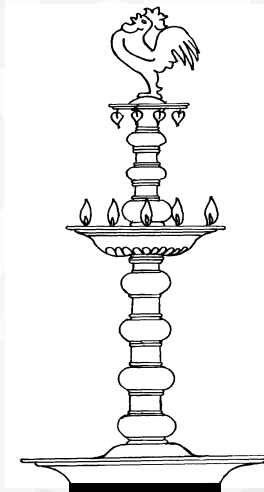


THE CEYLANKAN



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EDITORIAL



End of year edition is now in your hands. Undoubtedly it has been a rewarding year for the Society with a significant increase in membership over the last twelve months. The number and quality of member contributions to this Journal has seen a steady rise which makes it a rewarding experience for your Editorial Team. Both are testimony to the value members see in this unique Journal. We are committed to improve the production and to do justice to the quality of writing presented, whilst keeping the costs down. Sometimes the two are in conflict. A recent proposal to increase membership fees was carried unanimously at a public meeting and awaits ratification at the AGM. Such a step is at best palliative, the Committee knows this too well. Bearing in mind only direct printing & postage costs are charged to the Society (all software, computer time, proof printing costs are borne by volunteers) we need to invite member suggestions/comments as to how we may address the issue in the coming months. One way to reach a wider audience is to make it available for download off the Internet at a reasonable user pay rate. This will involve a substantial start up cost unless we have members prepared to volunteer his/her free services. Also, success of this depends on how well "connected" you are to the 'net'. The Editor awaits a huge rush of great ideas over his email.

The Editorial Team wishes all members the very best for a safe, happy, festive season and a prosperous New Year.

19th Century Images



A fat Natucotya Chetty
from a sketch by John K L Vandort

Back to my Grandmother's Kitchen

by Deloraine Brohier

Grandmother was a great cook. But then most Burgher ladies of a generation ago were experts in the culinary arts. In those days the housewife provided the family with excellent traditional fare - whether it was in savouries, in sweetmeats or richly garnished rice dishes.

The ladies who accompanied their men folk under the Dutch East India Company and settled in the tropical island of Ceylon, adopted and adapted the food specialties with the condiments and ingredients as they found them in the new lands they had come to. They also continued with the preparations of their predecessors, the Portuguese. That is why I prefer to use the term "Colonial" for the cuisine handed down to the Burghers to this day.

The variety of dishes and foods in Sri Lanka are therefore an admixture of the Asian and European. So we have ingredients and preparations that are Indian, particularly Madras, Indonesian, Malaysian, Arabian as also that of the Portuguese, the Dutch and the British. Not all foods, as attributed to one or other of these peoples are particularly of origin from their countries. Social fallacies have been handed down and categorized and misnomers continue. Picked up and thrown around in social conversation and discussion, the love cake is said to be very much a Dutch specialty but is really Portuguese and similarly the foccetti, the bolfiado, a pastry filled with chopped cadjunuts, sugar treacle and doused in rose water, is very definitely a Portuguese sweet meat not Dutch.

Besides, the cuisine as attributed to the Portuguese or the Dutch is not necessarily European. Their mixture is of the East and Asian, in the use of the spices and condiments as well as in their substantive items of ingredients the substitute of cadjunuts for almonds, the use of fruits like the pineapple or the pumpkin in place of the apple and peach, the chillie of Asia or the pungent rose water of the Middle East. This is why I define all this cuisine as "Colonial Portuguese" or "Colonial Dutch" handed down the

generations amongst the female folk of the community termed as Burgher.

In savouries, the Burghers excelled in the pastellos or curry patties, the dainty pastry filled delicacy is Portuguese in name and origin. The bolo cutlet or the frikkadella is more of Dutch origin but spiced up in Sri Lanka with green chillie, garlic and the small red onion. In sweetmeats the Burgher housewife excelled in love cake, bolfiado and breudher. Specialties of curry dishes were the carmenache or the smore, while in rice dishes the lamprais was a very special meal of a Burgher household. To this day the gourmet would be very selective in associating all these delicacies with the Burgher community. For in social conviviality when conversation drifts from politics to economics and the country's development programmes, should the subject of food be raised and a lengthy digression ensue, invariably the specialties of Burgher cuisine are highlighted.

Tiffin time or tea-time in Granny's household saw us as children rushing back from school to throw our satchels and rush to the open back verandah where Granny would have something special for our hungry mouths. Her face shiny with perspiration from the heat of the open fire where she had presided, she would bring to us at table the breudher (or correctly spelt as broeder), hot from the oven - generous slices with salted butter spread thickly and thick wedges of Edam cheese with its red rind. At other times there was the pannekoek or the pancake. The Ceylon pancake was as dainty as a lady's handkerchief and an old recipe gave as a secret of its preparation that the mixture contained king coconut water to give it a special taste. The pancakes dexterously tossed by grandmother, hot from the pan, were sprinkled with sugar granules and the juice of the lime or lemon. Eaten hot or having been left to cool, either way was equally delicious. Poffertjes undoubtedly attributed to the Dutch and seen even to this day in the open fair and markets in The Netherlands was another. Gone are the days when households would turn out as Granny did, poffertjes for tiffin. If they are seen even in Exhibition specialty or displays in Sri Lanka today, it would be a wonder! The brass pan with its cylindrical indentations was an implement found in every Burgher kitchen



Breudher (broeder)

in the past. The batter for the poffertjes was blended with the yolks of eggs and milk combined with the touch of yeast, and was cooked over a very hot oven till they puffed up like over-sized ping pong balls. This delicacy also piping hot was generously doused with sugar syrup into which had been sprinkled slivers of chopped almonds or cadjunuts. Some speak of boroa which today can be picked up at a way-side boutique, but are rock hard and mixed with much grated coconut. The Portuguese boroa was a biscuit of delicacy containing semolina, eggs, cadjunuts and was flavoured with rose water. Expertise was needed not in its making and mixing, but in its baking; crisp on the outside but so soft in the middle it just melted in your mouth!! Foguetti, which is a Portuguese word for rocket or squib, is a tube of pastry, the flour wrapped around short stumps of bamboo. The foguetti is filled with crystalized pumpkin preserve, (erroneously today more often with stewed pineapple) and coated in icing sugar. The experts, who turn out the foguetti in Sri Lanka today, are rare and very special.

"Bolo" is the Portuguese word for coarse cake and so we get bolo-de-coco or coconut cake, bolo-d'amor or love cake and bolo-folhado or bolfiado. One of my aunts on my mother's side termed this delicacy as a "hundred leaves". It was layer upon layer upon layer of the thinnest pastry, filled in-between with chopped cadjunuts, soaked in sugar treacle and rose water. Today we would raise our hands in horror at its cholesterol content but in the past chunks of bolfiado were consumed by the gourmet! The popular notion that foguetti, bolfiado and love cake is of Dutch origin is therefore a fallacy. The love cake, which comprises hundreds of cadjunuts and pounds of sugar, rulang or semolina, many eggs and butter, some pumpkin preserve should also have a sprinkling of powdered cinnamon and cardamom and the grating of lemon rind and some rose water. It is said to be one of the easiest cakes to make where no one could go wrong but do not be beguiled, for it has to be watched in its baking. When taken out of the oven the love cake should be soft and oozy in the middle and crisp and crumbly at the top.

In Granny's day most houses as I remember had

the cumbersome Dover stove stoked up with fire wood or the gas stove served with built in pipes. Other households had the open hearth or a bed of coal which when lit would retain its heat for a length of time. The utensils used for the Burgher delicacies, the breudher pan or the poffertjie pan had legs, which buried themselves in the coal and cooked the item. The ladles or implements had long handles so that the housewife at the hearth would not have cinders burning her clothes.

Specialty curries associated with the Burghers are carmenache, smore and kofta curry. Carmenache is undoubtedly Portuguese. It is a hunk of beef cooked with roasted and powdered curry stuffs, including slices of green ginger, garlic chopped fine and fennel leaves. Set the meat

aside and cut into thick slices. A gravy is then made with the juice that is left in the pan, adding thick coconut milk, powdered Rusk to thicken, onions fried in ghee or butter, into which the slices of beef are then arranged and allowed to simmer. This must be served hot with rice and/or vegetables. Smore is a Colonial Dutch dish, very similar but where chillie powder is introduced which makes the dish



A Dover Stove in the background

spicy and hot to taste. Some years ago when in Goa, running my eye through the Menu card in a lovely little restaurant there, I picked on kofta curry and my mind went back to the dish served up for us in our household. Kofta curry is made up of large meatballs loosely coated in powdered Rusk and deep-fried, then placed in thick brown curry gravy and served hot.

The lamprais or lomprijst undoubtedly came to us in Ceylon from Indonesia as packeted, spiced rice. When attending a conference in Jakarta we were served for Tiffin with a spicy delicacy termed a "lamper". Into wedges of thick milk rice was a filling of curried chicken wrapped in banana leaf, but unbaked. The lamprais as popular in Sri Lanka could have originated from here. In Sri Lanka today the lamprais is anything but what the Burghers would have prepared in the past. Originally spelt lomprijst the name devel-

(Continued on page 14)

The cascade system of

Hiriwadunna Tank:

Details enshrined in folk memory

by Somasiri Devendra.

The following excerpts from notes made in 1959 are presented here as it is felt that they need to be recorded. They are presented without editing as this may affect the flavour of the narrative: I have, however, added headings.

The village of Hiriwadunna, where these notes were made, is located on the Dambulla-Trincomalee road some miles before it reaches Habarana. Its “purana” village was below the bund of the *Hiriwadunna wewa* and the newer L. D.O. allotments bordered the main road.

In 1957 the dry zone was subjected to torrential rains and flooding, and many tank bunds were breached, making many stretches of paddy fields unfit for cultivation for some time. The public raised much money to supplement state funds for rehabilitation. Ananda College, where I was teaching then, itself collected a considerable sum and the Social Services Department encouraged the College to take over custodianship of a village, rehabilitate and improve it. While this was taking place teachers would, from time to time, take students from the upper forms on field trips to the village to supplement their academic knowledge with first hand experience. By the time the rehabilitation was over, Ananda College had established a new school there, the first in the village, as a longer-lasting contribution.

On these trips with our students, we would spend the nights probing the older villagers’ memory banks for their knowledge on any aspect that occurred to us. The following notes were made on such a trip, with the intention of finding out how twentieth century rural colonists perceived the past history of the lands they were settled on. According to the villagers, they had been settled on their properties by Freeman and one of the oldest – who said he was one of the original colonists – said that he remembered H.C.P. Bell who was then old. This would have made their village date back to the early twentieth century. Their view of the past, therefore, did not spring from centuries-old tradition, but from a mix of remem-

bered history, myth and evolving legends. (They were familiar with the *Mahavamsa*, with which they checked their original narrations to us, later admitting they were mistaken and offering us a revised version.) The history, as they perceived it, is recorded here in both versions.

Importantly, however, they did have some knowledge of the “cascade” system of tank irrigation. This was in 1959, long before our irrigation engineers awoke to such a system, but these villagers were fully aware and, in fact, could trace the flow of water to their own tank from the source to its eventual disposal beyond their village tank. I believe that this information is worth recording. Unfortunately, I had misplaced my notes for over 40 years, and it is only this year that I found them. I have referred this information to Mr.D.L.O. Mendis who is researching this area and would like either him or any other irrigation engineer to check the plausibility of the flow described by the villagers. I lack the knowledge to do so. Whether facts prove it correct or not, I believe the fact that the villagers knew of the existence of such a thing as a “cascade” is important in itself.



The village had been a monastery site in earlier days. Led by the villagers, I went in search of the ruins, found and sketched them. Apart from the remains of buildings – pillars, steps, balustrades, moonstones and guard stones – there was a stone cistern at ground level, built of four slabs of dressed rock slotted into each other; three were yet erect while the other had fallen down

We are, now, further away in time from my informants of those days than they were from

Freeman and Bell. The country has changed a great deal and, apart from the description of the water-flow, the other value of this narrative is a reflection of the way life used to be in a backward dry zone village nearly 45 years ago.

THE NOTES

(made at Hiriwadunna Rural Development Society building, 17.4.59)

ORIGINS OF THE VILLAGE

The village was first established by a *sitana*, (= a rich man) during the time of the Sinhalese Kings. Soon after that, this tank breached. We don't know what happened. Our people came here after that from various places, repaired the breach and settled down. We know only the history of our people. No details known of the time of the Sigiriya kings. Our people were from *Galegoda*, *Molligoda*, *Ratwatta*, *Ehelepola*, *Keppetipola*, *Morakawa Walauwas*. Probably *Rajadhirajasingha* lived at this time. This was *Seneviratna Adikaram's* area.

