

# The Ceylanikaum



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## The Ceylon Society of Australia

*Keeping Our Heritage Alive*

(Founded in 1997)

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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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**In Colombo:** Until further notice members are requested to deposit subscription money/cheques at a HSBC ATM machine or transfer to the HSBC electronically. The information you require is for ATMs: Account Name: Ceylon Society of Australia CSA Account Number- 008-044109-001 - e Transfer above plus: HSBC Swift Code- HSBCLKLX. Annual subs: LKR3000.00  
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Annual subscription is A\$30  
(Pensioners & Students in Australia A\$20).



*From the Editor...*

Working on the layout of this issue, I was left with a single page – blank – staring me in the face. In a quandary and sitting at the computer wracking my brains, I remembered in a flash an evocative photograph (1930s vintage) of the Slave Island Railway Station a reader (sadly, I cannot recollect who) sent me some time back with the suggestion that I use it alongside a photograph of what the Kompannya Vidiya station looked like today. I had already assigned someone to do that for me many months ago and the results were on file. With that was born a little feature called 'Then & Now' for our journal. Now it is up to you, dear reader, to roll in those vintage photographs of icons of Ceylon/Sri Lanka, near and dear to your hearts and we will get things moving.

On the subject of icons, there is this shrine, sacred to millions of pilgrims of all faiths worldwide, that, in August 2012, will celebrate its 250-year jubilee since the permanent structure was built and also honour a statue that has been venerated for well over 400 years – the Shrine of St Anne's, Talawila. I found St Anne's on my first ever visit most compelling, to say the least.

All the way from California (USA) Justin Driberg delves into the past, recalling the glory

days when he served in the Ceylon Engineers during WWII – the contributions to the war effort, people he worked with, places he'd been to, sport and recreation – all part of life serving in the wartime Army in general. Interesting reading.

As a fitting sequel to George Keyt's art featured in the past two issues of the journal, Tissa Devendra plays detective in tracing the whereabouts of a stained glass reconstruction of another Keyt masterpiece, a mural titled "Lanka Matha/Mother Lanka" to the Montreal Library in Canada. The mural is still on the list of missing things and maybe our intrepid sleuth will leave no easel unturned to one day reveal its hiding place.

E.C.T. Candappa concludes his fascinating piece on the editors of his time in Lake House, while Somasiri Devendra also wraps up his maritime musings on the voyage of Annapooranyamal from Jaffna to Boston.

While still in Jaffna, Samuel Thevabalan Arnold pays glowing tribute to the colossal contribution made by the American Missionaries to Higher Education in Ceylon and the achievements of the students and teachers in making it the successful institution it was.

Nature Notes is back with Meals Ammi Made coming from the kitchen of Geraldine de Saram-Jansz in far-away and picturesque Canada.

By the way, keep those Letters to the Editor coming in too!

## About the Ceylon Society of Australia

The CSA is a non-profit organisation, incorporated in Australia. Its main objectives are to foster, promote and develop interest in the cultural heritage of Sri Lanka, especially the post-medieval period when this country was first exposed to, what we now call, globalisation. Apart from publishing the journal – **The Ceylankan** which has attracted much international appreciation – the Society holds meetings quarterly in Sydney, Melbourne and Colombo. Most importantly, it is non-political and non-partisan and studiously steers clear of political and similar controversial issues. CSA is not a formal, high profile Society but rather, a gathering of like-minded people, open to receiving and

imparting new ideas, who greatly enjoy a quarterly meeting in reasonably modest and intimate surroundings. While Sydney is home to the parent body and looks after the needs of the society in all of NSW and the ACT, the Melbourne Chapter covers members and others residing in and visitors to Victoria; the Colombo Chapter caters to CSA members in and passing through Sri Lanka, and the Sri Lankan public! Members of the public with an interest in the study of Sri Lankan history, culture and heritage – the young members of the public are especially welcome! – are invited to attend. Admission to these meetings is free, while donations to defray expenses are much appreciated.



## Our Readers Write

### *Old stamping grounds*

I enjoyed two articles in the latest issue of *The Ceylankan*. The first was about High Street (W.A. Silva Mawatha) Wellawatte, my old 'stamping grounds'. Not least because it mentions the hospital where I was born, and also Peterson Lane (named after my great-grandfather, George Peterson) where—at no. 43, named *St. George's* for obvious reasons—I spent the first years of my life until mid-1958 and again in 1960-61 until we moved into our own home at 86 Manning Place, Wellawatte.

The other article I enjoyed was the one by the former Miss Gourlay. Very well written, with lots of interesting information. Clearly, she still has a love for Ceylon and the formative years she spent there.

ROGER THIEDEMAN

### *Precious memories*

The article on 'The people of High Street, Wellawatte in the '50s, in the May issue of *The Ceylankan*, brought back precious memories of people and places in that lovely suburban community where I lived for many years.

As a youngster living down Peterson Lane in the '30s, next to the Reid's, I knew the Gauder family in the corner house. One of the girls, Pearl, married my cousin, Henry Stork, while another niece, Christobel, now lives in Melbourne. Opposite the Gauder home and a couple of houses down High Street lived the Willy Peries family, their daughter Myrtle and husband Noel Ebert, family friends. As a teenager in the '40s we lived in a nice bungalow on High Street next to Gregorys Place where there was a small Pentecostal Church.

Swastika Stores was a popular place to shop. Quite often I biked there to get some grocery item for my mother, or buy Nestlé's chocolate bars that had collectible pictures in them, which were pasted in an album and any extras traded.

In the mid '90s, on a visit to Ceylon, I took a three-wheeler ride with my son, all the way from Galle Road to Havelock Road. He was nine-years old when we left Ceylon, so I had to show him all my old haunts and landmarks. We stopped to admire lovely old, well maintained

homes with trelliswork in the front portico and patterned boards along the roof edges. I bought some chocolates at Swastika Stores for old times sake, and we had a sherbet at a boutique near Hampden Lane, where two houses down the road lived the La Brooy family, cousins to a Major La Brooy of the Ceylon Engineers.

I am sure there are many folks like me who lived in Wellawatte, who have also enjoyed the good read from the pen of *The Rambler*, about the 'good old days' when we used the Ebert Silva buses that took us from the Galle Road to Pamankade.

JUSTIN DRIEBERG (California, USA).

### *More about cactus*

I have to thank Tony Peries for his generous comments in the last issue of *The Ceylankan* on my article on cactus growers which appeared in the previous issue of the journal. He mentioned therein the famous cactus gardens in Huntington, California which is on my 'must see' list but which I have not had the good fortune of visiting yet. The other old and well established cactus garden is in Monaco which again I have yet to see but which is featured in many books as are the Saguaro Monument the world heritage listed giant cactus reserve in California. Of the newer cactus gardens is the small but well designed one at the J. Paul Getty Museum in Los Angeles which I visited about five years ago and which I found quite fascinating. Visitors to Changi Airport in Singapore may not be aware of the compact cactus garden on the roof top of the airport which is small but very representative of the many cactus and succulent genera and which I never fail to visit whenever visiting Singapore.

THE RAMBLER

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### *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.*



# Batticotta Seminary - Jaffna College

The First University of Western Learning in Ceylon (Sri Lanka)

Sri Lankans are blessed to live and work as professionals in varied disciplines in different parts of the globe. Often the host citizens marvel at the strong English knowledge and expertise of the Sri Lankans. The emerging next generation of Sri Lankan youth enter universities in Europe, Canada, Australia and the USA, to mention a few, and shine with excellence in their studies and careers. One wonders how people coming from a small island such as Sri Lanka could be so outstanding. Recently there was a news item to the effect that there were 10 000 practicing accountants in a population of around 20 million people in Sri Lanka. Our nation started English education almost 200 years ago. Some of those coming from Jaffna in the North of Sri Lanka have American names such as Mather, McIntyre, Mills, Cooke, Curtis, Arnold etc. which their forefathers took on from their association with missionaries who started reputed English schools in the region.

## *Education in Sri Lanka*

Sri Lanka was under colonial rulers, the Portuguese (1505–1658), the Dutch (1658–1796) and the British (1796–1948). Both the Portuguese and the Dutch set up schools around their churches in the local languages. The Roman Catholic priests under the Portuguese and the Protestant missionaries under the Dutch were involved in setting up and running the schools.

The British followed the way of the Dutch and set up schools around the country. In 1801, there were 170 schools out of which 47 were in Jaffna. The schools in Jaffna were administered by Rev. Christian David who was recruited by the British from Tanjore, South India. He was the first Tamil priest and also the British colonial chaplain. He settled in Chundikuli, Jaffna and set up an English school there. The Roman Catholics continued to flourish in Jaffna and other parts of the country following the British granting freedom of religion.

