

# The Ceylanikaum



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of AUSTRALIA

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*Keeping Our Heritage Alive*

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## How to become a Member of the CSA

Who can become a member of the CSA? Any person with a common interest relating to the historical heritage of Ceylon/Sri Lanka and wishes to share that interest with like-minded people worldwide is welcome to seek membership. Please contact any of the following for further details:

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Annual subscription is A\$30  
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*From the Editor...*

**T**here is a story in this issue that gripped my attention. It was a fascinating piece of writing, smooth, flowing like the Mahaveli a few days after a brief bout of rain somewhere around the Kandyan hills.

It is another great example of the fruits of Joe Simpson's facile pen that has graced the pages of the journal many a time past. So our readers are very familiar with Joe's writings and, no doubt, will enjoy delving into *Born Under a Dark Star*. It is our hope that Joe will keep stoking those creative fires and serve us with more of the same.

Tony Peries satisfies his insatiable passion for the outdoors when he takes his readers on a nostalgic journey to beguiling Bagura in the east of the Yala Game Sanctuary, floods notwithstanding. Don't miss the ride.

By way of a contrast, Stefan D'Silva pictorially records the drama of Yala in the grip of a drought in his regular Nature Notes.

In his own inimitable way, Vama Vamadevan follows in the steps of the visionary Blessed Joseph Vas' life in Sri Lanka during the Dutch era.

Chulie de Silva introduces an interesting style in presenting her recipe for Ambul Thiyal in Meals Ammi Made.

In addition to the usual features, Bill Mackie concludes his story on the legacy of Lionel Wendt, Mahinda de Silva introduces his readers to the Renton family of planters in Sri Lanka while the book review highlights Sri Lankan Buses Past & Present.

No better way to round off than to flip to the Back Cover, only to discover that the erudite scribe The Rambler is, once more, sharing his vast knowledge, this time with a brief illustrated sketch Of Old Lighthouses in Colombo Fort.

Dig in and, by the way, keep those articles coming in - by the gigabyte!

### **Mohini Gunasekera made Member of the Order of Australia**

Long standing member of the Ceylon Society of Australia and well-known Sydney lawyer Ms Mohini Gunasekera was appointed Member of the Order of Australia at the Queen's Birthday Honours announced



• Ms Mohini  
Gunasekera AM

recently. This is a rare honour which has been awarded only to two other persons of Sri Lankan origin - Prof. Christie Weeramantry and Prof. Yasmine Gooneratne, both members of CSA.

Mohini has been recognised for her services to the Sri Lankan

community, to Buddhism through leadership and support of a range of organisations, and her contribution to inter-faith dialogue. She is currently the Trustee and Treasurer of the University Buddhist Education Foundation, and Chairperson of Trustees for four years. She established the Lankarama Education and School Building Trust Fund and the Lankarama Library Trust Fund. She was the inaugural President of the Federation of Australian Buddhist Councils for the first four years and for many years a lawyer practising on a *pro bono* basis for a range of community organisations.

Mohini Gunasekera contributed much to the drafting of the CSA's constitution during the early years.

The Ceylankan congratulates Ms Mohini Gunasekera on the great honour conferred on her.



## Our Readers Write

### *Researching Donald Friend*

I am researching the time that the Australian artist Donald Friend spent in Sri Lanka with Bevis Bawa and would appreciate any information/anecdotes/leads to further information that members of the Ceylon Society could provide to me. I have material on Donald via his extensive and salacious diary at the time. I am hoping for material from someone else who may have been friends with Bevis and/or Geoffrey Bawa around that time, or even Barbara Sansoni, all three of whom and Donald worked on hotel projects at the time. Any help would be most welcome. Could you please include this in the letters section of the next edition of the Journal.  
PAUL van REYK

### *Hugh Karunanayake replies:*

There are several books on the work of Friend including one by Gavin Fry who spoke on Friend at one of our earlier CSA meetings. The Curator of the Art Gallery of NSW Edmund Capon (don't know whether he is still there) would have a lot of information on Friend. The Art Gallery purchased from Geoffrey Bawa the pair of doors that Friend painted during his stay in Sri Lanka. Tim Drysdale, the son of Russel, lived with Friend in SL in *Brief* - Bevis Bawa's home and then went back to Australia where he committed suicide. His largest mural *The City of Galle* is in the Board Room of John Keels and it was brought to Sydney for the DF retrospective in the 80s. The other two notable murals were of Colombo and Trincomalee cities. The latter was recently acquired by a CSA member at an auction. If he agrees I can pass on his details as he has been researching Friend. The list of the many publications on Friend could be obtained by a google search. I think I have four or five of them. There is plenty of material out in the public domain on Donald's life in SL but many of the actors in the story would have passed on by now.

### *Parson's story*

I was interested to read Gillian Parson's story [*Bisset Treasure in The Ceylankan*] and would be glad to have her address, as I too have a "lost" great grandfather, Henry Lumsden Egan of Fernlands, Pussellawa, who came to the island

about 1874 but whose birthplace I can't find! I'd be pleased to have her address or phone number if she is agreeable.

Congratulations on an enjoyable magazine.  
GILLIAN BRANAGAN (introduced to your society by Tony Peries)

### *Read at one sitting*

Congratulations on the 50th issue which I received yesterday and immediately sat down and read through.  
SHELAGH GOONEWARDENE

### *Impressed!*

Yesterday we received the May issue of *The Ceylankan* and we are most impressed with its appearance and quality. More particularly we want to say we are very pleased with the two-page spread of our article on Lionel Wendt Mementoes - the layout of text and photos is nicely balanced and the photo of Lionel, Aunt Gladys, and Brian Easdale is excellent. We also liked the note 'Tony Recalls'. We did not realise that he is the reincarnation of "Biggles". Thank you both for all the help.



The article "A Planter's Wife" brought back many memories of life on Galaha Estate, riding my cousin Mary's donkey at Maskeliya and our cow at Galaha to supply fresh milk. The latter feature of some other estates prompted my mother, when attending dinner at a neighbouring estate and being offered a serve of roast fresh beef, to remark "What did the cow die of?". We have yet to read the other articles.  
BILL MACKIE

### *Your views are valuable!*

*Do you have a point of view to share with our readers? Can you shed some new light on a topic discussed? Is there anything you like or dislike published here and have something constructive to offer about it? Then express your opinion in the Letters column. Please keep them brief, no more than 400 words preferably. Letters may be edited because of length and/or content.*



# The Rentons of Middleton

*By Mahinda de Alwis*

Sometime in March 1988 when I was Superintendent of Logie Estate, Talawakelle, the British High Commission in Colombo communicated with me via the State Plantation Corporation about the impending visit of Timothy Renton then Minister of State in the Thatcher Cabinet. Mr Renton was to arrive in Sri Lanka to visit the Victoria Dam. The British Government was the principal source of foreign aid towards the construction of the Dam which was declared open in May 1985 by the British Prime Minister of the day Margaret Thatcher. The High Commissioner Mr David Gladstone told me that Mr Renton's grand uncle J. Vantosky Renton who once owned Middleton Estate, Talawakelle died in Ceylon in 1915 and was buried in a grave in Lindula and sought my assistance in locating it to enable Mr Renton to visit and pay his respects to his long departed forbear. Middleton Estate which was operated previously as a separate estate, was amalgamated as part of Logie Estate when estates were nationalised under stage 2 in 1975.

When inquiries were made from the workers, a senior retired worker informed me that a Mr Renton lived in Middleton bungalow and after his passing away was buried in the Lindula church graveyard. It was with some difficulty that I located the grave as the headstone was covered with overgrown weeds and the lettering almost obliterated. It was given a thorough clean-up and the area tidied for the distinguished visitor who drove up to the estate together with the High Commissioner in a cavalcade of vehicles. Mr Renton first visited the grave and lit a few candles and then proceeded to the bungalow. The Minister in Charge of the Mahaveli, Mr Gamini Dissanayake and his wife Srma also joined the party having flown from Colombo in a helicopter. The visit created

a lot of local interest, not the least because of the presence of the VIPs who later joined us for a sumptuous lunch at the estate bungalow catered by the Hill Club, Nuwara Eliya. It was a near tearful and poignant occasion for Timothy Renton who had apparently only heard of but



*J. H. Renton*

James H. Renton - pioneer tea planter and Ceylon's first tea Commissioner in Europe



• *Baron Renton lights a candle at the grave of his grand uncle Vantosky Renton in the Lindula churchyard.*

never known the estate owned jointly by his grandfather James H. Renton and grand uncle J.V. Renton for many years.

Middleton Estate, Talawakelle and Talankande Estate, Dimbula were originally planted in coffee by R.B. Downall, a pioneer coffee planter and Member of the Legislative Council. Mr Downall was a wealthy man who once owned Barnes Hall, the palatial house in Mount Lavinia, built by Governor Sir Edward Barnes and now the Mount Lavinia Hotel. The brothers James Henry Renton born September 4, 1852 and Alexander Vantosky Renton born May 10, 1854 arrived in Ceylon from Aberdeen in Scotland in 1875 and within a few years bought Middleton and Talankande Estates from Downall who also owned Dambattenne Estate



in Haputale, the latter to become famous as Sir Thomas Lipton's main tea estate. Mr Downall died on December 5, 1888 at the age of 45. The Rentons having bought the two coffee estates had them replanted with tea. While Vantosky Renton managed the estates, his brother James was based in Colombo and was one of the early tea buyers in the industry. Vantosky's life on a tea plantation may have been rather lonely and devoid of much social contact. Such were the rigours of a pioneering tea planter's life in those days. In



• (From left) High Commissioner David Gladstone, Baron Renton and Mahinda de Alwis outside the Logie bungalow.

1883, at the age of 29, he wrote an anthology of poems published by the Ceylon Observer Press in 1880 called "*Coffee blossoms and other poems*" a work which reflected his sensitivity to the environment around him. The August 1889 Edition of the *Ceylon Literary Register* carried a detailed description of his climb up the rock of Sigiriya, then a remarkable feat, the area being overgrown with forest and excavation work on the ancient site still to commence.

#### *Creditable role*

In 1900, the Planters Association appointed James Renton as Tea Commissioner for Ceylon Tea in Europe, a market yet to be fully acquainted with Ceylon Tea. Renton was given a sum of £5000 to be spent on raising the profile of Ceylon Tea throughout Europe. He was the pioneer Ceylon Tea Propagandist in Europe and possibly the first such agent to be appointed. He acquitted himself creditably in this role.

As a result tea exports from Ceylon to Europe rose by about 300% over a period of six years from 1899 to 1906 and this laid the

foundation for a new age of prosperity not only for Ceylon Tea but for Ceylon as a country whose economy was dominated by the tea industry.

James also had, in the meantime, made some judicious investments in rubber companies in Malaya and was able to oversee his estates in Ceylon from his residences in Bedford and Knightsbridge in England, having decided to return to England with his family in 1902, mainly to educate their children. Vantosky, the younger of the two brothers, who continued to live in Ceylon died in Lindula in 1915 at the age of 61, 40 years of which were spent in the island. He was buried in the Lindula churchyard. He was a bachelor at the time of his death. Five years later in 1920 James died having been run over by a horse drawn taxi in London, at the age of 68. The estates in Ceylon passed on to new owners a few years later.

James Renton married Louise Sophia Brander who travelled from Germany to marry him at Holy Trinity Church, Nuwara Eliya on November 25, 1889. They had four sons Gordon, Noel, J.W.H. and Ronnie all born in Ceylon, but educated in England. All four sons enrolled in the British Army for active service in World War I. Noel studied at Harrow Public School, joined the Army and was on active service in WW I and died in action on July 30, 1915. The youngest J.W.H. (possibly James Jr) was also killed in action a year later. The tragic loss of two sons in consecutive years would have had a devastating effect on James and Louise. Of the other two sons, Frederick was twice wounded in action in France. Ronnie, who was lieutenant in the 11th Hussars, saw little action at the start but his regiment was involved in driving the Germans back towards the Rhine near the end of the war. Ronnie lost his first wife at childbirth and remarried five years later and was the father of two sons Jeremy and Timothy. Both sons were Etonians, Timothy showing early signs of leadership as Head Boy and Head Prefect at Eton, the leading public school in England. Both completed their tertiary education at Oxford University like their lawyer father Ronnie. Timothy, who was born on May 28, 1932, joined the British Conservative Party and served as a Minister of State in the Margaret Thatcher and John Major Cabinets. In 1997 he was created a life peer as Baron Renton of Mount Harry. His

(Continued on Page 19)



An intrepid TONY PERIES recounts youthful days seeking nature while roughing out and at the same time...

## ...Lapping up delights of Yala's Bagura

I wonder how many of those who have an interest in Sri Lanka's wild life reserves recall that in the 1940s and even later in the 60s, the Department of Wild Life encouraged limited shooting in what used to be called "Intermediate Zones" (IZ) adjoining the Yala Wild Life Sanctuary: the section of Yala accessed from the Tissamarama Road had such an IZ around Palatupana and another at Galge, reached by crossing the Menik Ganga at Kataragama.

The cream of the resorts was in Bagura (Yala East) reached through Arugam Bay/Panama (pronounced Paa-na-ma) along the track to Kumuna, via Okande. In the late 40s, this place was legendary both as a beauty spot and a place where wild life of all sorts abounded. The late Aloy H. Perera made some excellent films on behalf of the Shell Company Film Unit, "Jungle Themes" being one of them. I think it was in this film that there was a segment covering a baby elephant which had fallen into a quite steep-sided rock pool near Bagura from which its mother could not extricate it. Aloy and his companions built a brushwood ramp to help the little animal out, all captured on film. Other legendary "jungle men" like Dr.R.L. Spittel and R.S.V. Poulter also spoke of this remarkable spot.

