

The CEYLANKAN

The Journal of the Ceylon Society of Australia

Edition # 15, July, 2001

EDITORIAL

Our Society has had a great first 3 years, and the concepts envisaged originally appear to be, at this time, the correct ones. What was not contemplated was the rapid growth of the CSA and the accompanying success of the CEYLANKAN with its increased costs. When the membership was small the entire production of the journal was performed by members, ie, editing, setup, collating, organising the images, printing, addressing envelopes and even putting the journal into the envelopes. Our costs were quite minimal at this stage. We have moved on and the last 3 editions have had to be out-sourced for the printing only, which means of course increased costs. The editing, collating and setup etc, are still performed by members. Postage is another area of increased costs, the Government shrewdly changing the rules escalating the rates fairly sharply for large envelopes. We have checked to see if there are advantages being on the "special magazine list" for cheaper postage, but we are not eligible due to insufficient numbers of the journal at this stage. When we hit the 400 mark in membership the new postage rules can be applied, and thus savings.

The CSA is not trying to make a profit out of its existence, but at the moment we have to be practical financially and I believe the time has come to raise some of our subscription rates a small amount. We are currently trying to find a lower priced printing company, and believe we can keep the subscriptions at the new price for some considerable time. Our next executive meeting will determine where we go. At this stage in all probability it will only be the overseas and pensioner/student rates that will have to be raised by a small amount as with the new postage rates, their subscriptions do not cover costs. And we are looking at other methods of raising funds to keep out dues as low as possible.

HOW TO BECOME A MEMBER OF THE CEYLON SOCIETY OF AUSTRALIA Contact Vama Vamadevan

3 Collie Court,

Wattle Grove, NSW, 2173

Full Membership: A\$25/year

Overseas Membership: A\$25/year

Pensioner/Student: \$15/year

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THE CEYLAN KAN is printed quarterly. Every effort is made to print material that is relevant and correct, but we do not take responsibility for errors. The editorial committee would appreciate being informed of inaccuracies. Original material is sought, preferably of an anecdotal, historical nature, but anything is considered provided it equates with the Society's ideals – of being of a non-racist, non-political, non-religious and non-confrontational format.

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SYDNEY MEETING ON 13TH MAY 2001

The day was Mothers' Day, perhaps not the ideal day for a meeting but a good crowd rolled up to hear (and see) two excellent presentations about the Ceylon elephant. Teresa Cannon and Peter Davies are "elephantphiles", for want of a better description of them! And their interesting talk, well illustrated with slides, held the audience's attention throughout.

Teresa spoke first giving a fine explanation of the animal *Elephas maximus maximus*. The elephant is a sub-species of the Indian species, and distinguished by certain features: the domed head, the raised dorsal spine, a lack of pigmentation on the front of the upper trunk and the increased wrinkles on the trunk itself. It was interesting to hear that the animal is poor-sighted, needs 100 to 200 kilograms of vegetable matter each day for sustenance, the gestation period is 22-24 months, and that they take great care of their feet!

Care of the animals at the orphanage at Pinnawella was demonstrated on slides, and the care that the mahouts give their charges was appealing.

Peter talked about the use of the elephant as a 'worker', and its importance in religious ceremonies. He emphasized the work currently being done to ensure the animal remain safe from extinction, and mentioned the severe drop in numbers from 12,000 at the beginning of the 19th century to some 2000 today. How the European hunters, mainly British used to shoot these majestic animals for sport, one hunter having more than 1000 kills to his credit (or discredit whichever way you look at it).

Teresa and Peter have produced a wonderful book about their elephant 'obsession', called "ALIYA". It can be obtained from them at the following:

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The second presentation was by Dr Harold Gunatilleke, a fine film about the elephant which only enhanced the slide talk. Harold's films are well produced and this was certainly enjoyed by all. The Perahera was illustrated with all the pomp and ceremony it exhibits, and the elephant "circus" where the animals performed various 'tricks' – standing on small stools, sitting on each other, standing on their hind legs, or balanced on their front legs and trunk, was entertaining.

Harold's video can be purchased from him at....

We thank the evening's presenters for their time and their well prepared and very interesting presentations.

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MELBOURNE MEETING MAY 2001

Genealogy is a subject that is attracting increasing interest among people who wish to

explore the past in order to gain clearer ideas about their ancestors, which in turn provides valuable clues about their own identity. Kyle Joustra has now become a familiar name for his expertise in this field in Melbourne and to many who contact him from other cities and even other countries. His talk was entitled "Genealogy and the making of history, with special reference to Ceylon." Starting with the origins of the surname, which derive from such things as occupations, localities and other main areas of living, he went on to give a brief window of historic events in

Ceylon, principally the arrival of the Portuguese, Dutch and British, showing how history is the engine that drives the growth and development of so much including the proliferation and forms that names take. His

historical sketch extended through World Wars I and II and the coming of Independence.

He dwelt on the motivation for a person to take the journey of tracing his or her name which meant unexpected and sometimes unwelcome discoveries. But he stressed that there is really no political, social or colour structure in genealogy. It is a straightforward search and its findings have to be accepted without connotations that try to obscure its essential simplicity.

Kyle's goal is to produce CD's for libraries so that people can trace their genealogies and also he wants to send back the correct information he has compiled to Sri Lanka where the information available has deteriorated due

to lack of care, and continues to deteriorate at an alarming rate. He has copies of all the primary records such as the birth and death registers of the Wolvendaal Church.

An interesting discussion followed the presentation, fuelled by many questions from the audience. Kyle had also mounted an exhibit which featured his own genealogy, attractively illustrated with photographs, and a map of Ceylon dated 1695, among other items. He now has over 43,000 names in his data-base, testifying to his dedication to the subject.

Two documents prepared by Kyle were circulated to members of the audience. One consisted of two pages of names in alphabetical order which was an impressive sample of the variety and variations of Sri Lankan names.

The other document gave useful information which provided the backbone to the presentation under three main headings: Names/Surnames and Tracing their History, Sources of Information and Examples of reasons for your name's formation/existence.

The raffle draw was won by Tilak Wijewardene and the winning ticket was drawn by Lyn de Souza. Dr Srilal Fernando who chaired the meeting announced that the next meeting would be held in September and the speaker would be Mr H.L. Mahindapala on the subject "The Major Political and Social Movements in 20th century Sri Lanka." The exact date of the meeting would be notified later.

... Shelagh Goonewardene

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STOP PRESS!

The Sydney branch held a special meeting at very short notice on June 24th with Kyle Joustra, visiting from Melbourne, speaking on Genealogy. Shelagh has more than adequately covered Kyle's material in her Melbourne report. Enough to say that a good roll

up enjoyed his presentation and many from the audience kept Kyle busy during supper. His talk was well organised and illustrated.

Our second speaker was Dr Laksman Rajasinghe, who spoke about the health system in ancient Ceylon. It was a most interesting talk and went back to the earliest days on the Island. Of particular interest were the architectural structures built in these early times to accommodate the sick. The illustrations of some of these buildings and modalities makes us realise how advanced care of the sick was in Ceylon in this early period.

Dr Laksman related the health history from the 4th C BC. How hospitals were established with good facilities in these early times and how King Dutugamuwa 101-77 BC, established small hospitals in each village. The biggest and best being built by Parakrama Bahu the Great, (1153-1186). Several Buddhist monasteries also had health facilities. Hygiene was of particular concern, and the drainage systems developed in the large facilities at Polonaruwa and Anuradhapura, were engineering masterpieces putting to shame what was available in Europe at the time. There was also great emphasis on prevention of health problems in these early years.

Dr Laksman's talk will be the subject of an article in a forthcoming CEYLANKAN.

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TEACHING AT RICHMOND COLLEGE

March 10th, 1974

....by Joe Simpson

A reasonably hectic week in a long, essentially unromantic, and often frustrating term. I organized a performance by some singers from the American evangelical ship *Logos* currently docked in Galle Harbour – the little fellows from the Hostel were especially thrilled with the ventriloquist act (“Wake up, Abdul!”). I also fixed up a visit by the Hostel kids to the ship itself through much negotiating with police, port officials, and the ship's crew. I marched them straight past a long, long queue of some 2,000 locals lined up at the dockside. This fairly made my reputation as far as Ariyadasa de Silva was concerned, although, mind you, he himself was rather the worse for arrack at the time. “Ariya” and I have been working closely since the Bandarawela trip, and his promise to secure me more classroom work (especially in the form of a group of students keen on learning English through activities such as hiking, films, talks on world affairs etc) has encouraged me immensely.

A football match that I organized between the *Logos* crew and the Galle soccer players, fell through when the former failed to show up...the Galle players then went along to the ship and were presented with a set of bibles, presumably by way of compensation! The ship was an American Evangelical vessel, and the crew members insisted on preaching the gospels to the population of Galle (being 95% Buddhist) in places such as the Town Hall, after enticing them there with promises of music and dancing. Letters went out addressed to the principals of the local *Buddhist* schools, starting off with “Dear *Christian* Leader”, and so forth. The apathetic response of the local populace, as well as of the local school principals, fortunately prevented these sorts of cultural *faux pas* from causing too much of a disturbance!

The ship's crew, consisting mainly of intensely serious, clean-cut, college-age Bible Belt Americans, all carry around on their persons miniature tape cassette players, on which they

must listen to inspirational scriptural quotations every half hour. Otherwise, the only incident of note during the mission ship's visit involved some local rogues who transferred a quantity of religious books from being displayed on the lower deck, into an out-rigger strategically stationed on the water directly below. A local Jesuit Father and some evangelical Christians from the ship loudly and furiously gave chase unsuccessfully to the fleeing, and infinitely more fleet of foot, "biblio"-pirates!

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WHY WE ARE PROUD TO BE AUSTRALIAN CITIZENS!

Only in Australia...

- ..can a pizza get to your house faster than an ambulance;
- ..are there handicap parking spaces in front of a skating rink
- ..do Supermarkets make the sick people walk all the way to the back of the store to get their prescriptions while healthy people can buy cigarettes at the front
- ..do people order a double cheeseburger, large fries...and a Diet Coke
- ..do banks leave both doors open and chain the pens to the counter
- ..do we leave cars worth thousands of dollars in the driveway, and store our junk in the garage
- ..do we use answering machines to screen calls and then have call waiting so we wont miss a call
 - from someone we didn't want to talk to in the first place
- ..do we buy hot dogs in packs of ten and buns in packs of 6 or 8
- ..do we use the word "politics" to describe the process of Government ("Poli" in Greek meaning
 - "many" and "tics" meaning "blood sucking creatures".

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ERRATA....

Kingsley Siebel's letter on p11, CEYLAN 14, should have been headed **Louis Edmund Blaze**. He was never 'Edward' but was always Louis Edmund.

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HERE THEY ARE!!!

Change is inevitable, except from a vending machine.

24 hours in a day. 24 beers in a case. Coincidence? I think not!

The Dark Ages were caused by the Y1K problem.

What happens if you get scared half to death twice?

Ambivalent? Well yes and no.

Toilet stolen from Police Station. Cops have nothing to go on!

Corduroy pillows are making headlines!

Gargling is a good way to see if your throat leaks.

He who dies with the most toys is nonetheless dead!

Honk if you love peace and quiet!

....don't you love these bits of nonsense!!!

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THE COLOMBO - KANDY ROAD

...By Victor Melder

Roads existed in the Sacred City of Anuradhapura, the Royal Cities of Polonnaruwa and Kandy, prior to the foreigners invading Sri Lanka. In the citadel of Kandy, many roads existed, but the Kings at the time fearing invasion by the foreigners, who were constantly knocking at the door, left the roads to disrepair and even forbade its citizens to cut a pathway through a thicket, lest the invading hordes made use of them to invade the city.

Between Colombo and Kandy, there existed then, what was called a 'military road', a sort of pathway, which the foreigners used on many an occasion (by which men had to walk in single file) in order to reach Kandy.. This later was developed into a more accessible pathway, and ran through Hanwella, Sitawaka, Ruanwella, Attapitiya and across Balana pass, a distance of 91 miles. Whilst there were cart tracks to other towns, they did not exist to Kandy

No carts were available and from 1815 to 1820, during the first five years of British occupation of Kandy, the government paid a coolie, who could carry only 40 pounds of goods, at 5 rds* or 8sh 9p per journey/load, (when 11 3/7 rds* equalled one Pound Sterling). This was equivalent to 28 coolies costing 12 Pounds 5sh for a cart load of 1,100 pounds. (*rds=rixdollars)

By 1821, the pathway had been improved enough to take cart traffic, and the government contract for a cart trip from Colombo – Kandy was 3 Pounds 1sh 3d, considerably less than the costs involved by coolie labour. Over the next few years coffee was introduced into the Kandy area, and with 300 coffee plantations coming into being, the need for cart traffic was great. Yearly tolls on carts on the Colombo-Kandy Road varied from 18,000 Pounds Sterling to 21,000 Pounds Sterling, at 12 shillings per cart up and down. This is equal to about 30,000 carts per year.

Within nine years of the signing of The Kandyan Convention (1815), the Great Kandy road was commenced by Sir Edward Barnes, "the Road Maker" (1824-1831). When he resigned the Government in 1831 there were carriage roads connecting every town of importance. Much of this progress was due to the courage and endurance of Major Skinner, and as a

lasting monument to him stands the Colombo-Kandy Road – *(An article on Major Skinner would be an interesting one for the CEYLAN!)...Ed*

This new road to Kandy was 72 miles in length and followed a different route to Kandy, crossing the Kelani Ganga in Colombo. It then traveled a comparatively straight road to Ambepussa, climbed up what we call the Kadugannawa Pass, crossing the “old road” just below Balana, and then across the Mahaweli Ganga at Peradeniya, instead of Gannoruwa. It is reported, that in 1865, there were on this road 2,300 dwelling houses and 707 halting stations.