After the breach, people came from: *Kandavala* (no one here now), *Ambanpola* (no one here now), *Ikilivatta* (no one here now), *Haduwa* (one person only – not here now), *Dehigomuva* (one person), *Mahadamana* (one person), *Koswatta* (one person), and *Galagomuva*. One person who came was *Kadirahami* from?. *Kumarasingha* was from a Brahmana family.

Henarat Mudiyanse. Married from another village. Not many relationships with other villages. Marriages are only between relatives, even if it is between different villages.

Kathiganawa. A battlefield of the Sigiriya kings. Located in front of the tank.

Galakil. A compound of medicines and stone, used for fusing stone.

1917 (1927?). Freeman was Government Agent. He gave land to the present village. 15 or 20 acres. He gave 15 but the Surveyor found 20 within the boundaries. Till the 1957 floods, most people lived in the *purana* village.

There is the *Satipaṭṭana Bhavanava* on five gold plates and *dhatu denamak* enshrined in the old dagoba ("lindahan karala"). Once a year they offer 5 *hara* of *kiribath* and five *malvatti*. This is traditional, but not carried out to the letter. This is taken in a *pathraya*. It must be on a Wednesday, Saturday or a Monday. It must be

in February, March or April or New Year, but there is no specific date. All the villagers go.

This area belongs to *Aiyanayaka deiyo*. The villagers go to the place with *Kaludakada deiyo*. *Minneriya deiyo* said that no devils will attack this village this year as the god will protect this damaged village. So there is no need (for the ceremony?) this year.

In the earlier days, when the gods were not propitiated, a man would die when the tank filled and another when the fields ripened. Out of (every ?) ten children in the village, seven died. Then they started this custom. It is only within living memory that the children of the village prospered. It was last performed – not this year or last year – but in 1957. It has been postponed twice now. It is very expensive. About 50-60 have to be fed.

Collect 50 *seru* of rice. 60 is collected at 2 from each. Coconuts, about 60 (same division). About two bottles oil. About two pounds (or more) sugar. 6 *seru* of paddy. *Bulat* 150 (100 for the ceremony alone). *Puvak* 150 (same). *Hakuru bavak*. About 4 *Kurumba*. Two *dawul* drummers. A good *hangaleya* to *hangala bandinda*. This is a decorative dress, like a series of flowers, worn round the waist. A *hangala hatte* must be worn. It is like a skirt and blouse: the skirt billows out beautifully.

The offerings are taken in procession. There is a cloth over the offerings. Drummers play. The *hangaleya* and drummers are paid. *Gallinda Kapumahattaya* is the one who goes into a trance (*avesa venava*). This is a traditional person. He performs the ritual. This is all. On the journey, he leads the procession, in a trance. On the return, he comes last, having come out of the trance.

Vandule poth. A book written by the man who hides a treasure, for his own guidance. The man who finds it is a lucky man.

THE CASCADE SYSTEM

This was part of the *Sigiri vava* scheme. From *Puvakgaha ulpotha* in *Amban ganga* the water came to *Vavalu Vava*. From there to *Nuwaragala Vava*. From there to *Polattawe Ihala vava* (*Maha vava*). From there, part goes to *Minneri vava* (along the *Kiri Oya*?) This is the water

from *Vavala*. From *Ihala vava*, the old *Yoda Ela* does not flow because of the water going to *Minneri vava*. From *Polattawe* the water should come to *Sigiri Maha vava*. From there the overflow comes along *Sigiri oya* to this tank (*Hiriwadunna*). From here it goes to *Habarana vava*. From there to *Hurulu vava* along the *Yan oya*.

HISTORY –(original narration)

Kassapa came to *Sigiriya* after killing his father. Then *Mugalan* was at *Anuradhapura*. *Mugalan* got angry when he heard of his father's death. One can't be sure what will happen when two kings fight. So, to cheat his brother, he dug a mud hole 60 *riyan* deep. This was full of water. He filled it with mud. This was done secretly and he built a false road over it. Then he sent a letter to *Kassapa* that he would meet him in battle at this spot on a particular day. No place was named: but only the place where they would meet face to face. *Mugalan* delayed on the way, till *Kassapa* came to the place, on elephant back, with his army. Now both were racing. *Mugalan* put the mud hole between them and turned his elephant back when he saw *Kassapa*. *Kassapa* thought that this was in fear and came on faster and fell into the hole. Then *Mugalan* shot *Kassapa* with an arrow (this was in the *danuddara silpa kale*). He sent *Kassapa's* army back to *Sigiriya*. Without following on to *Sigiriya*, *Mugalan* went back to *Anuradhapura*. He left *Sigiriya* untouched. *Sigiriya* degenerated slowly as time went on.

HISTORY – corrected version

Datusena had two sons, *Kassapa* and *Mugalan*, and a princess. The princess was married to another prince before *Kassapa*. (She was second to *Kassapa* in the family). Then *Kassapa* married.. He became King (at the same time as when the father was reigning). King *Datusena* built *Tisa Vava*. He spent a lot of money. The sister's husband was a drunkard and *Kassapa* criticized his father for his choice. Because of this, *Kassapa* walled up his father at the *Anuradhapura* Palace. Then *Mugalan* ran away in fear. He lived with an Uncle (*Mama*) who was a monk. The Ministers were angered. The Army was also against *Kassapa*. (They agreed on the former story of the *Tisa Vava*) So, leaving *Anuradhapura*, he found the isolated (by men) peak of *Sigiriya* and re-

sided there with his *gollo panguwa*. He built a city there. Built walls, four sentry posts, *diya agala*, etc. *Mugalan*, who was with the monk was educated by him. When he was 16 the *Anuradhapura* residents searched for him and gave him the *Anuradhapura* throne. During his reign he tried to find the whereabouts of his brother. He sent scouts in all four directions. Those who went south found the place secretly. They carried back the news. Then *Mugalan* prepared the army and the ministers and secretly dug the hole.

Kassapa committed suicide rather than be killed by *Mugalan*. His army retreated. *Mugalan's* army pursued and massacred them at *Katiganawa* – hence the name. Some escaped up to *Sigiriya*. *Mugalan* took the dead body and went with his army to *Sigiriya* and buried him and built a big *sohona*. Then he returned.

He thinks – can't remember – that the fresco ladies are *diviyanganavo*.

Pidurangala – Lot of treasure buried here from the temple. There are more Buddha images on the other side – the slopes of this place. Huge sleeping Buddha. Pond (perpetually full). On the top there is a rope pattern along the edge of the rock, in a square. This is a sign of a *nidha-hana*.

They say there is a *maligawa* in the rock and the entrance to this is protected by bees

Wadunagala (modern *Pathulgaswela*) – is a rock close by. At the foot of the rock there is a water hole – the other end of the rock is below ground. A wall-like rock meets this rock. The meeting point is cracked and a long corridor cave is exposed. His (the narrator's) *grand-mother* could remember a time when the cave was clear enough to be seen. She had seen, at the far end, after looking long, *pata redi vananava*. This is said to be the treasure of *Sirivaddana sitano*.

(End of historical narration)

Miscellaneous information

Treasure under the earth was taken by a *sastarakaraya* named *Welimuvapothane Gurunnanse* who could read *gal-nagara* (inscriptions). He was able to find the location from the *vandule poth*. A Brahmana from India who married from

a *walauwa* in Kurunegalle, *Hingurakgoda Gurunnanse*, had also learnt to read the letters.

The oldest villager, who had come to settle down here, *Hirivadunne Liyanagedara Banda* had seen H.C.P.Bell at Pollonnaruwa when Bell was an old man. The other old villager was *Hirivadunne Ranhamige Punchirala*, who had been born in the village. One giant would place two stones in a pingo, with two stones in each end and take them to *Lovamahapaya* in Anuradhapura, at 12 noon.

Thindukulama (now *Thoombikulama*) is a tank between here and *Galakadawala*. This is the very last tank. Tamils were settled there by king Dutugemunu, or maybe Mahasen or even king Sri Wickrama (because he was a Tamil). He posted a garrison there and got the Tamils to cultivate paddy etc. Most of the paddy was made into a *Veendahana* called *goyiduva*. This was in the *athulpatta* of the tank. All the implements used were also buried intact. There are many ruins close by. The King's main treasure, *Maha Nidahana*, was buried north of the tank. It has been dug for several times but has not been found. There is a stone bed by the treasure.



Beruwela: A point of reference for Sri Lanka's Muslims

by B. H Spencer Roberts

On the picturesque southern coast of Sri Lanka is Beruwela: a small town overlooking a palm-fringed beach and a tiny, tranquil harbour where fishing boats and *dhow*s rest at anchor.

This quiet and idyllic place – now a popular tourist resort – is of great significance to Sri Lanka's Muslims and has a long history of Arab settlement presumed to go back to 1024 AD: the traditionally accepted date of the first Arab migration to the island.

The arrival of these Hashimite Arabs, fleeing a repressive regime in the Arabian Peninsula at the time, is commemorated in the very name of the town itself; because Beruwela is derived

from the Sinhalese word *bae-ruala*, which loosely means, “the spot where the sail was lowered”.

The Kechimalai Mosque dominates Beruwela; reputedly the oldest Muslim religious edifice in Sri Lanka. This domed building with its white minarets stands prominently on a headland – the



Kechimalai Mosque, reputedly the oldest Muslim edifice in Sri Lanka

site of that historic Arab landing in the eleventh century.

Kechimalai is venerated by all Sri Lankan Muslims and attracts pilgrims from all over the island. The *muezzin* of the very holy mosque calls devotees to prayer five times a day. At the end of Ramazan Kechimalai holds a festival, which is renowned in the Muslim world.

Most holy places attract myths and legends and the Kechimalai Mosque is no exception. One legend concerning the origin of this place of worship nearly a thousand years ago suggests the Mosque was built on the tomb of a Muslim saint. Apparently, the rock-coffin of the holy man floated onto the headland, perhaps in a storm, and made the promontory his final resting-place.

The Italian priest and traveller, Marignolli, visited Beruwela in the 14th century and found the place firmly in the possession of the Muslims: descendants of those earlier Arab migrants. On a voyage from China to India, Marignolli's ship was driven by storms to Beruwela. Here, he was



Rail Travel Tales from Sri Lanka

Continued from Journal 22

by Tilak Wijewardene

A middle-aged gentleman seated next to me very humbly informed me not to give notes but only coins. It seemed I was creating hyperinflation within this train. Potentially, all beggars in future might demand notes only! My fellow passengers were becoming concerned about my overly generous donations of Rs.10s and Rs. 20. (In Australia one cannot buy a packet of peanuts with the dollar equivalent of Rs.20). In this train carriage I was acting as a generous benefactor, creating a dangerous precedent for local passengers. The gentleman became my mentor for the rest of the journey, got friendly and started conversing with me. He asked a few questions about Australia, in particular Shane Warne's bowling figures and the treatment of 'Our Murali' by the Australian media.

I was in mid-sentence when a highly plaintive scream emerged from the far end of the carriage. It was getting louder and louder. The noise conjured in my mind the image of 'The Scream' by Norwegian artist, Edvard Munch. A woman was approaching with her mouth gaping open, hair in tatters and emitting a continuous ear-piercing scream. It was Edvard Munch's figure walking by. The Scream was alive! Norwegians in Sri Lanka on peacekeeping duties didn't have to go to Oslo to see their beloved countryman's painting. I nodded at my neighbour, the Mentor. He quickly said, "Don't give her a cent, she is supposed to be deaf and dumb, but I've heard her speak before." The Scream heard the Mentor's comments, and gave him a withering look.

The carriage settled back into a peaceful rhythm but only for a few more minutes. The Child Prodigy, a boy of about 12 years made his appearance solo, carrying a bag for his collection. He possessed a contralto voice with excellent control of the high notes and I enjoyed his performance. It's a pity he was born in Sri Lanka to a poor family. If in Italy he could have ended up at La Scala, Milan: or in England, he could have been an invaluable member of the Kings College Choir at Cambridge University. But fate is

such that he sings for a living on this train. The Prodigy was up with the latest in popular Sri Lankan music. The first song was a rap number, Bhatiya and Shanteuses, "Tha, Na nay na na." The next was a very appropriate song for a crowded train, "Dhanapala paree hinganawa" (A man named 'Rich man', begs in the street), and "Kapuru Hamy duganda Hamanawa" (A man named "Sweet smelling man" has body odour). The boy should also have marketed a deodorant spray. There were more than a few Kapuruhamys in the compartment!