In the early 19th century, many Christian organisations sent their missionaries to Sri Lanka. In 1804, the London Missionary Society (LMS) in England sent three missionaries, one to Galle, the second to Matara and the other, Rev. Palm to Tellippalai in Jaffna.



by

Samuel Thevabalan Arnold

The Presbyterian Church, which was the church of the Dutch, continued to function in Colombo and in a few other places. In 1812, the Baptist Missionary Society (BMS) in Britain sent some of their missionaries who served in Colombo.

The Wesleyan Missionary Society (Methodist Church) sent missionaries from England who arrived in Galle on June 29, 1814. Rev. Lynch and Rev. Squance went to Jaffna and started work there. Rev. William Ault went to Batticaloa and founded the first English school in the island in 1814, the reputed Methodist Central College, Batticaloa.

The Church Missionary Society (CMS), the missionary wing of the Church of England (Anglican) sent a few missionaries in 1818. Among them was Rev. Joseph Knight who settled in Nallur (Jaffna) and started work there.

There were Buddhist, Hindu and Muslim organisations that opened schools in different parts of the country in addition to the many government schools. Parents were interested in the education of their children and sent them to local schools and prestigious boarding schools.

## *American Missionaries*

The contribution made by the missionaries of the American Ceylon Mission (ACM) to Sri Lanka, to Jaffna in particular, is unique. The first group of nine missionaries from Newbury Port, USA reached Colombo on March 22, 1816 after a five-month voyage on the sailing vessel, the 'Dryad'. The Governor, Sir Robert Browning supported them in their mission to Jaffna. The British authorities gave the missionaries permission to take over the 350-year old abandoned churches and buildings of the Portuguese and Dutch in Tellippalai and Vaddukoddai.

This was the beginning of the fruitful services to the people in the field of education, medical facilities and general upliftment. Around a 100 missionaries served during the next century in Jaffna. Many of them and their children died there. But the call to serve and the love for the people kept them there in spite of the hardship.



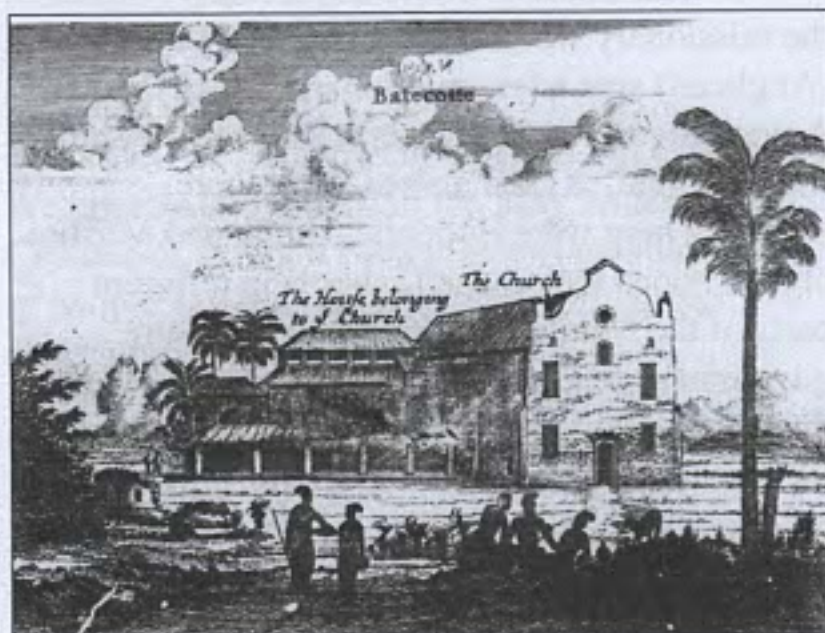
As a result, the schools for boys and girls in the different villages of Jaffna flourished.

Among these schools three were paramount in Sri Lanka – Batticotta Seminary (University) founded in 1823, Uduvil Girls Boarding School in 1824, and Green Medical School in 1848 by the Mission. This article is confined to the first.

### ***Batticotta Seminary (1823-1855) – The First University***

'Batticotta' is the anglicised name of Vaddukoddai, the pioneer mission and focus of service to the people of Jaffna. In 1822, six years after their arrival, the American missionaries felt the need for an institution of higher education in English for the students who were eager to learn.

Such an institution was started on June 22, 1823 at Vaddukoddai called the 'Batticotta Seminary'. The benefactors in America provided funds to establish the institution and also awarded



• ***Batticotta Seminary (adjacent to the Church) one of the first institutions of higher western learning in Sri Lanka.***

(Courtesy Phillipus Baldaeus)

scholarships to the students. The supporters were not rich but ordinary Christians who gave out of love and sacrifice to help the needy. Advanced students were admitted to this Seminary with Rev. Dr Daniel Poor as the Principal.

The Batticotta Seminary became one of the first institutions of higher Western learning to be established in India and Sri Lanka. The only other institution at university level that had been established previously was Serampore University in Calcutta, India, founded in 1818 by Rev. William Carey the Baptist missionary. All other universities in India were started in the middle of the century.

The following were the objectives of the Batticotta Seminary: • to give the native youth of good promise a thorough knowledge of the English language; • to cultivate Tamil Literature; • to teach Sanskrit, Latin and Greek to a select number; • to pass on the knowledge of Hebrew to assist in obtaining acquaintance with the Word of God; • to offer extensive study of Geography, Astronomy, elements of Geometry, Mathematics, Trigonometry and Natural Philosophy; and • to offer a course of six years duration.

Some of the finest scholars from the elite Ivy League Colleges and Universities of New England, USA served in the Seminary as Principals and Professors. After Rev. Daniel Poor, the next Seminary Principals were Rev. H R Hoisington, Rev. C T Mills and Rev. Dr E P Hastings. Rev. Dr E P Hastings, the last Principal of the Seminary, was married to the sister of the President of USA, Grover Cleveland.

The Batticotta Seminary, during its 32-years of existence (1823-1855) produced 700 graduates. The outstanding scholars from the Seminary included C W Thamothersampillai (later Rao Bahadur who became a High Court Judge in India, Head of Studies and Chief Examiner of Tamil at Madras University), Caroll Visuvanathapillai, Nevins, J R Arnold and Wyman Cathiravetpillai. When the University of Madras was established in 1855, the first graduates to obtain the BA degree were C W Thamothersampillai and Caroll Visuvanathapillai, the young graduates from the Batticotta Seminary.

Many Seminary graduates were appointed as District Judges, Magistrates, Interpreter Mudaliyars, Sub-Collectors of Customs, Medical Officers, Educationists, Proctors, Teachers, Pastors etc. The Medical Officers included Drs Danforth, Cleveland, Parker, McIntyre, Everts and Ira Gould. The engineers included F Armstrong, M Sherman, D H Clark and Wythialingam.

J R Arnold (Arnold Sathasivampillai) was an outstanding Author, Editor, Poet and Professor (Tamil Literature at Jaffna College from 1880 to 1891). He wrote 13 Tamil Literary productions (some found only in the British Library, London). "His achievements are comparable to that of Dr Samuel Johnson" (*Morning Star*, February 1998).

It is to be noted that the first converts to the Christian faith in Jaffna who were baptised,



took on American names as their surnames. The decedents from the early converts continue to have surnames such as Arnold, Mather, Mills, Backus, Nathaniel and Niles.

The educational essence of the Seminary permeated into different regions. Many came from different parts of Sri Lanka and India to join this institution. The scholarly British Colonial Secretary, Sir Emerson Tennent visited the Seminary and remarked: "The education imparted at Batticotta Seminary was not inferior to that given in any European University".

The Batticotta Seminary was suspended in 1855 on the recommendation of the Deputation from the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions (ABCFM). The English schools of the Mission were abolished and English was eliminated from the course at Uduvil Girls School. In place of the abolished Seminary, a Tamil higher education institute was established.

"Thus came to an end the Batticotta Seminary, at one time famous throughout India and Ceylon as a great seat of learning. It lasted 31 years and cost the American Board over Sterling Pounds 20,000, not taking into account the money collected in India and Ceylon" (Quote: J V Chelliah). Rev Dr E P Hastings was the last Principal of the Seminary having served in this capacity from 1849 to 1855.

### *Jaffna College (1872)*

Following the closure of the Batticotta Seminary in 1855, there was no other institution that could be considered its successor. Due to the pressure for English education for boys, Mr Robert Breckenridge, a Seminary teacher started a private school, 'Batticotta High School' in the vicinity of the Vaddukoddai Mission in March 1856 with 50 pupils. Numbers grew and reputed teachers like William Nevins, Daniel Niles, J P Cooke, T M Tampoe and J Lyman assisted Mr Breckenridge.

