

A photograph of a tea plantation with rows of green tea bushes in the foreground and several tall, thin trees in the background. The scene is brightly lit, suggesting a sunny day.

# Scottish tea planters of the Indian Raj – 19<sup>th</sup> century

WALLACE FAMILY HISTORY

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# Assam Black tea

## from *Camellia sinensis* var *Assamica*

- ▶ 1823 the plant was discovered by Robert Bruce, Scottish Explorer who found the plant growing wild near Rangpur.
- ▶ A nobleman Maniram Dewan was reputed to have shown him the plant - a variety of tea brewed by Singpho people.
- ▶ Robert died in 1823 and his brother Charles employed by East India company had the seed analysed in Calcutta in 1831
- ▶ 1833 Britain lost monopoly of tea trade with China and George Gordon was sent to lead tea plantations in Assam
- ▶ Discovery enabled East India company to develop a trade in tea from India with commercial production about 1840

## **The tea industry**

1839 the first company for growing and making tea was set up in India at Chabua and indigenous Assam leaf were shipped to London.

Many Scots travelled to India to be part of this industry owning tea estates.

By 1862 the Assam tea industry comprised 160 gardens owned by 5 public companies and 57 private companies.

Early conditions were harsh with the opening up of the jungle 100 miles from Calcutta – tigers, leopards and wolves.

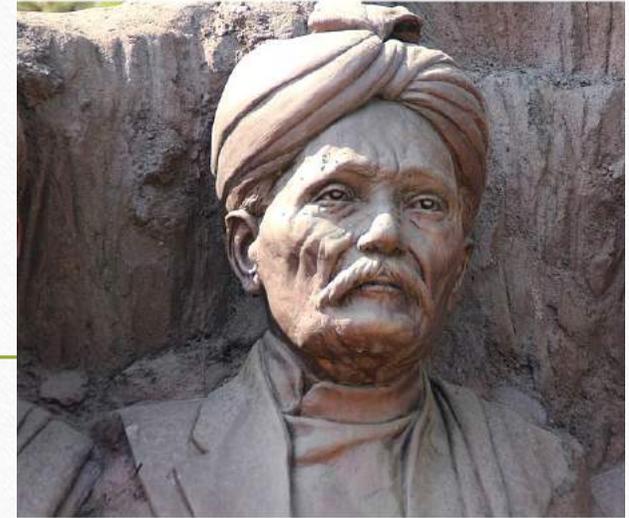
Foothills around Darjeeling were cultivated about mid 1850

Today India has 13000 tea gardens and 2 million workers.

Assam has over 100 tea estates , crops March to December – 400 million kilograms annually

# Maniram Dewan also known as Maniram Dulta Barma 1806 -1858

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Maniram Dewan, Freedom fighter memorial, Guwahati, Assam

- 1<sup>st</sup> tea planter with his own estate
- Hanged in February 1858 as a conspirator in the Seepoy riots 1857 against the British.

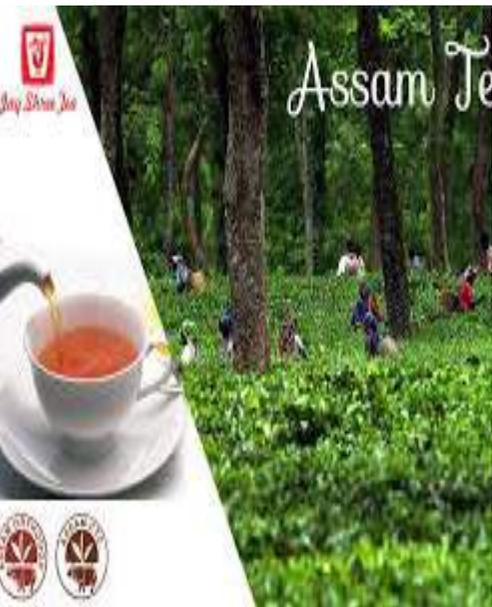
# Cultivation of tea – planting to auction