The stage was set for the Final Act as we were approaching Mirigama. Just as in the operatic saying, "It's not over till the fat lady sings", a very fat lady took the floor. With one leg shorter than the other, balancing herself using a grab pole, she started singing. She was no soprano or diva of Maria Callas, or Kiri Te Kanawa's calibre, but she sang with gusto, "Peenamuko Kalu Gange" (Lets swim in the river Kalu ganga). Once she completed her collection it was all over.

As a finale I would have preferred 'Nesun Dorma' by Luciano Pavarotti or those heavenly voices of Andrea Bocelli and Sarah Brightman singing 'Con Te Partiro', translated to 'Time to say Goodbye'. By the way, Andrea Bocelli, the Italian blind singer would have struck more than a chord here, on this train. "Anai, appo, potta suddek hinganawa" (Oh dear, a blind **white** man is begging!).

The show was over, but there remained the 'Ticket office' collections. A man who would have done Mario Puzo's image of the Godfather proud began to walk through the train. When approached by this sinister looking man, the vendors and performers quickly give him cash. No words were exchanged. This man was the 'Show Director', a local Mafiosi or the rep from the 'pataala lokaya' (the underworld). At the Gam-paha stop a different crowd got in, a younger mob of girls and boys. This is the "tuition-teen" crowd going to Mirigama for tuition in subjects such as English, maths, economics and geography. They were a lively bunch and had the traditional herd instinct. Girls and boys were separated, except for a few daring pairs, who were conducting 'meaningful' conversations in the dark passages between compartments. A boy and girl gazing at each other, with their 'halup karayas' (supporters) helping them on.

It occurred to me that in Sri Lanka, there are no facilities for younger people of this 'class' to meet each other and have meaningful encounters without the uncomfortable overbearing surveillance of their elders. The elders take great pains to separate the sexes from birth and then at a marriageable stage, get two absolute strangers to marry, live together and produce offspring. This method worked fairly well in the past, but I have my doubts about it for the future.

We had reached Mirigama. The Mentor helped me with my bag; then lo and behold from nowhere appeared 'The Scream'. She was flailing her arms as she approached The Mentor and then let rip that scream. It started with a low scratching shriek and reached a crescendo of at least 100 decibels with the accompanying Doppler effect. Quite miraculously she had recovered her speech, no longer deaf and dumb! It was hilarious to hear what she had to say to The Mentor for giving her game away. The content of her speech is unprintable because of its vulgarity. The genealogical details of The Mentor's family were minutely described, with a list of four legged relatives. The delivery was absolute and to the point, expletives well placed for maximum impact. There was no pause to permit reply or protest; just take it straight from an old pro!

The Sinhala language, when all its colourful expletives are used at their best is to my reckoning the most poetic and meaningful in the world. Even the dark skinned, streetwise naatami' (railway porter) blushed blue and covered his face with his gunny bag hood. Now I understand when Professor J.B Dissanayake (Professor of Sinhala) says "Bhashaawaka Mahimaya" (the glory of a language). The Professor should have recorded this "speech" for posterity.

It was finally time for the curtain call on the Mirigama platform. With a sympathetic word I parted company with my friend and Mentor.

The experience I had on this train ride was tremendous, full of a rich cultural experience that one can only obtain when travelling on a passenger train. One does not have this experience on an Australian or a British train. All expatriates and some local Colombo-ites should travel in a suburban passenger train to enrich themselves with such an experience. All the emotions are tested – humour, sadness, pity, hope, happiness and so on.

If I have inspired you to take such a trip, do not complain of the difficulties in 'putting up' with such a commute, after all this is the country of our birth.

I wonder whether my fellow passengers and the performers would believe in Panditha Amara-deva's lyrics, 'Me ran derane, yali epadeemata hethu waasana wewa.' (May I be fortunate enough to be born again in this Golden Land).

I think they would, I certainly would!

ΩΩΩΩ

APPRECIATION:

Rodney St John

I believe that it was Divine Providence that brought Rodney and me together some 12 years ago, which developed into an abiding friendship. What began as a casual meeting developed into a close relationship, with close affinity and camaraderie. For years we met every Wednesday morning to discuss and research into topics of interest, namely all things Sri Lankan.

Rodney was a storehouse of knowledge and information having spent a number of years working and researching in the outback of Sri Lanka. This gave him a greater insight into the land, its peoples, flora, fauna etc. He was an authority on the birds of Sri Lanka and we recall his erudite talk on Sri Lankan birds at one of the earlier meetings of the Melbourne Chapter of the Ceylon Society.

His love of nature, the environment and conservation did not begin and end with Sri Lanka. I recall his many forays into Nature reserves, Parks etc in West Australia, the Northern Territory, Queensland and many spots in Victoria that he visited with his family. Whilst there, he always made a detailed study of his surroundings. He was equally at home at Kumana, Uda Walawe, Kakadu or Lakes Entrance.

Rodney was an active member of the Bird Society of Australia and often wrote to them on various topics and on observations he had made on birds. He spent quite sometime with me ex-

plaining the similarities of some species of birds, plants and flowers in Australia with that of Sri Lanka.

He was a quiet achiever, who left an impression wherever he went. If ever Rodney undertook a task, he would attend to it with zest and a verve seldom seen among others. He was a passionate member of the Ceylon Society, Melbourne Chapter, where he not only attended meetings, but also made it a point to meet as many of those present at the meetings. He was a keen contributor to the 'Ceylankan' the journal of the Ceylon Society, and rarely was an issue published that did not have an article by Rodney.

Even as he lay in pain, gasping for breath at the Broadmeadows Palliative Care Centre, just three days before his demise, he was concerned that he would not be able to make it to the Ceylon Society meeting scheduled for the Sunday he passed away. He wanted me to tape the proceedings and bring it to him, so that he could listen to it. This was the passion he had with things he was involved with...sadly it was not to be.

He was also a keen Bridge player and would attend the weekly bridge sessions at the Essendon Bridge Club. He also attended the fortnightly get-together at the Day-Care Centre of the Ceylonese Welfare Organisation, travelling the long distance to Noble Park, just to meet people and listen to all they had to say.

The last two years he spent his Wednesday visits to the Sri Lanka library I maintain, researching into the history of Galle, especially the Galle Fort, for a major paper he was working on. Last September, when he visited Sri Lanka he spent two days in the Galle Fort and spent each day tramping up and down every street in the Fort, checking the houses for their architecture and the history behind each dwelling. Sadly his paper is not be, it is my earnest hope that one of his sons, David or Ajit, will see it fit to complete their father's research and fulfil his dreams.

Rodney was a simple man, his needs were few and he had no time for an ostentatious life, each new day was a learning experience for him. He never had an unkind word for anybody or any-

thing, always looking for the good points in any situation. His love of mankind was epitomized when he willed his mortal remains to Medical Science, this is why there was no funeral service for Rodney. Even in death, he continues to help humanity.

It is fitting that this memorial service for Rodney be held today, the Feast of All Saints, in the calendar of the Church. It is humble men and women of Rodney's stature whose feast day it is today. Saints who lived their lives with love, honour and respect for humanity.



Rodney St John

This is how we will remember him, as a person of beauty, passion and humanity. We love him and will miss him. It is the words of Rumi, the 13th century Persian mystic that will secure him in our hearts....

After my death, do not look for my grave

In the bosom of the earth

My resting place is in the hearts of those men and women

Who are wayfarers on the path of love.

Rodney St John, what a Man, a Colossus among men. How I wish he were my brother!!

Victor Melder

Rodney St John was a founder member of the Melbourne Chapter and gave a memorable presentation on Sri Lankan and Australian birds at one of our earliest meetings. This was a subject in which he excelled being a dedicated lover and perennial observer of Nature. He donated a tape of birdcalls as his contribution to an archive, which had just been inaugurated for the Society.

His involvement with the research interests and work of the Society was such that he never failed to attend a meeting, always displaying his enthusiasm and enjoyment in what transpired. He was our official photographer at these events and the photographs taken by him and the articles he

wrote for THE CEYLANKAN will serve as a permanent reminder of his outgoing personality, his considerable expertise on innumerable subjects connected with Sri Lanka, and his firm commitment to the aims and objectives of the Society.

Dr Srilal Fernando

Modest, unassuming and without pretension, Rodney was a good friend and a gentle, caring human being with an endearing sense of humour. We had the common bond of having experienced our student life during the golden days of the University of Ceylon, Peradeniya, in the 1950s and shared memories of people and events from those days. We would keep each other informed of news of colleagues and friends and he always showed a genuine human concern as to how their lives were progressing.

Being a graduate in Geography Honours, Rodney specialised early in studying the different aspects of the land and the people of Sri Lanka. He became an expert in its flora and fauna and gradually expanded his range of interests to include history, human settlements, archaeology and so much else. He had an abiding interest in people and their efforts to build up systems of knowledge about the country. He appreciated interesting connections between different generations of the families he knew both personally and through reading about them.

Rodney loved the country of his birth with unswerving devotion being sensitive to all the influences fostered there, which had shaped his personality and life. He instructed and nurtured this love in his sons David and Ajit who deeply value their Sri Lankan heritage. Following in his father's footsteps, Ajit is a keen collector of Sri Lankan books.

Rodney was a man of faith and when he perceived that his life was nearing its close he was able to say with acceptance and grace that he surrendered himself into the arms of his Creator. He will be sadly missed by us all. May he rest in peace.

Shelagh Goonewardene

ΩΩΩΩ

‘Pupanie’ @ 6,800 ft also known as Hethersett Tea Factory

by Sumane Iyer

A strange, but evocative place name, buried in the mists of Kandapola.



‘The Tea Factory’ Hotel - Hethersett - Kandapola

Mr. W Flowerdew from Hethersett in Norfolk would have never dreamed that the property he purchased in late 19th century and turned into one of the best Tea Estates play another role in the 21st. The factory which produced Silver Tipped tea sold at record prices at the London Tea Auctions in 1891 is now a most imaginatively conceived luxury hotel. As seen in the picture above, the external façade still retains the industrial look. But step in through the main door at the *porte cochere* you enter another dimension.

In my younger days working at Hayleys, I used to visit this estate on work. I have been there when the massive engine cranks into life and starts the line shafts running to power the huge intake fans and other processing machinery. I could almost hear this din while I was registering at the reception, which from memory is located near the ‘factory office’ of by gone era. The waiter who gently sidles up behind you and offers a warm cup of Spicy Tea to welcome you, brings you back to reality. And what a pleasant reality it is. The wooden floors which used to be covered in a film of tea dust is now polished to perfection. The old engine is still in the pit and for effect it is gently cranked over by an electric motor. The lofts where the jute hessian tats withered the leaf have been converted to luxury rooms, 57 of them, with attached bath & toilets.

(continued on p 15)



ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

FOLLOWED BY FELLOWSHIP AND DINNER

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WHO ARE THE PANNIKARS?

by Vama Vamadevan

Sri Lanka's best elephant trappers of the past were called Pannikars. They are Muslims living mainly in the Batticaloa & Trincomallee districts. Their stock in trade is to lie in ambush along a trail they know as habitually used by elephants on their way to the waterhole or pool and trap them. When the herd is sighted they find out which way the wind is blowing by striking a match and gently blowing the flame off. This usually shows the wind direction.

The Pannikars carry coils of rope made of finely twisted thongs of raw deer hide. The secret about the raw deer hide rope is that when the elephant pulls, it stretches like a harp string without breaking. The elasticity of the hide pulls back the elephant when it falls to its full length. The Pannikars lie in wait and when the herd is sighted, at a prearranged signal a blank cartridge is fired and everyone makes a din of a noise with tom toms, beating tins etc. to excite the elephants and coax them to run along a predetermined trail.

