhuyan – a profile
~ Natalie Mookerji

50 planters@play

The Moran Polo & Gymkhana Club ~ Simanta Bordoloi

53 Planter’s Punch

Home Leave 1970 ~ Phil Bayley

54 Kamjari

The ‘Hakuna Matata’ of Tea
~ Bisswadip Banerjee

56 The Gem Collection

‘Junglee Howdah’ at Chuapara T.E. ~ Nav R. Thapa

58 It’s a Wild World

Rescuing Rupa ~ Tanuka Mitra

60 Health Watch

Depression ~ Dr Jayanta Konwar

62 Requiem

63 Postscript ~ Rupa Saikia

64 Back Cover: Purple Sunbird

Photograph: Mr Anand Wats

Tree Oasary



~ Sarita Dasgupta



Baghjan T.E. is located in Tinsukia District of Upper Assam, across the river from the Dibru-Saikhowa Reserve Forest. It is said

that leopards (baagh) would visit the area to drink water from a small rivulet (jaan) which flowed through the estate; hence the name – Baghjan.

Sri Mukheswar Chetia, retired Jamadar Babu, who had joined work at Baghjan in 1968, recounts that on his early morning ‘kamjari’ rounds, he would frequently find leopard cubs sleeping peacefully among the tea bushes while their



mother was away hunting. Although leopards lifted cattle and goats from the workers’ Lines, they very rarely attacked people, or even disturbed them. Nonetheless, the staff and Assistant Managers would pedal their bicycles furiously past any thicket that might look as if a leopard were hiding behind it, ready to pounce!

The Dangori River



The estate comprises two Divisions – North and South, called North Side and South Side. The latter is bounded by the Beel – a large lake – while North Side stretches down to the bank of the Dangori River. This river was a thirty feet wide outlet called Ananto Nullah till the flash floods caused by the outflow from the Brahmaputra

Sailing on the Beel



The Wild Bison



Flooded Road above the Sluice Gate



Purple Moorhens

during the 2004 monsoon pushed water into the 'nullah' (drain), widening it to over a kilometre in breadth. The estate lost almost five and a half hectares of land in Section Nos 32 and 34. Every year, spurs and bamboo cribs have to be set up along the river bank to prevent the overflow from entering the estate and causing further damage.

The Beel is a sanctuary for birds such as the purple moorhen, egrets and storks, and the permanent abode of many aquatic creatures. A wild bison which is a regular visitor to the estate enjoys cooling off in this 'watering hole'. A sluice gate allows the excess water from the Beel to flow into a low lying water enclosure which has been marked as a No Spraying Zone in order to preserve the ecosystem.

The oldest living Line Chowkidar, Sri Logon Sai Toppo, remembers when tea chests were loaded onto a boat on the Beel and transported to Dibrugarh for further

transshipment. At first, the chests were moved on the trolley line which ran from the factory to a point near the Beel. However, this proved to be a troublesome process during the rains, so the estate's four Fargo lorries were pressed into service to transfer the chests from the factory to the Beel. The chests were then loaded onto the boat which was rowed from the Beel to Dibrugarh by a crew of twelve oarsmen – six on each side. After transferring the tea onto a larger ship bound for Kolkata, the boat would return to Baghjan with the workers' weekly rations. The coxswain of the boat built a house close to the Beel, where he lived with his wife and child.



Fargo Lorry



Coxswain's House

L to R: Sri Mukheswar Chetia, Sri Logon Sai Toppo & Sri Jatin Hazarika



Sri Toppo recalls the PF Policy being introduced in 1955, when he was made a permanent worker of the estate under Mr D.E. Stewart. The first PF deduction started at one rupee, five paise! The workers' quarters in Charali Line (Line No 4) and Line No 9, the oldest Lines of the estate, were also converted into 'pucca' structures from the same year. Sri Toppo was made a Line Chowkidar in 1965, during the tenure of Mr V.L. Austin, with a monthly wage of ₹64. He retired in 1986 during the tenure of Mr Sukhdarshan Singh.

When the estate was first planted out in 1922, it covered an area of 300.65 hectares. In the 1960s, during the tenure of Mr A.P. Lennox (1958-64) and Mr V.L. Austin (1964-67), another 108.91 hectares were planted, while 61.62 additional hectares were planted during the tenures of Mr R.K. Mathur and Mr S. Chatterjee in the 1970s. Another 103.28 hectares were planted in the 1980s when Mr Jagjit Singh, and later, Mr B.K. Panth, were managing the estate. By the mid-1990s, all the extension areas were planted, and the estate's tea-bearing area now covers 607.30 hectares.

Many changes have been made in the numbering of the Sections under the new Sectional Plan – the only Section



number that remains unchanged is that of Section No 9, first planted in 1924-26. Sri Toppo chuckles at the memory of the confusion caused when these changes were first made!

According to what Sri Toppo remembers, the present Factory Assistant's bungalow used to be a 'chung' bungalow in the 1950s with Mr Miller as its first occupant, while the present 'chung' bungalow used to be the Manager's Bungalow. The South Side bungalow was constructed when Section No 3 was planted out in the early 1960s. The main office remains as it was in the past but the factory was much smaller and had 'chungs' for the drying of tea leaves.

Sri Mukheswar Chetia was an excellent football player in his youth, representing the estate at various tournaments. An open tournament has been hosted by Baghjan since 1978, in which the winners are presented with a running shield. The residents of Baghjan are very interested in sports. The inter-Line football competition and the Maruti Cup cricket tournament are keenly contested every year, with each Line putting up a team. The best players from each Line then form the estate's team, which participates in the Khasi Cup inter-garden football tournament.

Baghjan Estate Football Shield



Khasi Cup Football



Maruti Cup Cricket

Bazaar Bus



Festivals are marked by cultural activities in which everyone participates with great enthusiasm. Retired staff member Sri Jatin Hazarika used to take active part as Secretary of the working committees for such functions. He ensured that popular local artistes, such as noted singer Debojit Bordoloi from Margherita, were invited to entertain the audience.

All three retired stalwarts are delighted to see the 'bazaar' bus which used to run between Baghjan and Doom Dooma town in their time, still going strong!

There have been many changes in the estate since their time, mostly for the better. The hospital is well equipped and looks after the health of the workers, staff and executives of the estate. Various medical and health awareness camps are held throughout the year, addressing issues such as Eye Care & Cataract Screening, Tuberculosis detection and treatment, Family Welfare,

Maternal Nutrition, and Child Care. An annual Baby Show ensures that babies are brought to the hospital to have their height, weight and general health checked regularly. The hospital bagged the Best Hospital Award (South Bank) for the year 2012-13.

Responsible and mature women from each of the Lines are chosen as members of the Mothers' Club. They are actively involved in various social and community welfare activities and are of tremendous help to the medical team in spreading awareness about important health and hygiene issues in the Lines.



A Worker's Home & Front Yard

The estate has two central and two mobile crèches, each with dependable attendants who take care of babies with working mothers, while the children of school-going age are educated in the two LP Schools – one in each Division.



Health Care & Awareness

The attendant at the North Side crèche, Smti Kumodini Johan, is affectionately known as Miss India for her zealous work as a social activist who has been instrumental in spreading awareness about environment issues among the workforce.

North Side Crèche & (inset) Smti Kumodini Johan



The church just opposite the crèche in North Division and the temple facing the entrance to the estate are the main places of worship among the populace.

Places of Worship



The Adolescent Girls' Club formed under the ABITA-UNICEF Child Protection Programme offers valuable guidance to pre-teen and teenage girls on the estate, addressing issues that affect them and providing them with a protective environment. So far, the issues discussed are the prevention of Child Labour, Child Marriage, Trafficking, Exploitation and health concerns. Advice is

Adolescent Girls' Club Activities



given on their rights as citizens, developing talents and skills, education and nutrition. Apart from creating awareness towards these relevant issues, the girls are also encouraged to participate in skits, dancing and recitation competitions in order to develop their talents and self-confidence.

The estate propagates practices that encourage conservation of natural resources and environment protection, such as afforestation, the planting of shade and tea nurseries, water management, the protection of water bodies, rehabilitation of wild animals and the production of organic manures.

Vermi-compost pits within the nursery premises yield enough manure to enrich the soil in rehabilitation areas.

Apart from bamboo groves, and well maintained clonal tea and shade nurseries, old trees are preserved and venerated by the workers, while new trees are planted in available areas. Sri Dharamdas Elizabeth, dubbed the 'Green Man of North Side' by the management, is the person called upon to plant the first shade sapling, tea plant or tree.

Venerable Old Trees



Apparently, anything he plants, flourishes! As the workers take their lunch break, Dharamdas is easily recognizable among them by virtue of his luxuriant beard. When asked if he has any particular reason for keeping the beard, he states that he will shave it off if and when his son becomes a graduate.

'No Hunting' signs have been put up in several places within the estate to create awareness about the protection and rehabilitation of animals that may stray into the estate, such as the rather attractive fluorescent snake that an Assistant Manager found draped around the handlebar of his motorbike early one morning! Other 'visitors' of the reptile or feline family are humanely captured by the authorities, taken back to the forest across the river and released into their natural habitat.



Lunch Break & (inset) Indigenous Footwear

Bird houses attached to trees all over the estate provide shelter during inclement weather.

Baghjan is HACCP and Rainforest Alliance certified and boasts clean and well maintained Lines. The following Awards have been won by the estate for its overall performance and the quality of its teas:

Best Performance (South Bank) – 2006-07

Best Performance (Circle) – 2011-12

Best Quality (Circle) – 2013-14

South Bank Best Outgrowers' Leaf - Quality Citation 2013-14

The highest yield recorded in Baghjan T.E. so far was 31 quintals in 1985 when the present Superintendent, Rajeev Mehrotra, was the 'Poali Sahab' (youngest executive). Perhaps history will repeat itself! If tea is "liquid wisdom" we certainly wish Baghjan plenty of it!



The Team (L to R): A.P. Gomes, A.S. Bhandari, Dr R.K. Gogoi, R. Mehrotra (Superintendent), B. Gurung & A.C. Bora

Sri Dharamdas Elizabeth



KHANH HOA FACTORY

~ Sakina Hussain
Phu Ben, Vietnam

Aerial View of Khanh Hoa Factory



Surrounded by lush green hills and hillocks covered with tea, Khanh Hoa Factory is located 10 km away from the Head Office, between Phu Tho and Ha Hoa plantations. The history behind the name of the factory is quite interesting. It was neither named after the place, nor the owner who built it. Mr Dao Van Lieu, the man who established Khanh Hoa, derived 'Khanh' from the name of the village where he was born and 'Hoa' from Ha Hoa district, where he started his career.

Born on 24 February 1942, Mr Dao Van Lieu was from Khanh Cuong Village, Yen Khanh District, Ninh Binh Province, Vietnam. His is an amazing story of how one is bound to succeed if focused and determined. He left home for Phu Tho Province at the tender age of seventeen, with an empty pocket but a heart full of dreams of setting

up his own business. He started work as a loader and after a period of two years as a porter, Mr Lieu got a job as a driver in Lo River Union Tea Estate. His hard work was recognized and he was promoted to Deputy Head of the Transport & Materials Department and finally went on to become the Director of Ha Hoa Tea Company (a member of Song Lo Federation of tea estates that later became Ha Hoa factory). In time, Mr Lieu decided to establish Khanh Hoa Tea Company, but was unable to start a private business due to government regulations, since he was still the Director of Ha Hoa Tea Company. Finally, he succeeded in setting up the company in 1997 with his wife, Mrs Li Thi Huong, as the Director. Initially they faced a lot of difficulties in building the factory and organizing manpower, as the place belonged to the Co-operative Society of Yen Ki Village and the public



Tree-lined Pathway

Mr Lieu's Bungalow



authorities wanted to move from that place to some other areas. Taking advantage of this, Mr Lieu took 27,000 square metres of land on rent for a

term of twenty years and started his project. The factory started manufacture in 1998.

The factory was built with different areas such as Withering Troughs, Processing Room, Sorting Room, Packing Room, Office and Stores for materials. Machineries were invested in. The factory also organized its own Management Board, which in conformity with the law of Enterprise, selected and trained many skilled workers in manufacturing and grading of teas. This helped the factory in exporting teas to South-east Asian countries and some to the European market too. The expansion work progressed well and with a capacity of only 6,000 kg of green leaf per day in the year 1998, it went up to 20,000 kg per day in 2000. From 2006 to 2009, the factory continued expanding for exports and reached a capacity of 40,000 kg green leaf per day. Simultaneously, the factory also carried out the project of 'Component of Clean Manufacture in Industry' under the Ministry of Industry & Commerce. Mr Lieu, along with his wife, two sons and two daughters, personally supervised the day to day running of Khanh Hoa.