# India and tea growing areas



# The tea estates of Assam



- 765 tea estates and 100,000 small gardens
- 753 tea factories produce 570 million kgs, more than half of India's tea
- 13% of global tea production is from Assam



# Tea Exports - Summary to present day

- ▶ 1853 - 183.4 tons and by 1857 - to 70 acres under cultivation 1870 - 6700 tons 1885 - 35,274 tons
- ▶ In 2013 Assam has 304,400 hectares growing tea producing 570 million kilograms tea
- ▶ 2014 India exports 1,197.18 million kilograms tea from all districts
- ▶ 1/6 tea in the world comes from Assam from 1000 small and large tea plantations from 850 tea estates - Green leaves plucked Oct-Nov; cropping March to mid Dec

# Tea leaves ready for harvest

Tea Garden in Assam



# Conditions for growing tea

High humidity and heat – tropical climate

This gives Assam tea a malty taste ,

rich flavour and strong bright colour

Green and white tea are also produced

High precipitation – Assam borders Bangladesh and

Myanmar 70-300mm rain per day during monsoon

and 36 degrees.



# Chang Bungalows

## Sorting tea

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# The Wallace family

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George Wallace a coal mine manager 1768-1841

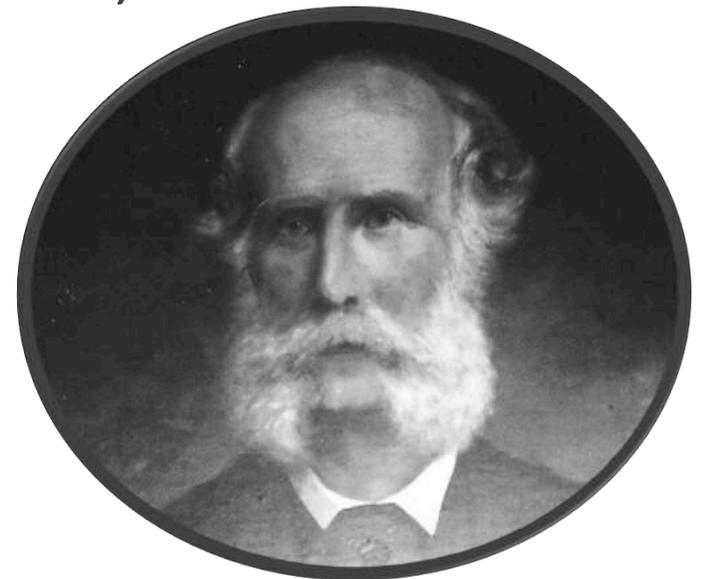
married 1796 in Markinch to Ann Seth 1777-1853

11 children- 4 survived Amelia 1798 \*John 1807, Isabella 1810 and  
\*George Johnston 1817

\* The future tea planters:

John Wallace 1777-1835

(brother of George)