Once the elephant to be trapped is selected the chief Pannikar runs alongside it and deftly slips the noose on one of its legs. This is a job that requires pluck, alertness, daring and wit. It is these qualities that qualify the Moor to be the best Pannikars or elephant noosers. This breed of Pannikars is now almost extinct. (*see picture on back cover Ed*)

(Continued from page 4)

oped into lamprays and today it goes as lamprais. It is a packet of the best thin grained rice cooked in the stock of beef or chicken; special items include the lamprais curry which should have the five meats of beef, chicken, pork, mutton and ox liver, all diced, the seeni sambol of onion and plenty of maldivefish, blachan of ground dried prawn spiced with garlic and green ginger and sitting atop two frikkadella or forced beef meat balls. Here again the secret of the expert is to bake the packet when wrapped in the banana leaf and serve to the table straight from the oven which when it is opened, is steaming. The lamprais was a Sunday lunch in many a Burgher home of the past. Today it is left as a specialty to the commercial experts.

Gone are the days when those who made these delicacies delighted in turning out the specialties primarily for their families. The Burgher lady experts with their families are gone to lands far away. With them have also gone the poffertjes and breudher pans, the brass preserve basins, where the pooldosi or the pumpkin preserve was cooked, and the long brass spoons. Most of us left here in the land of our birth are denied the pleasure of seeing the breudher or poffertjes being kneaded in our own kitchens or inhaling the delicate perfumes of rose water and spice, nor do we have the dish hot and cooked emerge at our dining tables. These are only memories of the past – to reminisce is sufficient delight.

ΩΩΩΩ

Obituary:



Dr. Cedric Susanga Wickremasuriya.

It is with a profound sense of sadness that we record the passing of our Sydney member Dr. Cedric Susanga Wickremasuriya on 30th August 2003. Following his expressed wishes, the cremation was a private service.

He was a distinguished man of Medicine who

used his skills to alleviate the sufferings of many who sought his help. To his patients he was not a mere physician but a life long friend. He had a remarkable career at the faculty of Medicine of the University of Colombo, Sri Lanka where he acquired his MBBS. He later proceeded to the UK and secured his FRCS, England.

Not long after his return from England, he sought, and won the hand of Rukmani, the elder daughter of Mr Henry Amarasuriya, then one of the wealthiest men in Sri Lanka. Much of the broad acres they inherited was lost in the Land Reform programmes of the nineteen seventies. Undaunted, and without even the slightest hint of bitterness, Susanga decided to move to Australia in 1976 and settled in Sydney with his wife and family.

He first served as a GP for a few years before he joined the Coal Board and worked both in Wollongong and Sydney, as its Chief Medical Officer, where he is remembered for his enthusiasm and devotion to duty. During his stay in Sydney, he identified himself in the upliftment of the marginalised sections of the Sydney community. He, and his wife Rukmani, were regulars at the Soup Kitchen run by the Sydney Mission and served the poor and the needy in more ways than one. He was compassionate and sensitive to the needs of the less fortunate and peripheral sections of the community. Along with Rukmani, he applied himself to such tasks and projects with pragmatic and positive action.

On a personal note, I must mention that when my wife, children and I migrated in the early 1980s and settled in Sydney, even without having known us previously, he went out of his way to give us a hand. When I needed specialised medical attention, he put me on to the best Physician at the Royal Prince Alfred Hospital and constantly inquired and advised me on my condition.

As a member of the Ceylon Society of Australia he was a regular at our meetings and members will remember his broad smile with which he greeted one and all. He always had a word of encouragement for those his junior and never failed to appreciate even the smallest attention given to him. He was an excellent *raconteur* and used this skill to the fullest at social gatherings. At his beautiful home at St Ives, he and Rukmani, entertained numerous professional and social friends,

where their hospitality knew no bounds.

Susanga epitomised the virtues of a true adherent of the '*dhamma*', not in routine rituals and worldly religiosity, but at a higher plane. In his last years, his faith in the *dhamma* stood in good stead, to help him endure the pain and agony of his illness. His faith never faltered or wavered to the very last. Helped by his wife, he endured all the pain and discomfort with fortitude. He was a perfect gentleman, totally devoid of guile or malice. In the final assessment, Susanga acquitted himself magnificently in the service of the two counties he worked in, lived, and loved. He has an assured place in Elysium.

Vama.....

ΩΩΩΩ

(continued from p 13)

Rummaging around in the stationery folder I come across this notice which warns the unwary visitor not to get alarmed in the middle of the night if one hears ghostly sounds. The high winds at this height struggling its way over the outer cladding apparently moans its way past your windows. So be warned - you light sleepers, I was 'dead to the world' after a six hour journey from Colombo and a sumptuous dinner washed down with some smooth Arrack.

Dinner time was extraordinary. Where in the world does the kitchen and waiting staff put on an impromptu jig and invite the guests to join in? Two old Swiss ladies seated next to us thought this was great fun and were on the floor in a flash. Of course yours truly joined in. The Saxophonist one man band brings back nostalgic memories with his repertoire. He even played a haunting rendition of '*Dhanno Budunge*' at my request..

Go trekking, cycling or ride a horse, (all services provided) visit the Nature Reserve, go watch the bird life, but take in the breathtaking views from the lofty heights, recharge your mental batteries, drink in the clean air. Sounds like a bit of Paradise? It certainly was for me.

And why '*Pupanie*'? in Tamil it means 'flowers of frost' - apparently it was also meant as a tribute to Mr. Flowerdew. Poetic, and at the same time an apt description of the place.

ΩΩΩΩ

Some Characters of the Old Ceylon Bar

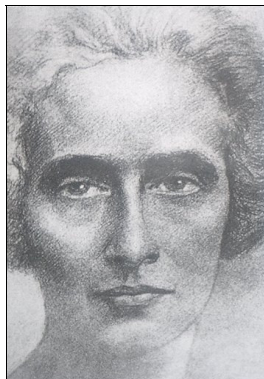
Part 2

Benjamin "Benny" Bawa (1865- 1923)

by Joe Simpson

Appeal Court Advocate Benjamin William ("Benny") Bawa, K.C., father of the well-known bohemian character Bevis and the internationally famous lawyer-turned-architect Geoffrey, was a capable sportsman with Clark Gable-like good looks. Benny Bawa was described during his lifetime as the handsomest man in Ceylon and after his death as "one of the all-time giants of the bar". Benny became a highly successful lawyer, having started out from scratch after his father died leaving his mother and five younger siblings penniless. He briefly acted as temporary Solicitor-General for Ceylon, before becoming Aide-de-Camp (A.D.C.) and Private Secretary in 1919 to Governor Manning.

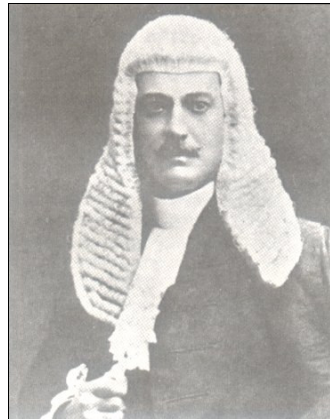
Benny's wife Bertha Bawa came from a prominent old Burgher family, the Schraders, descended from a German mercenary soldier in the service of the Dutch East India Company (V.O.C.) who had settled down and married a Dutch lady in Jaffna in 1716. Bertha's mother was the daughter of Elizabeth Harriet Campbell, a Eurasian lady with mixed Sinhalese and Scottish parentage (and supposedly related to the Dukes of Argyll). The Schrader family owned large estates near Kimbulapitiya and Wester Seaton near Negombo, along with a substantial townhouse in one of Colombo's last cinnamon plantations, in what is now Ward Place. Bertha and her sisters all married lawyers, while her only brother, Fred, took over running the family estates. Her younger son Geoffrey, the future architect born in 1919, would spend a good part of his early years staying with his mother's relations in Colombo and at their Kimbulapitiya estates. Nowadays, the fine estate bungalow at Kimbulapitiya is a



Bertha Bawa

guesthouse of dubious repute named "Golden Heaven", although according to David Robson in *Bawa: the complete works*, as of 2002 rather surprisingly much of the original Schrader furniture still remained intact in the house, along with Fred Schrader's 1927 Chevrolet, standing in perfect order under the *porte cochere*.

Benny Bawa's best friend throughout much of



Benjamin "Benny" Bawa

his legal career was James Arthur van Langenberg, another eminent Colombo lawyer, who died prematurely in 1915. Indeed, as a trainee lawyer before being called to the Ceylon bar in 1887, Benny Bawa had articled with his friend James' father, a famed Burgher lawyer also named James

van Langenberg (d. 1886). According to Sir Gerard Wijeyekoon's *Recollections* (1951), Benny Bawa and the younger James van Langenberg were inseparable, travelling in the same horse and trap to the Law Library every morning and returning to their respective homes after work in the same equipage, before meeting again most evenings to play tennis with the likes of E. W. Jayawardene (father of Sri Lanka's future President Junius Richard Jayawardene) at the Colombo Lawn Club, followed by a congenial visit to the Orient Club. Years later, their respective sons, Bevis Bawa (born in 1909) and the gifted Arthur van Langenberg, would become equally good friends.

Sir Gerard provides a succinct profile of Benjamin Bawa, whom he describes as "always fearless in the discharge of his duties to his clients". His first law practice after being called to the bar in 1887 was in Kegalle, where he quickly established a reputation for himself as uncommonly brilliant. After a few years he was induced to return to Colombo by Frederick Dornhorst, the pre-eminent advocate known in his heyday as the "Lion of Hultsdorp".

In 1904 Benny was called to the Bar at the Middle Temple in London. Sir Gerard remembered the day when Chief Justice Layard brought

some distinguished English visitors to court, and arranged with the Supreme Court Registrar to put Bawa's case first on the list, so that they could have the opportunity of listening to a really outstanding Ceylon advocate. Bawa, as lucid and polished a speaker as one could hope to find, did not disappoint! At one time he turned down an initial offer to act as Solicitor-General, on the practical ground that his enormous fee income was about six times what he could earn working for the Government.

Benny Bawa's skill at swift repartee was legendary. Once, when as a well-known and distinguished lawyer he returned to Kegalle to handle a case after many years at the Appeal Court in Colombo, a rather pompous member of the minor judiciary pointedly asked him who he was. Back came the equally pointed response: "I am still B. W. Bawa." On another occasion, in Colombo, the Chief Justice of the time became impatient with Bawa as he could not quickly get the facts from him, for both men had to be turning the pages of a voluminous record. "Oh!" said the C.J. with heavy sarcasm, "When *I had a brief* I used to read it from cover to cover." "But *we have briefs*, My Lord," was Bawa's curt rejoinder.

In 1893, Benny Bawa was commissioned into the Ceylon Light Infantry (CLI), as would be his son, Bevis, some years later. It was in his capacity as a CLI captain that Benny served as Aide-de-Camp to Governor Sir William Manning (1918-25) shortly after the end of World War One. His older son Bevis Bawa would also follow this path, serving in a similar capacity under several British Governors after World War Two.

In *Galle: As Quiet As Asleep*, Norah Roberts tells a tale from the 1860s about Benny Bawa's father, Ahamadu Bawa, a charismatic long-time proctor who spent his later career in Kandy. Apparently the then-minuscule Galle Bar used to gather for lunch at the Oriental (later New Oriental) Hotel in Fort. One day (so this story goes) a subscription list made its way around the table, to raise funds for a stranded French *Made-*

moiselle to return home. Proctor Ahamadu wanted more details. The hotel manager explained to him that the damsel in question, while on board ship in the Mediterranean, had met an English planter on leave from Ceylon. He had courted her, proposed marriage, and had been accepted. He had suggested to his fiancée that she settle her affairs in France, then sail to Ceylon to join him in her new life as a planter's wife. This she had promptly done, and after "burning her boats" she had disembarked at Galle and taken a room at the Oriental Hotel, expecting a joyful reunion with her *amour de coeur*...only to discover to her anguish that the

caddish fellow was already married! Now penniless, she wanted to return home. Proctor Bawa, intrigued by this saga, arranged to meet with the lady, found her to be attractive and so presented her with a business proposal: he would arrange for her to stay on at the Oriental for a week as



Bawas in front of Chapman House – Darley Road circa 1910

his guest, so that they could become better acquainted, then if she was willing, he would marry her - but if not, he would pay for her passage back to France. Charmed beyond words, the young lady accepted the proposal. By the end of the week, so the story goes, they were engaged to be married, Proctor A. Bawa generously pensioning off his existing (Moslem) wife in order to clear the way.

Bevis Bawa liked to tell an even more fantastic story about how his grandparents first met in Galle and were married by special licence the very same day, after dashing Ahamadu Bawa rescued Bevis' grandmother (then a young woman named Henrietta Ablett who was visiting Galle from a passenger ship in the harbour, en route to Australia) from the unwelcome attentions of a local tout.

