

THE CEYLANKAN

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Editor : David Goodrich

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EDITORIAL

Some of the reluctance to contribute original articles to the CEYLANKAN seems to be diminishing and the type of information is becoming quite diverse. The CSA is mainly concerned with things of a historical flavour, whether it be anecdotal, or of interest about things gone by for a member, or simply because it seems no one has written much about a particular topic. We do get material sent in that has been taken directly from the internet, and most of this we put on hold for two reasons: copyright considerations, and if it is currently available, then anyone has access to it and we would be simply duplicating. We are trying to solicit original articles if possible, and we emphasize the anecdotal. Interestingly, on perusing articles we have printed in earlier editions we find several relating to the bombing of Colombo by the Japanese. That occasion seems to have struck a cord with many readers!! Where were YOU on that Easter Sunday? Most of the contributions we print have been put together by 'authors' who have done some homework on their pet subject, (sometimes we have to cajole and plead, even groveling isn't out when we know someone has a good story to relate!). This is then the stimulus, hopefully, for others to put pen to paper (or more likely, keyboard to printer) so readers can have the pleasure of new thoughts and new topics. There is such a wealth of material any of you could write about. It is all exciting stuff!

So "keep all 'them' letters coming in". If we believe a contributed article is antagonistic to our ideals of being a non-political, non-racist, non-confrontational or non-religious organisation, we will let you know.

THE DOUBLE ATTRACTION AT THE LAST MEETING

An enthusiastic audience enjoyed every minute of the two fine presentations made at our August meeting. While the subjects chosen by the two speakers were different,

the presentations were stimulating and interesting, and held the attention of a very appreciative audience.

Dr Vijaya Samaraweera was introduced by the Chairman as an academic who specialized in political science, teaching at the Uni-

19th Century Images



A Veddah - the aborigines of Sri Lanka

versity in Peradeniya, and later at the University of Boston. His academic career took a different route when he changed to law, and he now serves as a Consultant with the U.N. his latest assignment being in East Timor.

Vijaya spoke on the impact of the British legal system on Sri Lanka's notions of justice. He outlined the role played by Charles Cameron of the Colebrooks-Cameron Commission (1833) which made recommendations regarding a structure for the administrative and judicial functions for Ceylon, consequent to military rule by the British over its newly acquired colony. The introduction of the legal system involved the establishment of courts, and legal procedures, and conventions which were not familiar to the Sinhalese litigant. The Law of evidence and the sanctity of testimony for the witness box, tried, tested, and developed in the legal environment in England took some time to settle within the environs of a Sinhalese

community unfamiliar with its evolution. Despite the early frustrations experienced by the nascent judicial system and its administrators, in early nineteenth century Ceylon, the notions of British justice seem to have been well and truly entrenched after almost two centuries of dispensation of justice. Dr Samarweera's talk evoked much discussion.

Mr Gamini Goonesena who was introduced by the Chairman as a cricketing celebrity with a string of achievements to his name, spoke next. Gamini who started his cricketing career at Royal College, in Colombo, went on to represent Cambridge University, and Nottingham for several years. As captain of Cambridge University he scored 211 runs in its annual match against Oxford University. It is the highest score by a captain in matches between the two universities, and is a record yet to be surpassed.

Gamini referred to his early years in Kenya, then in Colombo where at Royal College he discovered his skill in leg spin bowling. As a schoolboy he also played for Sinhalese Sports Club where the late Colonel Derrick de Saram was his mentor. He thereafter played as a professional for Nottingham before reverting back to amateur status to play for Cambridge. At about that time he was chosen to tour the world with E W Swanson's team of international cricketers. Gamini recounted several interesting incidents in his career including tips he received on how to play Sonny Ramadhin, then regarded as the world's best spin bowler, and sharing a room on tour with 'pukka sahib' Sukhinder Singh. His talk was laced with personal anecdotes, and embellished with humour, which enthralled a rapt audience.

The talks were followed by the Annual General Meeting, and concluded with a luscious supper provided as usual by the ladies. Brian Parker our Public Relations Officer took the initiative to raffle a case of Lion Lager beer graciously donated by Mike Udabage. Gamini Goonesena drew the winning ticket which was held by our Chairman Hugh Karunanayake.

THE GATEWAY TO SRI LANKA

(continued from Ceylankan # 10)

The period from the early days of the Port of Colombo to about the first World War was summarised in a previous issue. The changes to the harbour to that time were considerable, and since then tremendous improvements have occurred or are planned to happen in the near future.

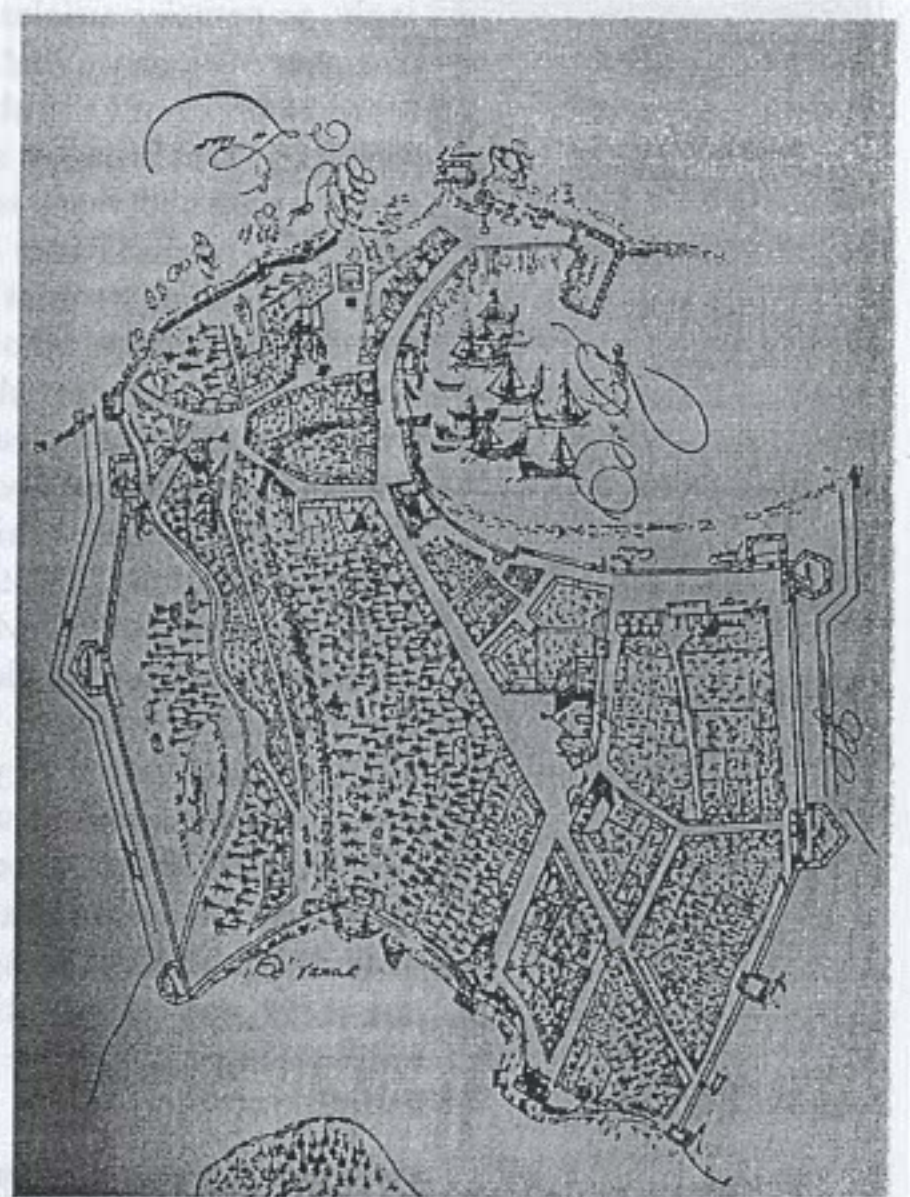
The extension to the South West breakwater of 550 metres, completed in 1912, was put in place because of the large swell surging through the

North West entrance. The result cut the wave ratio inside the harbour – a problem in both monsoons – by more than half, thus improving shipping safety immensely.

Between 1914 and 1923, additions to the port works included: 520 meters of blockwork quay walls for lighters, warehouse and jetties, construction in the Baghdad and Pettah areas, completion of oil facilities and bunkering jetties, and the construction of the rail connection from the harbour to the main line.

Between 1881 and 1930, 10 million cubic meters of dredged material were removed from the harbour basin, the objective being to deepen the harbour to a berthing depth of 11 meters. Completion of the inner dry dock in 1938 being the only really major construction until 1950. Until that year, Colombo was principally a lighterage Port with only one alongside berth. In 1950, the Government decided to provide more quayside berthages, transit sheds, warehouses and ancillary port buildings, and that year saw the start of Colombo's second major port development activity with the commencement of:

- a...Prince Vijaya Quay
- b...Oil dock with its associated pier
- c...Delft Quay – later called the Bandaranayake Quay



Colombo and its harbour during the 17th century.

- d...Queen Elizabeth Quay – 915 meters long, with a wave wall 4.3 meters high to protect against the SW

monsoon.

e...Coastal berths

All completed by 1956 at a cost of Rs110 million

A statutory body – the Sri Lankan Port Authority – was established 1st August 1979. Prior to then, port activities were performed by three state institutions.

The first container terminal in Colombo was officially inaugurated in 1980 and arrangements made for 2 gantry cranes (these are the huge cranes necessary to unload and



What the Port Of Colombo will look like after the planned developments

load containers) to meet the increasing demand for container handling. It was very forward thinking and the ongoing result has been of tremendous benefit to the country.

The world trade very rapidly embraced containerisation as the new method of shipping cargo. It was quick, efficient, and required minimal stay in any port. The loading and unloading of ships could now be done in hours, or at most days, instead of weeks or even months, and the ships' stay in port and the attendant costs, reduced greatly. And what was even to a greater advantage for Sri Lanka was its position in the Indian Ocean. Vessels from Europe carrying cargoes for Japan, Hong Kong etc, often carried some containers for the Bay of Bengal ports or the Gulf countries, and for the ships to divert to each and every port in those areas to drop the odd container off was too expensive. Colombo is in the ideal position as a transit port, the hub of the Indian Ocean, and the cargoes requiring transshipping were off loaded there to be loaded on other ships plying the Bay or Gulf areas, to be quickly delivered to their destinations. In 1997, Colombo was the 20th busiest container port in the world.

The future developments include a huge extension to the Port facilities including a new breakwater that will dwarf the current area enclosed. The area will expand the container facilities many times over, and provide new berthing facilities enabling the Port to earn huge foreign exchange monies that can only improve the country's economy.

Over 1,700,000 containers passed through the Port in 1998, not a bad increase from virtually zero in 1980. And over two thirds of those containers were for transshipment to regional destinations. It is estimated that by 2010, total containers handled will be approximately

5,000,000 with about 4,000,000 for transshipment.

The included maps and plans illustrate the changes that have occurred over the years and the final image illustrates the major future plan for the port of Colombo.

DID YOU KNOW ??

Captain John Parker of the 2nd Ceylon Regiment, fought a duel with Captain James Brown of the same Regiment, on 17-11-1810, at Galle. Brown was shot in the right side and died. The Superior Court found Parker guilty of manslaughter and sentenced him to one weeks imprisonment in the common jail of Colombo. This was the first trial by jury in the Island.

A quantity of plate was discovered in Kandy in 1823 belonging to the deposed King. Reverend Norman Gastin, 2nd Colonial chaplain at the time, applied for its use in the Kandy church. Accordingly a silver salver, a cup, and a pair of candlesticks, part of the plate, were handed over by the Government. They later disap-

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NEXT MEETING!

11 November 2000 (Saturday)

Commencing 6.30pm

Willow Park Hall

25 Edgeworth David Avenue
Hornsby

Lalitha Witanachchi
will speak on
"Why I became a writer"
Noel Cruz
will speak on
"The Cocos Island Mutiny"

RSVP to Hugh, Michael or Vama on numbers listed on previous page.

peared!!

The first Government steamer was the 'Seaforth', christened by Mrs TH Twynan at Bombay in 1840. She was ordered by Sir Wilmot Horton for regular inspections of the Pearl Banks. She was a paddle steamer of 207 tons register, 2 engines of 30 hp each, and built of teak. Her first skipper was George Steuart.

Governor Cornelis Joan Simons (1703-1707), a graduate in law, was associated with the compilation of the The-sawalami (Tamil codes of law) and the building of the first leper asylum at Hendla. His memoirs were mostly devoted to the subjects of legal rights of the Dutch East India Company and their newly possessed territories in Ceylon. Ref: A Book of Dutch Ceylon - Links between Sri Lanka and the Netherlands, by RL Brohier,

SOME NOTES ON THE CEYLON CONTINGENT TO THE BOER WAR

Here are three references to the Ceylon contingent in the London Times.

London Times. 02/02/1900 (Friday)
Colombo, Feb.1. The Ceylon contingent, 130 strong, embarked to-day in the Umkuzi. Capt. Toogood, Warwickshire Regt., accompanied the contingent.
London Times 29/04/1901 (Monday)



Officers of the 1st contingent from Ceylon to the Boer War.

Colombo, April 27. The Ceylon contingent from South Africa arrived here this evening (no ship mentioned, possibly the China, London to Sydney, called at Colombo Saturday)

London Times 23/04/1902 (Wednesday)

Colombo, April 22. The Syria, from Bombay, left here this afternoon for Durban, having embarked the 2nd Ceylon contingent for South Africa, numbering 100 men. Capt. Stewart in command.

The first contingent consisted of the Ceylon Mounted Infantry; the second was made up of drafts from the newly-formed Ceylon Planters Rifle Corps. There is a possibility that the second contingent (CPRC) was attached to the 2nd Battalion Gloucester Regiment during its service in South Africa.

