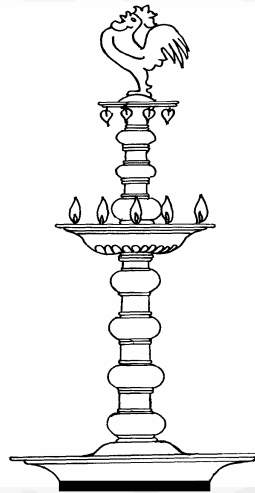


# THE CEYLANKAN



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Editor: Sumane Iyer

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## EDITORIAL



**T**he 21st Century is running too fast - or so it seems. Already seven years are done and we are upon another. So first of all, Happy and Prosperous New Year to all our members and readers.

The 10th Anniversary issue of Journal # 40 spawned a raft of new contributors and it was very encouraging to receive articles from new members which

will be carried in future issues. First time contributors Earle Forbes and Fred Kreltszheim make their presentations in this issue, whilst poetry is getting a more than fair shake. I wonder if there is anyone out there that can help us with cartoons on selected topics. Nothing like a caricature or two to lighten the mood and draw a chuckle. So, if you are reasonably confident of doing one or know someone who can, please drop me a line.

All three Chapters are starting the year off with excellent fare. Sydney members will be informed and entertained by an authority on Cricket. Neville Turner, well known cricket writer who has been to Sri Lanka many times to witness Test Cricket will be taking a foreigner's perspective on the culture of the game in Sri Lanka. This will be followed by a book launch by member Chandra Senaratne on a topic he spent 25 years of research. "Reincarnation". The material is based on personal experience. A familiar figure, Dr R K de Silva talks about the "Origins of Sri Lankans" at the Melbourne meeting whilst another book launch happens in Colombo. Local President Somasiri Devendra is launching his book "Yesterday is another Country". I must remember to tot up the number of members who have published books. It certainly bodes well for the Society that we have an erudite membership.

## 19th Century Images



SINHALESE FISHERMAN.

## Sinhalese Fisherman

# The Sheltering Jungle

by Somasiri Devendra

**J**ungles fascinate me: a fascination that had been kindled by my father and John Still, both archaeologists and writers. But I was not an archetypal ‘jungle man’, for the jungle spoke to me in a different idiom: to my heart rather than my head. And of Man, rather than of trees and animals.

It was writers who woke this fascination in me. My father - a teacher then - guided our class through our English Literature text, John Still’s “The Jungle Tide”. It (and he) held the class spellbound. The first chapter, on “A Forest Reserve”, is a prose poem: the unravelling of its many strands was a lively adventure in both Literature and Heritage. Perceptively and with love, Still opened my mind to the world that was the rain forest. Years later, Leonard Woolf’s haunting description of the scrub jungle of the dry zone in “Village in the Jungle”, did the same, affecting me almost viscerally, and completing my education. Although I was to become familiar with both types of jungle, the words of these two writers, weave in and out of my own consciousness, experiences and perceptions, crafting a composite image of the jungles.

Not long after teaching us, father joined the Archaeological Survey of Ceylon, as it was then. He loved the work and found every excuse to leave his desk and go ‘on circuit’. On every return he was brimful of experiences and what we learnt from him round the dining table was more than anything a University could give. His interests were eclectic and the talk would flit effortlessly from treasure hunters at a ruined dagoba, to a dung beetle at work, the cult of ‘*Aijyanar*’, a bungalow-keeper’s encounter with a wild elephant, migrant birds, the ‘*gaemi-kavi*’ (folk verse) of village pilgrims seeking the boon of a son from “*Kalu Devatha Bandara*” the guardian-deity of the *Sri Maha Bodhiya* - and to the man who manufactured “*Sarvagna Dhatu*” (the bodily relics of the Buddha, himself). During school holidays, the ‘circuits’ became family outings.

Striking inland from Puttalam on the way to Anuradhapura our road would be bordered by “*Weera*” trees in bearing. While we were stripping off the berries, he would nonchalantly remark - in passing, as it were - that this was elephant country and that they, too, relished “*Weera*”! When taking the Kurunegala route, we never passed the “*Aijyanar*” tree shrine without plucking off a twig in offering it to this mysterious deity.

What do I remember of those early days?

The dry wind blowing fitfully to die suddenly, eerily; the sandy earth hot and crumbly under our bare feet; the brackish water which never quenched your thirst; the bright, hot sun that squinted eyes; nights of star-filled skies; balmy winds flowing over our over-heated bodies like a benediction; cities of ruins spread out in parklands peopled with twisted, stunted trees and families of monkeys; vast acres of land covered over by tanks, with bleached skeletons of dead trees, their frozen arms reaching to the sky; driving through clouds of butterflies who would get trapped in the radiator grill, only to flutter out whenever we made a pit-stop - the memories are of things felt, seen, heard, of happy times of almost mythical proportions now.

## These jungles, these sheltering guardians of my heritage.

Most of all it was an induction to the lands of our lost ancestors, the world they had lived in and tamed; and to those who still lived amidst the jungle tide, as they had lived for a thousand years. We had been city-bred almost all our lives. Now, in the euphoria of Independence we were being inducted into our cultural and physical heritage. Ambitious development schemes were afoot and father went to inspect work at Gal-oya, where bulldozers were turning back the jungle tide. The impact of these behemoths made a strong impression on him: I still have his photographs of them pulling down the trees. It must have an idea that this was only a beginning. But I do know now, that he was deliberately inducting us to our forgotten heritage before it was gone forever.

He took us to see the Veddahs, already old in the late 1940s, who sang us their songs swaying to a rhythm of their own. It was hardly music to our ears but, definitely, a far cry from what is touted as “Veddah songs” today. Among father’s favourite verses were a ‘*gaemi kaviya*’ in praise of Sorabora wewa - which Seligman says the Veddahs sang at the ‘*Kiri koraba*’ ceremony - beginning:

Paalu rata-i Vanni-ye etha-nin oha	ta
Golu gena panithi vaeli-hinniyo aenga	ta
Reru aevith diye-kelinaa sonda ruwa	ta
Yaa-lu thopith giyado horabora waeva	ta?

“It’s waste land in the Vanni from here onwards,  
Screaming, the she-bear will pounce on you  
And the *Serumas* sport in the water, so lovely to see  
Tell me, Friend, have you too, been to  
Sorabora lake?”

and ending with:

*Horabora maevey waeva degodey vanaanta rey  
Kapaa gal kaanu egoda-ta eliya keley  
Nelaa mal pahan vebera-ta egantherey  
Horaborawewa nudutu aes motada pin keley?*

“Deep in the forest surrounding the lake  
Channels through rock watered clearings  
on the other bank.  
But you, who offer flowers and light lamps  
at the shrine there,  
Of what use is merit to you, whose eyes  
have not seen Sorabora lake?”

Another jungle trek he took us in Veddah country was from Aluthnuwara, through the jungle to Rantambe. We went in single file. If the guide found a rock on the path he warned “*Galak!*” to the one behind him, who repeated the warning, and went down the crocodile, voice after voice, till it reached the last man. The sheer power and roar of the Mahaveli forced into a narrow gorge was worth every aching muscle. So much of the vanishing loveliness of Lanka were we inducted to.

Another day, somewhere off Anuradhapura, we were in an open jeep, following jungle trails that had us bending down each time we passed low branches and thorny, sweet-smelling *mimosas* in flower pressing on us from all sides, finally emerging into a small clearing in the middle of a huddle of huts. Swept ‘*midulas*’, (courtyards) mud houses seemingly growing out of the earth, thatched roofs with deep eaves reaching low and keeping the interiors dark and cool. Like the houses the people, too, belonged to another world, another age. Aware of the world outside their own jungle, yet aware that their fates rested in their own hands, there was a palpable sense of the inevitability of their fate. Nothing must have changed in these villages from the time of Dutugemunu, neither the jungle that was their home nor the shortness of the reach of governments.

It was a similar footpath to Tantirimale – with its unfinished reclining Buddha statue, pre-historic drawings in a cave and a stunted Bo tree growing out of a crack in the rock slab – also deep in the jungle then. We were about to climb up an incline – the bund of an abandoned tank – when, suddenly, there was a man on a bicycle atop the bund, wearing sun-glasses in the jungle gloom. Seeing us, he let out a yell, dropped his bike and took to the tall timber! When we had reassured him, trembling, he had an explanation to offer: “I thought your jeep was an elephant”.

All these, and my own, later experiences seem to form a continuum, each single experience blending with the next to form an undivided whole.



....we never passed the “*Aiyanar*” tree shrine without plucking off a twig in offering to this mysterious deity

The year I graduated and started work as a teacher at Kegalle, (I was given Bell’s “Kegalle Report” to get my historical bearings) Father decided to retire from the Department – though not from Archaeology – and set about planning a long ‘circuit’, a final goodbye to all his beloved sites and to follow up reports of some new finds. This time, I went with him all the way.

Again, it is the jungle sites that I remember: the barely cleared monastery site of Arankele with its long, long ‘*sakman-maluwa*’ (roofed-over path for walking meditation) and a silent invitation for a meditative walk. Even today, “...in my inward eye / which is the bliss of solitude” I keep re-visiting the image of that forest hermitage and remembering the invitation not accepted, with deep regret. Nearby was the ‘*gala-pita-gala*’ (rock-upon-a-rock): a silent sermon that the insubstantial wind could wear away rock that had lasted millions of years. On the way we stopped at a living forest hermitage, Ruwangirikanda, where we saw nary a hermit but only the link between the solitude of the forest and the environment made for meditation, withdrawal.

And so we went from one jungle site to another. Off past Polonnaruwa, towards Dimbulagala, we diverted on another trek. This time to an outcrop of boulders entirely surrounded by forest, noted but not yet excavated. This was ‘*Pulligoda Gal-ge*’. On one side of what must have been a cave-temple was a beautiful fresco of a group of halo-ed celestial beings. I looked round: forest everywhere, Dimbulagala looming in the distance, only the frenzy of the cicadas’ shriek for company, the eyes of the celestial beings still fixed on a



long-gone past. I thought of “Ozymandias, King of kings / Look upon my works, ye mighty, and despair”. Impermanence, the Buddha said, is the nature of the world.

Walking back to where we had parked the car, we came upon a site called ‘*Kos-gaba ulpotha*’ (Jak tree spring) . I cannot remember what it was there that took us, but it was a jungle spring of beautifully clear water. I snapped a quick shot of my father washing his face in the pond, reflected in the pool and framed by trees. This picture of him in the surroundings he loved deserved a better photographer.

From there, it was onto forest-girdled Dimbulagala, where a lone monk was battling the encroaching jungle with the help of a handful of villages. The depredations of a madman hadn’t helped. A man seeking a place for meditation had come to live in a cave. His real mission: to destroy the paintings. He would comb the forest for buffalo dung and in the nights, dissolve it in water into a paint-like consistency and using a broomstick as a brush, would paint over all the ancient paintings. By the time the harm was known, it was impossible to remove the offending layer without destroying the paintings under it. We only saw the damage, but what could one do?

One of our last stops proved almost more than memorable. We were now in

Kantalai, still very much forested. This was in the days of colonisation and the jungle was being rolled up for colonies to be built below the tank. Gangs of workmen were deployed all over the jungle and one Colonisation Officer had dutifully reported to the Archaeological Department that workers had stumbled upon ruins. So we were there to see them. The officer had got hold of one of the men and we set off towards the jungle. There were some strange looks thrown at father who was, as usual since 1922, dressed in full national dress, complete with scarf and open-toed sandals. But he was quite at ease in this kit in any jungle, as he proved that day.

All went well for about half an hour, or maybe more, till we stumbled on to a newly cleared patch of jungle. Not “cleared” exactly, for it was one mass of trees brought down and lying crazily over each other. We did try clambering over them, only to see a sea of

them. So we decided to skirt this clearing and get to the other side by following the perimeter of the clearing. Easier said than done, it proved to be. On and on we went till, suddenly, we saw a water hole before us. The man with the shotgun held up his hand. “Stop – there may be animals!” so we turned back and tried to find a way to go. It was pretty late afternoon, but the dense forest foliage didn’t let us look up at the sky. The guide, reluctantly, admitted he was as lost as we were! The branches were getting lower and lower and we were bent in two all the time. Then we found the dry bed of a stream and it was natural to walk along that – it gave us a little headroom and the sand was welcome. “Careful”, said our marksman walking ahead and he suddenly crouched and said “Look!” It was the pugmarks of a leopard and freshly made – the sand was falling back into the depressions. And we had heard

nothing – only ourselves. We plodded on, hopefully, and praying we were not going in circles. At last we stumbled onto a foot-path, or game-track, and followed it till it took us along to a gravel path which, in turn took us to a roughly-tarred road. All this had taken much time. We hailed the first vehicle that came along and were dropped at the Colonisation Office late in the evening, much to that officer’s relief. We had much to talk about the day’s misadventures that night, at



A restored dagoba from "Namal Uyana" which is a declared Forestry Dept and Archaeology Dept. Reserve. It is an ancient Aranya of Na trees in the middle of a pink quartz mountain. You get a very interesting view of Sigiriya from the top.

the Kantalai Rest House.

Once only, did I have the privilege of watching a systematic archaeological excavation in progress. It was the excavation of the “Kota Vehera” at Dedigama, the supposed birth spot of Parakramabahu I. Called “Kota” vehera because its upper structure (*bataras-kotuva*, *devataa-kotuva* and *kot-kaerella*) ( terms for the square shaped structure that caps a dagoba) had not been completed, it was really a massive structure. *Dagobas* are built upwards from far below ground level, in solid brick and stone up to and above the relic chambers. Above that, it was of rubble, brick-bat and earth filling, with the brickwork outside gradually tapering off to form the dome. To get to the chambers, you entered from above so that no damage is done to them. You dig down through the rubble-filling till you come to the

solid brickwork. The serious work begins then. By the time I was allowed in, all that had been done and the brickwork was being removed. It was a mason's work, in reverse. Carefully, the workers eased-out bricks individually. Exposing each succeeding layer took more time. Each deeper layer was better laid than the one above it. Finally the most finely laid layers immediately above the relic chambers came into view.

