

My Page

out new icons and watching word format changing on the PC screen. It was real magic at my fingertips. I never thought that I one day I would be doing all this just by my self.

The first blow came when Bandana left the district. It was now Loya and I, who devoted lot of time for the next issue. Loya started writing Editorials. We both share a very special bond that strengthened through The Camellia. Loya, more efficient but with less free time due to having small school going children, and I still a novice then, but with all the time in the world at my disposal, formed a team with a perfect understanding, which I would cherish lifelong. Now looking back I realize there is time for everything. It was to happen when the era of the Internet had dawned, making communication very fast and easy. The real blow came when Loya too left for Guwahati and I was left all by myself. Yet somehow never for a minute it occurred to me that The Camellia would phase out.

In the initial issues some of us used to write regularly, but it was not possible for the same people to continue and sustain readers' interest. We had to get more writers from Tea and this was the biggest challenge. Surprisingly it was much easier than we thought. I am still amazed how we managed that. Only thing I gave was a gentle push. As I told earlier I realized that in Tea each one has a story to tell but most of them needed assurance that they can put their experiences in words.

I had to convince them through my editorials, letters, and over many phone calls that write it 'as simply as you would narrate your story at a social gathering, with no frills and ornamentation. Thus our readers started to pen down and over a period of time.

Later the club correspondents kept increasing subscribers and on transfer took it with them to the new Tea district they moved to, With Anjali Behl it reached to the North Bank gardens, with Karobi Choudhury it reached Dooars, with Sarita Dasgupta to Bishnauth, who further introduced it to other District Tea Clubs Thakurbari through Namita Ahmed. It gives me such a wonderful feeling that today with the effort of Mridula Anand and her team it has traveled to far off lands on its journey ahead.

When you start a venture like The Camellia every step is a turning point but there were some major ones that made The Camellia gallop. Loya introduced me to Mr. Ali Zaman, a known Tea planter writer; I sent him an email requesting for his contribution and he very magnanimously obliged us. I wrote to some other Tea stalwarts, like Robin Borthakur, Narendra Bhagat, Arun kaul, Amir Khan and Noshir Jalnawala and they all responded with lot of encouragement and that brought a new quality to the magazine.

And then arrived a big turning point that became a new landmark. Mr. Ali Zaman introduced me to Mr. David Air of koi-hai web site, who put some of The Camellia content on his web site requesting for articles from this web site members including retired expatriates from Tea settled in UK, USA and Australia.

The Camellia had now crossed seas. Since then The Camellia has never looked back. Alan Lane took charge of the Overseas correspondent; a job he executed with remarkable dedication and sincerity.

By then we had formed a network of club correspondents and various sections incharge, who were enthusiastic and ready for small responsibilities. Mridula took over 'Cha Chat' & Madhumita 'Children Section'. Still they were in different districts and it was not possible to