DEMONOLOGY IN SRI LANKA

BY
SUMANE IYER

In many a village, despite modern education various beliefs and practices pertaining to Demonology still survive as a frequent, if not a regular feature of its life. The villager finds hope, consolation and revenge as a consequence of these performances. Propitiation of demons is a primitive practice prevalent among the village folk to prevent and cure disease and to ward off evil on the one hand and cast debilitating spells on enemies, on the other. Woven around this practice is an elaborate ritual called "Thovilaya". More of this later, for now let's examine why, when and where these practices originated. Why?

This is the easiest question to answer - The fear of

"yakas" or demons that bring ill health, poor harvests and "enemy" action upon the villager is a very real and palpable one. All primitive societies have had their fair share, and Ceylon was not immune from the phenomenon. But what makes Ceylon somewhat unique is that even at the close of the twentieth century, with literacy rates in the upper eighties



these practices have not died out. Open a local paper and you can still find advertisements offering 'yantras' – charms, and 'mantras' spells covering a wide spectrum of human needs. Conquer your enemies one might proclaim or subdue that illness which is dogging you and has baffled physicians and so on. Astrologers, and 'Government Registered Charmists' – believe it or not – feed on the primitive fears and direct and guide people to propitiate one kind of demon or another in search of a favourable outcome. If the local physician cannot cure an illness he may advise astrological consultation. The Astrologer determines which 'Yaka' demon is to be propitiated. Here are some examples of these demons and the illnesses they are capable of inflicting:

Maha Son Yaka – fever, aches and pains in the body

Deva Sanni Yaka – infectious diseases

Bhuta Sanni Yaka – insanity

Jala Sanni Yaka – cholera

Kalu Kumara Yaka – infertility & emaciation in women

Riri Yaka – loss of appetite

Vevulum Sanni Yaka – fits

Maralu Yaka – ulcers and tumours

Maha Kola Sanni Yaka – (like the wide spectrum antibiotic of modern day) is propitiated when one cannot zero in on the ailment. This demon covers all that is not easily diagnosed.

Huniyam Yaka – all ailments that are ascribed to curses, magical spells and evil eye – the writer has had personal experience in witnessing the unravelling of one of these within his family circle. That's another episode.

I have not come across a reference to a Yaka that is responsible for impotence in men. I think your guess is as good as mine – there were no impotent men, only

infertile women!

When?

Buddhism was introduced to Ceylon about 245 BC. In his article "Pre – Buddhist Religious Beliefs in Ceylon" (JRAS, CB Vol XXXI No 82) Dr S Paranavitane draws our attention to prevalence of a "Yakkha" cult. 4th century traditional records mention the existence of 'Yakkha' chiefs, cults they dominate, and primitive forms of worship including the worship and veneration of trees. We do need to dwell on a subtle distinction between the word 'Yakkha' and 'Yaka'. The former if confused with the latter may lead the reader to believe that demonology is definitely Pre-Buddhist in chronology. 'Yakkha' denotes an Animistic deity of early Aryans and does not necessarily imply a demon. But one is not divorced from the other as connection of beliefs that deities and demons inhabited hill tops, trees, streams and groves brings about a congruence. So, it is a safe assumption that 'Yaka' retains part of 'Yakkha' and may subscribe to the etymology of the word. Since the Mahawamsa chronicles demonology as being prevalent long before its time we can define a window of time between 245 BC and 400 AD as a safe, albeit a wide time frame, within which demonology surfaced in Ceylon. ...and Where did it come from?

Scholars like Paranavitane, Pertold, Parker and WA de Silva have provided ample evidence in support of their writing on the subject. One thing that is clear is the existence of a large body of contradictory evidence regarding the origin of demonology in Ceylon. Whilst Paranavitane traces demonology to pre Buddhist period and hence to the 'Yakkhas' of Aryan origin, Parker (Ancient Ceylon) believes it is of South Indian origin. He is supported in this view by WA de Silva "Sinhalese Magic and Spells" (JRAS, CB Vol XXX) that a majority of charms contain words in Telugu and Canarese, both well established languages of South India. Verses recited at "Thovil" ceremonies makes references to South Indian Brahmans who brought these practices and rituals to Ceylon. But there is a Papua New Guinea connection according to Pertold. In his thesis, "The Ceremonial Dances of Ceylon", he proposes that majority of the elements of demonology has its origin in PNG. He compares local ritual with those of the Pacific Islands and shows close similarity, if not total congruence between them. One of the rituals called "Mal Baliya" [dance of the flowers] has close resemblance to one in PNG. The Pacific Islanders too practice the equivalent of "Huniyama" or "Kodivina" a voodoo practice of casting evil spells for revenge or harming or destruction of perceived enemies. The methods are virtually identical, lending strength to the PNG origin. "Huniyam" is a well established branch of demonology in Ceylon.

Since demonology in Ceylon demonstrates structural affinity with practises from such diverse locations as South India and PNG, could we safely conclude that demonology has transcended both cultural and geo-

graphical barriers to survive this long? Whilst the commonality of the various origins explain some of the structural elements of demonology, that in Ceylon has been modified by the advent of Buddhism. For example a South Indian Malabari exorcist sucks the blood from a decapitated fowl the Sinhalese 'Yakkdura' (exorcist) tempered by Buddhist tenets of not taking a life, punctures the cock's comb and draws a drop of blood.

The "Thovil" ceremony.....

Following the advice of local astrologer, who identifies the particular demon to be propitiated, the 'yakdura' or 'kattadiya' will gather various materials including a sacrificial rooster if the situation demands one, and proceeds to the affected client's house. Ceremonies are usually held anytime after dusk and may even commence as late as 10.00 p.m. and go on till dawn. It is a very exhausting process for all participants and even spectators do find the going a bit rough. The 'kattadiya' will begin the ceremony by inviting the demon to be present. At first the 'kattadiya' adopts an imploring stance and progressively if the presence is not detected by him, he begins to threaten and command the demon to appear. The demon manifests itself through the patient who shows signs of agitation and sometimes lapses into trance like state. In answer to questions by the 'kattadiya' the demon responds through the patient, who will begin to talk 'in tongues'. Spectators may not comprehend these words but the kattadiya does. A protracted dialogue takes place and to sustain the audience interest, there is wit and light hearted banter between the protagonists. The negotiation progresses to the point where the demon agrees to cure the patient or produce any other favourable outcome, provided certain specified offerings "pideni" or "thatu" are made. These ceremonies whilst are deadly serious to the affected parties are also a source of entertainment in the village. Showmanship by the 'kattadiya' ensures his current performance gains him favourable publicity, so he spares no pain to make sure the entertainment value is high on the agenda. Stage props, include human skulls, earthenware pots filled with tender areca flower, incense burners and flaming wooden torches. The 'kattadiya' does most of the devil dancing himself – some say he is substantially intoxicated during proceedings, but has his acolytes provide other dance sequences simultaneously.

The dancing, or more accurately frenzied movement, takes place around an "avidiya", an attractive structure made by weaving tender coconut leaves basket fashion with built in tessellation and decorated with flowers, mainly red and white. It may be mounted in the centre of a forecourt or front yard of the house usually on a platform about waist height, with oil lamps and blazing torches also made of dried coconut leaves providing illumination and effect. The dancers wear anklets of small brass bells strung together. Drums and flutes provide a cacophony of sounds and some sort of rhythm which the dancers follow in a kind of loose fashion - there is no discernible choreography in these proceedings. Depending on the type of

'thovilaya', the 'kattadiya' and his acolytes may be dressed in red and white frock like garb or a dress of dried leaves woven or strung together. Masks are worn in more complicated exorcisms.

The reader will have formed a mental picture of the proceedings by now.

Stage two is when "negotiations" have been successfully carried out and the process of offering begins. Amidst continuous chanting by the 'kattadiya' these offerings are made to the demons in the vicinity of the patient but he/she is shielded by a white cloth held by two assistants. The patient at this stage does not see the proceedings. Offerings consist mainly of 3, 5, 7 or 9 types of flowers, 7 kinds of vegetables, [note the odd numbers] pith of banana trees, rice cakes and sweetmeats, an egg, etc. To add colour and gravity to a particular scenario the 'kattadiya' may require the patient or his family to increase the number of ingredients. At the end of this session one of the acolytes will carry the tray/s containing these offerings and dispose of them in a stream of running water. The symbolism here is that, the demons get attached to the offerings and are thus carried away from the affected person and his habitat. As a further reinforcement and assurance that the demons have left the location the 'kattadiya' will walk through the house with a bowl of burning incense and resin driving the demon away. Final security is obtained by burying small clay pots or glass vials bearing charmed objects at eight peripheral points on the property. Thus forming an effective barrier against re-entry of the demons. This kind of practice in demonology is for a benign purpose – to cure an illness, insanity or simply ward off evil.

The practice of 'Huniyam' or "Kodivina"

Here comes the deadly stuff. This is the process of projecting a destructive force towards an enemy. The practice is conducted in secrecy. The 'kattadiya' is briefed by the client, nominates the target/s and the process is left in the hands of the former. He may take a few days to make necessary preparations, check for auspicious



time. The client does not participate due to the secrecy that shrouds this practice, he is made aware of the efficacy of the 'huniyam' by the end result, which may take sometime to manifest itself in the target. Sudden illness, which afflicts the target is taken as a sign that the 'huniyam' is working. The villagers believe what they see, coincidence of events mean nothing to them. If the initial 'huniyam' fails to produce a result acceptable to the client then further investigation is carried out by the 'kattadiya' who recommends a repeat performance, with more potent tools being applied.

The boomerang.....

And what of the antidote? That's another service 'kattadiyas' perform. The affected target can consult a "Anjanam Baleema" (light reader) who will identify the person/s who projected the spell that is making the target unwell or has reversals in his fortunes. "Huniyams" are done to disable personal enemies or business rivals, or simply to get revenge on a spurned spouse or lover [voodoo spells, pointing the bone, etc in other cultures]. So, depending on the situation, effects such as an abnormal loss in business, sudden illness of a healthy individual are sufficient reason to send people running to the light reader, first to identify the person/s who cast the spell and then on to a 'kattadiya' to reverse the effects. Naturally the affected person or family member institutes a search for the most powerful 'kattadiya' they can find. By word of mouth each 'kattadiya' is known by their prowess in the field. Once selection has been made and consultation is completed the reversal process begins. The exorcist gathers the tools of his trade to perform the 'Kodivina Kapeema" (cutting the spell) ceremony. Among these are, a skull of a cow, pumpkin, nine kinds of flowers and sweetmeats and cooked food as offerings to the demons. The ceremony is similar in structure to the 'thovil' described earlier but has different undertones as the objective is not only to cure the afflicted or bring redress to the affected but also ensure the same spell is returned with 'interest' to the sender.

The highlight of this ceremony is the cutting of the pumpkin. This is when it becomes touch and go. The 'kattadiya' lies on his back, a fresh white cloth is draped on his abdomen. The pumpkin is placed on this cloth. Whilst both the main 'kattadiya' and his acolyte mutter specific mantras, the acolyte is invited to cut the pumpkin with a machete kind of knife. Too little pressure, the pumpkin does not yield and too much will risk his abdomen, and perhaps his life. This part holds everybody involved in thrall, the swinging or plunging machete has to have the correct momentum to achieve the desired result. If the pumpkin is cut neatly in two then the ceremony is declared successful. The affected person regains his health, wealth or spouse and the sender will now suffer the same effects he originally directed against his enemy.

Adapted from an article by Vimal Karunananda – Spark Vol 2 December 1956 – Journal of Post Senior Students English Union - Ananda College Colombo

EHELEPOLA'S LAST RESTING PLACE

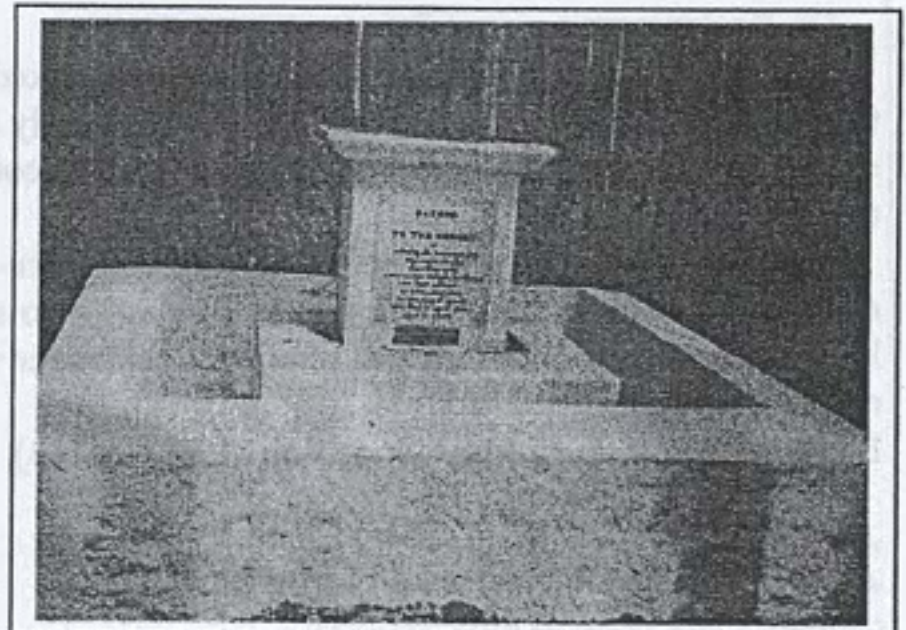
by
Nihal De Zoysa

A monument to Ehelepola is located at Moulin a' Poudre in the North West of Mauritius (Ile d'Maurice) in the district of Pamplemousses, about 14 kilometres north east of Port Louis, the capital. It is about 4kms from the sea and situated at the intersection of two roads in a beautiful quiet pine grove.