Within the factory premises, Mr Lieu built a beautiful wooden bungalow where he lived with his family. Best quality wooden pillars were brought from several Provinces, and it apparently cost him about \$ 40,000 to build the house in 1998. This was much more than the expense of a concrete house at that time.

Khanh Hoa also has three ponds covering 5,000 square metres – one for fish, another for turtles and the third one as a reserve pond. After the takeover, PhuBen sold fish worth \$ 2,900 in the first year; 50% of the money was ploughed back into putting some special types of fish in the pond. All along the ponds, very high yielding litchi trees have been planted. The harvested fruit is distributed amongst all the staff.



Khanh Hoa also has a beautifully laid out garden in the front yard of the bungalow, which has twelve different varieties of bonsais that were collected from different parts of Vietnam. A fountain made of limestone brought from Da Nang, with a variety of goldfish swimming around, adds to the visual appeal.



The Garden



The pathway to Khanh Hoa house and the factory is planted with palm trees on one side and jasmine shrubs on the other, which fill the air with a lovely fragrance.



The Rice Cooker

Khanh Hoa is self-reliant with its own canteen which serves tasty and healthy food. Organic vegetables grown in the compound are used, thus enabling the workers to procure meals at a subsidized rate. A unique rice cooker caters to the ten staff members and sixty workers.

A Russian model Army Jeep used by an Army General was gifted to Khanh Hoa during the Vietnamese war. Good care is taken of the vehicle, which is in perfect running condition.



As is oft found in family run business ventures, trouble starts brewing once the patriarch gets on in years and the children move on to greener pastures. Mr Lieu too found it difficult to keep the company economically viable. PhuBen Tea Company acquired Khanh Hoa on 9 May 2013 and started manufacturing from the 28th of the same month, producing 6,00,667 kg of made tea that year. It is a 100% Black Orthodox tea factory, which underwent major renovations during the cold weather of 2013/14. The processing room, which was originally divided into three rooms, was broken to accommodate on-line Rolling, Fermenting and Drying systems, with three CMFs. All efforts were made to increase the capacity and 9,50,384 kg of made tea was produced in 2014. A glass partition separates the processing and the drying areas.



Factory Inauguration



The whole factory has CCTV cameras for security and surveillance purposes. Two new rolling tables with pressure plates were also commissioned and this year's

estimated target is 1,400,000 kg. The factory is certified for ISO 9001:2008, ISO 22000:2005, GMP, Rainforest Alliance and Halal.

Here's wishing that the only thing that 'brews' for Team Khanh Hoa is a good cuppa!



Visitors...



At the 6th North American Tea Conference held in San Antonio, Texas, USA, between 22 and 24 September 2015, PhuBen Tea Company's Jasmine Green Orthodox tea won first place among Vietnamese teas in the Gold Medal Tea Competition, 2015. Mr Cren Sandys-Lumsdaine accepted the Award on behalf of the Company.



Mr Cren Sandys-Lumsdaine flanked by Mr Peter Goggi - Chairman of the Tea Association of USA (left) & Mr Devan Shah - International Tea Importers, USA (right)



Two executives from McLeod Russel's head office in Kolkata had the honour of being chosen to represent India at the World Darts Cup 2015 which was held between 26 and 31 October 2015 in Kemer, a seaside resort along the Mediterranean coast in Antalya, Turkey.

Mr Ranji Saha and Ms Piyali Bhattacharjee Chaudhuri were on the four-member men's and women's teams respectively.

RANJI SAHA: In 2001, the tea tasting room at the MRIL head office was equipped with a dart board and this was where Ranji Saha had his first tryst with the sport. The next year, he was a member of the MRIL team at the Merchants Cup Darts tournament. Thereafter, Ranji's aim only improved as he practised at Quatro - the lunch room at the office - and went from strength to strength as he competed with the best players at various darts tournaments around the country, thus improving his National ranking.

"Decent wins at State Ranking tournaments, State Championships and back to back Men's Doubles National Championships provided me with a chance to represent my

WDF WORLD DARTS CUP 2015



country in the WDF World Darts Cup 2015. It was an enriching experience for us. The atmosphere was electrifying and donning the national colours at the World Cup was very precious," says Ranji. Appropriately enough, he calls this journey, "From the Tea Cup to the World Cup."

PIYALI BHATTACHARJEE CHAUDHURI: Darts was a surprise discovery for Piyali who was introduced to the game by Ranji Saha and Sunny Uthup in 2012 after joining McLeod Russel. Fascinated by the sport, Piyali started playing in office tournaments held at Quatro and won the Ladies' Darts Tournament. This encouraged her to participate in the State Championship in which she was the runner-up in the finals, after which she was ranked No 2 in the state. She then started participating in the national tournaments where she fared very well, the wins ranking her amongst the top 10 in the country.

"I found my new passion...Darts after Dance, where dedication, focus and practice are the main pillars," says Piyali. "I made it to the World Cup team with my good rankings and some real good luck. It's just the start and I have a long, long way to go. Participating in the World Cup has given me the chance to understand this platform on a different level. My family, specially my husband, motivated me immensely. It was an honour for me to be a part of the Indian Team."



AMAN BHUYAN



Aman, son of Gautam Bhuyan of HO Kolkata, and Mandira, has been steadily winning laurels both in Academics as well as in extra-curricular activities over the years. In 2012-13, he ranked 1st in his school in all three International Olympiads - Science, Maths and English - and stood 92nd

internationally (among 14 countries) in the Science Olympiad. In January 2015, Aman bagged Zonal Rank 1 (West Bengal and Andaman & Nicobar Islands) and stood 10th internationally in the IEO (International English Olympiad) conducted by the British Council in collaboration with the Science Olympiad Foundation. This performance earned him a letter of appreciation from the Executive Director of the Foundation.

In addition to the certificates of excellence he has been presented

by his school for his achievements in academics, sports and cultural activities, Aman was awarded certificates for Outstanding Performance ('Overall' and in English) by ASSET (Assessment of Scholastic Skills through Educational Testing). It was not surprising that this bright boy would score 94% in the ICSE Board examinations.

His school recognized Aman's sense of responsibility and appointed him as a Prefect as well as School Vice Captain. Aman participates in Debates and is a keen sportsman, excelling at pool, athletics, golf, swimming, riding and running marathons. He has represented his school in many of these sports, recently winning an inter-school Pool Tournament for his present school, Birla High.

We congratulate this outstanding young man and wish him every success in life.





~ Priya Shekhawat
Corramore T.E.

The Sponge Cake

The Victoria Sponge Cake gained popularity during the reign of Queen Victoria. A quintessential English tea time treat, this cake is sandwiched together with raspberry jam and has a delicate dusting of caster sugar on the top. One would encounter a Victoria Sponge or a Victorian Sandwich, as it is also known, in most tea rooms in England. It is also known as the Madeira Cake in the UK.

It was created as a sweet treat to be served at tea time, which was a new concept at the time. In the USA, it is known as the Butter or Pound cake.

There are a number of variations to this cake, such as: Fruit Cake, Marble Cake, Cup Cake and Chocolate Cake. It is the base for many desserts too. The eggs, flour, sugar and butter should be of equal weight, with the eggs being weighed in their shells.

Here are a few recipes to tickle the palate:



Ingredients for a basic Victoria Sponge Cake

225g caster sugar

225g softened butter

4 eggs (weighed in their shells) 225g

225g flour

2 tsp baking powder

1½ tsp vanilla extract

3 tbsp milk

For the Filling:

½ cup good quality strawberry or
raspberry jam

½ cup cream

Icing sugar to dust the top of the cake

Preparation Method

1. Preheat the oven to 180°C or 350°F.
2. Grease two 8" sandwich tins and line the base with greased paper.
3. Beating by hand with a wooden spoon or using an electric mixer, cream together the butter and the caster sugar until the mixture is light and fluffy.
4. Add the eggs a little at a time beating well after each addition.
5. Sift and lightly fold in half the flour and baking powder with a metal spoon or spatula, then lightly fold in the rest of the flour.
6. Add the milk and vanilla extract.
7. Divide the mixture between the prepared tins and level the tops with a knife. Bake both on the same shelf of the oven for about 20 – 25 minutes.
8. When the cakes are well risen and firm to the touch, turn them out on a wire rack to cool.

To make the filling, beat the cream until fluffy and thick. Gradually beat in icing sugar and vanilla extract. Spread this mixture over the bottom of one of the sponges. Then spread the jam over the bottom of the other and sandwich them together.

Dust with icing sugar before serving.

Steamed Christmas Pudding

Ingredients

3 eggs - beaten

175g butter

175g brown sugar

175g flour

1½ tsp baking powder

1 tsp vanilla extract

2 tbsp golden syrup

2 tbsp granulated white sugar (for caramel syrup)

100g chopped dry fruit soaked in brandy

¼ cup candied peel chopped finely

Grated rind of 1 orange and 1 lemon

½ level tsp ground ginger

½ level tsp ground cinnamon

½ level tsp ground clove

½ level tsp nutmeg

4 tbsp brandy

Method

1. Mix the granulated white sugar with ½ cup of water and make caramelised syrup.
2. Cream butter and brown sugar till light; add the golden syrup.
3. Beat in the eggs one at a time.
4. Add the dry ingredients, sieved earlier, alternating with the caramelised syrup.
5. Grease a 1 litre pudding basin with butter. Cut a circle of greaseproof paper and foil about 1" longer than the diameter of the basin.
6. Spoon the mixture into the prepared basin and cover with greaseproof paper and foil. Secure with string.
7. Put basin into a large saucepan half filled with boiling water. Cover and steam for 1½ - 2 hrs. Top with more boiling water from time to time as the water evaporates.
8. Remove the pudding basin from the pan. Leave to cool. Remove greaseproof paper and foil and turn out the pudding onto a dish.
9. Warm some brandy, pour it over the pudding and ignite. When flames subside, serve with **brandy butter**.

Brandy Butter

Ingredients

50g butter ● 50g caster sugar ● 4 tbsp brandy

Method

Cream the butter and sugar. Beat in the brandy, a tablespoon at a time. Leave to harden.



Pineapple Upside Down Pudding

Ingredients

50g butter

50g brown sugar

1 can pineapple chunks, drained well

6 cherries, drained well

Victorian sandwich mixture made with 4 eggs



Method

1. Grease an 8" round tin and line the base with greased paper.
2. Melt the butter and pour it into the tin. Sprinkle brown sugar evenly over it.
3. Arrange the pineapple chunks on top of the brown sugar in a flower pattern and place a cherry in the centre of each flower.
4. Spoon the cake mixture carefully into the tin and bake for 30 – 35 minutes or until well risen, golden and firm to the touch. Cool in the tin on a wire rack for a few minutes, then turn the cake out onto the rack to cool completely.
5. Serve with whipped cream or vanilla ice-cream.

Five Helpful Tips on Baking

1. To bake a perfect cake, start with high quality ingredients because one is unable to taste and correct while preparing it.
2. Pay special attention to the size of the dish, the measurements and the temperature of all ingredients, including the oven temperature.
3. Pay attention also to the physical states to induce while stirring cream and folding.
4. One will learn to recognise the proper 'look' of well creamed butter and eggs; of batter ready for the oven; and other critical stages in cake-making entirely through practice.
5. Invest in a good quality oven.



~ Alfred Omoya
Muzizi T.E.

The Exciting Evolution of Tea Rehabilitation and Growing in the Rwenzori Days

Uganda Development Corporation (UDC) through its subsidiary Agricultural Enterprises Limited (AEL) and Uganda Tea Growers Corporation (UTGC) was set up in the 1960s to run agricultural parastatals in the country, and the tea sector was one of them.

The tea sector/estates which straddle the former greater Kigezi sub-region (Ankole, Igara and Kayonza Estates), the Rwenzori mountain areas (Kiko, Mpanga, Mabale, Mwenge Estates), Muzizi and Bugambe in present day Kibaale and Hoima Districts respectively, Salaama Estate in present day Mukono District near Kampala and, to a lesser extent, Zeu highlands in West Nile region, thrived in the 1960s (when most of the tea was planted) up to the early 1970s.

UTGC was responsible for running Igara, Kayonza,

Mpanga and Mabale Estates where individual farmers or groups sold their green leaf to the factories which they eventually owned through shareholding, whereas AEL was in charge of Ankole, Kiko, Muzizi, Bugambe and Salaama Estates.