Alfred Bawa, one of Ahamadu's brothers, gave a rather more prosaic version of this episode to Arnold Wright for *Twentieth Century Impressions of Ceylon* (London, 1907). According to Alfred, Ahamadu and Georgina Matilda Ablett

actually met while Ahamadu, a Moslem law student from the old Arab town of Beruwela just south of Colombo, was completing his law studies in London in 1863. Georgina Matilda's father, who lived in Islington, North London, was distantly descended from French Huguenot émigrés. The young couple married in England and Ahamadu brought his new bride back with him to Ceylon soon afterwards, where he practiced his profession first in Galle and then in Kandy and finally Colombo. Whichever of these three versions is the most accurate, we do know for certain that their eldest child, Benjamin William, better known as Benny, was born in Galle in 1865.

(A.R.B. Amerasinghe's *The Supreme Court of Sri Lanka* provides us with another colourful anecdote about Proctor Ahamadu Bawa, Mrs. Bawa's father-in-law. Fairly early on in Bawa's legal career the future Colonial Secretary and then Kandy Police Magistrate, (later Sir) Alexander Ashmore had ordered him physically carried out of court for not obeying a ruling. Proctor Bawa charged Ashmore before the Bench of Magistrates, which fined Ashmore, who in turn had the conviction set aside on appeal. Ashmore then renamed one of his dogs "Bow Wow", and made a practice of loudly calling out the animal's name every time he walked past Bawa's home, making it sound just like "Bawa"! Not to be outdone, Proctor Bawa retaliated by having some posters printed and pasted all over town, which read: "*Lost, stolen or strayed, a puppy called Ashmore*".

Sir Gerard remembered sadly the occasion that he went to visit Benjamin Bawa at his London hotel in late 1923, while Bawa was *en route* with his wife and two children from Colombo to Harrogate, to seek a last-chance health cure at the famous Yorkshire Spa. He was astonished to find that the "powerful and handsome" man he had last seen only a year ago in Ceylon was reduced to a "mere shadow stretched on his deck chair", albeit still puffing on a large cigar. Bawa offered him a sherry, but regretted that he could not have one himself. In fact, the once-robust Benny had been diagnosed with Bright's Disease, a fatal kidney disorder, only a year or so before. The London doctors could do nothing for him. Within a short time of this last meeting between the two friends, Benny Bawa died suddenly at Harrogate, not yet aged sixty, leaving

his devastated widow and two young children, Bevis and Geoffrey, to make their way by sea back to Ceylon.

Bertha would survive her husband for more than twenty years before succumbing to diabetes. David Robson tells us something about the Bawa home in Colombo. Chapman House, a former residence of the Bishop of Colombo, was a solid, two-storey "bungalow" situated at the south end of Darley Road, set well back from the road within a large garden. His book has a 1910 photograph of both Benny and Bertha seated in their horse-drawn carriage in front of Chapman House, dressed in formal white including sun-hats, with a turbaned servant standing to attention at the rear, the whole serene scene set against a background of leafy trees. Benny Bawa had bought it in 1906, when Darley Road was a leafy, spaciouly-designed road running along the east side of Beira Lake, and dotted with stately homes and clubs. Chapman House was one of number of large, 19th century Italianate villas on a large block of land at the junction of Darley Road and Union Place, now a busy commercial intersection. Soon after she married Benny in 1908, Bertha had used some of her own considerable fortune to buy the annex that abutted the main part of the house, thus doubling the size of the property. This annex was connected to the side of Chapman House by a *porte cochere*, and its flat roof served as an elevated terrace. To the rear of the property, there were extensive stables, garages and servants' quarters. The lower floor of Chapman House consisted of a series of rendered arches set within colonnaded bays, while on the upper floor a continuous open balcony ran behind a colonnade.

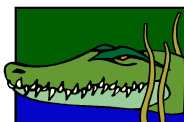
After her husband died in 1923, Bertha Bawa became somewhat socially reclusive, spending much of her time at Chapman House, which she shared with a retinue of servants and with Violet and Rose, Bertha's two spinster sisters-in-law who devoted themselves to the welfare of her two young sons, Bevis and Geoffrey. Violet Bawa ran a photographic studio and was considered "artistic"; a talented caricaturist, she published a book of her sketches, dedicated to Bevis. Mrs. Bawa liked to travel, despite her reluctance to mix in Colombo social circles. In 1928 she returned from England with a huge crate that accompanied her from Colombo har-

bour to Chapman House; great must have been the excitement when the crate was opened to reveal a road-ready bright yellow sleeve-valved Daimler tourer! This car belonged to Bevis until 1930, when his mother gave him a new six-cylinder Humber as a 21st birthday present.

When Bertha Bawa died at Chapman House in 1946, her sons Geoffrey and Bevis each inherited one half of the Darley Road property. By the autumn of that same year, Bevis had already sold his part of Chapman House. Geoffrey, who was about to set off on a world tour, invited his older brother to live in the other half of the property still owned by him. In the spring of 1948, by which time Geoffrey had reached Italy, he instructed his Colombo solicitors to sell his remaining half of Chapman House, to help raise funds for what he then hoped would be his permanent residence in Italy. Soon after, however, he abandoned this plan and returned to Ceylon. He never returned to live at Chapman House, however, preferring to invest in a small coconut estate near Bentota (the future "Lunuganga") and a *pied-a-terre* in the Galle Face Court, Colombo. Thus ended four decades of the Bawa family's connection with Chapman House.

ΩΩΩΩ

Did you know?



"There are two species of Crocodiles in Ceylon, the estuarine, most of which are man-eaters, and the swamp crocodiles, which inhabit the tanks and rivers. There lives today in the tidal reaches of the Walawe River at Ambalantota a giant crocodile which is credited with at least a dozen victims. He inhabits a favourite bathing -place and it became necessary to put up a wooden fence in order to protect swimmers from the brute. All efforts to trap or shoot this reptile have proved futile."

Philip Crowe, American Ambassador in Ceylon—1953-1956 in "Divisions of a Diplomat in Ceylon"

HelpAGE

SRI LANKA - GREETING CARDS

HelpAge, Sri Lanka is an approved charity working towards achieving a better quality of life for the elderly in Sri Lanka. To raise funds for this worthy task, HelpAge sells greeting cards illustrated by reputed artists. 'The Ceylankan' readers have an opportunity to assist HelpAge by purchasing very reasonably priced Christmas and New Year cards; a list of those available for 2003 is enclosed in this publication. We are pleased to record that Mr. J. W. D. Perera, a member of CSA who passed away in February this year, bequeathed a house in Sinsapa Road, Colombo 6, to HelpAge to be used as a transit home for the elderly.



MEMBERSHIP FEES ARE GOING UP IN 2004*

All those in arrears for 2002 & 2003 please send in your fees at current rates shown below NOW.

NEW RATES FROM 1 JANUARY 2004 ARE:

Member/Overseas Member	AU\$ 30.00
Pensioners	AU\$ 20.00

** to be ratified at the AGM on 6/12/03*

REMINDER MEMBERSHIP DUES

There are some members still in arrears of 2002 subscriptions. Please see enclosed individual reminder. 2003 subscriptions are now overdue. Kindly draw your cheque/MO in favour of the Ceylon Society of Australia and mail to Rienzie Fonseka—25 Clanwilliam Street—Eastwood NSW 2122 Please note subscriptions are for a calendar year.

Annual subscriptions are:

Members	AU\$ 25.00
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Pensioners	AU\$ 15.00

BOOK REVIEWS

“Armageddon or Brave New World?”

by Christie Weeramantry



Like so many thinking people all over the world, Mr. Christie Weeramantry has been very perturbed by the tragedy in Iraq- the invasion of the country by the U.S., British and Australian forces. In the weeks leading up to the event, when France and Russia resolutely refused to allow the Security Council sanction a war, it became very clear that the U.S. would arbitrarily lead an attack on its own.

In protest against this planned invasion, Mr. Weeramantry wrote articles, gave interviews and addressed meetings, which included a session of British parliamentarians in London. The general thrust of his arguments was that an attack on Iraq without the approval of the Security Council would be unconstitutional. He specified ten principles in the U.N. Charter, which would be violated. An invasion would also be morally indefensible, as it would inevitably result in the loss of numerous lives and serious damage to the infrastructure, to hospitals, schools and religious and cultural institutions.

In his book, “Armageddon or Brave New World?”, Mr. Weeramantry enlarges on the opinions he has expressed earlier and stresses the fact that we have a task ahead to counter the dangers ahead of us. He refers to the U.N. Charter as “the basic document of today’s international law”. It is a document, which was carefully drafted with one overriding objective in mind- the promotion of international peace. The Charter created the U.N., and by invading Iraq in the circumstances they did, the U.S. and its allies have challenged the moral power and legitimacy of both of them. The actions of the U.S. are particularly reprehensible, as it is the only Superpower today and a responsibility devolves on it to set an example to the other nations of the world. The allies purported to act under Resolution 670 of the Security Council, which was passed in 1990. It was a weak argument, which was squashed by Mr. Weeramantry. He has pointed out that it was irrelevant and out of date, as its objectives were fully realised in the first Iraq War.

The allies gave two reasons for launching their attack. (1) Locating “the weapons of mass destruction”, which they accused Iraq of amassing in violation of Security Council resolutions. (2) Ending the despotic rule of Saddam Hussein and setting up a democratic government in its place. Actually, the U.N. and the Security Council had the powers to tackle both problems. They had in fact appointed a team of inspectors who had been busy making a strenuous search for any WMD in the country. However, they were recalled on the eve of the invasion, before they could finish their assignment. Up till then, they could find no incriminating weapons. Nor indeed, though many weeks have passed since the invasion started, have the allies been able to find any.

Mr. Weeramantry argues, though Saddam’s record was a black one, the means adopted to overthrow him were unconstitutional. Here again there are adequate provisions in the Charter under which the Security Council could have acted. The first and obvious line of action could have been to resort to diplomatic procedures such as mediation and negotiations. However, if there were evidence of the violation of human rights, the Security Council would have the authority to set up a tribunal, such as a War Crimes Tribunal.

Many people are tempted at this stage to shrug their shoulders and say the damage has already been done and nothing could be done about it now. This, Mr. Weeramantry says, is erroneous thinking. The international situation is in a dangerous pass. The violence we have seen in Iraq may well be inflicted in other countries as well- Iran, North Korea or anywhere else. President Bush keeps making ominous references to “rogue States” and an “Axis of evil”.

So what lies ahead of us? Armageddon or a brave new world? A world of violence or a world of peace?

Mr. Weeramantry’s book is a source of invaluable information as well as a guide to the action which all of us should now be taking.

Christie Weeramantry, member of our Society, was until recently the Vice-President of the International Court of Justice at The Hague

Vernon Abeysekera

Without Fear or Favour

by F.N.D. Jilla

This volume of the memoirs of a retired Police Officer of the Ceylon Colonial and later Sri Lankan Police Service is a gripping and yet harrowing story of a young police officer who was filled with high ideals and a deep sense of duty.

The book covers the period of emergence of the Police Force from the Colonial era of Dowbiggin and Banks, to the appointment of the first Ceylonese Inspector General of Police - Sir Richard Aluvihare.

It also tells of the abortive first coup attempt by F.C. de Saram, Jungle Dissanayake and others (senior Army and Police officers) and reveals details of discussions about the Bandaranaike/Chelvanayagam Pact, at which conferences the author, together with other senior Public Servants was present.

Mr L. D. C. Herath, retired IGP writes in his Foreword:

"Freddy Jilla was not a slave to rules and regulations. He worked on the principle that rules are meant for men and not men for rules. He was guided by high principles, not only to ensuring that his subordinates provided an efficient service to the public but also protecting his subordinates from external pressures and interferences where he thought they had acted correctly in terms of the laws of the land and the rules of the Police Service. He was an exacting and demanding officer but also extremely fair and unbiased towards his subordinates."

Shelagh Goonewardene

Aphorisms:

Shot gun wedding: a case of wife or death
A backward poet writes....inverse
Dijon-vu...the mustard same as before
A man needs a mistress ..just to break the monogamy
If you don't pay your Exorcist, you get repossessed
(...are there any Aphorists out there with more contributions? Email Ed)

Geo Steuart & Co: Ltd. '52 – '73.