The first sod was cut in 1820 and the track was complete in 1821, but was not opened to traffic until 1825. Even then it had few culverts and bridges, which were not completed until 1883. The metalling was not begun until 1841. Meanwhile, the character of the road was described by the Chief Justice, Sir Harding Giffard in verse:

Marshes and quagmires, puddles, pools and swamps,
Dark matted jungles and long plushy plains
Exhaling foetid airs and mortal damps,
By Kandyan perfidy miscalled a Road
Through which the luckless traveler must wade
Uncheered by sight of man or man's abode.

Major Skinner, who was given a commission at the age of 14, whilst still under age, was appointed to build a portion of the Kandy road from Ambampitiya to Warakapola, or just above the half-way mark, at a gradient of “one in twenty”. His superior officer left him without explaining what this meant, and Skinner, a Lieutenant at the time of his appointment, did not ask.

Many bridges were built on the road, and this enabled the first Mail Coach in Asia to run between Colombo and Kandy during the administration of Sir Robert Horton (1831-1837). Prominent among those bridges stood the picturesque Bridge-Of-Boats, fittingly called “The Glory of Sir Edward Barnes” across the great Kelani Ganga and the beautiful Satinwood bridge across the Mahaweli Ganga at Peradeniya.

The Bridge-Of-Boats at Grandpass was commenced in 1822 and completed at a cost of Sixteen Thousand Pounds Sterling. It was replaced by the Victoria Bridge in 1893 at a cost of Rs 503,272. The Satinwood bridge at Peradeniya, a single span of 250 feet, was commenced in December 1826, and completed in 1832. It was designed by Lieut. General Fraser (who was responsible for the Bridge-Of-Boats) and was built on the barrack square in Colombo out of timber obtained from Trincomalee, and transported in sections by river. The bridge replaced a ferry which had been in use at the spot.

In 1842 there were four tolls on the Colombo-Kandy Road and in 1843 three tolls. By 1844 it was reported that the number of bullock carts with goods passing between Colombo and Kandy had arisen to about 79,000 annually, and the average hire about 2 Pounds 10 shillings, showing a cost of transport between Colombo and Kandy, of 197,500 Pounds Sterling annually. In the twenty five year period that the tolls existed, more than 600,000 Pounds Sterling was collected from over 2 and a half million carts.

It must be agreed that the man who built this road up the Kadugannawa Pass, deserves a monument, or at least a medal. Actually he has a monument, the tower standing above the right hand side of the road. The man was Capt WF Dawson, officer commanding the Royal Engineers, who died in Colombo on the 28th March 1829. He was evidently a very popular officer, for Governor Barnes placed an obituary in the Government Gazette and the cost of the monument was met by public subscription.

The cartage of goods by these carts was tedious and uncertain, and the expense was greatly increased by reason of the extensive mortality among the cattle employed; so much so, that occasionally coolies, each bearing a load of merchandise, were dispatched from Colombo to Kandy, in preference to the cart mode of conveyance.

Sir Henry Ward reported in the Legislative Council in 1855, "during the great pressure in 1854, 4 Pounds 10sh was paid for a bullock cart taking to Kandy a half load of rice and returning to Colombo with 15cwt of parchment or 10cwt of dried coffee, and the time employed upon the road, which under ordinary circumstances does not exceed from 6 to 8 days, varied in many circumstances from 14 to 18, while in some cases it took a month and even six weeks, before the goods were delivered".

The Kandy Road destroyed the isolation of Kandy. What is more, it introduced a new king. He was not George III or George IV: he was King Coffee: and Governor Barnes had helped him to reign, for one of the first coffee estates was planted by Governor Barnes himself at Gannoruwa, now destined to be the Farm School.

As soon as the Kandy road was opened it was realized that a new source of profit, greater than cinnamon, offered itself. People poured into the Kandyan hills. Usually they were British, for they alone had the money to invest and the initiative needed. The flourishing coffee industry outstripped the road's slow pace of delivery and soon a new method of quicker delivery of the product to Colombo was considered. Thus was spawned the concept of the Colombo – Kandy railway.

Bibliography;

The Kandy Road by Sir Ivor Jennings, University of Peradeniya, 1993

The Ceylon Railway by G. F. Perera, The Ceylon Observer, 1925

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Dear David,

A few weeks ago, I received a copy of the May 2000 issue of 'The CEYLANKAN' from Kenneth Harvie, my brother-in-law in Brisbane. I was quite impressed with the quality of material on a variety of topics, some of which are of great historical value. Some of the articles also take us back to a forgotten era that we must strive to keep alive.

I was particularly interested in the piece on Plate's, the well-known photographers of yesteryear. That hallowed institution holds a special place in my heart for a very special reason. Over half a century ago, Plate's took my wedding picture. It happened like this. My marriage to Olga Harvie, Ken's sister, was solemnized at the Holy Cross Church in Hatton. I travelled from Badulla for the wedding. Plate's cameraman came all the way from Colombo. The train reached Hatton around midnight, and the good gentleman was able to snatch a few hours sleep at his hotel before he showed up for the 8 a.m. wedding. He was in a full suit, complete with necktie - a real 'Mahattaya.'

Since it was obviously not going to be a studio picture, we posed for the camera in the backyard of the church. A blanket took the place of the customary carpet. The bill for the entire operation of three copies each of the couple and group, including second-class train fare and incidental expenses came to Rs. 200 - barely enough for a restaurant 'buth-curry' today. The black and white photographs, still in excellent condition, are on the wall of our Toronto home, reminiscent of an age gone by.

As I write this, Ken has also sent me the January 2001 issue, which, at a cursory glance, seems even more interesting than the previous one. It is also good to see the names of some of my good friends - Shelagh Goonewardene, Victor Melder and Jack Van Sanden, all of whom I've met in Melbourne on our two visits Down Under in 1991 and 1995/96.

I look forward to a closer contact with you and what seems to be a fine organization. With warm regards.

Kirthie Abeyesekera. 625 Finch Ave. West Apt. 901, Toronto, Ontario, M2R 3W1, CANADA

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ANOTHER...

Dear Vama: Thanks for your fast response. I will be sending you a M.O. shortly to cover cost of the back-issues and also renew my subscription for another year. The last issue was the best I have read so far. I liked the index and also the list of the Society's members. And I have read every article in it. Most interesting. I intend to alert friends from Ceylon, who now live in USA and Canada, and also a few 'down under' too, to the 'CEYLANKAN' and encourage them to subscribe to the journal.

Best wishes and regards,

Justin Drieberg

An article about the Japanese attack on Colombo, written by Justin, is included in this edition.

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A letter from Sergei DeSilva-Ranasinghe, was received. He is a student at La Trobe University in Melbourne pursuing an Honours degree and choosing to do his analysis on *The History and Expansion of the Sri Lankan Defence Forces Since 1949*. A substantive part will be devoted to *Political Military History*. Sergei hopes to contribute an article on Sri Lankan military history to the CEYLANKAN later in the year. He states that there is regular information forthcoming on the British Colonial Military Establishment in Ceylon from a number of enthusiasts, himself included, and if members are interested in this area of interest, to contact him at: 8 Stawell Street, Coburg, Vic. 3058, or email:

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Dear Editor

On reading some of the past editions of the CEYLANKAN, I came across the item about the bombing of Colombo and the article on Squadron Leader LJ Birchall. The following details of the flight from which the Japanese fleet was sighted may be of interest to readers.

Birchall, a Canadian, arrived on the Island only 48 hours before he took off on his eventful reconnaissance flight. He had flown from England via Gibraltar, Cairo and Karachi. At 3am at the Koggala Lagoon camouflage netting was removed from the Catalina, QL.A as the crew assembled in front of the mess tent. Their orders were to patrol the ocean to the south-east of Ceylon and to report on any ships sighted.

Birchall had as his co-pilot, Flying Officer Kenny. Sergeant Henzell manned the front turret machine gun in very cramped conditions. On the flight deck with the pilots was the navigator, Warrant Officer Bart Onyette, another Canadian. Behind them were the Wireless Operator, Sergeant Phillips, and his two assistants who doubled as blister gunners, Sergeants Calorossi and Davidson. Sergeant Cook was the rear gunner. Sergeant Catlin, the engineer completed the crew.

Checks on QL.A, after they had taken off, proved what had been anticipated – the aircraft had been stripped by base personnel at Koggala. The crew's worst realisation was finding all of the tracer ammunition for the Vickers guns had been removed.

The Catalina cruised at a steady 90 knots and began the 400 mile planned zig-zag pattern. They had fuel to last until the QL.A could return to Koggala to land in daylight the following day. At 1730 hours they were working their way back to Colombo when the rear gunner noticed a black speck on the horizon. They turned south to investigate descending to 2000 feet. The scenario that confronted the crew was the sighting of a huge armada of naval vessels.

Birchall turned for home and Sergeant Phillips tapped out his first (of three) sighting report giving details of the enemy ships. Before he could get his third message away, six Japanese Zero fighters were upon QL.A. destroying the radio equipment and wounding Phillips. Maximum speed of a Catalina was 180 miles per hour and a Zero could travel at twice that speed.

Sergeants Calorossi and Davidson, in the middle of the aircraft, fired their machine guns to little avail. The Zeros were armed with .303-inch machine-guns and also two 20mm cannon

which fired explosive shells. Calorossi's leg was shattered and splinters penetrated Catlin the engineer. Birchall, with a bullet in his leg, tried to evade with his sluggish plane. Internal fuel tanks started to blaze, and as the plane was too low for the crew to bail out, Birchall managed to set the plane down onto the sea only seconds before the tail broke off.

The Zeros kept up their attack, and several of QL.A's crew were hit, two badly. Birchall, Kenny and Onyette got most of them into Mae Wests (life jackets) and out of the plane into the sea. Two could not be saved and the others swam frantically away as the Catalina carried depth charges pre-set to explode at sixty feet. The Zeros continued to attack, the men in the water also having to dive to avoid being burnt by gasoline burning on the surface of the water, and the bullets. Davidson was hit by several and died instantly.

Six men were left alive, three badly wounded. They were picked up by the Japanese destroyer *Isokaze* after thirty minutes in the water. On board the injured were badly beaten and repeatedly asked the same question, Birchall was asked by his captors if he had sent any messages. Birchall lied by replying he had had no time to radio to his base. But the Japanese knew he was lying.

The message sent by QL.A was received in the Naval Office in Colombo. It read: *Large enemy surface force sighted 360 miles SSE of Dondra Head. Heading NNW. Exact composition unknown*".

Birchall spent the rest of the war being abused, beaten and tortured in a Japanese POW camp. At war's end he became a national hero in Ceylon and was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross and the Order of the British Empire for Gallantry. He rose to command the Royal Canadian Air Force and later became a top administrator at York University.

...M. B. Seal

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Hello David:

I really enjoyed just recently reading the editorial in an old issue, as my father receives your publication. I was most interested to note that mention is made of the Toussaint home. Mrs. Alice Toussaint (nee Driberg), now deceased, was my grand-aunt (sister of my grandfather, Denzil Clifford Driberg).

Our family had the privilege of briefly living in Colombo in 1960, for slightly less than a year, when my father, Justin Fredrick Schokman Driberg, was posted there as Manager, Air India. We lived in a beautiful house in Balapokuna(?) road, not far from Nugegoda Road, and the time we spent in Colombo was absolutely magical. There was a coconut estate behind our house, and as children we roamed around freely, hunting 'thalagoyas'(not to be confused with 'thala-balls', ha...), and running from the occasional 'kabragoyas' that crossed our path!

The day began with the hopper woman bringing hoppers and string hoppers to our door early, and these were eaten with sweet fresh coconut milk for breakfast. What great

memories I have of walking to school along the lanes near our house to get to Nugegoda Road, and the lovely huge pale lavender marshmallows I indulged myself with from the boutique at the top of the road. It seemed like life was a series of parties, moonlight beach parties, birthday parties, 13th anniversary parties, christenings and wedding parties. And all that delicious food!

I'll never forget my first Christmas Day there, doing the rounds paying our respects to all the older relatives, and hoarding the delicious Christmas fruitcake we were offered (all the first offerings were eaten, and the second offerings discreetly put into Mum's handbag). At the end of the day we pulled out our stash and evaluated them as to who had made the best cake. Santa arrived that day on a motorbike, loaded with a huge sack of gifts.

On New Year's Day we celebrated at Ken & Lettie (nee Felsinger) Schokman's place. We re-play this scene often to this day...several of us were outside setting off rockets, but the one we all remember is the one set off by my uncle Carol (Drieberg). It took off, hit a stone, veered off its path, and made straight for the sarong of one of the neighbourhood gawkers. The man took off running, yelling at the top of his lungs, and the rocket exploded just a few inches from him! Luckily he was unhurt, which made the incident all the more humorous.

I have learned a great deal of the history of Sri Lanka , and I want to thank you for such an interesting publication.

Aloma Lively (nee Drieberg)

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From the Sapumal Foundation

Dear Editor

I have had the pleasure of receiving your Journal from friends in Australia, when you publish articles that are of particular interest to me. I enclose a folder giving information of the Sapumal Foundation of which I am the Chairman. The information may be of interest to 'old-timers' from Sri Lanka and to those who intend visiting Sri Lanka.

The folder describes the galleries of the Sapumal Foundation which contain at any one time, around 150 paintings and drawings tracing the development of art in the Island from the 1930's to date, from a selection of items in the inventory of the Foundation. The core of the collection consists of works by artists who were original members of the '43 *Group*, who laid the foundation of modern art in Sri Lanka. Artists such as Harry Pieris, Richard Gabriel, Ivan Peries, George Keyt, Geoffery Beling, and many others.

The Gallery is at 32/4 Barnes Place, Colombo. Tel 695731. Open Wed-Sunday from 10.00am to 1.00pm.

Admission FREE. Wishing you all success with your Journal.

LSD Pieris

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THE WOODEN BOWL

...by Anon...sent in by Frederick Prins

A frail old man went to live with his son, daughter-in-law, and four-year grandson. The old man's hands trembled, his eyesight was blurred, and his step faltered. The family ate together at the table. But the elderly grandfather's shaky hands and failing sight made eating difficult. Peas rolled off his spoon onto the floor. When he grasped the glass, milk spilled on the tablecloth. The son and daughter-in-law became irritated with the mess. "We must do something about grandfather," said the son. "I've had enough of his spilled milk, noisy eating, and food on the floor."