Ehelepola's house at the time of his death, was later converted to a gunpowder mill by the British - hence the name Moulin a' Poudre. The powder mill and arsenal has access to the Indian Ocean via the river 'Riviere du Tombeau', called the river of tombs.

Rumour has it that this area was frequented by pirates who stashed away their ill-gotten loot around the upper reaches of the river. The monument inscribed in English on one side and Sinhala on the other, is white-washed and surrounded by a short concrete wall of around 4 metres by 4 metres by 1/2 metre high

The inscription on the monument in English reads as follows:



SACRED TO THE MEMORY Of

Erhelepola* wijesoondra
wickramasingha
chandrasekra
amarakoon wahalamodianse
late first adigar
or prime minister
to the king of kandy
who died 24 april 1829
aged 57 years

* NB the spelling of Ehelepola on the stone

The date of his death on the 'English side' is a bit obscure, but on the other 'Sinhala' side, we discovered the date of death as "upriel visi hath veni dina", or 27th

April.

At the date of the visit on the 29th of April, we were very moved when we discovered flowers and a candle placed on the "Sinhala" side of the monument, apparently placed by some Sri Lankans. There are a few hundred Sri Lankans working in the Export Processing Zone (EPZ) around Port Louis.

HUMOROUS EPISODES IN HISTORY

1...Beckmeyer was the Colonial Surgeon in Jaffna, holding, like many Burghers, high office in that town. He travelled in a contraption called Push-Push (not a rickshaw as we know them). It had a man pulling from the front and another pushing from the back. Very curious indeed. The good Surgeon was giving evidence about an autopsy he held before Justice Sir Edward Creasy. A question arose as to what weapon was used.

The Judge: Doctor, what instrument did you use to hold the autopsy?

Dr. Beckmeyer: a "Pakot".

Judge: What is a Pakot?

Dr. Beckmeyer: a....a....Pakot.

The judge turned to the interpreter Mudliar and asked for the meaning of Pakot. The interpreter very sheepishly and softly told the Judge it means "Pakku vetti" used to cut arecanuts (Sinhala: Girey').

It transpired the Doctor was not given surgical instruments and had to perform postmortems with any instrument he could lay hands on. From that time Dr. Beckmeyer was called 'Dr Pakots'.

DBU Journal of April-May 1956, Vol:XLVI Nos 2,3).

2...In 1658 the Dutch attacked Jaffna having taken Colombo and Mannar with ease. They now arrived in Chavakachcheri. At this juncture the Portuguese paid dearly for a practical joke they played on a Mudliyar (Local Chief) of Thenmarachchi. This Mudliyar had consistently displayed to the Portuguese his desire to marry a white woman. The Portuguese said it would give them great pleasure to help him get one. The wedding preparations were underway and on the appointed day a palanquin arrived supposedly with the bride. When the Mudliyar opened the curtain of the palanquin there was a dog inside with a 'Thali' (Bridal chain). The Mudliyar was furious and bid his time. In due course, when the Dutch arrived in Chavakachcheri, the Mudliyar sent word to the Portuguese that the Dutch were preparing to attack the fort and were going to advance along the lagoon. The Portuguese fortified the lagoon landing areas and moved all their armour to the coast. The Mudliyar took the Dutch by land unopposed to the Fort. The Fort fell and the Por-

tuguese paid dearly for their practical joke. Did the idiom 'Every dog has its day' come from this incident?

A GLIMPSE INTO THE PAST Medical Men and Medical schools Of A Bygone Era By Dr Srilal Fernando

Since the 1960's, Sri Lankan medical men and women have migrated overseas distinguishing themselves in many fields of activity. What is little known is that in the 18th and 19th centuries, a number of eminent medical men from overseas served in Ceylon and left their mark. Most of them are remembered for their contribution to other fields such as Botany, Zoology and Historical Literature. A few names come to mind quite easily. John Davy, a brother of Sir Humphrey Davy of Davy's miner's safety-lamp fame, served in the Royal Army Medical Corps from 1816 to 1820 and wrote many a learned paper on a number of subjects but is best known for his book: *An Account of the Interior of Ceylon*, published in 1821. He was also an eye witness of the Rebellion of 1817 and 1818.

Henry Marshall, a graduate of the University of Glasgow, came to Ceylon as an army surgeon. His book: *Notes on the Medical Topography of Ceylon and Ceylon, a General Description of the Island and its Inhabitants*, are source books on information about the period on both medical and non-medical topics.

Going back further to the Dutch period, one of the early arrivals was Michael Ondaatje from Southern India. He was the eldest son of the physician to the King of Tanjore. He was invited by the Dutch Governor Adrian van der Meyden in 1659 to help treat his wife whose illness baffled the physicians of the day as well as the native physicians. Ondaatje succeeded and found favour with the Governor as well as the public and enjoyed an extensive practice.

Two doctors who contributed to Ceylon Botany were Nicholas Grimm and Paul Hermann. Grimm, a Swedish doctor, was employed by the Dutch East India Company in the 1670's



Title page of Carl Linnaeus' book

and his *Laboratorium Ceylonicum* was published in 1679. Paul Hermann was the chief of the Dutch Medical Service in Ceylon and served from 1612 to 1679. He sent Ceylon plants to Holland. Carl Linnaeus published an account of the plants in the herbarium under the title *Flora Zeylanica*.

Medical Schools
In the early British period, military hospitals were established in central locations. Some of the English doctors taught medicine to local students on an individual basis, following the apprentice system. Once they gained proficiency, they were established as assistants.

The first medical school was established in 1835 by a Dr. Kevert. The students were: Mr. Ferdinands of Kandy, EF Kelaart, PH van Cuylenburg, MB Misso, Trask, Cleveland and Ebert. Out of this group, EF Kelaart distinguished himself. At eighteen he left Ceylon for England on a troopship 'Numa' as assistant to the Staff Surgeon in charge of the detachment of the 78th highlanders. He entered Edinburgh University and obtained the MD degree becoming the first Ceylonese to obtain a British medical degree. He returned and served in Ceylon. He wrote a book on Ceylon Zoology. *Prodromus Faunae Zeylanicae*. He also made the first proposal to the Government to build a museum in Colombo in 1852 though it only came into being 25 years later.

This system of clinical teaching was not satisfactory and the government of the day decided to train doctors at the Bengal Medical College in Calcutta. The first batch of students were sent in 1839. The names of the first two batches of students were Anthonisz, Loos, Dickman, Krikenburg, Ondaatjee, Andree, Wambeck, Marcus, Margenot, Ludovici and Toussaint. This method of training continued till the Colombo Medical School was established in 1870. A number of these graduates from the medical school in Calcutta distinguished themselves.

The first three principals of the Colombo Medical School; James Loos, EL Koch and JL vanderstraaten were all graduates of the Bengal Medical School. The story of JL Vanderstraaten is interesting as it provides a glimpse into the social factors involved even at that time in the selection of medical graduates. He worked as an assistant dispenser to a retired ship's surgeon in Colombo. He attempted several times to obtain admission to the Bengal Medical School via the government. He then became a ship's apothecary. In one of his voyages he met the Governor who later interceded on his behalf and secured his admission. Vanderstraaten became the principal of the Colombo Medical School several years later and his paper on the medical history of Ceylon was read in 1886 before the Royal Asiatic Society of Ceylon.

The development of Western medicine in the north of the country is an equally fascinating story. It begins with the arrival of a small band of missionaries under Daniel Poor. They were from the American Christian Mission in Boston, Massachusetts and arrived in Jaffna in 1816. Though not medically qualified, they had some training and experience and set up a hospital at Tellipalai. Dr. John Scudder, a doctor from New York was the first medical mission-

ary. He set up a dispensary in Pandatherruppu in 1820. Scudder was replaced in 1836 by Dr. Nathan Ward. After serving ten years in Jaffna, Dr. Ward returned in 1846 and Dr Samuel Fisk Green was appointed to take his place. After graduating from the College of Physicians and Surgeons of New York in 1845, Dr. Green practiced in his hometown of Worcester, Massachusetts until he took up missionary work.

He set sail for Madras from Boston and the sea voyage took four months. He continued his study of Tamil on the voyage. He arrived and commenced his work as a missionary doctor at the American Christian Mission Seminary at Vaddukodai. At that time in 1847, there were very few English doctors and



Dr Samuel Fisk Green.

none of the Tamils of Jaffna had an idea of European Medical Practice according to Dr. Waitilingam, who was one of his first students. Dr Green had to face the prejudice that any newcomer would receive. However, by skill and devotion he was able to treat and influence those around him. He established a medical school in Manipay in 1848, and three students were selected in the first year. Their names were Joshua Danforth, J Dennison and J Waitilingam. This was a period of intense social change, especially in following European habits. Dr. Green expected his students to settle and live in their villages. However, he found that with their knowledge of English and medical skills they could find employment as doctors in Government Service for more lucrative salaries. As a result he decided to teach the students in Tamil. He wrote: "I hope by going into vernacular education, to get some doctors who will in native dress start off afoot in response to calls, and not demand a horse and carriage to be sent and a heavy fee in addition. This aping European habits is very well in moderation but young Jaffna overdoes it".

The names of the class of 1861-64 tell their own story
Karthekaser alias M Hitchcock
Ethernayakam alias CT Mills
Swarminather alias SW Nathaniel
Kanakadittinam alias LS Strong
Vaitialingam alias DW Chapman
Navarathnam alias Sivappirakasam
A Appapilly alias William Paul
JB Shaw alias L. Spaulding

Changing to the Tamil medium produced its own prob-

lems due to the lack of books. Dr Green set about the task of preparing words for all areas of medicine and built up a vocabulary of medical terms which also used words already in existence in Tamil. He started a program to translate English textbooks into Tamil. One of the first books selected was Dr. Calvin Cutter's Anatomy, Physiology and Hygiene. It was not a direct translation as his aim was to put it as simply as possible into the Tamil language. Dr Green served for two ten year periods and when he left Ceylon he had trained over 80 medical practitioners.

This brief glimpse at the past gives an account of some of the medical men who served in Ceylon, the medical schools and the social changes that followed them.

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(As my great.great grandfather was one of these early doctors in Ceylon I am wondering where he obtained his training. He was Dr Johannes Daniel Theobald Prins (b.1804 d.1868) and practiced in Colombo. His 3rd son, Henry Horsford Prins, trained as an MD in Calcutta, later finishing his diploma in England, then signed on as a ship's doctor to New Zealand. He settled there in 1858 and is mentioned in two books about the medical history in Christchurch: A Hospital on the Avon, and Old Christchurch. He was a pioneer in some operative procedures in that city. ..Ed)

THE COCOS ISLAND MUTINY

Noel Crusz's book will be on the stands in January 2001. There has been widespread interest and inquiries from all parts of the world regarding the date of publication. The fully documented story of a mutiny by Ceylonese Commonwealth troops puzzled the big names in Australian publishing. Will this sell, they asked? Some felt that the book was for an international market and was it worth the risk?

That Crusz took thirty years to research and write the book was of little consequence, when well known military writers in Australia, USA and England had not heard of this mutiny, the only one in World War

II where three men were executed for their uprising.

Now interest has been revived amongst academics and historians, who were kept in the dark about the blood and tears of mutiny and de-colonisation in the Asian scene.

It was Publisher Ray Coffey and Sydney Journalist Alan Gill who lost no time in seeing the value of Crusz's book. The author did a Master's in history at the University of New South Wales, and his thesis was on The Cocos Island Mutiny. But the story then was only half told. The Literature Board of the Australia Council gave him a grant to help him in his research. Yet it was The Fremantle Arts Centre Press in Western Australia that offered publication whilst other well known publishers too asked for the hard copy.

Crusz had already unearthed the Field General Court Martial files in the Public Record Office in London when they were opened in May 1994. Permission was granted by the Stationery Office of Her Majesty's Government for the author to quote from these files. Archivist Anthony Richards of the Imperial War Museum and Julie Robertshaw helped in securing documents pertaining to the mutiny.

The Defence Department in Australia also allowed Crusz to reproduce and publish material with Crown Copyright acknowledgement. The author knew and interviewed most of the surviving mutineers and loyal troops. The University thesis was only a stepping stone to years of research in Australia, Sri Lanka, India, Singapore, England, United States and Canada.

The mutiny took place on May 8th 1942 on Cocos Keeling Island in the Indian Ocean on the day of the Coral Sea battle. The Ceylonese mutineers attempted to arrest their British Commander Captain George Gardiner, and hand over Cocos to the Japanese Armed forces. The mutiny failed. Seven men at a Field General Court Martial were sentenced to death, and three ultimately paid the supreme penalty by hanging.

The author argues that the British Commander's Field General Court Martial was seriously flawed. This opinion was also held by the late Peter Hastings who commissioned Crusz's article for the Sydney Morning Herald's Good Weekend.

"The Cocos Island Mutiny"~ a tangled tale of insurrection, death and the politics of race in World War II. Noel Crusz has unravelled a human drama which people in high places for too long tried to keep under wraps. A great read.---Alan Gill, (Sydney Morning Herald Journalist)

(Publication: January 2001. Inquiries: Fremantle Arts Centre Press. PO Box 158, North Fremantle, WA 6159.

The book will be available through Penguin Books Australia Ltd, PO Box 257, Ringwood, Victoria.)

MORE ON THE GALLE FACE GUARD HOUSE (AND WAR-TIME)

by
Kingsley Siebel

Malcolm Abeyakoon wrote (CEYLANKAN May 1999) of this old building (illustrated in April 1998 CEYLANKAN). Let me add a historical note. The guard house was the first semi-permanent office of the Boy Scout Headquarters in the 1930s. I remember that in the 1940s, the guns had disappeared and only one delapidated room remained, but that too was lost to sight a short time later.



The Galle Face Guard House.

Perhaps one of the guns was moved to Gordon Gardens beside the Governor's (then) residence?