A Personal Odyssey

by Tony Peries

Geo. Steuart & Co. was pre-eminent amongst the mercantile firms in Ceylon.

Founded in 1835, GS as it was universally known, handled more than 20% of all the tea produced in Ceylon, which put it up in the world league.

Tony Peries' book is not a history of Geo. Steuart & Co. that has been written by others but is about his journey and the many firsts, from being the first Ceylonese Assistant, taken on in the Tea Department, to the first Ceylonese Director and then on to become Chairman and CEO of this great company.

Perhaps at this point I should declare a personal interest in this book. I was on estates under the GS umbrella, virtually all my planting career. It was traditional for planters to bitch about the weather, the Government andthe bloody Agents ! But if truth be told, GS was an efficient and very fair Agency House.

This story is not just about Tony's progress up the ladder at GS and the reasons for his far too premature retirement. He writes about the people he worked for and with, the characters, some definitely questionable, about the workings of a major Agency, the Board Room tussles, and some of the decisions therein that nearly brought this venerable mercantile institution to its knees. It is about the workings of a Tea Department and the associated Brokerage Houses, the Auctions, dealing with the Government in those turbulent times, and with London, and the Estates, in fact the whole business of Tea. However, it is not a stodgy treatise on the industry but is full of light and shade and understated humour – a damned good read.

One wonders if Tony Peries wrote this book as an act of closure on his twenty one years at the coalface. I hope not, as I am sure he has a wealth of material for more publications from those interesting and changing times.

Although this book is a personal reminiscence,

it is in my opinion, also a valuable historical document about the times and a life style that no longer exist.

Brian Parker.

400 Years of Dutch-Sri Lanka Relations: 1602-2002, edited by Saman

Kelegama and Roshan Madawela - 595 pp, US \$15.00 Published by Institute of Policy Studies, Colombo, available from Lake House, Vijitha Yapa and leading book sellers in Colombo.

Think of Holland and one tends to think of such things as tulips, dykes, canals, clogs – and painting. It is a small country, smaller than Sri Lanka in both land area and population. But it is among the top ten world trading nations, and it was top dog among world powers in the 17th and 18th centuries, when the Dutch East India Company – VOC, to use the initials of its Dutch title – ruled various parts of the world including coastal areas of this country.

It was Sri Lanka's destiny, shared with only a few countries, to have three European powers place their imperial footprints on it. The Dutch, coming between the Portuguese and the British, ruled the coastal areas from 1658 to 1796. The Hollanders' impact was the least substantial but, as discussed in this book and evident in many ways, not insignificant or transient.

While Dutch rule started in 1658, Sri Lanka's links with the Netherlands date back to 1602 when a Dutch admiral, Joris van Spilbergen, landed near Batticaloa and was received by King Vimaladharماسuriya 1 in Kandy. This 595-page publication presents 21 papers contributed to a symposium held in Colombo in August 2002 as part of the events to mark the passage of 400 years since that year. The Institute of Policy Studies in Colombo and the Sri Lanka-Netherlands Association organised the symposium, and the Institute's Director, Dr Saman Kelegama, and a Research Officer, Roshan Madawela, co-edited the publication.

The editors' Introduction admirably conveys the wide scope and main themes of the book. Besides the Introduction, the book has five parts: A Historical Perspective, Economic Relations, Dutch Influence on Society and Politics, Landmarks and Legacies, and the Impact on Culture and Community. The symposium assembled a pool of scholarly talent from a range of disciplines: history, including social and cultural history, archaeology, architecture, art history, cartography, economics, law. All the contributors are Sri Lankans but for one Dutch scholar.

He and two other contributors provided two papers each.

It was the British whom Napoleon derided, giving wider currency to a phrase used by Adam Smith, the first guru of free markets, as "a nation of shopkeepers". But it was the Dutch that J M Roberts, in his *History of the World*, said were "the trading imperialists *par excellence*" who carried "the technique and institutions of commercial empire to their furthest development." The chief ambition of the Dutch was to control the export and carrying of Asian spices to the markets of Europe rather than to conquer and colonise countries. It was perhaps in keeping with a predominantly commercial ambition that, as Vernon Mendis observes in his contribution to this book, the Dutch set the greatest store on diplomacy to achieve their ends.

But when diplomacy did not work, they were not averse to using less benign means. In Ceylon, they tried to subdue the Kandyan kingdom in 1765. In the words of J P Coen, the Dutchman who set up the Dutch East India Company's Asian headquarters in Batavia (now Jakarta), "We cannot carry on trade without war and war without trade" (cited in David Landes, *The Wealth and Poverty of Nations*).

In the historical articles, K W Gunawardena offers a Sri Lankan perspective of the early period of Dutch rule and Vernon Mendis writes about the importance of diplomacy in Dutch policy in contrast to the policies of the Portuguese or the British. The doyen of Sri Lankan historians, K M de Silva, presents a comparative analysis of the three phases of the European imperial presence in the island. L J Wagenaar, the Dutch scholar, suggests that the explanation for the way the Dutch conducted themselves lies partly in their culture, their Dutchness or Eurocentricity, and their commercial mentality.

R K de Silva, in an account of how the British ousted the Dutch, focuses on two interesting figures: Count Charles-Daniel de Meuron, a Swiss military entrepreneur who supplied a mercenary regiment to the Dutch in Colombo, and Hugh Cleghorn, a Scottish academic and occasional secret agent who persuaded de Meuron to ditch the Dutch and switch to the English. Cleghorn then served briefly as the first British Chief Secretary, under Governor North, in Colombo, while Britain still controlled only coastal parts of the island. (His not particularly learned observations on Ceylon's ethnic geography, in what came to be known as the Cleghorn Minute, became a principal exhibit in the case for treating the North and East as the traditional homeland of Sri Lankan Tamils.)

Dushyantha Mendis examines Dutch economic policies and concludes that despite "exciting departures", there was no take-off, as there was to be under the British, because the Dutch East India Company was addicted to monopoly and central control. Wagenaar looks at the detailed economics of the Dutch presence, providing statistics on export values, European civilian and military personnel, income and expenditure. Kelegama deals with recent economic

relations and documents an increase in Sri Lankan exports, mainly garments, to Holland, in Dutch tourists, and in Dutch investment. The Netherlands is also a significant provider of aid.

In discussing the Dutch impact on religion, Charles N Jansz, a Dutch Reformed Church pastor, agrees that the Dutch used both compulsion and inducements to make converts, and that "coerced" conversions could have been the reason why large numbers left the DRC when the Dutch quit Ceylon. The DRC, the oldest of the Protestant Churches in Sri Lanka, is now said to have about 5,000 adherents from "all the major communities"; almost all its seven churches in Colombo have trilingual congregations.

Writing about the Dutch educational system, Lorna Dewaraja says there was no difference between Dutch educational and religious policies and both were subordinate to Dutch political purposes. The main aim of the schools in a tightly controlled system was to make converts to Calvinist Christianity. She says some features of the Dutch system have not disappeared completely.

A R B Amerasinghe, surveying the Dutch influence on our legal system, points out that the use of Roman-Dutch law "has not been as extensive as it might have been" though, as a source law, it continues to be of great value. The courts continue "to apply the principles of Roman-Dutch law in appropriate cases" and to decide "whether a particular rule of the Roman-Dutch law is applicable or not."

Roland Silva points to the broad scope for archaeological research of the Dutch period: forts, canals, churches, hospitals, ports, warehouses, houses, ships, drainage systems, as well as many objects such as furniture, ceramics, coins, silverware, lamps and pipes. Somasiri Devendra brings a pioneer's enthusiasm to his account of Sri Lanka's first steps in marine archaeology, focusing on investigations of the wreck of the Dutch ship *Avondster* – one of many vessels wrecked in the port of Galle.

Dutch architecture is the subject of Ashley de Vos, who suggests that the Portuguese, coming from a sunnier part of Europe and intending to stay, were better placed than the Dutch to make a contribution to architecture in Ceylon. Domestic buildings that came up in the Dutch period, built by Portuguese or Portuguese-trained local craftsmen, did not have a distinctive Dutch colonial stamp as buildings in Dutch South Africa or Indonesia did, but were an architectural hybrid "of dual parentage". This article ends with several pages of photographs from Sri Lanka as well as Indonesia, South Africa, Suriname and Curacao. Unfortunately text and pictures are inadequately linked and many pictures inadequately captioned.

In leading up to a discussion of the Dutch influence on furniture, Ismeth Raheem draws attention to the reverse flow of knowledge, specimens, artifacts and designs to Holland from Asia including

BOOKSHOP AND WEB RESOURCES

BOOKS/MAPS/COLLECTIBLES

This column is a regular feature for the benefit of members who publish works, and others who wish the Society to sell material on their behalf. No charges apply to members but donations will be gratefully received. Others pay a handling charge of 10%. Please

e-mail the editor if you wish to take up this offer

Armageddon or Brave New World?

By Christie Weeramantry. Published by Sarvodaya Visva Lekha, 173pp, AU\$ 12.50 + \$ 2.50 f&h. Contact Jay Fernando 03 9841 0192.

Without Fear or Favour by F. N. D. (Freddy) Jilla. Memoirs of a retired officer of the Sri Lanka Police Service. Published by Vishva Lekha 2001, 625pp \$25.00 + \$4.00 p&h. Call Homi Jilla (03) 9804 5316

George Steuart & Co Ltd 1952-1973: A Personal Odyssey - Tony Peries. \$ 20. Contact Tony on 02 9674 7515

Hills of Paradise - by Dr Shiva Breckenridge 305pp, hard cover \$ 40.00 + \$ 5.00 p&h, contact Treasurer.

Celebrating Sri Lankan Women's English Writing 1948-2000 - by Yasmine Gooneratne
Publisher: Women's Education & Research Centre, 58 Dharmarama Road, Wellawatte, Colombo 6
Paperback, 451 pp, price SL Rs. 850/- Contains bio-bibliographies, documentation, and analyses of the writing of some 70 Sri Lankan women authors.

The Way We Grew by D T Devendra - \$ 10.00 + \$ 3 p&h - call Sumane Iyer - 02 9456 4737

Please note p&h is within Australia only, overseas postage quoted on request.

WEB SITES WORTH VISITING

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www.erols.com/arbs [Asian books]
www.heritagebooks.com [Genealogy, History]

Ceylon, and is keen to highlight the role of Sri Lankan craftsmen. Dutch maps and mapmakers are the subject of Dennis Fernando, and Dutch paintings and drawings of R K de Silva. K D G Wimalaratna writes about the cultural impact of the Dutch and also about their influence on land registration.

Deloraine Brohier gives a history of the Burghers and an account of their contribution to so many spheres of life in Sri Lanka. Carl Muller sets out to document Dutch contributions to the Sinhala language (examples: *bonchi* and *booruwa*) but is sidetracked into such observations as: "Michael On-daatje wrote his famous Chetty-Burgher book, *Running in the Family*. I tried my own brand of Burgher book – and I was run out of the family!"

The range and level of scholarship at the symposium and represented in this publication are indeed impressive. The symposium and the several other activities arranged for the 400th anniversary of Sri Lankan-Dutch links reflect Sri Lankan appreciation of their significance. It would be unrealistic to expect this to be matched by a reciprocal consciousness on the part of our Dutch partners. In the Harvard historian Simon Schama's much-praised book, *The Embarrassment of Riches*, on Dutch society and culture in the 17th and 18th centuries, neither Ceylon nor cinnamon merit mention in the index. (For that matter, nor does Indonesia.) Nevertheless the jubilee programme in Sri Lanka had the support of the Netherlands government through its embassy in Colombo. It would be interesting to know how the occasion was marked in Holland itself. This volume includes contributions from only one Dutch scholar although the editors say many Dutch scholars have researched Sri Lankan history and culture.

With contributors addressing a wide range of mainly discrete topics there is little room for scholarly argument or conflicting views. One issue on which a divergence seems to surface is in respect of Dutch policy towards Buddhism. K M de Silva says that while the Portuguese destroyed Buddhist, Hindu and Muslim religious centres and edifices, the Dutch were somewhat more restrained and "demonstrated far greater zest in demolishing Roman Catholic churches." Wimalaratna seems to disagree: "Dutch hostility to Buddhism was far more intense than towards Roman Catholicism."