# Newton Hall, Kennoway, home of the Wallaces — built by John Wallace, George's brother 1829

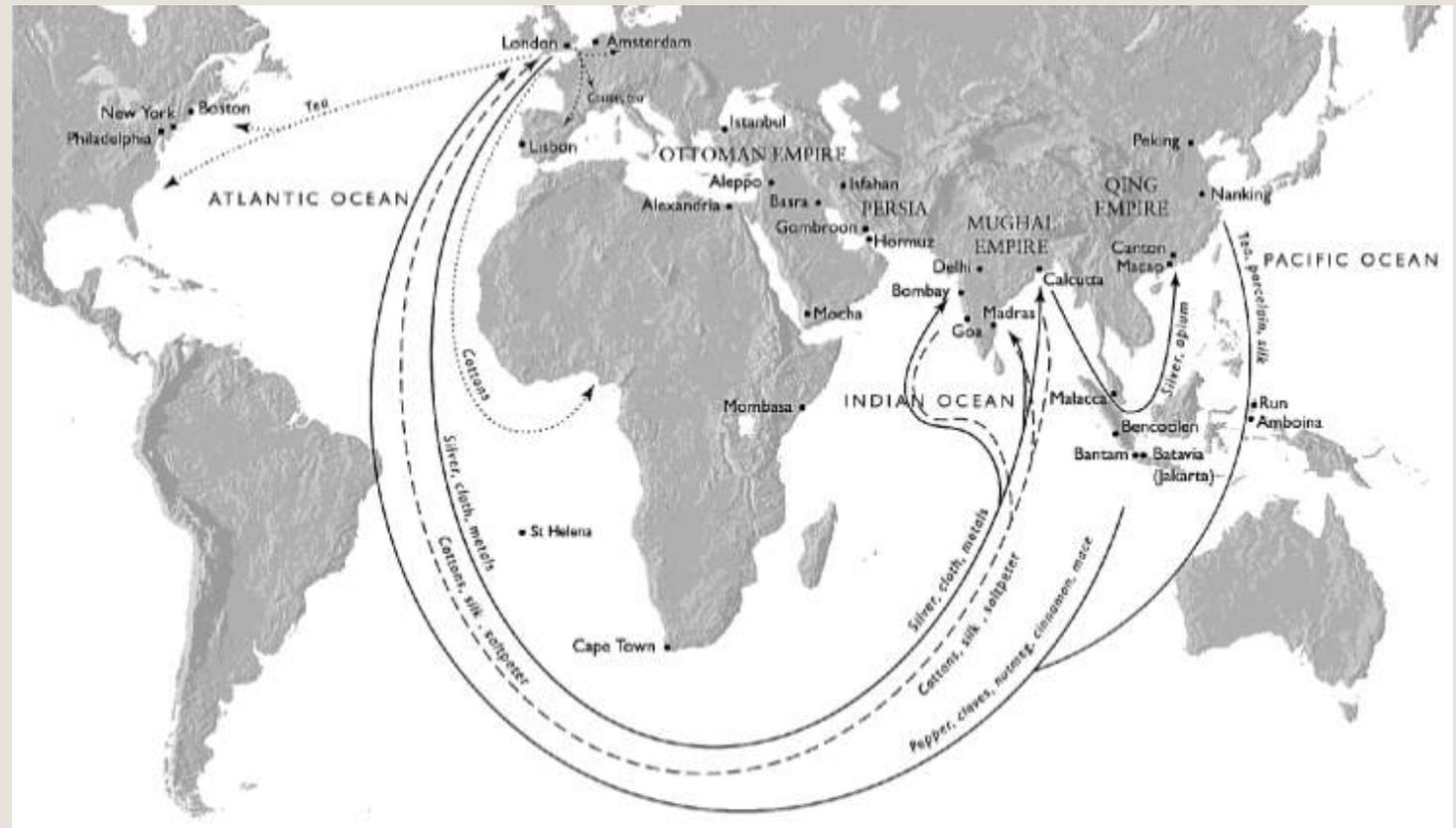
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Designed by David Bryce Scottish Architect (1803-1876)

John and George financed the building



# A 4 month journey on the East India Company ships London to Calcutta



# East Indian company and the tea estates

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John (27 years) went to India in 1834 met and married in St Johns Cathedral Calcutta to Priscilla Dyer (19 years)

Wallace tea plantation was established around 1839

Wild tea in Assam was crossed with Chinese plants and the first auction in London took place in 1839.



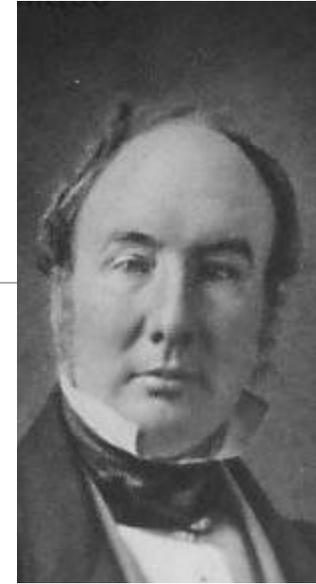
# Children of John and Priscilla

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William Leslie 1835, John 1836,

George 1837, Maria 1839

All born and baptised in Calcutta



The usual practice of British living in India at the time was to return their children back to Britain as it was considered healthier for them.