My interest takes the story a little further. The new Scout Headquarters was built on a spot halfway beside the road that runs at the back of the green on the opposite side of Galle Face (this green is now built over). The new Scout building still stands by the canal that runs between it and the old State Council. There was a flagstaff and a green where the Sea Scouts met. Malcolm's father, whom I knew well, remained secretary of the Scouts in the new building, and was head of the Sea Scouts. Balappu, the watchman at the Guard House (whom Malcolm mentions) also lived in a little room on the level of the green, between the pillars that held up the hall and office rooms above.

I was a Rover Scout, and Commissioner Green appointed me in charge of an Air Raid Precautions Unit on the outbreak of World War II. I, too, was then accommodated in the same building. The ARP unit later moved to Barber Street at the foot of the road on which the Wolvendhal Church stands. It was a large house in which I had about 40 Scouts in full-time residence to answer any emergency call. None came but as the ARP Headquarters was not far off it was possible to arrange for a few mock-

calls, usually at night, to keep the boys on their toes.

I was in the Scout Headquarters in Galle Face on the morning when the first Japanese air raid warning sounded. I donned my uniform and was out in a flash but on seeing a Japanese plane just overhead, I abandoned my bike and took shelter in the nearest drain. I think that was the day Trincomalee was bombed.

If my memory serves me correctly, there was a second raid on the following Easter Sunday. I was in the Milagiriya Church when the alarm was sounded. A plane was brought down in Wellawatte on this occasion, not far from where Malcolm lived.

It is interesting how many vivid memories have been relived in the CEYLANKAN regarding this important time in Ceylon's history.....Ed.

CORRECTION.....!!

As Editor, I goofed badly in the last issue of the CEYLANKAN. Somehow I spliced two articles contributed by Roger Thiedeman and in his words made a "terrible mishmash on two of my articles by combining them into a sorry, meaningless mess". He is correct and I wish to apologise sincerely for the mishap. The first article, Memories of Ratmalana, is complete and finishes at the second last paragraph on page 19, CEYLANKAN 11.

The photograph of the plane and the caption accompanying it in the CEYLANKAN 11 were not supplied by Roger with his article. Thanks for the correction Roger. The second article which was 'cannabilised' in CEYLANKAN 11 follows this note of apology. Read on as the story makes enjoyable reading.....

SERENDIPITY IN JAFFNA A Personal Vignette by Roger Thiedeman

One of Sri Lanka's ancient names was "Serendib". That musical name has also enriched the English language with a delightful word: 'serendipity'. Defined in dictionaries as the faculty of making unexpected and happy discoveries by accident, it nicely sums up one of my happier experiences in Sri Lanka over two decades ago.

It happened in 1978, when I returned to my native land for the first time since emigrating to Australia six years earlier. I had long nurtured a desire to see Jaffna, a part of Sri Lanka that had eluded me in my previous travels around the island. So, one morning when the opportunity presented itself, I boarded Air Ceylon's Avro 748 for a flight up north.

I was privileged to travel in the cockpit. After a brief stop at China Bay, I watched spellbound as the Jaffna peninsula's distinct outline began to dominate the hori-

zon. From my vantage point up front, I had clear views of the Elephant Pass salt pans and the red, rich soil of the region (nowadays, alas, running redder still with the blood of Sri Lanka's youth). No geography lesson or textbook could have given me a better appreciation of the rugged beauty in that part of the world.

Upon landing at Palay, the two pilots insisted I joined them for breakfast at the airport canteen. Stringhoppers, hodhi, parippu and ulundu vadai never tasted more delicious! Then, climbing into one of Jaffna's ubiquitous Austin A40 hiring cars, I was transported to town by two jovial gents. They were clearly pleased that I had chosen to visit their city.

After checking into the Subhas Hotel, I changed into T-shirt and shorts and headed for Casuarina Beach, Karainagar. Despite unfamiliarity with the Tamil language, I had no problem finding my way there. Friendly and helpful strangers ensured I boarded the right bus, then told the conductor where to drop me off. When I alighted from the vehicle, another kindly young lad – maybe 13 or 14 years old – offered to show me the path to the beach, going at least a mile out of his way in the process. I often ponder that boy's fate, in the context of today's Eelam conflict.

Soon, I was luxuriating in the warm waters off Karainagar. Sitting on the sandy floor submerged up to my neck, scarcely a ripple disturbed the sea around me. Gentle breezes sighed through the branches of tall casuarina trees lining the beach. As a benign sun beamed down, I reflected that this was a close to Heaven as one could get on Earth.

At first the beach was almost deserted. Only another six or seven people lazed on the sands, or in the water, to either side of me. But the population of Casuarina Beach suddenly swelled four-fold when an ancient Chevrolet private bus pulled up nearby.

Out of it spilled a throng of happy, laughing Sri Lankans – men, women and children of varying ages, and a boisterous dog. They lost no time racing for the water, clad in an assortment of bathing costumes: swimming trunks, one and two-piece ladies' outfits, even diya-reddas. A couple of tots plunged in naked.

It was quickly apparent that their lingua franca was English, as they excitedly chattered and called out to one another. So, when some of the menfolk floated in my direction, I decided to engage them in conversation. Solitude is fine, but only up to a point!

I discovered they were a party of friends – Sinhalese and Burgher – from different parts of Sri Lanka, holidaying in Jaffna as guests of other friends, a Tamil family, who had also accompanied them to the beach. Suddenly, while I was introducing myself to this carefree, racially integrated group, a middle-aged lady perked up with obvious interest.

"Did you say your name was Roger Thiedeman?" she asked. I replied in the affirmative.

"Are you Noeline's son?" she asked again. Another "yes" from me.

"Why, your mother and I were good friends at

the Wellawatte Methodist Sunday School!", shrieked the lady. Flinging her arms around my neck, she planted a kiss on my cheek and announced: "I carried this man when he was just a baby!"

Several weeks later in Australia, my mother's joyous disbelief exceeded my own when I told how I met her old friend, right out of the blue, on a remote beach in northern Sri Lanka. This was indeed serendipity personified!

Back at Karainagar, the holidaymakers welcomed me into their midst. Waving aside my feeble protestations, they shared their picnic lunch with me. For the second time that day a stringhopper feed with all the trimmings really hit the spot. Later, after more chatting, basking and sea-bathing, then watching a glorious sunset, we all piled into the boneshaker bus and rattled our way back to Jaffna.

But my day with those lovely people was far from over. The Tamil family invited me to join them at home, with the rest of the gang, for dinner. And the meal? What more authentic Jaffna fare than thosai with the works?

Finally bidding farewell to my charming hosts on that warm night in August 1978. I mused that the world – Sir Lanka in particular – would be a better place if all races could mix as happily as did those friends.

Perhaps I had a foreboding of things to come. Less than three weeks after that Air Ceylon Avro returned me to Colombo, it was destroyed by a bomb at Ratmalana airport, fortunately without loss of life or limb. It was one of the earliest blows in the tragic war that festers to this day.

Which makes me grateful for having had the opportunity of visiting Jaffna in halcyon times, seeing its natural beauty, history and culture, and getting to know its people on their home turf. Sadly, I fear I will never be able to do that again.

CONTRIBUTION BY THE BURGHERS TO THE SRI LANKAN POLICE SERVICE by Jack Van Sanden*

The first Superintendent of Police was an Englishman, Mr Thomas Owen, who was appointed in 1833 for Colombo Fort and the four Gravets of Colombo. He appointed five Burghers as constables and 15 peons, consisting of Burghers, Malays and Moors, to work under him. However, in 1844 the post of peons was abolished and Inspectors, Sergeants and Constables were appointed.

The first Ceylonese was appointed an Assistant Superintendent of Police (ASP) on 1st December 1847. He

was PH de la Harpe, a member of the Force from its very inception. In 1856 he was highly commended by the Governor for raiding a coining den (counterfeit money den) and was rewarded 5 pounds. He had an unblemished record of service and died 7th January 1865.

The first Ceylonese to act for the Inspector-General of Police (IGP) was Benjamin de la Harpe, ASP, Western Province. The IGP in a letter to the Colonial Secretary in 1870, highly praised Mr de la Harpe for acting for him for long periods when he was on circuit. In 1871, because of several thefts by servants, a Registry of Servants was opened and, in addition to his other duties, Benjamin de la Harpe was placed in charge of this new branch. He was

later, in 1880, appointed Registrar of Carts.

The first Ceylonese police officer to be placed in charge of the Colombo Harbour was Inspector M. Toussaint.

In 1905, Acting ASP Altendorf was placed in charge of a new Police Training School and he prepared a manual for use by recruits, other police officers and probationers. In 1907, the Finger Print Identification Department was started and



Mr Altendorf.

Inspector Altendorf, who was trained in India, was attached to it in addition to his other duties.

Prime Minister Sir John Kotalawela appointed Fritz Scharenguival, Superintendent of Police, Criminal Investigation Department, as the first Director of the newly created MI-5 Division. His assistants were Douglas Kelly and Joe Grenier and a few others. This Division was disbanded when Mr Bandaranaike became Prime Minister.

Several officers have lost their lives in service. On 17th March 1864, George von Hagt, a Special Constable, was shot dead by the famous bandit, Saradiel of Utuwankanda, when he and a Sergeant attempted to arrest Saradiel.

In 1894, Inspector Nell was killed in service. The following Inspectors were pallbearers in a grand Police funeral: Vandersmaght, Perkins, Mack, Jansen, Pietersz and Toussaint.

In 1936, Inspector FR Forster was shot dead at Alutgama in the course of his Police duties. His assailant, a notorious seller of illicit liquor, was hanged for this murder.

The very high honour of being promoted Deputy Inspector General of Police was attained by Messrs DV Altendorf, W Ludovici, WAR Leembruggen, CP Wambeek, DCT Pate, TH Kelaart, V Roosemalecocq, Jack

Van Sanden, Richard Arndt and IDM Van Twest.

The first Police cricket match was played on 24th September 1898 against Royal College. Burgher officers who played in that historic match were AS Toussaint, G Perkins, H Collette and HC Toussaint. Royal College won by an innings! Some All-Ceylon cricketers who were also in the Police Force were VS de Kretser, VC (Puggy) Schokman and TH Kelaart.

Inspector Edward Gray excelled in boxing and was the Police and Commonwealth boxing champion. He was later a much sought after referee in international boxing tournaments.

In 1854, Inspector PL Keegel of Galle was commended by the Governor for arresting four seamen who had assaulted the Chief Mate and nearly caused a mutiny on board a German vessel that had docked at Galle. In November of the same year he had stopped a fight between the Russian, Swedish, German and English crews of seven ships moored in Galle harbour. Six of the combatants were arrested and fined in court.

In 1867 an English planter, named Falconer, was shot dead in Kandy. Inspector WV Woutersz and Sergeant GP de Vos investigated the murder, traced the gun, and arrested an estate kangany who was subsequently tried and hanged.

In 1870 Inspector JE Andree and Sergeant White enquired into the theft of coffee from the railway, detected the culprits and obtained a court conviction.

In 1871 Inspector JC David, after a very smart bit of criminal detection, arrested a man called Bastian Naide, who was absconding after committing a murder in 1861. In 1875 he was granted a reward of Rs300 by the Governor for arresting an infamous absconder named Pedro.

In 1879 Constable Kalu Banda was murdered by a notorious gang referred to as the "Nawalapitiya Lambs". With commendable bravery, Inspector David conducted enquiries, arrested the gang and obtained court convictions.

In 1885, former Inspector of Police JA Illangakoon, who had been appointed Rate Mahatmaya of Kotuwilla in Kurunegala, was murdered by a gang of thieves who broke into his home. Inspector de la Harpe and his father, the ASP, made inquiries and arrested the gang. Four of the accused were hanged and three were sentenced to 20 years. Inspector de la Harpe was highly commended.

A famous case in 1891 was the Katugampola Riots over land disputes. Two people were murdered, livestock indiscriminately slaughtered and innocent villagers harassed. Inspector FWD Modder investigated and arrested the culprits. Thirty three accused stood trial and twenty seven were convicted.

In 1900 there was a tram car riot and twelve tramcars were damaged and drivers and conductors assaulted. ASP Trevana and Inspector Modder investigated resulting in 23 arrests. Inspector DV Altendorf conducted the court prosecution.

On 24th September 1901, there was a serious riot at Ambalangoda. Twenty four police officers had to fire 34 rounds of ammunition to quell the rioters. Some officers were injured; forty one persons were arrested and charged. Inspectors Ludovici and Pietersz and other officers were rewarded for their bravery.

On 5th December 1906 at 10pm, Francis Dickman Attygalle was standing on his verandah talking to a man when he received a gunshot to his abdomen causing his death a short time later. Before he died he said that it was ex-Constable Sinho who had shot him. This ex-constable had served under the famous ex-Inspector of Police, John Kotalawela. Inquiries revealed that Kotalawela had a strong motive for getting rid of Attygalle over some family disputes. It appeared that he had arranged the murder and had then gone off to Japan. He was arrested on his return and charged with the murder of Attygalle. Kotalawela beat the law however, by committing suicide...arsenic or calomel was suspected. ASP W Ludovici and Inspector CJ Modder and some other officers were highly commended and rewarded for a smart bit of detective work on that case.

Naturally I have written about male police officers, but I must mention their wives who stood bravely beside their husbands, often working in remote police stations far from their loved ones, experiencing loneliness and isolation and the constant fear that their husbands might be injured or killed in the course of their police duties. These loyal wives were a tremendous source of help and encouragement to their husbands.

Burgher police officers played a significant role in the pre- and post-Independence phases of Ceylon politics, displaying qualities of bravery, devotion to duty, impartiality and integrity. Especially during the era of communal violence, Burgher officers played a valuable role in that no one could have accused them of partiality towards the Sinhalese and Tamil communities. In that unfortunate period of instability and violence, Burgher officers were in the forefront of maintaining law and order in very trying circumstances.