Now, a different set of workers came in; the most experienced ones, working with trowels no larger than teaspoons. One by one, they removed the bricks above one chamber till they came upon stone. The chamber, from our perspective, was now a rectangular pit roofed over with granite beams placed side by side, touching each other. Years of pressure from the weight above them, had cracked them, but the pieces had not parted. The trick was to prevent them parting and falling inside. Finding the most intact, several ropes were tied around each fractured part, attached to a tripod fitted with a pulley block. With infinite patience the beam was inched from its position, till its full weight was born by the tripod and it was gently swung upwards and sideways and placed elsewhere. The chamber was now visible, but more delicate work remained to be done. The remaining beams had to be removed. It was a nerve-racking task but it was finally done. Photographs of every step were taken and the chamber photographed before anyone ventured in. It was a solemn moment to see the chamber after eight centuries. In the middle was the '*Meru gala*', the square stone pillar representing Mount Meru, the Cosmic Mountain. Resting on it was the main reliquary. Around the central pillar and at the corners of the chamber were multi-headed terra-cotta cobras. Set into niches on the four walls were images of the Buddha made of gold foil moulded round sandalwood paste. The walls were covered with a paper-thin plaster painted, but in a manner never before seen in this country – black background with beautiful red line-work figures, classical in simplicity and rendering. In all, nine chambers were found when the excavation ended: eight geometrically disposed around a central one. I had witnessed only the first revealing its secrets.

Late in the evening we drove back to Colombo. I don't remember the journey back: I must have been unusually silent. It was easy enough to deal with such an encounter with a material past, the handiwork of men like us, long dead. Less easy it was to absorb, contemplate, and understand the impermanence the monument spoke of. That needed a long walk in the silence and solitude of Arankele's '*Sakman-maluma*'

More than half a century later, I wonder if I understand, even now.

ΩΩΩΩΩΩ

## The Last Voyage of the Emden

*The German World War I raider's odyssey with  
Australian and Sri Lankan links*

*by Douglas Ranmuthugala.*



Pre-war photograph of SMS Emden

**T**he German World War I (WWI) raider SMS *Emden* left behind a story that as the years rolled by, became a legend. The main players were Germany, UK and Australia, but the last voyage of this vessel touched lives in Sri Lanka and India. The name 'Emden' entered the languages of the two countries, Sinhala and Tamil in Sri Lanka and Tamil and Malayalee in South India (*Emandan* in Malayalee), meaning a dangerous, tough and resourceful person. In Sri Lanka, in addition to spreading "shock and awe" among the colonisers and the colonised, it created complications in the life of a Boer prisoner of war, Englebrecht, who was living peacefully in the deep south of the country. The Australian connection came through the RAN light cruiser, the *Sydney* that scored the first Australian naval victory in WWI when she forced the *Emden* aground at North Keeling Island. That location too has tragic links to Sri Lanka due to the Cocos Island mutiny in World War II. In addition, Cocos Islands are well known to Sri Lankan fishing vessels operating in those waters.

But the last voyage of the *Emden* was a fantastic story by itself, rivalling the yarns of sea adventure by C.S. Forester or Patrick O'Brian. Neither Hornblower nor Maturin could outdo Korvettenkapitan (Commander) Karl von Muller, the Captain of the *Emden* in audacity, courage or chivalry. *Emden* was launched on May 26, 1908 as a light cruiser. She was named after the city of the same name in north Germany that sponsored the construction. Twelve boilers powered two piston-driven shafts giving her a maximum speed of 24 knots, but the propulsion system was already out of date. Her sister ship, the *Dresden*, had steam turbine power. *Emden's* boilers had to be





Fregattenkapitan  
Helmuth von Muller of  
the *Emden*.

fuelled manually with coal. Men had to work hard in the grinding heat of the tropics, feeding the 12 hungry boilers, shovel load after back-breaking shovel load. The sleek lines of the ship earned her the nickname of the “Swan of the East”. Ten quick firing four-inch (105mm) guns and two transversely mounted torpedo tubes gave her teeth. But she was out-gunned by most of the newer British cruisers with their six-inch guns and multiple torpedo launchers during her lonely albeit short,

explosive career in the Indian Ocean, thousands of kilometres from her home port, with no friendly ports or warships for assistance.

What gave *Emden* an advantage was the amazing ingenuity of her Captain and the sheer guts and tenacity of her 360-man crew. The son of a Prussian army officer, the young von Muller broke with tradition to join the German Navy, but promotion came slow due to his reticence to push himself into the limelight. He was always humane, and chivalrous to the point of fault, sometimes going out of his way to halt ships so that he could convey his apologies to captains of ships where he felt that he had not done the correct thing. Crews of ships attacked by the *Emden* were allowed to leave the ship before it was sunk, taken on board, looked after and handed over to neutral ships. Von Muller's Executive Officer was the equally capable Kapitanleutnant (Lt.Commander) Hellmuth von Mucke who managed to extricate the shore party under his command sent to the Cocos to destroy the radio base and sail them away to safety in the commandeered schooner, the *Ayesha*. Leutnant der Reserve Lauterbach was a former captain of a German passenger liner. Highly efficient staff work kept the captain up to date with all the necessary information for successful tactical action.

Von Muller took command of the *Emden* in May 1913. Prior to the outbreak of the war, *Emden* served with the German Eastern Fleet under Rear Admiral Maximilian von Spee and saw action during a rebellion in China. Von Muller received encomiums for putting a rebel fort out of action with accurate gunfire while sailing up the Yangtse River. In August 1914 the *Emden* left the Fleet and embarked on the epic eleven-week sortie during which she captured or sank 23 mercantile ships, two warships, destroyed the oil storage facilities at Madras (Chennai) and spread

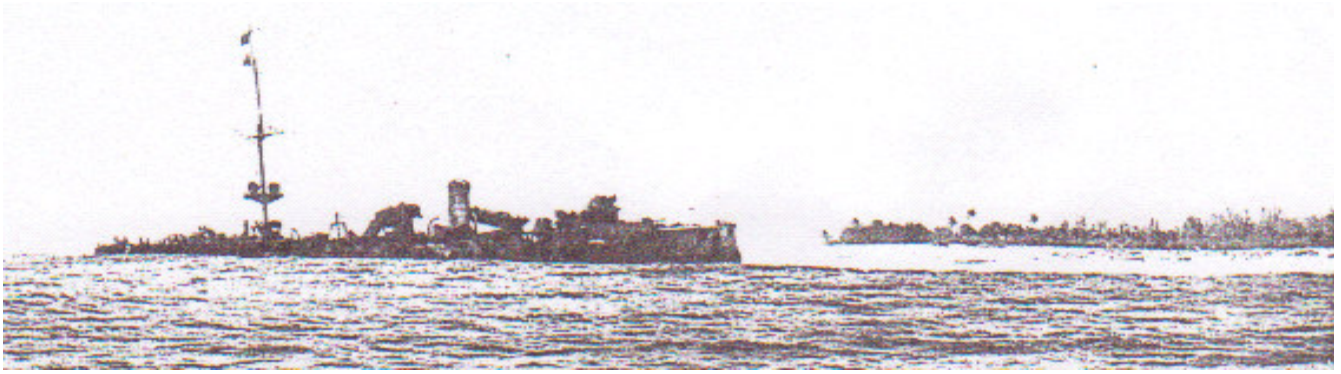
terror around the Indian Ocean. Warships from UK, France, Russia and Japan were deployed to stop the *Emden*. The *Mowe* (37 ships sunk) and the *Wolf* (27 ships) were the only German raiders to sink more ships during WWI. But both these ships relied heavily on laying mines rather than on guns and torpedoes, and in the case of the *Wolf*, 13 of the kills were from exploding mines. Both ships survived the war.



Captain (later Vice-Admiral)  
John Collings Taswell Glosop, Royal Navy, the Captain  
of HMAS Sydney

The *Emden* sailed through neutral Dutch territory, surviving an encounter with a Dutch warship and appeared out of the blue in the Bay of Bengal on the East Coast of India, where in September she took eight prizes in quick succession. After operating in the region, she headed back to India where on 22 September she destroyed the British oil storage facility at Madras. Her expert gunnery enabled the *Emden* to fire 130 shells, destroying the oil facilities with very little collateral damage. The Japanese Cruiser *Chikuma* tasked with the protection of Madras was in Colombo, the crew enjoying Sri Lankan hospitality. While the damage done to the city was not very serious, it caused untold panic in Madras. Then, sailing down the East Coast of Sri Lanka, she rounded Dondra Head and within the next four weeks captured thirteen ships. The *Emden* patrolled 30 miles off the port of Colombo, but did not mount an attack due to the city being on the alert after the Madras episode. But she captured the *Tymeric* as she came out of Colombo. The mighty colonial empire of the British took a heavy blow in morale. As far as the Indian Ocean was concerned, Britannia no longer ruled the waves. It stopped being a British lake.

It was during the cruise around the south of Sri Lanka that the *Emden* entered the life of Engelbrecht, a Boer prisoner of war who had, after the cessation of hostilities in South Africa, settled down to a life of peace in the deep south of Sri Lanka. He had been given an appointment as a game ranger at Yala. This tranquillity came to an end when it was rumoured that he had been in clandestine contact with the German ship and had supplied it with provisions – meat from the sanctuary. As a result, he lost his position as ranger, and was imprisoned in Kandy until he was released due to lack of evidence. It was very much later, in 1931 when the second *Emden* visited Colombo that the allegation could be laid to rest. The Captain of the



Emden aground at Cocos Islands after severe battle damage

new ship had served with its earlier namesake, and was able to provide an affidavit that Engelbrecht had nothing to do with the German raider.

By this time the *Emden* was a legend during her lifetime. Newspapers all over the world had headlines covering her triumphs. When she captured a ship carrying a cargo, *inter alia*, of toilet soap, the soap manufacturers used the story in a very successful advertisement campaign, claiming that the *Emden* targeted the ship for that brand of soap! Much was made of stories from survivors from ships sunk by the *Emden* regaling the world with stories of the chivalrous behaviour of Capt. von Muller. In UK, Winston Churchill wrote to the First Sea Lord on October 1 complaining bitterly of the angst caused by *Emden's* continued existence: "I wish to point out to you most clearly that the irritation caused by an indefinite continuance of the *Emden's* captures will do great damage to Admiralty reputation."

In the midst of all this publicity, the *Emden* carried on with her voyage of mayhem and destruction. Occasionally, the crew added an oval, dummy funnel of painted canvas to her three funnels, giving her at a distance a reasonable similarity to the four-stack British cruiser, the *Yarmouth*. At Penang, she destroyed the Russian cruiser, the *Zhemchug*, with two torpedoes, causing some loss of life. On this occasion, the *Emden* entered the Penang harbour at speed, flying British colours, an accepted *ruse de guerre*. But she went into action under the German flag. The Russian Captain and his Number Two were ashore having left the ship in a state of disarray. Both ended up in prison in Russia for their lapse. A plucky French destroyer, the *Mosquet*, took up the pursuit, only to be sunk for her pains by the bigger German ship. Von Muller took the trouble to send an apology to the Russians for his failure to pick up survivors, and to an unarmed pilot boat he had opened fire upon by error during the encounter.

Capt. von Muller then paid an audacious visit to the British Island of Diego Garcia, where the British officials were unaware that there was a war on, although the manager of facility had his suspicions

aroused by the warlike nature of the ship. The ship underwent minor repairs, was coaled, and seen off with great hospitality by the company officials who were in for an unpleasant shock when the next visitor, the *Empress of Russia*, informed them of the situation.

The last task undertaken by Capt. Von Muller was an attempt to destroy the British communications base at Cocos Island. He arrived there on 9 November 1914 and dispatched a shore party of 50 men under his Executive Officer, von Mucke, to carry out the task on Direction Island, and by doing so, strike a serious blow to the British war effort in the Indian Ocean. Once again he had erected the fourth stack to impersonate HMS *Yarmouth*. But this time, the ruse did not work. The base managed to send out two radio calls, one with the succinct message – "SOS *Emden* here". An Australian convoy escorted by four warships, about 53 miles away, received the message. HMAS *Sydney*, a fast cruiser with six-inch guns was detached to investigate. Commanded by Capt. (later Vice-Admiral) John Glossop, a Royal Navy officer on secondment to the Australian Navy, the *Sydney* was more than capable of dealing with the German ship. The shells from the four-inch guns of the *Emden* would bounce off her armour at long range, and with her superior speed, the *Sydney* could easily keep her out of effective range and inflict punishment with her own guns. But the game German picked up the gauntlet for this unequal contest. The *Emden* headed towards her foe with her guns blazing, firing 1500 rounds in the one and a half-hour battle. The Krupp rapid-fire guns, with a firing rate of 16 rounds per minute, could have three salvos in the air at the same time and the ability to elevate the guns to 30 degrees came as a surprise to the Australians. The early salvos destroyed the fire control system of the *Sydney*, put one gun out of action, killed four men and wounded several others before Glossop moved the bigger ship out of *Emden's* range. Then the Australians pounded the German ship relentlessly, firing 670 rounds at long range, killing men, destroying guns and blowing the stacks down. Von Muller had only one way of avoiding being sunk. He ran his ship aground on North Keeling Island.



The *Sydney* broke off action to look for *Emden*'s support ship and on return, due to confusion in signalling, and as von Muller had failed to lower the German flag, fired several more rounds into the wreck killing twenty men. But Capt. Glossop did not lack a spirit of chivalry. Such attitudes were not unusual in days before war became total and brutal. These were days when fighter pilots called off combat when the opponent ran out of ammunition. On seeing the plight of the *Emden*, he sent the following note to von Muller.

*HMAS Sydney, at sea*  
*The Captain, HIGMS Emden*  
 Sir,

*I have the honour to request that in the name of humanity you now surrender your ship to me. In order to show how much I appreciate your gallantry, I will recapitulate the position.*

*(1.) You are ashore, three funnels and one mast down and most guns disabled.*

*(2.) You cannot leave this island, and my ship is intact.*

*In the event of your surrendering in which I venture to remind you is no disgrace but rather your misfortune I will endeavour to do all I can for your sick and wounded and take them to a hospital. I have the honour to be,*

*Sir,*  
*Your obedient Servant,*  
*John Glossop*  
*Captain .*

Von Muller had no option but to surrender. His Executive Officer was still ashore with the party detailed to destroy the communications centre. The *Emden* was in no condition to fight back. Nearly half of her crew were killed or wounded. Her guns could not be aimed and the torpedo tubes flooded. Attempts to evacuate the ship had failed. He accepted the terms and after some futile steps to destroy the ship, was the last to leave her.