The family returned to Scotland/ four month Journey and dropped off the 4 children to Newton hall in Kennoway Fife. The first trip back!

The Kennoway primary school had 120 children in 1843 – maybe 4 Wallaces!

# Life at Newton Hall

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Ann the grandmother, single daughters Amelia and Isabella and servants were there to supervise the growing family. A real separation from their parents.

John and Priscilla returned to the Tea plantations.

Two more children **Adolphus 1841** and **Anne Amelia 1843** came back with their parents.

7<sup>th</sup> child **James Newton born 1845** was born at the hall.

Leaving 7 children with grandmother (64) Amelia (43) and Isabella (31) they returned to the tea plantations

During the Raj ( Hindu word for sovereignty) there were about 150,000 British people living in India

# MORE KIDS!

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**Forbes 1849** in Calcutta

**Margaret was born 1847** in Calcutta

Another trip back to Scotland - The parents again returned these 2.

However in 1853 the grandmother Ann died.

Later that year **Priscilla 1853** was born at the Hall when John and Priscilla were back in Scotland.

There are now **10 kids** looked after by John's sisters.

**1854** the parents John and Priscilla left again but tragedy struck. Priscilla died on the voyage back was buried at sea aged only 39. Note next slide.

John continued to the tea plantation just before the Sepoy riots.

# Entry in family bible written by John

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*19 September 1854*

*“ Priscilla Dyer my beloved wife departed this life at sea on board the ship Devonshire Latitude 34.17 and Longitude 3.12 . Her mission was to return to India but her strength failed . In her last moments she was happy at the thought of joining Mrs Pederson”*

*Mrs Pederson may have died earlier on the voyage.*

*The Dyer family were a well known family in north India in military circles but the connection with Priscilla is uncertain.*

# Sepoy Riots 1857 –1858

Rebellion began in Meerat north of Delhi.

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- 10 May 1857 to 1 Nov 1858 – one year 6 months
- The result was British victory and suppression of the revolt
- Formal end of Moghul Empire
- End of East India Company rule in India
- Transfer of rule of British crown and reorganisation of the army, financial systems and administration through Govt of India Act 1858
- India was therefore now administered directly by the British Government

# John Wallace was in India at the time of the Sepoy riots 1857- returned to Scotland in 1858

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His sister Isabella received a letter to say he was fine but in fact he was unwell with a disease of the large intestine and returned to Newton Hall in 1858. His sister Amelia died that year and John died in May 1859. That left John's sister Isabella aged 47 in sole charge.

*Anne aged 16 on January 5<sup>th</sup> 1859 had an illegitimate child Robert.*

Her brother William now aged 24 returned to India to the tea plantation and probably took the infant with him to prevent a scandal. William stayed in India and died there in 1879 aged 44.

The sons John and George also left  
the hall at this time but stayed in  
Kennoway

George died in 1863

John died in 1887



# 1871 census at Newton Hall – who is there?

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George J. aged 53 – now landowner , farmer had returned from India

Sister Isabella aged 61

Maria aged 31, Annie 28, Margaret 23, Priscilla 17 and Robert 12

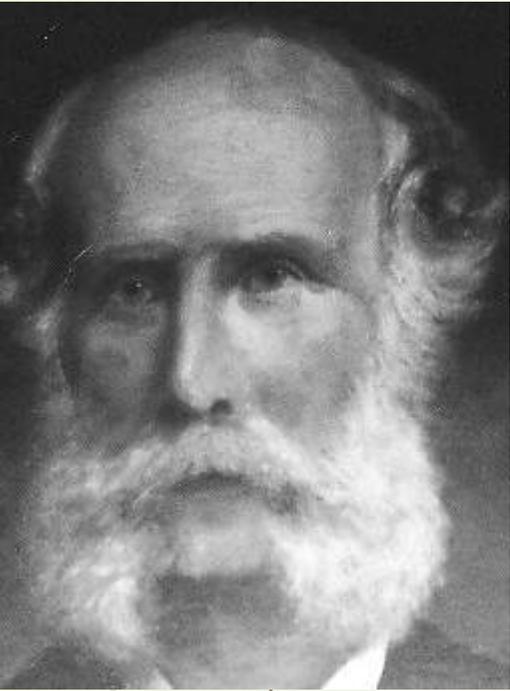
A cook, domestic servant aged 39 and housemaid aged 31 and a farm servant.