Many leading people of Jaffna, foremost of whom were graduates of the Batticotta S G Lee, J R Arnold (Professor of Tamil Literature), J V Chelliah, J K Sinnathamby Rev. S M Thevathasan Rev. L S Ponniah, G D Thomas Rev. S R Rasaratnam, J K Kanapathipillai, Allen Abraham (Professor of Tamil Literature and Mathematics who was conferred the FRAS), Seminary resolved to help establish a worthy successor to the Seminary. A resolve was made to establish "an educational institution of high

order to be called Jaffna College conducted on the principles of Protestant Christianity under the management of Christian instructors and trustees".

An appeal was made to the American Board to supply a Principal and furnish the means for his support. It was interesting to note that both members of the deputation who were party to the closure of the Seminary now warmly commended the undertaking. A number of influential gentlemen in New York raised a sum of \$18 750 and placed the funds in the hands of trustees in America for investment. The local committee decided to raise Rs 10 000 locally as an endowment for support of a Tamil teacher.

Jaffna College was established on July 3, 1872 with Rev. Dr E P Hastings as Principal.

The first batch of selected 20 students started a four-year course which included Algebra, Geometry, Philosophy, Astronomy, Logic, English Literature, Bible, Christian



• Jaffna College

Evidences, Anatomy, Physiology, Moral Science, Geology, Chemistry, Methods of Teaching, Latin and Sanskrit. All students were required to board at the premises and pay for their expenses.

A long list of students graduated from Jaffna College with the first batch in 1876. Jaffna College had many eminent teachers on staff including R O D Asbury, E G Adams, S F G Carpenter, T P Hudson, Edward Kingsbury, A C Sunderampillai, J C Amarasingham, J P Cooke, C H Cooke, D S Sanders, J S Navaratnam, Lyman Kulathungam and Handy Perinpanayagam.

Jaffna College was affiliated to the universities of Calcutta (1891-1893), Madras (1907-1911), and later to London. A large number of students obtained their degrees from Calcutta, Madras and London. Some of them received their Masters degrees from Calcutta and



Madras. In 1915, the Batticotta High School was amalgamated with Jaffna College.

The excellent students produced in varying fields were due to the Christian education imparted by the reputed Principals and staff. After the first Principal Rev. Dr E P Hastings, other Principals during the first 50 years were Rev. S W Howland and Rev. R C Hastings, Mr W E Hitchcock, Rev. G G Brown and Rev. John Bicknell. The respected alumni of Jaffna College served in different fields both in Sri Lanka and overseas.

### ***Jaffna College in the 20th Century***

Starting with Rev. Dr Daniel Poor and Mrs Susan Poor in 1816, 139 missionaries have served in Jaffna up until 1972. Some of the present alumni of Jaffna College have been students under Edson and Dorothy Lockwood (1936 to 1969), Rev. Dr Sydney and Ruth Bunker (1937 to 1966), Dr Robert and Frances Holmes (1947 to 1960), Rev. W R Susbach (1949 to 1956), and Mr and Mrs Ben Bavinck (1954 to 1972).

Rev. and Mrs G G Brown were at Jaffna College from 1899 to 1920. Rev. Brown was Principal from 1908 to 1915. Outstanding developments took place during the era of Rev. John and Mrs Nelly Bicknell. Rev. Bicknell was Professor from 1902 to 1905 and Principal from 1915 to 1936. Mr J V Chelliah was his able Vice Principal. During this time, the Intermediate in Science and Arts courses affiliated to the University of London were started.

Rev. Sydney and Mrs Ruth Bunker served at Jaffna College from 1937 to 1966. Rev. Bunker became Principal in 1937 and Mr K A Selliah became Vice Principal in 1939. In 1947, the Collegiate Department was decentralised with Rev. Bunker as President. In the same year, Mr Selliah became the Principal of the Primary and Secondary Schools with Mr D S Sanders as Vice Principal. During the Bunker-Selliah regime, both departments developed extensively as more students graduated from the collegiate section. There were students who began their studies in the kindergarten and went on to complete their degrees. When Dr Bunker retired in 1966, Dr Luther Jeyasingham became President. He continued until the take over of the collegiate department by the State in 1974.

After the retirement of Mr D S Sanders in 1952, Messrs Lyman Kulathungam and K C Thurairatnam were appointed as co-Vice

Principals. Mr Selliah retired in 1964 having been a distinguished student, teacher, Vice-Principal and Principal of the college. In 1964, Mr S V Balasingham was appointed as Principal. He suddenly passed away in 1968.

Mr Rajan Kadirgamar took over the Principalship in 1968 and retired in 1988 after 20 years at the helm. Dr S Jebanesan (later Bishop of the JDCSI) was Principal until 1993. Subsequent Principals were Mr G Rajanayagam (1993-2000), Rev A A Paul (2000- 2003), and the present Principal Mr Noel Vimalendran.

Since 1969, Jaffna College had to face many challenges following government control and the take over of the collegiate section by the Jaffna University. A branch of Jaffna College was started in Paranthan. The Jaffna College Institute of Technology in Vaddukoddai, the Institute of Agriculture in Maruthanamadam and the Undergraduate department in Jaffna town continue to serve the youth in difficult situations. The Christian Institute for the Study of Religion and Society (CISRS) and the Evelyn Rutnam Institute for Inter-Cultural Studies (donated by Dr James Rutnam in memory of his wife Evelyn) housed in Jaffna promote study and research on aspects of society and culture. The community in Jaffna, the Church and the American Board of Trustees assist the college in serving the people following the objectives of the American missionaries who came to this part of the world in 1816.

In the words of Rt Rev. Dr S Kulendran, the first Bishop in Jaffna of the JDCSI, "All that we can say is we have tried, tried in spite of increasing and overwhelming difficulties, resisting all temptations to follow the path of least resistance, tried to be true and faithful to the implications and responsibilities enshrined in the College motto, 'Jesus Christ the light of life'".

**Well done Batticotta Seminary – Jaffna College!** May the alumni and the nation of Sri Lanka continue to support this great seat of Learning!



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### **'SHAW-ISMS'**

There is no love sincerer than the love of food  
– George Bernard Shaw (*Man and Superman* (1903))

He knows nothing; and he thinks he knows everything. That points clearly to a political career.

– George Bernard Shaw (*Major Barbara* (1907))



*They had difficulty in getting out of Gibraltar. The vessel's kicker was out of order and they were forced to depend entirely on their sails. Before they could clear the harbour, the hawser close to the brig's after-deck had been cut. The wind failed them in mid-ocean and they were becalmed for days on end. Our compiler SOMASIRI DEVENDRA now concludes the account with his own postscript on ...*

## ...The voyage of the Annapooranyamal to Boston

• *A dhoni berthed in Colombo Port*

(Source: [www.imagesofceylon.com](http://www.imagesofceylon.com))

### *Coleridge paraphrased*

"We were a painted brigantine on a painted ocean," said one of the Ceylonese, Sabaratnam who, with two others in the native crew, speaks English fluently. The water became too rusty for drinking. The food became low. Capt. Dan headed for Bermuda, carrying every inch of sail to catch whispers of wind. After 41 days, the Florence C. Robinson - which the owner named for his wife, and sailing companion - reached Hamilton, amid a reception that Capt. Dan will

never forget. They got underway for Gloucester nine days ago and picked up a wind that did much to make up for the black days in the doldrums. Making up for Nantucket Light, with a soupy fog clinging low, the brigantine had a narrow escape from being cut down by a transatlantic liner. Capt. Dan blew ... blasts on his mouth foghorn and the crew in the yards, -...couldn't be deciphered). They could see the towering masts and even the sides of the big liner and there was little they could do in the absence of wind. She



cleared the brigantine by yards and went on her way without a sign of recognition.

#### *Doster glad to be back*

Doster was the first ashore today as the headlines caught on the bollards. "What a glorious feeling, what a sensation, to get my feet on American soil again," he exclaimed. "I've been all over Europe,

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... A steady line of old Gloucester salts stood in wander, gazing at the lines and exclaiming at her ironwood planking - teak and a native Ceylonese wood known as Margosa. "She is built to last 100 years, if not longer," said Robinson with a touch of pride.