The *Sydney* took von Muller to Colombo from where he was sent to Malta and England. He died in 1923 of Malaria, a sickness he had contracted in Africa during his early career in the German Navy. Among those who survived was the 2<sup>nd</sup> Torpedo Officer, Prince Franz Joseph von Hohenzollern, the young nephew of the Kaiser. The shore party under von Mucke sent to destroy the communication network in the Cocos gave the British the slip by commandeering the almost decrepit schooner *Ayesha* and sailing away. Hellmuth von Mucke had his own saga on the return trip, bluffing his way out of neutral territory, and travelling through the Middle East, braving the desert and warring Arabs led by Lawrence of Arabia who were fighting the pro-German Turks. He reached Germany, receiving a hero's welcome, and wrote a gripping tale of the adventures. He saw further service

during the war and eventually died in 1957. Leutnant der Reserve Julius Lauterbach, the jovial ex-passenger liner captain, detached to command a captured vessel, was captured, escaped, and went on to further adventures in command of a raider. But this last venture of the *Emden* had been in vain, as the British reassembled their communication equipment with spares they had hidden from the Germans and were soon back in business.

The story of the *Emden* is one of courage, intrepidity, and absolute dedication in the face of fearful odds. The warlike spirit of von Muller and his men was tempered with humanity and chivalry. It earned the respect of friend and foe. Unfortunately such stories are rare in today's world.

The battered hulk of the *Emden* lay where she ran aground, with souvenir hunters and scavengers carting off whatever they could. In 1952, a Japanese salvage company took away the bulk of what was left. Two guns from the ship are on display in Hyde Park, Sydney and the War Memorial, Canberra. Today, a few pieces, including the drive shafts, still polished by the moving tides, and some shells lie in comparatively shallow water off the island, all that is left of the once proud and feared "Swan of the East". It is now a protected site, but diving on the *Emden* can be done with prior permission, under strict controls. The ship may have perished, but her memory is part of the annals of the sea and will remain so for the predictable future.

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ΩΩΩΩΩΩ

#### Arabian Proverbs

**Your head is your house; furnish it**

**If you want your cooking praised, feed it to a hungry man**

**Deep water fish care nothing about surface gales; so is the wise, when foolish voices rise**

**In vain you try to straighten a dog's tail**

**Don't build boats in a town with no harbour, don't light candles in blind people's parlours**

## 2 B, or Nt 2 B

by S Pathiravitana

**L**ately, the mail I have been receiving on the electronic media is getting more and more curt, not actually rude, but brief, like a pair of shorts at a wedding party. It took my mind to the days when telex was an accepted media of communication and the sender used to sign off with a brief tks or some such abbreviation. Soon after that, faxing appeared on the scene, and a temporary calm was restored to the world with the three-letter and the two-letter midgets, like tlx for telexing, fading from the scene. Good riddance, I thought to myself, of this slang and bad rubbish and sat back to be more comfortable among familiar faces. But not for long, the devil shouting, Ho! let, what is now called, SMS in and restored the status quo.

Experts are now telling us that we are on the verge of a language revolution. Those who are mourning that the English language is now facing its greatest peril and shedding copious tears have been told to get aside and wipe their tears. The mobile phone is the instrument behind this innovation and there is hardly any country now that has escaped its influence and pressure. It is estimated that nearly half the total number of SMS messages exchanged in the world today happens to be in China out of a total that adds up to about a world trillion. Here in Lanka even the men supposed to be cleaning the streets now use mobile phones on the job. And the term SMS has gained the status of a verb.

If you come across expressions such as 'I'll SMS you later' or 'I am SMSing my girl friend' or even, 'He SMSed me last night' you can see how it is gaining currency. So much so the Scottish Educational Authorities have now okayed (by the way a slang word once, but now in universal use) the use of SMS terms by schoolchildren. Much publicity has been given recently to what happened in a school in Scotland when a teacher asked her pupils to write the usual essay on 'How I spent my holidays.' This was how one 13-year-old schoolgirl put down her experience - in the shorthand used when sending messages via SMS, which means Short Messaging Service.

**The essay began, "My smmr hols wr CWOT. B4, we usd 2 go 2 NY 2C my bro, his GF & thr 3 :-@ kds FTF".**

The teacher did eventually get the message and it read when translated, "My summer holidays were a complete waste of time. Before, we used to go to New York to see my brother, his girlfriend and their three screaming kids face to face."

If you are thinking of holding your hands up in horror just read how a Guardian staffer, Simon Jenkins, greeted this achievement. "THANK YOU, Scotland. First John Knox, then the Enlightenment, and now the Scottish Qualifications Authority. In a direct challenge to the English at their most reactionary, the authority has declared that it will accept text-messaging short forms in school examinations. The dark riders of archaism will protest and the backwoods will howl. No spell is cast as dire as spellcheck. But the champions of reason are massing north of the border and need our support."

And support for this trend is coming not only from the Guardian newspaper but also from the BBC and the British Council. That makes me ruminative and urges me to take after the 13-year-old Scottish school girl. So I asked myself 2 B, or Nt 2 B, - d@ is d ?. Whether Bernard Shaw who set aside his wealth to simplify the spelling of English words would be happy in his grave at this bizarre turn of events or laughing at the burgeoning short hand, I do not know. You may remember that he was against writing cough, though and through when reason tells you that it should be kof, tho and thru.

Earlier Noah Webster in America, creator of the Merriam-Webster American Dictionary, saw how redundant the u's were in certain English words and dropped them so that today the Americans write with a sense of pride and independence, labor, favor and color much to the annoyance of old proof readers. This trend also annoyed the literate Englishmen of his time who put the blame of poor English writing on American influence. Coleridge is foremost in condemning things American, not so much the dropping of u's as the coining of new words. Let us hear him thundering in anger - "I regret to see that vile and barbarous vocable *talented* stealing out of the newspapers into the leading reviews and most respectable publications of the day. Why not *shillinged*, *farthinged* and *tenpenced* etc?...If mere convenience is to justify such attempts upon the idiom, you cannot stop till the language becomes in the proper sense of the word, corrupt. Most of these pieces of slang come from America." He was wrong: they are now coming from the British Isles

What would Coleridge say if he were around today? What wouldn't he! Britain's state organisations like the BBC and the British Council and private enterprises like the newspaper Guardian are, he would say, in a conspiracy to ruin Britain's most privileged gift to the world - the English language. How on

earth, he may wonder, can this jumble of phonetic symbols and Arabic numerals be made meaningful? The British Council already has a web site where they are willing to give a helping hand to all those who are baffled and well past their youth, for, parenthetically I may add that the youth of today need no help because they have taken to SMSing like the proverbial ducks to water.

For those who are uninitiated to the mysteries of SMSing, the British Council's web site has kindly set aside a kind of glossary to this new language to make us understand, if not overhear, what the youth of today is up to. For instance, the letters PAL stand for Parents Are Listening. Well, if it is not the parents then it may be the Boss who mustn't overhear, so SMS the acronym BIL - Boss is listening. The messaging, I must say, is courteous most of the time. For they use the word please and thank you most often with PLZ for please and THNQ for thank you.

The new lingo has been described as 'the language of love and business.' A strange combination, indeed. Business has cut into it because they find it is cheaper than emailing and the normal land phone charges. So, when business comes into it we can be sure that SMS will be kept going for ever and ever. As for love, that too is perennial. And those famous words 'I-love-you,' any bashful lover may now SMS the message very poetically under the disguise as V 2 R 1. The R I have discovered stands for 'are' so that message would read as an improvement of the 'I-love-you' formula - "We two are one." If these hints I have given you help you to get a grasp of this new language and if you follow it up a little more, you are in for winning a golden prize. The Guardian in turn which has discovered SMSing's literary possibilities says that "Texting unleashes creative forces" and its poetry is similar to the compacted form of the Japanese Haiku. The Guardian is not joking, and it is inviting readers to try their hands at writing poetry using the short forms of SMS. It reassures you by saying that "SMS poetry is just another poetic form. Its guidelines are simple and as such a stimulating challenge or a constraint as is writing in any poetic form that has rules,"

As you may see, the Guardian is in earnest, for it backs up its words with the offer of a £1000 reward for those who can prove their SMS poetic skill.

*Editor's note: I hope our own poets will have a go, email them to me (please no SMS I admit to being a Dinosaur) and I will do the rest!*

ΩΩΩΩΩΩ

## The Humbug Tree

*by June Colin-Thome*

In the centre of my hometown  
On a spot where two roads meet,  
Grew a tree with spreading branches  
That gave respite from the heat.  
A busy common meeting ground - the coolest  
place to be

Aptly known as "Putcha Gaha",  
Which meant "The Humbug Tree".  
Multitudes of business ventures  
Flourished in its shade.  
Facets of human artfulness  
And simple honest trade.  
Snake charmers, betel vendors,  
Bearded bards just old and wise.  
Gram sellers, fortune tellers,  
Some came to socialise.

Money lenders, lace-makers,  
All worked quite tirelessly.  
Many races and social levels  
Mingled harmoniously.  
But time has changed the landscape -  
Things aren't as they used to be,  
And Galle has lost forever  
Its unique "Humbug Tree".



# The Defence of Ceylon

(Editor's note – the year is 1942)

Extract from “ Earle Page – Prime Minister of Australia 1939” reproduced with kind permission from Mr Donald Page MLA NSW :Member for Ballina - grandson of Sir Page.

W

hile the Burma issue was being resolved another of profound importance was under discussion.

The rapid deterioration of the position in the Netherlands East Indies and the consequent exposure of North Australia emphasized the vital importance of Ceylon. The Chiefs of Staff stressed to the British War Cabinet the strategic importance of Ceylon as a base for the control of sea communications in the Indian Ocean, including the Middle East reinforcement route and the routes to Australia, India and Burma. The continuance of supplies to China also depended on security in the Indian Ocean. Should Ceylon fall into enemy hands the whole military position in the Indian Ocean would be jeopardized. Further, the loss of the oil fields in Palembang and the tanker shortage made the regular flow of oil supplies from Abadan vital to a successful continuation of the war. The presence of enemy naval forces in Ceylon would be a threat to Persian supplies. In addition, both Trincomalee and Colombo were required as bases for units of the British fleet. Neither had sufficient capacity alone. Colombo, moreover, was a vital convoy assembly point.

As the convoy conveying the remainder of the Australian 7th Division was due to arrive in Colombo, I suggested to Curtin on 24 February that the Australian Government should offer to allow these troops to remain in Ceylon until the 70th British Division could arrive in the middle of March. I pointed out that the British War Cabinet was not making a direct request to Australia for this assistance, in view of the Burma decision, but these troops were actually on the spot and their presence in Ceylon might determine whether we would hold it. I recommended that the position should be carefully weighed from the Australian point of view.

In view of Curtin's criticism of the lack of air support in both Greece and Malaya, I provided all available information concerning likely air support in Ceylon. There were no formed squadrons based in Ceylon, though there were a few Swordfish and Albacore aircraft on the island. Two squadrons of Fulmar fighters were due to arrive shortly and by the beginning of March a considerable force of Hurricanes would be in the vicinity and could be landed in Ceylon if the situation so demanded. By 28th February there would be

fifty-two heavy and sixty-four light anti-aircraft guns on the island and more were on the way.

It was obvious to me, and it was the opinion of the British War Cabinet, that Ceylon was even more vulnerable than Australia and that the defences could not possibly resist a determined Japanese thrust. I viewed the possible loss of Ceylon in the same light



Sir Earle Page (1880-1961)  
Pic - Courtesy National Library  
Australia

as I had considered the Burma situation. A sudden Japanese attack on this practically defenceless island would give the Japanese control of the Indian Ocean which lapped Australian shores and commanded the eastern approaches to the Middle East. With the Japanese ensconced in Ceylon, our 9th Division, then in the Mediterranean, could neither be supplied nor brought back safely to Australia. Moreover, the loss of Ceylon, with Japanese supremacy in the Indian Ocean, could terminate further victories in the Middle East and with the loss of the Middle East, offer the prospect of a total defeat.

Curtin replied to my request on 26<sup>th</sup> February. He indicated that whether the defence of Ceylon or Burma was the matter involved, no change had occurred in the fundamental need to strengthening the local defence of Australia. As the Japanese were now in force both in the Netherlands East Indies and Rabaul, they were just as likely to move against Australia as Ceylon. He argued that in view of the Allies' worldwide weakness vis-a-vis the Axis, there were various theatres where the A.I.F. or any other division could be useful. But from the Australian point of view there was no theatre east of Suez of greater importance than Australia.

“I have the impression [Curtin concluded] from cables and actions such as the unauthorised diversion and the repetition of the request for the 7<sup>th</sup> Division through you and the reference to shipping and convoys, that we are going to have difficulty in getting the A.I.F. back to Australia. That is why I put to you at length the relation of the return of the A.I.F. to local defence and the importance of its security as a base for counter offensive action against Japan. I want you to press this most strenuously.

I cannot fail to point out to you that your telegram gives no impression that Australian point of view regarding security of the Commonwealth as ultimate base to be held in South West Pacific has been

advocated by you. We have certainly had no comments from you on special information with which you have been supplied.”

This touched me on the raw and I replied the same day with what was probably the longest cable I had dispatched since my appointment as Special Envoy. I expressed surprise that the Australian Prime Minister should consider that I had not consistently advocated the Australian point of view as furnished by him and understood by myself. Beginning with a review of my own personal and family record, I recalled my peace-time advocacy of strengthening Australia's security by the construction of two Australian battleships and a dock at Sydney; my support for the creation of permanent military forces in Australia as recommended by General Squires; my part in bringing Sir John Salmond to Australia – an event which provided the basis of our existing air force – and my public attitude towards the disposition of Australian forces in wartime so that they could be readily available for Australian defence.

I recalled that the vital importance of Australia as a base for Empire defence and success against Japan was indicated in Wavell's appreciation of 16<sup>th</sup> February. I reminded Curtin that the Wavell report had formed the basis of the decisions and policy of the Pacific War Council when it was unanimously agreed that Australia and India must be preserved as bases if Japan were to be defeated, irrespective of what Japan was doing elsewhere.