Back in those days Jeeps and Land Rovers were rare and most of those intending to camp at Bagura used carts from Panama. Aloy Perera would drive his Ford V8 up to Okanda in the dry season and once encountered a semi-conscious man named Garuwa from Kumuna who had been badly savaged by a bear being carried out on a litter. He was taken to Batticaloa Hospital by Aloy and survived. With Aloy, at that time, was Lynn Andrado whose family was well known in Hambantota. Lynn's brother Everard was at school with me and I had stayed at their home in Hambantota from where we went out daily to shoot duck in the season which commenced on November 1. We had often been out with Lynn at night in the jungle off Gonnoruwa where game was plentiful.

Lynn was a surveyor who often lived under canvas and had visited Bagura several times so he was happy to lead an expedition there proposed by a cousin of mine, Dr. Lance Fernando. Lance and a friend of his, Jeff Felix, had stayed at the Arugam Bay resthouse a couple of times and driven from there to Panama where the lack of a road discouraged further progress.

Panama in those days was quite remote without even a bakery or a kadai (corner shop) to supply a reasonable meal. It did have a school, post office and a sort of dispensary /cottage hospital with an apothecary in charge. The villagers were mostly paddy growers. Pottuvil was therefore the "last outpost of civilisation" where one could purchase petrol and fresh



• *The Bagura campsite. Tents were customarily used in two sections, with an outer section which fitted over the inner making the interior totally weatherproof.*

vegetables. Not long ago, reading a book about the famous volcano, Krakatoa, near Java, I found the eruption of 1883 which totally blew up the volcano and caused a major tsumani, led to one casualty at Panama, in Sri Lanka, where a woman crossing a field was drowned.

Entry to the IZs had to be booked well in advance and the first "slot" in November was keenly sought after as April-October was "close season" when no shooting was allowed. The game, as a result, was well rested. My recollection was that two other IZs adjoined



Bagura and so by booking all three, one could ensure privacy. We managed a booking for November, 1953, for when Lance got the loan of a jeep which was, necessarily left-hand drive ex-U.S. Army, there being practically no "private" new jeeps then save with the Gal Oya Board. Our jeep was an old workhorse with the usual rock like springs but totally reliable. In later years Aloy Perera lent us his new civilian model with winch, altogether more comfortable. Lynn was then also able to get Survey Department tents on loan: which were customarily used in two sections, an inner and an outer which fitted over the inner making the interior totally weatherproof. These tents were made of a very heavy canvas, so with the necessary poles etc, weighed a lot. Lance was able to borrow his mother's Humber Hawk, which accommodated a complete tent plus some luggage which just about flattened the rear springs! The jeep took everything else.

"Everything else" covered a lot—bedding, food items like eggs (carefully wrapped!) and other essentials; camp furniture, lamps, cooking utensils, and our personal luggage. Planning was very exact to ensure all the goods did not exceed vehicle capacity and we had to remember a puncture repair kit in case the spare needed to be repaired.

The North East monsoon rains that year were early, heavy and prolonged when Lynn, Lance, Jeff, Everard and I set out, to the extent that the Arugam Bay ferry had stopped operating as the water level on the Panama side was well above the landing ramp. A small payment persuaded the ferryman to take the



• *Wading the causeway near Panama village.*

jeep and us across but we had to drive the jeep off the ferry's ramp on the other side into about

two feet of water, then up the steep, muddy shore. Between that point and Panama lay two causeways, one very deep and fast flowing; the other, near Panama village, extremely wide, but a little easier to cross in a flood. The first of these was impassable that day. We spent the night in the verandah of a school and reached Panama the next day where we engaged two carts to take all our belongings to Bagura, the road being impassable though carts with human pushers could just about get through. The jeep was left in



• *As the road was impassable, only carts with human pushers could just get through to take belongings to Bagura.*

a school at Panama. From there to Okanda is ten miles and Bagura another five. Lynn knew Peter Jayawardene, the Ranger at Okanda, who told us the Bagura Oya was crossable to the camp site. We finally got there late in the afternoon: we had with us the mandatory tracker from Okanda, the young and enthusiastic Galapatti, who brought his bicycle (!) as well as Lynn's own tracker Endoris, from Hambantota, and the former's survey labourer, Gunadasa, a more than adequate camp cook. Endoris was known to the Andrado family over decades - he was a carter who owned several carts/bulls which he hired out regularly. Besides, he was an experienced *shikari* (tracker) who could track animals, gut and skin them. He was also an amusing character with a way about him. On our first trip he was soon driving one of our hired carts while the owner walked beside it, raptly listening to Endoris's chatter. Lynn and his



camp followers had our tents up in no time while the rest of us stood about looking helpful.

Bagura is really an idyllic spot as the *aara* (small stream) flows into a lagoon, thence into the sea, though a sand bar builds up at the mouth in dry weather. At the far end of the lagoon are wooded sand dunes which slope down to a narrow shelving beach. Herds of deer and wild boar come to feed and drink in the evening though they often stay out but in the shade, visibly, in the hotter hours. Bagura is a very big flood plain and on one of our trips we had to cut the sand bar, after which the flooded plain drained within a couple of hours. Peter Jayawardene was with us as he was a keen fisherman and said that large sea fish went into a feeding frenzy in the hours after the bar was cut and could be easily caught. We could indeed see large fish but on that occasion they took no bait of any kind and the only fish we captured we found trapped in a pool.

As will be obvious from my remarks, Lynn's knowledge, his helpers and tents were invaluable. His father, Patrick, had been a sportsman in his day who often accompanied the famous rogue elephant shooter, Father Wickremasinghe, the Roman Catholic parish priest of Hambantota. Lynn too had been shooting with Fr Wicks (as he was known) and by the time I got to know Lynn, he was sometimes called in to dispose of rogue elephants. Single elephants or very small herds often devastated crops like paddy, leading villagers to drive them off with ancient muzzle loaders, causing wounds which made the animal dangerous, liable to attack on sight. I was with Lynn, as was Dennis Dirckze, one of our Melbourne members, when he shot a rogue in April 1952, which had killed one or two villagers at Bundala: he used a heavy (I think .450) rifle which finished the elephant with one shot.

I must admit unashamedly that our trips in those times were primarily for shooting, which had not become politically incorrect as yet and was to a degree, encouraged by the Department of Wild Life as a means of culling herds of deer in particular. In places like Bagura game abounded and was hunted mostly by those who kept to the rules, which were strictly enforced anyway. Entrants to the IZs were given permits to kill a very small number of animals. The shooters of one generation become the ardent

conservationists of the next, as was the case with Aloy Perera.

The camp ground at Bagura was under some very large shady trees, by a drinking water well and with the *aara* on one side. In dry weather, that could be forded at a sandy shallow



• *Keeping keen eyes on the wild life.*

spot little more than ankle deep. Freshwater crocodiles lived in the *aara* and could be seen basking on the lagoon shores in hotter hours. We bathed in the *aara* and never heard of crocodile attacks. We shot a crocodile and ate its tail, once, finding it quite a palatable white meat not unlike prawns. A crocodile has widely distributed nerve ganglions so the flesh can twitch disconcertingly for some hours after death! Bird life abounded with a variety of waders seen and on one or two visits we shot gargeny duck and sometimes an occasional snipe or jungle fowl. Fresh meat for the "pot" was never a problem but camping for a week, as we did, meant fresh vegetables ran out, though we stocked up at the last possible point, generally Pottuvil as even Panama. (15 miles anyway) had little to offer.

Having only the one 4-wheel drive vehicle meant the tent etc. had to be taken in and out by cart which delayed the homeward journey until the carts reached Panama necessitating a night at Arugam Bay. After 1954, we were able to get a second 4WD which speeded up the journey. As it was, we used the inner tent for sleeping and the outer separately slung for eating and as a "lounge". Lynn's man Gunadasa



produced amazing meals from a couple of pots and a frying pan, balanced on three stones. In our several trips to Bagura I recollect only one passerby going to Kumana but the mail carrier from Kumana went by regularly on his weekly walk to and from Panama, always stopping for a meal and a chat. He was barefooted and carried no weapon.

Bagura and its environs are fairly open country with the forest dotted by *pelessas* (open spaces) often with a central pool where animals drink night and morning. In 1953, the area looked particularly attractive, very green after the rains and with fingers of water extending out from the central lagoon into depressions but drying out quickly. We usually went out at daybreak and again by about 4.30 p.m. in two groups, each with a weapon. All animals were shot with a rifle, ensuring a clean kill but we carried shotguns and a 375 magnum or other heavy rifle in case a buffalo or elephant attacked. Thankfully that never happened. On that first trip there was a lone, obstreperous buffalo which regularly pawed the ground and made little rushes towards us. Lynn would not let us even fire a shot over it but put it to flight by running at it with the tracker's open umbrella, yelling at the top of his voice! I have never met anyone so devoid of fear.

In early trips to Bagura we drove to Kumana each time and though it was an attractive village high on the bank of the Kumbukkan Oya, it was also poverty stricken with only two men in employment, the mail courier and the Irrigation Department gauge reader who kept a daily record of the river level. The strict natural reserve (which the villagers called *maha thahanang kalay*) started on the far bank and ran to the Menik Ganga. The villagers grew a few vegetables for their use, caught fish and doubtless did a bit of poaching with illegal "trap" guns.

The beach at Bagura was attractive, partly because it was deserted though large herds of sambhar were often seen - we shot one on that first trip and it was like shoe leather. The best eating was wild boar, with smallish young animals being most desirable. We found large old boar often worm infested. Hare were rarely seen. Elephants were common, mostly solitary animals within shooting range, that left us alone or sometimes small herds of two or three, never menacing. Just about any time of day, animals

within shooting range could be seen from our tents and bird life was plentiful. Snakes too were rare and I recall seeing only two, not including a python we accidentally ran over on the road to Panama.

I think we made about eight trips to Bagura between 1953 and 1965, the last being with families, to a Department of Wild Life visitors bungalow at Okande built in the 60s. We didn't see much game then and the 1953 and 1954 trips remain etched in my memory, for both an unspoiled landscape and an abundance of wild life. In the late 50s, some land on the Panama-Okande track was under illegal paddy cultivation making tough going even for four wheel drives. Illicit timber felling on the far edges of the IZs also contributed to a decline in the attraction of the area. The bridge which replaced the Arugam Bay ferry was destroyed by the tsunami but later replaced. Arugam Bay itself now has some tourist accomodation and a retired planter living there takes visitors on game watching trips: I wonder who goes to Bagura nowadays?



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## Webmaster wanted

Members may be aware the CSA has its own website and is now looking for a member with the necessary aptitude and know-how to undertake the role as its webmaster. The position will be voluntary and a labour of love. The person we are seeking will need to have his/her own PC, software and internet service. Some knowledge of community type websites, familiarity with HTML and an ability to do simple graphics will be appreciated. It is essential to set aside sufficient time for a firm commitment to maintain and periodically update the CSA website.

This is an ideal opportunity for the appointee to interact closely with a wide membership of Sri Lankan scholars, intellectuals and others from across the globe.

If you have the dedication and the drive to undertake this important role please email the editor and include a brief resume.

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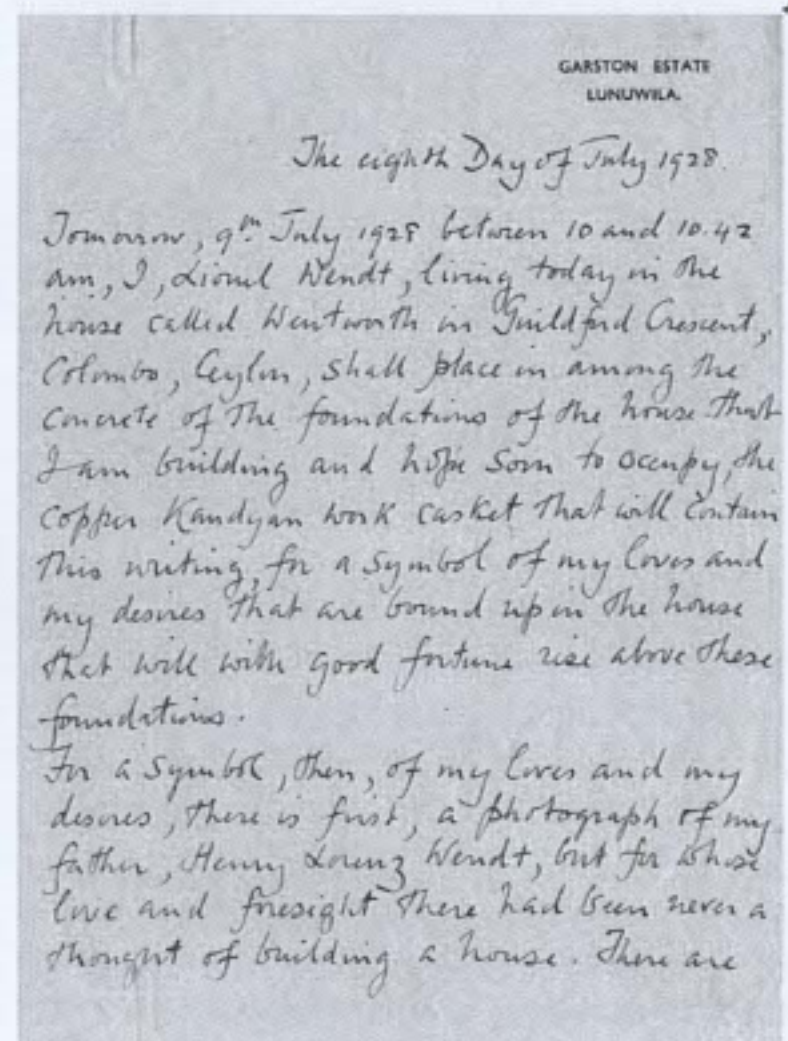
**BILL MACKEY** concludes his article on the memorabilia bequeathed by Sri Lanka's much revered artist as he goes on the

## Lookout for Lionel Wendt's buried treasure

In Number 50 of this Journal the article "Mementoes of Lionel Wendt" provided brief information about memorabilia of Lionel Wendt's talents in music and photography. These memorabilia and the subject of this article were inherited by me from my aunt Gladys Forbes of Colombo. This note reveals details about Lionel's placement of a letter and small personal treasures in a copper casket that he buried in the concrete foundations of the new house built in 1928 to be his home named *Alborado* at 18 Guildford Crescent, Colombo. The message and contents of the casket expressed Lionel's special wish that beauty and peace flourish in the new house.