However, with the economic uncertainty and political upheavals of the 1970s, these parastatals were completely run down and by the early 1980s most of the estates had been abandoned or were operating well below their capacity. From the mid-1980s the government (with funding from EU) made several interventions to salvage the industry through rehabilitation of tea fields and factories but eventually these efforts did not pay off, save for the UTGC ones which kept limping along. The ones under AEL were failing, with abandoned tea fields and run down factories.



Abandoned Estates

In 1993, through its Policy of Privatisation of Government Parastatals, the government sold off AEL to Commonwealth Development Corporation and James Finlay Limited who jointly formed Rwenzori Tea Investment Limited which was incorporated in Uganda in 1993 and began operations on 1 February 1994 under the name of Rwenzori Highlands Tea Company Limited. The new Company – RHTC Ltd – then began rehabilitating the fields and rebuilding factories once more.

Fresh after graduating from the Havana University of Agricultural Sciences (in 1993), I joined the Company on 1 February 1994 at Ankole Tea Company Limited as they were called then, as a Services Foreman responsible for engineering on the estate and reporting to the Factory Engineer. What was interesting then was the poor standard of factory machinery maintenance and lack of service parts. For example, we would fill up worn drive sprockets for the CTC machine with welding and later file/grind them to give them some 'teeth' to achieve some drive, and when servicing the standby generators we would wash oil filters with diesel in order to reuse them. Miraculously, we were making some tea in the factory!

Factory under Renovation



One evening in April 1994, I saw a truck loaded with some strange kind of poles of about 3-4 inch diameter entering from the back of the estate. When I asked my Manager, Mr Tugume Japheth, what these were, he laughed and told me they were tea tree poles from the last rehabilitation of the Ankole fields being taken away for fire wood. He said the tea trees had grown to over 20 feet after they had been abandoned; here I was getting used to a tea bush growing to barely a metre in height!

Tea Trees





Overgrown Tea

Later that year I was transferred to Mwenge Central Engineering. From the current day Mwenge Guest House you could hardly see Itwara Factory as the view was blocked by overgrown tea trees. The state of affairs was the same at Muzizi and Bugambe. Bugambe was the worst of all as both the fields and the factory had been abandoned after the 1979 war.

In January 1995, as the field rehabilitation progressed, there was an urgent need to rehabilitate and re-commission the factory to match the progress in the fields. I was then transferred to Bugambe, with one artisan, to start cleaning up the factory and install processing machines. On 29 May 1995, Bugambe produced black tea again – for the first time since 1979.



Renovating Bugambe Factory



Rehabilitation - Kisaru Estate



In 1997, Kisaru Estate was acquired. The factory and field having been abandoned since 1992, tea bushes had grown close to 20 feet tall and the factory and other buildings were homes to bats, snakes, wild pigs and other wild animals. Elephants and buffaloes would graze right up to the factory fence and compound. Though I was an engineer, I was given the responsibility of overseeing the rehabilitation of the fields by the then Group Manager, Mr Mark Potter. At the same time I was responsible for the renovation of the dilapidated buildings and putting up new labour villages at Kisaru.

The way I experienced it, rehabilitation involved lopping (cutting down the tea bush to a height of 1 metre), leaving it to recover for about 60 days when bud break became heavy, followed by normal pruning to a height of 45 cm (18 inches). I worked with a workaholic Division Manager, Mr Joseph Olera, who would hack at the tea tree with his

poorly equipped workers all day under the scorching tropical sun. Joseph had previously gained tremendous experience from the rehabilitation programme at Bugambe.



Kisaru Estate



Mechanical Harvester

A fond memory following the rehabilitation was of the time when my Manager challenged me to construct a tea nursery shed ('banda') to accommodate seedlings for 10 Ha. Neither he nor I had a clue how to go about it! I told him I would construct something measuring 30 x 60 x 2.5 m and would make extensions as required. A person with the right skill/knowledge came along when I had completed it, and I found I was almost right in terms of specs for the structure!

What I remember most with fondness and satisfaction from that time is the support from my 'boss', who gave me all the encouragement I needed in everything I did (I was the only Estate Engineer to have been allocated a pick-up truck ever!) and the fact that my colleagues, to this day, appreciate my efforts at multi-skilling and making them perform and work without the 'boss' around them.



Lopped Tea

BENEFICENCE



“Let us remember: One book, one pen, one child, and one teacher can change the world.” ~ Malala Yousafzai, the 17-year-old winner of the 2014 Nobel Peace Prize

~ Lesley Guha Sircar
Kolkata



Udaan is situated on the ground floor of 8/3A, Alipore Park Road. Since its inception four years ago, this Centre for learning has grown from strength to strength. The journey has been challenging but the Vision is always one of HOPE. Children of Classes 5 to 12 from lower income families in Kolkata are chosen based on the recommendations of the Principals from humbler English Medium Schools in the city, like Indira Academy, MG Runpta, Loyola High School, Holy Mission English Medium School and Loreto Literacy Centre on Middleton Row, to name a few, and given customized tutorials at the Centre in all subjects.

Udaan is fondly known as the Centre and for good reason too. Every weekend, the doors of this free coaching establishment which is sponsored by McLeod Russel India Limited are thrown open to seventy-five children. Under the comforting guidance of Mrs Kavita Khaitan, and the parent figures, Vijay Chowdhary and Anju Chowdhary, along with

their dedicated team of twelve staff and willing volunteers, many a young dream is turned into a realistic future.

Classes on Friday evening are a recent initiative but generally school begins at 9.30 on a Saturday morning and continues throughout the day. True to the saying, “Healthy Food for a Wealthy Mind,” the children are provided with a nutritious meal at lunch time and are never sent home without an evening snack. Sunday offers the same routine and the children are infused with confidence and the strength to face the week ahead.

There is a well stocked Library to encourage the children to read and a Computer Room as well.

Academic Achievements

Over the years there has been a marked improvement in the academic progress thanks to the tireless efforts of the teachers at the Centre; even those children who are not able to make their grades have a certain sparkle in their eyes – a result of constructive nurturing. That in itself is an achievement.

Education isn't confined to just the classrooms. Co-curricular activities are encouraged and the boys and girls get as much time for recreation as they do for study.

An educational trip was arranged on the 1st of May 2015 to the Birla Industrial and Technological Museum on Gurusaday Road.



The Annual Day Function

Children have talent and their talent is displayed during the annual

production which is staged sometime in December/January.

The success of the event is the culmination of enthusiastic and happy hours of practice a month prior. Academics aren't compromised in any way and these practice sessions are held during their spare time. The audience, primarily the families of the children, and special invitees, are treated to amateur theatre and an energetic display of contemporary and 'Bollywood' styles of song and dance. Over the past two years talented young actors have dramatized 'A Christmas Carol' and one of the witty stories from 'Akbar and Birbal'.

The evening closes with speeches, a formal prize distribution and a high tea which provides a pleasant platform for parent-teacher interaction.



The Summer Camp

This was a new initiative introduced during the summer holidays in 2015. The months of May and June were the hottest ever, but this didn't deter our children from coming to school once a week to take part in the Summer Camp.



They were given T-shirts to paint on and taught the art of block printing on cards and paper bags which they made by themselves. The mood was invigorating and while the young girls immersed themselves in embroidery and crochet lessons, the boys enjoyed some indoor games on a light competitive level. A matinee show of 'Mary Poppins' was also screened and the young and impressionable mind was drawn into the make believe reality played out by Julie Andrews.

If you ever come to Udaan, at the head of the road you will see a noncommittal signboard which has a footnote that reads, “We leave no stone unturned.” I often ponder on the strange coincidence of how this saying points such a lead to the happenings down the road... at 8/3A, Alipore Park Road.



Community Projects – Mangaldai Circle



~ Deepak Mehta
Borengajuli T.E.

The estates under Mangaldai Circle, Assam, have undertaken Social Welfare Projects under the MRIL – CSR mission statement:

As a responsible corporate citizen, Mcleod Russel is committed to enhancing the quality of life, wellness and wellbeing of the people around its various work centres and locations and also committed to safeguarding the environment by adopting an eco-friendly, transparent and participatory approach in all activities, with a view to maintaining ecological balance.

The Corporate Social Welfare activities of MRIL primarily include one or more of the items covered under Schedule VII of the Act with special focus on the following:

- 1. Promoting preventive healthcare and sanitation and making available safe drinking water and other activities contained in Schedule VII (i). The Company may be involved in these activities by way of adoption of one or more villages around its tea estates for total development.
- 2. Promoting education and education-related activities covered under Schedule VII (ii).



- 3. Activities relating to environmental sustainability, ecological balance and other activities contained in Schedule VII (iv).
- 4. Protection of national heritage, art and culture as contained in Schedule VII (v).
- 5. Contribution to various funds contained under Schedule VII.

Under the above policy guidelines the MRIL estates under Mangaldai Circle have adopted Barengabari village, located 3 km south of Borengajuli T.E. under Paschimpatla Revenue Circle, with a population of around 800 residents comprising Bodos and Adivasis. As the existing water supply scheme provided by the government was lying defunct, we took up the matter with the Deputy Commissioner of Udalguri District, Mrs Sadhana Hojai, and invited her along with other district officials of the PHC to a meeting at Barengabari village on 25 November 2014. After a fruitful interaction with the villagers and Village Gaon Panchayat officials, and productive discussions with all concerned, we took up the following projects at Barengabari village:





- A. Complete revamping of the old water supply system (2950 metres) along with the filtration plant and extension of piped water supply (1400 metres) with a new underground pipeline to provide safe drinking water to the villagers.
- B. Development of ponds/water bodies for fisheries, environmental conservation and ecological balance. We undertook the digging of two ponds covering an area of 11 bighas using JCBs initially, but had to finally use the bigger excavators with tracks to negotiate in the muddy water where JCBs could not work. Dumper Trucks were also used to remove the huge quantity of soil excavated and this soil was used to fill up low lying areas of a nearby football field which had water logging problems during the rainy season. After leveling the soil the village football field has also been

revamped and improved. On the auspicious occasion of Rangali Bihu the villagers introduced 170 kg of fish spawn in the two ponds. Different varieties of fish spawn like Rahu, Mirika, Bhakua and Common Carp were introduced.

On 19 May 2015 the villagers arranged to plant 150 coconut saplings on the 'bundh' around the fish ponds. After the planting was done by the whole village community, the men enclosed the area with fencing provided by MRIL under the CSR project.

- C. A water supply project was also undertaken in the Srimanta Sankardev Satra – Borengajuli, where boring was done to a depth of 160 feet after conducting resistivity tests to ascertain the quantum and yield of available water. An overhead tank has been constructed and an underground water pipeline



system has been laid out for the Satra and adjoining local LP School which had no water supply earlier. This has been a boon to the school children and also to the large number of devotees who come to the Satra from as far away as Barpeta.

- D. Infrastructure development projects for the production of vermi-compost in the nearby villages, with a buy-back scheme for the vermi-compost generated, have been started in Khasiachuba village near Borengajuli T.E. and Garuajhar village near Bhooteachang T.E. These are being undertaken to promote environmental sustainability and ecological balance. The vermi-compost will be bought from the villagers by the MRIL estates, thus providing them with a means of livelihood and encouraging the socio-economic development of the area.



Laparoscopic Cholecystectomy at Dirial Central Hospital

~ Dr Munin Sharma
Dirial Central Hospital



manpower and anesthesia equipment. These were soon overcome and the surgeries started on 23 April 2012 with the help of surgeons and technicians from the Assam Medical College Hospital, Dibrugarh. From then on there was no looking back. Dirial now conducts Laparoscopic Cholecystectomy surgeries on a regular basis and has achieved a milestone of 100 completed cases on 13 August 2015 with the help of a local surgeon and anesthetist from Beesakopie Central Hospital.

This facility rendered by DCH has been of great help to the patients in the estates suffering from gall bladder calculus (stone), overcoming the hardships faced by them in undergoing the same at Assam Medical College, Dibrugarh, in terms of transport, investigation, stay and finance. DCH will continue to work hard in its endeavour to provide the best health care facilities to the garden populace.

Dirial Central Hospital (DCH) is the only central hospital in the Mcleod Russel Group which offers Laparoscopic Cholecystectomy services to the workers and staff of the Company's estates.

The Laparoscopic Cholecystectomy surgeries initially took some time to start due to certain hurdles in terms of



Patient Counselling



Operation Theatre



Post-operative Care



Dehing Patkai Wildlife Sanctuary

~ Gaurav Dey
Dirok T. E.



Leopard Cat, Clouded Leopard, Porcupine, Barking Deer and the Golden Cat.