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and in Asia and the Near East, and this is the best thing I've seen in two years - a bit of the United States." The Ceylonese, first of their race to touch Gloucester in many years, glanced casually at the shore. They were more interested in making the brigantine ship-shape and in seeing their old friend and skipper, Robinson. When he appeared, they greeted him with the exultant excitement of children, shouting greetings long before he was aboard. Robinson took them ashore to see a lobster pound and they stared in fascination. But, they were eager to [be] back aboard their vessel. Robinson said the brigantine will "stay for a while" here, while she is being repainted and overhauled. He was not certain just when he will make a cruise in her," he said.

#### *Old salts amazed*

Until the vessel hauled out into the stream, a steady line of old Gloucester salts stood in wander, (*sic*) gazing at the lines and exclaiming at her ironwood planking - teak and a native Ceylonese wood known as Margosa. "She is built to last 100 years, if not longer," said Robinson with a touch of pride. When he bought her two years ago she was named "*Annapooranyamal*" after a Hindu temple in Benares. This name is still indented on her side. She was originally schooner-rigged, but Robinson whose epic trip alone around the world in the Ketch *Svaap* stamps him as an authority, had her changed over to the brigantine along the lines of the old British brigs of war. Doster, heavily bearded and bronzed by many suns, hastened to Boston for a meeting with his parents. His luggage bore legends that

revealed he had been in (*sic*) recently in Franco territory. But, he dismissed that phase of his adventure." I'm back in the states now and there is nothing like I .... nothing that means more to an American." - That's it.

*Names of the crew that landed in Gloucester:* Kanagaratnam Thampipillai (48) Sinathamby Sithamparapillai (28) Thamotheampillai Sabaratnam (28) Pooranavelupillai Subramaniam (29) Aiyadurai Ratnasamy (24).

#### *Ceylon brig arrives after long voyage Gloucester Times, August 2, 1938*

*Capt. MacCuish with Hindu crew presents rare spectacle - light winds extended trip to 80 days*  
A strange boat, a strange crew but, a well-known skipper, Capt. Duncan A. MacCuish, local master skipper, rounded Eastern Point yesterday noon, when the hermaphrodite brig Florence C. Robinson, with five Hindus handling sail, completed her 80-day passage from Candia, Isle of Crete, a distance of some 5000 miles. Her new owner, William Robinson of Ipswich and the wife for whom the boat is re-named, were at the Walen wharf to greet her. Before a half hour had passed, hundreds had gathered to catch a glimpse of what resembles the ghost of His Majesty's Ship *Bounty* returning to the seas to haunt Cape Ann. As she passed the sch. (*i.e.* "schooner") *Gertrude L. Thebaud*, it was as if east had met west in schooner design. Lumberlike as she looks, however, Capt. Norman A. Ross of the Marconi-rigged sch. *Blue Dolphin* [who] is [an] authority that the stranger can sail.

#### *The long trip*

Theirs' (*sic*) was a long, crawling [trip] hindered by lack of wind, days of endless calm when the Atlantic was like a mill pond, a mirrored surface without a sign of any breeze. Capt. MacCuish left here by steamer for the island port to get the craft and bring her here. Her crew consisted of five Hindus from Jaffna, northern Ceylon, that little tea island, south of India. The craft itself, a 90-foot affair, was built at Jaffna some nine years ago on the [lines of] whichever British man o' war [that] hit into that area at the beginning of the 19th century. That model was the much the same as the *Bounty* on which a crew mutinied and became white settlers of Pitcairn Island. The natives have never changed the mould, and though larger ones are built, the sch. *Annapoorani* as it was known, is the popular (size for) cargo ship(s) ply-



ing their trade in the Indian Ocean. Her crew of Hindus has manned her from Ceylon to Burma, and to ports of India since her launching. She had dodged all manner of monsoons and stood the strong winds of those waters. Capt. MacCuish and his dusky quintet sailed from Candia, on May 3 and were 31 days before touching at Gibraltar.

Here they took on an extra helper, Alexis Doster, Jr., of Litchfield, Connecticut, 20 years old, who had just completed a first-hand course of two years in European politics and was glad to greet the Goddess of Liberty again. He had rubbed elbows with Nazi conquerors of Austria, had met self-assured fascists of Italy and had swapped bullets with the Spanish Communists to the point that he was wearied of the whole mess and saw the wisdom in returning home again to get some more "book-larnin." The boat hardly touched at Walens Warf before he reached over the rail, planked down his fist hard on the piles, and gleefully remarked, "America, it is really you!"

#### ***Left Gibraltar June 8***

Leaving Gibraltar June 8, they were 41 days reaching Hamilton, Bermuda. It was a slow passage with not enough wind stirring most of the time to ruffle a sail. They were equipped with a 50-horsepower Belinda marine engine but the engine had gone out of commission, six months before. Capt. MacCuish had provisioned for 30 days believing that would be plenty. The first month slipped by, however, and America was still on the far horizon. The skipper then headed the craft for Bermuda, and rationed out the food and drinking water. The Hindus cooperated by foregoing their daily habit of anointing their heads with fresh water in carrying out religious rites, and instead substituted salt water. It was a great sacrifice to them, but they knew their god would understand. That helped solve the water problem. The grub difficulties were much harder. Finally, they fell back on rice. They had a Hindu cook named Manian who knew rice inside and out. It became rice for breakfast, more rice for dinner and still more rice for supper, until yesterday. Capt. MacCuish vowed that if ever Mrs. MacCuish placed rice before him, he would "go off the handle." They landed safely at

Hamilton even though ravenously hungry. Doster could not get to the Princess hotel fast enough to surround himself with a thick, juicy steak splashed with onions. Capt. MacCuish himself soon got acquainted with some good food and [on] Saturday, July 23, and (*sic*) the voyage was resumed to this port.

[The] Captain has had many experiences afloat in his long day. [He] had been in Bering waters, in the South Seas, globe trotted several summers in fine yachts, been skipper of craft during taking of moving pictures especially for the filming of the famed "Captain Courageous," and man and boy has wrung countless gallons of sea water from his oilskins. He has had all manner of crews, both good and bad, both those who can and do obey to a smattering of "sea-lawyers." So when he says the Hindus made him a first-rate crew, they must have been capable. None of the five ever bothered about shoes or stockings, making the run of the ship in bare feet, even to climbing the rigging into the cross-trees of the top

masts. The skin between their toes had become hardened, yet flexible. None ever heard of oilskins or "sou'westers," and contented themselves with their native turbans as headgear and shorts or pants with sweaters.



• *Religious observances at ship's bow.*  
(Source: Hornell)

They appeared to have one boss, a husky-bearded sailor who answered to the name of Pullai. He speaks English and of course, more fluently, his native tongue, Tamil, in which he would relay the skipper's orders to the crew. Proud of his esteem, he saw to it that the other boys promptly obeyed orders. A rigid discipline could easily be observed aboard yesterday.

#### ***The sacred ash***

Some of the Hindus sported a yellow dab on the forehead. The inquirer was informed that that dab was called the "sacred ash," and its presence



bought their god, Siva, closer to them. Siva knew all personally who wore that mark, they said. A spot on the forehead is whitewashed, and then powdered, and the dab stuck on that spot. The Hindus who belong to a high caste in Ceylon, held their weekly worship on Friday night, their Sunday, by the way. Friday evening, they would gather in the forepeak of the vessel, scooch around a lighted lamp, and chant their prayers of thanksgiving to Siva in a weird rite that was the more sincere in its emphasis.

The trip was their first voyage west of the Suez Canal. They were baffled by the fogs encountered in crossing the Atlantic. They had experience[d] light fogs in northern areas of the Indian Ocean, according to Pullai, but this fog was so thick that they felt as if "life was shutting its doors to them, and lifting them to another world amid the clouds." Capt. MacCuish's presence reassured them there was little danger. The Hindus are all British subjects and were allowed to land under custody of Robinson who was responsible.

#### ***A "Hermaphrodite brig"***

The dictionary gives the definition of a "hermaphrodite brig" as a "two-masted vessel square-rigged forward and schooner-rigged aft" which fits the description of the *Florence C. Robinson* to a "T." In Great Britain, this type of vessel is called a "brigantine". The same dictionary in speaking about Tamils, as these Hindus call themselves, says "the Tamils are members of the most enterprising branch of the Dravidian race, mostly Hindus, though a few still are animists. They are numerous throughout South India and northern Ceylon. The language is the oldest, most cultivated and best known of the Dravidian languages. Modern Tamil uses an alphabet descended from the Brahmi character. The typical Dravidian is short, very dark, with plentiful and often wavy hair, and broad nose." Jaffna, the port from which these Hindus sail, and where the craft was built, is on the northern tip of Ceylon, separated from the southwest tip of India by the Gulf of Mannar.