Beauty, especially in its aural and visual forms, was a passion of Lionel Wendt. This passion is manifest in his perfectionist's approach to performing piano music, in his writing on art, literature and music, and in his creative aspirations in photography. Burying the casket containing the letter and some of his chosen treasures suggests a pagan rite and sacrifice by Lionel to secure beautiful outcomes on this piece of land.

A copy of the letter in the casket, which was written in Lionel's hand and given to Gladys



*Page 1*

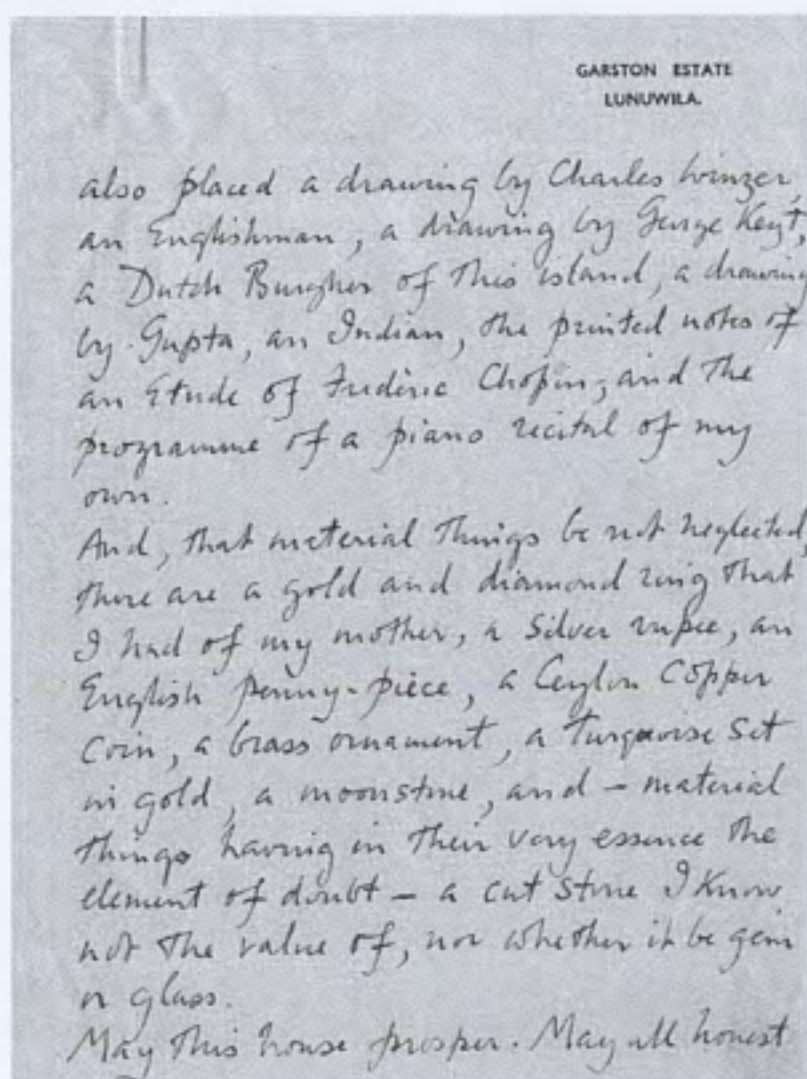
Forbes, is reproduced in the accompanying illustration. My own research into the fate of the casket and its contents is hampered by time and distance from the site of *Alborado*'s demolition.



*The Lionel Wendt Memorial Art Centre in Guildford Crescent in Colombo is the symbol and testimony that Lionel's dreams for the prosperity of the Arts in Sri Lanka have been and will continue to be fulfilled.*

*-Photograph by Stefan D'Silva*





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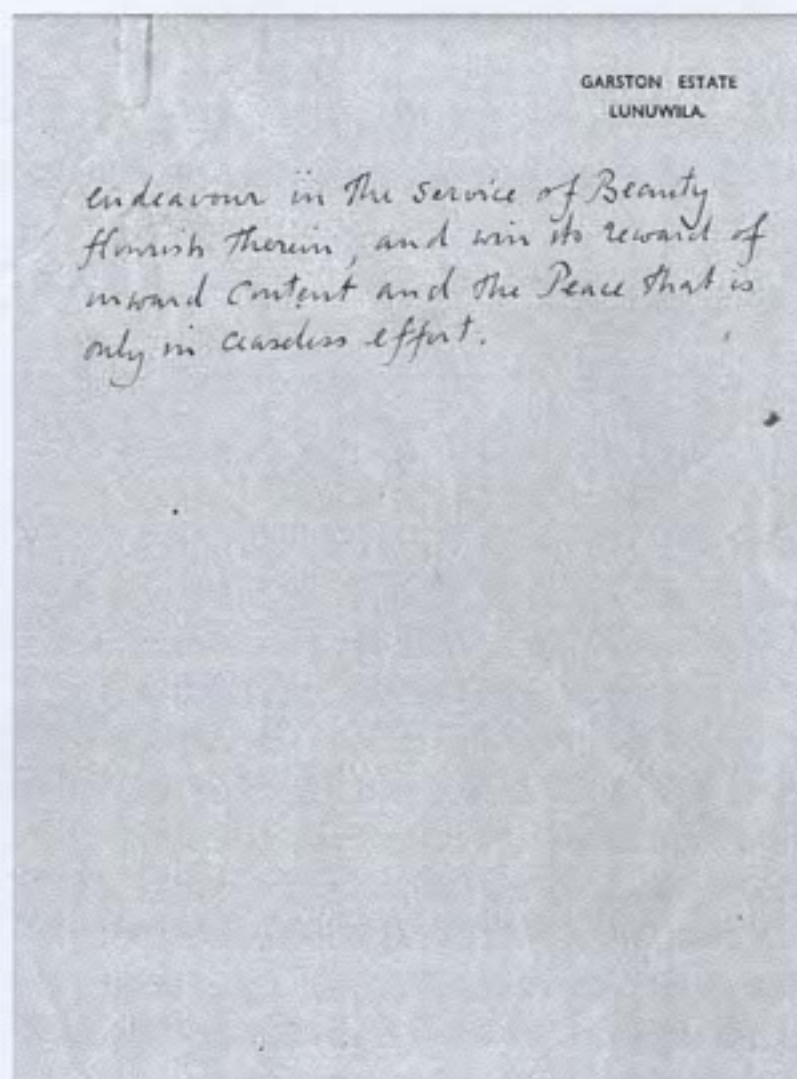
(Above) The copy of Lionel Wendt's three-page letter of July 1928 which accompanied other symbols of his loves and desires in a casket buried in the concrete of the foundations of his new house Alborado.

Consequently I seek to know has the casket been retrieved and safely retained, was it purloined and lost to posterity, or does it still reside under the Memorial Centre to continue its ritual function to fulfil Lionel's wishes stated thus:

**"May this house prosper. May all honest endeavour in the service of Beauty flourish therein, and win the reward of inward content and the Peace that is only in ceaseless effort."**

The building of the Lionel Wendt Memorial Art Centre and its popular usage today leave no doubt that Lionel's wishes have been and will continue to be fulfilled.

• (Right) The gravestone of Lionel's parents Henry Lorenz and Amybelle.



Page 3



• The gravestone of Lionel Wendt at the Kanatte Cemetery.







# Blessed Joseph Vaz of Sri Lanka

**VAMA VAMADEVAN follows  
on the tracks of a Saint in  
the making**

**I**t is just over 500 years since the introduction of Catholicism by the Portuguese to Sri Lanka. The Portuguese arrived in the island in 1505 under the command of Lorenzo Azavedo from Goa in Western South India where they already had a foothold. Close on his heels came the Catholic priests who built Churches and schools and converted some of the inhabitants of the Maritime Provinces to Catholicism. Goa was a flourishing Portuguese colony in India and a staunch Catholic stronghold.

Joseph was the son of a Brahmin convert to Catholicism. He was born on April 21, 1651 in the village of Konkari, in Goa. He grew up in piety and displayed, at a very early age, a singular love for the poor and the downtrodden. Soon he showed signs of a divine call to the priesthood. He studied at the Goa College of St Paul run by the Jesuits. Goa, even at that time, was a city of churches, convents and colleges, but also had its quota of places of worldly frivolities and idle amusements. But Joseph devoted all his time and energy to acquire the virtues and knowledge required to becoming a good priest. At the age of 20, he received the minor orders and at 24 was made a Deacon. He was ordained a priest in 1676 when he was 25. However, he was not given a clerical charge, and this made him turn to Ceylon (now Sri Lanka) to serve the Lord.

Because of his early days in Goa, a Catholic pocket in India, the Goanese claim him as their saint as well. But Sri Lanka was the stage on which he played an important role and lived the most number of years as a priest and died there as well. Hence Sri Lanka has a better claim.

There is no record of how he got the call of the Lord to work in Sri Lanka. At the time of his arrival, the Catholics in Sri Lanka were being persecuted and condemned by the Dutch, who succeeded the Portuguese as the next colonial power

in 1658. The Dutch did not want the religious bond between the Catholics and the Portuguese to hinder their hold on the colony. They introduced the death penalty on any Catholic priest who dared enter the island and try to convert anybody to Catholicism. They compelled the Catholics to attend the Dutch Church for their spiritual needs. Without the guidance of their priests, the Catholics were left on their own to sustain their faith.

It was in these dreadful circumstances that Fr. Joseph Vaz decided to come to Sri Lanka and to minister to the Catholics. In March 1686 he made his way to Sri Lanka, overland through Malabar, Travancore and Tuticorin and then crossed over by boat via the Palk Straits to Sri Lanka. The boat journey turned out to be disastrous. It ran into a tempest of exceptional fury and the ship that set sail for an anticipated three-day trip, dragged on for two weeks. When the ship left, it had victuals for three days on which they had to subsist for two weeks. A servant, John, accompanied him. They disguised themselves as coolies desiring to enter Jaffna looking for work. Apart from his clothing he carried a sacred vessel for Mass. The ship ultimately landed in Mannar, 100 miles from Jaffna, the intended place of disembarking.

To the surprise of Fr Joseph Vaz, Mannar had a large Catholic population who were at the receiving end of oppression from not only the Dutch but also from the Hindu King of Jaffna. It was so bad that the isle of Mannar was called the 'isle of Martyrs' because 600 converts - men, women and children preferred to lay down their lives rather than give up their faith. Fr Vaz and John begged on the streets, door to door, and when they gained sufficient strength set off to Jaffna. On arrival in Jaffna, in 1687, the two were struck down by dysentery and spent time as invalids. On recovery they started begging again, house to house, trying to find out who were Catholics and



who were not. Fr Vaz soon found a devout man who was prepared to give him shelter and help him say the first Mass on June 23, 1687.

### *Regarded as quixotic*

The few priests he spoke to and discussed matters of persecution with regarded Fr Vaz as quixotic. The hierarchy gave him a posting as Vicar of Kanara (in present day Kannadam) as a diversionary ploy. His three-year ministry in Kanara was not without controversy. The suffering he underwent served as training for the arduous task lying ahead in Sri Lanka. To ensure his efforts would not end with him, he founded the Oratory of Goa dedicated to work in Sri Lanka.

The conversions to Catholicism and the secret celebration of mass soon reached the Dutch Governor who was on the look out for him at that time as he considered a Catholic priest - an outlaw - with a price on his head. The Catholics of Jaffna conducted Joseph Vaz and John out of Jaffna to the safety of the Vanni and from there to Puttalam, the chief Port of the Kandyan Kingdom.

He arrived in Kandy in August 1692 and sometime later, after initial difficulties, won the goodwill of the Kandyan Kings and engaged in inter-religious discussions and fostered religious harmony. With this advantage he was able to move about freely and rekindle the Catholic faith in the island. The major part of his work was in the Kandyan Provinces where he served for 19 years until his death. At first his intentions were suspect and he was clapped into gaol. At this time the city was in the grip of a severe drought. It happened that the King asked him whether his God was the true God, as he claimed, if so, that Joseph should pray to his God to implore for rain. Fr Vaz set up an altar in a public square, knelt down before it and started praying before a large gathering. Soon rain clouds gathered and there was a downpour.

Fr Vaz is credited with having saved the Catholic Church from extinction in Sri Lanka. Recognising this, Pope John Paul II on his last visit to Australia in 1995 broke journey in Sri Lanka on January 21 and beatified Fr Joseph Vaz, the first to be so elevated in Sri Lanka. This has increased the interest in the contribution of Joseph Vaz. The feast of Blessed Joseph Vaz, the apostle of Sri Lanka, is celebrated widely across the country. In the village of Ballaketuwa in the Badulla Diocese, a beautiful church has been dedicated to him.

