

# Bengalis in London's East End

## Tea

Kolkata (Calcutta) was founded by Job Charnock, an English sailor, who settled in a Bengali village 240km up the river Hooghly in 1687. It soon became an East India Company trading post and fort, and grew into a great port city, from where the Bengali seamen mostly sailed. They were the forebears of today's East End Bengali community.

At first The East India Company shipped thousands of tonnes of tea to Britain from China. In 1824, Robert and Charles Bruce, two brothers from Scotland, discovered wild tea growing in Assam. However, it was not immediately recognised as such: the curator of the Botanical Gardens, a medical doctor called Nathan Wolff thought it was another member of the Camellia family. It was not until 1835 that he accepted it was tea.

In 1840, a tea garden was established in Chittagong. By 1855, wild tea plants were also discovered at Chandkhani Hills of Sylhet in Bangladesh. The first commercial tea garden in Bangladesh was, however, established in 1857 at Malnicherra Tea Estate, two miles away from Sylhet town.

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