Some of the bird species existing in the sanctuary are: White-winged Wood Duck, Kalij Pheasant, Grey Peacock Pheasant, Besra, Black Baza, Slender-billed Vulture, Osprey, Great Hornbill, Wreathed Hornbill, the Common Hill Mynah, Emerald Dove, Brahmani Ducks and Green Pigeons.

As Dirok T.E. shares a common border with the sanctuary, the estate has often played host to visiting residents from it. There are some very interesting wildlife encounters which have taken place here, involving wild elephants, snakes, leopards, monkeys and other animals. Elephants, especially during winters, have kept the residents of Dirok quite physically fit, as there have been a number of occasions when the animals have ended up chasing them, and the people have had no other option than to pull up

Dehing Patkai Wildlife Sanctuary falls under the category of Assam valley tropical wet evergreen forest, and happens to be the only rainforest in this state. It has an area of 111.19 sq km, and is located in the Dibrugarh and Tinsukia districts of Assam, covering three areas: Jeypore, upper Dihing River and Dirok rainforest. It is also a part of the Dehing-Patkai elephant reserve, which was declared a wildlife sanctuary by the Government of Assam in 2004. A section of it falls under the Dibru-Deomali elephant reserve in Arunachal Pradesh.

This sanctuary, with its dense forests and thick undergrowth, is an ideal habitat for local wildlife. To date, 42 species of mammals, 40 species of reptiles and 30 species of butterflies have been identified here. The most common mammal species of this sanctuary are – Hoolock Gibbon, Slow Loris, Stump-tailed Macaque, Capped Langur, Asian Elephant, Tiger, Leopard, Black Bear, Himalayan Squirrel,



Hornbill



Hill Mynah



Emerald Dove



Green Pigeons



Brahmani Ducks



at how gorgeous it was, with its lovely coat and graceful movements. A few years ago when Mr Nisar Ahmed was heading the estate, he encountered a Monocled Cobra in the Burra Bungalow, which he captured and later released into the forest. The estate has quite a few species of snakes which are often spotted roaming around. Mr Ahmed would often be seen scouting around for various species of animals, birds and butterflies here, and has a veritable treasury of photographs of them all.

We are blessed to witness the natural beauty of this sanctuary around us, so as responsible citizens, the management here leaves no stone unturned in educating the local people about wildlife conservation and protection, and the benefits thereof. In today's era of industrialization, this close proximity with Mother Nature is a feast for the eyes indeed!

their socks and race away from them. At times they have also damaged labour quarters, especially in Line no. 15 and Likhajan Line of the estate. These incidents occur mainly due to human encroachment of the animals' natural habitat and widespread felling of trees, leading to an acute scarcity of food reserves for not only these pachyderms, but all wild animals.

A Slow Loris which had found its way into the Dirak factory, was captured by the forest officials and released into the forest. We have been lucky to witness an interesting friendship between a Macaque monkey and a stray dog, spotted playing in the factory premises time and again.

One evening when I was returning home from the Division office, I was fortunate enough to behold a Clouded Leopard, crossing the road at its own pace. I was awestruck



Slow Loris



Monocled Cobra



Who says it's just the Wild West? Dehing-Patkai definitely makes one feel there is also a 'Wild, Wild East' right here at our doorstep !

» Makum Namdang Cup Golf – 28 June 2015



The Winners – (L to R): Rajeev Mehrotra, Vivek Seth & Akshay Seth with Mrs Namita Ahmed at Margherita Club

MRIL 5-a-Side Football – 19 July 2015 «



1



2



3

Tingri Club:

- 1 *The Winners (MRIL White) with Mr Ramanuj Dasgupta*
- 2 *The Winners (MRIL White) & Runners-up (MRIL Red)*
- 3 *Man of the Match – Siddharth Thapa*

Births

1. **NINSIIMA KAILYN**,
daughter of Muhereza
Mark & Birungi Rachael
Mwenge T.E. 6 July 2015
2. **ADHIRAJ**, son of
Gurdeep & Sumeet Singh
Pertabghur T.E. 25 July 2015



Weddings

1. Noredah Kyohangirwe of Ankole T.E wed Silver
Mugisha on 22 August 2015
2. Katsigaire Nicholas of Bugambe T.E wed Ampumuza
Charity on 2 May 2015



An Unexpected Guest



On the night of 9 September 2015, an Indian Pangolin (*Manis Crassicaudatus*) was found nosing around the hospital perimeter at Central Dooars T.E. Before it came to any harm, the creature was handed over to the Forest Guards at the neighbouring Bhutri Beat office, who later released it in the Buxa Dooars Reserve Forest.

The pangolin is the only mammal with large keratin scales covering its skin. When attacked, it rolls into a ball, and its scales coupled with its muscular power makes it impossible for a predator to unroll it. The long tail can be used as a weapon to lash out at predators, but in females, it also doubles up as a baby carriage!

The pangolin spends the daylight hours in its burrow which may be as deep as six metres underground, reached through a long tunnel, and goes foraging for various kinds of ants and termites at night. It tears open the termites' nest with its powerful claws, thrusts its long tongue into the passage, then withdraws it with the little creatures adhering to the saliva on the tongue.

The Indian Pangolin is on the list of endangered species, but we know of at least one of them who is now safely roaming around the Buxa Dooars Reserve Forest!



narration

~ Sarita Dasgupta
Bordubi T.E.

Novelty Teapots



"The very sight of a teapot puts a smile on the face of most people. One cannot help but think of more serene and genteel times. From a whimsical child's teapot to an elegant English Teapot, to collectible teapots that adorn some homes, they are a subtle reminder of all that is good in this world." ~Barbara Roberts



The Museum of Tea Ware is located in Hong Kong Park which is beautifully laid out with ponds, a waterfall, an aviary of exotic birds and other interesting aspects. Following the signs, I arrived at Flagstaff House, a colonnaded building which had no doubt been the residence

or office of some dignitary in the past. On entering, I was handed a brochure and saw that, in addition to the permanent historical exhibits, unusual teapots made by the leading potters of Hong Kong were also on display. I was fascinated by the strikingly different teapots of various shapes made of

diverse materials including taps and machine parts! It struck me then that these kinds of unusual 'novelty' teapots were probably made in the past too, in various parts of the tea-drinking world.

The first novelty teapots were, in fact, made in China and date back to the reign of the Song Dynasty (960 – 1279 AD). The teapots were made in Yixing from a special kind of porous clay found there, called 'zisha' (purple clay). In addition to the traditional teapots they made, Yixing potters also tried their hand at moulding novelty teapots in the shapes of fruit with auspicious connotations. The peach signifies 'long life' and 'good luck', the pomegranate means 'numerous progeny' and the persimmon indicates 'success in business' and 'prosperity'.



Peach



Pomegranate



A green glazed persimmon shaped teapot dating back to the 9th century is displayed at the Museum of Tea Ware.

Once tea found its way westward and Afternoon Tea became a 'national institution' in England in the 18th century, teapots of different shapes and hues became popular. The Staffordshire potters used their imagination, inventiveness and also their sense of humour, to make novelty teapots. Josiah Wedgwood and Thomas Whieldon made teapots in the shape of pineapples, cauliflowers and cabbages. George Jones and Minton made Majolica teapots shaped like animals, the most popular among them being the Minton Tortoise Teapot.



Wedgwood Teapots



Throughout the 18th and 19th centuries, interestingly shaped and amusing teapots continued to be made. In fact, in the 19th and 20th century, some teapots were made as satirical comments on contemporary British politicians and other prominent people. Teapots in the likeness of Sir Winston Churchill, complete with cigar in mouth, were very popular. Teapots with Dame Margaret Thatcher's face found their way into the market too. Elvis Presley seated in an aeroplane poured tea into many a cup!

Minton Teapots



The Victorians used teapots to commemorate special events, especially Queen Victoria's Golden and Diamond Jubilees. Special teapots were made to mark the

Sir Winston Churchill



Dame Margaret Thatcher



Elvis Presley



coronations of the monarchs who succeeded her, including Queen Elizabeth II. Royal weddings have also been commemorated with teapots, the most recent being the wedding of Prince William and Princess Katherine. Teapots were made to encourage patriotism during wars as well.



Crinoline Lady

In the 1920s and 30s the Staffordshire pottery houses continued to make novelty teapots. James Sadler & Sons, famous for their 'Crinoline Lady' teapots, also made teapots shaped like tanks, ocean liners and aeroplanes, and a series decorated with Mabel Lucie Attwell cartoon characters. Perhaps their most interesting collection was the iconic 'Racing Teapots' line in the shape of racing cars. These came in cream, black, green, yellow, blue, grey, pink and maroon and all had a license plate that read 'OKT42'.

Attwell Characters*Ocean Liner**Racing Teapots**Aeroplane**Battle Tank*

Though mass produced and inexpensive at the time, and more amusing than aesthetically pleasing, these teapots from the 1920s and 30s are now collectibles costing much more than their original price. Clarice Cliff joined the Staffordshire firm of

Lingard Webster in 1912 as an apprentice and then went on to start the Art Deco movement along with Suzie Cooper. They created a range of novelty teapots which can now fetch up to £12,000 each!

*Clarice Cliff Teapot*

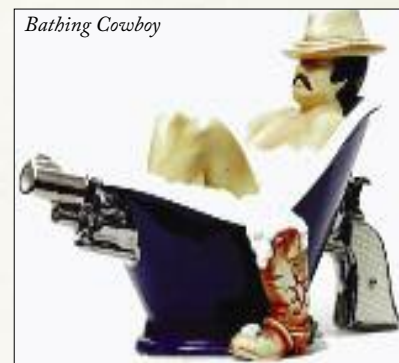
A giant teapot made in the early 1900s by Gibson & Sons, another Staffordshire firm, suddenly surfaced in 2003 after lying covered up in a garage for decades! The owner claimed that it had been given to his grandfather, a china and glassware retailer, by Sydney Gibson in exchange for a dinner service he had ordered for his daughter's wedding. The teapot is 76 cm tall and weighs 50 kg. It needs two men to lift it when empty and can hold 1024 cups of tea. It was sold to an American collector in 2003 for £5,000!



WWII curtailed the production of novelty teapots until the 1950s, when country cottages, animals and seaside themes were the inspiration for novelty teapots that came into the market. There is also a WWII Willy's Jeep teapot in existence!

In the 1970s, Roger Michell designed the 'Walking Ware' line of teapots manufactured by Carlton Ware. This line of teapots has legs complete with socks and shoes!

Pottery is an art form and many contemporary artists have tried their hand at designing kitschy teapots for fun, such as a commode! Paul Cardew's teapots are very popular with collectors, and he also has a line of miniature teapots.

Miniature Desk Teapot*Miniature Commode Teapot**Miniature Sewing Machine Teapot**Walking Ware**Bathing Cowboy**The 'Fabulous Four' Teapots!**Teapot Island*

Teapot Island in Kent has very interesting novelty teapots on display, including a set shaped like The Beatles, a cowboy in a bath and Princess Diana's face.

In India too, exclusive teapots of eccentric design and made of unusual material, are displayed at 'arty' exhibitions and advertised online.

Novelty teapots, popular more for their fun, unusual and novel aspects at the time that they were made, rather than for their exclusivity or aesthetics, are now considered collectibles of inordinate value. So, if anyone has an ugly looking teapot lying in an old box in the attic, basement or storeroom, my advice is, have it valued. It might just turn out to be worth a fortune! On the other hand, if you happen to buy a modern model, it just might become a family heirloom to future generations!



~ Rupa Saikia

A cup of brisk, malty tea with a bright colour immediately brings Hunwal T.E. to mind. A large estate with a total grant area of 1295.27 hectares, it is located in the quality belt of Jorhat on the south bank of the Brahmaputra River, with the township of Mariani sharing a common border on the north and western sides of the garden. The Bhogdoi River flows by the eastern periphery of the estate, while the southern side affords one

View of the Patkai Hills



a beautiful view of the Patkai hills of Nagaland, as it is situated on the foothills of this range. The historic Dhodar Ali, a 212 km long road, starting from Kamargaon in Golaghat to Joypur in

Dibrugarh district, built by the Ahom king, Gadadhar Singha around 1867, runs alongside the garden on one side. The king had mobilised a large force of opium addicts or 'dhods' to build this road, and hence the name.

The history of the place has contributed significantly to the name 'Hunwal'. Legend has it that, in ancient times, there was a caste of Assamese people, who prospected for gold (Soan) in the

Dhodar Ali



Hunwal Factory

various sandy rivers of Assam, using specialised containers to extract this precious metal. Based on their occupation, they came to be known as Sonowal Kacharis. It is said that they settled on the banks of the Dessoi river, now known as the Bhogdoi. It is perhaps from these people that the area earned its name - 'Sonowal', with the British who set up the estate, anglicising it later to 'Hunwal'.