**Nephew Adolphus was now a tea planter at Ranga Jann Upper Assam**

And Forbes moved to Dunbar to farm but took up shares in that tea estate and the Kutthola Grant at Garackpore

*The heirs of John Wallace who died 1859 had 154 acres – lands and woodland at Newton Hall*





George Johnston Wallace owned Kutthola Grant 5300 imperial acres plus share in Gorunga Tea Estate near Golohat Town.

The 422.98 hectares produce 1.5 million kilograms tea .

George dealt with a firm in Calcutta now Gillanders Arbuthnot & Co Ltd originated in early part 19<sup>th</sup> century incorporated in 1935 part of Kothari group of companies in the 60s with head office in Kolkata

George died in 1895

Nephew Adolphus returned to Scotland

George Johnston Wallace died in 1895

# Escape of Maria Wallace with the village doctor Thomas Morris 1873

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Thomas was 41 and Maria aged 34 when he called to Newton Hall  
After marriage there they went to live at Sweet Bank Cottage in  
Penneway.

son John Wallace Morris ( my grandfather)

was born in 1874 and

daughter Maria Annie Priscilla Jane (Cissy) in 1880

1888 Thomas died suddenly aged 54

Maria  
Wallace



# 1891 Newton Hall

## Who is left there?

- George J. aged 73, nieces Annie aged 48 and Priscilla aged 37. (Margaret left to be with her brother Forbes in Dunbar)
- 2 domestic servants, gardener, ploughman and his wife
- George died 1895 leaving his tea estates, Calcutta coal shares and Hall to his nieces.
- In his will he thanked them for looking after him and provided for them so long as they did not get married!

# John Wallace Morris with his mother and sister contemplating his future 1892

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He was the last of the Wallaces to go to the tea plantations in India





John Wallace Morris son of Maria and Thomas Morris left Scotland in 1893 aged 19 on the “City of Bombay” from Liverpool to Calcutta.

2 years later he joined the Assam Light horse regiment which was formed in 1891 –part of cavalry reserve of British Indian army with headquarters in Dibrugarh.

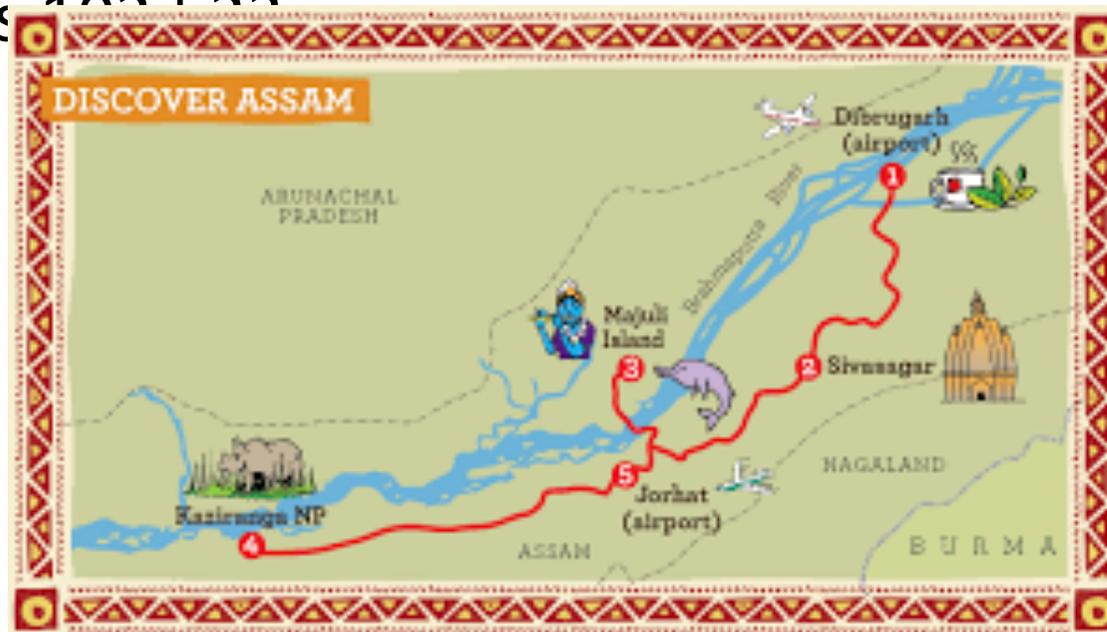
400 men fought as mounted infantry.