This principle, I said, had always been accepted as the foundation of all the resolutions of the Pacific War Council, and the Combined Chiefs of Staff at Washington endorsed it in a statement on 25<sup>th</sup> February.

‘You may take it, therefore,’ I said, ‘that my advocacy of Australia's being preserved as a base for offensive against Japan has been so successful as to place it beyond argument in Britain.’

I further quoted a Pacific War Council resolution that Australia should be told that the Australian Government's policy of taking the whole of their forces back into the Pacific area and to Australia should be accepted. The leading elements of the Australian 6<sup>th</sup> Division were already embarking and would go straight to Australia.

I reminded the Prime Minister of my cable of 17<sup>th</sup> February in which I had outlined my defence of the Australian Government's point of view in the War Cabinet. I had concurred in the Pacific War Council's decision on that day for the diversion of the 7<sup>th</sup> Division to Burma, on receipt of the Australian Prime Minister's telegram of 17<sup>th</sup> February stating that the Government ‘would prefer that all these forces should be concentrated in Australia *but are mindful of the fact that the strategical position of Burma may necessitate some reinforcement there until other troops are avail-*

*able from elsewhere.*’ I suggested that on the actual diversion of the troops, in view of Churchill's cable to Curtin of 23<sup>rd</sup> February, in which he took full responsibility for this action, and indicated that it had been taken without my knowledge, it seemed as though my cables were not been carefully read. ‘They are prepared carefully,’ I pointed out, ‘and deserve this consideration, because I have practically spent twenty-four hours a day on this job during the last very anxious four or five weeks.’

I went on to argue that the position of Ceylon was not analogous with that of Burma to Australia. Ceylon's position in relation to Australia was comparable to that of the Burma Road to China. It was part of its lifeline.

I hope to demonstrate [my cable continued] that the holding of Ceylon till naval superiority can be established by the British and American forces will lessen the danger to our Australian convoys, will shorten appreciably the time in which a successful invasion of Australia can be attempted by Japan, and will hold open what may well be during the next few months one of the most important lines of communication for long-range aircraft to come to the assistance of Australia from America and Britain through Africa and the Indian Ocean. It may well be the only hope of maintaining direct air communication with Britain. Our troops have been forced to go to Ceylon to refuel in any case. They might, by staying there for a month, permit to land there also without danger British troops who are coming quickly to take their place and subsequent Australian troopships to refuel on their way home.

The situation at Darwin obviously makes it impossible for these home-coming troops to be landed there. Before they can be available on the eastern coast, nearly as much time will have elapsed as the promised American reinforcements would take to come across the Pacific. In the meantime, the battleships which are gradually becoming available in the Indian Ocean would be free to participate in the escort of our British and Australian troops whose safety would be practically assured against the great hazards of limited escort....

A leading reason why I have devoted much thought and consideration to the establishment of cordial, automatically working machinery of consultation on all planes between Australia and Britain has been the consciousness of the backward state of Australia's defences and the stupendous task she has to defend her continent with so few people. Even with many more people than we have at present in Australia, reliance on outside help for machines of war such as special types of aeroplanes, tanks, machine tools and equipment and raw materials not produced in Australia would be inevitable. In the scramble for priority in all

these matters, where every applicant nation can make a good case, maximum goodwill and the feeling that there will always be the utmost co-operation are tremendous assets. Therefore in the consideration of the strategic value of Ceylon to Australia and Empire communications, I hope regard will also be paid to this aspect.

Knowing you as I do, and with your knowledge of my record and my views, and of the disinterested service I have given you in London, and your repeated thanks for it, I am convinced that the statements in your telegram on 26 February do not represent your personal views.

On the following day I sent Curtin a summary of the case for diversion to Ceylon, underlining the major points. I urged that we now had to face the fact that our Australian troops were just at the right spot and at the very moment to save a vital link in Australia's outer defences and lines of communication. While they were doing this important lifesaving job for a month, an offer has been made to Australia to substitute the same number of American forces for Australia's defence. Moreover, despite the shortage of shipping to which I had referred, the highest priority had been given to the return of troops to Australia under the strongest possible escort, even to the detriment of actual fighting theatres.

On 2<sup>nd</sup> March – six days after receiving my advice – Curtin telegraphed Churchill expressing the Australian Government's anxiety to assist the strengthening of the garrison at Ceylon and offering to make available two brigade groups of the 7<sup>th</sup> Australian Division. He requested adequate air support for these troops and their escort to Australia as soon as possible after their relief. At the same time the Prime Minister stated that the Australian Government was relying on the understanding that the 9<sup>th</sup> Division would return to Australia under proper escort as soon as possible. He added that while the Australian Government was gravely concerned at the weakness of Australian defences, they realized the significance of Ceylon in this problem. They made their offer believing that in the plans Churchill was making he realized the importance of the return of the A.I.F. to defend both Australia and New Zealand.

Despite the Australian Government's decision over Burma, I had felt certain that Curtin would ultimately adopt my advice and leave the two brigades of the 7<sup>th</sup> Division to garrison Ceylon. I had therefore advised Churchill to disembark the two brigade groups of the 7<sup>th</sup> Division as soon as they arrived at Colombo, and to send the ships back to Suez to pick up the further reinforcements.

The speed of our support for Ceylon gained us tremendous goodwill with Burma, China, Malaya and India, and brought us, moreover, the offer of Ameri-

can forces double the number originally contemplated to aid our local defence.

My experience in London – and this was confirmed by later experience in Australia – taught me that it was far easier to obtain American supplies for troops in Australia if a substantial number of American troops were already stationed there. It was, therefore, my advice at all times to the Australian Government to seek the greatest possible number of American troops for Australian defence. I recommended this even if it involved delay in the return to their homeland of the 6<sup>th</sup> Division from the Middle East. For such a course ensured the supply of equipment indispensable in winning the Pacific War and in maintaining the territorial integrity of Australia.

The following letter which I received from Sir Frederick Eggleston, Australian Minister in Chungking, provides an interesting postscript to the controversy which racked the United Kingdom and Australian War Cabinets. I therefore reproduce it here.

*This Chapter ends with a long letter from Sir Frederick Eggleston, Australian Minister in Chungking to Sir Earle Page, with a copy to Canberra. As the contents of the letter only apply indirectly to the defence of Ceylon a summary of it should suffice:*

*Sir Eggleston states that from Winston Churchill's speeches and the statements of Prime Minister John Curtin "there is a considerable difference of opinion between the two Governments as to the strategy and conduct of the war in the Pacific".*

*The difference appears to be on three issues-- "one, the dominant strategy to be applied to the Pacific, another, the reinforcements to Australia, and lastly, the representation of Australia in the bodies conducting the war".*

*Ed*

*Reproduction of this chapter in The Ceylankan is due to the untiring efforts of the late Darnley de Souza. Darnley first contacted me back in 2006 by snail mail including a photocopy of the extract. I demurred on the grounds of copyright issues and the fact that copy typing from hard copy was to me a great impost. I did not hear from him for a while and then I received written authorisation from Sir Page's grandson as credited at the beginning. He had been at work locating the copyright owner to obtain required permission. Darnley went even further. Shortly before his demise he painfully transcribed the chapter into electronic format which I have used here. Darnley's keenness to share knowledge with fellow members reached a new high with this effort. He badgered me no end to present this chapter in The Ceylankan.*

*.... and so Darnley it is in at last, better late than never! And I salute you for the determination.*

*Sumane Iyer  
Editor*



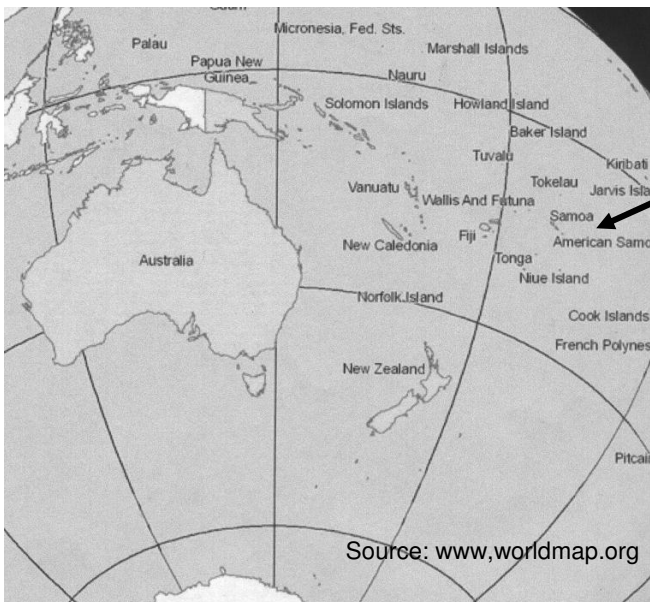
# Sri Lanka to Australia via Samoa I Sisifo

## Part 1

by Earle Forbes

**I** had heard of Samoa only in connection with Margaret Mead's book 'Coming of Age in Samoa'. This study along with others by Havell Ellis, Alfred Kinsey, Marie Stopes and other notable scholars were in demand from the lending section of the Peradeniya University Library. Not in my wildest dreams or best laid plans did I imagine that at about 11.30 pm on the 29<sup>th</sup> of June 1975, I would be on an aircraft about to land at Faleolo airport in Western Samoa. Not only that, my wife and 2 young daughters were with me; the younger only two yrs old.

As I looked out the aircraft window all I could see was the darkness of night. We had been flying for about 6 hours; almost all of it over water. Out of Sydney to Nadi in Fiji; and from there now on route to Faleolo; the only interna-



tional airport in Western Samoa. An announcement had come over the aircraft communications system to say that we would be touching down in 15 minutes. That announcement had been made about 10 minutes ago. There was as yet no sign of lights below, just the starry glow of the night sky. Suddenly my eyes caught sight of a dim row of lights. As we got closer it grew longer but not



...and soon with a thud we touched down on the dimly lit runway at Faleolo airport

much brighter. The aircraft began to descend and it looked as if we were roaring down into a sea of darkness. Thank God that this was an illusion. Soon with a thud we touched down on the dimly lit runway at Faleolo Airport. When we got off the aircraft a few minutes later we entered a very modest terminal building. With a corrugated iron roof and a concrete and glass enclosure, we could have been at some remote spot in Sri Lanka. We were however, about 15,000 kilometres away at Faleolo, Western Samoa. We were ushered to immigration and after the formalities of their check directed to a spot to await the arrival of our luggage. The bags of the 30 or so passengers, were brought in contraptions which resembled huge shopping trolleys pushed along by two men per trolley. The Customs check was quick. I did not know why at the time, but the only question we were asked is whether we had any magazines and pictures in our luggage. Apparently pornographic magazines and pictures were taboo in this peaceful strongly Christian island. After an answer in the negative and a quick examination of our suitcases we went through to the exit. I was in a state of confusion for a few minutes but was soon brought back to reality when I saw the smiling round face of my good friend, Sarath. It was like coming across an oasis in a vast desert. Was it not good to see a Sri Lankan friend at 12.30 am in this godforsaken part of the world? Sarath was a good mate of mine at the Peradeniya campus but he never looked so good in all the years I had known him. Greetings completed, we carried our suitcases out of the building. Outside there was a small parking area with vehicles parked in random spots; a couple of utes, a few small sedans and a majestic white Wolseley 1800. To this white vehicle Sarath guided us and with some adjustment and shoving down we finally managed to load the suitcases and seat my family in the car.



The distance from Faleolo airport to the capital city (or should I say town) of Apia is approximately 45 kilometres. I noticed that once we had driven out of the airport compound there were no street lights. The darkness of the night was illuminated by the headlights of the mighty Wolseley. There were only a few vehicles on the road. This was the main road to Apia from the only international airport and it had just one lane in each direction. On either side of the road were wide grass verges. The road went through what looked like villages and at these points there were signs of life by way of a few flickering lights or at times of persons sitting at the far edge of the grass verge. The surroundings were so unfamiliar and it felt like a million miles from home. Sarath was chatting in the car about various things and we did not feel the nearly one hour pass until the outskirts of Apia began to appear. We were driving along a street now which was a bit wider than the Faleolo to Apia road and I noticed that there was evidence of small stores, shops and a motor vehicle dealership. Most of the buildings were single level with a few double storey ones. I did not notice any three or four level buildings that night nor did we have to stop at any traffic lights because there was none in Apia.

As we had got to the town area, I reminded Sarath that we had accommodation booked at the legendary Aggie Grey's Hotel, and I asked him to drive there. However, in true Sri Lankan style Sarath and his good wife Sylvia had other plans. Sarath turned to me and said, *'tonight mate we are going to my place and we will see about the hotel tomorrow'*.

We had arrived in Western Samoa, and although my first thought was to cut my losses and go back home to Sri Lanka, we ended up staying there four and a half years in what turned out to be an extremely enjoyable and rewarding stay.

History has divided the Samoan Islands into two areas. Three main islands, Manau, Upolu and Savai'i make up 'the Samoan Islands'. There are also several smaller islands but these are not of consequence by any measure. The Samoan Islands were first referred to by European sailors as the Navigator Islands. In the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century European nations and America were jostling for control of the Samoan Islands. By a treaty concluded in 1899, the Americans and Europeans divided the Samoan Islands among themselves. Germany declared the Western Islands (Upolu and Savai'i and the smaller islands to

the west) as their territory and America in 1904 declared Manau and the eastern islands as being American territory. When the European nations were drawn into conflict in 1914, New Zealand seized the western Samoan Islands from Germany. This remained the state of play throughout the first world war. As part of the post war peace settlement, The League of Nations in 1921, gave New Zealand a formal mandate over the western



Apia -capital of Western Samoa (circa 1975) note it has no tall buildings, quite earthquake safe

islands. New Zealand administered Western Samoa, as it came to be called, up to 1962. In 1962 Western Samoa became an independent state. It was the first Pacific Island group to attain independence.