This 154-year-old property was first planted out in 1861 by a British gentleman called William Minto. Then but a fledgling estate, it changed hands several times over in the subsequent years, till M/s Jardine Henderson, the managing agents for George Anderson, took over the property. The ownership was further transferred to McLeod Russel (India) in the year 1977. In 1988, McLeod Russel merged with the Williamson Magor Group.

Hunwal T.E. comprises three Divisions: Mariani, Hattijuri and Nagadhoolie, the total planting area being 901.63 hectares. Each Division has an interesting tale as to how it acquired its name. Mariani, with 298.69 hectares, was named after the town, as it was closest to it. Hattijuri with 242.28 hectares, was so christened due to the regular visit of a pair of elephants at that time (Hatti-elephant; Juri - pair) while Nagadhoolie, with an area of 360.99 hectares, used to host visitors from the Naga hills, who would descend here from the hills, to test their skills in sports (Naga - the Naga people; Dhoolie - play).

The factory has an installed capacity for 2.10 million kg of made tea, manufacturing some of the finest CTC and Orthodox teas of Assam. Hunwal is ISO 22000 and Rainforest Alliance certified. The garden strictly adheres to the principles of Sustainable Agriculture Network (SAN) standards, under which Integrated Crop Management practices are followed. The estate was the pioneer in the development and use of ITK (Integrated Technical Knowledge) formulations, a programme based on ecological principles for the control of pests. The vermi-compost unit provides organic manure for the plantation and the nursery, which has a high clonal percentage adding to the excellent quality of the leaf produced.



Tea Nursery



(L to R) – Sri Somnath Neog, Sri S. Doloi, Sri Dulal Chandra Baruah & Sri Jadav Goswami

The retired staff members have many a tale to tell of the bygone years. Sri Dulal Chandra Baruah, who worked in the capacity of Head Tea House for forty years, recalls an interesting incident concerning Mr T. N. Barooah, past Manager of this property, whose booming voice would intimidate many a worker and the Assistants under him. One day, a factory worker got so scared because of this factor, that he hid himself in a tea chest, only to be discovered by Mr Barooah himself, who promptly instructed the 'mistri' (carpenter) to seal the box. Hearing this, the worker fled, not stopping till he was well past the factory gates, and Mr Barooah had himself a hearty laugh! Sri Bhodro Orang, the trolley engine driver; Sri Bimal Ojha, the coal stove stoker; Sri Lothe Orang, truck driver; and Sri Prem Orang, who are all in their eighties now, remember the times when the green leaf would be transported to the factory through small trolley trains. In fact, in 1965, during Mr H.W. Scallon's time, when there was an outbreak of an unusual type of flu among the



(L to R) – Sri Prem Orang, Sri Bhodro Orang, Sri Bimal Ojha & Sri Lothe Orang

workers, Sri Bhodro was instructed to carry patients in the train trolleys to the factory, from where they were taken to the hospital. "Those were really tough days," he expresses. Back then, elephants and bullock carts were part of the transport fleet for the despatch of teas, to bring medicines, fuel, rations, and even ferry the executives and company visitors to safety during the floods, recounts Sri Somnath Neog, who was deployed in the factory, of the early days when teas were packed in wooden chests and transported to Neamatighat by bullock carts for onward shipment by steamers. This trip would invariably take two to three days just to cover a distance of 30 km.

Special mention must be made of 85-year-old Sri S. Doloi, retired clerk of Nagadhoolie Division and the senior-most among the retired personnel. Apart from his regular duties, here was a man who was multi-faceted. He was an electrician, fitter, plumber, mason, all rolled into

one, as well as a talented singer, who performed at cultural functions. There was even an occasion when he was called on by Mr H.W. Scallon, the Manager then, to attend to an electrical breakdown when the main electrician failed to repair it. His dedication to the Company was greatly appreciated.

The management also plays an important role in the conservation of wildlife, especially since the Hollongpahar Gibbon Sanctuary is located just 10 minutes away from the estate and the inmates there do wander around the vicinity. It is the only sanctuary in Assam where seven species of primates are found, namely, the Hoolock Gibbon, the pig-tailed Macaque, the Assamese Macaque, the stump-tailed Macaque, the Rhesus Macaque, Capped Langur and the Slow Loris. Sri Jadav Goswami, retired JB of Hattijuri division, recollects how on a rainy day he fled for his life when he mistook a raincoat clad



Langur



Gibbon (Female)



Gibbon (Male)



Imperial Green Pigeon



Malayan Giant Squirrel



White Throated Kingfisher



Python



Moon Moth



Median Egret



Small Spider Hunter



Mobile Crèche



Central Crèche

'chowkidar' for a wild buffalo! Signboards are prominently displayed all over the garden prohibiting the killing of animals and birds, and the felling of trees. To this effect, awareness camps are held, highlighting the importance of saving the local flora and fauna. Eye-catching illustrations on conservation are painted on the walls of the crèches, for the benefit of the children. Water conservation, wildlife protection, conservation of the eco-system, have all been prioritised by the estate.

The estate has three government-sponsored Anganvadi schools and three other schools run by the government. There are crèches in each Division along with a mobile crèche, which assists the workers who bring their infants along with them. All the crèches function under trained attendants. Milk and a meal of wholesome, nutritious food, is also provided daily to the children. There are nine ASHA workers, three to a Division, helping in the immunization programmes for children and taking care of pregnant women till the birth of the child.



There is a well-equipped hospital along with two dispensaries in the estate. Health camps on family planning; hygiene; sanitation; preventive measures against malaria, diarrhoea and other illnesses; ill effects of alcohol and tobacco products; are held on a regular basis for the benefit of the workers. A number of welfare schemes too have been undertaken by the resident doctor and his able team from time to time. The MRIL Vision Project has greatly helped the people here, with a large number of cataract cases being operated on. Routine health check-ups for the staff and workers are conducted thrice a year. The medical team, along with the Mothers' Club members, has played an important role in reaching out to the workers on health

issues, thereby promoting a healthy atmosphere. A unique garbage disposal scheme is being propagated in the Lines – each family puts its garbage in a disposable bag hung on a fence post to be collected on a daily basis.



Garbage Disposal Scheme

In 1965, Sri Nobin Kond, a retired and dedicated worker, received the certificate of 'President's Scout' from the then President of India, Dr Sarvapalli Radhakrishnan. In recent times, Ms Sushmita Borah, daughter of Sri D.P. Borah, Head Clerk, has participated in the sport of badminton at the State and



Sushmita Borah



Sri Nobin Kond with Dr Sarvapalli Radhakrishnan

National levels, earning numerous accolades. The popular Nagadhoolie Jhumur Dance Group too, has won several awards in competitions in the area.

The majority of the workers in this estate are Hindus with a lesser populace of Christians. There is a beautiful Shiv temple where Shiv Ratri is celebrated on a large scale each year. There is also a Shankari Naamghar, where religious rituals are performed regularly. These occasions are well attended by the executives, staff and workers along with their families. There are three churches, one in each Division, for the benefit of the Christian community.



The Mariani Planters' Club overlooking the Bhogdoi River, is located in Hunwal T.E. Established in the year 1880, it was initially housed in the Mariani railway colony. It was only in 1959 that the club was relocated to its present site, under the aegis of Mr A.T.A. McIntosh Smith. Having all amenities, such as tennis courts, a squash court, swimming pool, table tennis board and an old, well maintained billiards table, it has membership of executives from thirteen estates. The bar has an old world charm with its wooden floor and panelling. In the olden days, the club was the only place where the planters would get together to enjoy their sports and a tippie after a hard day's work, as well as escape from loneliness.



The Mariani Planters' Club

The Machaan



'The Machaan' is an ideal retreat for the executives of the garden, their families and friends. This two storeyed bamboo structure standing on stilts, is picturesquely located between two large ponds stocked with several varieties of carp and local fish, and surrounded by beautiful lofty trees. Initiated in 2008 by Mr R.K. Baruah, the Manager then, it was later completed by Mr S. Batra during his tenure. Lazy Sundays, especially in winter, with a catch of fresh fish, has been the preferred activity for all who have been posted there.

The Burra Bungalow was built in 1928, with a brass



Burra Bungalow

plaque on the verandah wall testifying to it. Close by stands an enormous rain tree with a huge canopy – a stunning feature, adding to the overall beauty of the place. This old structure was built keeping the hot and humid climate of Assam in mind.

Visitors



Over the years Hunwal has had many important visitors such as: the Governor of Assam – His Excellency Sri Prakash Mehrotra on 8 August 1983; Mr D.M. Jayaratne – Honourable Minister of Plantations, Sri Lanka, along with his wife and other dignitaries in 2007; Honourable Union Minister of State, Commerce & Industry – Sri Jyotiraditya Madhavrao Scindia in September 2009.

Hunwal T.E. has been the proud recipient of the Company's Overall Performance Award in the years 2008 – 2009 and 2013 – 2014. With such dedication and pride of the entire work force towards the garden, may that rich cup of tea always delight the senses.



The Team

Standing (L to R): K.S. Ranawat, R. Dutt, D. J. Baruah & S. Das

Seated (L to R): A. Negi, A. Wats, (Superintendent), Dr S. C. Gogoi & S. Bhadury (DM Systems)



A Rose by any Other Name...

~ Rangoli Wats
Hunwal T.E.

Roses have always fascinated me but not being endowed with the proverbial “green fingers” I initially hesitated to take on this exotic flower. Roses were not easily available and thinking that it would be all too complicated and way beyond the capabilities of my ‘malis’ and me, I had resigned myself to admiring them in someone else’s garden or in the shops.

It was only in 2004 while at Margherita T. E. that I felt brave enough to try, encouraged by my dear friend, Junu Borkotoky. I bought ten plants from Tezpur and Tinsukia, and started...

Luckily, my first attempt was a great success and since then I have planted roses in Baghjan, Paneery and now at Hunwal. They have given me great pleasure so I would like to share a few tips on growing this fascinating flower.

The best place:

1. A well drained spot where the plants will get at least four to six hours of sunlight.
2. No roses should have been planted there for around ten years.

The right time:

From end-October to mid-December or February to March

The right method:

a) Soil preparation:

1. Pits should be dug 2 ft wide and as deep, with straight sides, at a distance of 2 to 3 ft apart.
2. A 3 inch layer of rubble at the bottom of the pit will help drainage.
3. Fill $\frac{3}{4}$ of the pit with well rotted cattle manure, leaf compost and soil well-mixed with a handful of powdered lime (chuna).
4. The soil used to finally fix the plant in place should not contain any cow manure, but be a mixture of soil, leaf mould and a tablespoon of bone meal.

b) Planting:

1. Cut off any unwanted suckers below the grafting joint, and any dead twigs.
2. Do not remove the ball of earth around the root of the young plants. Soak the plants in a bucket of water for an hour so that some of the soil may come off without damage to the roots when planting. If the plants are in polythene sleeves, the roots must be watered before planting too.
3. Make sure the lateral root is $2\frac{1}{2}$ to 3 inches below ground level.
4. The grafting joint should be at least $1\frac{1}{2}$ inches above the soil so as to keep it free of unwanted suckers.
5. Keep a slight mound of earth over which the roots are spread.
6. Fill the prepared soil around the plant carefully, then firm up the area, especially around the collar of the plant. Stake it, if necessary.

c) After care:

1. The newly planted roses need shelter from sunlight, but dew is beneficial to them.
2. The soil around the base of the plant should be weed-free but avoid disturbing the roots.
3. The soil should be reasonably moist. Avoid over-watering, watering the leaves or watering in strong sunlight.
4. An antifungal spray must be used in case of rain or (God forbid!) hail.
5. The plants do not bloom much during the first six months but if they do, cut any blooms above the second five-leaf branch let or above the next outward facing eye.



d) Pruning:

This must always be undertaken from mid-October to mid-November no matter how old the plants are. Opinions differ on pruning of roses. I follow what some would call a rather “drastic” but successful method. I do it personally, with the help of a ‘mali’ to hold the pruned branches away so as to avoid looking like a wounded soldier by the end of the day!