Blessed Joseph Vaz was ahead of his time and appreciated the advantage of introducing

Oriental forms of worship, prayer and Catholic drama. By that time he was sufficiently versed in the language of the people and able to compose catechisms, summary of the doctrine and litanies in the local language that people understood. He initiated the performance of Passion plays and Catholic puppet shows, all of which survive to the present times. Being an oriental himself, he knew the importance of presenting the religion to suit the cultural traits of the people rather than transplanting it in its foreign form. He laid the foundation for an indigenous church that has survived to this day. When the Vatican Council II (1962-65) allowed the use of National Languages in the liturgy, Sri Lanka was ready for the transition. While he is credited with saving the Catholic Church in Sri Lanka from near extinction during the period of Dutch rule, he was also responsible for laying the foundation for an indigenous Catholic Church in the country. Fr Joseph Vaz died in Kandy on January 21, 1711 of fever and stroke. However, one of the baffling questions engaging the attention of researchers is to locate the grave and remains of Fr Joseph Vaz.

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2. Perera S.J. Fr.S.G: *Fr. Joseph Vaz - Apostle of Ceylon. (Galle)* 1953.

EDITOR'S NOTE: The 300th Anniversary of the death of Blessed Joseph Vaz falls on January 16, 2011. Strong moves are underway to foster the elevation to Sainthood of this visionary priest who singlehandedly revived a persecuted church in Sri Lanka.



## A Warm Welcome to New Members

Gehan and Judith Gunasekera, Enfield South,  
NSW Mrs Marie Kelly Camberwell, VIC 3124  
Ms Renukha Nugawela South Yarra, VIC 3141





Was he a born folk hero, a silver-tongued man of great ability and ingenuity or a demonic mischief-maker with a horrible twist in his whole moral constitution? In this most readable analysis, JOE SIMPSON charts the life and inexplicably convoluted ways of a legal mind of someone who may have become one of the finest legal luminaries Sri Lanka produced.

## *Born Under a Dark Star: The Rise and Strange Fall of Jaffna's Nicholas Gautier Gould*

"A man of consummate ability who held a commanding position in the North." – *Supreme Court Advocate J. R. Weinman, 1918.*

"A remarkable man...decidedly an intellectual freak...singularly gifted, but there was a twist in his moral constitution that ultimately placed him in the criminal dock...[he] had absolutely no sense of honour. He was wild and reckless in what he said, both in public and in private life, and his disregard of truth was phenomenal." – *Former Ceylon Supreme Court Justice Joseph Grenier, 1923.*

It was a typically hot afternoon on the Jaffna Peninsula and the Englishman Sir Edward Shepherd Creasy, Chief Justice of Ceylon, was far from being in the best of moods. A touch irascible at the best of times, albeit with a kindly heart behind the formidable facade, the scholarly Sir Edward was known for his periodic outbursts from the Bench. "Sit down, Sir. You are a beast!" he had once famously roared in court at "Vesuvius", a prolix Jaffna lawyer who had quite inadvertently offended him (the accused in the dock had panicked and taken to his heels). Even some first-rate Jaffna defence counsel had acquired the odd habit of suddenly going on leave when the "Chief" was about to arrive from Colombo on one of his elaborately-planned northern circuits, his approaching palanquin (for these were the days before the railways) escorted by relays of village drummers and torch-bearers, lest criminals or wild elephants hinder the judicial progress.

On this particular day in the 1860s, some time around noon, Justice had been tossed unceremoniously into the ditch when a wheel had flown off the Fiscal's coach conveying Sir Edward from Kankasanturai (KKS) to Jaffna. It

seemed inexplicable at the time. His Lordship's *obiter dicta* to the world generally and the coachman in particular, after picking himself up and dusting himself off, are fortunately (as one chronicler has aptly put it) known only to the recording angel. For quite some time after this unfortunate mishap no human help at all



Sir Edward Shepherd Creasy

was within sight, until – *mirabile dictu!* – a solitary carriage could be seen approaching in the distance across the dusty plain...

The Good Samaritan about to rescue Sir Edward, with such seeming fortuitousness, was none other than Nicholas Gautier Gould, a brilliant and enormously resourceful young Tamil defence lawyer notorious for his ruthless,



some said even unscrupulous, tactics against his legal opponents. In truth, alerted to a whisper among the Jaffna Bar that certain Supreme Court Judges held him in disfavour, the wily Gould had devised a scheme to confound his detractors. It had been a simple matter to persuade the Fiscal's coachman, one of his many admirers among the ordinary folk of Jaffna, to loosen one of the carriage wheels before the Chief Justice set off from KKS, where Gould himself had his country retreat. The upshot was that Advocate Gould was able to drive his eminent - if somewhat bedraggled - passenger all the way into Jaffna Fort, through the main streets of the town and past the windows of his rivals, so that word of his evident familiarity with the Chief Justice spread like wildfire and (or so it seemed) gave the lie to the baseless fabrications of his calumniators.

But, as the saying goes, "the pitcher went to the well once too often", and within a few short years Nicholas Gould's ascendant star had fallen into chaos and disaster, and he had lost both his promising legal career and his liberty. The few scattered fragments from the jigsaw that the passage of time has left behind for us to piece together reveal the story of someone of whom it can truly be said, that he was born under a dark star.

#### *1850s: a Jaffna student at the Colombo Academy*

Nicholas Gautier Gould first comes to our notice in the later 1850s as a schoolboy at the old Colombo Academy, a government institution that became Royal College in 1871. Dorothy Bartholomeusz, in "Ceylon in my time" (published in 1987) recalled that her father had attended the Academy during the principalship of the Reverend Dr Barcroft Boake, described in the Royal College website as a "forthright personality" but also "an excitable Irishman who took even well meant criticism as an attack on him personally". Boake ran the school as his personal fiefdom for almost 30 years until his retirement in 1870. One story Dorothy's father told her involved a very bold and clever boy by the name of Gould. One day a ripe fruit fell from the only mango tree in the Colombo Academy grounds and young Gould promptly picked it up and ate it, after having announced to an admiring audience of other boys: "Marriage has been declared between Gould's mouth and this mango - let he who has aught to say do so

now, or forever hold his peace." Now, eating mangoes from this tree was absolutely forbidden, supposedly for fear of dysentery. Mrs. Boake saw this all from an upstairs window, and reported back to her husband. Next day at morning



*Rev. Dr Barcroft Boake*

assembly Gould was called up to the platform and Rev. Boake produced a cane announcing, "Marriage has been declared between Gould's back and this cane - he who has aught to say should do so now, or forever hold his peace." As the cane swished

upwards through the air, Gould piped up: "Hold, Sir - my back objects!" The

bewhiskered and cassock-robed Rev. Boake fired back, "You are too clever, boy - either you will mount the Bench or you will end up in jail!" In one respect at least, as we will soon see, the Principal's impromptu prophecy was to prove all too accurate.

The "History of Royal College 1835 - 1985" by S.S. Perera (1986) tells us that "Nicholas Gould, a student from Jaffna, later a lawyer" was editor in 1860 of a short-lived Colombo Academy publication called the "Students' Magazine" that ran from July 1 until October of that same year. One wonders if he was also a member of the 22-strong committee of the Colombo Academy's first Debating Society, formed at the same time as the school magazine, and named "The Improvement Society". Other senior students assisting Gould with the new magazine were Christopher Brito and James de Alwis, both described as "well known scholars of the Academy". Brito became a redoubtable politician who once challenged the great Tamil leader Sir Ponnambalam Ramanathan for an elected seat on the old Legislative Council. James de Alwis may just possibly be the long-forgotten offspring, although there is no evidence for this,



from his father's little-known first marriage to a Miss de Livera. The 19th century Sinhalese lawyer, Legislative Councillor and renowned *litterateur* James D'Alwis (D'Alwis père) who died in 1878 had himself attended the Academy in the later 1830s, on a scholarship personally paid for by the Governor, Stewart Mackenzie. The Royal College history also mentions in passing that Gould later edited a newspaper called "The Jaffna Freeman". In fact, this soon-to-be notorious publication would be his very first project after leaving school.

### *1860s: a comet over Jaffna*

We next encounter Nicholas Gould back in Jaffna, having successfully survived Dr. Boake's, no-doubt, recurring ire at the Colombo Academy. In John H. Martyn's "Notes on Jaffna",



• *Justice Joseph Grenier*

published in 1923, we discover that Gould gained quite a reputation during the 1860s in the Northern Province as a "bewitching, adventurous and romantic character", who had worked his way up to "eminence and command" despite starting out as "poor and unpatronised".

The year after his abortive first foray into journalism at the Colombo Academy, he entered public life in 1861 as the editor of his very own newspaper, "The Jaffna Freeman". Retired Justice Joseph Grenier, who grew up in Jaffna around this time, remembered this organ as so "rabid in tone" and "anti-English in its object" that it was a wonder that the editor escaped horse-whipping more than once. Gould's main target was Jaffna officialdom, which he savaged mercilessly. All over Jaffna he held in his secret employ all manner of spies, including servants at official and even private dinners, who sent him back the juiciest gossip for his newspaper. At the first scent of personal risk, however, the bold Defender of Truth would go to ground and keep well out of sight until the danger was past.

In 1863 the fiendishly-clever young Nicholas Gould added another string to his bow

by passing out as an Advocate of the Supreme Court. As a contributor to John Martyn's "Notes" remarked of Gould after his fall in 1871, "by his wit, cunning and unrivalled excellence as a speaker, he became eminently popular and engrossed in the practice of our courts...[and] asserted himself as a friend of the people and won their affection". He rapidly came to the fore in his new profession, creating what one contemporary, Joseph Grenier, described as a "great stir" in Jaffna legal circles, but was also well known from very early on in his advocacy career for being "very unscrupulous in his methods of advocacy".

Justice Joseph Grenier, writing his memoirs towards the end of his life, described with barely-suppressed relish one particular incident from his youth in 1860s Jaffna, when the fearless journalist-cum-lawyer Nicholas Gould received a truly sound (and evidently well-deserved) thrashing at the hands of an enraged young Burgher in his 20s named Peter L. [Loos?], whose fiancée Gould had gratuitously insulted. Joseph Grenier and some others heard the commotion, and came running. While the bruised and battered Gould was carried home by two of his manservants, "weeping copiously and wailing piteously all the way to enlist the sympathy, no doubt, of his friends", a greatly excited Peter briefly told Grenier the story.

Next day, Peter was charged with assault in Police Court. Grenier attended the hearing before Police Magistrate Prideaux Selby, son of a well-known previous Queen's Advocate, Henry Collingwood Selby. Peter pleaded guilty and explained the extenuating circumstances. Gould's proctor demanded a prison sentence, on the ground that his injured client was "an Advocate of the Honourable the Supreme Court". Magistrate Selby smiled and fined Peter two pounds, throwing in for robust good measure the comment that he'd have done exactly the same thing, had he been put in the Defendant's place. The Burghers in court and outside on the verandah immediately gave vent to a rousing cheer and escorted Peter in triumph to his house. Peter married his fiancée a year or so later, and Joseph Grenier was his groomsman. In 1923 Justice Grenier was pleased to write that the bridegroom was still hale and hearty – at 83!

As already mentioned, though still in his 20s Nicholas Gould soon acquired a great reputation, albeit a mixed one, in the Jaffna



legal circles for his exceptionally formidable adversarial skills as a trial lawyer. One of his regular opponents in the Jaffna courts was Henry Mutukistna, the Deputy Queen's Advocate, a Chetty lawyer described by Justice Grenier as a "polished gentleman" – certainly not the sort of compliment deserved by Gould. Grenier recalled, as a youngster in the 1860s (he was born in 1852), watching the jury trial of a young Brahmin woman, represented by Gould, who had been charged with swearing a perjurious affidavit accusing Luke Kelly, the Police Magistrate at Chavakachcheri, of indecent assault upon her. Gould's brilliant defence won over the all-male Jaffna jury completely and even some six decades later Grenier remembered the punchline of his closing speech: "Convict my client, Gentlemen of the Jury, and you destroy the sanctity of your homes. Your wives and daughters may be subjected to the same kind of treatment, and if they came forward and invoked the aid of the law, they would find themselves in the same position as the prisoner."

The Judge was Christopher Temple, a member of the Supreme Court Bench since the mid-1850s, and by then Senior Puisne Justice under Sir Edward Creasy. Unfortunately Temple, known even in his judicial prime for his unusually poor capacity and inane remarks from the Bench, was by then far too elderly, deaf and feeble to give an effective charge to the jury, who promptly acquitted the accused woman without even leaving to deliberate. The delighted onlookers cheered the verdict, and a jubilant Jaffna crowd escorted Gould in triumph back to his town home. Never mind the facts, in their eyes justice had truly been done, for Kelly – denigrated by Grenier as a "half-wild young Irishman...[with a]...very evil reputation as a gay Lothario" – was intensely disliked by the deeply conservative inhabitants of the district over which he was supposed to administer the law.

### ***1871: The Brahmin Will Case***

By the early 1870s, for all his many detractors, Nicholas Gould enjoyed widespread popularity among the ordinary Tamil folk of Jaffna, who saw in him a kind of folk hero, forever attacking established authority and possessing what the "Notes on Jaffna" correspondent in 1871 called "the talismanic facility and ingenuity with which he invariably extricated [himself from] the difficulties he found himself in", due to

his bold and reckless ways. His record of trial successes in the Jaffna Courts was second to none, thanks not least to his highly persuasive manner with juries and his ruthless techniques. The former lawyer Sir Gerard Wijeyekoon, in his 1951 "Recollections", described Gould at his zenith as a "man of great ability, and wonderful resources", a "great fighter" who took on the many officials in the land, and an "eminent advocate commanding a very big practice in the North". Justice Grenier acknowledged that by 1871 he had the largest practice that any



• ***Sir Gerard  
Wijeyekoon***

Advocate ever had in Jaffna, and was popular among a "certain class of people". But Grenier also noted the one fundamental flaw in Gould's character, the fatal "twist in his moral constitution" which in 1871 was to bring this soaring Icarus tumbling down to earth in spectacular fashion: the man "had absolutely no

sense of honour, and his disregard of truth was phenomenal". In short, like his namesake Old Nick, he was a demonic mischief-maker.