So the husband and wife set a small table in the corner. There, Grandfather ate alone while the rest of the family enjoyed dinner. Since Grandfather had broken a dish or two, his food was served in a wooden bowl. When the family glanced in Grandfather's direction, sometimes he had a tear in his eye as he sat alone. Still, the only words the couple had for him were sharp admonitions when he dropped a fork or spilled food. The four-year-old watched it all in silence.

One evening before supper, the father noticed his son playing with wood scraps on the floor. He asked the child sweetly, "What are you making?" Just as sweetly, the boy responded, "Oh, I am making a little bowl for you and Mama to eat your food when I grow up." The four-year-old smiled and went back to work.

The words so struck the parents that they were speechless. Then tears started to stream down their cheeks. Though no word was spoken, both knew what must be done. That evening, the husband took Grandfather's hand and gently led him back to the family table. For the remainder of his days he ate every meal with the family. And for some reason, neither husband nor wife seemed to care any longer when a fork was dropped, milk spilled, or the tablecloth soiled.

Children are remarkably perceptive. Their eyes ever observe, their ears ever listen, and their minds ever process the messages they absorb. If they see us patiently provide a happy home atmosphere for family members, they will imitate that attitude for the rest of their lives. The wise parent realizes that every day the building blocks are "Let's be wise builders and role models. 'Lord, we ask not that you move the mountains, but that You give us the strength to climb'. Life is about people connecting with people, and making a positive difference".

Take care of yourself, ... and those you love, ... today, and everyday! On a positive note, I've learned that, no matter what happens how bad it seems today, life does go on, and it will be better tomorrow.

I've learned that you can tell a lot about a person by the way he/she handles three things: a rainy day, lost luggage, and tangled Christmas tree lights. I've learned that, regardless of your relationship with your parents, you'll miss them when they're gone from your life. I've learned that making a "living" is not the same thing as making a "life." I've learned that life sometimes gives you a second chance. I've learned that you shouldn't go through life with a

catcher's mitt on both hands. You need to be able to throw something back. I've learned that if you pursue happiness, it will elude you. But, if you focus on your family, your friends, the needs of others, your work and doing the very best you can, happiness will find you. I've learned that whenever I decide something with an open heart, I usually make the right decision. I've learned that even when I have pain, I don't have to be one. I've learned that every day, you should reach out and touch someone. People love that human touch - holding hands, a warm hug, or just a friendly pat on the back. I've learned that I still have a lot to learn. I've learned that you should pass this on to everyone you care about. I just did. Sometimes they just need a little something to make them smile. **People will forget what you said .. people will forget what you did, but people will never forget how you made them feel.**

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INTERESTING OBSERVATIONS!!!

Snippets of info that pop up from time to time, often sent in without an author!!

In 1972, (when the Dominion of Ceylon became the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka), the Ceylon Light Infantry (CLI) became the SLLI. The CLI traces its roots to 1 April 1881, and shortly after this date the

Prince of Wales agreed to become their Honorary Colonel. As was the custom, simultaneous with that honour, the CLI modified its cap badge to give pride of place to the familiar Prince of Wales' three-feathered plume.

In 1972, it was initially asserted by the Sri Lankan Ministry of Defence that as the country was now a republic, these three feathers would have to go. The Regiment, however, took umbrage with such a change, and as a result the officers of the Regiment undertook to come up with a scheme to somehow keep their beloved badge without affronting Republican sentiments. The result, (not formalised it appears, until 1974), was the substitution of the 3 plumes for 3 "stylised" sheaves of rice paddy, (a Sri Lankan staple). "Stylised" is the key word, since these sheaves were so drawn as to be indistinguishable (except upon close scrutiny) from the Prince of Wales plumes. This story was told by a now retired officer of the CLI/SLII who was involved in the process.

Another similar such example of "symbolic sleight of hand" occurred when the Ceylon Engineers became the Sri Lanka Engineering Regiment. As the Ceylon Engineers, the corps wore the standard British/Commonwealth engineers cap badge (ie, the Royal Cipher "ER" for "Elizabeth Regina"). They retained this after 1972 (but did have to remove the crown on top) by insisting that henceforth the "ER" stood for "Engineering Regiment"!

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A KAFFRINA MUSICALE

(First published in the "Ceylon Daily News" of 13.12.1935)

...By D.T. Devendra

It was close upon 8.30 p.m. when we got to Mariyakade. We saw a stream of pedestrians ahead of us. They were joined by batches of others that emerged from the numerous alleys that honey-comb this populous part of Maradana. At first we took little notice of the crowd,

but soon the swelling of their numbers began to interest us. Crying off the programme in hand, we decided to follow their wake, "profanum vulgus" though it was, as Horace had it.

Indifferent to passing traffic, we jostled one another in our attempts to speed up, but we were unceremoniously shoved back, so that, perforce, we had to move with the stream. At last we turned into one of the many dark alleys by the side of the numerous furniture shops. As we proceeded in the dark stumbling across stones and other impediments, a cry was echoed to us, "Botala Katu! Botala Katu!". We passed on the warning to the barefooted people behind, till it became a good refrain to all of us.

The alley opened out into a fair-sized area terminating in a high wall by the side of which grew a shade tree. A little in front of this wall had been put up an improvised shed with a high platform as its floor. In front of the shed were rows of chairs and benches to accommodate about two hundred people. This visitors' gallery and the shed were roped off. Four Kitson lamps powerfully lit up the scene.

A large crowd of about three or four hundred men and women had collected by now. The seating accommodation was presumably for the select invited. The rest crowded in as best as they could. A troupe of local musicians walked in to the accompaniment of clapping. The seraphina man was at the very back of the platform; he had two violinists on his left, the tabla and triangle player (to keep time) on his right. Some half dozen stalwart men were walking up and down acting as ushers. They seemed physically fitted out to be chuckers-out, which was doubtless a silent part of their various duties. Evidently, they were the moving spirits in the evening's entertainment. The stage was now well set.

There was a buzz of excitement and a general air of expectancy. Suddenly, there was deafening applause, and an elderly man walked into the shed. He was dressed in silk sarong and coat, and appeared to be about forty five years old. The cheering which greeted his appearance had hardly died down, when it was renewed as another came up and joined him. The new-comer was a young man dressed, in smart fashion, in a silk shirt and sarong while a multi-coloured kerchief was tied round his neck with studied indifference.

One man from among the organizers came up to the platform and announced that a musical contest would now begin. He apologized for any shortcomings in the arrangements, and expressed the hope that the guests of the evening would go away pleased with the entertainment. He introduced the older man as the previous season's champion, who had been worthily challenged by young blood, with laurels to his credit obtained elsewhere. The master of ceremonies next turned to the contestants and in a few words requested them not to overstep the limits of good breeding in the course of their contest.

The orchestra struck up a lively tune and indulged in a few preliminaries for twenty minutes. When they ceased, the champion advanced to the edge of the platform and salaaming to the audience in Oriental manner, welcomed them in a fitting quatrain of Kaffrinha music. The young rival, in the meantime, had been casting tender glances towards a belle seated in the front row, and immediately followed with the reply to the opening stanza of his rival. In the course of his recital he discarded a welcome, and promptly engaged his antagonist in fierce poetic warfare. His effusion did not keep within the bounds

of strict civility, for he plunged into a lively description of his opponent's appearance, not omitting the bristling moustache, which impeded the proper expiration of its owner's music! He also wondered at Age's impudence in trying to break a lance with youth.

The champion in his reply overcame a moment's discomfiture, and alluded to youthful vanity in pitting itself against Experienced Age. The couplet of the popular champion was much appreciated by the audience some of whom went up to him and tied kerchiefs on his arm. These were rewards of merit. The recipient soon began to cram into his pockets the many silk handkerchiefs that were showered on him.

Half an hour had elapsed, but the young man had yet not been favoured by the populace. He looked with envy at the other and, turning his face towards the assembly, as much as to say, "I'll soon show you what I can do!" He caught a sympathetic glance in the eye of his lady, and returned to the fray with renewed vigour. He referred in sarcastic vein to the unmerited receipt of favours by his rival, which elicited a furious retort that they were a tribute to unassailable worth! But the young man's thrust, greeted by a salvo of clapping, brought him his first favour of the evening, in the shape of a violently red silk handkerchief from an admiring "thamby".

Thus the contest went on, with varying success, and the young man proving his mettle in apt retort soon became popular, as evidence of which appeal to the audience, he was quickly swathed in kerchiefs in both hands. Not a few of them were tied round his neck to the danger of suffocation! Extending his "bandaged" hands towards the spectators, he proudly claimed superiority over the champion who had made the tactical blunder of stuffing his laurels of victory into his pockets, leaving the bystanders the impression that he had been awarded none. Nevertheless, the old 'un yielded not a whit in retorting suitably, though he did not succeed in effectively silencing his opponent on whom a maiden's lashes were bent.

We later heard that Age had counted against the champion. Thus had Youth triumphed, as is its wont. So ended a night of strange experiences in the City.

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MY TRIP TO SRI LANKA

After nearly 25 years away from Sri Lanka, the pangs of nostalgia and fervent memories of my motherland enveloped me. But it was some time before I meekly submitted my thoughts and desires to Viki, my wife of Anglo-Saxon heritage. Viki was studying for a Certificate of Pastoral Education, and was in the throes of final year 'blues'. Despite initial refusals and "what ifs", we finally decided to influence our dear friends Peter & Wendy to accompany us on a 'Magical Mystery Tour' of Sri Lanka for 2 weeks. Disappointed by the many Sri travel agents in Australia, I finally decided to organize the itinerary via the Internet engaging a local agent.

Excitement! With much loss of sleep and great anticipation, 13th August 1999 finally dawned, as we boarded our Qantas flight to Singapore, then Emirates Airline to Colombo.

The heartbeat increased dramatically on approach by night to Bandaranaike International airport to be met by soldiers in full battle uniform at every vantage point. Customs was a formality as there were no officers in attendance. Very trustworthy!! The agent met us with a large banner saying Mr. Geoffrey – respect has not been lost despite the turmoil.

The trip to Colombo from the airport, was hair-raising, dodging cows, dogs, people etc, - by the way, no seat belts, so hang on and pray! The 1st day we walked near the hotel and were accosted at every turn by overzealous guides, touts and tuktuks, etc. Lunch was of course 'CURRY' – meat and fish. Our day tour was at 3pm around Colombo and I was enthralled at the multitude of people/carts/dogs/cows jostling in narrow roads/paths. Bloody hell! Fertility practice obviously is NOT promoted in Sri. Anyway we mini-vanned ourselves to various side streets around Colombo bringing back happy memories of a lad who had lived in the Pettah (main street) for a number of years. My wife comments that the roads and transport are chaotic! She said she is either going to live or die riding the streets and byways of Colombo, with our 'DEMON' driver Neville de Silva at the wheel tooting messages on the horn throughout this journey.

The next day we headed out of Colombo to Anuradhapura, via Negombo, Chilaw, Puttalam, with the roads getting as much comment as people on bikes/foot getting to "church on time". No names mentioned, but the rest-house at Puttalam couldn't come faster after the 'Curries' the day before. Any bumps resounded with gales of laughter as the other members of the tour were aware of the dilemma we were facing. The rice and curry were bloody sumptuous! We had passed tree-houses, buffalo, deer and ox-carts, meat stalls beside the road and bicycles with boxes of fish. At long last the party arrived at an Italian financed hotel- all grand, beautiful and the shimmering blue-water pool very inviting. After lunch, rest and pool we visited many Buddhist sites with beautiful sights of rice fields and distant mountains. Exhausted we slumped into bed for a good night's sleep.

Day 2 dawned with us very refreshed and raring to go after a meal of string-hoppers, eggs/fruit and toast/jam. Neville by this stage was in a sweat! The air-conditioner in the van seems to be behaving like a cranky child. Either it worked spasmodically or it needed a gentle thump on the dashboard to start the fan turning. By the time the party got to Polonnaruwa with much talk and laughter, my wife did ask Neville whether prayer or singing would help to bring the air-conditioner to life. "No luck lady" he would say! The vote was to turn the 'bloody thing' off. Polonnaruwa was exciting with many ruins dating back to the 10th century. Unbelievable and fascinating so says the Aussies. Massive stone carvings of a 3x position Buddha. On the way to Sigiriya the party stopped at a large wood-carving factory amazed at the intricate work on elephants, dining tables and chairs.

We arrived at Sigiriya having a brief look at the distant rock, with much anticipation of tomorrow's tour. Swim followed by a sumptuous dinner with a few 'arros' set us on the way to a restful sleep. By this time we are following Neville's instructions to the 'T': "Early start to the rock Sir!" 7am the party is starting the many varied ooh's and aah's at the wonderment of one of history's treasures. The symmetrical lines of design and construction are much appreciated by the party with trusty Neville explaining the rich history of Sigiriya. We were the 1st to start the climb as the heat gets quite intense later on the day. Peter and I

trundled up the stairs followed by the ladies with assistance from the many boys touting for business. AWESOME paintings with the view just MAGNIFICENT. This breath-taking location, was followed by a visit to the Dambulla caves, all underground and cut out of stone.

A few purchases from a roadside Batik factory, herb garden tour with the owner trying to sell the 'right herb' to improve the male sex life. Peter and I bought a container load! Only joking! Kandy beckoned us next, with teeming people all exited about the Perahera later that night. Attended a cultural evening with much drumming, dancing and walking on 'hot coals' before the mighty Perahera started around 8.30pm - FASCINATING, COLOURFUL and NOSTALGIC.

The next morning the party left Kandy for the coolness and carpet-like tea estates of Nuwara-Eliya, 6000ft into the clouds. The hotel was alongside beautiful market gardens- the soil so rich and brown, good enough to eat!

After a rest, we walked the local trail beside the lake often confronted by little boys and girls wanting to talk and even sometimes to sing Christian hymns. My wife gave a bible to John with much encouragement to go for his dreams and attain a solid education. The 'LILLIES' serenaded the dining party with romantic Sinhala songs.