- 1) Pruning is best done early in the day, using a sharp pruning knife or scissors for the cleanest cut. Long sleeved garments and gloves help a lot!
- 2) Cut with an outward slant above the third outward facing dormant bud or eye, counting from the base of the plant. In this way you should be left with two to four branches after pruning.
- 3) Work your way around the plant so all the cuts are outward facing. Remove any dead wood near the base of older bushes.
- 4) “Wintering” (the “drastic” step): Once the bushes are pruned, on the very same day I remove (by hand) between 4 to 6 inches of soil in a circle, 6 inches from the base of the plant, to expose the roots. The plant is then left without watering for 5 to 7 days or until there are signs of new growth on the pruned stems.
- 5) The waiting period may be used to prepare soil which will be used to refill the circular trench around each plant: 2 parts fresh soil, 1 part leaf compost and 1 part dry cattle manure, well mixed. The refilling must be done only after the signs of new growth appear so you may need to do it on different days for different bushes.

6) Water well.

7) Please note that roses planted between October and December will only be pruned the following year; whereas those that are planted between February and March will be pruned the next calendar year.

Important points to remember with regard to growing roses:

- a) Choose plants which are healthy, and have a bud or label to know the colour of the flower. The bud can be removed at the time of planting.
- b) Avoid wetting the foliage and over-watering. During the monsoons, see that no water accumulates around the base of the plants.
- c) Roses benefit from liquid cattle manure. This can be given prior to watering once in 10 days.
- d) Cut the blooms when they flower as this encourages the plant to produce more blooms. I make sure to cut blooms on a daily basis as soon as they open. Wilted flowers must be cut off.
- e) The smaller varieties of roses like Polyantha and Dwarf or Miniature roses do well in large pots and do not need much pruning.
- f) Bone meal is very useful to roses.

I hope this information will be useful to anyone who is as fond of roses as I am. It is not really difficult, so for those of you who are hesitating, I will say, “Go ahead and try, because if I can, then so can you!”



Supplier of the Year Award: Gisovu T.E.

The Jubilant Gisovu Team



~ Surender Jhijaria
Gisovu T.E.

The news came in the form of a pleasant email. Gisovu had been awarded the 2015 Taylors of Harrogate 'Supplier of the Year' Award. This prestigious award is in recognition of the tireless efforts and hard work by the entire Gisovu team especially our Tea makers, the logistics team, Field staff and most importantly our Coothegim farmers who supply our fine green leaf. Taylors established the award five years ago and chooses their winner after a stringent selection process, based on an eight-point criteria list – Quality within Origin, Consistency, Service, Social and Environmental work, Food Safety, Quantity purchased, Communication and Personal service over and above the norm.

The three-day Supplier of the Year event was held in Harrogate where we experienced the famous Yorkshire hospitality, were introduced to various aspects of their tea, coffee and bakery operations, culminating in the presentation ceremony in Harrogate on 9 September 2015. The event provided a great opportunity for us to interact with the coffee supplier winners and people from various parts of the Taylors operations that we normally do not get to meet.

The presentation made by me on behalf of the Company was different from the typical corporate presentations that tend to focus on resource utilisation, streamlining of manufacturing process, industrial and



field output etc. We focussed instead on the human aspect of the industry and its socio-economic impact on the people in the community. The presentation was well received by the delegates who appreciated the work that goes on in a remote estate in Africa to produce the

famous Gisovu tea.

Though we were always aware of and confident about our quality, seeing Gisovu Tea being recognised as a fine tea by our customers filled us with a sense of pride. I would like to share a couple of experiences...

On our first day in Harrogate I had gone to Bettys Café Tea Rooms with a colleague and asked the waitress to kindly recommend a tea. Without any hesitation, she pointed to the menu and remarked, "My favourite is the single estate Gisovu!" The words on the menu say it all.

"We have been buying teas from this lovely tea garden for over 35 years. Deliciously crisp and refreshing with a rich golden colour, this really is one of the world's finest black teas."

On another occasion while visiting Bettys in York, I came across a gentleman buying Gisovu tea and when asked why he was buying this particular tea, his prompt



Tea Supplier of the Year Award



Quality is a journey and not a destination and we look forward to taking our relationship with Taylors from strength to strength.

"... a rich infusion of the sweet aroma of the African soil and the rich taste of its culture which you can feel in every golden drop, savouring the very essence of the spirit of Gisovu..."

Bettys Menu



response was, "This is the best tea one can drink in York." Nothing can be more rewarding and reassuring than the words of a satisfied customer and it was indeed an indescribable moment to see our tea make the journey from thousands of miles away and find pride of place at Bettys, one of the most famous Tea Rooms in the United Kingdom.



Gisovu Tea at Bettys



GAUTAM BHUYAN

– a profile

~ Natalie Mookerji
HO Kolkata



Gautam with Aman & Mandira

Introducing Gautam Bhuyan – one of MRIL's many versatile personalities.

Gautam's love for the great outdoors manifests in his unrelenting passion for long distance driving. Along with his wife, Mandira, and son, Aman, he has done some incredible distances: Guwahati – Tawang in 2000; Guwahati – Kolkata in 2004; Kolkata – Darjeeling in 2010; Kolkata – Siliguri in 2012; Guwahati – Mawlynnong (Asia's cleanest village) in 2013; Kolkata – New Delhi (Via Benaras & Kanpur) in 2014; and is now planning to do Kolkata – Ladakh and Kolkata – Puducherry. His first long drive was from Guwahati to Kathmandu and Pokhra in 1999.

His next passion is music – he immerses himself in the rhythm and vibes of Classic Rock bands of the 70s and

80s, his favourites being Dire Straits, Santana, CCR, Deep Purple and Scorpions among others.

Gautam is a fan of Blues legends like B.B. King and guitarists like Joe Satriani, Jeff Beck, Steve Vai and street guitarist Damien Salazar. Gautam himself is a rhythm guitarist, very much at home with a 12-string guitar and likes to play instrumental numbers on the keyboard.

Among Indian instruments, he has attended tabla classes for more than five years.



Road Trip – Chennai to Puducherry



In Action!



Ferraby Cup



Vodka Collection



Culinary Delights!



Sharp Shooter!



Festival Beats!



Play on...

Gautam is an excellent DJ who can give the professionals a run for their money! In music parlance, he has left a lasting impression in the minds of people when he played at several resorts and touched the hearts of many at the farewell party held at Bishnauth Gymkhana Club, Assam, in December 2013.

He enjoys listening to music on vinyl and his collection of various genres is immense.

He takes great interest in the latest gadgets and technology too.

A born F&B maestro, his bar holds an enviable collection of fine vodkas from around the world, like

Boker, Puriste, U'luvka, Stolichnaya Elit and many more. He reminds one of Tom Cruise in the movie 'Cocktail' when he concocts his favourite cocktails like Flaming B52, LIIT, Mojitos and Daiquiris.

The chef in him surfaces at family functions and on weekends when he thrills friends and family alike with his cooking – bringing forth mouth-watering treats including delicious momos and authentic Assamese dishes. He keenly follows the Masterchef Australia series on television.

Fast-tracking to the Great Outdoors, Gautam excels in sports like badminton (he was once a District Champion) and cricket (he played in the 5-a-side Merchants Cup league from 2004 to 2011). He was a member of the champion team in the local inter-company basketball tournament held at the Rangers Club, and also of the participating team in the Merchants Cup Soccer tournaments from 2005 to 2009.



The Winning Smile

His first major win in golf was the Best Gross at the Taj Mahal Ferraby Cup on 22 January 2011, when he replaced Mr Aditya Khaitan who was unable to play in the tournament that year. Gautam, playing by default as it were, ultimately went on to win the coveted Cup! "It was possible for me to win only because Mr Khaitan didn't participate!" says Gautam with a smile.

Gautam hit a hole-in-one on the 6th hole at the Tollygunge golf course on 11 October 2009 and also won the Best Gross in Div II at the Merchants Cup the same year. He hit the longest drive in the Merchants Cup tournament of 2011. He even managed to get his handicap down to 7 at one point of time!



Corporate Treasure Hunt

He was the Coordinator of The WM Times from the onset of the first issue in January 2008 till the January 2014 special issue which featured Mr B. M. Khaitan's fifty years as Chairman of the Williamson Magor Group. Gautam also worked on the MRIL Coffee Table Book.

He now delves with ease into the world of indoor games like darts – playing in Quatro during lunch breaks. He recently participated in the State Darts Open Championship.

He continues his tryst with the outdoors in the latest adventure sport – the Corporate Treasure Hunt – which involves planned driving following clues along the way with colleagues till one finds the hidden treasure. Several corporate houses participate and Gautam enjoys the fun and excitement of being part of this event.

We wish him great success in his penchant for adventure and hope he explores his inherent talents further...



The WM Times



~ Simanta Bordoloi
Dirai T. E.

The Moran Polo & Gymkhana Club



The Moran Polo & Gymkhana Club (MPGC) has been known as one of the most active and eventful planters' clubs in Assam. In 1905, some British planters and passionate polo players started using the grounds to play this game. The stable housing the thoroughbreds was located at Sepon, adjacent to the main entrance gate, but has since been converted into servants' quarters. In 1911, MPGC was formally established in a small building, which is now used for pool and gym purposes, next to the newly constructed existing club building. The land belongs to Moran T.E. under Sivasagar

district and is about sixty kilometres away from Dibrugarh town. Though in recent times it is facing a lot of problems in terms of encroachment, it still has all the amenities such as tennis courts, football ground, cricket ground, pool table, gym, outdoor badminton court, fire place, a well stocked library and of course the very popular covered swimming pool. At present the club has a total of 85 members from 17 estates of Moran circle.



The club compound is located on a 6.66 hectare plot after 2.66 hectares were surrendered earlier in deference to the Land Ceiling Act. The old building was renovated in the year 2001, as on 21 June of the same year, a dozen surrendered militants were shot dead in cold blood by unidentified assailants inside the club premises. The entire club building including the bar was damaged by bullets. In 2011, the bar was renovated to its present form when Mr P.S. Dowerah and Mr F.P. Ansari were the President and Honorary Secretary of the club respectively.



The Thowra golf course under MPGC is situated in the midst of Thowra T.E. This 5836 yard 18-hole course, having



Thowra Golf Course

its share of 2-par-3 and 1-par-5 holes, is basically a flat course, made artificially difficult with bunkers and 'hullas' in practically every hole.

The most challenging hole however, is the short 269-yard 4-par 4th hole where a massive 'peepal' tree stands directly in the path of the tee off. Golfers confronted with this obstacle at the tee have hesitated to take a decision – whether to go over, through or under it, usually resulting in messing up their shot. Unfortunately, not much is known about the history of this course. Apart from the usual in-house tournaments, Thowra holds three important PAF fixture tournaments every year, namely the IDB, Captain's Prize and the Annual Meet tournaments.

In addition to sports, the members always look forward to occasions like Bihu Nite, Swimming Gala, Men's Nite, Diwali Nite, Children's Christmas Party, Barbeque Night and Holi, apart from the other annual events such as New Year's Eve, Flower Show, Annual General Meeting and the Annual Club Meet. The Mid-Rains Dance is the much awaited event of Moran club, with each year witnessing an increase in the number of revellers! No club event is ever appreciated without one's palate being well taken care of. In this sensitive area, Moran Polo Club scores high with its outstanding catering standards, taken care of by the talented ladies.

The Club Centenary was celebrated in December 2012 with great enthusiasm. All the companies contributed funds to make it a grand success. Around 300 guests were hosted during the event, who participated in the celebrations. The main attractions were golf, tennis, pool-side lunch and a DJ night. Apart from these activities, souvenirs such as tee-shirts and silk scarves with the MPGC logo were released among the members and the guests. A competition was

organized to finalize the design of the logo and the one created by Mrs Rhinusmita Lahkar, wife of Mr Sanjib Lahkar, was selected.

In the year 2013, on one occasion the Chief Ministers of three north-eastern states – Assam, Nagaland and Arunachal Pradesh – happened to land in their respective helicopters at the club. They were very impressed by the graciousness of the hosts, the facilities provided by the club, as well as its decor. Moreover, Mr J.B. Patnaik, ex-Governor of Assam, always made it a point to drop in for a cup of tea whenever he travelled by road to Upper Assam.

Over the years, MPGC has seen many stalwarts of Tea come and go, each leaving his mark in the history of the Club. The founder of Moran Blind School, Late Bruno Banerjee, father of Mr Victor Banerjee, was a dynamic member. And with each new generation who steps into its hallowed portals, the stories are carried forward, with many more added to the rich legacy that is MPGC.



Members of the club who answered the call of their country during World War I (1914-18): Capt B.M. Rooney, Capt D.C Crole, Capt Edward Lee & Lt C. L. Nesurier.