Readers must forgive me if I have missed names of other officers who served in the Police Force with distinction. Most of what I have written is from memory and available records in my possession....and it is probable I have missed some names.

(Mr Jack Van Sanedn is a retired Deputy Inspector-General of Police, Sri Lanka)

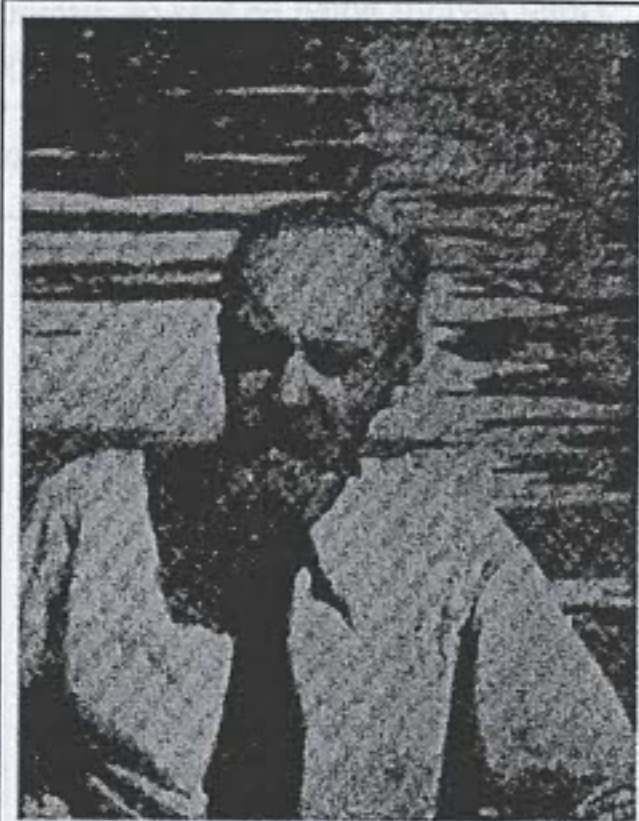
MAJOR R RAVEN-HART, OBE - Explorer, Canoeist, Translator and Writer

by Vama Vamadevan

No less a person than Arthur C Clarke (later Sir) describes Major R Raven-Hart as the "most unfor-

gettable character I've ever met". He was born in Eyre, Scotland, in 1889 and studied in London and Paris collecting a Doctorate of Letters of England, and Licences Letters of France. He joined the British Army and served in the Suffolk Regiment. He was described as a tall and distinguished looking man who saw service in WWI in Egypt under Lord Allenby, in the Intelligence Service. He served in both the British and French armies during WWI.

In his youth he was daring and a man of guts. He is reputed for having saved a party of nuns in an expedition that also involved TE Lawrence. His Holiness the Pope, awarded him a Medal in recognition of his braver rescue effort. It is said that while awarding Raven-Hart the



Maj. R Raven-Hart.

medal, the Pontiff made the remark..." I know you are not a Christian, but it won't do any harm..."

During World War II, he served in the Air Force under Lord Mountbatten giving of his expertise in radar. He is credited with having erected radar equipment on top of the Great Pyramid using his knowledge as a Communications Engineer, which was his profession.

Raven-Hart was a linguist 'par excellence', and was at home with five languages, able to read, write and speak all of them fluently. He could read another dozen languages. It is no surprise he translated Heydt's: Ceylon (Colombo, 1952), from the German to English, and 'Germans in Dutch Ceylon (Colombo, 1953), also from German to English. He has also translated Dutch documents and writings of French travellers about Ceylon. Other books he translated and edited about Ceylon are: The Dutch Wars with Kandy (Colombo 1964), The Pybus Mission to Kandy in 1762, (Colombo, 1958), and Travels in Ceylon, 1700-1800 (Colombo, 1963. He also authored the books, Ceylon, History in Stone (Colombo, 1964), and Where the Buddha Trod, (Colombo, 1958), both of which are interesting reads. No one will dispute that writing, editing and translating seven books in the short spell of 15 years is an achievement that does him proud.

Germans serving in the Dutch Forces wrote many of the accounts of life in Dutch Ceylon. To name few: Heydt (1744-47), Schweitzer (1644-58), Herbert (1665-

66), Saar (1647-57), Van de Behr (1644-58). Many of these writings would have been inaccessible to the general reader but for their translations by Raven-Hart. In most of his translations he adds valuable notes and comments not to mention indexes and glossaries to enrich the work. He scrutinized all the places mentioned in these writings with the quarter inch Ceylon Survey Maps to check and recheck the veracity of the material he was translating. His research work took him to the India Office, the Hague archives and consultations with Botanists, Zoologists, Geologists and others in specialized study areas.

Raven-Hart was also an ardent canoeist and has paddled down all the major rivers of Ireland, down the Mississippi, the Nile, Irrawaddy and the Murray-Darling basin in Australia. The avid writer that he was, he recorded his canoeing experiences in: *Canoeing in Ireland*, *Six Swedish Canoe Cruises*, *Down the Mississippi* (Boston, 1938), *Canoe in Manadalay* (Struik, 1939), and *Canoe in Australia* (Melbourne, 1948). It is interesting to note that two writers about Ceylon, Sir Samuel Baker and Raven-Hart, have both been associated with the exploration of the river Nile.

The whole world was his stage. He wrote about many countries from the USA to Australia, and most of the countries he wrote about he actually lived and worked in. He lived in Colombo for some 12 years and traveled very widely visiting places of interest and associating with people with like interests.

Raven-Hart canoed down the Mahaweli Ganga and all the extant Dutch canals from Chilaw to Galle. He used these canoeing trips to study nature in the raw. He was a student of archaeology, religion and myth, much of which he wrote about in *Ceylon History in Stone*. He loved people and befriended them with ease, and can be referred to as 'Sri Lanka's Mungo Park' of modern times.

On his retirement, he moved to South Africa where he wrote two books: *Travels at the Cape 1751-53* (Cape Town, 1967) and *Scenes from Cape of Good Hope in 1741* (Struik, 1967). He had the outstanding ability to illustrate his books with his own drawings and photographs. He was not without humour as seen from his humorous book about the Royal Air Force entitled *RAFing It*. He died at the ripe old age of 80 still immersed in his writings. In his last years he was plagued by financial troubles but his yearning to write sustained him through hard times and good. The cavalcade of books he left behind stands testimony for the great traveler and writer he was. He is one of the earliest of the Post-Independence (non Sri Lankan) writers who still marvelled at the beauty of Sri Lanka.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR



RE: The early 19th century Baptism of the Ven Dharma Rama

With reference to the above article

(CEYLANKAN 9). Ney Alexander Dharmaratna had six children one of whom was Thelma. Thelma married Artie Samarasekara and the union produced 4 children, Rohana, Sonia, Manel and Carol.

Thelma was Principal of Bishops College, Colombo for a number of years and later became Royal College's first Lady Teacher. After teaching at Royal for several years, she migrated to Australia and taught at a school for some years before retiring.

Rohana and Sonia obtained degrees at Colombo University, Rohana then migrating to Australia. Sonia married one Francke then migrated to Canada.

Carol passed his university entrance in Colombo and migrated to Australia. He entered the University of NSW and graduated with a degree in Mechanical Engineering. He then enlisted in the Australian Army and today is a Lt. Colonel and Deputy Commandant at Army Headquarters, Wodonga. I believe he is the first Sri Lankan to hold this rank. He played cricket for Royal College and was captain of the hockey team there. He continued to play both sports for the Army in Australia. He married Joan Van Sanden, my daughter, and they have two children both of whom are at university.

....Jack Van Sanden.

OF KAHAMBILIYA AND KEPPE-TIYA

by Rodney St John

This is one of those "flashes" into the unforgettable memories of the past. The setting is the scrub jungle, a few acres of it, which in my schooldays were still available, and in this case were just adjoining my home in Dehiwela. The significance was that the scrub provided the ideal stage for many of our schoolboy activities such as playing cowboys and Indians, hide and seek, etc, in addition to regular forays with the catapult. It also helped us to, quite unknowingly, acquire a useful knowledge of the birds, animals and plants that existed in their natural environment.

It was here, so many decades ago, that I had my first "brush" with Kahambiliya, the stinging plant or nettle. To the uninitiated, it was just another innocuous looking plant which could be brushed aside with impudence, particularly when you were a "crook" being chased by a determined "sheriff". That was until one day the leaves brushed against my neck and I was soon brought to a halt by the burning stinging and almost excruciating pain it caused. That day I had to retire hurt! A hot welt appeared at the spot injured which took days to subside. Of course this was not going to be a deterrent but it certainly made an impression on a fertile mind. I learned to recognise the plant, locate it, and avoid it at all cost.

Later we even realised its potential as a deadly weapon against schoolboy foes. The minute hairs, which cov-

ered the leaves, were the cause of the pain. Though easily rubbed off onto bare skin, they were not effective on the palm and the lower side of the leaf was less potent. The technique, therefore, was simple, just have it flat on the palm and touch the unsuspecting victim unobtrusively! Then, disappearance from the scene was vital. Usually the prime suspect for the ensuing "discomfort" of the victim, was the innocent caterpillar.

In later years I was informed that the plant belonged to the botanical family Urticaceae and that its specific name is *Fleurya interrupta*. Such stinging plants or nettles are found in most countries, including Australia and New Zealand, although of different species. Interestingly, they are often used by herbalists for various medicinal purposes but there is no evidence that it was so in Sri Lanka.

My father enjoyed growing vegetables and spices in his spare time. Invariably the fertiliser used was cattle manure, or as we referred to it in those days, cow dung. I noticed however, that he always covered the ground at the base of his plants with the tender branches and leaves of a small shrub. It was easily obtained from the scrub jungle where it grew profusely. Identification was easy because some leaves on the plant had a reddish colour, rather like autumn foliage here. Moreover, it gave out an unmistakable odour when cut. The average height of the plant was about three or four feet but this could be attributed to constant pruning for use as stated. This is how I learned about Keppitiya, which belongs to the family Leguminosae with its specific name being *Croton lacciferus*. It was quite popular and used mostly as a mulch but also as an insecticide.

In 1994, on a visit to Sri Lanka, I took the opportunity of visiting the scene of my schoolboy romps. There was not a vestige of scrub left in the area and the urban sprawl had taken its toll. I got talking to some of the children nearby, and asked them had they heard of these plants? Had they heard or seen the avichiya (Indian Pitta, a bird), and what about a hare? No, they had read about the hare at school but not about the others. How lucky we were to savour the vanishing scrub. Perhaps Kahambiliya and Keppetiya will be lost to generations to come.

THE DE LA HARPE OF CEYLON

by Kyle J Joustra

A few months ago it was my pleasure to meet a now good friend Gerald de la Harpe and his wife Therese (nee Poulier). Among the many discussions we had (and wonderful curries!) the story of the de la Harpe family emerged and this has allowed me to follow it as far back as 1340!

The de la Harpe family has an interesting and colourful history starting with Pierre de Alpa (de Arpa) where through transfer of Farmhouse "Arpes" Thonon, France with a receipt dated 16/2/1391 the origin of the name begins its present day adaptation, de la Harpe (The

original Latin name was Arpa and in French de l' Arpe. The letter (H) preceeding the word Arpa was introduced during the year 1540. The substitution of the letter (r) for the letter (l) is explained by the difficult pronunciation of that letter in the popular language, as is shown in the words, "soldat" pronounced "sordat", and "croix d'Alpille" as "croix d' Arpille"). The family was to make its first, of many migrations, to Lausanne, Vaud, Switzerland to settle, and acquired land, status and respect in their new country. Their involvement in Government and the Military was extensive and over the next many generations the family was associated with high office in government and military.

Two outstanding members of this family were: Sir Frederic Cesar de la Harpe, born 6 April 1754 who between 1784-1795, was family tutor to the Grand Dukes of Russia; and General Amedee Emanuel Francois de la Harpe, born 27 September 1754, who started an army career early in life. On the 12/5/1775 he enrolled himself as a standard bearer in the service of Holland in a garrison in Namur, Belgium. He rose to be one of Napoleon's top Generals and highly respected by his subordinates. He was a very disciplined and principled man as can be noted in a letter he wrote: 'Due to certain scandals, which were going unpunished; I tendered my resignation to the Chief General in the following terms. "My character of firmness cannot bear too see and tolerate such behaviour. Therefore there is only one thing to do, and that is to resign; consequently, General, I beg you to accept my resignation and send an officer to relieve me of the command that was entrusted to me. I prefer to plough the fields than to be the leader of a people who are worse than the vandals of the past ages."' The chief General replied to this resignation by stating that he would attend as soon as possible to these matters of misconduct in the army and bring it back to order and discipline. He finished by saying to Amedee, "I rely heavily on you for success, and your retirement would cause irreparable harm to the army, and I beg of you to abandon the idea of resigning."

This answer was an honorable one to the person who received it as well as to the person who wrote it. What made it more rewarding for Amedee was the reaction of his brave soldiers when they learnt that their General was going to resign. A deputation from all the ranks was sent and imploring him to continue as their leader, and to hold them to account for their future conduct and to forget their past errors.

In Mondovi he received with kindness the officers from Berne of the Steller Regiment. Though they had shortly before voted for his banishment, he in no way reproached them. Offering his hand, he said, "Gentlemen, I hope we will see each other one day in Switzerland as friends". Unfortunately his wishes were to remain unfulfilled, for a brilliant career was to end very shortly.

A few days after Mondovi, the Austrian General Beaulieu, who was informed of the movement of the French Army, dispatched with all possible speed to Codongo, Italy, a reinforcement of 5000 men. This army corps was defeated by the French on the 8-5-1796, but Amedee paid for the victory with his life.