I got quite emotional hearing the many references to GOOD OLD SRI LANKA. After a tour of gracious old British homes and gardens, the party wound itself down the road to "Tissa" finishing of the day with a tour of Yala National Park seeing many deer, peacocks, wild boar, crocodiles, iguana and monkeys. The mini-van bumped along, often passing pilgrimage families having a cooling bath in the river beside the road. GREAT STUFF!!

We finally arrived at Bentota for a much needed four day rest and recreation.

The hotels we stayed in and rated.

Colombo - The Inter- Continental = 2-3 Star

Anuradhapura - Palm Garden Hotel = 5 Star

Sigiriya - Sigiriya Hotel = 5 Star

Kandy - The Grand Hotel = 5 Star

Nuwara - Eliya - Galway Lodge = 5 Star

Bentota - Serendib Hotel = 3 Star

Our thanks to Neville De Silva – Our Driver. May God bless him and his family and for his thorough knowledge, wit and coolness in chaotic traffic. Pan-Lanka Tours – An itinerary well coordinated, with an excellent selection of hotels etc.

May Sri Lanka prosper in spirit and the knowledge that many a person has enjoyed its beauty and grandeur.

Geoffrey Moreira

E-mail. .

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FUNNY EPISODES IN POLICE WORK.

Police work is not all drudgery. There is the lighter side often that compensates. Come Christmas and the fisherfolks in Negambo have Passion plays going into the thin hours of the morning. In one such play Christ was being crucified by Roman soldiers. His mother Mary was sobbing inconsolably. She was usually played by a man dressed as a woman. The onlookers wept unashamedly at this touching scene. Then suddenly the hammer from the Roman soldier's hand fell on Mother Mary's knee with a jarring clank !! The young fisherman playing the role of Mary sprang up on one leg screaming and shaking his fist at the Roman soldier gave vent in a stream of picturesque seafront language!

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THE STORY OF JOHN KEELLS LIMITED

...By BH Spencer Roberts

JOHN KEELLS: the name implies largeness, strength, confidence and success in Sri Lanka today; for the parent company and its subsidiaries form an industrial and commercial giant. The John Keells group at present covers most areas of commercial activity, however, this conglomerate had a small beginning in 1878.

A Britisher, named Edwin John, went to Ceylon from England in 1870 to join his brother George, who was a produce and exchange broker. The brothers formed a partnership in 1876, and operated a business called John Brothers & Company, in Baille Street, Colombo. A branch office was opened in Kandy, Edwin managed the Colombo office, and George took charge of the Kandy operation. Soon after, WG John, a nephew, arrived from England to assist in the business.

However, in 1878, John Brothers & Co. dissolved, and Edwin John began another business called E. John, Produce & Exchange Broker, from an office at 19 Upper Chatham Street, Colombo. Ceylon's climate did not agree with WG John, and he left the island in 1884 to settle in Australia.

E John had a lean period in its first decade of business. A writer by the name of Villiers had this to say about the period: "Business in Colombo was at a very low ebb during the years 1878 to 1888. Most of the brokers, if not all, lived in their offices in the Fort, and it was difficult to make a living sufficient to provide adequate education for the family at home, and many a Ceylon lad missed the opportunity of education which would have been an asset for him in life. The business in those days was very limited, coffee had all but gone, tea had not arrived and the little business there was in cinchona was not enough to go around."

During those difficult years, Edwin John's second son, Reginald Marshall John, came from England to join his father's business. Around 1890, however, the business community in Colombo, looked towards the tea industry hopefully. Tea was stirring the commercial

stagnation of a decade and everyone was clamouring for a share in the fledgling industry, including E John. The business employed Herbert Tarrant to assist with the setting up of the tea department of the firm.

Tarrant arrived in Ceylon in 1890 from England. He had been a tea taster with Charles Hope & Company, a well-known Mincing Lane (London) establishment. His arrival in the island, however, was not the result of an employment contract. Instead, he had come on "spec" with a letter of introduction to William Anderson of George Steuart & Company. Anderson referred him to E John, where he gained employment. Herbert Tarrant worked for E John till 1894, and then began his own tea buying business, which did very well for many years.

In 1892 E John recruited a new assistant from England for the Tea Department. His name was A C Rogers. Then in 1895, Reginald John was made a partner in the business, and in that same year E John took in Lionel Ottley Leefe, a former employee of Hawes & Herty, Mincing Lane, London.

By 1895, E John's business was growing quite rapidly in tea, shares, oil, exchange and other areas of activity, and a larger staff became necessary. In 1896, Charles Edwin Haslop joined the business as an assistant and took charge of the Share Department. Under his management the share-broking side of the business increased to be the most profitable part of the firm.

Robert J M Meaden joined E John in 1897 as an assistant to Haslop. Both of them had come from George Armitage & Company, a firm which ceased operations in Ceylon when George Armitage left the island suddenly.

By 1901, Edwin John had virtually retired from the firm and lived in England, with occasional visits to Ceylon.

On 1st January 1901 Haslop and Leefe were made partners and the title of the business changed to E John & Company, Produce, Exchange and Share Brokers. The partners at the time were Edwin John, Reginald John, Charles Haslop and Lionel Leefe.

Edwin John died in England in 1902, and in 1905 HE Guimaraens, a Mincing Lane tea expert, who visited Ceylon for health reasons, joined the Company. At this time E John & Company acted as correspondents for the following London firms: Russell, Grant & Hammerton Ltd, AA Bendon company, Shaw & Company, and Zoete & Gordon.

Lionel Leefe in 1943, and RJM Meaden, who had been promoted to Partner earlier, became the Senior Partners of E John & Company. Incidentally, two employees of E John & Company fought with distinction in World War II. They were LCF Leefe (Lionel Leefe's son) and Tommy Cuming. Leefe was awarded the DSC and Cuming the Military Cross. 1946 saw the retirement of RJM Meaden and the appointment of LCF Leefe as the Senior Partner of E John & Company. In that year too, EF Don was promoted from Assistant to Partner, and W MP Lloyd recruited as an assistant.

In 1947 all the European assistants were made partners, and two Ceylonese made assistants: HD Walter De Silva and DE Martenstyn. At the end of the year, EF Don retired and went back to England. The following year E John & Co. amalgamated with two London tea broking firms: WM Jas and HY Thompson & Co., and Geo White & Co., of Fenchurch Street, to become E John, Thompson, White & Company Ltd. The two English firms in the amalgamation were represented by their nominees, WJ Thompson (Senior) and AB Yuille.

1953 saw the beginning of a Freight Department at E John, Thompson, White & Co. Ltd, headed by JO Moss, formerly of Keell & Waldock Ltd. SH De Silva (Walter De Silva's son) was transferred from the Rubber Department in 1954 to assist Moss.

DFH Armitage, who had worked for the firm earlier, rejoined as a Director in 1955 after leaving Carson Cumberbatch & Co. In that year too, LNJ Leefe (grandson of Lionel, and son of LCA Leefe) joined the firm.

LCA Leefe retired in 1957, and Paterson was made Chairman. In the 1950s Walter De Silva became the first Sinhalese Director of the Board. He died in 1958 and his place on the board was taken by CDH Leitan. Paterson retired in 1959 and Christie-Miller became Chairman.

In 1960 E John, Thompson, White & Company Ltd amalgamated with Keell & Waldock Ltd and became John, Keell, Thompson, White Ltd. The new Company had their offices at the National Mutual Insurance Company Building in Chatham Street. Initially, the total staff of the firm numbered 126 inclusive of a labour force of 18, and the volume of business generated by the Company was the largest in its field. Douglas Armitage of the previous firm of E John, Thompson, White & Company Ltd was the first Chairman of the Board.

John, Keell, Thompson, White Ltd followed a vigorous policy of diversification. It also purchased a large warehouse in Glennie Street from Dodwell & Company, an import and export establishment, which wound up its business in Ceylon.

In the 1975-1976 period, John, Keell, Thompson, White Ltd began to form subsidiary companies. These enterprises included Mackinnons Exports Ltd, Facets Ltd, Extracts Ltd and Habarana Walk Inn Ltd. John, Keell, Thompson, White Ltd, continued to expand and diversified further into coconut oil and dessicated coconut milling, mica and graphite mining, and the production of treacle and jaggery. However, these ventures were discontinued later.

In 1976, the Company became a public company and changed its name to John Keells Ltd.

By 1978, one hundred years after Edwin John began his business, John Keells Ltd and its associate companies employed over one hundred executive staff and had the largest turnover in broking of Sri Lankan produce. It was also the largest private sector tour operator and owned the largest fleet of tourist vehicles.

Today John Keells Ltd is a colossus in manufacturing, retailing, food packaging, tourism, hospitality, broking, export and many other areas of business activity. The group of

companies was very efficiently managed by the previous Chairman, Ken Bala, a man dubbed by his peers as a “commercial genius.” The current Chairman is Vivendra Lintotawela.

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A BIT OF GENEALOGY

....Kyle Joustra,

The Portuguese in developing their colonies, particularly in the 15th & 16th centuries, believed in the principle of intermarriage with the indigenous people they encountered. Naturally this produced a racially mixed community, and had its practical advantages – it bonded the invaders to the colony making them a more intrinsic part of the community, giving it advantages when it came to war: the locals normally would take the side of the colonists, thus dispensing with a dependency on Europe.

However, unlike the Portuguese, who had little opportunities in a comparatively barren and subjugated Portugal, and who needed the colonies for financial success, the Dutch were comparatively prosperous. The Dutch for the most part resisted the intermarriage opportunities with the “natives” that availed them. But they did intermarry into the already “mixed blood” people present. Some of the Dutch Governors, realising the advantages of becoming a total part of the local community, were in favour of intermarriage, others were not.

One Governor who wanted to retain ‘purity of race’, was Rycklof van Goens, who in a Regulation relating to Emigration to Ceylon, wrote in 1669:

"Our attention must now be directed especially to the subject of peopling this Colony with our own people. That in order to maintain our footing in this Colony, the Burgher Class must be strengthened as much as possible by our own people, taking care as far as possible that those who now marry Native women, for want of others, do educate their Children well, so that in future their daughters may be married to Netherlanders, and thus our race may degenerate as little as possible.....".

He wrote more in his instructions, all of which favoured Burghers over any other group of people.

Of course nature being what it is, intermarriage took place. Few Western women arriving necessitated marriage to women who were available. And of course the result of the over one hundred years of occupation by the Portuguese in Ceylon, who already were to some degree “Europeanised”, were the Portuguese Burghers.

So we see the result of this “mixing” of the races; a population comprising people often appearing indigenous with European names, and sometimes the opposite, European appearance with Sinhala or Tamil names. No wonder confusion can reign when it comes to genealogy.

The following is a list of names, many identified with Burghers comprised of Sinhalese, Portuguese, Dutch and English origins, that I have on my database (probably a few other nationalities represented here too):

Dias Abeyesinghe, Abeyesundere, Abraham, Adamsz, Adriaansz, Agotha, Albertsz, Albinus, Albrecht, Aldons, Alexander, Alphonso, Altendorff, Alvis, Amarasuriya, Amour, Anderson, Andree, Andriesz, Andriezen, Anjou, Anthonisz, Appelboom, Appleton, Arendsz, Armitage, Armstrong, Arndt, Arnolda, Arsakularatna, Askey, Assauw, Atwell, Atzelyn, Aubert, Austin, Auwardt, Avery.

Backhouse, Baley, Baillie, Baker, Bakker, Balkhuysen, Ball, Balmond, Balthazar, Dias Bandranaike/ Bandranayaka, Baptist, Barber, Barbet, Barnes, Barnet, Barsenbach, Bartels, Batholomeusz, Bastiaansz, Bates, Batta, Bawa, Beekman, Beleke, Beling, Bellise, Bennett, Berenger, Berg, Bernhard, Bertus, Bertram, Berveling, Betger, Betts, Beukman, Beven, Bhupalam, Bilsborough, Blacker, Blackett, Blake, Blaze, Blok, Bocks, Boers, Boetz, Bogaars, Booy, Bonifass, Boomgart/gaart/gaard, Borwater, Boteljo, Boucher, Bouti, Bowen, Bras, Brechman, Brinkman, Brittain, Brix, Brodie, Brohier, Bromley, Brook, Brown, Browngreaves, Bruwaart/Bruwart, Buckley, Bulner, Burby, Burke, Burt, Butger, Buttery, Buultjens,

Cadenski, Flamer-Caldera, Kamp/Camp, Campbell, Cannon, Carron, Caspersz, Chapman, Christoffelsz, Claasz, Claessen, Clarke/ Clark, Clementi-Smith, Cockburn, Collette, Colomb, Collier, Conderlag, Conradi, Consigliere, Constz, Cook/Cooke, Corner, Corteling, Cooray, Crabtree, Cramer, Crispeyn, Crowe, Crozier, Crutchley, Curtis

da Costa, da Silva, D'Abrera, D'Alwis, d' Anderado, Daniel, Daniels, Danielsz, Dassenaiké, David, Davidson, Daviot, Dawson, D'Costa, de Almeida, de Alwis, de Arpa, de Bevere, de Boer, de Breard, de Bruin, de Caan, de Coenje, D'Estandau, de Fonseka, de Fransz, de Vry/Fry, de Haan, de Heer, de Hoedt, de Jong, de Jonk, de Joodt, de Kretser, de la Chaume, de la Combe, de la Harpe, de Lannoy, de la Motte, de la Porte, Du Bois de Lossosay, de Livera, de Ly, de Ley, de Melho/ de Mel, de Moor, de Meuron, de Neys, de Niese, de Ramo, de Raymond, de Rooy, de Rosayro, de Rowel, de Run, de Saram, de Silva, D'Silva, de Souza, Warusahannadige de Soysa, de Vos, Waas/de Waas de Witt/de Wit/de With, de Wolff, de Zilva, de Zilva-van Twest, de Zilwa, de Zylva, Dekker, del' Harpe, Dekker, Demmer, Derinyanagala, Derksen, Detheridge-Davies, Deutrom, Dias, Dick, Dickman, Dickson, Dirckze, Doebratz/sz, Douwe, Don, Dormieux, Dornhorst, Drieberg, Driemont, Dryver, Dundee, Du Port, Dunsford