The immediate cause of Gould's sensational dénouement was what Joseph Grenier described as his "stupid forgery of a Will in Jaffna"; the resulting "Brahmin Will Case" of 1871 held the rapt attention of just about every newspaper reader in Jaffna, and many beyond. The 19-year old Grenier attended each day of the high profile trial before the Chief Justice Sir Edward Creasy, Nicholas Gould's erstwhile fellow traveller. Richard Morgan, the great Queen's Advocate, prosecuted, while the indomitable Harry Dias (later Supreme Court Justice Sir Harry Dias) mounted a typically brilliant defence. Gould had earlier testified at a Jaffna civil hearing in favour of the challenged validity of a Brahmin's Will, which was then shown to be a forgery. Criminal charges were subsequently laid against Gould, along with at least two co-accused by the names of Ramalingam and "Supper". The trio was committed for trial in the Supreme Court, with Colombo as the venue because of concerns over the impossibility of a fair hearing in their native Jaffna.

Many who remained well-disposed towards Nicholas Gould expected a favorable outcome, so myriad were the successes that



had attended his previous trials – when he was not in the dock, himself. His silver tongue and powerful defence team proved to no avail when, well into the trial, the other two accused suddenly turned Queen's evidence, spilling the beans with what the "Notes on Jaffna" correspondent called "important admissions". On November 9, 1871 the jury convicted Nicholas Gautier Gould of forgery, and the Judge sent him down for five or six years with hard labour. It was said that even the normally-stern Chief Justice Creasy had a tremor in his voice as he sentenced the deviant Advocate, who had appeared before him so many times in Jaffna. For those who considered the headlong manner of his earlier meteoric rise to have been suicidal, as many had, their fears were now amply justified. The day after sentencing, Gould was brought before the Court in drab prison attire and formally disbarred from the practice of law. From now on he had "passed from public honour into public ignominy...after having occupied the highest independent position attainable by the Jaffna man in his own sphere", at least according to one contemporary.

We do not know how long Gould served of his stiff sentence, but according to Dorothy Bartholmeusz he went to India after his release. Unable to hit paydirt there, he devised a typically devious "Gould" ploy to try to grease his way back into Ceylon's professional class. He put his own obituary notice in the Ceylon papers, which triggered a flurry of articles about his cleverness. Gould promptly collected these and returned with them to Jaffna, cheekily demanding to be reinstated as a lawyer on the strength of such glowing eulogies. So far as we know, he failed utterly in this quest. Henceforth he would be forced to play the role of the proverbial camel without, rather than within, the tent.

A typical Nicholas Gould piece of mischief-making around the early 1880s, a few years after his release from prison, caused Leopold (Lep) Ludovici, the editor of the Colombo "Examiner", to be charged with criminal libel and when he entered a guilty plea, to be fined Rs. 1000 by Chief Justice Richard Cayley, one-time Private Secretary to Sir Edward Creasy. Cayley, a former Ceylon Attorney General, had a somewhat chilling touch as a Judge and was said to have made only one joke in his life, and that not on the Bench. The Judge's well-known lack of humour coupled with his bad health (which forced him to resign in 1882

after only three mostly forgettable years as Chief Justice) may have persuaded the editor to throw in the towel without risking a trial! What had in fact happened was that Ludovici had been gulled by the silver-tongued Gould into publishing what soon turned out to be thoroughly bogus "proofs" of bribery and corruption on the part of the highest official in the Northern Province, undoubtedly the long-serving Government Agent Sir William Twynam, whom Leonard Woolf knew in the early 1900s as an octogenarian in Jaffna. Once the storm had broken over the unsuspecting Ludovici's head, Gould simply took back his "proofs" and dropped out of sight. It would become an all-too-familiar pattern.

*(To be concluded)*

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### **The Rentons... from Page 6**

daughter "Polly" Renton, a celebrated film maker and renowned journalist, died tragically at the age of 40 years with her four-year old daughter Sita in a road accident in Kenya in June 2010. Polly and her brother Alex the

award winning journalist of *The Guardian* were doughty protagonists of the war against want and poverty.



The story of the Rentons in Ceylon gives credence to the pithy saying that "the whirligigs of time brings on its own revenges". James Renton arrived in Ceylon in the early 1880s as

a colonist seeking to make his fortune; by a strange quirk of fate he was followed over a hundred years later in 1987 by his grandson Timothy in a completely different role bringing development aid to the former colony!

Although years of secluded history have somewhat clouded the story of the Rentons and their pioneering work in Ceylon, there is little doubt that a tea garden in distant Sri Lanka holds a special place in the heart of Baron Renton of Mount Harry (above).  
(I wish to thank Mr Hugh Karunanayake for encouraging me to write this article for *The Ceylankan*)





Meals  
Ammi  
Made

## Ambul Thiyal

by Chulie de Silva

My mother's ambul thiyal was undoubtedly the best. The fact that the fish was brought straight from the boats no doubt helped but what else went to make it? One day I followed her, and noted down as she cooked one of her famous ambul thiyals – it's simplicity itself – fish + 3 main ingredients and – no garlic, cinnamon, or tamarind or onions...

1 kilo tuna (bala, atawallo in Sri Lanka)

Goraka (Gamboge) – about 5 pieces ground to a paste – should be the size of a large sized lime. (note: the goraka can be softened in hot water or microwaved for about 10 seconds).

Black Pepper – ground to the same size as the goraka. Chillie powder – about 2 full teaspoons. One sprig of curry leaves. Salt to taste.

### Preparation

In Sri Lanka, you wash the grinding stone and use the water to mix the ground ingredients into a paste. Anywhere else, I would say, rinse your blender out and use that liquid. Coat the fish well with the ground ingredients; add salt and the sprig of curry leaves. Arrange the fish in one

single layer in a clay pot (if available). Do not add extra water. The gravy at the start should be thick and check after 5 minutes to make sure the fish doesn't stick to the pan. The end result should be dark in colour and look as if the fish was baked in a black pepper sauce.

(In the olden days, the clay pot on the wood fire had another clay pot with burning coconut shells on top to make the fish cook evenly).

The goraka works as a natural preservative and the fact that garlic, onions etc. are not used means that this curry can be kept without spoiling in hot weather with no refrigeration required.

As it is a traditional must for most Sri Lankan meals, this can be served with boiled rice, milk rice, string hoppers, hoppers, roti, pittu and even the good old bread - *kade paan* or *roast paan*.

## Send us your recipes

Readers are invited to submit their favourite recipes for publication in this column. Preferably your recipes will be simple and easy to prepare. They must be of Sri Lankan origin and as this is a family-orientated column, we suggest that your recipes be of meals you learnt to prepare from your Amme' or Achchi.

So why wait? Send those mouth-watering recipes to the editor without delay.

## Of old light houses...

(Continued from back cover)

sailing vessels was signalled into the port. The structure could be clearly seen in 18th century illustrations of the Colombo harbour and its environs. It is believed that the lantern was installed on the building somewhere around 1837 to make it a lighthouse. It functioned as a lighthouse till the removal of its lantern in 1860 for placement on the new tower in Chatham Street. The structure of the old building was demolished around ten years later, together with the dismantling of the ramparts of the Fort which occurred between 1869 and 1871. Very few close-up images of the old lighthouse are available. We are thankful once again to Mr Palinda de Silva of Texas (from whose collection we have published several images of rare sketches in previous issues

of *The Ceylankan*) for the courtesy of two images that are published here. One is a sketch by an unknown artist and is taken from an album of sketches made in 1834-37 and compiled into an album by Lady Ann Wilmot Horton, wife of the Governor of Ceylon Sir Robert Wilmot Horton (1831-37). It shows the old lighthouse and the signalling station together with the rear section of Queen's House as it stood over 180 years ago. The second image is a photo by Slinn circa 1860 of the lighthouse after the removal of the lantern to its new home in the clock tower in Chatham Street. The third image in colour circa 1852 is a photograph by Frederick Fiebig, a photographer of German origin who visited Ceylon even before the official introduction of photography to the island. The Fiebig image shows the old lighthouse with its lantern in place.





## *Sri Lankan Buses Past and Present*

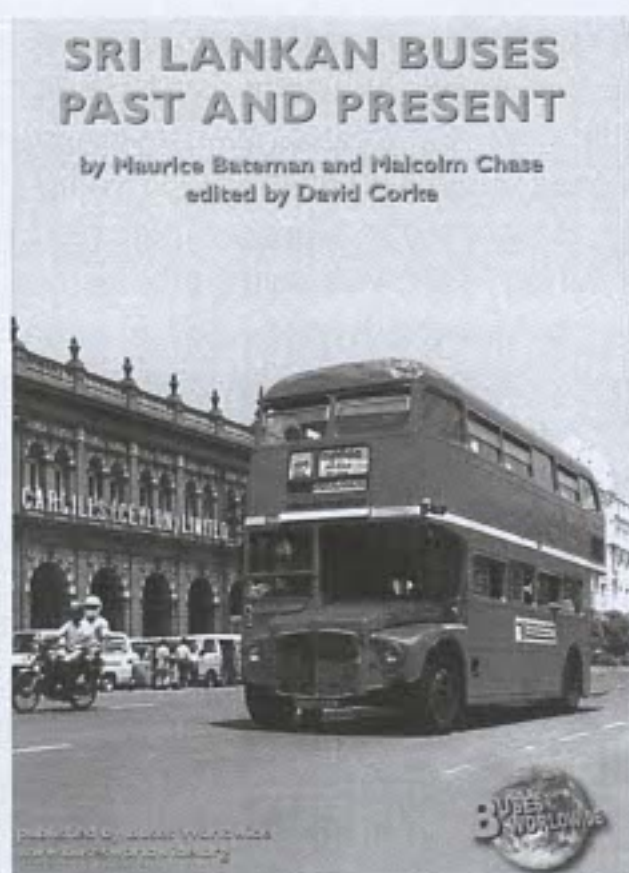
by Maurice Bateman & Malcolm Chase; edited  
by David Corke

*Published by Buses Worldwide, UK, 2010*

*196 pages; A5 size; profusely illustrated*

*£17 including p&p to Australia*

*(see [www.busesworldwide.org/slb.php](http://www.busesworldwide.org/slb.php) for UK &  
Europe prices & for ordering your copy).*



Almost without exception, everyone who has lived in Ceylon/Sri Lanka has experienced the travail of travel by bus in the Resplendent Isle. While buses may seem mundane, lacking the romance of railways, many foreign transport enthusiasts, mainly from Britain, find Sri Lankan buses utterly fascinating. Over several decades, hordes of bus buffs have been visiting the island on bus-spotting and photography tours, amassing vast amounts of information, images and video footage of the bone-shakers that we took for granted or barely tolerated for the sake of necessity.

Now, for the first time, a detailed history of bus transport in Ceylon/Sri Lanka has been published. Produced by the UK-based Buses Worldwide enthusiasts' group and titled *Sri Lankan Buses Past and Present*, this informative, picture-packed volume takes readers on a journey from the earliest bus services in Ceylon, through the 'glory days' of such private

operators as Sir Cyril de Zoysa's South Western Omnibus Company and others. An entire chapter is devoted to the Ebert Silva organisation, which survives and thrives as a successful tourist coach operator. Ceylon's trams and trolleybuses – now a hazy memory, even to older Lankans – also get their own chapter.

The nationalisation of private bus companies in 1958 to form the Ceylon Transport Board, and the ensuing period of monopolistic State-run bus operation to 1978, are covered in as much detail as are following chapters on government and private buses from 1979 to 2004; also the buses that were donated by overseas benefactors in 2005 for post-tsunami relief.

'Bus Ride Down Memory Lane' is a guest chapter written by Ceylon-born, Melbourne-resident magazine editor and transport historian Roger Thiedeman. It is a collection of personal reminiscences of bus travel in Ceylon from Roger, a member of The Ceylon Society of Australia, who was also instrumental in rewriting a few other chapters, while supplying additional information, pictures, and some captions to photographs.

Double-deckers, single-deckers, buses big, small, and everything in-between, they are all here. And so up-to-date is this book, it even features the 'topless' double-decker that recently began operating Colombo city tours for the Sri Lanka Tourism Development Authority in collaboration with Ebert Silva Holidays.

Even if buses bore you, the book's appeal surely lies in its superb collection of photographs. In colour and black-and-white, covering a broad spectrum of eras, they depict buses on the streets of Colombo, Kandy, Negombo, Galle, Jaffna, and many other parts of the island. Suffice it to say that the illustrations alone are worth the price of the publication.

So join the *polima*, board the *bus-eka* and *issarahata yanna*, reach for your purse – if it hasn't been pickpocketed in the crush – and shell out your shekels to the conductor for a copy. For anyone nostalgic about anything and everything to do with Sri Lanka, this bus book is just the ticket.