Bonaparte describes this catastrophe in his communique on the 9-5-1796. "The brave general La Harpe, after having beaten the enemy, gave instructions for the security of the positions he had occupied. He urged the greatest diligence and alertness to those responsible for the security of these posts. But these orders were not carried out. An enemy patrol came upon one of our posts and attacked it where there was a gun emplacement. If our troops had carried out their instructions, this patrol would have been trapped, but the guards, being taken by surprise, deserted their position. General La Harpe hurried to the abandoned post and attempted to rally his troops to launch a counter attack. The order to advance met with no success, so he turned back to force his troops forward. This they did preceded by an advance guard which was unfortunately commanded by an officer who did not keep his ranks together. The cowards, seeing the horses of General La Harpe and his attendants approaching, called out, "There is the enemy cavalry!". With these words the troops opened fire at point blank range. La Harpe was hit by several bullets and fell dead at the feet of those he wanted to lead to victory

This General, a true Republican and cherished by his brothers-in-arms, carries the regrets of the country and the army. Let this dreadful event be a lesson to the officers and non-commissioned officers to exercise the greatest vigilance...."

In a letter to the Executive Directory, Bonaparte stated, "The Republic lost a person who was very devoted to her, and the soldiers lost a comrade who was fearless and strict in discipline." Finally the great Napoleon said at St. Helena, "He was a Grenadier in stature and in heart. La Harpe seems to have furnished history with one of its most brilliant military celebrities."

Long after the death of Amedee, the Division of La Harpe became outstanding in the army for its rigid discipline. This appeared as a testimonial to the death of a brave man of great personal virtues, brilliant courage, and rare talents.

It was through involvement with the military that the de la Harpe family became associated with Ceylon. Two sons of Jaques de la Harpe and Jaqueline Patton being Captain Jean Charles de la Harpe b. 1759 and Major Hendrik Ludwig de la Harpe, b. 1772 became involved with the de Meuron Regiment.

Historical Note: The Swiss mercenary regiment de Meuron was formed in 1781 by Colonel Daniel de Meuron and had served under the French at sea in India. They had next transferred to the Dutch, served at the Cape for five years, and arrived in Ceylon in 1788. Cleghorn, a Scot and former Professor, approached the Count in Switzerland

and proposed that the Count transfer his regiment to the British for a sum of five thousand pounds. De Meuron accepted and Cleghorn then sailed for India with the Count's instructions for the Commander of the Regiment in Ceylon, the Count's brother.

During the siege of Colombo and after extracting a promise from Major Agnew, the British envoy, that the regiment would not be called upon to fight against the Dutch, the Regiment de Meuron was formally released from its oath. On the 8th of October 1795 the Regiment transferred to the English together with plans of Colombo's defenses and knowledge of Dutch strengths and weaknesses. The Dutch were merchants and unprepared to fight but they defended their trading concessions for another five months. The British had a reputation for intrigue and the Dutch did not feel they could trust them, so they fought on, finally surrendering on the 15th of February 1796.

Ceylon then became an English possession under military occupation. Captain Pierre de Meuron, commanding officer of the de Meuron regiment in Ceylon, was appointed a Brigadier General in the British Army and Commander-in-Chief and Military Governor of Ceylon until the arrival of Lord North in October 1798. Some members of the de Meuron Regiment remained in Ceylon and the Piachaud, Senn and de la Harpe families, to name a few, are among their descendants.

(See also CEYLANKAN 8 for more about the de Meuron Regiment....Ed)

Hendrik rose to become a Captain in the de Meuron regiment and with the transfer to 3rd Ceylon Regiment he became Major. A son of Hendrik was Peter Henry de la Harpe who became Assistant Superintendent in the Ceylon police in which the History of the Ceylon Police Vol 2 1868-1913 pg 2 had this to say "de La Harpe was one of the veterans of the Force and an Officer who had served with Mr Thomas Oswin the Superintendent of Police in 1833. He had an unblemished record and was reputed to be one of the ablest Detectives of his day". The de la Harpe family would continue its involvement with the Government and Military/ Police, Gerald's father being 2nd Lieutenant Indian Army Reserves 73rd Carnatic Infantry No.63/6736 (M.S.I.) (Between 25 August 1918 - 1 May 1922) and later becoming Chief Inspector in the Ceylon Police Force.

Gerald de la Harpe came with his wife to Melbourne in 1951 and is very proud of the history behind his name with many an interesting story and book to show. The de la Harpe family has spread to many corners of the globe: France, Switzerland, Chile, South Africa and Australia to name a few.

(See another article about the de la Harpes in this edition, and also in CEYLANKAN 11...Ed.)

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

The following letter and article make interesting reading....

..... Though Sri Lanka is a tiny island in the vast Asian region, it is noteworthy that the oldest Asian boys' boarding school and University College – the Batticotta Seminary – was founded in 1823 by Dr Daniel Poor at Vaddukoddai which has become the Jaffna College of today.

Mrs Harriet Winslow established the first girls' boarding school in the whole of Asia in 1824 at Uduvil. This school has played a pioneering role in the education of women for the past 175 years. I have expanded details about this College in the accompanying article below following this letter.

The Kotte Christian College was established by Sir Edward Barnes in 1827, and the Colombo Academy was started by Sir Robert Wilmot Horton in 1836.

St Thomas College was established by the Bishop of Colombo, Dr Chapman, in 1849 at Mutwal, but later moved to Mount Lavinia.

Bishop's College, Colombo, was founded in 1875, and Ladies College in 1900. Thus Ceylon produced great men and women of educational excellence from the early nineteenth century onwards.

...Mrs Punithavathani Visvalingam

.....by Mrs Vathani Visvalingam

UDUVIL GIRLS COLLEGE -
JAFFNA

by

Mrs. Vathani Visvalingam

The commemoration of one hundred and seventy five years of the founding of Uduvil Girls College as the first girls boarding school in Asia by Mrs Harriet Winslow, who incidentally was the great grandmother of the late John Foster Dulles, the renowned Secretary of State in the USA in the 1950s, is a very significant and proud occasion.

The first American Missionaries arrived in Colombo on 22nd March 1816 and travelled overland through dense jungles to the arid northern peninsula of Jaffna. They considered the best way of improving the primitive conditions of the people was by opening up educational and medical centers. The first school was started in Tellipallai in October 1826, and by 1819 about 15 schools were established throughout the peninsula. In 1823, the Batticotta Seminary was founded, becoming the Jaffna College of today.

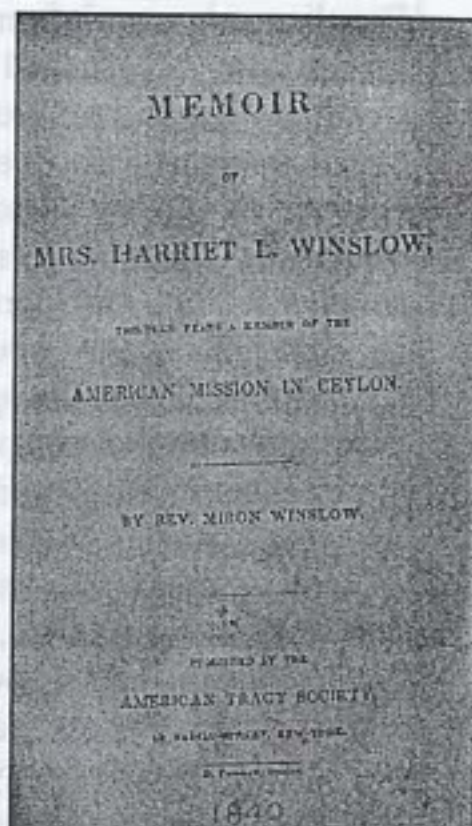
Rev and Mrs Miron Winslow resided at Uduvil. They found that the local girls were confined to their conservative homes and were married off early. The parents showed no interest in the girls education when

approached by the missionaries. Mrs Harriet Winslow, with great courage and foresight, established the Uduvil College giving the students free tuition, board and lodging. When they finished their studies, the girls were given in marriage, because when they left home to study in a Christian school they were disowned by their parents. It is believed there were only three girls in the first class, but soon Uduvil played a pioneering role in the emancipation of women helping to change the age-old structure of Jaffna society. Mrs Winslow died in 1833 and was buried in Uduvil.

A Miss Eliza Agnew succeeded Harriet Winslow, and for the next forty years under her guidance, the school took root and flourished with hundreds of girls gaining an all round education. Uduvil celebrated her golden jubilee with great pride and jubilation in 1874. Miss Susan Howland succeeded Eliza Agnew as principal in 1880. A new set of classrooms, a spacious school hall and other buildings marked the expansion of the school and its student body. It became the premier center of girls' education in the peninsula at the beginning of the twentieth century.

Miss Lulu Bookwalter, a very young and charming missionary, became Principal of Uduvil in 1912. With great enthusiasm, determination and thoroughness she built up the College to the pinnacle of academic greatness. An impressive row of two storied modern classrooms, spacious and airy dormitories, science laboratories, a domestic science cottage and a well-stocked large library, were also added. At that time western music, dancing and drama were the norm in schools, but Miss Bookwalter sent a teacher to Rabindranath Tagore's Shantiniketan University to be trained in Indian music and dance, and on her return she taught those melodious Bengali Manipuri and Bharathanatyams. Uduvil was the first school to have such stage performances and orchestral items greatly appreciated by all. In 1920, the first batch of Uduvil students were sent to Womens' Christian College, Madras, for graduate studies and to Vellore Medical College, enabling many girls to become graduates and doctors in successive years. When Uduvil celebrated its first one hundred years in 1925 it had attained a great place of eminence as the oldest and best educational institution for girls.

Miss Bookwalter's twenty-five years at Uduvil was



Title page of the Memoirs of Mrs Harriet Winslow

celebrated in 1937 with a Praise and Thanksgiving service in the morning at the Uduvil Church. In the evening she was taken in a flower decked open car with natheswarem music players leading the slow procession around Uduvil. Old girls and well wishers greeted her all the way with garlands and gifts. It was indeed a memorable silver jubilee celebration of a beloved principal who was a great benefactor of the community and who made Jaffna an ocean of educated women. Miss Bookwalter retired in 1941.

The first national principal, Miss Ariam Hudson Paramasamy, appointed in November 1941, had to steer Uduvil through difficult times of educational changes, but with her friendliness and gracious ways, Uduvil progressed, imparting an all round education. It was made a grade I school in 1947. The 125th anniversary celebration in 1950 was a very significant and spectacular event with the dedication of the college chapel. The school opted to function as a private non-fee levying institution in 1960 in order to preserve its heritage and its historic role. The principal and staff had to work very hard to raise funds but parents, old girls and wellwishers responded magnanimously and the school maintained its educational excellence.

Mrs Saraswathy Somasunderam succeeded Miss Paramasamy on her retirement in 1970. She ably continued the rich traditions of excellence and established a work-oriented curriculum with vocational subjects like secretarial studies, type writing, bookkeeping, textile techniques, etc. The one hundred and fiftieth anniversary was proudly and grandly celebrated in 1974.

In spite of the vicissitudes that befell Jaffna in the 1980s and 90s, Dr Miss Selvi Chelliah, principal from 1982, has very courageously and efficiently run the institution maintaining high standards winning first places in interschool competitions and events, in spite of all the difficulties found in Jaffna. Today, Uduvil Day is celebrated yearly on November 24th – the birthday of Miss Bookwalter – with a Thanksgiving service and tree planting ceremonies in the vast college campus, by the final year students of that year. "The truth shall make you free", is the motto of the school, and all those who have passed through its portals, will feel its importance in their lives. The noble vision of Harriot Winslow in founding Uduvil has been a great blessing in turning the backward peninsula into an oasis of learning and advancement.

As we step into the 21st century, may we hope and pray that Uduvil will ever shine brightly in its service to the community. Its past is the fulfillment of the vision of the founders and its future is a promise to the generations to come. We thank God and praise Him for our beloved Alma Mater, Uduvil Girls College.

YOU WILL LOVE THIS ONE!!!

As we know, we see discrimination in some form or other almost every day and often times it leaves a sour

taste in our mouths. The following story shows us the side of diversity that we are all working towards. It is a pleasant twist to see that there are companies and individuals who face discrimination head on, if only one small step at a time.

British Airways should be applauded for their action in this situation. On a British Airways flight from Johannesburg, a middle-aged, well-off white South African lady found herself sitting next to a black man. She called the cabin crew attendant over to complain about her seating.

"What seems to be the problem, Madam?" asked the attendant.

"Can't you see?" she said, "You have sat me next to a kaffir. I can't possibly sit next to this disgusting human. Find me another seat!"

"Please calm down Madam," the stewardess replied, "The flight is very full today, but I'll tell you what I'll do, I'll go and check to see if we have any seats available in club or first class."

The woman cocks a snooty look at the outraged black man beside her (not to mention many of the surrounding passengers).

A few minutes later the stewardess returns with the good news, which she delivers to the lady, who cannot help but look at the people around her with a smug and self satisfied grin:

"Madam, unfortunately, as I suspected, economy is full. I've spoken to the cabin services director, and club is also full. However, we do have one seat in first class."

Before the lady has a chance to answer, the stewardess continues.... "It is most extraordinary to make this kind of upgrade however, and I have had to get special permission from the captain. But, given the circumstances, the captain felt that it was outrageous that someone be forced to sit next to such an obnoxious person."

With which, she turned to the black man sitting next to the woman and said, "So if you would like to get your things, sir, I have your seat ready for you..." At which point, apparently the surrounding passengers stood and gave a standing ovation, while the black guy walked up to the front of the aircraft.

....people will forget what you have said....

....people will forget what you have done....

....but people will never forget how you made them feel!

