# Thomas Robinson’s £550,000 tea fraud exposes layers of deception and false credentials



The extraordinary saga of Thomas Robinson, a 55-year-old from Perthshire, illustrates the intersections of ambition, deception, and alleged fraud. Recently, Robinson was convicted of defrauding investors and luxury hotels out of approximately £550,000 through his dubious enterprise, The Wee Tea Plantation. This venture claimed to produce premium Scottish tea but ultimately involved deceitful practices that raised eyebrows across the industry.

At the heart of Robinson's trial were not only the financial discrepancies but also his outlandish personal claims. Throughout the proceedings, he maintained a façade of credibility that included assertions of military service, professional rugby achievements, and academic qualifications, all of which have since come under scrutiny. This extensive web of embellishments was intertwined with his story about inventing the ubiquitous “Bag For Life” that many associate with major retailers like Waitrose. However, investigations revealed no substantiation for this claim, suggesting that Robinson's colourful narratives served to bolster his credibility in the eyes of potential clients and investors.

Born Thomas Robinson in Greenwich, London, he described a background that oscillated between the streets of London and a supposed year in the Irish Defence Forces, alongside a career in professional rugby. When challenged about his military claims, including his ability to hold dual nationality, Robinson's answers became increasingly convoluted. He asserted he could not elaborate on his army career, describing, instead, unverifiable stories about witnessing soldiers die and serving in various capacities. This barraged the court with incredulity, as fiscal depute Joanne Ritchie pointedly remarked on the fabrications intended to paint him as a trustworthy individual.

More curious still was Robinson's narrative surrounding the founding of his tea plantation. He claimed that inspiration struck him during a visit to the Himalayas, where he theorised that the conditions in Scotland could support tea cultivation. Despite these claims, reports indicate that the teas hawked to high-end hotels like The Balmoral and Fortnum & Mason were actually sourced from wholesalers, entirely undermining the authenticity he purported. The claims of royal connections and prestigious endorsements further complicated his story, as they seem to have been exaggerated or entirely fabricated—a strategy he might have employed to entice more clients into his web of deception.

The culmination of these dubious practices led to serious legal consequences. His tea enterprise, which once imagined itself as an innovator in the agricultural landscape of Scotland, was dissolved in 2019 amid an investigation, highlighting a pattern of misrepresentation. Robinson's ambitions and consequent downfall serve as a cautionary tale regarding the allure of entrepreneurship and the ethics of truth in business.

Following his conviction, Robinson's life has taken another twist; he claims to have worked for an environmental company and as a school bus driver during the pandemic, subsequently landing a role as a senior chef at Taymouth Castle, a position he insists was held for him following an alleged industrial accident that left him with cognitive and memory issues. The veracity of these claims, much like his previous assertions, is met with skepticism, particularly given the lack of witnesses and evidence surrounding his latest narrative. His trial and subsequent conviction reveal not only a failed business venture but a deeper exploration of identity and the lengths to which individuals may go to create an alternate persona to hide their truths.

Robinson's story serves as a stark reminder of the precarious nature of trust in the business world, where the line between ambition and deceit can often become blurred. The fallout from his actions will undoubtedly ripple through an industry keen on maintaining authenticity and integrity—elements central to the growth of Scotland’s burgeoning tea scene. As investigations continue and further details emerge, the public remains alert, eager to learn more about those who would prioritise personal gain over honesty in both agriculture and commerce.