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### *Pardon the Pun!*

*Those who jump off a bridge in Paris  
are in Seine.*

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## Synopses of Meetings

Sydney May 23, 2010

CSA President Sunil de Silva said that the speakers required no introduction because they were CSA Members and known to most of the audience. The main business of the evening was two talks on the subject of *Nineteenth century American Missionaries in Jaffna, Ceylon: with special reference to Samuel Fisk Green*. The speakers were Thiru Arumugam and Ernest Macintyre. Thiru Arumugam traced the interest in America in overseas missionary work in the beginning of the 19th century leading to the formation of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions (ABCFM) in 1810. This was the first organisation of its type in America. They recruited and sent out missionaries and their first overseas mission station was started in Bombay in 1813. The second mission station, formed in 1816, was in Jaffna. This consisted of four Americans and their families. Two of the missionaries, James Richards and Edward Warren had been previously sent by the ABCFM to follow a course in medicine and surgery at the Dartmouth Medical School. The normal duration of medical courses at that time was three years but when they completed two years they had to leave for Jaffna and they were not fully qualified medical practitioners. In addition to their duties as preachers they set up small dispensaries in Vaddukoddai and Tellipallai. Unfortunately, both of them contracted tuberculosis and did not survive very long. Warren passed away in 1818 and Richards in 1822.

The next medical missionary sent out to Jaffna was John Scudder MD. He was a fully qualified medical practitioner and was in fact the first American to be sent out as a medical missionary to Asia. He arrived in Jaffna in 1820 with his family. He set up a small hospital and dispensary in Pandatheruppu. He trained two of his assistants in the practice of medicine. One of them left for employment in Colombo soon after he completed his training and the other died of typhoid. In 1833 the British Government decided to freely allow foreign missionaries to work in India and the ABCFM transferred Scudder to Madras in 1836. Four generations of Scudders worked as missionaries in India contributing over 1100 person-years of service.

Nathan Ward MD was the second fully qualified medical practitioner to be sent out to Jaffna by the ABCFM. He arrived in 1833. He set up a dispensary and a few beds for the treatment of in-patients. He was also a teacher in the Batticotta (i.e. Vaddukoddai) Seminary where he taught Medicine and Natural Philosophy. He trained about eight to ten men in the practice of medicine, the most notable of whom was Dr Gould who was described by an English Chaplain who was treated by him as equal in standard to a European Physician. In 1846 finding his health and his wife's health affected, Ward decided to return to America.

The next medical missionary to arrive was Samuel Fisk Green MD, who landed in Jaffna in 1847 and made the greatest contribution of all the medical missionaries who came in the 19th century. He worked in Manipay until 1857 when due to failing health (suspected tuberculosis) he returned to America. By 1862 he had recovered his health. He got married and returned to Jaffna in 1862 where he worked until he retired in 1873. His main achievements during his stay in Jaffna were as follows: • Studied the Tamil language in depth, sufficient to preach and write books in Tamil. • Established a hospital in Manipay which still exists and is known as the Green Memorial Hospital. At its peak it had a capacity of 400 beds. • Prepared glossaries of Tamil medical and scientific words, coining new words if none existed. This was a pioneering work in Ceylon and South India. • Translated or closely supervised the translation into Tamil and printing of eight major medical text books including Gray's Anatomy, a total of over 4500 pages of text. • Established Ceylon's first school of western medicine where ultimately 115 medical practitioners were trained, teaching early batches in English but later switching over to instruction in Tamil to avoid a brain drain.

Green finally returned to America in 1873 and there were no foreign medical missionaries in Jaffna until 1893 when two Canadian missionary doctors, Dr and Mrs Scott arrived. Mrs Scott was the first lady doctor to practise in Ceylon and female patients in Jaffna flocked to her for treatment. The 19th century ended on a high note with the opening by the American Mission of a new Women's and Children's Hospital in Inuvil in 1898 and the Manipay Hospital becoming very popular. Thiru Arumugam ended his talk by introducing



his recent 272-page hardback book with the same title as the talk.

The next speaker was the well-known playwright and dramatist Ernest Macintyre who proceeded to review Thiru's book. He said that his overview will be impressionistic in nature, meaning that it will suggest the effect or impression on him, rather than taking the usual path of a review. A worthwhile book is reading you while you are reading the book Ernest continued and pointed out that he began to see yesterday and today in Jaffna in conjunction. He mentioned that his family had a personal link with Dr Green because his great-grandfather Dr Charles Macintyre studied medicine in Green's school and that his wife Nalini's great-grandfather Dr William Paul was also taught by Dr Green. This made their daughter who is a medical Professor, a confluence of two streams of the efforts of Dr Green.

The choice of the Jaffna Peninsula as the operating base for the American Mission was deliberate. The first reason was that there were already copies of the Old and New Testaments in Tamil which had been translated by **Danish** missionaries in South India and the Americans would not have to spend time translating the Bible. The second reason was that they realised that sooner or later the British would allow unimpeded access for foreign missionaries to work in India and since the Americans would have acquired a knowledge of Tamil by that time they would find it easy to operate in South India.

The voluntary meeting of the Tamil population with western medical practitioners was a creative meeting of two different cultures in the pursuit of medicine. He quoted an example from the book where Dr Macintyre made a statement that there is a belief that if the soot at the bottom of the pot catches fire then a girl in the house has menstruated for the first time. The usual reaction of western colonisers was that the native culture and western culture were too far apart for meaningful communication and he quoted an example when Leonard Woolf was Assistant Government Agent in Hambantota and the local Headman said that the position of the planets at the time of birth of a female child would determine when she would have her first menstruation. Woolf's sneering reaction was typical of some 'clever' westerners, whereas in comparison, the American medical missionaries showed respect and understanding of how

local culture evolved. Dr Green's idea was that Christianity and westernisation should not be confused, one with the other, and that he would rather see Christian Hindus than Hindus Europeanised.

When Dr Green found that the medical practitioners whom he had trained were going off down south for more lucrative appointments in Government medical service he decided that the only way he could prevent this was by switching the medium of instruction to Tamil. This was a monumental task but he was able to handle it. The drift down south may not have happened if the Jaffna Peninsula had a large middle class and a thriving economy. All this may change now, it has to change. But what of the future of medical education in Jaffna? After Green's school closed down it took about a 100 years before the Medical Faculty of Jaffna University was established. Perhaps the way forward is through private universities and Jaffna College would be an excellent base for sponsorship by an American University.

Ernest concluded his talk by reading an extract from a letter written by Dr Charles Macintyre to his mother a few days before he died. It is implied by the letter that his father had already passed away and he was exhorting his mother, who was a Hindu, to seriously consider conversion to Christianity before it was too late. It would appear that the conversion of Charles by the American missionaries was a genuine conversion.

*- Thiru Arumugam*

**Melbourne- April 18, 2010**

The chairman Dr. Srilal Fernando introduced the speaker for the evening Mr. Premachandra Kumbukkage B.Arch. (Melbourne University), a retired Architect who has worked both in public and private sectors in Sri Lanka, including a number of major hotel projects in Colombo and outstations. His interests include visiting and photographing places of archaeological interest and reading, collecting books and material of relevance. The topic for the evening was **"From Dambadeniya to Yapahuwa, a presentation on art and architecture of the period"**.

The kingdom of Dambadeniya was situated in the present day Narammala local government area in the Kurunegala district and



was centred on a rock, 160m above sea level. Wijayabahu III who was in control of Vanni area selected Dambadeniya as his capital in 1232 and established the third kingdom of Sri Lanka after Anuradhapura and Polonnaruwa.

The Dambadeniya kingdom was ruled by four kings. Buwanakabahu I was the last king of Dambadeniya who ruled for 12 years up to 1284. Dambadeniya was abandoned as a royal capital around 1287 but the Wijayabahu clan continued their hold on power at Yapahuwa, Gampola, Dedigama and Kurunegala. The Sacred Tooth Relic and the Bowl Relic was brought to Dambadeniya by Wijayabahu III and that gave the sanction for Dambadeniya kings to be the rulers of the island. Wijayabahu III built 'Wijesundarama' at Dambadeniya. Parakramabahu III was supposed to have constructed the two storied Temple of The Tooth, which was restored during later times. Stone Mason's Rock ( or Waduwa Ketugala) with a flight of stone steps is located close by. The small museum at the premises houses items found in the area. According to Dr. S. Paranavitane, Dambadeniya rulers exercised power in the territories of Wattala, Kelaniya, Attanagalla and down south Totagamuwa and Devinuwara.

'Pujaweli', 'Saddarmaratanaveli', 'Chulawamsa', 'Pali Thupawamsa', were written by scholars of the time which followed a revival of literature, art and architecture in the 13th century. King Parakramabahu II an erudite scholar who was known as 'Kalikala Sahithya Savvadnar' composed "Kavsilumina".

In temple architecture in Dambadeniya, timber comprised the major building material compared to stone and brick at Anuradhapura and Polonnaruwa. Influence of foreign factors also contributed to these changes. Tampita Vihara and Chethiyagara were given preference during the Dambadeniya period which can be observed even today at Wijesundarama.

Gods 'Upulwan', 'Saman Boksai', 'Vibisena', Goddess 'Paththini' were worshipped on an equal footing with Bodhisatva Maitreya etc. Rulers of Dambadeniya seemed to have shown special patronage to gods 'Upulwan' and 'Saman'; since shrines for these deities were built within the kingdom at Aluthnuwara Devale Kegalle, Mahasaman Rathnapura and Upulwan Devale Devinuwara. The glamour of Dalada Perahara commenced from the times of Dambadeniya rulers.

The kingdom was shifted to Yapahuwa around 1287. Yapahuwa was selected by a leader called 'Subha'; hence the place known as 'Subhagiri' or 'Subhapabbtha'. The present name Yapahuwa is derived from 'Subhagiri'. The rock of Yapahuwa is situated about 4.5 km east of Maho railway station.

Parakramabahu II had to face Maga's forces in the North, but also Prince 'Chandrabhanu' who landed in Southern part of Sri Lanka with a Javanese army in 1247. It appeared that the Javanese Prince was not completely defeated for later he managed to lead an army towards Yapahuwa. 'Chandrabhanu's intention was to capture the Sacred Tooth Relic, but this time, however, he was defeated by Buwanakabahu and cousin Virabahu.

There appears to be some resemblance between the architecture of the Dambadeniya temples and that Sri Lanka's foremost architect Geoffrey Bawa's early work.

Sixty illustrative and colourful slides pertaining to Dambadeniya, Yapahuwa and Ratnapura and Padeniya were shown and explained. Further, large photos of Rathnapura Mahasaman Devale were also presented.

Well-known member Victor Melder and Prem Kumbukkage had books of relevance for display and sale.

- Dilhani Kumbukkage

## Colombo Chapter July 19, 2010

**Srilal Perera, Mechanical Engineer (BSc) presented the Thala Sastra of the Kandyan drum music for a better understanding and appreciation of Kandyan drum music** at the Ceylon Society of Australia Colombo chapter meeting. He introduced the classification of drum music with demonstrations accompanied by Ajith Perera on drums and Venuri Perera on cymbals.

The classification of this music ranges from popular **simple single beat** (*Sulu Thani Thitha* is made up of two timing digits called *Mathra*) to classical area where it combines with either **Median single beat** (*Medium Thani Thitha* made up of three timing units called *Mathra*) or with **Great single beat** (*Maha Thani Thitha* made up of four timing units called *Mathra*) or the combination of Median and Great. Symbolic representation of Single Beats: simple \*\*



median \*\*\*

great \*\*\*\*

### Double Beats

simple/median \*\*/\*\*\*

simple/great \*\*/\*\*\*\*

median/great \*\*\*/\*\*\*\*

These timings are divided by a pair of cymbals and the drummer fills the bars

**Symbolic representation** with cymbals incorporated with a [O] for open cymbal and [C] for closed cymbal.

### Single Beats

simple O\* Example Hanuma Wannama  
{Dance of Hanuman}

median O\*\* Example Wairodi Wannama  
{Dance of cat's eye }

great O\*\*\* Example Gajaga Wannama  
{Dance of elephant}

### Double Beats

simple/median C\*/O\*\*

simple/great C\*/O\*\*\* Example Sewla  
Wannama {Cockeral}

median/great C\*\*/O\*\*\* Example Nayadi  
Wannama {Cobra}

### Triple Beat

Simple/simple/median C\*/C\*/O\*\* Mayura  
Wannama {Dance of the Peacock}

Many more of them could be joined to form

**Multiple Beats** to repeat as periods .

C\*/C\*/C\*/C\*\*\*/O\*\*\* The auspicious dance  
Mangalam.

The Kandyan Drum Music is produced by the 4 basic sounds *Thath, Jith, Thon, Nang* and their derivatives . The sounds thus produced in an orderly sequence is the drum language which the drummer and dancer both memorise but has no meaning. Of the four basic sounds, the sound *Nang* is very much a characteristic of the Kandyan Drum. When performing , the drummers pair themselves where half of them play the drum stanza with the *Nang* sound coinciding with the top dead centre of the cymbal sound and the other half of players lagging just behind the top dead centre play the complementary stanza while innovating within the beat limits .

After a vigorous dance , a culminating stanza called the *Adawva* is played with a reduced tempo *Vilamba laya* , where the dancer is expected strictly to interpret the drum language in the dance . At such times neither the dancer nor the drummer is allowed to innovate and the drummers all play the identical stanza.

The singing , music and dancing ( nachha, geetha, vaditha) trio is one of the renunciation items of the 8 precepts in the preaching of Lord Buddha. Thus survival of this art needed it to be a part of rituals and religious ceremonies. Only King Narendrasingha (1701-1739) the playboy king of Kundasale gave the green light for dances to be performed for the viewing pleasure of humans and in addition, he introduced dancing girls to his court

Ms. Venuri Perera also recited a verse to the C\*\*/O\*\*\*double beat, in Sinhala written by a young girl of King Narendrasinghe's harem. In her lament she says she was plucked from the safe haven of a village as nubile lass with "kekulu" (flower buds of breasts) to be introduced to the passions and pleasures on the inner court of the King. In the verse she pines and yearns for the King Narendrasingha and says :  
"Oh! if thou the powerful King Narendrasinghe not come tonight; Who can I set eyes on to soothe these wanton breasts of mine?"