The eastern islands were not given up by the Americans. Manau had the very useful natural harbour of Pago Pago. Not only was the Pago Pago harbour deep and wide at the entrance, it was also protected from the strong winds by a ring of mountains. Those of you who are old enough and who have heard Bing Crosby sing, will remember the melody 'South of Pago Pago'. In proximity to the harbour, the Americans had in time, developed a magnificent airstrip. To the Americans Pago Pago was strategically too important to be united with Upolu and Savai'i. Later on, together with Pearl Harbour, Guam and the Subic Bay Naval Base in The Philippines, the Americans had sought to control the Pacific with a spread of military bases. No wonder then that America decided that it should keep Manau as a 'Protectorate' and call it *American Samoa*. To this day it is designated as a territory of the United States of America with George W Bush as President. Officially it is administered by the Department of the Interior of the United States of America. In 1975 it was claimed that nearly 75%

of the American Samoan revenue came in the form of grants from the United States. The American Samoan economy at the time was a subsistence one and generated very little revenue. The Samoans of Manau, or for that matter the Americans, did not even bother to raise revenue by the simplest means, namely a Customs duty on imports. Pago Pago was a duty free port and it was not uncommon for expatriates and the richer local inhabitants of the area to be seen buying large bottles of Channel No.5, Courvoisier VSOP, Omega watches and similar luxury products. My four and a half years were spent in The Independent State of Western Samoa, (Samoa I Sisifo). Visits to American Samoa were few and far between and primarily for the purpose of duty free shopping.

Up to the time of independence New Zealanders had control over the development of Western Samoa. With independence the Commonwealth Fund for Technical Co-operation (CFTC), The Asian Development Bank (ADB) and similar aid agencies were seeking to assist in one way or another in developing the country. It is largely through these aid agencies that expatriates from Sri Lanka, India, Britain, USA and some other countries began to arrive in Western Samoa. Sarath, who was with The Development Finance Corporation in Sri Lanka, had been trying to get a posting with the ADB for sometime. This was no easy task. One day the ADB offered him a posting in the remote location of Western Samoa. A lesser mortal would have hesitated; but not Sarath. He seized the opportunity, and as he said at the time when he left Sri Lanka for Western Samoa, 'all I need is a foot in the door'. As time showed he was quite correct. After a spell in Western Samoa and another in the equally remote Solomon Islands, Sarath ended up in Manila at ADB headquarters. He served the ADB for many years with distinction and is now enjoying his retirement in Canada, to which country he and his family migrated when he finished up with the ADB.

Sarath, was to my knowledge, the first Sri Lankan to arrive in Western Samoa on a long term posting directly from Sri Lanka. Some months after his arrival in Western Samoa, Sarath wrote to me, and among other matters, enquired whether I would like to work there. I replied his letter but said that I was not sure whether it would suit my family as my elder daughter was now attending school in Colombo and I was reluctant to disrupt her education in a country like Western Samoa. He replied that there was an excellent International school and also a very

good feeder Catholic Primary School in Western Samoa. To cap it all the Deputy Principal of the International School was Sam, a Sri Lankan who had come to Western Samoa from New Zealand. Sarath was in the process of arranging for his family to come to Western Samoa and he had covered all aspects of schooling with advice from Sam.

I was still not keen on the idea, but in order not to disappoint Sarath, I sent a copy of my C V to him. A few weeks later I received a letter from him to say that the Commissioner of Inland Revenue, his golf buddy, and the Public Service Commission of Western Samoa were very impressed with my C V and intended offering me a position as a Senior Investigating Officer. So it came to pass that I landed at Faleolo International Airport at approximately 12.15 am on that fateful 29<sup>th</sup> of June 1975. It should have been the 30<sup>th</sup> of June as it was after 12.00 midnight. But it was the 29<sup>th</sup> June as we had crossed the International Dateline and gained a day in the process.

When we arrived in Western Samoa, we were the fourth Sri Lankan family in Apia. Besides Sarath and Sam a third family had arrived just before us. This other arrival was Cecil and his wife. Cecil had concluded a long and brilliant career in the Public Works Department (PWD) Sri Lanka, as an engineer and technocrat. He had retired from the PWD and was soon thereafter offered a posting as Advisor to the Minister of Public Works in Western Samoa, under the auspices of the CFTC. In the next three years several other Sri Lankans took up appointments in Western Samoa. There were five who came over to work as aircraft engineers and specialist personnel for Polynesian Airlines. In addition still more were to arrive in Apia in the ensuing months.

Western Samoa in the wider scheme of things is a very small country located in isolation in the middle of the Pacific Ocean. The two main islands which make up Western Samoa (Upolu and Savai'i) are comparatively small. Upolu the smaller, but more important of the two islands, is about 1120 square kilometres. Savai'i the larger, but less populated island, is approximately 1700 square kilometres. The population of Western Samoa at the time would have been only about 160,000. It is difficult to understand how at the time so many Sri Lankans were drawn to work in such a small country in the middle of nowhere. Quite apart from the reasons for their being there, Sri Lankans contributed significantly to the

*(Continued on page 24)*



*Continuing the series "places that touched your heart and mind"*

## Memories of Laxapana

*by Fred Kreltzeheim*

**D**

**uring my career** as a Tea Planter, I spent ten years on Laxapana Group, Maskeliya – four years as an Assistant Superintendent and six years as Manager, from 1961 to 1971.

In the late 'fifties the Ceylon Government decided to build a dam across the Maskeliya Oya – a slow-moving and meandering river which once flowed through Maskeliya and fed into the Kelani Ganga, but now forms a part of the Mousekelle Reservoir. The objective was the construction of a Hydro-Electric Scheme, which resulted in the inundation of several thousand acres of land, the Maskeliya town itself, and seven tea factories. Laxapana Group lost approximately 150 acres of tea, the tea factory, manager's bungalow, and several staff quarters and ancillary buildings. This necessitated the retrenchment of a significant part of the labour force. With Government approval, we were allowed to cultivate an

equal extent of virgin land higher up in an area called the Peak Wilderness under the tea replanting subsidy scheme using cuttings from well known clones, as against the earlier practice of tea seedlings. The planting of clonal tea has many advantages over seedlings, notably, a very much higher yield, proven quality, and a resistance to certain diseases.

Obtaining labour to work on a different division, especially such a distance away, was always a challenge. This problem was overcome by an agreement between the management and the labour unions that retrenchment would not take place if the unions agreed to the transfer of selected workers who would willingly work on the new clearings, and that once the new tea was in production, they would transfer to the new division, named Hamilton, as well.

We commenced by planting 10 acres of tea in 1964, 15 acres during the following year, and 25 acres per annum thereafter. Planting 25 acres of new clearings each year was a monumental task, and required a great deal of planning. Organising the tea nursery itself was no mean effort. We needed approximately 125,000 new plants each year, and for this we put out around 140,000 clonal cuttings. Preparation of the land prior to planting was most important, and this included



A section of the Hamilton Division a few years later. Adams Peak in the background

the construction of new roads and a drainage system to minimise soil erosion. Over the next few years, workers quarters were constructed, and in due course the chosen labour were resettled, albeit rather reluctantly. Within a relatively short period, just five to ten years, these fields were yielding well over twice as much as the surrounding seedling tea and the workers reaped the rewards for their hard work by obtaining a much higher remuneration for their work. This result gave me much satisfaction being a “win-win” situation and when I left



The Superintendent's bungalow built in the early 19 hundreds, approximately 8800 sq feet in extent was demolished prior to flooding of the estate

Sri Lanka in 1971, I felt, and still do, that I had left a “little part of me” back on Hamilton which has now grown into a highly profitable Division of about 140 acres of a high-yielding and beautiful tea plantation anyone would be proud to own: in fact, a real joy to behold. I have included a photograph showing this magnificent sight, around 5000ft above sea level, in the shadow of the spectacular Adams Peak. When I last visited the tea looked even better.

I will always remember Laxapana Group and Hamilton Division for the ten wonderful years I worked there despite some very challenging times. On my last visit in 2002, with a group of visitors from Australia, I noted regretfully, most of the staff and labourers I worked with had moved on. I realised, with a pang of sadness and nostalgia that I was now just another face in the crowd, another inquisitive visitor!

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...apt epitaphs

**Rest in peace. The mistake shall not be repeated.**

*...inscription on the cenotaph at Hiroshima, Japan*

## Twilight time at Yala

by Stella St John

When on the far horizon  
Swelling sea meets serene sky  
The sun dips slowly, shyly  
Staining the blue heavens  
Crimson, saffron, vermillion  
Turning the pearl-white salterns  
Spread out before me  
Into a glowing pink sapphire  
Butterflies with burnished wings  
Flit lightly, swiftly by:  
Egrets as if one thought  
Soar in formation, away to roost  
Leaving behind a lone black-winged stilt  
Nimbly high-stepping  
‘Midst tufted reeds in quiet shallows  
Behind me sounds the thunder of the surf  
Ceaselessly punctuating the stillness all around  
Like the muffled beat of drum:  
And even as the scent of ripe divul  
Is wafted on the passing breeze  
There comes the faint yet distinct sound  
Of crashing undergrowth  
Spelling the presence of that great  
Most majestic of all beasts!  
The sky now changes fast  
From red-gold to soft purple  
And blue grey  
The deer, the sambhur and peacock  
Have long since vanished  
Into wider glades and deeper woods  
And into the shadows merged  
The incessant chatter of  
Grey Langur, so agile  
Swinging from the giant tamarind, close by  
Have of a sudden ceased  
And they are mute:  
The peace of eventide is shattered  
Only by the lapwing crying accusingly  
“Did you do it?”... “did you do it?”  
And from afar comes the plaintive mooing  
Of cattle moving slowly,  
Moving homeward  
Soft shadows now grow deeper  
Cool winds now stronger grow  
And nature seems to hold her breadth:  
This is the hushed, the quiet hour  
This the day's bewitching hour...  
When life and time stands still!

Twilight time at Yala

## Colonel W. Vincent Legge a pioneer of Ceylonese Ornithology

by Murray Lord

**T**he islands of Tasmania and Sri Lanka are often compared bio-geographically. Each is about the same size, and has been isolated from large continents to their north since the last ice age. In both places, endemic bird species make up slightly more than 10 per cent of the number of breeding species. There is also a more obscure ornithological connection; the only bird whose common name honours a Tasmanian is a bird endemic to Sri Lanka. The bird is Legge's Flowerpecker, *Dicaeum vincens*, and it is named for Colonel Vincent Legge, the author of *A History of the Birds of Ceylon*.

### Legge's early life

The Legge family settled in Tasmania in 1827, and was subsequently granted land near the town of St Marys in the north east of the island. It was there that the family established their property called Cullenswood, named after their home in Ireland. Cullenswood is still owned by the Legge family today. William Vincent Legge was born at Cullenswood in 1841.

At the age of just 12, Legge travelled to England, accompanied by his parents, initially to further his education. He was educated mainly at Bath, but also in France and Germany, before entering the Royal Military Academy at Woolwich. We are told he was an accomplished linguist, taking the prize for German and being runner up in French, while at the Academy. Upon receiving his commission he was initially stationed at Dover Castle, before spending three years at Shoeburyness, where he passed through the School of Gunnery. His interest in birds had been sparked by this time, as his first published note in *The Ibis* dates from 1866. In 1867 he returned closer to home with a posting to Melbourne.

The withdrawal of Imperial troops from Australia at that time prompted the posting of his artillery battery to Ceylon, where he arrived in 1868.

### Time in Ceylon

By the time Legge arrived in Ceylon as a 27-year old lieutenant in the Royal Artillery, the initial ornithological exploration of that island was approaching completion. Men such as Templeton, Layard and Kelaart had already conducted extensive work (Saparamadu 1983, Wijesinghe 1997). All of the currently recognised endemic bird species had been collected, apart from the Serendib Scops Owl that was to remain undetected for another 130 years.



Col. W V Legge (1841-1918)

During the eight and a half years that Legge was stationed in Ceylon, he was posted at Colombo, Galle and Trincomalee. He published a number of articles on Ceylonese birds during that period in a variety of publications, mainly A.O. Hume's *Stray Feathers*, the *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society (Ceylon Branch)* and *The Ibis*.

Whilst his writings do not convey full details of all his travels around the island, it is possible to discern a little about how he went about his ornithological work in Ceylon from some of his publications, particularly the species accounts in *A History of the Birds of Ceylon*. The bulk of the observations are of course centred around his three postings, but it is clear that he travelled and collected specimens extensively throughout Ceylon. Periodically he complains that the limited leave available to him did not allow him to spend



as much time in a location as he desired. Illness is also mentioned in passing. His inland expeditions were done on horseback, apparently with a ready supply of “coolies” available to assist him. The extent of his travels is evidenced in the species account for the Ceylon Hawk-Eagle; having raised a young bird and kept it for five years before it was handed over to a zoo, he noted that it had “made two voyages round the island with me, and the trip across country in a bullock-bandy.”

Legge in fact appears to have kept quite a varied collection of captive birds. Many were captured when young, which allowed him to take detailed notes of their moults, food preferences, calls and other habits. Managing the menagerie seems to have been a complex business: the Ceylon Hawk-Eagle ate its room mate (a Brown Wood Owl, apparently), and one of the perils of trying to feed rats to his Grey-headed Fish Eagle was that the Painted Stork that shared the cage would take the rat from his hand before he could get to the eagle. The Eagle tried to take its revenge on the Brown Booby in the next cage which unwisely stuck its head through the bamboo separating them. The Booby survived, but not for long. Some species did not do well in captivity. Ceylon Spurfowls were frightened so easily that they would injure themselves flying into the sides of the aviary.

In addition to Legge's travels, he maintained a network of correspondents in various parts of Ceylon who provided him with bird observations. Additionally he monitored the specimens being offered for sale by taxidermists (primarily Whyte & Co of Kandy). In all, he claimed to have added 24 species of birds to the Ceylonese checklist.

As with the majority of his contemporaries Legge assembled a collection of bird skins. In fact, reading through his book one comes across numerous references to his disappointment at not being able to collect particular birds he saw. One gets the impression that the birds that escaped Legge's guns had to earn their freedom; in the species account for the Clamorous Reed-Warbler he remarked: “On my trying to drive them out of their strongholds they retreated to the base of the reeds, and no amount of shouting or stone-throwing, and in some cases of stamping even on the rushes, sufficed to flush them. It was only by setting fire to the almost impenetrable cover that I succeeded in getting a shot.” (Legge 1878-80).

Whilst he did express regret at the destruction his collecting caused, that was not enough to prevent him proceeding: “From behind a tree hard by I gazed on this splendid sight for a few moments and hastily jotted down in my notebook the different species on their respective trees. The sun was getting up, and the birds were rapidly going off for food; so it was time to begin work and (cruel monster that I was! Mais que voulez vous?) carry death into the midst of the happy company.” A description of the carnage is followed by the comment that “Such scenes as this are familiar to most readers of *The Ibis* and when once witnessed are not easily forgotten.”