There would also appear to be varying assessments of the gains to the Dutch from their imperial presence. Ismeth Raheem, in remarks prefacing his survey of furniture from the Dutch period, says Colombo's importance as a generator of revenue for the Dutch East India Company was borne out by the fact that between 1760 and 1768 exports from Colombo turned in a clear profit of 2 million guilders – the second highest revenue from the company's 33 Asian settlements. Wagenaar agrees the cinnamon trade was highly profitable but adds the following gloss: "The expenditure for the Dutch presence in Ceylon – administration, military safeguard, and

above all the costs of overhead in the Netherlands and Asia, may have exceeded the financial profits."

A key question that our colonial experience raises is why the Dutch failed to leave as strong an imprint as their predecessors did. The editors address this question briefly, pointing out that besides their influence on religion, the Portuguese had a stronger impact on language, dress and music. Mentioning two possible explanations: the climatic similarity between southern Europe and Sri Lanka and "Dutch reluctance to get involved with the locals," they indicate their preference for the latter. Wimalaratne, in his essay on the Dutch cultural impact, also touches on the issue of Dutch relations with Ceylonese but does not talk of "Dutch reluctance". He says that in the 1640s the Dutch tried to found a Dutch colony by permitting several soldiers to settle as colonists and providing them with "villages and estates for subsistence". He attributes the failure of this venture to the soldiers' lack of enterprise and disinclination for hard work as well as to "the native women," who "were unfaithful and also extravagant in their habits."

A book with contributions from a variety of authors is not likely to be marked by the same felicity of expression throughout. An editor would also be hard put to it to eliminate all unevenness and repetition. But it is reasonable to expect more rigorous attention to such matters as spelling, punctuation and grammar. Today, with texts for publication invariably prepared on computers with word-processing software, there is less reason to have spelling errors in a publication, but total reliance on the spell-checking competence of word-processing packages can be risky. It can result in such bloomers as the following: "... the insistence of Dutch women that if their made servants decide to wear their maid long, then they should ... " There is ultimately no solution save to depend on human skill, the skill of editors and proof-readers. Indiscriminately sprinkled capital letters mar some pages of the text and superfluous or wrongly placed commas and grammatical errors are occasional irritants. I am sorry to have to point to these blemishes in an otherwise very worthy publication.

Charles A Gunawardena

A CORDIAL WELCOME TO NEW MEMBERS



Rosemary Senn & John Weirick

Pymble NSW

Errol Fernando

Mt Waverley VIC

Sunimal & Chrysanthie Fernando

Hornsby NSW

...who have joined since publication of
Journal 23

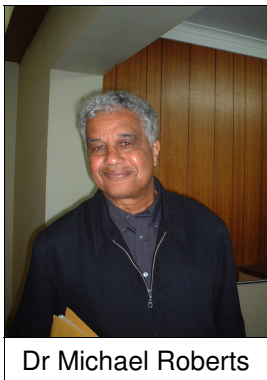
Synopsis of meeting Sydney –October 2003 The Political Ideology of the Kandyan Kingdom

A Presentation by Dr Michael Roberts

In his preamble, Dr Roberts explained the origins of the term “Kandy”, as being a westernisation of “*Kande Uda Pas Rata*”. The citadel of “Kandy” was known in those times as *Senkadagala*, and the term *Sihalaya* was used to denote the whole island of Ceylon. The Kandyan Kingdom, therefore, in the parlance of the day, more correctly referred to what was perceived by the Sinhalese of Kande Uda Pas Rata, to be the entire territory of Ceylon. Political Ideology in the context of

said, had with how transmitted, Royal Rule effected.

In his new “Sinhala-ness in the Period”, Dr attempting composite how the



Dr Michael Roberts

his talk, he more to do ideas were and how was ef-

b o o k Conscious-Kandyan Roberts was to present a canvas of

State was administered, rather than an event-based historical commentary. In other words, “*How Did Kings Rule?*” Or, indeed, “*What Are Kings?*” In this endeavour, he acknowledged the assistance of many erudite sources.

There were several seminal points:

- the Rulers of Sihalaya were perceived by the Sinhalese to be the rulers of the entire island. The War Poems bore ample testament to this.
- this “Kingdom” in the perception of the time was centre-oriented, not boundary-oriented
- the concept of “Rulership”, which he called “Tributary Overlordship”, was in essence a delicate balance in which Homage was the key element in the interdependencies between superior and subordinate (inferior) – a system quite unlike modern twentieth century “rule”
- allegiances were hierarchical and devotional, an ideology in which there was no separation of “Church and State” to use the modern metaphor
- the War Poems, which were largely allegorical

and exhortational, were a powerful means of exercising influence over the populace, and were far from being mere rhetorical exhortations

- “responsibility” was two way: Kings were just as vulnerable in terms of discharging their “responsibilities” as were individuals further down the food chain, in that they were held accountable for, say, the advent of rain at the correct time for planting, etc. It was because they were seen to be charged with largely supernatural powers that they enjoyed dominion over the populace which they “ruled”.

Dr Roberts throughout his talk provided a great deal of anecdotal background to the specific points in his thesis. This background provided a rich tapestry of information for the audience. Judging by the lively and prolonged Question & Answer session, which followed, the talk was much appreciated by all those present.

Chris Piachaud

A tale of Two Bottles

“Once upon a time” the advertisement ran, “there was a bottle of weird and wonderful design. Now this bottle made of heavy coarse glass with kinks in the neck which gathered dirt as a non-rolling stone gathers moss. And it was sealed in a stopper with rubber ring which gave unto the contents a flavour as of perished motor tyres. One day a wise man looked upon this bottle and straight-

away had a he designed light in weight without. There ices in this bot-stopped with a cork, and on placed an elephant as a sign the right stuff. tomers rose name blessed



brainwave. So another bottle and shapely were no crev-tle and it was nice clean the bottle he figy of an ele-it contained Then the cus-and called his saying

“By gad this is the goods’.

Moral:

Quench your thirst with Elephant brand mineral waters in hygienic bottles.

This is an advert that appeared in local papers in Ceylon circa 1922

(Courtesy: *Ceylon In Our Times 1969*
CCC Diamond Jubilee Publication)

Test Cricket of a different kind

by Dr Srilal Fernando

Early last year I received a call from Michael Ludgrove the then head of the rare book section at “Christies” Auction house requesting help to decipher the names of Ceylonese cricketers who had signed a cricket bat in the 1930’s following a combined Indo-Ceylon match against the visiting MCC. This led to my keeping an eye out for unusual items on Ceylon cricket. A few months later a set of autographs came up for sale. They were of the visiting English women cricketers who played a match in Colombo, against the Ceylon women in the first “test” of its kind. I was lucky to trace two of the test cricketers from the Ceylon team who now live in Victoria, Beverly Roberts (Juriansz) and Enid (Gilly) Fernando. Incidentally Gilly is called Gilly after AER Gilligan the Australian Cricketer and answers to no other name.

There is on record a previous match, played by a visiting English women’s cricket team in Colombo. However, they played against a team consisting mainly of wives of European Planters and no Ceylonese was included.

The visiting English team were on their way to Australia on the HMS “Orion”. The Colombo Cricket Club were the hosts and the match was played at the oval on the 1st November 1948.

The match attracted a crowd of around 5000 many of who had not seen women play cricket before. Among the distinguished guests were the Governor General, the Bishop of Brisbane, the Assistant Bishop of Colombo – the Reverend Lakdasa de Mel, the Yuvaraj and Yuvaranee of Kutch and Sir Richard Aluwihare.

The English team consisted of:-

- v Miss Molly Hyde (Captain)
- v Miss Rheinberger
- v Nancy Joy
- v Grace Morgan
- v Mary Duggan
- v Betty Birch

- v Dorothy McEroy
- v Mary Johnson
- v Megan Lowe
- v Nancy Wheelan.

The Ceylon team consisted of:-



The English Team

- v Miss O Turner (Captain)
- v Miss Enid (Gilly) Fernando – vice captain
- v Mrs C Hutton
- v Miss S Gaddum
- v Phyllis De Silva
- v Shirley Thomas
- v Marienne Adihetty
- v Beverley Roberts
- v Pat Weinman
- v Leela Abeykoon
- v Binthan Noordeen
- v Reserves : Mrs D H Swan & Mrs E G Joseph
- v Umpires: W S Findall and H E W De Zylva.

Mr S P Foenander broadcast a commentary of the match.

Beverley Roberts, 16 years old Leela Abeykoon and Phyllis De Silva were from St John’s Panadura, which was the first school to send their girl students to play cricket for Sri Lanka. The coach was G C Roberts (older brother of Michael Roberts). Marienne Adihetty was from Galle and her brother played for Richmond College. Binthan Noordeen was from Ladies College. She is the granddaughter of M.C. Amoo one of the best Malay cricketers of former days,

who took a team from Ceylon to Bombay in 1910. Binthan was a teacher at Ladies College at the time and also excelled in hockey, netball and tennis. Pat Weinman is the daughter of Jeff Weinman, a former Nondescripts cricketer.



The First Ceylon Women's Cricket Team - 1948

us who played cricket and would like to play for Ceylon, were to go to Colombo and meet and practice with other women from the Colombo clubs, so that a team could be chosen.

I learnt that H.M. S. 'Orion' on its way to Australia

The team was mainly coached by S. Saravanamuttu with others such as S J Campbell helping. The Board of Control of Cricket headed by P Saravanamuttu made the arrangements.

had berthed in Colombo. On board were the English Women's Cricket team en route to play in Australia. They had requested, when they come ashore, that they play a local team to "help them stretch their sea legs".

Though the match itself was one sided with the Ceylon women cricketers beaten decisively the Ceylon team impressed the visitors by their gallant display, after less than two months of practice as a team.

The Colombo Cricket Club, who was hosting the ladies team, had agreed to their request – and set about getting a Ceylon ladies team together.

The English team won the toss and batted first. Molly Hyde the captain scored a century in a fine display of batting. The captain of the Ceylon team Mrs Hutton took six wickets for 43.

We were told we were going to practice in Colombo play against other women's teams and possibly be chosen to play in the Ceylon team. We went to Colombo – several girls from St Johns (all played cricket) accompanied by our sports mistress and my father (G.C. Roberts) who was the college coach. We played several practice matches over a few weekends.

The fielding was good with Miss Leela Abeykoon stumping Mrs Morgan. Beverley Roberts took a single-handed catch at cover.

I remember well known cricketers from Colombo came and coached us in the finer points of cricket. Cartman, Saravanamuttu, Bartholomeusz came to mind.

When the Ceylon team batted Leela Abeykoon put up a stiff defence. Only Enid (Gilly) Fernando reached double figures scoring 22 with 4 fours. Miss Lowe took a hat trick.

My father played club cricket – and was our coach. I remember him showing us how to set the field for a woman "batsman" – "one slip would be enough", and "one fielder at square leg – not deep". We enjoyed the practice sessions – and met many women who played hockey – now playing cricket.

The next days the papers reported the event and showered praise on the young team. Trynne C Ahlip described the events of the day and the cricketers in verse.

In conclusion a first hand account of the match by Beverley Roberts is included.

NOVEMBER 1948 RECOLLECTIONS OF THE FIRST CEYLON WOMEN'S CRICKET TEST

The team was chosen – three of us from St John's. Happily we set about having the new white cotton divided skirts and blouse sewn. We were quite proud of our new test team uniform, and remember, being rather taken aback, when we saw the English Team in their tailored

"I remember being told by our sports mistress at St John's Panadura (Mrs E Potger) that any of

cream flannel outfits. Very professional!

I noticed that each member in their team had cricket pads and gloves. In our team, only the wicket keeper had a pair of pads and gloves.

None of us owned gloves. We shared a few pairs we were given from the college.

There was a good crowd to watch the match. St John's turned up in force to support their chosen students. As a team we enjoyed the game. We felt the English women were the superior team – but we didn't feel intimidated. These ladies took cricket seriously. We enjoyed playing.

In the evening the Cricket Club entertained the two teams, in a celebration of the match. Over drinks we chatted with the visitors, and exchanged autographs. Before the evening ended all the members of the Ceylon Team was presented with the All Ceylon Badge”.

ΩΩΩΩ

To be, or not to be a Burgher: that is the Question

by Kyle Joustra (*resident Genealogist CSA*)

Today we come across some persons who are proud to be called Dutch Burghers, some who see no connection to being Dutch Burgher and others who still cringe at the mention of Dutch Burghers.