## Reference Map:

* Paragraph 1 – [[1]](https://www.thecourier.co.uk/fp/news/courts/5252516/thomas-robinson-perthshire-tea-fraudster-bizarre-claims/), [[2]](https://www.thecourier.co.uk/fp/news/courts/5252516/thomas-robinson-perthshire-tea-fraudster-bizarre-claims/)
* Paragraph 2 – [[1]](https://www.thecourier.co.uk/fp/news/courts/5252516/thomas-robinson-perthshire-tea-fraudster-bizarre-claims/), [[3]](https://www.thecourier.co.uk/fp/news/courts/3823726/tea-plantation-perthshire-scam/), [[5]](https://www.heraldscotland.com/news/17603397.storm-teacup-scottish-grower-accused-faking-worlds-best-tea-award/)
* Paragraph 3 – [[4]](https://www.thecourier.co.uk/fp/news/courts/3823726/tea-plantation-perthshire-scam/), [[6]](https://www.scottishdailyexpress.co.uk/news/scottish-news/man-accused-bragging-royal-links-28350033)
* Paragraph 4 – [[1]](https://www.thecourier.co.uk/fp/news/courts/5252516/thomas-robinson-perthshire-tea-fraudster-bizarre-claims/), [[2]](https://www.thecourier.co.uk/fp/news/courts/5252516/thomas-robinson-perthshire-tea-fraudster-bizarre-claims/), [[3]](https://www.thecourier.co.uk/fp/news/courts/3823726/tea-plantation-perthshire-scam/)
* Paragraph 5 – [[1]](https://www.thecourier.co.uk/fp/news/courts/5252516/thomas-robinson-perthshire-tea-fraudster-bizarre-claims/), [[6]](https://www.scottishdailyexpress.co.uk/news/scottish-news/man-accused-bragging-royal-links-28350033)

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## Bibliography

1. <https://www.thecourier.co.uk/fp/news/courts/5252516/thomas-robinson-perthshire-tea-fraudster-bizarre-claims/> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.thecourier.co.uk/fp/news/courts/5252516/thomas-robinson-perthshire-tea-fraudster-bizarre-claims/> - Thomas Robinson, a 55-year-old from Perthshire, Scotland, was convicted of a £550,000 fake Scottish tea fraud. He falsely claimed to have invented the 'Bag For Life' and fabricated a background involving military service, rugby playing, and academic qualifications. Robinson's company, The Wee Tea Plantation, was dissolved in October 2019 amid investigations into his fraudulent activities. He later secured employment as a senior chef at Taymouth Castle, near Kenmore, Scotland.
3. <https://www.thecourier.co.uk/fp/news/courts/3823726/tea-plantation-perthshire-scam/> - Thomas Robinson, also known as Tam O'Braan or Thomas O'Brien, appeared in court accused of scamming luxury hotels out of £600,000. He allegedly supplied tea products to establishments like The Balmoral and The Dorchester, claiming they were grown at his Scottish plantation, when in fact, they were purchased from wholesalers. Robinson denied the charges, and a trial was set for April 2020.
4. <https://www.thecourier.co.uk/fp/news/courts/3823726/tea-plantation-perthshire-scam/> - Thomas Robinson, also known as Tam O'Braan or Thomas O'Brien, appeared in court accused of scamming luxury hotels out of £600,000. He allegedly supplied tea products to establishments like The Balmoral and The Dorchester, claiming they were grown at his Scottish plantation, when in fact, they were purchased from wholesalers. Robinson denied the charges, and a trial was set for April 2020.
5. <https://www.heraldscotland.com/news/17603397.storm-teacup-scottish-grower-accused-faking-worlds-best-tea-award/> - Tam O'Braan, owner of The Wee Tea Plantation in Perthshire, Scotland, claimed his tea won a gold award at the Salon de Thé in Paris. However, investigations revealed that the award may not exist, and concerns arose about the authenticity of his tea's Scottish origin. The Balmoral Hotel and Fortnum & Mason, which previously sold his tea, ceased offering it, and the Scottish Tea Growers' Association dissolved its ties with him.
6. <https://www.scottishdailyexpress.co.uk/news/scottish-news/man-accused-bragging-royal-links-28350033> - Thomas Robinson, also known as Tam O'Braan, is accused of falsely claiming royal connections to support his fraudulent activities. He allegedly persuaded luxury hotels and retailers to purchase tea by asserting that it was grown in Scotland and had royal endorsements. Robinson denies the charges, and a trial is scheduled for next year.
7. <https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-scotland-north-east-orkney-shetland-67291088> - The BBC reports on a £5 million fraud case involving a former Scotland Yard finance officer who defrauded the Metropolitan Police. The individual invested the stolen funds in properties and businesses in the village of Tomintoul, Scotland, where he was later arrested and jailed for seven and a half years.