Legge's specimen collection returned to England with him and the majority subsequently went to the Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery. In 1936 in accordance with Colonel Legge's wishes that his collection be returned to Ceylon, the collection was donated to the Colombo Museum which received a total of 678 specimens of 278 species.

During his time in Ceylon, Legge was involved in the activities of the Ceylon Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society. He was secretary of that organisation from 1870 until he left Ceylon and history records him as having reorganised the society's museum – which later became the nucleus of the Colombo Museum's collection.

Legge's contribution to Ceylonese ornithology



Legge's Flowerpecker *Dicaeum vincens* Sclater

is honoured by a number of birds bearing the scientific name *leggei*. Also to be found in Ceylon is Legge's Flowerpecker, a small colourful bird found in lowland rainforest areas of the southwest (though not easy to see as it prefers to feed in the canopy). It

is also sometimes called White-throated Flower-pecker.

### The book

Legge's major contribution to Ceylonese ornithology occurred after he left the country, with the publication of his *A History of the Birds of Ceylon*, which was issued in three parts between 1878 and 1880. It was subsequently issued in a second edition containing an extra appendix in 1881. He left Ceylon in 1877 and served at Portsmouth until the end of 1878. He was based at Aberystwyth in Wales at the time of publication.

The book contains 34 hand coloured lithographs by the most prolific ornithological lithographer of the time, J. G. Keulemans. After a detailed introduction there are species accounts for all species then known to have occurred in Ceylon, including a description of plumage, information on breeding, on its distribution (both within and outside Ceylon) and of variations of plumage throughout the bird's range.

In the introduction, Legge stated that whilst certain details including those of distribution outside Ceylon and related forms may "seem superfluous to the ornithologist in England, with numerous libraries at his command", his aim in including them was to provide a comprehensive reference for local observers. He said that one of the reasons he wrote the book was "to create a taste for natural history in the minds more particularly of the educated native community, and the hope of founding an ornithological school in Ceylon, such as had been the effect of the labours of Jerdon in the Indian empire".

The book was published to many favourable reviews. Amongst the most favourable were those of Legge's correspondent A.O. Hume. In relation to the first volume he wrote that "the work as a whole will equal, if not surpass, any other work of the kind that has ever appeared ... The work appears to me to be a perfect model of what such a work should be; admirably written, admirably arranged, saying just so much as is necessary of each species, free from repetitions..." Later, when reviewing the completed work he said "This is undoubtedly by far the most complete and satisfactory work that has yet appeared in regard to any portion of the British Asian Empire. It has involved years of persevering labour, and testifies not only to the industry but to the literary skill and sound judgement of its author." Richard Bowdler Sharpe of the British Museum subsequently remarked that Legge's "memoir on the avifauna of Ceylon is one of the most excellent works ever written by an ornithologist".

*A History of the Birds of Ceylon* became more accessible to recent ornithologists thanks to a facsimile edition printed in Sri Lanka by Tisara Prakasakayo in

1983. Whereas facsimiles of most bird books of the era often reproduce the plates in detail but abridge the text, it is a tribute to the quality of Legge's text that its facsimile reproduced the text in full but the plates in only a reduced size.

### Return to Australia

In 1883 Legge was offered the command of the armed forces in Tasmania, a post he held intermittently for the next twenty years. He soon found himself involved in the Australian ornithological community and was the founding president of the Australian Ornithologists Union (an organisation now known as Birds Australia).

Whilst Legge's primary scientific contributions were to ornithology, he also contributed to other fields in Australia. He wrote articles on forestry and geography, and a peak not far from the family home at Cullenswood bears the name of Legge's Tor, in honour of his role in determining its exact height. For a number of years Legge's Tor was considered to be the highest peak in Tasmania. Colonel Legge died at Cullenswood on 25 March 1918, aged 77.

### Acknowledgments

Thanks to Hugh Karunanayake for assistance in locating material for this paper, and to Deepal Warakagoda, Yasantha Mapatuna of the Colombo Museum and Kathryn Medlock of the Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery for responding to queries. The Military Museum of Tasmania provided the photograph of Col. Legge.

### Further reading

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*This is an abridged version of an article published in issue 8 of Birding ASIA, the journal of the Oriental Bird Club. For more information on the Club, visit [www.orientalbirdclub.org](http://www.orientalbirdclub.org)*

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## BOOK REVIEW



**The Joy of Sharing: Where did we come from? Why are we here? Where do we go from here?** by Charles Boyd, 2007, Published by AuthorHouse, Bloomington IN, USA. 184pp, \$ 31.50 Hard cover, available from Chandra Senaratne ph 02 9872 6826, e-mail: [charboyd@iprimus.com.au](mailto:charboyd@iprimus.com.au)

Reincarnation? said the secretary I had just fired. “You mean, I could come back as a pig?” I shook my head. She didn’t have to come back, but misconceptions such as this one are the reasons why it is so difficult to explain reincarnation on a scientific, factual basis.

So said Hans Holger parapsychologist, college lecturer on the paranormal and psychic phenomena, author of 16 books in the introduction to his book “Born Again – The Truth about Reincarnation” (Doubleday and Company, New York 1970) Hans Holger wouldn’t be the first to express such feelings, or Chandra Senaratne writing as Charles Boyd the last.

Boyd’s approach to the subject is unique in this genre of writing. He shares the same phenomena of “divine direction” under which he wrote this book with Hans Holger and the like, but departs in structure. It is not a book of contiguous prose but more like a modern day FAQ (frequently asked questions).

He poses 134 questions and following each he renders an answer. Although I read it cover to cover over a week end this book is one you can pick up any time, read a bit at a time or read it like I did. It is a reference work if you may; as the difficult subject is handled from many angles. Much of the supporting anecdotal evidence is drawn from his personal experience of over 25 years, thus lending it authenticity that other type of writing may lack.

The writer may be excused for repetitive statements which appear throughout the book. It is an inevitable consequence of approaching the complex subject from different angles and needs reinforcement. ‘Rhana’ the ‘spirit guide’ who navigated the writer and sometimes put ‘thought projections’ into his head, is mentioned quite frequently, as the real author of the book. This is despite Boyd’s own efforts in diligent research in libraries and other sources to gather material to make a convincing case. Boyd is candid in his presentation of the ‘evidence’ he lays before the reader. His invitation to the reader to examine critically but not dismissively the various hypotheses is the hallmark of an honest writer in whose armoury assertion does not displace intelligent debate. His statement ‘*we have to bear in mind that karmic determinants are self earned, rather than transmitted*’ is a powerful cry to the reader to re examine ‘*what ye sow, so shall ye reap*’ with greater respect. In doing so, Boyd drives his

(Continued on page 29)

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

### **The Joy of Sharing: Where did we come from? Why are we here? Where do we go from here?**

by Charles Boyd, 2007, Published by AuthorHouse, Bloomington IN USA. 184pp, \$ 31.50 Hard cover, available from Chandra Senaratne ph 02 9872 6826, e-mail: [charboyd@iprimus.com.au](mailto:charboyd@iprimus.com.au)

**Blossoms of Wisdom on Peace and Environment** – by Erika Dias. This is an anthology of 123 poems, illustrated with 39 colour photographs. Hard cover with dust jacket ISBN: 955-599-403-X; 133 pp.; Published: April 2005; US\$ 30.00. Available from Wisdom Gift Publications, email: [hideva@sltnet.lk](mailto:hideva@sltnet.lk)

### **Also by Erika Dias**

**A Wisdom Gift**, (Jointly with Pierre Wittmann), Amarin Printing Group Co., Ltd., Bangkok, Thailand; December 1993 (book of poems), First Edition - December 1991, Third Edition - December 1993; ISBN 974 887 1681; Price US\$10.00

**Oneness In Duality**, (Jointly with Pierre Wittmann), Amarin Printing Group Co., Ltd., Bangkok, Thailand; November 1993 (book of poems); ISBN 974 8361608; Price US\$10.00

**Presents de Sagesse** (French translation of ‘A Wisdom Gift’, book of poems; jointly with Pierre Wittmann); Contact Pierre Wittmann [pierrewittmann@wanadoo.fr](mailto:pierrewittmann@wanadoo.fr)

**Meditation: Many Methods Through Watching the Mind**, First Edition - 1997, Third Edition; Sarvodaya Vishva Lekha Publishers, Ratmalana, Sri Lanka; May 2003; ISBN 955-599-320-2; Price US\$6.00

**Fully Awakened: or Sleep-Walking?** Sarvodaya Vishva Lekha Publishers, Ratmalana, Sri Lanka; November 2002; ISBN 955-599-300-9; Price US\$8.00

### **Books by S Muthiah: Contact author**

[smuthiah.mes@gmail.com](mailto:smuthiah.mes@gmail.com) OR ‘Vijay Gardens’, 2-F Vijayaraghava Lane, Vijayaraghavachari Road, T. Nagar, Chennai – 600 017, India.

**Indo Lankans**, 320pp, East West Books (Madras) Pvt 125 by airmail, A\$ 200 courier.

**The Chettiar Heritage (English)** 288pp –The Chettiar Heritage, Chennai. A\$ 100, by airmail, A 225 courier.

**Tamil**—subsidised, A\$ 75 by airmail, A\$200 courier.

**Madras that is Chennai**, 260pp, Ranpar Publishers,



(Continued from page 17)

early development of this country.

The pioneer Sri Lankan in Western Samoa was Sam. He came across from New Zealand as a school teacher. Sam's talents and hard work were soon recognized and he was promoted to the position of Deputy Principal. In this position Sam was responsible for setting policy and running the operations of the premier High School/International College in the country.

Sarath moved upwards from Advisor, to be the Deputy Director of the Development Bank. Most aid to the country was channelled through the Development Bank. His role was central to the distribution of development finance to several vital national projects. He once mentioned to me that at times very unusual small projects also came across his desk; such as a loan application from a local politician who wished to grow peanuts.



Parliament House - and you thought only the Sydney Opera House has unique lines...

Cecil was at home in no time in the Western Samoan PWD. It was not unusual to see his photograph in the local press at the opening of various PWD projects such as new roads, bridges, public buildings and schools. When the Samoan Director of the PWD resigned from office, Cecil was appointed as Acting Director. The PWD was responsible for providing and maintaining government housing to expatriate staff. Cecil's high position in the PWD entitled him to occupy a beautiful bungalow by the sea. The back gate of this property opened up onto the beach and the mighty Pacific Ocean. It was common practice for the Sri Lankans to use Cecil's beachfront backyard as their own private ocean pool. On moonlight nights Cecil's beachfront had a most romantic and magical aura.

The Western Samoan national carrier, Polynesian Airlines, was also soon under the spell of the Sri Lankans. Raja arrived first in the country as an aircraft engineer. The types of aircraft operated by Polynesian were the same or very similar to that operated by Air Ceylon at the time. Raja soon saw openings available for several of his Sri Lankan work mates. In time, four other aircraft industry workers, (Joe, Hugh, Maheswaran and Hulu) took up positions at Polynesian. Their expertise ranged from engineering to maintenance planning, electronics and administration. To complete the deluge, as time went by, even the accounting side of the Polynesian operation was under the control of a Sri Lankan accountant.

*to be concluded in J 42*

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## Galle

*A reply to S. Pathiravitana's "Looking back on Point de Galle" in Ceylankan Journal # 39*

*by Barbara Misso*

**I** read with great interest your memories of life as a Forest Ranger in Galle. It was my childhood world you were talking of. My father and grandfather before him were both Government Surveyors who worked in forested and lonely places as you must have done. My grandfather spent his last years surveying in Galle. His theodolite and leather-encased tapes were among my grandmother's souvenirs that I played with as a child. As an infant I lived in my grandparent's home. It was a many-roomed house in Hirimbura, called Mont Cliff. (It's on a Survey map in the archives of Galle Library.) My grandfather died when I was 18 months old, so I never knew him or the house because my father then took us to another house closer to the Fort. But Mont Cliff still exists, renovated and renamed Mihinduru Gedara.

My father continued to work as a Surveyor till I was about eight years old. I have vivid memories of him as he left home for periods of time, which seemed very long to me, and returned with his khaki shorts and heavy knee-length socks spattered with mud. I remember well the horror of seeing him roll down his socks and expose fat leeches clinging to his legs and feet. He would talk to me about the woods he knew—Nadun, Ebony among others. I have always had an interest in woods. He talked of places you mention. Hiniduma, Kottowa, Walahanduwa, others I can't recall. I never knew these places. They were just shining words to light up memories of childhood and my father.

He carried a gun, though as you say, there were no wild animals. It was the gun his father had carried in an earlier time when it was needed; and there may have been more snakes. Because he had a gun in the house and children are curious, he showed my brother and me how to carry a gun and how to make sure it was unloaded before storing it. We later became adept at using a Daisy Air Rifle and the catapult. But we never touched the gun.

He brought the fruits of the forest to me; *dbhang*, *hibotu*—but I never heard of the *karthacolumbum*. I thought I knew the *mee-amba* as a very sweet miniature mango but it is a dim memory. If Galle produced something unique in my experience, it was the *pitikekiri*—a gourd to excel all other gourds in taste. As for perfumes, the scent from the white-flowered

Murraya, or the splendour of a dark night when the same tree was in bloom and was lit by fireflies, were unbeatable. There were also the glow worms in the grass. Never seen them again!

During the British occupation of Sri Lanka, Sir James Emerson Tennant writing in 1859, said ancient Galle “was the central emporium of commerce which in turn enriched every country of Eastern Asia, elevated the merchants of Tyre to the ranks of Princes, fostered the renown of the Ptolemies, rendered the wealth and precious products of Arabia, freighted the Tigris with barbaric pearl and gold and identified the merchants of Baghdad and the mariners of Bassora with associations of adventure and romance.”

When I knew Galle it was the sleepy old town that Lyn Ludowyk and Nora Roberts made famous among us Ceylankans. But that was part of its charm. I remember evenings spent on the ramparts as a child, running down flights of stone steps to stone chambers underground where ammunition had once been stored, our voices echoing through the door-less rooms. As a teenager I remember climbing by stone steps in the rampart wall down to bathing-places where only spent waves made their way, and where wading among anemones, squid and starfish was the only sport..