John lived at the Needham Tea Estate in Upper Assam where his mother Maria had shares.(She died 1905)

# DIBRUGARH

Head quarters of the District , a small town on the banks of the Brahmaputra River.

Gateway to 3 tea producing districts of Tinsula, Dibrugarh and Sibsagar – accounting for 50% of India's Assam tea crop. Oil and timber are the other 2 big industries – elevation 94 metres and in 2001 census population was 1,02,533



Marriage in 1907 at St Paul's Cathedral Calcutta

John Morris to Nora Munro – 6<sup>th</sup> child of 12 of James and Mary Jane Munro – born 1879 - Educated in India and not part of exodus of children to Scotland  
She was 28 and he was 33 years old

Their son Ken was born in Dibrugarh  
1908 and

my mother Enid born in Calcutta 1911  
Baptised in Kurseong  
(between Silguri and Darjeeling)



# Sealkhote Tea estate 1905

Sealkhote Tea Estate 1905



John Wallace Morris & Nora  
at their Chang bungalow & entry  
to estate – note Indian servants



## Indian National Movement 1905 to 1914

- \*Indian leaders became disillusioned with British Government
- October 1905 Bengal was partitioned by Curzon on basis of Hindus and Muslims and was regarded as an insult to Indian Nationalism
- \***John and Nora Morris with baby Ken went back to Scotland in 1910 – the last of the Wallace tea planters**
- \*BUT – disaster - as the 2 sisters, his aunts had lost the Hall and farm through mismanagement by a lawyer signing papers for free in 1903.
- \*The Morris family returned to India and gradually handed over tea plantation to Indian management and planned next move.



After India:

December 1912 The Morris family - John aged 38  
Nora aged 34, children Ken and Enid emigrated to  
the timber growing area south of Perth in Western  
Australia

The Wallace family connection – the Scottish tea  
planters in Assam India had come to an end.

# The Assam tea trade continues

- ▶ 1/6 world tea from that region
- ▶ 1000 small and large tea plantations and 850 tea estates.
- ▶ Type: English Breakfast
- ▶ Irish Breakfast
- ▶ Scottish Breakfast
- ▶ - good malty flavour, strong bright colour

## 2. ASSAM TEA

• Assam is a black tea named after the region of its production, Assam, in India.  
• Assam tea is manufactured specifically from the plant *Camellia sinensis var. assamica* (Masters). This tea, most of which is grown at or near sea level, is known for its body, briskness, malty flavor, and strong, bright color.  
• Assam teas, or blends containing Assam, are often sold as "breakfast" teas. English Breakfast tea, Irish Breakfast tea, and Scottish Breakfast Tea are common generic names.



ASSAM TEA LOGO

# Health benefits Assam tea

- Full of antioxidants
- Decrease risk of heart attacks and stroke
- Improve blood circulation
- **TASTE AND SMELL**
- Smell of freshly brewed aroma , malty , astringent and vigorous flavour.
- Summer harvest – fruity; Spring – flowery and sweeter