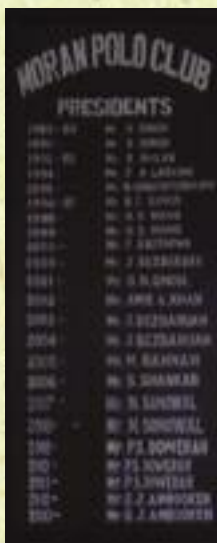
World War II (1939-45): Capt S.S. Haire, Capt R. Ball (MC), Capt G. Featherstone & Lt G. Jackson.



Football Team 1964:

Standing (L to R): L.C. Hazarika (Referee), S.K. Bakshi (Dirai), Dewan Mehra, Chatrath, N.B. Singh (Thowra), Chris Morris (Dekhari), Sohan Singh (Moran), Hardev Singh (Dekhari), S.N. Khonnika (Teloijan)

Seated (L to R): Gilchrist (Bamunbarrie), Peter Clayton (Doomur Dulling), Julian Francis (Khowang), Bruno Banerjee (Captain) (Teloijan), Ray Town (Moran), Shekarwat (Khowang)



Custodians of the Club: (L to R): Smti Meghdoli Topno (since the 1960s), Sri S.R. Chakraborty (Club Babu), Sri Gonesh Mahali & Sri Sarban Topno (Bearers)



HOME LEAVE 1970



~ Phil Bayley
UK



In 1970 the Company agreed to give me Home Leave of four months from early September, and this tallied with our intention of sending our elder son to his Preparatory school, Salisbury Cathedral School, in UK, as a boarder. This necessitated taking enough clothes for (maybe) a hot English summer and the bitter cold of an English winter. It was this fact regarding the weather which suggested to us that we make use of an old trunk in which the extra quantity of clothes could easily be fitted.

When it was time to leave for the airport we decided to make use of the jeep and trailer for the trunk, as there were too many of us in our car. It was now August and the monsoon rains were incessant so I arranged for a 'mistri' to bore holes in the bottom of the trailer so that any rainwater could easily drain away. Unfortunately, I did not supervise Kantoo, our jeep driver, as he loaded the trunk into the trailer. Although a tarpaulin was sensibly placed over the trunk, he thought the trunk needed cushioning at the bottom and placed another tarpaulin under the trunk thus covering the holes.

The distance to Tezpur airport is about 52 miles and we had monsoon rain all the way there. This airport was an Indian

Tezpur Airport (circa 1980)



Air Force base and Indian Airlines used an old building with open sides, a tin roof and a raised concrete floor. When we got the luggage

out of the jeep trailer we were shocked to find that the trunk had doubled in weight and all the clothes were soaking wet! As we had arrived at the airport early and the plane was delayed, we decided to squeeze out as much water as possible and Indian Airlines allowed us to drape as many items as possible around the airport with the hope that we could dry them as much as possible. As foreigners in a restricted territory we had permits to live in Assam and, after checking our credentials, we were helped a lot by the police contingent, especially the Assamese policewomen, who were of great help.

When the plane eventually landed we hurriedly packed the trunk which was still overweight but, fortunately, Indian Airlines did not charge us for excess baggage. Jennifer and the boys flew via Gauhati to Calcutta. Dum Dum was in its usual chaotic state so it was very pleasing to have WM's travel agent available to arrange meal vouchers and attend to the luggage before the BOAC flight to UK that evening. Arriving in UK the family moved to Jennifer's parents' house. On opening the children's trunk the clothes were all found to be very damp and stinking!

The washing machine was put to good use !



Tezpur Airport (circa 1950)



The 'Hakuna Matata' of Tea

— Bisswadip Banerjee
Bogapani T. E.

A couple of months back, a fresh Management Trainee joined our estate. After his first introduction to our office staff in the morning, he asked me, “Sir, what is kamjari?” and I thought to myself, “Welcome, lad, to Planet Tea.” The most important word, KAMJARI, without which a tea estate is non-functional and we planters would be at a total loss; it’s the ‘hakuna matata’ for us as in the jungle of the Lion King. It is the most important word for everyone working in an estate and is more valued than all the space scientists of NASA working together!

The morning office starts with the sentence, “Kamjari kaha hain?” The day then commences with this spark of the ignition and we start our engines and run a cross country race till we drop down exhausted in the evening! It is a never ending word because as you finish one, the other pops out like toast from a toaster.

As we planters start our day, the office, headed by the captain of the ship, Burra Sahab, leads the discussion and then the magical word pops out and all decisions are taken. If the Captain is in a bad mood and with a hangover from the night before, then objects are seen flying and Assistants turn into gladiators, not to attack, but to save themselves from the missiles! I have heard of certain incidents when Assistants even perform puja just to ensure they do not encounter a disastrous day!

However, on good days the hours pass smoothly by with a lot of laughter and good companionship.

I joined Tea in the Dooars. After a week of working there, I found a leopard cub in the garden and happily kept it in my bungalow. Another week passed and I was summoned to the office by Burra Sahab. As soon as I entered, I was told in no uncertain terms, “You are no Jim Corbett here. Your work is not to keep cubs, so hand it over to the forest guys.” I had no option but to follow his orders pronto!

Then I was transferred to Assam and kamjari here was a frightful scene. I had just done five months in Tea so witnessing the books lined up on the Burra Sahab’s desk flying helter-skelter when the Assistants or the staff committed any mistakes, rather overwhelmed me. I used to think all these dramatics were rather over-the-top for the little word ‘Kamjari’, which means daily allocation of work.

Years went by and I worked with different Burra Sahabs; each one had his own way of dealing with kamjari... some aggressive and some polite, but eventually all kamjaris were carried out, come hell or high water.

Kamjari for an Assistant is not only to look after his Division but also do kamjari in the bungalows, such as procuring cigarettes or arranging for a quick drink for colleagues at any odd hour. Even arranging a picnic

becomes a kamjari. And if you are the Factory Assistant and you slipped up on sending the plumber or the electrician to the Burra Bungalow, then even a “sorry” would be of little help! One of my Burra Sahabs told me when I came to the estate that he wanted everything done ‘in style’, work in style and party in style. However the Assistants are yet to figure out that mantra of Style and are still striving hard to achieve that Goal! Kamjari does not end with Captains only but it goes down till the grassroots of Somra and Mangra too, to see how many hours of work they have put in and how much work they have completed.

Now with the introduction of new systems we try to become tech savvy but here also we falter and try and send corrigendum almost on a regular basis... not to forget, this is also a part of Kamjari.

We planters are truly ‘Jacks of all trades’ while still trying to be Masters of it all! We do all possible work – be it mechanical, electrical and electronics – sometimes without being qualified; yet, at the end of the day, we carry out all our kamjaris in a befitting manner for the interest of the estate and also for the Company.





~ Nav R. Thapa
Chuapara T.E.

‘Junglee Howdah’ at Chuapara

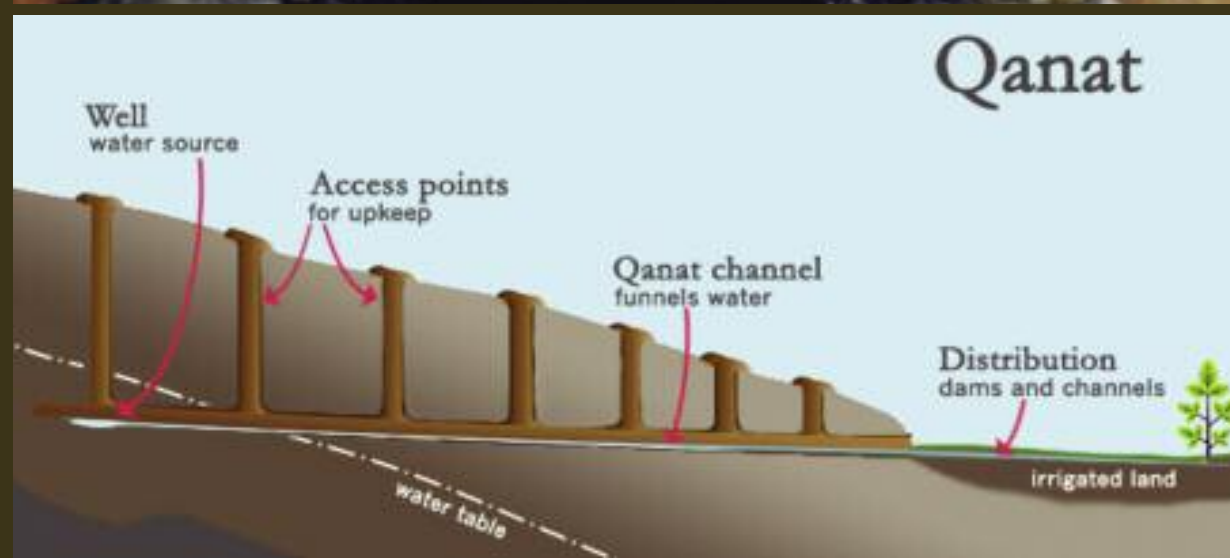
Visitors to the tea gardens are often awestruck by the architectural splendour of Tea bungalows and clubs as well as simplistic yet effective engineering feats in the factory and other constructions.

Keeping in mind that these wonders were achieved in remote areas in an era when road connections were few and far between, one is left wondering what the moving force behind these marvels was.

One might be familiar with the terms ‘Jugar’ and ‘Bandobast’, often used in the plantations of Assam and Bengal. Both essentially mean getting the work done within the constraints for the best, most effective result. However, behind this simple definition is the symbol of the planters’ indomitable grit, determination and ‘gung ho’ spirit in the face of adversity.

One amazing example of this spirit is the Junglee Howdah at Chuapara T.E. Built in the early 1900s during the tenure of Mr Hughes, the Junglee Howdah used to supply water to Chuapara and two other adjoining estates – Mechpara and Bhatpara. In fact, as late as 1989-90, it was functional and catered to the substantial requirement of Chuapara T.E.

According to Mr R.K.Ghosh, eminent water expert, the Junglee Howdah was built in the pattern of Qanats which was based on ancient hydro-technology developed in Persia (modern Iran) during the 7th century BC. He further confirms that the plan and layout of the Junglee Howdah is an exact replica of the Qanats. It is believed that the Howdah was built by Muslim artisans, which perhaps



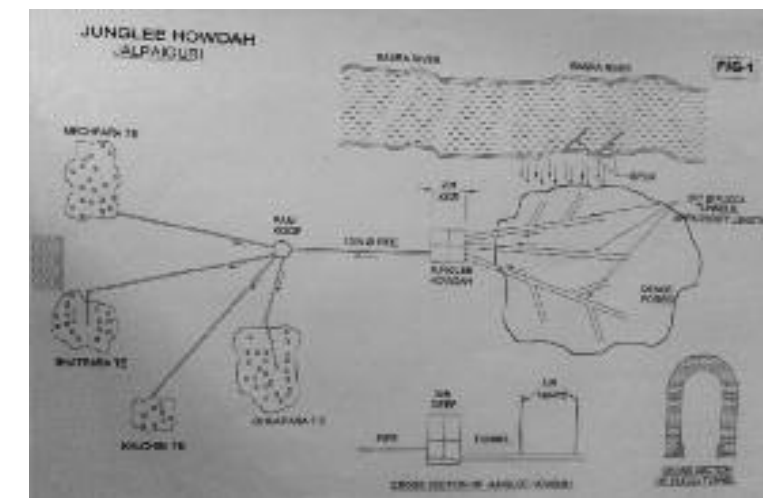
explains the sudden influx of Muslim families in Kalchini block during 1930-1931, as per census records.

Qanats or underground canals are one of the most ingenious ancient hydro-technologies developed in Persia to tap sub-surface seepage water mainly on mountainous slopes and let it flow through the pull of gravity to the fields and settlements. This technique was mostly used by farmers in ancient Persia for irrigation in vast tracks of farm lands. It is believed that Qanats are still in use in several countries stretching from China to Morocco and have been in use in India since 300 BC, in places like Gulbarga, Bidar and Burhanpur.

The Junglee Howdah is an imposing Masonic structure measuring 15ft x 15ft and 30ft in depth. Upon closer inspection one will find an amazing arrangement of three semi-circular tunnels about 10ft in diameter, each lined with bricks. Those tunnels run up to 600ft in length. Seepage sub-surface water from the surrounding forest would be tapped by these tunnels and accumulate at the bottom of the Howdah. The water would move to the main reservoir (Pani Koop) through two 12 inch pipes by the force of gravity, from where it would be distributed to Chuapara, Mechpara and Bhatpara – again through gravitational force. However, with the advent of deep tube well technology and the parting of Mechpara and Bhatpara from the Company’s fold, the supply was confined to Chuapara T.E.