#### ***Greeted by tug***

The first to sight the craft here was Carl D. Hill, light keeper at Eastern Point, who relayed the news to the waterfront at 12: 45. A short while later, the tug *Mariner*, Capt. Loren A. Jacobs, steamed out to take the vessel in tow to the wharf

as the sails were furled. Those who caught a glimpse of her as she rounded the Point were treated to an unusual sight. Another craft to speed out to her was one of Joseph Mellow's party boats, having aboard Mrs. MacCuish, the skipper's wife and their son. Capt. MacCuish received a thrill to once more greet his family after a three months' absence. Vouching for her speed was Capt. Norman A. Ross of this port, skipper of the Marconi-riggerd auxiliary sch. yacht *Blue Dolphin*. Capt. Ross was in Massachusetts bay yesterday with the yacht owner and others aboard and happened to come abreast of the strange craft. The *Dolphin* using auxiliary power was unable to keep up with the brig even though the latter had only sail. Capt. MacCuish declared he would be willing to put the *Robinson* up against the Canadian champion *Blue Nose* in a race."

#### ***Reader's comment***

Source: "jacob99"s Homepage in LankaNewspapers.com.

*Greetings from the USA.*

*My name is Donald MacCuish. My grandfather skippered the Florence C. Robinson from Crete to Gloucester, MA. I seek additional information on the ship before she was renamed, the voyage itself, and members of the crew. Ideally, I'd very much like to chat with descendants of the crew members. Any help would be greatly appreciated. Thank you very much.*

#### ***POSTSCRIPT***

*That is the story. But I can't let it rest there. Nearly 70 years later, a warship built in America and purchased by Sri Lanka, repeated the voyage in reverse order. The US Coast Guard cutter, USCG *Courageous* was bought by Sri Lanka and a naval crew flew to Norfolk to take her over and acclimatize themselves with her. Then, the ship was commissioned SLNS *Samudura*, and sailed by her 90-man crew for Colombo which she reached six weeks later. This was the longest voyage undertaken by a naval ship, whether Ceylonese or Sri Lankan: the longest prior to it was the voyage by the minesweeper HMCyS *Parakrama*, way back in 1961. Since her arrival, *Samudura* has played her part in naval operations with distinction.*

*But I think that voyage should be the subject to be written up by someone who sailed aboard her. SD*



Extract from  
**SHIPS AND SHIP-BUILDING IN  
SRI LANKA**

With particular reference to  
**A VERNACULAR NAVAL  
ARCHITECTURAL IDIOM**

Lieut.Cdr.(Retd) Somasiri Devendra,  
B.A.(Ceylon), SLN

(being Chapter 9 of "Evolution of Traditional  
Technological Innovations in Sri Lanka" launched  
on 31 March, 2011). Illustrations not included.

From sources that were recently made available to me it is evident that there were several shipbuilding communities in Jaffna, those of Kayts and Velvettithurai being the most active, with the larger ships built at Kayts and the smaller at Velvettithurai, the smaller port. In Velvettithurai shipbuilding and seafaring were a community calling and were practiced in the 19th and 20th centuries. The vessels built were hybrids, in terms of technology and had no specific features to merit their classification as traditional ships. Many were entirely western in form. Others were ships that had run aground and been abandoned, and later salvaged and rebuilt to their original form.

**European type sailing vessel built  
in Velvettithurai**

I have yet to get these Tamil sources translated but the photographs, by themselves, are revealing of the shipbuilding skill of the region. There is a list of 114 ships with the names of the owners (mostly Chettiars from Tamilnadu) and the Captains (all from Velvettithurai) which is ample evidence of a healthy seafaring community. The ships traded between ports, from Colombo to Rangoon.

Perhaps the most famous of them was the 'Annapurani', a two-masted ship with beautiful lines, which caught the fancy of an American, William A. Robinson, who bought her, re-named her the 'Florence C. Robinson' and sailed her with a crew of six seamen from Velvettithurai to Boston in 1938.

**The 'Annapurani'/'Florence C. Robinson'**

I have published an account of the voyage (Devendra: 2009 a) of the "...89-foot brigantine Florence C. Robinson – the last windship of her kind that, in all probability, will ever cross the Western Ocean under canvas alone..." (*The Boston Globe*, August 2<sup>nd</sup>. 1938) and shall not repeat it here.

**Note 12**

Meenadchisundaram (2006) says the last sailing ship built in Velvettithurai was the one at Figure 38. Named "Parvatha Pattini", it could carry a cargo of 2700 sacks of one hundredweight each. The builder was S. Balsubramaniam *mestri* and it was owned by C. Cumarasamy. Muthukumarasamy (1982), from whom these details have been obtained, gives the name of the *Tandal* (Master) of the vessel as T. Subramaniam. The Blue Ensign (of Great Britain and her colonies) indicates she had been registered as a merchant ship.

**References to Tamil sources**

1. Meenadchisundaram, P. (2006) **Varaathil Valvettithurai**. Valvettithurai.
2. Muthukumarasamy, P.K. and Vaithyalingampillai, (1982). Point Pedro.

(Concluded)



**CORRECTION**



The following factual errors have been noted on page 23 of the May 2011 issue of the journal (J54) relating to the article *The voyage of the Annapooranyamal to Boston* by Somasiri Devendra. The caption to the photograph (left) should have been: "The Annapooranyamal' in Boston (Source: Boston Globe)."

Also, column 2 line 5 should have read: "I contacted the website," and not "I contacted the Globe".

Any inconvenience caused is regretted.



**T**he years 1941 to 1946 hold a special place in my memory book. I spent those years with different units of the Ceylon Engineers (CE) and look back with pride on the many accomplishments with a diverse group of fine men, all volunteers, from our fair isle (then known as Ceylon).

My first taste of Army life was boot camp at Engineer Headquarters on Bullers Road, then a few weeks with a guard unit at Mutwal, beside the Colombo Harbour, with Captain Wijewardena in command. Rockhouse Battery, manned by the Ceylon Garrison Artillery, towered behind and above us.

I was next sent to the 3rd Field Company. Some of our noteworthy projects included construction of a concrete bridge and part of a link road from Kalutara to Matugama and a pontoon bridge over the Kelani River at Hanwella. The pontoon bridge was a unique construction project.

It consisted of paddy boats placed side by side, with a wooden roadway built on each unit, aligned end to end. It had ramps for on/off traffic. A steel cable ran from bank to bank, anchored to tall concrete pillars on both sides of the river. Every boat was connected by thick ropes to pulleys on this steel cable in order to keep them aligned. The bridge facilitated fast movement of Army vehicles to inland outposts.

My next posting was to the 40th Engineer Battalion in Colombo. We were billeted for some time on a part of the campus of St. Benedict's College at Kotahena that had been commandeered by the Army. We were busy laying concertina wire on the beaches from Galle Face going south, also preparing bridges over the Kelani River for demolition, if the imminent Japanese invasion took place. Their naval force was heading our way.

We experienced the Japanese air raid on Colombo early Easter Sunday morning, April 5, 1942. Our Commanding Officer, Colonel Rajasingham, was standing next to me as we watched aerial dog fights when a Japanese Fighter plane came roaring round St Lucia's Cathedral with forward guns blazing; an R.A.F. fighter on its tail in hot pursuit. The pilot must have spotted our tents and army vehicles. However, it was our good fortune he missed strafing our camp but hit the saw mill next door. Its corrugated roof looked like a mosquito net, full of holes, after the raid. Our Colonel was our



## MEMORIES of WWII years with Ceylon Engineers

..... BY JUSTIN DRIEBERG

only casualty, hit on the head by a stray piece of shrapnel. He was merely dazed for a while; his tin hat had saved him.

Not too long after the raid, our 40th Battalion marched all the way from Colombo to Jaffna where we set up camp on the beach at Palali, near Kankesanthurai.

We were soon at work helping with the construction of a runway that was used later by our Bombers on their missions. That airstrip, I understand, is still in use.

The 40th Battalion then moved to Trincomalee where we built an Army Field Hospital at Fort Fredrick and a slipway at China Bay. Major Douglas La Brooy, who I believe was also a Civil Engineer, was architect of these projects. The Pontoon Bridge at Hanwella was also his brain child.

Commander of 'A' Company was my good friend, Captain Dougie Ramanayake. In later years, in the 60's I think, he was called out of retirement and put in charge of a special army unit to wipe out a rebel group who were holed up in the Kegalle area. He was so successful in quelling the rebellion that Time Magazine featured a story about him in their International Edition. This made me feel very proud of my brother officer and friend.