The sea, now gentle, now threatening, was embedded in my consciousness so that when I visited Portland in Victoria before the harbour area was renovated, I thought of Galle with its old pier and the salt smell of the sea air.

My mother's family lived in the Fort in an upstairs house in Pedlar Street with their large family of nine children; and later in a smaller home just opposite the Ludowyks in Lighthouse Street. Lyn had left home but his younger brother, Denzil, the violinist, used to visit us frequently. My mother was his accompanist till he left for Germany and wider fields for his talent.

The area of the Fort that I knew best was that occupied by families with Dutch and Portuguese names; Anthonisz, De Bruin, De Vos, Arndt, La Harpe. to select a few at random. It included the Presbyterian and Anglican Churches, the New Oriental Hotel, the Kachcheri, the Law Courts and Ephraim's general store stocked with imported goods. My mother used to take a rickshaw into the Muslim area to give music lessons to girls who were in purdah and I once attended a lavish birthday party of a Muslim classmate and remember being intrigued by customs different from mine. I was about ten years old. There was also an area of town occupied by descendants of the Portuguese who proudly kept their culture alive. Their carol singers visited homes in and outside the Fort on the night of the 24<sup>th</sup> of December. It was one of the highlights of Christmas.

From my reading I gathered that Galle was used as a fortress by the Dutch. Only the high-ranking soldiers lived there when on duty. They had other properties outside the Fort that were their family-homes. Sunday Service in the Presbyterian Church in the Fort was a solemn occasion for these high-ups and their families. The most important rode in carriages; others walked, attended by black slaves carrying their 'personal' chairs.

The Fort became a significant place in stages, I found in my reading. First, it was occupied by Arab traders who built a "stockade of pointed stakes on the south side." The Portuguese took over from them (there is no mention of war). "They built a line of rampart with its moat and three bastions cut across the land side from sea to sea. In the middle there was a gate with a draw-bridge and the position could be defended with this fortification. ....After the Hollanders occupied it they did nothing more than build the bastions anew and enlarge and deepen the moat"...so says my Portuguese source and no Dutch source contests it, so De Heydt was possibly stating a fact.

Today it is a World Heritage Site and the rest of the world seems to have discovered its appeal! I could not find who the Costizos were; only a line or two in Spanish and a lot of pictures on the internet.



## SYNOPSIS OF MEETINGS

### Melbourne: 7 October 2007

Chairman Dr. Srilal Fernando introduced the speaker, Dr. Raja Bandaranayake who made a presentation based on his book, "**Betwixt Isles", The Story of the Kandyan Prisoners in Mauritius, (2006)**. He has gained a PhD from the University of London and he is a Fellow of RACS. Dr. Bandaranayake is an International Consultant in Medical Education and a Professor of Anatomy. He has ventured away from medicine and in the interesting field of history to do this study.

Dr. Bandaranayake visited the tomb of Ehelapola Maha Nilame in Mauritius which is inscribed in Sinhala and English. It is a national monument in Mauritius. A discrepancy in the date of death of Maha Nilame led the speaker to research the matter. Dr. Bandaranayake meticulously collected information from archives and libraries in several countries including Sri Lanka and Mauritius. (*The synopsis appearing on page 27 of Journal # 39 August 2007 issue is in content same as that of the meeting under review - Ed*)

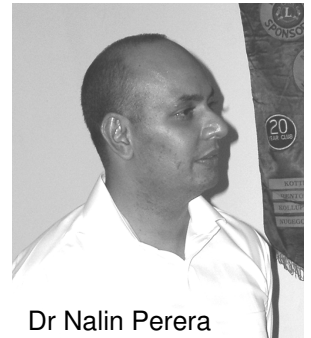
Copies of the book "**Betwixt Isles", The Story of the Kandyan Prisoners in Mauritius** were available for purchase.

Prior to the commencement of the meeting Mr. Martin Peiris an Environmental Portraitist from Sydney presented his book on Sri Lankans who have impacted on society from a cultural and social perspective. The winning raffle was drawn by Mrs. Bandaranayake and the lucky winner was Mr. Errol Fernando. The meeting concluded with a lively question and answer session.

*Dilhani Kumbukkage*

### Colombo: 1st December 2007

President Somasiri Devendra welcoming everybody introduced the speaker, Dr. Nalin Perera to speak on "**Some Indigenous medical systems: Traditional Acupuncture and the place of 'Magic' in Sri Lankan Medicine**". Dr Perera hails from a family of Ayurvedic physicians and practices Homeopathy and traditional Acupuncture.



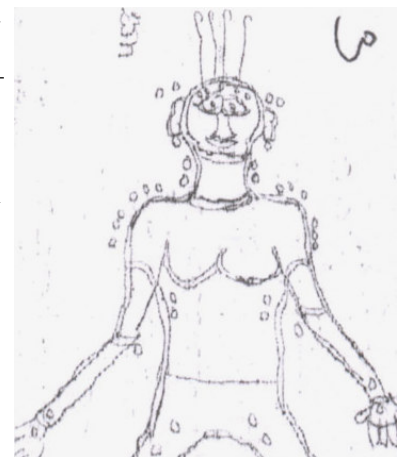
Dr Nalin Perera

Dr Perera began by saying that "Ayurveda" is a Sanskrit word denoting the Science or Lore of Life; a holistic healing system practiced in India for 5000 years; long before the beginning of Sri Lankan history. Its essence is that man is a part of the natural order of things, governed by the same laws of Nature.

There are many ways in which "Sinhala Vedakam" differs from Indian Ayurveda. We trace our system also back to pre-Vijayan times acknowledging a king Ravana (not the Ravanna of the "Ramayana") as the one who codified it. Probably after the Aryanisation of the country the two systems fused in this country. Traditional Chinese medicine is the third strand of Sinhala Vedakam. Indian Ayurveda says that illness occurs when the three *doshas*, namely, *Watha*, *Pitha* and *Kapha* are not in harmony. The Chinese system says the harmony is between two forces, *Ying* and *Yang*. All things are governed by these: black-white, negative-positive, good-bad, hot-cold, and are subject to change. Sri Lankan physicians placed less emphasis on the tri-*dosha* principle and more on the duality principle of Heat (*ushna*) and Cold (*seetha*). All old diagnostic and therapeutic texts follow this: a common cold is caused by an excess of *seetha* and a skin eruption is due to excess *ushna*, for example. Foods follow the same principle: *thambili* (king coconut) is cooling, while *bala malu* (tuna) is heaty. The speaker's awareness of other facets of our medicine arose from his own experiences.

Ayurveda has eight specialisations. The speaker's own family has practiced medicine as specialists in *Umathu roga* or psychiatric disorders and been custodians of a Temple in Nee-lammahara. He served his apprenticeship under an uncle in the *guru-shishya paramparava* system (the teacher-pupil continuum). Since, to be a good doctor one needs to have three *puruddhas*: *kale puruddha*, *aba puruddha* and *deka puruddha* (experience of practice, of hearing and of seeing), he studied under other physicians abroad: homoeopathy in China and acupuncture both in India and China.

Early into his practice, an 80+ year old patient showed him two barely visible scars on her temples. Her vision began to diminish at 17 and a surgeon diagnosed it as irreversible degeneration of the optic nerve leading to total loss of vision. A traditional physician at Atharugama Temple in Kandy, after examination, had taken a hot needle and cauterized these two



Sinhala acupuncture points from an ola

places. Starting the next morning her sight became normal in a few days. Some months later, another patient had related how his migraine headaches had been cured by one session of blood letting by Yatiyana Veda Mahattaya.

The speaker had begun a search for a teacher of traditional Sinhala Acupuncture, or *Nila Vidum Pilisum*. Every physician he asked had seen their elders do it, but had thought it too invasive. Finding an Indian text **Marma Soochi Karma** he had studied under a teacher in Kerala. Searching for old *ola* texts, found a few in the National Archives, the Colombo Museum and in Temples. He realized that *Nila Vidum Pilisum* was different from both Chinese and Indian acupuncture. The location points were different. The treatment was governed by the changing phases of the moon.

The books traced this system back to the *nagas* who had taught a priest who had gone to *Naga loka* to find a cure for the Chief Minister who was paralysed. The diagrams in the books showed the *nagas* as human figures with round, mongoloid features, wearing large ear-rings, distinctive hair styles and costumes. There were also many acupuncture points illustrated for treating animals such as parrots, peacocks, horses, elephants, lions and tigers. He was able to contact an authority on the Naga people, who confirmed that acupuncture had been practiced in Nagaland, but that the knowledge was now lost.

Along with a collection of over 100 *ola* books, early this year, he had come across a 101-year old Dr. Gunatilaka who still occasionally practises *Nila Vidum Pilisum* and is now engaged in documenting his work.

*Thovil* is the “magical” side of Sinhala medicine. In villages there are devils everywhere; particularly in cemeteries, old houses, forests and river banks. To villagers they are very real. The specialty of my family being *Umathu roga* he had seen “possessed” persons being brought to Neelammahara Temple, even as a child. Usually a few *cannabis* based pills put man and devil into a deep sleep, and were referred to a *gurun-nanse* (exorcist) to complete the cure. He did not understand this as it seemed so primitive and unscientific. But, as a practitioner, patient after patient testified to its efficacy. He began investigating *thovil* (the exorcising ceremony) from a medical perspective, learning that it was traced back to the *Yaksbas* who, along with *Nagas* were said to have been the pre-Vijayan inhabitants of our country. He then described one such investigation, where he talked to and examined the patient before, during and after the ceremony. The experience was illustrated with his video recording.

The patient, a girl, was in deep shock after a fright experienced while bathing alone at a well. In Sinhala we say she had had a *bayaveemak*. Her gaze was blank, she would not speak, had no appetite, could not sleep and had a constant headache. A psychiatrist had treated her and, interestingly, had even tried hypnosis, but her condition remained unchanged. The family decided on a *thovil*. Before the ceremony the speaker had spoken to the girl who, in spite of a blank stare, showed signs of fear and restlessness.

A *thovil* usually lasts from 6.00 pm to 6.00 am, divided into three *yamas*, or watches. During the first *yama* (6.00 pm – 10.00 pm) the *adura* (exorcist) builds a protective ‘wall’ around the patient by blessing her entire body with *sheshapada mantra* and, using his weapon, the *eegaha* (Ishwara’s arrow), commanded the devils to leave for a demonic palace where they were trapped. This was to break their hold on the patient.

This *yama* consists of recitals to reinforce the patient’s self esteem. The patient goes into a light trance.

During the second *yama*, dances and dramas are enacted to entertain the audience and break down the patient’s social isolation. The cramped position she is made to sit in, the rhythmic drumming, flaring torches, smoke from burning resin (*dummala*), and the glittering costumes of the dancers leads the patient into a deeper trance. She is followed by the *adura* who, himself, goes into a trance, in which state he is able to make long-lasting suggestions to the patient. Towards morning, actors dressed as different devils, come to the arena to frighten all; but the *adura* engages them in comic dialogue and submits each to humiliation. This demonstrates the *adura*’s control over the demons. Laughter erupts in the audience and even the patient is amused – the first sign of her coming out of her isolation. The *adura* then gives offerings to the demons on their promising to leave her alone in the future.

At the very end, a most frightening demon bursts on to the scene, shocking everybody, and dances in front of the patient. Then, he removes his mask and the demon is seen to be just a man. At this point the patient undergoes a visible transformation. The sudden appearance of a demon, who becomes merely a man in a costume changes the mood, and everybody, including the patient, laugh aloud, at their own foolishness. The patient rejoins society. How can you be frightened when the demon is only a man? The patient is cured, and for life, by the *adura* in one night. At the end of the *thovil* ceremony, everything is discarded, destroyed and burnt. A *pirith noola* (blessed string) is tied round her wrist and when the doctor spoke to her, she was absolutely normal and quite embarrassed at her former fear of the devil!

An objective study of *thovil* has convinced Dr. Perera that it is not ‘magic’ but a technique evolved over centuries, which uses the power of suggestion in a very specific way.

He ended with the comments that, first, we still have with us a very ancient system of medicine dating back to pre-Vijayan times; and, second this system is clinically valid for some maladies that current medical thinking consider incurable.

Dr. Perera’s talk induced much discussion with many eminent persons joining in. Discussions continued for almost as long as the talk itself and from the enthusiasm generated it was evident talk was well received. The meeting was held at the Lions Club in Nugegoda where in the words of President Somasiri (ex mariner) says they will “drop anchor”. Daya Wickramatunga thanked the speaker and the 25 participants and invited all to enjoy the refreshments laid out.

Daya Wickramatunga  
Secretary



At the very end, a most frightening demon bursts on to the scene...

## Meet our new office bearers

Our new President **Sunil de Silva** is, by his own admission, corpulent and gregarious. Both attributes owed to his early childhood. As a toddler he was cast in a Robin Hood stage production in the role of tubby Friar Tuck. “Tubby” being the operative word. The script had been modified to make the battle on the bridge in Sherwood Forest a contest with staves between Friar Tuck and Little John. Says Sunil “I took my role so seriously that I started beating Little John with such vigour that the drama teacher had to come on stage and rescue John”. And he has been battling ever since as Crown Counsel and later Attorney General in Sri Lanka and now as Crown Prosecutor in NSW Australia.

Sunil had his early education at Richmond College, Galle and Royal College, Colombo. He has an LLB from the University of Ceylon, a BA from the London University and subsequent post graduate degrees in London. Being blessed with a golden tongue, enjoyed a brilliant career as a prosecutor in Sri Lanka. He continues putting the bad guys behind bars in Australia where he migrated to in 1992. He has also done his stint as defence counsel. To quote “I have learnt out of the “Friar Tuck” incident, that making love or fighting on stage needs be conducted with simulated

ardour or belligerence. This initial training stood me in good stead when, as defence counsel I had to convince a jury that a man with a mountain of evidence ranged against him was indeed not guilty of the offence of which he had been charged”.