It is unfortunate that this relic has not been functional since 1989-90. Massive deforestation in the surrounding areas has robbed its seepage water potential. Also, with increasing lawlessness in the locality, there were instances of dead bodies being dumped there, and to deter people from drinking the contaminated water, the perpetrators spread rumours among the workers that the water caused gout. All these factors led to its closure.

However, Mr R.K. Ghosh is of the opinion that with some innovative restructuring it can be revived and possibly yield around 22,000 gallons of water per hour. So, we are ready for a new ‘avatar’ of our ‘Jugar/Bandobast’ tradition to make this heritage site work again!



It's a Wild World

Rescuing Rupa

~ Tanuka Mitra
Attabarrie T.E.



It was roughly around ten years back that my husband was posted at Rupajuli T.E. near Tezpur... a four-year stay and one of our most memorable postings. I came into close contact with wildlife here, with each day unfolding exciting new experiences! Encounters with elephants were a regular feature and everyone had a story to relate by the end of the day. There were leopards, wild hares and jackals too in the garden! But the elephant herds accompanied by their calves created havoc at night, breaking labour quarters, eating paddy in the nearby fields, injuring villagers etc. They returned to the nearby jungles in the morning, but some stayed on at times, causing immense problems to the garden workers.

Fights between bull elephants were a common feature... a scary sight indeed! They would also invade the bungalows and destroy the vegetable garden, fruit trees, flower beds and pots too. Every evening the workers got ready with 'mashaals' (torches) and drums to scare the elephants away!



One early October morning, the maid came and told me that a new born baby elephant had been trapped in a 'nullah' (drain) in the garden. The mother had tried desperately to pull her out, but in vain. The herd stayed till the morning and left. The drain was deep and the little calf was stuck in an awkward position. Since the Section was near the bungalow, I decided to go and see the calf. I called up my husband, Shankar, at his office and asked him to take me along with him to the site.

Once we reached there, we saw that two workers had cut the drain from one end to broaden it, while constructing a raised platform with loosened soil at the other end. Shankar then went in on the other side and tried to push the calf forward, so that she could walk out from the broadened end. Since it had rained the night before and was still drizzling, the whole area was slippery, which was causing a lot of hindrance to the rescue operation. The calf also seemed injured as the tip of her trunk was bleeding slightly. She definitely had to be handled with care! Finally, the 'chowkidar' and Shankar tried



to lift her slightly – a difficult procedure, but they somehow managed to raise her on to a higher level. By then lots of children and garden workers had gathered around us. All the shouting and screaming made the calf nervous and she refused to get up further. After a lot of effort they finally managed to take her out of the drain.

I then noticed she was wobbly on her feet and could not stand straight. She kept falling down, but finally after an hour or so she started walking around, and we all heaved a sigh of relief! Slowly, we guided her and took her to our bungalow, which was close by. Once she was in the bungalow compound, she happily went around trumpeting every once in a while! With the help of the 'mali,' I gave her a bath and cleaned all the mud from her body. Now the big question was what to feed her. She looked hungry and tired. The Bearer cut a cycle tyre tube, cleaned it, and then poured water and milk through it, trying to feed her. But in vain! She refused to drink anything and just kept trumpeting.

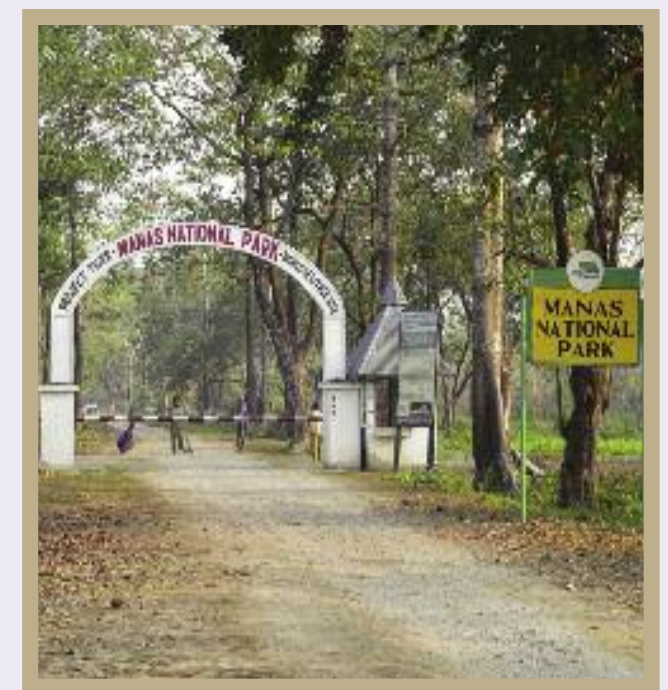
With some advice and contact numbers from Mrs Namita Ahmed at Phulbari T.E., Shankar contacted the Elephant Rescue Centre at Kaziranga National Park. The officials there agreed to come to the estate and take the calf. So, around 4pm the ambulance arrived, bearing two forest officials and a veterinary doctor from Kaziranga, armed with milk and a huge feeding bottle. What an amazing sight it was when the doctor put the bottle in her mouth, and she guzzled up the entire milk! He then checked her, diagnosing a navel infection and an injury to the tip of her trunk, due

to which she had fever and required immediate treatment.

We had to let her go reluctantly, but were happy that she was in safe hands. We kept in touch with the authorities and enquired about her health from time to time. She had to undergo an operation of the navel area as well as the tip of the trunk, and recovered completely.

A few years later when Shankar was posted at Dekorai T.E., we visited her at the Kaziranga Rescue Centre. She looked so happy and healthy in the company of other elephants! The officials were trying to rehabilitate all the elephants there into the wild, but it was not easy, as the elephants kept returning to the Rescue

Centre by the evening! Though she did not seem to recognise us fully, she was very friendly and we thoroughly enjoyed spending some time with her. The tip of her trunk was permanently damaged though – a handicap for an elephant. The officials told us that she would soon be shifted to Manas National Park, where she would be trained to carry tourists for safaris. With a heavy heart I left the Rescue Centre praying to God for her safety and good health. And yes, she was named Rupa by the veterinary doctor there, as she was rescued from Rupajuli!





~ Dr Jayanta Konwar
Daimukhia T.E.

Depression is a mood disorder that causes a feeling of sadness and loss of interest. This is a psychosomatic disorder. More than 90% of people have suffered from this problem once in their life.

There is no permanent cure for this problem whose causes may be physiological or pathological, such as:

DEPRESSION

- ☹ Lack of attention towards anybody – especially children and old people – may lead to Depression.
- ☹ Over-involvement with one's work may lead to Depression, because the person does not have free time to devote to himself and his family.
- ☹ On the other hand, too much free time, especially among housewives belonging to 'high society', can lead to Depression caused by the lack of meaningful activities.
- ☹ In an educated person, insecurity caused by unemployment may also cause Depression.
- ☹ Some chronic diseases like diabetes, hypertension and rheumatism, which don't have any permanent cure, may lead to Depression.
- ☹ Poverty and peer pressure in pursuing success may be another cause.
- ☹ Negligence could be a factor too.
- ☹ Hormonal influences during puberty and menopause may lead to Depression.

The cause for concern is the remedy or treatment. The following remedial measures may help:

- ☺ Alleviate the cause of Depression
- ☺ Get more involved or participate more in extra-curricular activities.

- ☺ Familiarize oneself with the disease.
- ☺ Meditate to calm the mind.
- ☺ If pathological, treat the cause of the disease.
- ☺ Be self-assured and confident in facing any situation.
- ☺ Live life to the fullest even with chronic diseases and their medicines.
- ☺ Keep oneself happy.
- ☺ Always be satisfied with what one has.
- ☺ Anti-stress, anti-anxiety or anti-depressant medication may help.
- ☺ It is the responsibility of the family/society not to isolate a depressed person.
- ☺ Love, affection and family bonding are the keys to cure Depression.

In the end, it is the mindset of the person concerned.

Be Agile, not Fragile. Live long.



Some more information from the Editors' Desk:
(Source: National Institutes of Health, USA)

Signs and symptoms include:

- ☹ Persistent sad, anxious, or "empty" feelings
- ☹ Feelings of hopelessness or pessimism
- ☹ Feelings of guilt, worthlessness, or helplessness
- ☹ Irritability, restlessness
- ☹ Loss of interest in activities or hobbies once pleasurable
- ☹ Fatigue and decreased energy
- ☹ Difficulty concentrating, remembering details, and making decisions
- ☹ Insomnia, early-morning wakefulness, or excessive sleeping
- ☹ Overeating, or appetite loss
- ☹ Thoughts of suicide, suicide attempts
- ☹ Aches or pains, headaches, cramps, or digestive problems that do not ease even with treatment.

To help your friend or relative

- ☹ Offer emotional support, understanding, patience, and encouragement.
- ☹ Talk to him or her, and listen carefully.
- ☹ Never dismiss feelings, but point out realities and offer hope.

- ☹ Never ignore comments about suicide, and report them to your friend/relative's therapist or doctor.
- ☹ Invite your friend/relative out for walks, outings and other activities. Keep trying if he or she declines, but don't push him or her to take on too much too soon.
- ☹ Provide assistance in getting to the doctor's appointments.
- ☹ Remind your friend/relative that with time and treatment, the depression will lift.

To help yourself

- ☹ Do not wait too long to get evaluated or treated. There is research showing the longer one waits, the greater the impairment can be down the road. Try to see a professional as soon as possible.
- ☹ Try to be active and exercise. Go to a movie, a ballgame, or another event or activity that you once enjoyed.
- ☹ Set realistic goals for yourself.
- ☹ Break up large tasks into small ones, set some priorities and do what you can as you can.
- ☹ Try to spend time with other people and confide in a trusted friend or relative. Try not to isolate yourself, and let others help you.
- ☹ Expect your mood to improve gradually, not immediately. Do not expect to suddenly "snap out of" your depression. Often during treatment for depression, sleep and appetite will begin to improve before your depressed mood lifts.
- ☹ Postpone important decisions, such as getting married or divorced or changing jobs, until you feel better. Discuss decisions with others who know you well and have a more objective view of your situation.
- ☹ Remember that positive thinking will replace negative thoughts as your depression responds to treatment.
- ☹ Continue to educate yourself about depression.

Depression is a serious medical illness; it is not something that you have made up in your head.

Requiem



SESHAN MAHADEVAN
1943 – 2015



KAUSHIK MITRA
1968 – 2015

“On life's journey faith is nourishment,
virtuous deeds are a shelter,
wisdom is the light by day and
right mindfulness is the protection by
night. If a man lives a pure life,
nothing can destroy him.”

~ *Gautama Buddha*



CAMARADERIE

Here in the gardens, where one's home is situated far away, nostalgia does set in, more so during festivals. However, the Tea family's bonding is such that homesickness is swept off, with celebrations of most major festivals at the clubs, where all members whole heartedly join in, regardless of caste, creed or religion! Maya Angelou rightly says, “I long, as does every human being, to be at home wherever I find myself” and we are lucky to have found our ‘home away from home’ here!

Each occasion involves intricate planning, with minute details being looked into, so that the event goes off without a hitch. Event Managers in cities would definitely get a run for their money, were they to compete with us in this field! The club sports a different look during each festival, as per the traditions involved. So, while a Deepawali celebration transforms it into a beautifully lit place, complete with ‘rangolis’, marigolds and warm colours, Bihu would see a totally different look by way of traditional Assamese

decorations adorning it and Christmas, yet another, with the décor pertaining to it, and so on. The ladies’ culinary skills are showcased each time, as they churn out dishes from all over India, befitting the occasion. And of course, each member takes immense pain to dress up for the occasion, with mommas tailoring special outfits for their little ones as well! Rituals too are followed as each festival is celebrated in its own unique way. The spirit of goodwill and harmony is the foundation behind all the celebrations.

At a time when there is discord among communities in various regions of the world, our little Tea community could well teach everybody a thing or two about Unity in Diversity. We are akin to a choir, where in different notes, we’re singing the same song “...One World, One Heart; Let’s get together and feel alright...” (Bob Marley)

Rupa Saikia

THE WM TIMES TEAM

Editor : Sarita Dasgupta
Assistant Editor : Rupa Saikia
Coordinator : Sunny Uthup

poSt
Script



The Song of the Purple Sunbird...
Hunwal T.G.



McLEOD RUSSEL
Believe in tea

Four Mangoe Lane, Surendra Mohan Ghosh Sarani, Kolkata - 700 001
Tel: +91 33 22101221, 22435393, Fax: +91 33 22488114
e-mail: administrator@wmg.co.in www.mcleodrussel.com