

I recall very distinctly the day Camellia Ladies Club started at DDPC, which initiated many cultural and social activities for the club members. One of these was to put articles and paintings by the club members and their families on the club notice board. The response was overwhelming; the notice board was full within a week. It took me by surprise that there was so much writing talent here and just a notice board to fill up. The time was ripe. An unseen hand guides the destiny of man from where if one picks up then there is no stopping. The beginning was done and my instincts told me something bigger was to follow.

Now it was the younger generation that supported, nurtured and helped me realize this dream, to name a few Loya Agarwala, Bandana Rajbongshi, Madhumita Bhattacharya, Mridula Anand, June Baruah and late Mukul Bhargava.

Our first issue, in a black and grey cover, was out in Dec 2001. It had articles mainly from DDPC members. We printed 175 copies at the cost of Rs. 7850 only. The members, especially the ladies, showed great interest. Bandana Rajbongshi was the editor. June Baruah did the DDPC activity round up, Encouraged by this success we personally circulated some free copies around to the friends and members of neighbouring clubs, as a result The second issue reached Panitola Sports Club and Moran Polo Club and by the 4th issue The Camellia had arrived and become a Zone one magazine.

Personally I never took writing seriously, never thought of sending anything for publication. It was always my 'Moody Muse' that will surface now and then. Though a complete novice to the genre of publication, I had a very clear concept of the content, the idea that had sat dormant for years: The Real Life Tea Stories, which were so different from the stories in city life. The emphasis was on the personal side of Tea Planters' lives - and there were so many unusual ones. These needed to be told, shared and printed for posterity, lest they get lost into oblivion.

The content division in various sections was entirely mine and it came as if it was sitting ready in my mind: for example Story telling meant 'Nostalgia', but the word has very wide connotation, so needed to have specific subdivisions. Hence several sections were created to fit various writings: "As it happened (for one particular Incident)", 'When I came to Tea (first day or initial days on arrival)', 'Nostalgia' as such carries (memoirs of the era gone by). Uncanny & bizarre (Tea boasts of quite a few haunted bungalows)', 'Giggle in Tea Cup (how could a Planter or Tea memsahib live without Manglu the bearer), 'Little Mirchi Thoda Pepper (A good laugh is a must), View Point (on serious note) and Cuisine and gardening (Tea Memsahibs' special forte) and of course the Children Section. As a reader of various magazines one can narrow down that 'Variety of engrossing content and good visuals' are both essential ingredients that hold one's interest. Lack of funds limited the later. Hence the aim was to get interesting content of the nature that a person in Tea could associate with. Having finalized this we asked people to send in articles for various sections. later the induction of the last color page 'A Thing Of Beauty Is A Joys For Ever' continued to showcase the creative side of many amature artists in Tea.

Most of the time we do not tell story as it happened exactly as many details are lost with time gap but as we recollect it. Here I am with my recollection. Loya and Bandana, excellent writers had also done computer courses. They would bring the articles on floppies and format it. I would stand behind them devouring like a student: how to type, edit and format the content. They converted me; a complete computer illiterate into computer enthusiast and thus 'The Camellia' was born in a corner of my children room where my computer is. I would spend hours just trying