- Sirilal Perera

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### YOU JUST CAN'T BEAT 'EM!

One top recruitment company in Sydney fields some highly complex questions to test candidates.

Up to a few weeks ago these included a couple of catch questions – the kind that could not be answered.

You proved you had brains by not answering them. But then comes along this Sri Lankan graduate who answers them both, much to the horror of the in house psychologist. Here are the questions and answers.

"How long is a piece of string?"

"A piece of string" said the bright lad from Sri Lanka "is twice the distance between the centre and either end"

"How far can a dog run into the woods?"

"A dog can run only half way into the woods , after that he is running out of the woods"

The resident psychologist was sacked and the Sri Lankan lad was hired.





## APPRECIATIONS

### Patrick Williams

As the sun quietly set on the life of my Pa, Patrick Williams, I sat down and asked myself how I would best remember him, and why. As his grandson, I am not fully versed in all that happened in his long and fulfilling life. The stories I've heard about Pa, especially in the last few months, is to me like opening a favourite book, only to discover a chapter I had yet to read. But to my mind these stories don't hold as much weight, rather, my memories are of some smaller moments that made up his grand life.

In the ten years that we shared our home, Pa naturally became a constituent link in our family chain. Our lives had become his life, and there was no greater joy for him than to partake in our daily experiences. In this time, we were each firmly impressed by his great learning, spirit and faith.

The full presence of my grandpa was truly brought to bear during these last few months,



albeit, we didn't have many deep and meaningful conversations. What we did talk about, however, was sport – any sport. A pall of emptiness tries to creep upon me now that our talks are no longer... but I remember, I remember them very well.

Pa was a self-effacing man of calm reserve, but one whose presence was apparent to all; veiled but distinct, with a boldness that somehow retained its shroud of mystery. None more so is this evident than in his 25-year stretch as chief editor of the 'Old Aloysian News-Mag'. As *avant-garde*, his efforts spawned a thrice-distributed magazine that went all around the world, not even terminal illness could dampen his ardour for finishing his final issue. His knack for journalism also saw him make contributions to the Julian's Journal, and his personage appeared in numerous reputable papers, most notably the Herald Sun! A decorated student and sportsman in his own right, one needs only to pore over the annals of the St Aloysius College in Galle, Sri Lanka, to learn of his triumphs. But being the man he was, Pa never sought a glimmer of recognition and often played down his influence with modesty

and charm; a personality that inspired people from all walks of life, from different countries and even those of each generation. That's right, even generation Y.

To us at home, the one thing that we will always remember about Pa is worked deep into the fabric of our very existence. Simply put, my grandpa made the best and most mouth-watering pancakes I have ever had! We would roll up this crepe-like dish, break it into pieces and dip it into curry. It may not sound all that ground-breaking, but it's just like the great poet Charles Baudelaire wrote: "A multitude of small delights constitutes happiness". Had it not been for Pa, and had he not spared some of his time once a fortnight, I would have never been afforded this experience that I have relished from boyhood. Pa has touched our lives in myriad ways, but it is these special memories, these little acts of his, that mean more than that for which he is celebrated and known.

We all have cause to be sad, but so too can we take comfort in his memory and in his peace. Pa has left a lesson for us all to observe. He has left us with a great example of how to live. To do honour to the memory of this great man is to be like him, for he was emphatically aware of the gift that is life. The fact that he lived for 92 years is a testament to his rare and sound insight, and our lives would be given all the more depth should we follow his lead. It is as Confucius said: "When we see men of worth, we should think of equalling them; when we see men of a contrary character, we should turn inwards and examine ourselves." You see, there is reason that all things are as they are, for we need people like Pa to elicit our full humanity. Pa, I am hardly equal to the task, but I hope to mirror your example and identify with your journey...as I make my way through mine.

### Dr Chris Raffel

Dr O.C. (Chris) Raffel, who passed away on March 30, emigrated to Australia in 1975 but there must be still hundreds of people in Colombo who will remember and mourn his death as the most devoted of doctors and perhaps even a small number will recall, at least by name and reputation, his father, Dr E.L. (Lawrie) Raffel, who founded the dispensary and surgery in Wellawatte where Chris himself presided for over 20 years.



When he arrived in Sydney, his qualities of dedication to his patients, even at the sacrifice of his own leisure time, quickly distinguished him from the run of general practitioners and his



practice there expanded rapidly. The Eastwood area in which he had settled became a popular one for Sri Lankan migrants and I remember him chuckling to discover that many of his new patients, having forgotten or never heard of the Burgher community, were happily amazed to hear this light-skinned man enquiring about their symptoms in fluent Sinhalese or Tamil.

A small number of people will mourn the loss of an incomparable friend, who radiated a steady warmth rather than a brilliant glare. These qualities perfectly complimented the different ones of his wife Carmel that resulted in their both providing a setting for pleasure and good fellowship which will forever be in the minds of those privileged to enjoy it.

I have no doubt that it was his response to their qualities that inspired the late Geoffrey Bawa, one of their closest friends, to design for them a house of great beauty in which music and the visual arts enhanced the loving kindness that enveloped all who crossed its threshold.

In Australia they had no Bawa at their disposal, but Carmel revealed a genius for creating beauty in uncompromising situations, while Chris acquired new skills such as lawn mowing, tree pruning and eventually cooking. Their human qualities glowed as warmly south of the equator as previously in the north.

Chris had a family feeling which made him surrogate father to the children of his brother Allen and his cousin Lorenz, both of whom died young. They too will cherish his memory, as will his three children Adam, Suhanya and Lahiru and four grandchildren. They know they had a most remarkable forebear.

- RUBIN MANTRA

### Dr Upali de Tissera

Dr Upali de Tissera a member of CSA for the past six years passed away after a valiant battle with cancer on June 23, 2010. Upali, who was 65 years old at the time of his death, was resident in Sydney for the past two decades and

was a well-known personality. He was a family medical practitioner highly regarded for his care and commitment to the welfare of his patients.

He was also a dedicated social worker who was involved in a variety of community service activities especially in relation to Buddhist religious work.

The following is an excerpt from the eulogy made at the funeral by John Cheah from the Aloka Meditation Centre.

Dr Upali has been a key member of the Australian Buddhist Mission (ABM) serving as Vice President for six years from 1987 to 1994 and as President from April 1999 to September 2006. His participation in the Committee has spanned two critical phases in ABM and Aloka's history.



During his tenure, all the activities of ABM were carried out very peacefully and harmoniously. Under his leadership together with the guidance of Venerable Mahinda and Sister Sumitra, the ABM groomed the younger generation to carry on the good work started by the pioneers of Aloka. As a doctor, he personally looked after the health and wellbeing of Ven. Mahinda and Sister Sumitra as well as all the residents of Aloka with care and compassion.

Dr Tissera's illness may not have been known to many people because he wanted to remain quiet so as to be able to meditate and practise. He leaves behind his wife Jayanthi, son Chaminda and daughter Samantha.

- HUGH KARUNANAYAKE

### Dr Edward Schokman

I came to know Edward when I started work in Kandy in 1957. Edward was in private practice with Dr C.D.L Fernando. After a



few years Edward set up a practice of his own and was a very popular doctor. He was also a very good cook and come Christmas time he would get up **Broeder** and other Dutch cuisine to entertain his friends. My family and I never missed these occasions, in later years sometimes driving all the way

(Continued on Page 30)



## BOOKSHOP & WEB RESOURCES

This is a regular column for the benefit of members (& others) who author books or have books, maps & other collectibles and would like the Society sell these material on their behalf. No charges apply to members, **but donations are encouraged from all using this service.** Regrettably, items can be listed only in three (3) consecutive issues. Please contact the editor for further details.

### RARE CEYLON BOOKS for SALE

**An Account of the Interior of Ceylon** By John Davy Tisara Prakasayo Edition (1969) A\$50.00  
**Seven Years in Ceylon** By Leitch Sisters (1890). Stories of mission life in Jaffna & Ceylon. A\$100.00  
**Sir William Gregory** By B.Bastiampillai (1968) Life & times of Govenor. Tisara Public A\$ 35.00  
**Eight Years in Ceylon** By Samuel W. Baker Tisara Publication. (1966) A\$ 30.00  
**Hundred Years of Ceylon Tea** By D.M.Forrest First Edition (1967) 51 Illustrations A\$ 100.00  
 Contact: e-mail: vama.vamadevan@gmail.com  
 Phone (02) 9825 1542 Write to: 3 Collie Court, Wattle Grove, NSW 2173

### BOOKS on SRI LANKAN ART, ARCHITECTURE and ARCHAEOLOGY

**Archaeology of Tissamaharama** by Henry Parker, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edn, 1984, 96 pp., hard cover, publisher – Academy of Sri Lankan Culture, price A\$ 10.00 +P&H  
**The History of Irrigation and Agricultural colonization in Ceylon** by RL Brohier, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edn, 66 pp., hard cover, 1998, publisher – Academy of Sri Lankan Culture, price A\$ 10.00 +P&H  
**Art of Isurumuniya** by Chandra Wikramagamage, 2004, 46 pp., 30 colour plates, 2 black & white plates, soft cover, Publisher – Academy of Sri Lankan Culture, price A\$ 15.00 +P&H  
**Tantric Buddhism & Art of Galvihara** by Chandra Wikramagamage, 2009, 90 pp, 52 colour plates, hard cover, publisher – Academy of Sri Lankan Culture, price A\$ 30.00 +P&H  
**Architectural Remains Anuradhapura, Sri Lanka** by JG Smither, revised edition by Chandra Wikramagamage, 1993, 103 pp., 67 black & white plates containing 49 drawings and 15 photographs and a map of Anuradhapura, hard cover, publisher – Academy of Sri Lankan

Culture, price AU\$ 85.00 +P&H  
 Copies available in Australia from P. Kumbukkage.  
 email : mathn@bigpond.com

**Nineteenth century American Medical Missionaries in Jaffna, Ceylon: with special reference to Samuel Fisk Green** by Thiru Arumugam. 260 pp, hardback, December 2009, ISBN 9780646520902. Price A\$30, postage A\$10 within Australia, A\$20 worldwide. For details contact the author at (02) 8850 4798 or email: thiru.aru@gmail.com or visit the book's website at: www.thiruarumugam.com

**Musings & Meanderings** by Derrick Mendis SJ Publisher Carl Fernando, "Orient" 7 Mosque Road, Dehiwela. Printed by Channel Link (PVT) Ltd. ISBN 978-955-96636-1-4 Price \$15 (including postage in Australia) obtainable from Michael Berman (02) 9416 7779 Email: MBerman@bigpond.net.au Price in Sri Lanka Rs. 750 Copies from the author at 53/7 Gregory's Road, Colombo 7 Phone +94 11677207

**Graveyards of Ceylon Colombo Vol. I** by Eileen Hewson.

Collection of memorials (about 775) from surveys and written sources plus some biographical details of those who died in the service of the Crown. Kabristan Archives 2008 98 pp PB Price £10.50 post UK £1 Europe £2 Overseas £4 ISBN 978-1906276-17-1

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Collection of memorials approx 750 and 761 burial records. Including Kurunegala and Gampola and war graves. Kabristan Archives 2010 123 pp PB Price £10.50 post UK £1 Europe £2 Overseas £3 ISBN 978-1906276-34-8

(Continued on Page 30)





## *Yala in Drought*



September 2009 saw Yala National Park in the grip of a severe drought. The normally lush Buttuwa Wewa was reduced to a mere pond. The animal activity around the valuable, available water source presented an unfolding drama to any observer. Traditional predator and prey drank from the same waterhole under a merciless sun. Elephants, visibly affected and in poor condition due to the lack of fodder, trooped into the waterhole and chased away crocodiles that infested every metre of the shores. Watching the elephants 'clear' a safe bathing area for the calf in their midst was drama in itself. Well over 50 crocodiles were littered around the waterhole and any 'island' in the water was a mass of crocodile bodies. The lack of an abundance of water also evidenced a low variety of birdlife. I was informed that most of the birds had 'migrated' to Bundala and other areas where waterholes and their supporting life forms provided sustenance for the birds. The landscape was brown, dusty and stark. However, the lack of underbrush gave good visibility of smaller mammal and leopard. Old, smelly carcasses provided ideal photo opportunities as animals visited the rotting carcasses. Yala in drought exhibited a rugged beauty of its own – one that is not commonly seen.

The good news is; when I visited Yala in January and May 2010 the Park was as green and lush as ever. Nature's cycle had been restored.



*(Top) Two crocodiles and two deer share the same waterhole. Prey and predator have to call a 'truce' to avail themselves of the life giving water.*



*(Above) An elephant drives away a crocodile before a calf is allowed into the water to bathe.*

*(Top left) An Elephant reaching up high for the only available green vegetation. Nothing but thorns and dry twigs are left at lower levels.*

*(Left) A Painted Stork and a Grey Heron surrounded by several crocodiles. The birds seem unconcerned as they step among the reptiles.*



## CSA Annual Dinner

One date you must set aside on your calendar is Sunday November 28. It's the night of the CSA's traditional dinner & carol singing. It is a fun, family-orientated evening when you all join in the sing-along. From past experience, it is a night to remember! So please organise your tables from now. The venue is the Thornleigh Community Centre, corner Central & Phyllis Avenues (off Pennant Hills Road) Thornleigh. For details: Chandra Senaratne on 9872 6826.