Earde, Eaton, Ebell, Eberhardie, Ebert, Edema, Eder, Edwards, Eksteen, Elders, Elhart, Elias, Elseveir, Emans, Engelbrecht, Ephraums, Erfzon/Erfson, Ernst, Estrop, Eversz

Felsingier, Ferdinandus/Ferdinando/Ferdinand/Ferdinands, Fergusson, Fermer, Fernando, Flanderka, Fermer, Fernand, Ferreira, Verwerda/Ferwerda, Fledderus, Foenander, Fonseka, Forbes, Forster, Foulstone, Franciskus, Francke, Frank, Franken, Fransz, Fretsz, Friedel, Friskin, Frobus, Vruchniet/Frugtniet, Fryer, Fybrandsz

Gambs, Garnier, Garth, Garvin, Gastberger, Gastman/Gasman, Gauder, Georgesz, Gerhard, Gerlach, Gibson, Giessler, Giffening, Gilbert, Gillegot/Gilgot, Gilles, Gaenger/Ginger,

Godlieb, Goedbier, Gogerly, Goggin, van Goldstein/Goldestein, Gomes, Goodrich, Goonewardene, Goulliard, Grabau, Gratiaen, Gray, Grebe, Green, Grenier, Grero, Greve, Groos, Groosman/Grosman, Gulde/Gulden, Gulliam, Gunsekera, Guthrie

Hahn, Hall, Hansen, Hardy/ Hardy-Harris, Harridge, Harris, Hartley, Hazelmyer/Hasselmeyer, Hekel, Helmers, Henderson, Henricus, Hepponstall, Herft, Hermon, Herscher, Hesse, Heupner, Heyn, Heyneker, Heynsbergh, Heyzer, Hillebrand, Hingert, Hoepels, Hoffland, Hoffman, Hofstad, Hole, Hollowell, Holmes, Holsinger, Holst, Hopker, Hopman, Hughes, Hugonis, Honter/Hunter, Huybertsz

Ide, Ilangakoon, Ingleton, Ingram

Jackson, Jacobs, Jacolyn, Jacotine, Jansen, Jansz, Jansze, Jayetileke, Jennings, Joachim, Jobsz, Johnson, Jones, Jongbloet/Jongbloed, Jongklaas/Jonklaas, Jordan, Joseph, Joustra, Jumeaux, Juriansz

Kale, Kalenberg, Kastner, Kats, Kay, Keegel, Keith, Kelaar/Kelaart, Kellar, Kellens, Kelly, Kennedy, Kerfbyl, Kerkenberg, Kerkhoven, Kern, Kersse, Kessels, Keunemann, Keyt, Keyzer, Kiel, Klehr, Kleyn, Knauwer, Knowler, Knoop, Koch, Koek, Koelman, Koelmeyer, Coenders/Koenders, Koenits, Koster, Krasse, Kreekel, Kreltszheim, van Kriekenbeek/Kriekenbeek, Kuhn, Kuyter

La Brooy, La Faber, La Feber, Landsberger, Lantsknegt/Landsknegt, Lawrence, Layard, Lebeck, Le Dulx, Leembruggen, Lempfert/Lemphers, Le Raux, Lewis, Lindeman, Lindsay, Livera, Lobendahn, Loffman, Loftus, Loos, Lorenz, Lourensz, Lowe, Ludekens, Ludovici, Ludowyk, Lunel, Luyck, Luyken, Lyford

Maartensz, Maas, Mack, Magnus, Maloney, Manger, Margenout, Markus, Marsellus, Marshall, Martensz, Martheze, Martin, Matthysz, Mayo, Mc Carthy, Mc Dornan, Medeler, Meerwald, Meier, Mekern, Melchers, Melder, Mellonius, Melot, Mertel, Metzeling, Meurling, Mewille, Meyer, Meynert, Milhuysen, Miller, Misso, Modder, Moldrich, Mooyart, Moreira, Moret, Morgan, Morley, Morris, Mortier, Mortimer, Mottau, Mauer/Mouwer, Mountbatten, Muller, Muntz, Murray, Mylius

Nagel, Nathanielsz, Navarednam, Nell, Nelson, Newman, Neydorff, Nicholas, Nicol, Nicolle, Nieuwenhoven, Noe, Nugara, Nuttall, Nye

Obeysekere, Ogden, Ohlmus, Ondaatje, Oorloff, Oppenheimer, Orr, Overbeek, Overlunde

Palm, Panneel, Pardoën, Parsons, Parys, Passe, Pate, Patterson, Paul, Paulusz, Pavee/Pave, Pegalotti, Pendegras, Peiris, Pereira, Perera, Peries, Perkins, Pfeiffer, Phebus, Philipsz, Philips, Piachaud, Pieris, Hannadige Pieris, Pieters, Pietersz, Pinder, Pinjero, Plunkett, Pompeus, Pokkenbeek/Poppenbeek, Potken, Potger, Poulier, Powell, Prigge, Prins, Pritchett, Pronk, Pyster Qualenbrink, Quyn

Rabinel, Rabot, Raffel, Raket, Ramkeesoön, Rankine, Ratnayake, Raux, Rawdin, Raymond, Reckerman, Redlich, Reid, Reimers, Renn, Reyhardt, Rezel, Riberg, Richardson, Richart, Ridings, Robertson, Roche, Rode, Rodrigo, Rodrigue, Rodriguez, Roeloffsz Roorman,

Roosmale-Cocq, Rosario, Rose, Rowden, Rowlands, Rudd, Rudolph, Rulach, Runtsdorff, Rusch, Russell, Ryan

Salvador, Sanders, Sansoni, Sauer, Scharenguivel, Schaak, Scharff, Scheerken, Scheffer, Schneider, Schoekraft, Schoffeling, Schofield, Schokman, Scholts, Schoorman, Schorer, Schrader, Schroter, Schubert, Schultze, Schumacher, Sela, Seneviratne, Senn, Serasinghe, Serpanchy, Sezilles, Shaw, Siebel, Siegerts, Sievertsz, Sietet, Sielman, Silva, Simpson, Siriwardena, Sisouw, Sluysken, Smith, Snippe, Soerts, Solden, Solomon/s/sz, South, Spaar, Sparkes, Speldewinde, Spencer, Sperling, Spittel, Spoor, Sprink, Sproule, Staats, Stainton, Starkenberg, Staples, Steenkelder, Stephens, Stevenage, Stewart, Strick, Stork, Strobach, Stroom, Struk, Struys, Stuurman, Sumlant, Suurd, Swan, Swinnas, Sykes

Taute, Taylor, Templer, Tepel, Tennekoon, Theile, Thesmar, Thiedeman, Thielman, Thierbach, Thomas/sz, Thome, Thorton, Thuring, Tissera, Todd, Toorzee, Toussaint, Tranchell, Trek, Tresselt, Trevail, Trotman, Trouw, Tullo

Uhlenbeck

Van Adrichen, van Arkadie, van Aken, van Bergen, van Braunhoff, van Buren/Buuren, van Charlet, van Cleef, van Cuylenburg, van Dam, van der Gucht, van der Hoeven, van der Laan, van der Meer, van der Put, van der Smagt, van der Spar, van der Straaten, van der Wall, van der Wekken, van der Wert, van der Ziel, Van Dort, van Dort, van Eyck, van Gyssele/Gysel/Geyzel, van Gunster, van Ham, van Heer, van Hek, van Houten, van Hoven, van Langenberg, van Lynden, van Mierop, van Ranzow, van Reyk, van Rhee, van Rooyen, van Sanden, van Schuler, van seggelen, van Twest, van Velp, van Zitter, van Zyl, vanden Berg, vanden Bosch, vanden Broeck, vanden Driesen, Varney, Veenekam, Veniga, Verbeek, Vermeulen, Vermey, Vernati, Verschuur, Vertagen, Verwyk, Visser, Vochteloo, Vogel, Vogelin/ Vogely/ Vogelaar, Volkers, Vollenhoven, von Bergheim, von Conradi, von Drieberg, von Hagt, von Mullertsz, Voogt/Voogd, Vos

Wait, Walbeoff, Walker, Walles, Wallis, Wallis-Smith, Walsh, Wambeek, Warkus, Warner, Watson, Weber, Weerman, Weinman, Wells, Wendelboe, Wendt, Werkmeester, Wesselius, Wetzelijs, Whatmore, White, Whitton, Wickremesinghe, de Silva Wijeyeratne, Wijesuriya, Wikramanayake, Wild, Wille, Willenberg, Williams, Willig, Wilmot, Wilson, Wiltschut, Windsor, Winn, Winter, Wits, Wittensleger, Wolfdaal, Wolff, Wood, Woodhouse, Wootler, Woth, Woutersz, Wright, Wydeman

Young, Yzelman,

Zanetti, Zeldenrust, Zezilles, Ziegelaar, Zieseniss, Zimsen, Zybrandsz.

If you are a "Dutch Burgher" and have several generations of family history in the Island, you are likely to have many of these names on your kinship report.

PS...There are now over 45,000 names on my data-base of names associated with Sri Lanka...Kyle, 23-7-01

Having obtained my kinship report from Kyle, I was simply amazed at the number of names included. Literally hundreds of 'relatives' from first cousins and aunts and uncles to 5th

cousins twice removed! came to light. People I would have never known to be related to me. This increased my understanding of how complex genealogy can become. Apart from the kinship report, Descendent and Ancestor reports give real appreciation of many other families who are part of an individual's genealogical inheritance. Some members of the CSA might be surprised to know they are a distant cousin, aunt or uncle of mine!... Ed.

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DANCE BAND MEMORABILIA

....by Rodney St John

I can recall, as will some readers, the names of a few Dance Bands of an earlier vintage in Ceylon (at that time). Mario Manricks, Tony Felice, Gerry Crake, Menzies, Manhattan, Luis Marino, the Sony Bartho Trio, and perhaps the Millionaires, are some that come to mind. I am of course considering bands such as Harold Seneviratne, Sam the Man, Jetliners and several others, as belonging to more modern times. There may have been an overlap and I stand to be corrected on this aspect because I have not researched Dance Bands.

I was pleasantly surprised however, when I was shown a photograph of a Band that performed under the name "The Syncopated Revellers", a name new to me. I decided to share this information with CEYLANCAN members and perhaps, hopefully, get some feedback about this band and its members, and also any information about other Dance Bands of earlier times. The first photograph shows the seven member band which, I understand, performed in the late thirties and early forties at the Colombo Club, the Garden Club, and at the Queen's Hotel, Kandy, and perhaps other venues as well.

Standing, left to right, are Vernon Daviot, Dick Stork and Raja Hall. Seated are Orwell Foenander, Mervyn Ratnayake, Winston Foenander and George Oorloff. These names are from memory and as memories fade, there is room for error. Information about the members is limited. Orwell and Winston Foenander were brothers and talented musicians and vocalists. Their vocal duets over the radio were known to be entertaining and popular. The former served as organist at Arethusa Church in Colombo 6 as well as at the Dutch Reformed Church in Wolfendhaal, while Winston was organist at the Dutch Reformed Church in Colombo 4.

Orwell with his wife Maureen (nee Kriekenbeck) and family, migrated to Australia where Orwell passed on, in the early nineties. It was Maureen who searched her family albums and kindly provided the photographs and whatever information she could recall. Winston married Iris Stork, continued to live in Ceylon where he passed on in the late nineties. He lived down De Fonseka Road, in Colombo 5 and those who had aquarium fish as a hobby will recall the well-frequented Aquarium that he ran at that address, and the stack of jokes he often shared with his regular customers. This business is still run, now by his son, on a larger scale.

Vernon Daviot worked in the Customs Office and was stationed at Trincomalee for some time. A friend of his recalls that Vernon married a Miss Candappah and that he owned a Velocette motorbike on which he got around. He was known to be an excellent violinist.

Vernon passed away in Ceylon but his son migrated to Australia and worked for the Ford Motor Company. Sadly, he too has passed away.

Dick Stork, I understand, was a member of a large family which moved to Australia. There were four other brothers: King, Douglas, Edward and William. The first two live in Melbourne, the other two have also passed on. His sister Iris, as mentioned before, married a member of the band – Winston Foenander. Mervyn Ratnayake also came down under but he too has passed away.

No information is available regarding Raja Hall and George Oorloff. However it is known that Raja's sister Thelma married Budd Jansze and that she was Principal of St Paul's, Milagiriya, and for a short time of Bishop's College, before they migrated to England. Budd Jansze, by the way, was the brother of Douglas who led the prosecution in the well-known Coup trial of 1962.

The second photograph shows a group of eleven members, three of whom are in the Dance Band previously mentioned. Whether this group performed as a Band and had a name other than "The Syncopated Revellers", is not known. Names as provided are: standing left to right, Meynert (whose first name I believe is Shadwell), Beertie Ratnayake brother of Mervyn, Ashton Duncan, Orwell Foenander, and another who is not identified. Seated are: George Oorloff, Harry Hobbs, Winston Foenander, Douglas Pereira, and on the floor is Silvin, who is Douglas's sister.

Friends recall that Bertie Ratnayake was in government service and that he rode a Harley-Davidson motorbike. He migrated to Australia and has since died. Ashton Duncan was a Custom's Officer and married Ninette Pereira, migrated to Australia and also died there. Silvin married Shadwell Meynert and they too migrated to Australia. Once again it must be reiterated that these names are provided from memory, and therefore stand to be corrected.

Hopefully members and readers will contribute more details about these groups and the performers. Also it would be appreciated if more information can be provided about other Dance Bands of an earlier vintage that played not only in Colombo, but in places like Galle, Kandy, Nuwara Eliya and other towns.

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DID YOU KNOW?

Australia's Prime Minister, Alfred Deakin, wrote a book about agriculture in India and Ceylon. Here are details of a copy available in a Melbourne bookshop.