### *Sent to India*

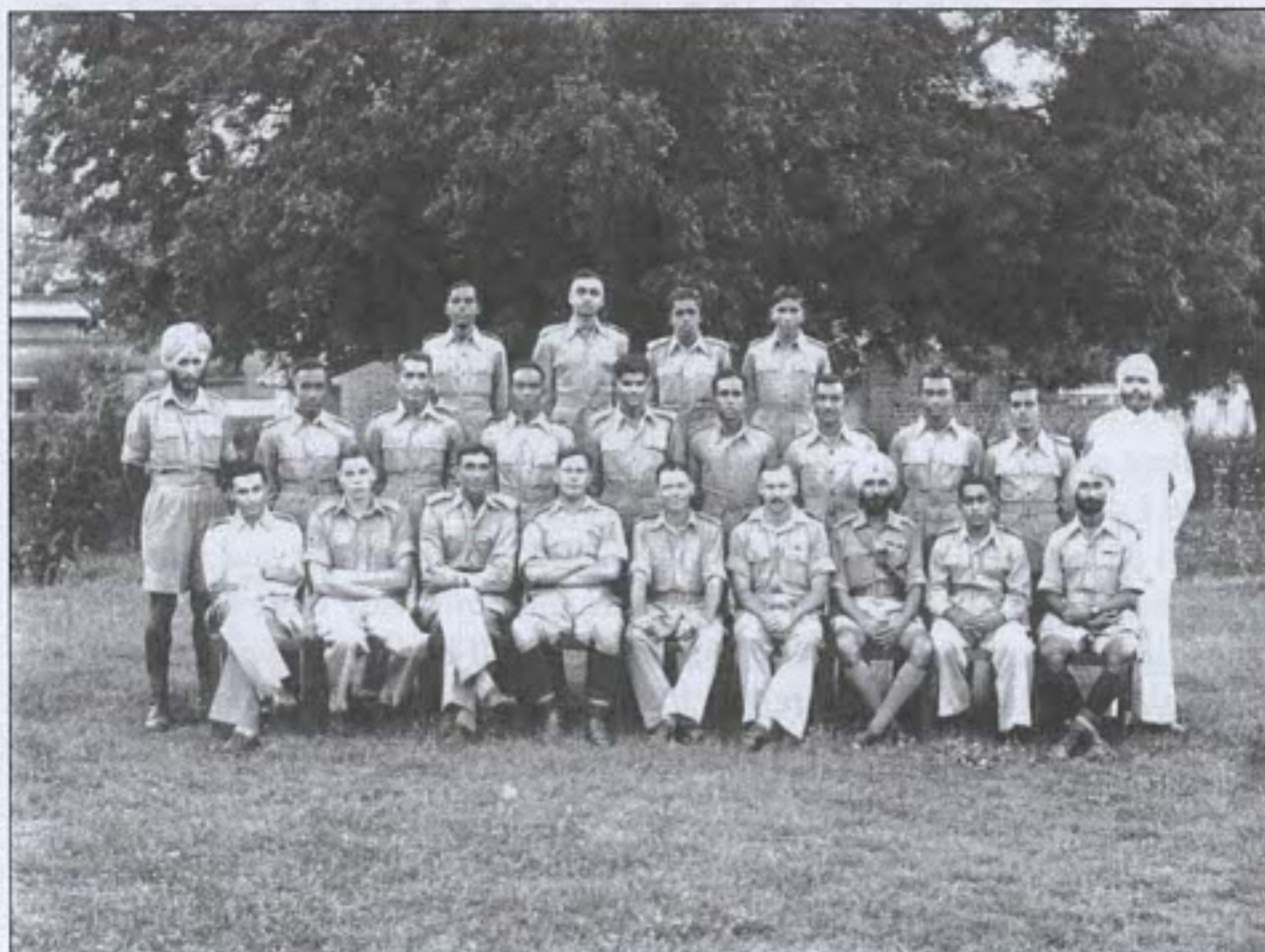
In May of 1944, 15 officers of the Ceylon Engineers, including myself, were sent for a six month Engineer Officers' Training Program at Roorkee, in North India. Most of these officers, whose names and rank appear in the picture on the opposite page, taken 66 years ago, had risen from the ranks. Some of the Subalterns had graduated with me from Officer Training School in Diyatalawa.

Roorkee was a desert army town in the United Provinces where the Sappers and Miners were headquartered. I understood that they were part of an Indian and Allied Force that battled a crack Japanese Division commanded by General Mutaguchi, at Imphal and Kohima



in Assam and halted the Japanese advance into India. Our travel to India commenced at the Fort Railway Station in Colombo. After an overnight journey to Talaimannar, the boat train took us

Some of our Instructors were Royal Engineer Officers, while civilian teachers were from the prestigious Thomason Civil Engineering College in Roorkee.



• *Members of the Ceylon Engineers of 16th B at Engineer Officers' Training School, Roorkee, India, May - November 1944: All from left to right, (back row) 2/Lt V.Subramaniam, 2/Lt J.F.S.Drieberg, 2/Lt B.de Silva, 2/Lt A.Abeywardene; (middle row) Hav. Ujar Singh, 2/Lt G.Goonewardene, 2/Lt Earl Corner, 2/Lt M.F.Mendis, Lt Geo. Joseph, Lt F.Muller, 2/Lt M.Zainudeen, 2/Lt H.P.Wijesooriya, 2/Lt C.Rajathurai, Hav. Ajit Singh; (seated) Lt D.W.Smith, Sgt D.W.Dean, R.E., Capt.M.H.Rustomji, Lt T.F.Earl I.A., Capt.C.A.Williams R.E., 2/Lt H.F.Savery R.E., Jem. K.Singh, Lt F.S.Alvis, Hav. Puran Singh.*

to Dhanushkodi, from where we entrained for another overnight journey to Madras.

Then began the long haul to Delhi, Meerut and Roorkee, all by troop train. Army Transportation Officers met us at every transit point, and layovers were at hostels for officers. It took about six or seven days to reach our destination.

All of us were housed in comfortable air conditioned rooms, and every officer provided with a full-time bearer (a personal servant), as is the norm in India. At the orientation evening in the Officers Mess we met some Royal Engineer Officers; a few Canadian and Indian Army Officers, who were all part of the same training program as us CEs - quite a motley group. Our six-month field training and classroom work was geared towards Army Garrison Engineering.

Our day started at 6.00 am with P.T. for half an hour followed by field work till breakfast at 9.00 am. Classroom lectures continued till 1.00 pm. After lunch, we had free time for a siesta, (the mean summer temperature in Roorkee exceeded the 100F degree mark) study and assignments. Evenings were free to fraternise in the Officers' Mess or in town with the locals. Our final month was vigorous jungle training at a place called Chakrauta, north of Delhi where we lived in Bashes (thatched roof huts).

Captain C.A. Williams, R.E. who was in charge of the entire program, reminded everyone that some of us in

training would likely be sent to Burma, and with other volunteers, would be the first to go.

An interesting highlight of our stay in Roorkee was a one-day Cricket match between the All-Ceylon Engineers and the Thomason College Team. Only four of our men had played College or Club cricket previously. A few had some village cricket experience, while three of our chaps had not even played the backyard 'polpithi' stuff. But we stonewalled and stole runs and we pulled off a victory by a few runs. We were now talk of the town and heroes at our Officer's Mess for weeks.

I may mention here that all CE units gave their men time to engage in sports - boxing, football and especially, field hockey. In 1943 an Indian Hockey team led by wizard Dhyani Chand

*(Continued on page 19)*





"...it is fitting that I should mention one who was instrumental in launching several young men into the Fourth Estate" writes former journalist and editor E.C.T. CANDAPPA as he concludes his engaging recollections in ...

## ...Editors of my time in Sri Lanka

**B**efore I come to the mainstream editors for whom I worked after I became a full time journalist, it is fitting that I should mention one who was instrumental in launching several young men into the Fourth Estate.

At my old school, St Benedict's College, in Colombo, the President of our Literary Union was a pushy student called Prosper Fernando. He invited the Editor of the *Times of Ceylon*, Victor Lewis, to address us one afternoon. This was during the sunset of the British establishment, when the Times was really *pukka sahib*. It speaks for the simplicity of Lewis and his generosity to have taken time off to address a student body.

But it paid dividends. His talk was so inviting that several students expressed a wish to become journalists. In fact, in the months that followed, a few actually joined the Times as reporters, abandoning other career plans. Some of them turned out to be very successful foreign correspondents, and one of them, Felician Fernando, became editor of the *Daily Mirror*, a sister paper of the group.

For my part, I kept in touch by sending in short reports, which kept my hand in and ultimately led to my joining Lake House. As for Prosper, who started it all, he went into broadcasting and quite literally became a household name. A body builder, with a splendid physique, he was also gifted with a powerful voice, and was greatly in demand for commercials.