His professional achievements are only overshadowed by his skills on stage and film. He is well known in drama circles both in Sri Lanka and Australia and has delighted many a compatriot in roles like a Tamil lawyer in ‘He Comes From Jaffna’, Hadjar in ‘Fifty Fifty’, a wealthy Sinhala planter in ‘Well Mudaliar’, a fiery revolutionary in ‘The Senator’ and a middle aged Sinhala man in ‘The Dowry Hunter’ and has acted in several of Ernest McIntyre’s dramas in Australia. He has acted in films such as ‘The Colomba Sanniya’, ‘The Singapore Sling’ and in tele-dramas such as ‘Ethera Bandi Senehasa’ and ‘Nopennenana Ananathaya’.

He is a man of many parts, with hobbies as diverse as carpentry fuelled by the urge to create and cooking fuelled by the urge to eat.

He recounts “My hobby of carpentry grew out of a frustrated urge for creativity. When I was nine years of age, my father thought that a gift of several volumes of Rudyard Kipling was a better birthday gift than a Meccano set. Following the ethic that books for relaxation were preferable to toys and the precept that carpentry was only a means for building or repair of houses or furniture. This made me adopt the excuse of

buying tools and building materials as being required for maintaining or enhancing the value of the house”.

Very justified we may all agree. But what of his next love – cooking? He speaks of his beloved hobby with characteristic wit, “my interest in cooking arose out of a desire to eat! Since I was the heaviest boy in my class from the time I was in the kindergarten, my parents kept me away from the types of food that I craved. One alternative was to eat at restaurants but that was too expensive, ergo, why not buy the raw materials and apply heat? Thus began a career of cholesterol enhancing, blood pressure raising and diabetic inducing gastronomic excursions. As a professional lawyer, my tongue and brain combine to provide me with the means that my tongue and taste buds cooperate in an endeavour to defeat the efforts of my cardiologist and GP to delay my arrival at the pearly gates”.

And who best is capable of doing this? It is none other than his first love Senani whom he married thirty years ago. She adeptly puts the brakes on, he says with a heavy heart. Sunil freely admits meeting Senani at a teen birthday party he ‘gate crashed’ and it was love at first sight. “I knew at once we were meant for each other, but it took her fifteen years to realise this fact”. Veni, Vidi, Vici [at last].



We also welcome a new member of the Committee **Thiru Arumugam** who was elected at AGM.

Thiru was educated at St Thomas’ College Mt Lavinia and graduated in electrical engineering (*summa sine laude*) from the “Thakarang” Faculty of the University of Ceylon in 1957.

After a stint in the Ceylon Government Service he moved to work in Nigeria in 1974, and moved on from there to UK in 1981. His final position in UK was as a Principal Engineer with one of the world’s largest multinational firms of Environmental Consulting Engineers, and his wife Malini was a Consultant Paediatrician in the National Health Service.

After retirement, they chose to move to the more salubrious climate of Sydney in 2004. They have so far been unsuccessful in trying to persuade their three sons to follow them to Australia. The older two are Traders in bonds and financial instruments in the City of London, and the youngest is a doctoral student in anthropology at Columbia University, New York.

The avalanche of information on the Internet has given his brain a new lease of life and he spends many hours researching Sri Lankan history. Other interests include killing pot plants (unwittingly, but much to Malini’s horror), collecting Victorian Ceylon penny stamps, stage lighting, restoring vintage valve radios and ruminating about his flying activities in the old days when he held a Private Pilot’s Licence. Sadly, the licence has predeceased the holder.





**If you need a good laugh** then read through these Children's Science Exam answers. These are real answers given by children.

**Q: Name the four seasons.**

A: Salt, pepper, mustard and vinegar.

**Q: Explain one of the processes by which water can be made safe to drink.**

A: Flirtation makes water safe to drink because it removes large pollutants like grit, sand, dead sheep and canoeists.

**Q: How is dew formed?**

A: The sun shines down on the leaves and makes them perspire.

**Q: How can you delay milk turning sour?**

A: Keep it in the cow.

**Q: What causes the tides in the oceans?**

A: The tides are a fight between the Earth and the Moon. All water tends to flow towards the moon, because there is no water on the moon, and nature hates a vacuum. I forget where the sun joins in this fight.

**Q: What happens to your body as you age?**

A: When you get old, so do your bowels and you get intercontinental.

**Q: Name a major disease associated with cigarettes.**

A: Premature death.

**Q: What does the word "benign" mean?**

A: Benign is what you will be after you be eight.

**Q: What happens to a boy when he reaches puberty?**

A: He says good-bye to his boyhood and looks forward to his adultery.

*(Continued from page 23)*

central theme in the book "we should mould our lives in such a manner, that we accumulate an abundance of unconditional love, humility, compassion forgiveness and selfless service". He gives potent voice to the "Why me?" syndrome in adversity and offers cogent argument as to why it is so. This is powerful stuff.

He draws on references of prior works by eminent persons, some of whom I personally would take with a pinch of salt, but in the field of scholastic debate, that is par for the course. The greatest merit in the book is its simplicity devoid of jargon that many writers use to prop up weak arguments. It is written in easy to read prose, sometimes with wit. I am sure our readers will find this a fascinating adventure into a complex subject that may divide people holding the same religious faith. But one must be mindful that this is after all the 21<sup>st</sup> century, and people are more enlightened and treat differing points of view with respect.

To quote Robert Frost: "We dance 'round in a ring and suppose, but the truth sits in the middle and knows."

*Sumane Iyer  
January 2008*



## **First Life Member of the Ceylon Society of Australia**

By an amendment to the constitution at the last AGM, the Society has recognised the exemplary service Hugh Karunanayake has rendered since inception of CSA ten years ago and elected him **Life Member**. Aided by his charming soul mate Tulsi, Hugh continues his good work albeit as a 'back bencher'. His counsel is sought rather too often for his comfort we are sure, (Hugh, you set a too high a bar that we ordinary mortals have to clear).

Hugh has a BA in Sociology from University of Ceylon -Peradeniya and has worked in both public and private sectors in Sri Lanka. He held the position of Deputy Director Save the Children (USA) in Sri Lanka, served in the Marga Institute and had an assignment in Bhutan before arrival in Australia in 1984. He retired as Manager Community Services - Hornsby Shire Council few years back and cares for his showpiece cactus garden. His second love after Tulsi, are his two sons, daughter and their families. His three grandchildren are the apples of his eyes and has no hesitation of jumping on a plane to endure a 24 hour journey to London where two of them live, or to do a dash to Melbourne to visit the third one. Rest of the time, he spends amongst his vast collection of antiquarian books, maps, postcards and other memorabilia on Sri Lanka. He is an invaluable resource in the production of this Journal. His prodigious knowledge of people, events and history of Sri Lanka has added that extra lustre to many an article authored by our other members. The wealth of knowledge he has acquired is only overshadowed by his desire to share this with others.

## A CORDIAL WELCOME TO NEW MEMBERS



**Eleric Walter Adrian De La Zilwa**

*Brighton, QLD*

**Ernest & Nalini MacIntyre**

*Ryde NSW*

**Dr Mrs Shyamala & Amarjit Paul**

*Toorak VIC*

**Chandra Sandrasegara & Phillipa Affleck**

*Paddington NSW*

**Rienzie Rupesinghe**

*Monash, ACT*

**Frank Bertram & Sybil Marcus**

*Bentleigh East VIC*

**Nihal & Deepika Balasuriya**

*West Pennant Hills, NSW*

*...who have joined since publication of Journal # 40*

*...we also welcome following gift subscription recipients of four issues of **The Ceylankan** awarded by members:*

**Ananda Jayasinghe**

*Donvale VIC*

**Jean Van Reyk**

*Belivah QLD*

## REMINDER MEMBERSHIP DUES

2007 calendar year subscriptions are now overdue and 2008 are due. Australian members may send personal cheque/ MO in favour of the Ceylon Society of Australia to Srikantha Nadarajah 50A -The Esplanade - Thornleigh NSW 2120, or arrange direct payment to the Society's account BSB 062-308 Acc# 1003 8725 at Commonwealth Bank. Overseas members are kindly reminded to send their remittances by Bank Draft in Australian currency or pay by using SWIFT Code CTBAAU2S. Personal cheques in foreign currency cannot be accepted. Those making direct payment to Bank are requested to inform the Treasurer by email where possible. Sri Lankan resident members have the option of paying in Rupees to local Treasurer. Please see contact details in adjacent panel.

### Annual subscriptions are:

All Members	AU\$ 30.00
Pensioners	AU\$ 20.00
Sri Lankan <u>resident members</u>	SL Rs 3,000

If in doubt of your subscription status please contact Nada on

Int + 61 2 9980 1701

E-mail: [vsnadarajah@bigpond.com](mailto:vsnadarajah@bigpond.com)

## OFFICE BEARERS OF THE CEYLON SOCIETY OF AUSTRALIA

### President:

Sunil de Silva

Int + 61 2 9983 1116

[sunsil@smartchat.net.au](mailto:sunsil@smartchat.net.au)

### Vice President:

Dr Srilal Fernando

Int + 61 3 9809 1004

[srilalf@bigpond.net.au](mailto:srilalf@bigpond.net.au)

### Secretary:

Doug Jones

Int + 61 2 9894 7449

[decjay20@aapt.net.au](mailto:decjay20@aapt.net.au)

### Treasurer:

Srikantha Nadarajah

Int + 61 2 9980 1701

50A The Esplanade Thornleigh NSW 2120

[vsnadarajah@bigpond.com](mailto:vsnadarajah@bigpond.com)

### Public Relations:

Harry de Sayrah

Mobile: 0415 402 724

[harolddes@hotmail.com](mailto:harolddes@hotmail.com)

### Publications:

Mike Udabage

Int + 61 2 9879 7728

[mike\\_udabage@itechne.com](mailto:mike_udabage@itechne.com)

### Editor/Librarian:

Sumane Iyer

Int + 61 2 9456 4737

48 Helvetia Avenue Berowra NSW 2081

[sumane@pacific.net.au](mailto:sumane@pacific.net.au)

### Social Convener:

Chandra Senaratne

Int + 61 2 9872 6826

[charboyd@iprimus.com.au](mailto:charboyd@iprimus.com.au)

### Melbourne Chapter Convener:

Shelagh Goonewardene

Int + 61 3 9808 4962

[devika@netstra.com.au](mailto:devika@netstra.com.au)

### Colombo Chapter

#### Convener/Local President

Somasiri Devendra

2737180 - [somasiri@edisrilanka.com](mailto:somasiri@edisrilanka.com)

#### Local Hon. Secretary

Daya Wickramatunga

2786783 - [dawick@sltnet.lk](mailto:dawick@sltnet.lk)

#### Local Hon. Treasurer

Mike Udabage

Mob: 0775 412 420 - [mike\\_udabage@itechne.com](mailto:mike_udabage@itechne.com)

329/124 Lake Road - Dehiwala

Ph: 273 1914

### Ex officio:

Dr Robert Sourjah

Int + 61 2 9622 2469

[robertsourjah@yahoo.com](mailto:robertsourjah@yahoo.com)

### Hugh Karunanayake

#### Life Member

Int + 61 2 9980 2494

[hkaru@optusnet.com.au](mailto:hkaru@optusnet.com.au)

Tony Peries

Int + 61 2 9674 7515

[srini.p@bigpond.com](mailto:srini.p@bigpond.com)

Ron Murrell

Int + 61 2 9484 4070

[ronchris@tpg.com.au](mailto:ronchris@tpg.com.au)

Thiru Arumugam

Int+ 61 2 8850 4798

[thiru.aru@gmail.com](mailto:thiru.aru@gmail.com)



## NEXT SYDNEY MEETING

Sunday 17 February 6.30 p.m

**Neville Turner**

Past President of Australian Society for Sports History  
will speak on

**"The History, Literature and culture of cricket in Sri Lanka – a foreigner's point of view".**

Followed by

**Chandra Senaratne**

on

**Where did we come from? Why are we here? Where do we go from here?**

Venue: Thornleigh Community Centre  
Cnr Pennant Hills Road & Phyllis Avenue  
Thornleigh NSW 2121

Info: Sunil 02 9983 1116-Doug 02 9894 7449

## NEXT MELBOURNE MEETING

Sunday the 24th February at 5.30 pm

**Dr R K ( Rajpal) de Silva**

will speak on

**The Origins of Sri Lankans**

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

Info: Shelagh -03 9808 4962 Or Srilal -03 9809 1004

## NEXT COLOMBO MEETING

Saturday 1st March at 5.30 pm.

Formal launch of the book

**Yesterday is Another Country**

by

**Somasiri Devendra**

President Colombo Chapter

Followed by a meeting of minds over cheese 'n' wine.

Venue: "Gandhara" Gallery - 28, Stratford Avenue  
Kirulapona Colombo 6

Info: Somasiri - 2737180 - Mike - 0775412420  
Daya - 2786783

## How to become a member of the Ceylon Society of Australia

Contact Treasurer Srikantha Nadarajah  
50A The Esplanade Thornleigh NSW 2120  
Ph: 02 9980 1701

E-mail: [vsnadarajah@bigpond.com](mailto:vsnadarajah@bigpond.com)  
and request an application form

### In search of speakers

The committee would welcome nominations of knowledgeable and academic persons to speak at our regular meetings, in Sydney, Melbourne and Colombo. You may have friends, relations who live in or visit Australia./Sri Lanka Our calendar for the year is - April/May, September/October and November/December. Dates can be arranged to suit availability of eminent speakers. Please contact :

**In Sydney** -President :Sunil de Silva

Ph: 02 9983 1116 E-mail: [sunsil@smartchat.net.au](mailto:sunsil@smartchat.net.au)

**In Melbourne** - Vice President Srilal Fernando  
03 9809 1004 or E-mail: [srilalf@bigpond.net.au](mailto:srilalf@bigpond.net.au)

**In Colombo** - Local President Somasiri Devendra  
2737180 - [somasiri@edisrilanka.com](mailto:somasiri@edisrilanka.com)

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

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10th Anniversary celebrations after the AGM—1. Sunil de Silva makes his acceptance speech after being elected the 3rd President of CSA  
 2. H E Mr Balapatabendi PC proposes a toast to CSA - 3. Master of Ceremonies Chandra Senaratne gets the party going. 4. Very encouraging to see the most senior member Mervyn Silva at 92 going on 16, the rest they say is history and the Grande Finale at 5 as Hyacinth Jones leads the sing-along to wind up a very enjoyable evening.

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P O Box 425 Raymond Terrace NSW 2322