

Boh Tea Plantations

No visit to Cameron Highlands would be complete without a visit to Boh Plantations. This famed plantation produces Malaysia's most famous tea, which is reputedly served to more than one million people a day! It is also a model family business. In the highlands, the company's planted area is about 3,000 ha, and in the lowlands, 400 acres.

Boh has three factories in the highlands, and one in Bukit Cheeding near Banting, Selangor. It also has a sister company which is involved in a joint-venture in Pahang, producing tea under the Teh Dara name. Another sister company grows tea in Queensland, Australia, and markets it under the Nerada Tea brand.

The Russells

The Russell family has been associated with Malaysia for more than a century. In 1890, John Russell sailed from London with his wife and five sons on the S.S Glengarry to serve as the first Government Printer in Kuala Lumpur in the then British Malaya. Prior to that he was a printer with the Illustrated London News.

His sons were all prominent 'Malayan' personalities. However it was John Archibald, or 'Archie' - who later founded **Boh** Plantations. Together with his brother Philip, they became the contractors for the Station Hotel in Kuala Lumpur during colonial rule. Philip was also involved in the construction of the railway track from Port Dickson to Seremban.

Archie had returned to Malaya when he was 16, and founded **Boh** Plantations in 1929 and a colliery at Batu Arang. He set up J.A. Russell & Co and remained the principal shareholder until his death in 1933. Archie married Kathleen Russell while on a voyage to London also in 1929. Archie is believed to have boarded the ship at Penang while Kathleen, Jamaican-born but of Anglo-Irish parentage, was travelling from Shanghai to London.

They (Archie and Kathleen) had a romance on the ship back to London and their courtship continued when they were in London. They were married in 1931 and both returned to Malaya the same year. The couple had a son, Tristan Beauchamp Russell, the following year. A year later, Archie died from tuberculosis.

Kathleen was an avid painter and some of her early paintings of Malaya can still be seen at the **Boh** office at Persiaran Hampshire in Kuala Lumpur. Kathleen returned to Britain soon after Archie's death. In 1936 she remarried William Gemmill, general manager of Transvaal Chamber of Mines in South Africa. And in 1939, Gemmill and his family moved to Salisbury (now Harare) in Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe), where Tristan spent most of his childhood. Today, Tristan's daughter, Caroline is at the helm of Boh.

A Cup of tea amidst in the Highlands

Raw tea leaves goes through various processes involving both the use of machines and the gentle touch of many human hands. The final process can be tasted at the plantation's simple yet elegant tea-house. Various different types of teas ranging from the strong black tea to the perfume scented ones, is served with sandwiches, cakes and local delights.

The Resort's many nature and leisure tour packages includes a visit to the plantations.

The Rose Garden

In 1934, Duncan Robertson, a Scottish seaman who was working for a shipping company in Singapore, came to the Highlands to retire. He bought a property and decided to plant roses. Since then, his garden has grown to include nearly 600 types of roses. Mr. Robertson passed away in 1971 and left the garden in the care of his Chinese wife. A caretaker who produces jams, marmalade and other 'rose-inspired' products now tends the garden.