(Private) DEAKIN, Alfred. IRRIGATED INDIA: An Australian View of India and Ceylon. It was published by W. Thacker & Co in London in 1893, and a copy is for sale in Melbourne for \$550.00!

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Charitable organisations are not new. The Friendship-in-Need Society was founded in Colombo during Governor Barnes administration around 1827 by Bishop Turner. The Bishop was struck by the number of applications for relief made to him.

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The Ceylon branch of the Asiatic Society (Royal Asiatic Society of Ceylon) was established in 1845, before the RAS of Great Britain was started in England, for Oriental research. Later it was affiliated to the British Society.

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The population of Colombo in 1865 was 45,664. In 1871 Ceylon's population was 2,405,287

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Demolition of the Colombo Dutch Fort was commenced in 1869 with the blowing up of the Rotterdam Bastion, and completed with the filling of the moat in 1871

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In 1871 UK coinage, in use since the British conquest, was withdrawn and a decimal system of rupees and cents inaugurated on 1 Jan 1872.

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Coffee (*Coffea Arabica*) was first introduced into the Island from Java, where it was originally planted by the Governor-General of Batavia, Zwaardenkroom, who had procured the seeds and plants from Mocha, in the Arabian Gulf in the year 1723.

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The British force which took Colombo in 1796, consisted of the 52nd, 73rd, and 77th regiments, three battalions of the East India Company's Madras Sepoys, and a detachment of Bengal artillery.

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Recently in the press was an article referring to the 'discovery' of the Buddha's birthplace, archaeologists implying that the evidence they had recently uncovered, indicated Lumbini, about 398 kms south-west of Katmandu, was the place. The archaeologists stated they had found a pillar the Indian Emperor As(h)oka, had built, in 249 BC, complete with inscriptions, which said this was Buddha's birthplace. Very interesting to read this in 2001 when a similar, but very detailed, article was written in the Times of Ceylon of 1937 identifying the same place, and mentioning the same Emperor and the inscriptions. The Times article even had pictures of the pillar.

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The Sambar deer is believed to have been introduced into New Zealand from Ceylon.

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18TH & 19TH CENTURY LEGISLATION

....by Kingsley Siebel

In 1723 (during the Dutch period) a proclamation was made against those "found guilty of robbery". For the first offence they were to be "bound and whipped and put to hard labour in chains for the space of twenty-five years", and for the second offence, "to be hanged!"

In 1746, there was a prohibition against “people going from one place to another without leave”, and “natives were prohibited from offending Europeans in a manner whatsoever on pain of being whipped, branded and put in chains”.

The English first occupied the maritime provinces in 1796 and a few of their legislative enactments illustrate the intent and thinking of those times.

“Torture, for the purpose of procuring confessions or against persons convicted of capital crimes by breaking on the wheel and other barbarous modes of execution” was abolished on 23rd September 1799. Hanging was substituted for decapitation, “except for those who preferred the latter”. A few months later “branding with a hot iron”, was ordained for certain offences.

In June 1800, “a light and equitable tax” was imposed on those who “chose to wear jewels and ornaments”, but the people assembled to protest. In response a proclamation was issued to “curb so wicked and refractory a spirit” and a military force was ordered to march into the district against those who chose not to “disperse and return to their homes as good and peaceable subjects to the operation of the said tax”. The proclamation was signed by the Secretary to the Government and not on behalf of the Queen.

In 1801, legislation was passed against “domestic slaves” who had shown a “disposition to mutiny and disobedience of the just authority of their masters and mistresses”, by bringing “false and frivolous complaints to Magistrates”. The same proclamation also enjoined “masters and mistresses to be particularly careful not to detain slaves for whom they had no sufficient title”. In other words, it was an exhortation to the angler when baiting his hook to “treat the worm tenderly as if he loved him”. (Isaak Walton)

The laws were so kindly that in 1806 a regulation was promulgated on the ownership of slaves permitting an appeal “provided the value of the slave was of an appealable nature”.

In 1826, hanging was substituted for “drowning as a capital punishment for females in the Kandyan Provinces”. And in 1832, “Moormen and Malabars” were prohibited from “possessing houses and grounds within the Fort and Pettah of Colombo”.

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THE CEYLON FISHING CLUB

...By Allan de Saram

Piscator non solum piscator (‘fisherman, not just a catcher of fish’). This phrase is certainly true of fly-fishing, which is considered by many to be the best and most rewarding form of any sport. Only the landed gentry could afford it in England and it was thought to be an elitist sport.

The earliest mention of trout was by Claudius Aelianus in the third century AD when he observed that “between Beroea and Thessalonica runs a river called the Astraeus containing fish of a speckled colouring; as to their local name, you had better ask the Macedonians”.

Closer to home, the Ceylon Fishing Club was founded in 1896 by local English and Scottish fly-fishing enthusiasts. Hugh L Hubbard, a planter based at St Johns Estate, Kandapola, was responsible for introducing the concept as well as undertaking the original spadework. St Johns is located just above the main road leading from Nuwera Eliya to Uda Pussellawa.

Hubbard imported ova from England at his own expense. In 1882, he placed some 20 Brown Trout (*Salmo Fario*), which are native to the British Isles, into the stream at Nuwera Eliya. His efforts sparked great interest and within four years, a group of enthusiasts collected Rs 3000 (a very large amount at the time) to finance the further import of ova. That group grew to more than seventy by 1893 and later in the same year placed some 800 fry in the Nuwera Eliya stream. Success in Ceylon, resulted in the introduction of trout to places such as Malaya, the Nilgiri Hills of South India and Mauritius.

A more permanent organisation was necessary to promote their efforts and the Ceylon Fishing Club was the result. The Club was established in 1896 at a meeting held at the Hill Club in Nuwera Eliya. Office bearers were elected, with no less than the Governor nominated as the Patron. The club was most active prior to and between the two World Wars. I believe the Club's affairs were wound up in the mid-to-late 1960s.

A major step for the club was the 'acquisition' of suitable streams. This was negotiated and a final agreement reached with the Government of the day. The right to stock and catch fish in suitable streams was leased to the Club for a payment of only Rs 100 each year. These rights extended over several hundred miles of water, but only some fifty miles were actually stocked.

Brown Trout were introduced and thrived in the new surroundings, grew to good size and provided excellent sport. However, an insurmountable problem was encountered in breeding the brown trout locally because the male and female of the species did not come into season at the same time. This meant that ova had to be imported and this was too expensive. Encouraging trials were subsequently carried out with a different variety of trout, the rainbow (*Salmo Irrideus*) a native of California. The trials were successful as the rainbow bred freely. The rainbow was subsequently introduced and by 1902 had been placed in the Horton's stream.

Hatchery facilities were necessary to handle the locally produced ova. The methods used at the start were pretty basic and primitive. However, a modern hatchery was constructed in Nuwera Eliya at the foot of Pidurutallagala and above the Cargills Building. Although smaller, it apparently compared extremely well with hatcheries in England.

From then on, the hatchery allowed the streams and rivers in the Dimbulla and Dickoya districts to be regularly stocked. Fingerlings were gradually introduced into the Horton Plains, Ambawela, Nuwera Eliya and Adam's Peak (the Rajamallai) streams to name just a few. The stream flowing through the Horton Plains was generally regarded as the best. Detailed maps of local rivers and streams were available, with the various pools carefully named and marked. This also helped with the stocking of streams and recording fish movement, which was crucial to the management of the fishery.

The names of pools in the Horton's stream are interesting and reflect historical events. One such pool was called Gologotha where a party of pilgrims on their way from Uva to Adams Peak were attacked and murdered. Legend has it that their heads were thrown into the pool, where their skulls were later found. Atkinson's Bridge pool was named after the planter on Non Pariel Estate, who constructed the bridge that enabled the transport of

estate requirements (to Ohiya) on the backs of “Tavalam Bulls”. Chimney Pool marked the site of the old chimney, which was part of the original Rest House built in 1869.

The quality of fishing in Ceylon has been well documented. As far back as 1917, detailed records were being made of fish taken from individual streams each year. This despite the obvious problem of having to collect and maintain information manually in times when movement and communication was difficult and slow.

The standard of fly-fishing available was, by all account, quite excellent. Philip Crowe, the American Ambassador to Ceylon in the 1950s, was a keen sportsman who was familiar with conditions in other parts of the world. He described the streams as some of the best in the east – despite the fact that, by this time, the Ceylon Fishing Club’s best days had long gone.

I was very fortunate to have lived and worked in the Nuwera Eliya-Kandapola districts during my twenties and thirties and was a member of the Club for a few years before it was disbanded. I spent many happy times during this period, fishing the Bulu Ela stream in the jungles below Pedro Estate. I also fished the Ambawela Stream where it flowed through what was called “The Meadows” between Ambawela and Nanu Oya railway stations and the Horton’s streams. The Horton’s and Ambawela streams were my particular favourites.

The fish were not big, but there were enough to keep me happy. I loved the outdoors and just being there gave my wife and I great pleasure. In fact, it was just two years ago when accompanied by my “thirty-something” daughter we were able to visit the Horton Plains again. As we were walking along the track to Worlds End, she correctly pointed out the bridge where the family had celebrated her fourth birthday!

Many factors led to the demise of the Ceylon Fishing Club, including the expansion in human population and development. All of this had a cumulative impact on water quality and the natural environment, which was crucial to the success of the fishery.

Poaching had always been a difficulty. During the first quarter of the 20th Century the punishment for poaching, if detected, was drastic and quick (such as the ten lashes handed out to a culprit in 1906). The problem of poaching became almost impossible to control after World War II because of, among other things, the decline of Club finances. This became acute in the fifties and sixties, following the departure of English planters, who made up the great majority of Club members.

The Ceylon Fishing Club does not exist any more, but I am sure that many old members like myself will fondly recall the Club for the excellent fishing provided!

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THE MELDER LIBRARY

A unique library on Sri Lanka, perhaps the only one of its kind, exists in Melbourne, Australia. This library was begun by Victor Melder in 1968, when he migrated to Australia. Victor, who had only one book with him then, has today accumulated over 4,000 books, 2000 magazines and journals, 25 years of Sunday newspapers and a collection of video and audio tapes, all on Sri Lanka.

Victor, who grew up in a village in Peradeniya, states he has savoured village life to its fullest and attributes this to be the cause of his unpretentious love for his motherland. This love, admiration and respect for this beautiful island is something he wishes to share with everyone alike in Australia. This is what gave birth to the 'Victor Melder Sri Lanka Library', which today is used by many Australia wide, as a primary source of reference on Sri Lanka.

In 1968, Victor states, many Australians were ignorant of Sri Lanka, most thought it to be a town in India, this annoyed him so much, that he knew he had to do something to set the record straight. He also wanted to make known its rich and diverse history, culture and social standing dating back over 2,500 years. He states, "I now knew why I was here, I had to get the message of Sri Lanka across".

He was pleased when those around him at work and the neighbourhood began asking questions on Sri Lanka, and Victor states, "I could not answer them all, and so decided to get a book or two down from Sri Lanka which would assist me in this quest. Soon like an argument, where one word leads to another, one book led to another, and today these have built up into a unique library."

Over the last thirty years its popularity has grown, so much so, that inquiries about Sri Lanka come from every State in Australia. Victor proudly states that the Sri Lanka High Commission in Canberra often refers people to the library, for there among the collection lie answers to almost every question. He describes the library as a learning process, for he states, "I learn something new on Sri Lanka everyday whilst researching material for others".

This large collection has been amassed with the help of friends both in Sri Lanka and Australia, for Victor has not been back to the land of his birth, since he arrived in Australia. With a trace of a smile on his face he states, "I cannot go back to a place I haven't left. I am here only physically, I'm there in spirit and still traverse those beaten tracks". Like his father, Victor was an engine driver on the CGR and has traveled to most places around the island.

"A number of friends in Sri Lanka would send me books, and those going back on holiday would contact me prior to going, to check what books were needed to be brought back. With the help of a few individuals in Sri Lanka who have donated books from time to time, the library has grown to what it is." Since Victor retired from the workforce eight years ago, his 'buying power' has since dropped and he now relies on donations from individuals and organizations.

The library has its books classified into many headings, some of them being: History, Geography, Tourism, Politics, Religion, Culture, Language/Literature/Writing, Law, Sports, Poetry, Portuguese/Dutch/British Periods, Economics, Art/Architecture, Dictionaries, Year Books/Commemoratives, Agriculture, Education, Anthropology, Wildlife, Flora/Fauna, Cookery, Ethnic Conflict etc.

Students from Primary, Secondary and Tertiary Institutions use the library frequently. With Primary students, the 'lesson' begins with a giant map of Sri Lanka, which adorns the wall. Currently there are four Tertiary students using the library for research purposes for their dissertations and writings. A point in reference, 18 students accompanied by three teachers

from Peninsula Grammar College, Mount Eliza, visited the library and spent the morning looking up references for a joint project they were working on about Sri Lanka.

Expatriate Sri Lankans too use the library, to keep in touch, and also read the Sri Lanka Sunday newspapers,

which are available in the library by noon on Monday. A number of NGO's and quasi government departments also use the library services. Victor spends most of his day in the library, researching material on requests or preparing news summaries etc on Sri Lanka, for the various Sri Lankan organisation newsletters, Australiawide.

A number of authors writing books on Sri Lanka also keep Victor busy. He helped Paul Croucher, an Australian Buddhist who wrote "A History of Buddhism in Australia 1848-1988". Currently two Australians are using the library for novels they are writing with a Sri Lankan background. A number of schools invite Victor to display Sri Lankan artifacts at their 'open days', he also visits schools, groups, clubs and organizations giving talks on Sri Lanka and also arranges video and slide displays.

Victor's proudest possession is a copy of 'Twentieth Century Impressions of Ceylon', which was donated to the library by the Rev Galaboda Sri Gnanissara Thero of the Gangaramaya Temple, Colombo. Another is the entire collection of the Dutch Burgher Union journals issued since 1908 to date, in bound volumes. These journals, along with the indexes of the Wolvendaal Church, Baptism and Marriage records (which the library has), help those doing genealogical research into their family history.