### *I join Lake House*

When I joined Lake House in 1952, the era of the old fashioned editor had not quite ended. Hillaire Jansz and Jayantha Padmanabha were the last two of this variety. They were also among the literary types and ironically, they enjoyed a certain public profile, being popular after dinner speakers and occasional lecturers.

Rarely seen outside his editorial office, Jansz also wrote verse which he published in *The Observer* under the pen name of Jay Quill and sometimes described himself as the Quaint Gaunt Saint, gaunt because of his cadaverous physique.

Padmanabha wrote a delightful weekly column in the *Daily News* called Cabbages and Kings, signed by Walrus, though he was quite clean shaven.

Both editors were invited to our rumbustious editorial parties, both attended; and while Jansz kept aloof, Padmanabha unwound at the piano accompanying us; frequently singing Frankie and Johnny, accompanying himself. Ah, that really was something to hear and remember.

Then, the times they were a changin'. Lake House expanded into a new wing; Cecil Graham took over as Editor of the *Daily News* and Tarzie Vittachi became Editor of *The Observer*.

This was around 1953. The era of the closed door was gone forever.

Both Graham and Vittachi kept the lines of communication between themselves and the rest of the staff wide open. They were frequently seen in the news room talking with reporters, news editors, in the subs room with the sub editors, and even down in the din of the printing presses.

Both were prolific writers of vastly different types. Cecil was the anonymous editor. He wrote feature articles and editorials, but never signed them. He kept such a low profile, it was almost a fad. He rarely attended a public function or cocktail party, never accepted a gift in his official capacity, lest his independence be seen to be compromised.

On the paper he discouraged the use of "by-lines" except on special occasions. He was a workaholic of the text book sort. He came in to work at 10.00 am, took a break at 2.00 pm, returned at six and stayed on till 1 am. During weekends he curled up with about a dozen books. He was a generous man and a lavish host and threw great Christmas parties for his staff.

A man of high principles, he submitted his resignation several times when he disagreed with management policies (but was also persuaded to stay). He refused to accept my own resignation once, and encouraged my literary efforts. In a profession where it is hard to earn a good word, no one had anything bad to say



about him. He migrated to Australia and died a premature death.

Meanwhile, on *The Observer*... Tarzie Vittachi succeeded Hilaire Jansz. Tarzie's name and editorial style were well known to me before I joined Lake House. The dramatic change in the appearance of the paper was an illustration of how an individual editor can place his stamp on it. Tarzie's editorial policy was similar to that of the London tabloid, the *Daily Mirror*: Publish and be damned. Under Tarzie, the paper gained a reputation for exposing corruption in high places.

His reporting staff took the cue. Many of his reporters were stars and would have shone on any major newspaper in the world. They were fired with his kind of energy, zeal and courage.

*The Observer*, especially the *Sunday Observer*, under Tarzie, was a bright and breezy banner, carried by a band of buccaneering young journalists whose very zest for life was reflected in their writing.

The paper also boasted a panel of great feature writers and columnists, Tarzie being pre-eminent among them. Apart from his hard-hitting editorials and weekly political commentary, the *Sunday Observer* was hugely popular because of Tarzie's column called *Bouquets and Brickbats* under the pseudonym **Flybynight**, Colette's cartoons and E.M.V. Joseph's *Sooty Banda*, a satirical column. These were the major selling points of the paper and it quickly passed into journalistic legend. There was also a brace of humourists like Peter Van Reyk and Eric Ranawake who helped to lighten the weekend.

Tarzie was the ultimate journalist - he could cover anything, anytime. He would work long hours, but was for all that, an affable man willing to raise a glass with his staff.

Tarzie strode the international stage with flair and rose to giddy heights in journalism, becoming a contributing editor of *NEWSWEEK*.

His classic book on the Sri Lankan racial riots, **Emergency '58**, written at lightning speed and published by Andre Deutch, became a runaway best-seller, was banned in Sri Lanka and remains a cherished collector's item to this day.



• Tarzie Vittachi  
(Courtesy Sunday Observer 2010)

**In my opinion, Tarzie Vittachi was one of the greatest editors I have known.**

When Mrs Bandaranaike became Prime Minister, her vengefulness towards Lake House resulted in sustained efforts to strangle the free press. Tarzie felt he could not function effectively under such conditions and he left to breathe more freely in the West.

He was succeeded by Denzil Pieris. Denzil was also a highly professional, dedicated journalist. He brought to the new assignment a vast store of experience which included editing the fledgling Sinhala newspaper *Janata*, with barely a working knowledge of Sinhala. He brought that paper up to a very high standard.

When he occupied the chair vacated by Tarzie, I suspect, he felt a tad uncomfortable, like wearing borrowed shoes too big for his feet. So in order to build anew, he demolished some of what Tarzie had built.

When Denzil took over he would have none of all this. Quite

unceremoniously, he scrapped Sooty Banda and discouraged the humourists. He brought a heavy handed approach to those whom he regarded his opponents. The character of the paper changed irrevocably.

Professionally, Denzil was a firm believer in the work ethic. He worked hard and kept long hours. Personally he was a loner, highly excitable in a crisis, but could, on occasion, unwind to the extent of having a beer with the boys.

Unlike Tarzie, he gave himself plenty of elbow room politically, but eventually he too abandoned ship.

Ernest Corea was at different times Editor of *The Observer* and of the *Daily News*. He was perhaps one of the youngest to hold these posts and he filled them both with distinction. He was a ground beaker in many ways and brought to his style of editing a cultured flair. One had the feeling he went by many books on Management. He was one of the most efficient and therefore, most unflappable of editors. He



• Denzil Pieris  
(Courtesy Sunday Observer 2010)



ran all departments — news, sub-editors, features, sports — on greased wheels.

He was quick to recognise merit and initiated a system of weekly bonuses and offered little notes of appreciation for good work, which notes also went into our personal files.

Of course, not only in hindsight, it was evident that journalism was only a stage he was going through on his way to a diplomatic career. He claimed a distinguished lineage, with one kinsman, Sir Claude Corea, being a very high profile ambassador and another becoming the Speaker of the House of Representatives. Ernest Corea himself became Sri Lanka's Ambassador to Washington and by all accounts was a most acceptable one.

Politically, at the kindest, it could be said he was like a skilful poker player. He knew exactly which card to play—and when.

Ernest Corea was among the five editors I knew who could be considered second generation editors of the *Daily News*. The others were S. Pathiravitharne, B H S Jayewardene, Manik de Silva and Fred de Silva. I did not know those that followed after I had ceased to have dealings with Lake House.

S. Pathiravitharne (affectionately known as Pathi) was a sub-editor on the *Daily News* before his elevation to the editorial chair. After due reflection I might add, with apologies to the others, that he was the most personable of those who occupied that seat. He was tall, with wavy hair and a ready, flashing smile and an altogether pleasant manner. He was always approachable, though quite busy and efficient. I wish to make another statement after due consideration. He was the best equipped, intellectually and culturally, to hold that post, because functioning as he did in a predominantly bi-lingual setting, he was the only editor whose proficiency both in English and Sinhala were on par. Further, he was very widely read in English and Sinhala literature and the Western classics, quite familiar with mainstream events in English and Sinhala culture. He could write brilliantly in English and Sinhala, and



• Ernest Corea  
(Courtesy Sunday Observer 2010)

indeed wrote an engaging weekly column, which he later published in book form. His writing displayed flashes of humour, uniquely his own. I cannot recall anything he wrote that was tainted with malice. He was a true gentleman of the pen.

He was replaced by B H S Jayewardene (Jaye as he was often called) in one of those fits of political skullduggery for which Lake House was notorious after the infamous State take-over of the group. BHS was a UNP "plant". He was very close to the UNP hierarchy. Pathi was the innocent victim of such a maneuver. Replacing him was an act of political knavery.

Having said all that, BHS turned out to be an efficient editor. He was by nature an efficient person. He had that elusive genius of the super executive—the ability to handle several things concurrently without getting the wires crossed. I know, because I worked with and for him on several big projects. He took on major professional assignments for big commercial establishments and diplomatic missions, while performing efficiently as editor. He was also correspondent for some foreign journals.

He had an amazing grasp of local politics, a phenomenal capacity for sheer hard work. He liked his drop of an evening, but only the best Scotch, of which too he was a liberal host.

He stood out among a tribe that placed job over everything else. Jaye, who was married to a senior taxation official and had five children, always put his family first. How he managed to juggle his time to remain such a devoted husband and father was another matter for wonder.