So where did the term ‘Dutch Burgher’ originate and why all the fuss: -

Historically the English word Burgher is synonymous with Dutch word "Burger" meaning *citizen, commoner* (1) [*not a nobleman*]. While the Dutch or VOC (Dutch East India Company) ruled Ceylon the employees of the VOC were ‘vrijburgers’ (free citizens). In essence when the British in 1796, took over the island, the people of Dutch origin who decided to stay on the island of Ceylon became free citizens as ties of oath and allegiance were severed. (2) The British made the distinction over time between

‘Dutch Burghers’ and other minority groups choosing to continue the use of the term burgher conveniently to segregate groups of non-indigenous people. As social systems were established many other sub-classifications evolved for people who could be seen together officially or otherwise eg Police Burghers, Railway Burghers, Shop Burghers etc. Somebody who was classed a ‘Dutch Burgher’ was held in some esteem and would be entitled to high-ranking jobs (but not as high as the British in most cases) over other sub groups and indigenous people. It was this distinction that helped to ferment either a fondness for being a Dutch Burgher or disdain of the people who weren't. Equally there is many an instance to be found where ‘Dutch Burghers’ would anglicise their surname (3) in order to get the British roles.

The Dutch Burgher Union was formed in 1908 in an effort to form a group that would discuss and retain ties with the Dutch heritage of their ancestors. Topics covered were Dutch culture, Dutch language (never really gained a great interest), and Dutch traditions like St Nicholas Day. To be a member of the Dutch Burgher Union one needed to cover certain criteria and thus further segregated people (4). Furthermore there was the creation of the Dutch Burgher Union Journal, which produced several family genealogies which gave some the impression that their origins were Dutch. While for some people they could proudly reflect their

lineage, others were ‘dropped off’ the family tree for a number of social, political and unknown reasons. There were even instances of distortion of fact or omission of pertinent information. The results left either good or ill feelings amongst the community.

The Dutch Burgher Community contributed an enormous amount to Ceylon and in fact through their descendants who migrated to different countries, the contribution has continued. It is the isolation by the British that contributes to the love/loath and indifferent relationship that exists today.

The two big questions

‘Are there still Dutch Burghers today?’ in short the answer is ‘no’- What is more correct is that there are numerous people whose ancestors are of Dutch Burgher origin and have much to be proud of.

‘Are the Dutch Burghers all of Dutch Origin?’ again in short the answer is ‘no’- It should be considered that the term Dutch Burgher means all people of origin from instigation of either employment or immigration by the VOC (Dutch East India Company) during their rule of Ceylon. The nationalities include Dutch, German, Swiss, French, Hungarian, and Italian to name a few. Essentially European origin and even Jewish sub-communities can be found amongst the ‘Dutch Burghers’.

It is the historic background and the contribution to Ceylon by the Burgher community that should create the interest and where the focus should be, rather than whether offence is taken to a linkage with ‘Dutch Burghers’ or not. It is also an irony, that while the British treated this group and others in Ceylon as of lesser consequence, there are several families connected to a line, which includes the mother of King George III!

1 There are many Dutch Burgher families connected to Noble or Royal lineage

2 Some employees did receive pensions from Holland later on.

3 Others have also erased any trace of a Dutch Burgher surname

4 This criterion is debatable and in certain cases people were cut out regardless of their entitlement to be members.

ΩΩΩΩ

LIONEL WENDT – Sri Lanka artist of the highest calibre

by Vama Vamadevan.

Yet another anniversary of the birth and death of Lionel Wendt in December makes it appropriate to appraise his achievements as one of Sri Lanka’s most reputed artists. Lionel was born on December 3rd, 1900 in Colombo. He was the elder of two boys, the other being Harry. Both died within a year of each other in 1944 and ‘45 respectively.

Lionel’s father was Henry Lorensz Wendt, a judge of the Supreme Court of Ceylon in colonial times. Young Lionel too was a barrister,

but his interests lay beyond in music and photography. Many of us know that Lionel was a renowned photographer, but few may know he was a virtuoso pianist whose performances were highly regarded, and he excelled as a music teacher.

At the age of 19, Lionel went to the UK in 1920 and returned to Ceylon in 1924. He tried to return to his legal practice, but the call of the Arts was too much for him to resist. Photography was a childhood hobby of his, but scarcely did anyone recognise that it would become his principal pre-occupation and his greatest legacy. Though his interest in photography grew, it was his secondary interest for a long time. It got a tremendous boost and a shot in the arm when Basil Wright arrived in the island to shoot the film ‘SONG OF CEYLON’ (wish someone has a copy to screen it at one of our meetings) and Lionel was selected to assist Basil.

Lionel first used the Rolliflex camera and then moved on to the use of the famous Leica camera. He wielded the Leica with such dexterity that he was given the rare honour of a one-man exhibition hosted by the makers of Leica cameras in London in 1938. By then his photographs had attracted the attention of photographers in Ceylon and abroad.



Lionel Wendt

Lionel died young at the age of 44, in his sleep, of a heart attack on December 19th, 1944. After his death, his brother Harry and his friend Harold Peris decided to commemorate Lionel Wendt by building an Arts complex. Harry died before the project could take off, and it was left to Harold Peris to complete the dream. The Lionel Wendt theatre was opened in December 1953. The first play to be staged was Maxim Gorky’s ‘Lower depth’ directed by Neumann Jubal. The name Jubal will bring nostalgic memories to those of that era, who were at the University of Ceylon, Peradeniya.

Sinhala plays like Prof. Ediriweera Sarathchandra’s “MANAME”, Chithrasena’s ‘Karadiya’ with the occasional Tamil play made the Lionel Wendt theatre a truly national venue of the arts. It has also become the venue of the most

number of Art and Photographic exhibitions of Sri Lankan artists.

The posthumously published book *Lionel Wendt's CEYLON (Lincoln-pager) 1950* is today a collector's item. It has been long out of print and it was only recently that a re-print appeared. The first edition is in high demand and was advertised by BERKELOUW in their catalogue No: 269 for A\$ 235/=. Manel Fonseka commemorated his 50th anniversary by bringing out the book `Re-discovering Lionel Wendt'. She made a singular contribution to the memory of Lionel Wendt by publishing this book.

Close associates of Lionel Wendt were fellow artists George Keyt and cartoonist Aubrey Collette, who with a few others formed the well-known '43 group.

The truth in Ananda Coomaraswamy's aphorism that "nations are made by artists and by poets, not by traders and politicians" needs no canvassing when we see the performance of our politicians and the legacy left by the likes of Lionel Wendt.

References:

Lionel Wendt's ; CEYLON (Lincolns-Pager) London, 1950.

Fonseka, Manel: Lionel Wendt: Disappearance & Discovery. (Sun.Obs. 17.12.2000)

Weeraratne, Neville: 1. A definitive look at Lionel Wendt (Sun Island 25.2.2001)

2. 50th Anniversary of the Lionel Wendt Theatre (Sun. Island : 13.7.2003)



Late breaking news!!

As recently as August 21 to October 28th 2003, an exhibition was held in Japan entitled `Modern Artists 111 - The gaze at Modernity'. It featured a wide range of modern photographic works by Sri Lankan photographer Lionel Wendt. He was hailed as the founder of the Modern Art Movement in Sri Lanka through the `43 group'. Sixty six pieces of Lionel Wendt's photographic works, a DVD projection of the film `Song of Ceylon' were on display.

Vama

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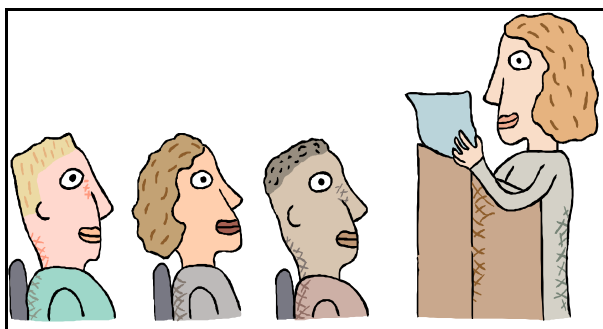
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Ph: Int +61 2 9874 0146
E-mail: winston@secura.com.au
and request an application form

NEXT SYDNEY MEETING

Sunday 22nd February 2004 at 6.30 p.m

**Sena Atukorale, former Director
Headworks Mahaweli Authority of
Sri Lanka**

Will speak on: Ancient and Modern
Irrigation Works in Sri Lanka-

Hornsby Bowling Club
22, Waitara Avenue
access only from Alexandria Parade

Meeting will be followed by a light supper. Volunteers of-
fering plates please contact Social Convenor Chandra on
9872 6826

RSVP Hugh 9980 2494, Chris 9498 2158

NEXT MELBOURNE MEETING

To be announced later

Venue: Holy Redeemer Church Hall
Cnr of York Street and Mont Albert Road
Surrey Hills VIC 3127
(Melways Ref: 46 H10)

For further information please contact

Shelagh -AH 9808 4962
Or Srilal -AH 9809 1004

In search of speakers

The committee would welcome nominations of knowledgeable and academic persons to speak at our regular meetings, both in Sydney and Melbourne. You may have friends, relations who live in or visit Australia. Our calendar for the year is February/ March - April/May, September/October and November/December. Dates can be arranged to suit availability of eminent speakers. Please contact President Hugh Karunanayake on 02 9980 2494 - fax 02 9980 7630 or
E-mail: karu@idx.com.au

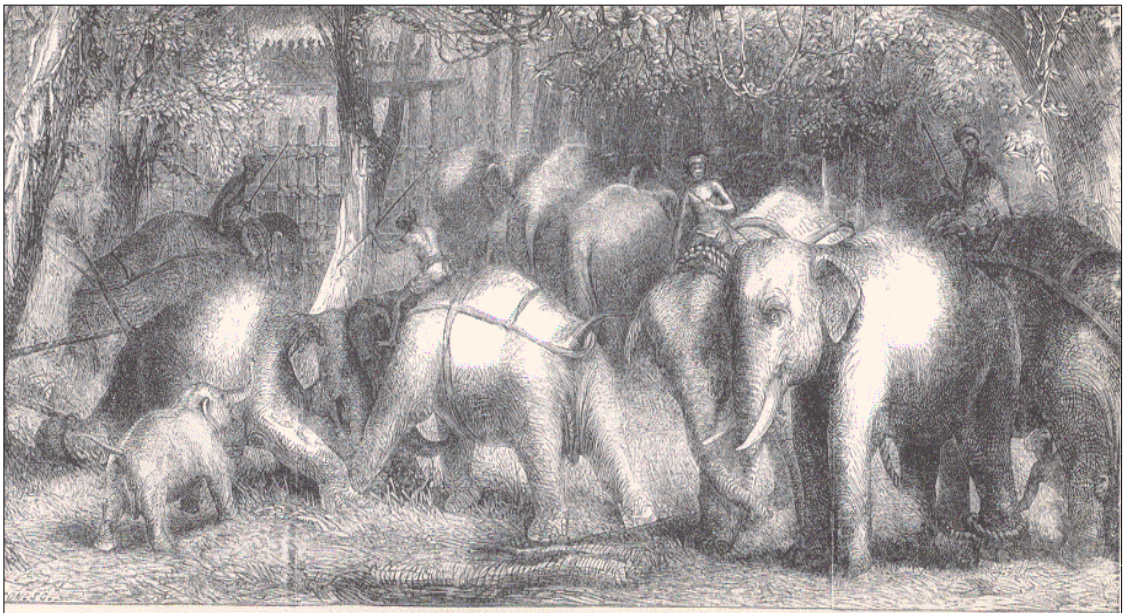
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P & H within Australia - \$ 3.00 - Asia/Pacific \$ 6.50 & rest of the world \$ 9.00 per package up to 5 issues. Please contact Hugh as above.

"THE CEYLANKAN" is published 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 if inaccuracies are brought to its attention. Original material is sought, preferably of an anecdotal, historical nature, but any material will be considered provided it contributes to the Society's ideals of being non racial, non-political, non-religious, and non-controversial.

Where applicable, contributors are requested to annotate bibliographical references to facilitate further research & study by interested members.

The Editorial Committee of THE CEYLANKAN, at its discretion, now accepts advertisements for products and services suitable for our members. Those related to genealogy, antiquarian and contemporary books, maps, art, memorabilia, and other collectibles are welcome. For further details and rates please contact Publications Officer Mike Udabage at Int + 61 2 9902 2774
E-mail: mike_udabage@idg.com.au



NOOSING WILD ELEPHANTS.