This library, in its entirety, has been left by Victor in his Will to Melbourne's Monash University, where it will not only be preserved for posterity but used by those seeking material and information on Sri Lanka.

In 1993, the Government of Sri Lanka bestowed on Victor the National Title 'Sri Lanka Ranjana', in recognition of his twenty-five years meritorious service to Sri Lanka in Australia. This is an award that Victor cherishes very much, for he states "to be honoured by one's Motherland is the highest accolade a man can receive".

Victor welcomes donations of book etc on Sri Lanka by any individual, organization or government departments. He assures everyone they are being put to good use and helping Sri Lanka in being better known. Sri Lanka seems to be in the news today for the wrong reason – the ethnic conflict in the island. "The Island is much more than that", he states, "and one has to get this message across. Sri Lanka has enough of knockers, she needs all those who are willing to support her and support her we must."

For those wishing to contact Victor, his address: The Victor Melder Sri Lanka Library, 7 Benambra Street, Broadmeadows, Victoria 3047, Australia.

E-mail address: < [. >](#)

Library Web site < [. >](#)

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MEMORIES OF WWII AND THE RAID ON COLOMBO

...By Justin Drieberg

Much has been written about the Japanese Air-Raid on Colombo during World War II. However, I have very vivid memories of events that led up to the day when war came to our shores that I would like to share with readers of the CEYLANKAN.

While serving with the Ceylon Engineers since 1941, a few buddies and I used a map with small (Allied and Japanese) flags to pinpoint and follow Allied losses and withdrawals, and the few victories, on the Eastern front. The seasoned Japanese forces that had stormed their way through Hong Kong, Thailand and Malaysia, had captured Singapore and Burma as well, and were on India's border endeavoring to break through the towns of Imphal and Kohima in the state of Assam. The Indian Army and Allied forces held their ground and repulsed the attacks of two Divisions of the Japanese 15th Army, commanded by General Mutaguchi. One Division was led by General Sato. Calcutta was bombed.

Well aware of the strategic position of Ceylon, the Japanese had to take it to enable them to attack India from the Southeast and Southwest. But they had to contend with the strength and mettle of the British Navy, then concentrated in Colombo and Trincomalee.

For two weeks prior to Easter week in 1942, all leave for Ceylon's armed forces was cancelled. The Japanese Navy and Invasion Force, we understood, was off the coast of our island paradise. An offensive appeared imminent.

Many army units were busy laying concertina wire along the beaches, while my, 'A' Company of the 40th Engineer Battalion, was doing preliminary preparation on bridges over the Kelani River for demolition, if needs be. There were many practice air-raid alerts at the time when RAF planes took to the air. To make it more realistic, they sometimes flew in enemy formation, dropping small 'flour' bombs, and mock air battles took place too.

It was my custom to attend Easter service at the Dutch Reformed Church in Wolvendaal every year, but I missed the one on April 5th 1942. Sirens sounded that fateful morning and many of us thought it was another practice alert. Some of our troops routinely got into the trenches while a few, including myself, sat on the parapet wall and watched waves of aircraft flying in Japanese formation. It was only when we saw bombs fall and heard the explosions, we knew this had to be the real thing. We had a grandstand view of dog-fights, saw Ack-Ack shells exploding in the sky, and watched as many planes were shot down and fell to earth in flames.

We were billeted at the time on part of the campus of St Benedict's College, next to St Lucia's Cathedral in Kotahena. While we watched the action from our vantage point on the wall, all of a sudden a Japanese fighter came roaring, full throttle, around the dome of the Cathedral, flying very low, its forward guns blazing away. Not too far behind was one of our fighters giving chase. The Japanese pilot must have spotted tents in the compound, guessed it was a military camp, did his strafing and disappeared. Had any of the bullets penetrated

any of our tents, in which were stored some of our supply of high explosives, our unit may have suffered heavy casualties. We were extremely fortunate, the bullets missed us, struck a small factory next door that had a corrugated zinc roof which, after the raid, looked like a mosquito net with all the holes in it.

Those of us on the wall hit the trenches before you could say “Jack Robinson”! Our CO, Lt Colonel Rajasingham, was hit in the head by a piece of stray shrapnel. He was not injured though, just dazed for a few minutes, his tin helmet saved him from injury.

Our (C.G.A.) anti-aircraft gunners did a splendid job, shooting down quite a few suicide bombers and fighters when they were close to their targets. But the Japanese inflicted much damage to the city and knocked out part of the Mental Hospital in the process, mistaking it perhaps, for an Army barracks. After the raid, some of our sappers were sent to clear debris and dispose of casualties at the hospital.

Japanese aircraft attacked the naval base at Trincomalee also and did much damage there. More than a thousand troops and civilians died defending the Island. For the next few days a fierce sea battle was waged in the Indian Ocean between the Japanese Naval Force and the British East Indies Squadron. The enemy fleet suffered heavy losses and their surviving ships limped back to Singapore.

We won the naval battle. Ceylon was saved from invasion and not attacked again. Two nights later Japanese reconnaissance aircraft that came by were shot down by the RAF.

Justin Driberg served with the Ceylon Engineers from 1941 to 1946. He was released from service in Jan 1946 with the rank of Lieutenant at which time he left the Island. Since then he has lived in India, Switzerland, England and Canada, and in California since 1971.

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THE SERPENT CATCHER

The Rev. Philip Baldeus, Dutch Minister, in his “*Description of the Ifle of Ceylon*” (1672) tells the story.

“He was a German soldier (commonly known as the Serpent Catcher), and was requested by Mr Anthony Pavilion, Governor of Coromandel to remove a cobra that was in the living room. He came only with his hat before his face and laid hold of the serpent with his other hand, without receiving the least harm. He handled the creature afterwards in our presence and not only carried it away in his knapsack, but also used to sleep near it. I suspect some witchcraft in the matter and talked to him seriously. He assured me that nothing was done but by natural means, and that he always carried the head and heart of a snake about him”.

....contributed by Kingsley Siebel

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QUEENS OF LANKA

...contributed by Kingsley Siebel

Notable kings like Devanampiya Tissa (who accepted Buddhism in 250BC), his brother Duttugemunu the great warrior (161BC), and the noble Datusena (459AD), to name a few,

are well known to students of Sri Lankan history. However, the four queens hardly receive mention or recognition.

The first was Queen Anula, who preceded the famed British warrior queen Boadicea. Whilst the latter poisoned herself on being defeated by the Romans, Anula came to power, in 47BC, by poisoning her husband Coranga, as well as his successor, for good measure. These were not her only recorded deeds of infamy. She is referred to as having 'disgraced her sex' by her lust for a palace guard, and 'poisoned one paramour after another'. Her successor, Katukana Tissa, could only preserve his life for a time before enthronement, by disguising himself in a yellow robe. He eventually raised an army and put the queen to death by setting fire to the palace, in which she had 'lived a dissolute life'.

The next was Queen Sivali, who took the throne on the death of her brother in 35AD. She immediately came up against a new royal dynasty, the Lambakannas, and was deposed within three months.

More than 1000 years later (1196), Vikramabahu II was slain by his cousin, Codaganga, only 3 months after accession to the throne, but his murderer got a taste of his own viciousness. He was blinded and deposed by his senapathi (commander-in-chief) Kitti, who put Lilavathi in place as a puppet queen. She was of Pandyan descent, and the first widowed wife of Parakramabahu the Great, so she must have been respected, even as a foreigner. She reigned for 3 troubled years, but any success in this period was due only to Kitti who finally quelled the Cola raiders. Twelve years later (1209), she was returned as queen by a Pandyan faction, but was deposed again, a year later, by a rival Kalinga, a Malayan prince.

These were turbulent years of foreign domination and internal strife, and as a Pandyan, she was given a third term in 1211, but not for long. This time it was a rival Pandyan prince who led the invasion of Lanka, deposed her, and installed himself.

The 25 years which followed the death of Parakramabahu the Great in 1186, was a period of intense instability in Lanka. There were no less than 9 kings and 2 queens (including Lilavathi), who seized the throne for short periods in 1209 and 1211). Most of the men were foreigners from India, Burma and Malaya. In addition to Lilavathi, there was the Kalinga queen Kalyanavathi (1202-1208). An undated inscription is said to have recorded that 'she was carried away during a Tamil insurrection', but she probably 'wore the crown' continuously for longer than the other three women.

None of these queens were notable rulers, but it must be said of Lilavathi, that no other ruler, male or female, in Lanka or any other part of the world, had her good fortune of being queen three times over. For this reason alone she must go down in history.

Whilst reflecting on the old days, it is important not to overlook modern times, when women have come back into the fore. Dudley Senanayake, a distinguished statesman, was Prime Minister for 3 terms. The career of his notable successor, Solomon Dias Bandaranaike was cut short by a murderer. SDB's wife, Anula Bandaranaike seized the baton and served 2 terms as Prime Minister and Head of State. The present incumbent, Mrs Chandrika

Kumaratunga is also of the Bandaranaike clan. So dynasties still prevail in the 'royal' household, and women have continued to play a part.

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Book Review

Surgeon of the Wilderness

The Biography of R.L.Spittel by Christine Spittel Wilson (revised edition)

Published by Sooriya Publishers

Price: Rs 360.

It is obvious the author, of this most interesting and well written book, had a great love and respect for her father. She has achieved an outstanding biographical study of the man, doctor, humanitarian, writer, researcher, etc, doing justice to her task with details of his life, his sensitivity and compassion for his fellow man.

Dr RL Spittel was born in 1881 (died 1969), and became a nationally and internationally known and respected surgeon and diagnostician who involved himself in the total science and art of medicine. He was the first to give a blood transfusion in Ceylon (using his own blood). The patient survived. He pioneered some new grafting methods and nose reconstructions, concerned himself with the efficiency of the running of hospital wards, and performed some major research on yaws, a disease brought to the Island by the Portuguese from Africa. He kept meticulous notes and obtained great results. His experiments and treatment of venereal diseases were also to achieve recognition, though at the end of his research, an English doctor, working on the same problems, submitted his identical findings to the British Medical Association just months before Spittel finalised his own.

Spittel became involved with the Veddahs during his lifetime (he saw his first when he was 7 years old), so much so he was accepted as "Hura" – cousin, by them. He wrote a huge treatise about this declining race, believing, correctly, that they were in danger of extinction. In his octogenarian years, he became involved in the project of trying to save the Deduru Oya elephants, as he feared the beasts' days were numbered. They were, but he again presenting the same enthusiasm and energy to this endeavor, as he had to everything else he had been involved with in his long life. Where he obtained his energy from was a puzzle. He was over 6 feet tall and weighed under 8 stone- about 50 kilos!

The book has to be read to appreciate the sensitivity which Christine Spittel Wilson expresses in "Surgeon of the Wilderness". She covers a huge amount of material in the book's 222 pages, and it is delightful reading. One gets the impression this book will achieve greatness, not just because of its subject matter, but because of the way it is written. Christine's love for her father permeates the writing, but it enhances and enriches the pages, leaving the reader with a sense of "good vibes".

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About some lesser known Communities of Sri Lanka...3

THE PARSIS – Westernised but orthodox ethnic-religious group

The followers of the Iranian Prophet, ZOROASTER, in India and Sri Lanka are called Parsis (or Parsees). This ethnic-religious group has its origin in pre-Islamic Iran and is from the Pars region (Southwest Iran). When Islam swept across the Middle East, and the Arabs forcibly converted Iranians to Islam, the Parsis migrated mainly to India in the 8th Century AD, where they first obtained asylum in Gujerat. Successive waves of Parsis immigrants settled in Bombay, Karachi and Bangalore.

Zoroastrianism is one of the oldest religions of the world, and was the religion of Persia prior to the conversion of the Persians to Mohammedanism. It is traditionally derived from its great prophet, Zoroaster or Zarathrustra, early in the 1st millenium BC, and is an ethnic

religion decided by birth. Parsi girls and boys, around the ages of 7 through 10, go through an initiation ceremony after some months of religious instruction. At this ceremony, called NAOJOE, a priest ties a thread, consisting of 99 strands, around each child.

Parsis do not have temples, as do Buddhists and Hindus, they worship in 'temples' that are more like houses. In India, however, the FIRE TEMPLE is considered their holiest place. The Parsis are not fire worshippers as such, but they revere fire. Their sacred literature is called the Zend-Avesta.

The Parsis were quick to adopt British customs when the British Raj held sway over India. They even adopted names such as Judge, Captain, Merchant (remember India's master of the willow, Vijay Merchant, in the 1940s), Sailor etc. Other names associated with the Parsis of Sri Lanka are names such as: Pestonjee, Jilla, Rustonjee, Billimoria, Choksy, Jevanjee, Nilgiriya, Dadhabouy, Lakdawalla, etc. The ladies were some of the first to bob their hair and lavishly use western cosmetics. Under the British they thrived as a commercial community and set sail to places such as Sri Lanka to start commercial and industrial ventures. In India the TATAs and the OBEROIs are household names as industrial giants. The entire community is disproportionately wealthier and economically better off than their numbers would suggest.

In the mid-twentieth century, it was estimated there were around 300 Parsi families in Ceylon. But today the numbers are said to have dwindled to about 45. World-wide, their population was estimated at 120,000. The Parsis in Sri Lanka, and indeed in the world, face many problems. A low birthrate, marriage outside the community, higher proportion of spinsters, higher mortality rates, late marriages, etc, are some of the problems. If a Parsi woman marries outside the community, the children are not considered Parsis. One cannot convert to Zoroastrianism or become a Parsi except by birth. On the plus side it should be noted that the Parsis have a very high literacy rate of around 75%. This again affects numbers since higher literacy is associated with lower birth-rates, world-wide.

In India, in begone days, the dead of the Parsis were taken to the 'Tower of Silence' and left there to be devoured by vultures. They did not cremate their dead because Fire is considered holy and could not be desecrated. The towers are about 20 feet (6 meters) high, with a circular courtyard at the top. In Sri Lanka they have a part of Jawatte cemetery set apart for them for burials. The fourth day after a Parsi dies is significant, and relatives and friends of the departed gather at the home for lunch.