### JOURNAL REPRINTS

Reprints and some back issues of the Journal are available in limited quantities. The cost to members is \$7.50 per copy. Non-members pay \$10.00 per issue. This does not include postage and handling. P&H within Australia is \$5.00; Asia/Pacific \$10.00; rest of the world \$15.00 per package up to 5 issues.

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### BOOKSHOP & WEB RESOURCES

*(Continued from page 28)*

#### Protestant Marriages Nuwara Eliya Ceylon by Eileen Hewson

Register of names (about 1000) from records in Holy Trinity Church including Tamils, Burghers, Sinhalese and Europeans. Kabristan Archives 2009 42 pp PB Price £5.00 post UK £1 Europe £2. Overseas £3.50 ISBN 978-1906276-26-3 Order from [sales@kabristan.org.uk](mailto:sales@kabristan.org.uk) or by post from Kabristan Archives 19 Foxleigh Grove, Wem, Shropshire SY4 5BS Tel: 00 44 1939234061 Pay by Paypal or credit card.

#### Websites worth a visit

[www.ceylonsociety.com.au](http://www.ceylonsociety.com.au)

[www.alluringsrilanka.com](http://www.alluringsrilanka.com)

[www.walkthetalk.com](http://www.walkthetalk.com)

[www.sellipi.com/srilanka](http://www.sellipi.com/srilanka)

[www.lankalibrary.com](http://www.lankalibrary.com)

[www.gic.gov.lk](http://www.gic.gov.lk)

#### *Pardon the Pun!*

*A man's home is his castle, in a manor  
of speaking.*

•

*Dijon vu - the same mustard as before.*

### *(APPRECIATIONS - from Page 27)*

from Colombo, to participate in his celebrations. Another noteworthy attendee at these functions, driving all the way from Badulla was Late Bishop Leo Nanayakara, a good friend of Edward's family. After his retirement he moved to Colombo. He was an overseas member of the CSA and an avid reader of our Journal. He would write letters to the editor from time to time. He leaves behind his wife Rosemary, son Christopher and daughter Leoni.

### A small collection of rare Ceylon books

is available for sale including Cordiner, Selki  
rk, Parker, Simon Sawyer, Hayley, Cave etc.

The books are presently in Sri Lanka. For  
details please contact Upali Dharmakirti on  
02 9986 0337.

Email: [upalid@optusnet.com.au](mailto:upalid@optusnet.com.au)





## CSA PUBLIC MEETINGS

### Next Sydney Meeting

Sunday August 22, 2010  
at 6.30 p.m.

#### SUNIL DE SILVA

(President, Ceylon Society of Australia, Former Attorney-General of Sri Lanka & well-known personality in Sydney Theatre) will talk on

#### *The Theatre of the Court Room and the Court Room of The Theatre*

Venue: Thornleigh Community Centre.  
Corner Phyllis & Central Avenues (off Pennant Hills Road) Thornleigh.

Further details from Chandra Senaratne  
(02) 9872 6826 or Thiru Arumugam  
(02) 8850 4798

Meeting will be followed by the usual social.  
Members, their guests & students are welcome.

#### Melbourne Chapter

At our next meeting  
**THIRU ARUMUGAM**  
will present a talk on

#### *"Nineteenth Century American Medical Missionaries in Jaffna, Ceylon"*

Date: Sunday 15 August 2010

Time: 5:30 p.m.

Venue: Holy Redeemer Church Hall  
cnr. York Street & Mont Albert Road  
SURREY HILLS

Enquiries: Hemal 0427 725 740

Visit: [www.ceylonsociety.com.au](http://www.ceylonsociety.com.au)

#### Colombo Chapter

"A fresh look at

#### **Dutugamunu, the Commander-in-Chief"**

by Mr. P.G. Punchihewa, author of  
*Mahasenapathi Dutugamunu Rajatuma*

Date: Saturday, 04 September 2010  
at 5.30 p.m.

Venue: Organization of Professional Associations  
(OPA), on Stanley Wijesundera Mawatha,  
Colombo 7

Questions and discussions will follow the talk.  
Members please invite any/all persons who are likely to be interested in attending and/or the proceedings and the Society.

*No fee for attendance. Please contact:*

Chulie de Silva, (President) Tel: 077 777

2220; e-mail: [chuls201@gmail.com](mailto:chuls201@gmail.com)

Daya Wickramatunga, (Secretary) e-mail:

[dashanwick@gmail.com](mailto:dashanwick@gmail.com),

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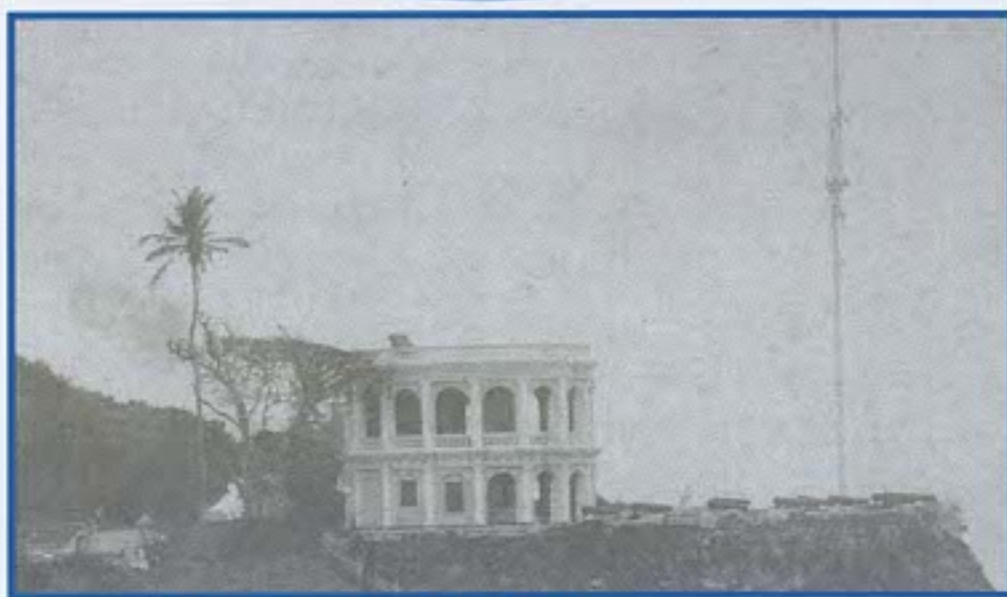
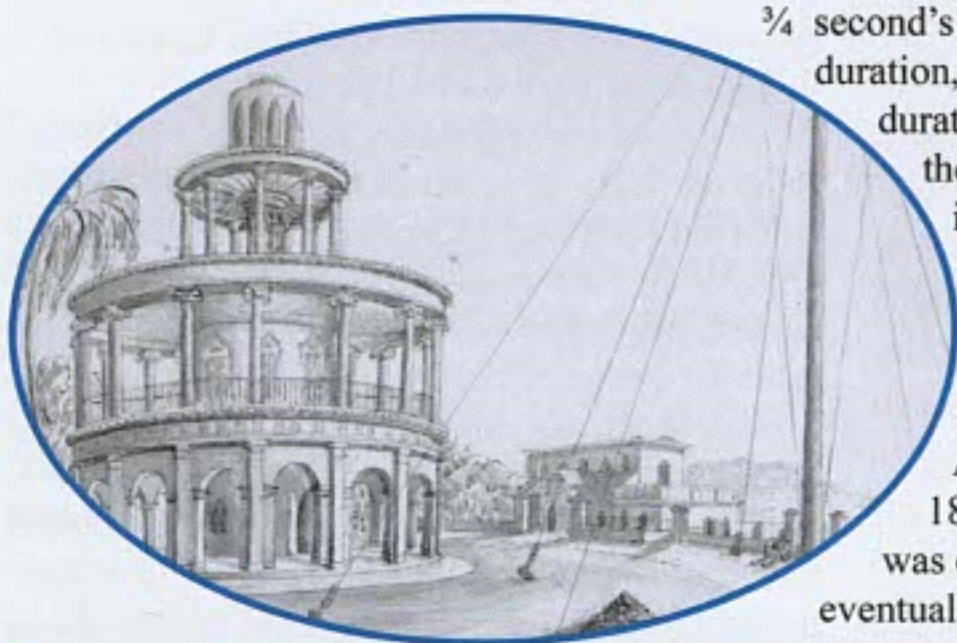
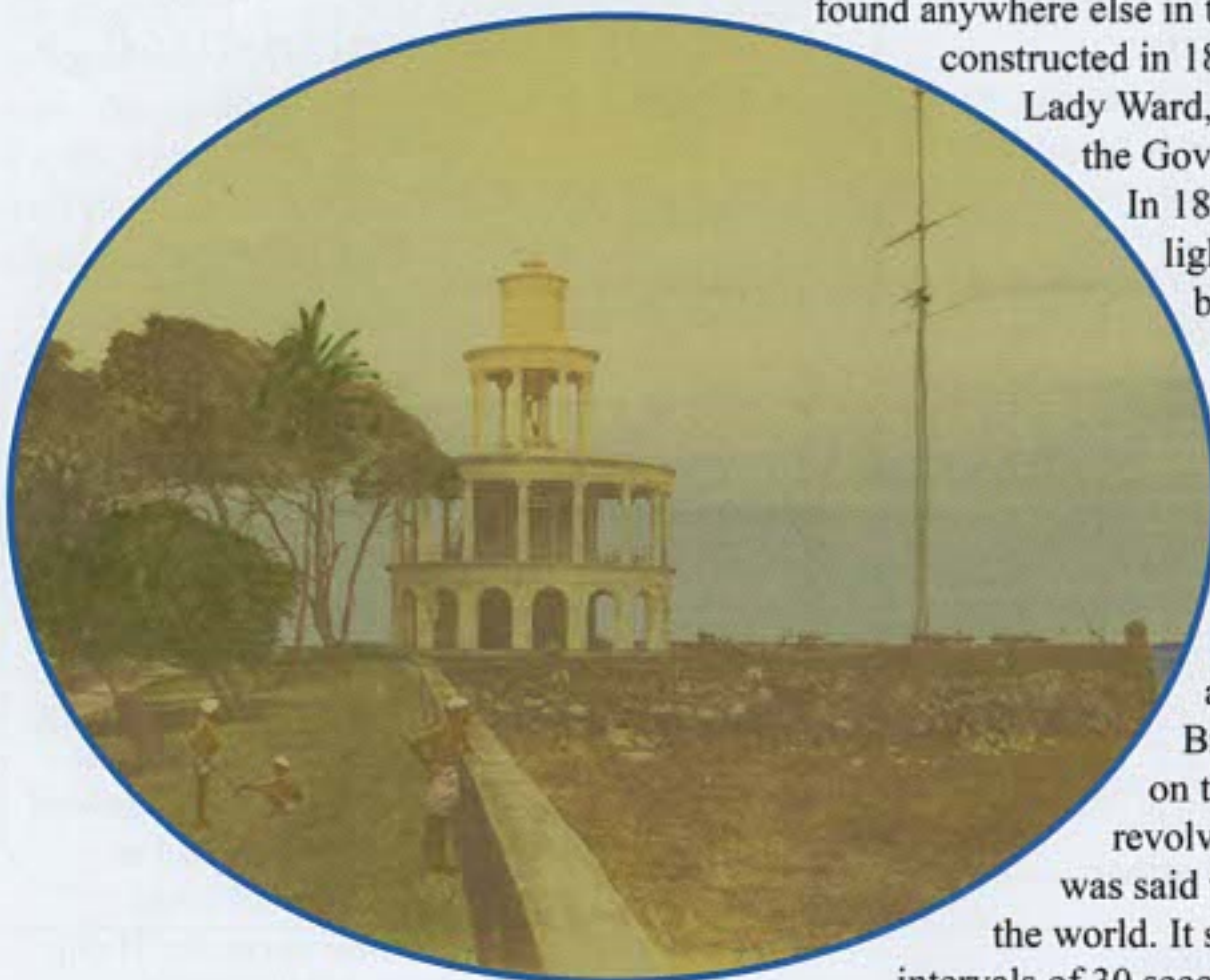


# Of old lighthouses in Colombo Fort

by *The Rambler*

The familiar landmark in the Fort of Colombo standing at the intersection of Queen Street and Chatham Street is a unique structure in that it was both a lighthouse and a clock tower, a combination not found anywhere else in the world. The tower was constructed in 1857 based on a design by Lady Ward, wife of Sir Henry Ward, the Governor of Ceylon at the time. In 1860 the lantern from the old lighthouse which was situated behind Queen's House adjacent to the Colombo Flagstaff and signalling station was installed on the tower. The original light was a fixed dioptric light which was later removed and installed as a red light at the end of the southwest Breakwater and was replaced on the Clock Tower by a white revolving dioptric light which was said to be one of the finest in the world. It showed a triple flash at intervals of 30 seconds, each flash being of  $1\frac{3}{4}$  second's duration, each short eclipse of  $3\frac{1}{4}$  second's duration, and each long eclipse of  $18\frac{1}{4}$  seconds duration. Kerosene oil of special purity was the illuminating agent. It ceased to function in 1952 when its beams were no longer reaching the sea due to the taller buildings that had come up in the surrounding areas. The original clock on the tower was made by the manufacturer of Big Ben in London. Although the clock was commissioned in 1872 it was kept in storage as the government was concerned about the cost of installation and eventually installed four decades later in 1914.

The old lighthouse located behind Queen's House was a familiar landmark in the Fort for centuries, having been built originally as a church by either the Portuguese or the Dutch, the origins being somewhat obscure. The building itself was of a neo-classical structure with the light tower rising from the centre of a handsome three storied circular colonnaded edifice. It stood next to the Colombo Flagstaff, the signalling station for the Port of Colombo where the arrival of



(Continued on Page 20)