THE MEETING OF THE MELBOURNE CHAPTER 30 July 2000

The second meeting of the Chapter, held at Holy Redeemer Church Hall, commenced with Dr Srilal Fernando in the Chair. He directed the attention of those

present to two books, Vama Vamadevan's "The Story of the Sri Lanka Muslims" recently published, and "The Cocos Island Mutiny" by Noel Crusz to be published in January 2001. He then introduced the first speaker for the evening, Rodney St John, a life member of both the Wild Life Protection Society of Sri Lanka and the Royal Asiatic Society, whose subject was "The Birds of Sri Lanka: an Overview". Rodney, a keen and meticulous observer of birds, told us how he had pursued this fascinating hobby from the sixties and also after coming to Australia in 1987. He identified 102 species of birds common to both Sri Lanka and Australia, of which 60 are migrants to Sri Lanka. According to the statistics for 1994, while 463 species and sub-species in Sri Lanka had been identified; in comparison, India had some 900 odd species while the whole sub-continent had approximately 2000 species. Considering the relative size of our tiny island as against these much larger geographical entities, he said Sri Lanka was a paradise in this respect alone. Hence its popularity with so many enthusiastic bird watchers from all over the world.

Among other things, Rodney recounted the process by which a species comes to be officially recognized and recorded, providing a full list of names of people who had become famous through their dedication to observing birds, identifying species and finally writing books which are the popular manuals in use today. All this, and the birds themselves, in full colour, were brought alive with slides and the soundtrack of bird calls, for some of the species, which he used to illustrate his talk. It was a one hour presentation packed with detailed information, bird stories and the distinctive touches of someone who has a thorough knowledge of his subject. Rodney's sons Ajit and David deserve our thanks for their assistance with the technical aspects of the presentation. Victor Melder had brought along an array of books, including Legge's "Birds of Ceylon" for members to view, and even a weaver bird's nest which was amusingly described as resembling an "elephant's stocking".

The second speaker was Kyle Joustra, the Society's resident genealogist. Kyle gave us "A Short Introduction to Genealogy," a field in which his expertise has grown to such proportions that he is now dubbed the 'Altendorff of Melbourne'! He explained how his one page of information about his ancestry grew, in a period of seven months, into an book of many pages. In pursuing the origins of his Barber family name he has discovered a whole new country and culture, that of old Ceylon. It has put him in touch with many people whose genealogies he has researched, and also linked him with people in other countries who share an interest in the subject. Kyle now has a database containing the complete genealogies of 482 families with involvement in Ceylon and many more are in preparation, comprising a total of 34,500 names. He showed his listeners how exciting the quest to discover who one was could be, and in the process uncover a rich heritage to pass on to one's children.

On exhibition was a large chart which Kyle

had compiled of his family tree which was effectively an impressive map of a family. Both speakers had several questions to answer and then the meeting adjourned for tea and general conversation. Thirty five people attended. Dr Srilal Fernando announced that at the next meeting on 15th October at the same venue, Victor Melder will speak on "Railways in the 1950s, highlighting a nostalgic journey from Colombo to Badulla".

....Shelagh Goonewardene

MORE ABOUT THE JEWS IN SRI LANKA

Recently there was an article about the "Jews in Sri Lanka", and an interesting piece of history it was to read. But there is another probable source of people of Jewish origin in old Ceylon. Most of the names in the Colombo telephone directory of Portuguese origin – de Silva, Perera, Fernando, etc, indicate a probable Jewish origin. And this was true of Portuguese names in all the Portuguese colonies.

Apparently King Ferdinand and Isabella, the 15th century rulers of Spain, who financed Columbus's expedition to the New World, initiated the persecution and massacre of the Spanish Jews. These Jews had lived in peace in Spain under the Moorish rulers, but the defeat and expulsion of the Moors led to Catholic fundamentalism and a holocaust against them unfolded. Some who escaped the massacre fled, many to Eastern Europe and were hospitably received by the Turks. Others moved to a slightly more humane Portugal, where they were acceptable subject to one condition – conversion to Catholicism.

These converted Jews were called 'New Christians' to distinguish them from the rest of the population. They were not allowed to retain their former Jewish names nor could they lay claim to old Portuguese family names. Being the inventive people that they are, these Jews created names base on natural features. De Silva – 'of the woods', Salgado – 'salt lagoon', de Costa – 'of the coast', Caldera – 'crater', etc. Portuguese students will have no trouble locating the origins of Sri Lanka's Portuguese names.

(Centuries later a similar situation occurred further east in Europe where in many countries Jews were forced to change their names, and in this area colours were often used, sometimes a locality, or perhaps a trade name, etc. Have a look at many Jewish names in Europe and you will find Black, Green, Silver, Gold, etc (these are the English translations for the names of colours from the country of origin). This allowed instant identification of this group of people whether for their own benefit or for easy identification by the authorities)

Many of these new Christians enlisted as sailors and soldiers on the great Portuguese voyages of discovery. They were in search of a better future in colonies where their origins would be obscured in their general classification as Portuguese. Thus, most Portuguese names in Sri Lanka clearly have Jewish roots.

During the Dutch occupation our country was really ruled by the East Indies Company (VOC) which was a multinational legion of adventurers from all over Europe, not merely from the Netherlands. Hence the 'Dutch' Burgher names of French, Italian, German and Scandinavian origin. Among these are a few Russian and German names - Oorloff (Orlov), Walbeoff, Marks (Marx) etc, which seem to point to Jewish origin.

Britain too was quite anti-Semitic, especially before World War 2. This may explain the British Jews in the Colonial Civil and Judicial Services, seeking a prestige unthinkable at home. The best known of the Civil Servants was Leonard Woolf. Another was Gibbon Moneypenny. Among the Judges were Sidney Abrahams and Alan Rose. Research will surely unearth more.

The diaspora has left its imprint on Sri Lanka, after all.

(This article was culled and adapted from the 'Sunday Island' newspaper of Sunday, July 31, 1994, written by Tissa Devendra)

OUR FEB 2001 MEETING

THE ENIGMA OF THE LION ROCK - SIGIRIYA

In continuation of the series GLORY OF SRI LANKA HERITAGE, the video, THE ENIGMA OF THE LION ROCK - SIGIRIYA, will be screened at the February meeting.

Dr Harold Gunatilleke captures the breathtaking view of one of the world's most legendary monoliths, this time by helicopter. Located in the cultural triangle of Sri Lanka, it is now listed as one of the Wonders of the Ancient World.

Dr Arun Dias Bandaranayake brings it alive with his narration and focuses attention on this unique 5th century urban planning, architecture, hydrology and engineering wonder.

This is an excellent 45 minute production of clarity and quality filmed on DV-CAM. Copies will be available for sale after the screening.

JOHN STILL'S SPOT-ON PREDICTION

by Darnley De Souza

"On reading Hugh's amusing article in the May 2000 Journal on "The Colonial Hangover- The Royal Thomian Cricket Match and its global impact " I was reminded of the seeming omniscient prediction

made by John Still in his book "Jungle Tide", and I quote from pages 217-218. Though the apposite prediction is at the end of the quotation the whole is of interest.

"It is curious to consider what are the qualities in men's works that give them the power to survive, and it would be difficult to foretell which elements of our own, or any other civilisation, will persist for even one thousand years. Speaking in round figures, the Portuguese, the Dutch, and the British have each ruled over the lowlands of Ceylon for one and a half centuries. Of the political power of the Portuguese, who came first, no trace remains, and their descendants are assimilated and rank almost as a caste: the Dutch Burghers, who came second, still hold records of pedigrees that link them with Europe, and still have a political organization that enables them to keep their interests before Government. Their traditions of behaviour remain European rather than Asiatic. The British still rule. Of Portuguese titles to land I believe none exist, though titles based upon documents granted by the Sinhalese kings who ruled before them are not rare, and titles supported by Dutch documents are common. The law of the land is still called Roman-Dutch, though of course, it is profoundly modified by British enactments; but Portuguese law is mute. Yet the religion brought in by the Portuguese continues to be that of a large section of the populace; while those branches of Christianity professed by the British have relatively few adherents, and the Dutch Church almost none. Portuguese music survives too, though the songs of the Dutch are dead; and while half a dozen persons have learned to read Dutch for special reasons, Portuguese is still spoken freely in the poorer quarters of several towns. Fate has, for some reason, picked for survival, religion, language, and music from among the wisdom of the Portuguese; and law, household comfort and family pride from the customs of the Dutch; and some future observer will doubtless note what is selected for survival from among the manifold ways of the British. To hazard a prediction, I would give my vote to cricket" (The Italics are mine...Darnley).

Remember that these words of John Still were written about 1928-1929, and therefore his remarks have to be taken in this context. It is tempting to take his 'cricket prediction' as a tongue-in-cheek comment, but this seems unlikely judging from his personality as revealed in "Jungle Tide"

The use of the Portuguese language commented on by Still will not come as a surprise to readers. John Capper in his book "OLD CEYLON, sketches of Ceylon life in the olden times. "(1877) speaks of an event about the year 1810 when the Maha Mudaliyar Illangakoon entertained Governor Sir Thomas Maitland at his mansion in Matara. Capper gives a very detailed account of it with special attention to the full court costume of the host. He also goes on to say "..... but one thing I may note,

though calculated to surprise my readers, that not only was the conversation between host and guest carried on in Portuguese, but most of the speeches and the replies were in that language" (p 105). It was the same Governor Mait-



Maha Mudaliyar Illangakoon meeting Governor Maitland

land (1805-1811) who made it a requirement that the language the Civil Servant had to master, in addition to Sinhalese, was Portuguese which was then in common use. In 1824 Tamil was substituted for Portuguese. (Ref: Diaries in Ceylon 1908-1911- Leonard Woolf, note 16 on p xvii, The Hogarth Press 1963)

An amusing postscript to this letter is a verse in Portuguese that my wife's grandfather had learnt as a child and passed down to his grand children. He claimed he had been taught the words by a Portuguese speaking lady. This must have been around 1900. It goes like this:

(Anthony, come here! dance the dance)

Nukusa bay. (I don't know)

Sanchi thre-a-rotha (Sanchi bring the cane)

Baila nona baila nona (Anthony starts dancing)

Note that this is only my phonetic version of the Portuguese, and is accompanied by a joining of both hands and a play of the opposite fingers at each line and finally all five fingers imitating the dance.

REMEMBERING NOEL DE SILVA

Noel de Silva who died suddenly on 8 August 2000, was 81 and believed he had been living on borrowed time since recovering almost miraculously, from a serious illness in 1994. Those 81 years were marked by vigorous enthusiasms and tenacious affections.

His abiding love was for his family; his wife Imelda whom he nursed through many years of a losing battle with Parkinson's Disease, his children Jehan, Tamara, and Dilly, his daughter in law, Julianne, and his grandson Suharshan.

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Noel was gregarious, reflecting perhaps, the large family of nine to which he belonged and which grew up on Dunsinane Estate, Pundaluoya. His devotion to his friends was overwhelming, his loyalty beyond question. He had endless time for them and in their company excelled as raconteur, expert cook, dynamic and highly argumentative bridge and/or poker player, and when all else failed, he would fling himself into the beguiling rhythms of the bailsa. He was profoundly interested in the development of Sri Lanka where he had been a political activist in the days before Independence. His concern for the country remained unabated though living in Melbourne for more than two and a half decades. One of his great enthusiasms was for 'Samata Sarana', the refuge created by Sister Bernie and Fr Joe de Mel on a disused rubbish tip in Mutwal.

In the best possible way, Noel was the universal man - widely read, fond of music, appreciative of art and with a fine sense of history: indeed, he was ever the student seeking to learn and understand.

A staunch belief in social justice led Noel time and again to expressing himself in the press, taking up the cause of the depressed and the downtrodden. He was outraged at the injustices suffered by the indigenous Australian. In his time, Noel was private secretary to a Minister of State in independent Sri Lanka's first Parliament, a newspaper circulation manager, a senior executive in charge of a pharmaceutical department, and an administrator with a tertiary institution in Melbourne.

And when that too came to a close when Noel retired at 70, he volunteered his services and worked first with Community Aid Abroad and the St Vincent de Paul Society, and later for the Anti-Cancer Council and Meals on Wheels. He was quite indefatigable. Many are the causes to which he would cheerfully have laid down his life. His funeral service took place on 11 August 2000 at St Peter's Church, Clayton, Victoria.

Neville Weeraratne

(NOTE BY EDITOR: Noel was a member of our Society. A delightful account of his youthful days on Dunsinane Estate, is found in the book written by his brother the late Lloyd Oscar de Silva entitled "Echoes in the Memory" Melbourne 1992.)

THANK YOU!

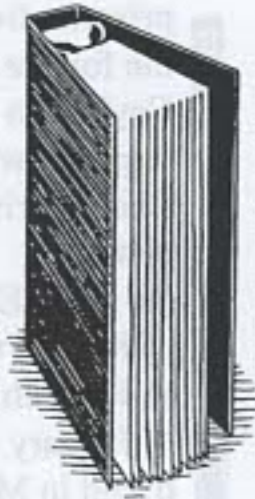
The Ceylon Society of Australia gratefully acknowledges the support provided by UNIVERSAL MAGAZINES PTY LTD towards the production of this journal.

BOOK REVIEW

TALES OF THE BLUE ELEPHANT

-Life and Times with the Ceylon Police

by Douglas Ranmuthugala



Douglas Ranmuthugala's book is an autobiography of his career in the Sri Lankan Police force, but it is much more than an account of his career. It is a treasure, honey combed with references to the sociopolitical context of his work, and also with his interactions with the interesting characters of his time. In addition, the author provides the reader with constant descriptions and explanations of the historical, archaeological and cultural significance of the numerous places and events that came within his ambit of work. The book is a pleasure to read because it is well written with a fine turn of phrase and expression.

The book begins with an account of his undergraduate days at the University of Ceylon, Peradeniya. His description of the beautiful physical environment of the University was accurate, although his view of student life was rather idyllic. However, he did identify the tensions that existed between the two distinct parts of the student population, the English and the non English streams in the fifties and sixties, and that they did portend the changes that were to eventuate in the country over the next half of the century. He dealt with them objectively.