It is a paradox that one of the world's oldest religions is facing extinction today. The problem is so acute that the UNESCO has assisted a project for the preservation of Parsi culture and heritage. The Parsis present a classic example of whether communities should merge and integrate and in the process lose their identity, or whether the world would be the richer by preserving their heritage and not let it be diluted.

The hard liners within the modern community contend that their forebears left Iran in the 8th Century to preserve their identity and orthodoxy, and it would be a betrayal of these ideals and dreams if they were to relax and relent by compromise. They think whatever the vicissitudes, they must cling to their traditional concepts and values and to deviate from them would be a sacrilege. There are younger Parsis who believe the rules must be relaxed to admit those who marry outside the fold, to hold the community together. The hard-liners point out that during the Parsi diaspora some 1200 years ago, many fled to China and Europe. There they have integrated to such an extent today, that there is no trace of them left. They say the same fate could befall the Parsis in India and Sri Lanka if the rules are relaxed.

The Parsi community in Sri Lanka have reached dizzy heights in virtually all their chosen professions. The Jillas in the Armed Services and the Police, the Choksyes in the legal profession and in industry, the Pestonjees in music, Dadabouy in medicine, Nilgiriya in architecture, Ladawala in sports, etc. Even in the outstations they were outstanding in their

achievements, eg the Daswanis in Kandy, the Dayarams in Jaffna and Chadiramms in Nuwara Eliya. Of late, some have left Sri Lanka and gone overseas eg, Vasumals in Hong Kong. As a community they have enriched the ethnic mix of Sri Lanka to a high degree.

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HAVE YOU READ IT?

A review in the SMH recently of Michael Ondaatje's favorite book was most interesting. Michael describes a little known work, probably only available in Sri Lanka, by Tissa Abeyesekara: ***Bringing Tissa Home***. The review was so intriguing and beguiling that your editor would like very much to purchase, or at least have a loan of a copy to read. Does anyone have a copy, or are copies still available to purchase? Please contact the Editor if you can help.

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A LITTLE BIT OF HISTORY!

It is of course generally known that the British defeated the Dutch in a series of events on the Island culminating in the siege of the Colombo Fort. Some of the sequence of events prior to the fall of Colombo are not so well known and are as follows:

In 1793, armies of the French Republic were involved in war against England and the Netherlands. The French wanted to take over the Dutch colony of the Cape of Good Hope, Java and Ceylon. The English government of the time, obviously seeking to advantage itself, persuaded the Statholder – William of Orange – to empower the authorities in the Dutch Colonies to use the protection the British crown was offering to the Dutch.

On 7-2-1795, a letter from William, Prince of Orange in exile in England, to Governor van Angelbeck, was received in Colombo. It had been forwarded by the British authorities in Fort St George, Madras, urging the Governor to admit the British for protection against the French. The Governor must have declined the assistance.

On 30-7-95, the British arrived at Trincomalee and began a 3 week siege after which the Fort surrendered. Jaffna fell the following month, Kalpitiya was taken on the 5-11-1795, and the Dutch in Colombo gave up on 16-2-1796 - the mercenary De Meuron Regiment hired by the Dutch to protect the Fort, having changed sides. Galle fell a week later. The British capturing the maritime provinces with virtually no resistance.

Ceylon was then governed from Madras. In 1798, the Hon Frederick North was appointed Governor of Ceylon by the Crown, but subordinate to the Governor-General at Calcutta, until 1801. In that year the governments of India and Ceylon became separate.

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SIGIRIYA

....by Eileen de Silva

Ladies of the mountain, I speak, you do not answer.

No eyelids flicker

Delicate doe-eyed wonders, you speak not-
For your king is dead.....

You mourn him not...you loved him once
He lives in you
His banners flew from the mountain-top once
God-King...no parricide he-aesthete, lover, god
Among the immortals –until the mountains crumble...

Were you the fleshly delights he had to pass
On his journey to enlightenment...upward moving
As he watched the cloud-passage northward to the stars
On mirror walls?

Golden-skinned beauties, flowers on a rock
Your hearts are dry -you speak not
For your king has died...

On the cosmic mountain, where planes of life
Intersect. On Sinha-giri, his monument
of plaster, rock and clay
Imperishable...transcendent...Sigiri put him there.

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FOR SALE!

[7041] Legge, W. Vincent A history of the birds of Ceylon. London: [1878]-1880 Quarto, 1238 pp.; one coloured map and 33 hand-coloured plates by Keulemans. Three volumes [bound in one], half brown morocco, clean throughout, a fine copy. AU\$9750.00 Colonel Legge, who was born in Tasmania in 1841, is an important figure in ornithology. He was educated in England and found himself stationed in Ceylon with the Royal Artillery. Here he pursued his serious interest in ornithology and as secretary of the Royal Asiatic Society he reorganised the Colombo Museum. Birds of Ceylon was written in England after he left Ceylon in 1877. Legge came back to Tasmania and took on the vital task of organising the

defence of Hobart. His interest in natural history, particularly birds, never waned and he became one of the founders and the first president of the (later Royal) Australasian Ornithologists' Union.

Andrew Isles Natural History Books
113-115 Greville Street, Prahran 3181
Australia

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Ceylonese who fought in World War II

Henry and Cyril Talalle

...by Douglas Ranmuthugala

The flames of World War II did not reach Ceylon (Sri Lanka) until the Japanese entered the conflict late in 1941. The war was fought in the West, and the average Ceylonese had no great interest in it, other than the hardships entailed in obtaining supplies. But following the attack on Pearl Harbour, Japanese forces spread out rapidly in the Asia Pacific region, while several colonial powers beat a hasty retreat. In Australia, Darwin was bombed, and Sydney attacked by two 2-man submarines in 1942. Singapore, Malaya, Burma, Indonesia (the Dutch East Indies in those days), Papua New Guinea and the Solomon Islands, saw Japanese wade ashore or breach land borders in the same year. In April 1942, carrier-borne Japanese aircraft bombed Colombo and Trincomalee. Suddenly, the distant conflagration in the West became very real and local to the Ceylonese.

To many adventurous young Ceylonese, a thirst for adventure was far more compelling than patriotism or a desire to go to war to save the Empire. British propaganda that glamorised the trade of war may have contributed to their zeal. While in Australia and New Zealand, the call of "the bugles of England, calling across the sea", was a call to duty from the mother country, no such sentiment was noticeable in Ceylon, at least among the majority of people. But the call of adventure was strong and many Ceylonese youth volunteered to fight a foreign foe in a land far, far away, well before the Japanese onslaught. Some were soon disillusioned and in one case there was even a mutiny. (Read *The Cocos Island Mutiny* by Noel Cruz, published this year).

But many served with distinction in Europe and the Middle East. A good example is KS Kadigawa who, while serving in the Middle East with the Royal Army Service Corps, volunteered to join the Paratroopers 'out of sheer boredom', as he put it. He parachuted into occupied France with the Independent Parachute Brigade during the so-called Second Front, and was Mentioned in Dispatches twice before returning home to embark on a successful career with the Ceylon Police.

While large numbers joined the forces in Ceylon, a few intrepid souls, who could find the means, traveled to London to offer their swords to a country fighting an almost lone battle against what seemed an unstoppable enemy. Like the so-called wooden wall of sailing ships that stopped Napoleon from invading England, a thin screen of a few valiant men in fighter aircraft were all that stood between Hitler and London. Men like Rohan Amarasekera (DFC and Bar), who rose to command the Royal Ceylon Air Force; Rex de Silva and Fred Brohier

who travelled thousands of miles to join the “few”. They belonged to group that came back to the Island, each with a clutch of medals to show for his labours. Significantly, they had the moral fibre to avoid the psychological trauma that seems to a part and parcel of many ex-servicemen from Vietnam and even the Gulf War. A few paid the supreme price, leaving their young bodies to lie forever in a foreign land.

(Rupert Brooke’s sonnet that commences: ‘If I Should Die in a Foreign Land’ ... written before he died in 1915, during World War I, comes to mind here, Ed...my apologies to Douglas for intruding!)

Two young boys, Henry and Cyril Talalla, epitomise both these groups.

The Talallas were a Ceylonese family domiciled in Kuala Lumpur. The father, Hewage Benjamin Talalla, was a highly successful businessman. One of his sons later reached the Bench of the Supreme Court in Malaysia, while another represented the country in the USA. Henry and Cyril were the two elder boys. They excelled in sports at their school, the prestigious Victoria Institute of Kuala Lumpur, and in their late teens both obtained private pilots licences. When the war broke out in 1939, both joined the Malayan Volunteer Air Force, and then volunteered further for service with the RAF. Being born in Malaya, they were technically citizens of that country, but they described themselves as Ceylonese at the time of enlistment. (Christopher Shores in his book *Aces High*”, describes Cyril as a Sinhalese from Ceylon.) Both were sent by the RAF for training in Canada, and displayed natural skills in flying that earned them places in the Fighter Command in England as Sergeant pilots.

Cyril, or ‘Jimmy’ as he was better known, saw action in some of the bitter fighting over England, the English Channel, the North Sea and German-occupied Europe, flying Spitfires and the North American Mustang. He was later commissioned as a Pilot Officer, and in June 1943, was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross for outstanding service in the face of the enemy. His squadron participated in providing air cover for the Normandy landings on 6 June 1944, and followed the Allied armies as they pursued the Germans through France, Belgium and Holland. In April 1945, by then a Flight Lieutenant, he received the Bar to his DFC for his excellence as Flight Commander of 122 Squadron. The citation for the bar read: “This officer has participated in a very large number of varied sorties. He has displayed the greatest keenness to engage the enemy and has invariably pressed home his attacks with determination. Among his successes is the destruction of 4 enemy aircraft.” (London Gazette 17.4.1945, page 2025). After completing his 250th sortie over enemy territory, he was stood down from operational duties and spent the remaining months of the war as a flying instructor. At the end of the war he returned to Malaya, where he served as the Commandant of the Federation of Malaya Air Training Corps, the forerunner of the Malaysian Air Force. Later, he served with the Federation Air services, flying VIP flights, and then as Manager of the Malayan Airlines. Cyril ‘Jimmy’ Talalla passed away in 1973.

Henry was one of the early pilots selected to fly the newly developed fighter-bomber, the Hawker Typhoon. These ‘tank-killer’ aircraft in their ground-attack role, with broad white bands on wings and fuselage, were a familiar sight to Allied troops as they pushed into the

heartland of occupied Europe. Like his brother, he operated out of forward airfields in occupied France.

On 18th July 1944, the Allies launched Operation Goodwood against the Germans. Following intensive aerial bombardment, the Americans attacked on the western front forcing the Germans to withdraw to the west of St-Lo. Supporting these operations, the 2nd British Army and the 1st Canadian Army on the eastern front line attacked in the direction of Falaise, south of Caen. By this time, the Germans had shifted their Panzer Divisions toward the British forward line, and by 25 July, there were 3 times more German tanks facing the British than in the American sector. They had also over 100 of the formidable 8.8cm anti-aircraft guns putting up a barrage of steel in a desperate bid to halt the deadly aerial attacks by the Allies. 1600 four-engined bombers and 600 two-engined bombers and fighter-bombers had been pounding the German lines. The desperate defence by the Germans, in those first fifty days after Normandy, had already cost the British 6000 killed and 28,000 missing in action.

At 11.45 am, 25 July, Henry's Typhoon was one of a flight of four planes attacking German panzers at Fontenay-le-Marmion, six miles south of Caen. That was to be his last flight. The pilot who flew behind him witnessed Henry's plane being hit by intense anti-aircraft fire. His Typhoon was observed heading northeast and was not seen again. After the war it was discovered that Henry's plane had crashed in a farmer's field near the town of Airan, and he had been buried beside his aircraft. His body was exhumed and reburied at the Banneville la Campagne Commonwealth cemetery in Normandy. Thus ended the life of a youth seeking adventure, a life that, like the flights of his beloved Typhoon, was short, explosive and full of excitement.

The sacrifice of this young foreigner was not forgotten by the grateful people of the two French towns between which he fell. On September 29, 1996, fifty-two years after the D-Day landings in Normandy, the mayors of Airan and Moulton unveiled a sign officially naming the route between the two villages, *Route Henry Talalla*. The inscription reads: *Route Henry Talalla. Typhoon Pilote de RAF, Abattu au dessus de Airan et Moulton le 25.07.1944* (Route Henry Talalla. Typhoon pilot of the RAF, (who) fell near Airan and Moulton on 25.07.1944). It serves to remind travellers on the road that bravery, wherever it came from, was something to be recognised and honoured.

Henry's Alma Mater has honoured him by having his name inscribed in a memorial erected in the College grounds to those students and members of the staff who fell fighting in World War II. A Flame of the Forest, planted by his parents in the grounds of the Victorian Institute, forms part of an arboreal memorial to those who gave their lives in one of the most devastating wars in history.

Note: The author is indebted to Chee Min Chung, author of the website [.](#) of the Victorian Institute, Kuala Lumpur, for most of the material about the Talalla brothers and to Charles Amereseckera of Canada for allowing me to access his research into military careers of Sri Lankans.

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WANTED KNOWN....

From: "Pam Veenstra"

I am looking for any information about the following estates. They were coffee plantations in Ceylon during the 1870-1883 era. St George Estate, Waverley Estate, Hollywood Estate, Tullybody Estate.

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SRI LANKAN PROVERBS

"Although the *Ambalama* (A rest house for natives upon the high roads) be unroofed, will it shorten the journey?" – meaning, 'a good reputation survives poverty'.

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"The horn, which came last, has more power than the ear which preceded it" – 'The lowest in his own village has become head in another'.

* * * *

"Even in Gilimala (where betel was grown extensively) there are people with white teeth" – 'amongst the best people, some are bad'.

* * * *

"A foreigner and a parasitic plant are synonymous" – 'one is as ruinous to the place he inhabits, as the other is to the tree it embraces'.

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need pics

Have pics

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