Ranmuthugala then provides a brief history of the 19th Century Ceylon police identifying some of their duties, which carried over into the 20th Century, and were anachronistic to modern policing. I found his account of the capture of Sardiel the highwayman particularly interesting because it gives the lie to the official account in which the English Asst Government Agent Saunders is credited with the outlaw's capture. Sardiel was arrested through the efforts of five Ceylonese policemen, three of whom died in the execution of their duty.

Ranmuthugala began his career as a Probationary ASP in 1958 during a period of instability caused by SWRD's assassination which was then followed by an attempted coup d'etat in 1962 and in 1971 by a failed insurrection and then the secessionist movement in the North. During these traumatic years he was promoted from ASP to SP to Commissioner of Police Colombo and then to Deputy Inspector General of Police. Because of the political uncertainty in the country and its effect on the administration, he had to accept frequent transfers from one region to another and to a variety of postings. These frequent postings gave him a breath of experience, which he probably would not have acquired in such a short time if the country had been stable as it had been in the

past. In spite of the exigencies of the service, he attended training courses in the U.K. which were mandatory for Superintendents of Police, and with the elite Mossad Secret Service in Israel. This overseas exposure, undoubtedly helped him to accommodate new ideas and practices, and has stood him in good stead with his work in Papua New Guinea and Australia in subsequent years. His rapid rise in the Ceylankan Police reflects both his competence and his integrity during a very difficult period in Sri Lankan history, although it must be said that Ranmuthugala makes no overt claim to either of these virtues.

The book is interesting reading from cover to cover because, besides the analytical commentary, the reader is introduced to many personalities and colourful characters across a broad spectrum of society, with anecdotal references to each of them: Fred Brohier, Karl Van Rooyen, Sgt Major Nalawangsa, Hugh Bagot, 1411 Silva, Stanley Senanayake, Attygalle, Earnest Perera, Colin Premaratne, Vamadevan, Brute Mahendran, Gopallawa the then Governor General, and many others.

I recommend the book without reserve to anyone who seeks an insight into what was happening in Sri Lankan Society from the late 1950s to the 1980s.

Cedric Forster

Tales of the Blue Elephant -Life and Times with the Ceylon Police- Douglas Ranmuthugala.

A Sarvodaya Vishva Lekha Publication (Colombo) 2000
ISBN 955-599-187-1

243 Pages.

Price \$20.00 (in Australia)

We extend a warm welcome to the following new

NEW MEMBERS

members, and wish them a long association with the Society's activities.

Mr Kit Abeyawardena ENDEAVOUR HILLS,
VIC 3802

Dr Victor Kanapathy, CAMBERWELL VIC

Mr Cedric Forster, KEW, VIC 3129

Prof Jonathan Walters, WALLA WALLA, WASHINGTON, USA

Dr John B Chapman STRATHFIELD, NSW 2135

Mr Upali M.W. Gunawardena ROWVILLE, VIC
3128

Mr Upali Aranwela, NORTH RYDE, NSW 2113

Mr Aloysius De Souza, LINDEN PARK SA 5065

Mr Tilak Wijewardena, PARKDALE, VIC 3194

Mr Stanley J Sparkes, FOREST LAKE, QLD 4075

Mr Paul Samaratunga, BRIGHTON VIC 3186

Mr Justin F Driberg, MERENO VALLEY, CALIFORNIA 92551, USA

Mr Jeffrey de Silva, BLACKBURN VIC 3130

Dr Carlyle Perera, DEEPDENE VIC 3103

THE KANDYAN PRISONERS IN MAURITIUS

by Hugh Karunanayake

Nihal de Zoysa's interesting item on the tomb of Ehelepola (page 7) prompted me to advert to a little known work which gives a lot of information on the lives and times of the Kandyan exiled to Mauritius, after the 1818 rebellion in Ceylon. It is a set of four volumes entitled 'A Voyage around the World' by James Holman published in 1835. Holman visited Mauritius in December 1829, eight months after the death of Ehelepola. At the time of his visit, there were seven Kandyan state prisoners, and eleven other convicts from Ceylon sent to attend on the state prisoners. Of the seven, five were Chieftains. The first batch was taken to Mauritius in 1819, consisting of twenty four Kandyan state prisoners sent under the charge of Lieut Stewart of the 2nd Ceylon regiment, with an interpreter. In 1820, Major Bates of the Royal Artillery, brought another

prisoner from Ceylon, and also an interpreter, to relieve the former one, who with Lieut Stewart, returned to Ceylon. In 1821, Don Bastian arrived to relieve the interpreter who came with Major Bates. In 1823, Major Bailey arrived with two state prisoners and thirteen convicts.

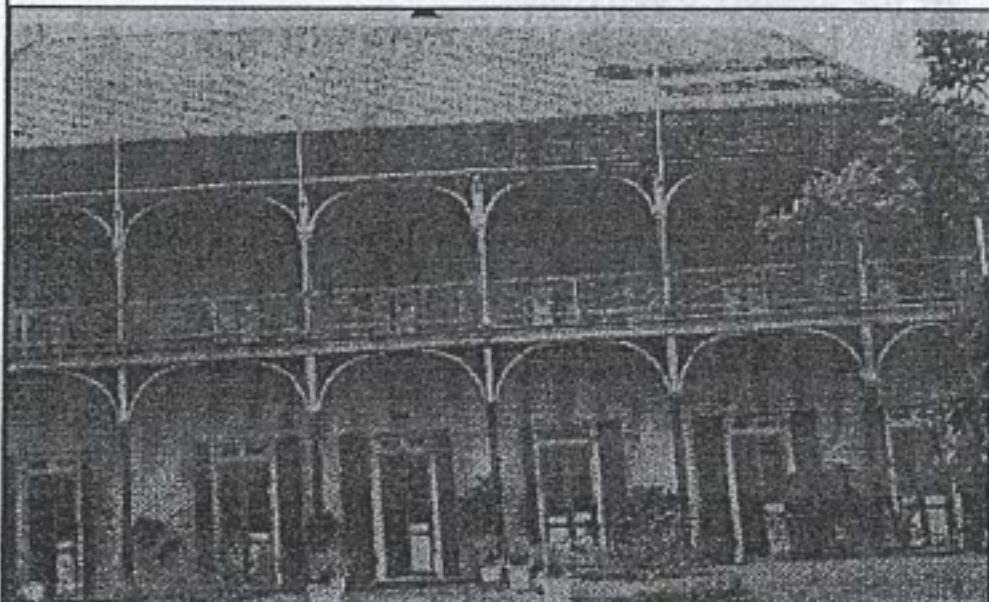
In 1825, Ehelepola, the Prime Minister to the last King of Kandy, was brought with two convicts, two women, and one child, by Don William, brother to Don Bastian. In January 1829, the Kandyan prisoners lost a kind friend in Major Bates, who died after a short illness. Don Bastian especially for whom he had entertained a particular regard, and who was only consoled, in an eight years separation from his family, by the Major's friendship, now found his position so insupportable, that he applied to the Ceylon Government, requesting to be immediately relieved. Lieut Vicars succeeded to the command over the prisoners, and in the April following, Ehelepola died, and his remains were consumed in a coffin, on a funeral pile, according to the Kandyan tradition.

According to Holman, the British Government which confined Ehelepola in Colombo from 1818 to 1825, felt the need to have him removed to Mauritius, where he was kept apart from the other Kandyan prisoners. The other Kandyan prisoners were accommodated in the building called the Powder Mills. Ehelepola however was given a comfortable two storied residence which is believed to be in the botanical gardens in Pamplemoues called Mon Plasir. Don Bastian served as Ehelepola's interpreter and butler.

Holman was highly impressed by Ihigamme the Buddhist priest who was one of the state prisoners. He described him as "the most intelligent person among the prisoners" and "so extraordinary a character", and went on to detail his life history as told to him, including the priest's friendship with Sir John D'Oyley, the British Agent in Kandy.

James Holman left Mauritius for Colombo together with Don Bastian in January 1830, in the vessel *Constance*. He travelled through the island often accompanied by Don Bastian for whom he had a high personal regard. He visited Bastian's father Don Johannes, in his coconut estate near Ratmalana and whose 'house possessed a few unexpected comforts owing to his son, who had acquired a taste for European customs, during his residence at Mauritius'. During his stay of about four months in the island, he was able to meet many of the important personages of the time including Mjor Colebrooke, George Turnour, Sir Hudson Lowe and others from whom he was able to gather significant insight into the situation then existent in Ceylon.

The photograph shown here was taken recently, and is believed to be that of Mon Plasir in which Ehelepola lived out his last days.



The house believed to be Mon Plasir in which Ehelepola lived his last years

REQUEST FOR INFORMATION

We are looking for the parentage and origin of GEORGE RAWDIN who married EUGENIE CATHERINE LORET on 4 -2-1875 at All Saints Church Galle. We would be most grateful for any information anyone may have or come across concerning these people, or information on Loret's Hotel later known as Ephraums Hotel. Please contact Jacky Morris on e-mail at: <morris_jacky@hotmail.com>

ELEPHANTS ON THE MAHAWELI

A Poem By Dr R L Spittel

Where are the homes the elephants haunt?

They are there in the lonely places
Where the hand of nature boldly flaunts
Her strength and majestic graces

How are the waters in which he lazes
Are they broad and fast and strong?
Yes, and quiet as silent graves
They sing no rippling song

And what of the tress? Strange hunter,
say,
They are gaunt and grand and tall,
And wistfully still as a bygone day,
Withe heaven covering all

And of the elephant, what of him?
He roams where he will and when
And feeds in those fragrant forests grim,
Far from the ways of men.

They wrought of mighty thew and
bone,
Soft is his tread and slow
In swamp and harbour, far and lone
Where the languid breezes blow
Richard L Spittel

NAUTICAL SNIPPETS

(Culled from the Port of Colombo Quarterly of September 1954, by Somasiri Devendra)

Two descendants of the men who mutinied on the Bounty were among the passengers travelling to U.K. on the M.V. Australia. One of them, Mr J. Asperu, recalled that he had visited Colombo once before, when he passed through with the New Zealand contingent to Gallipoli and France during World War 1. The other, Mr J Pitman is a padre. The canoes beached at Mount Lavinia, Ceylon's famed seaside resort, reminded them of the outrigger craft used by the Polynesian Islanders. Both are from Cook Island.

During the Japanese air attack on Colombo on Easter Sunday 1942, H.M.S. Tenedos was sunk in harbour and among the personnel killed was Sir Robert Peel, who was serving as a volunteer. Recently, a trip half way round the world ended when his mother Beatrice Lillee, Britain's well known stage star, stood by his grave in Colombo's General Cemetery. Beatrice Lillee is the widow of Sir Robert Peel(snr), a descendant of the famous British Prime Minister of the same name.

Twelve years ago, during world war 2, a sailing vessel bound for Colombo from the Port of Akyab was machine gunned and scuttled off the Andamans by a Japanese surface craft. The members of the crew were picked up by a passing ship and landed in Madras, however, not before one of their number was killed by a shark.

A sequel to this episode of the war at sea was an application made recently by the survivors who claim, that due to the injuries and privations suffered when their vessel was sunk, that they are now no longer able to earn a livelihood.

MAISIE DE SILVA 1907 - 1997 RETROSPECTIVE

A retrospective exhibition of paintings and drawings by Maisie de Silva will be held at the Lionel Wendt Gallery, Colombo on October 20 -25, 2000

The exhibition has been organised by the late Mrs de Silva's son Dr Rajpal de Silva, and daughters Dr Lilamani, Nela, and Preethi.

An 80 page illustrated catalogue commemorating the exhibition, and containing biographical notes on the life of the artist, as well as colour photo images of the exhibits together with explanatory notes, has been published. Copies of the catalogue will be available at our next meeting on 11 November 2000, at a cost of \$10 each. All proceeds from the sale of the catalogue will be donated to the Mallika Home, Visakha Road, Bambalapitiya.



CEYLON SOCIETY OF AUSTRALIA

OBJECTIVES-Promote interest in, and study of Sri Lanka's history, heritage, literature, arts, and interests in collectibles relating to Sri Lanka. The Society is non political and non sectarian.

MEMBERSHIP- A\$ 25.00 per annum
A\$ 20.00 p.a. Overseas members
A\$ 10.00 p.a. Pensioners/students.

For enrolment please apply to the Treasurer Mr V. Vamadevan 3 Collie Court, Wattle Grove, NSW 2173. Tel 61-2-98251542

Cheques to be drawn crossed in favour of the
CEYLON SOCIETY OF AUSTRALIA

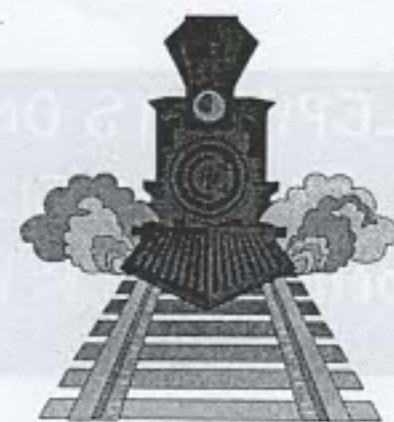
FACILITIES: Members are entitled to attend the quarterly meetings in Sydney or Melbourne. They will also receive the Society's journal THE CEYLON KAN, and access the library

CEYLON SOCIETY OF AUSTRALIA MELBOURNE CHAPTER

AT OUR NEXT MEETING

VICTOR MELDER

will speak on



RAILWAYS IN THE 1950S HIGHLIGHTING A NOSTALGIC JOURNEY FROM COLOMBO TO BADULLA

DATE: SUNDAY 15 OCTOBER 2000

TIME: 6.00 p.m.

VENUE: Holy Redeemer Church Hall
Corner of York Street and
Mont Albert Road, Surrey Hills
VIC 3127
(MELWAYS REF 46H10)

An informal discussion will be followed
by tea.

Inquiries to:

Dr Srilal Fernando (AH) 9809 1004
Shelagh Goonewardene (AH) 9808 4962