The other two editors of the *Daily News* that I worked for were Manik de Silva and Fred de Silva.



• Manik De Silva  
(Courtesy Groundviews.com)

Manik was also a very youthful incumbent who began life as a journalist on *The Observer* as a cub reporter. From the very first line he wrote it was obvious a great journalist had arrived. He wrote about sport, soccer specifically. Unlike cricket and athletics, soccer belonged to the *hoi polloi* and it attracted among its vociferous fans several rowdy and criminal elements. Betting was rife.

Manik began his report with three explosive words: "Soccer in Ceylon stinks."



From then on there was no turning back. He became an exceptionally skilful and fearless reporter. Those of us who were older could not help holding him in a kind of affectionate admiration.

He too, like Ernest Corea, claimed a distinguished lineage. His father was W A de Silva, Vice Chancellor of the Colombo University and Dr Colvin R de Silva was his paternal uncle. Although his family background was Left, Manik leaned towards the right, but kept clear of partisan politics in reporting.

He too wrote for several international news agencies and publications. He wrote a clear crisp prose. Unlike Pathi, his range was limited to politics and current affairs.

Among his personal qualities was his tenacious loyalty to his friends. He also had a compassionate attitude towards the disadvantaged.

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***Fred de Silva... if ever there  
was editor material,  
he was the man.***

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After disenchantment with Lake House, like many others, he joined the Upali Wijewardene group of newspapers and remains the Editor of the *Sunday Island*.

Fred de Silva followed Manik as Editor of the *Daily News*, and if ever there was editor material, he was the man. He came to Lake House from the *Times of Ceylon* where he had established a firm reputation as a writer and sub-editor. After a short sojourn on *The Observer* where he edited Letters to the Editor and compiled the chatty Roundabout column, he went over to the *Daily News* as Features Editor. He transformed its make-up with the assurance of one who knew exactly what he was about.

Soon, when he became editor, he was able to put his stamp across the whole paper.

He was a widely read man and a deep thinker. He would think nothing of button-holing a hapless reporter at one o'clock in the morning and bamboozling him with his own take on some aspect of Hindu philosophy, or whatever. He was fond of an argument, and of controversy. He had an acerbic tongue and pen. But his arrogance finally got him into trouble. He criticised the attire of Supreme Court judges for their poor dress sense. They sent Fred to jail for a couple of

months. It was a galling experience for him in many ways. He was finicky in personal hygiene and a very discerning diner. Prison life was hardly like home. Lake House, bless them, sent him meals from the trendy Pagoda restaurant.

But Fred emerged from the ordeal a broken man. He died a couple of years later. As far as I can recall he was the only journalist who went to jail for a journalistic offence. Others may have spent time at 'Her Majesty's pleasure' for other reasons. Who knows?



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### **Memories of WWII years...**

*(from page 15)*

and his brother Roop Singh, a powerful duo (both played with the Indian team that won a Gold Medal at the 1936 Berlin Olympics) was brought to Ceylon to play a few games. This was done to boost the morale of Indian Army units that were stationed in Ceylon and also to foster more interest in the game.

If my memory holds me right, I recall that an All-Ceylon Services team that played against them included Captain B.R. Heyn and Fulham Wright of the C.L.I.; R.L. de Kretser and myself from the CEs, an English goalie and the rest were Indian army men.

As a matter of interest, I may here add that it was Mr. Heyn (as I knew him in my teen years) taught me the rudiments of the game when I was a student at Arethusa College in Wellawatte. He also coached us for the Inter-School tournament. It was an honour to play with him in the same team. Many years later, after a distinguished career, he went on to become Ceylon's Army Commander.

When we returned to Ceylon I was posted back to my old 40th unit in Trincomalee who were engaged in building a dam at a place called Palanpattam. The following year I was sent to Roorkee again for a special four-week crash course.

When WW II was finally over, it was a great privilege and wonderful experience for me to lead and march with a Ceylon Engineer Contingent at the Victory Parade in Trincomalee. My request to be released from active service was granted, and in 1946 I was back in Civvy Street.







## Meals Ammi Made

### PRAWN BADUN

by Geraldine de Saram- Jansz (from Canada)

#### Ingredients

25 large prawns, 1 tablespoon roasted chillie powder, ¼ teaspoon turmeric powder, 1 teaspoon roasted coriander powder, ½ teaspoon roasted cumin powder, ¼ teaspoon roasted anise powder, ¼ teaspoon fenugreek, 1 tablespoon sliced onions, 4 cloves garlic chopped, 2 slices green ginger chopped, 2 pieces each cinnamon & rampe, ¼ stem lemongrass, a sprig of curry leaves, 1 ½ cups coconut milk, juice of 2 lemons.  
Oil.

#### Preparation

Shell prawns and wash with turmeric and lime juice. Put into pan with all ground ingredients – garlic, ginger, half onions, cinnamon, rampe,

lemongrass, curry leaves, fenugreek, salt and add coconut milk to cover.

When prawns are nearly cooked add more milk to thicken. Allow the curry to cook a few minutes longer. Remove the gravy and let the prawns fry in oil together with the rest of the onions. Pour back the gravy, adding lemon juice to taste and let it simmer till the gravy is thick.

### 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 Ammi or Achchi.

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

## Anyone for a cuppa?

Doesn't that invitation remind you of days bygone in Ceylon? And how we loved our cuppa; morning, noon or night – and in-between for that matter!

Sweetened with sugar or the ubiquitous juggery. If white tea was your preference, it had to be condensed milk (or *tin kirri* in the vernacular). Remember the times when you were away from home and had your cuppa in the thambi boutique? Since your taste called for the plain dark variety, you called out: "Light ekata thae ekak danda thambi." And watched in wonder – and a little dismay – as the thambi tossed the brown piping-hot liquid from one metal mug about a foot into the air and caught it with another mug on its return – like some inveterate juggler doing the tricks of his trade. It was then that you noticed his thumb, pallid like death and riddled with burns. The result of years of his jugglery.

And what about the tea? It tasted out of this world! Those were the days...

Tea came to be grown in small areas in Ceylon as early as the 1840s by brothers Maurice and Gabriel Worms. In the 1860s a Scotsman by the name of James Taylor cleared some 19 acres of forest in a place called Hewaheta to plant his first seedlings of tea – the plantation that came to be known as Loolecondera Estate. By the mid-1870s Loolecondera had grown to nearly 100 acres. Even though most tea estates were comparatively small, there was a steady decline in coffee growing as the island's main export crop. It was *hemileia vastatrix* (a leaf fungus commonly called the coffee blight) first seen in the 1890s, that destroyed Ceylon's coffee plantations by the 1930s.

Tea filled the breach admirably to the delight of millions of aficionados everywhere. Cuppa anyone?

– Rivikula



• Maurice and Gabriel Worms.  
- Courtesy of Pussellawa & Maturata Plantations Ltd.



# St Anne' Church, Talawila— the most ancient Catholic shrine in Sri Lanka

(Photo: with permission from Administrator, Fr Luke Nelson Perera)

by Douglas Jones

When Vama Vamadevan's article on Venerable Father Joseph Vaz appeared in *The Ceylankan* (J51), I had freshly returned from Sri Lanka after my first ever visit to St Anne's Church in Talawila. Vama had highlighted the work of Fr Vaz in Ceylon during the latter half of the Dutch occupation of the island where, in the 1690s, Fr Vaz's presence just across the water in Puttalam had brought considerable solace to Catholics in the area, deprived of pastoral care for more than 50 years. I felt that a brief look at this most sacred and ancient of Christian shrines in Sri Lanka would be appropriate and of considerable interest to our readers.

This shrine is set in the littoral of the Kalpitiya peninsula, snuggled between Puttalam Lake and the Indian Ocean and stands in a relatively uninviting wasteland, ravaged by drought at one time and blasting monsoon weather the next. As if to protect it from nature's persistent onslaughts, acres of mature palm trees surround the church like sentinels.

The first permanent church of St Anne was built on its present site in 1762 and the church will be celebrating its 250-year jubilee in August 2012.

The statue is now more than 400 years old.

Both history and tradition have it that Kalpitiya and the district around it nurtured the earliest contacts between Ceylon and India and other foreign traders. Just across the lake, a few



• *The Talawila shrine as it is today.*

(Photo: by the author)

miles to the north of Puttalam at Kudiramalai Point (Kihirikanda) was a port used to export pearls to Arab countries, and in exchange, Arab horses were brought in from this port, giving it the name Kudiramalai Point (the word "Kudira" is a Dravidian root word for "horse"). Kihirikanda was visited by Roman sailors during the time of Claudius (417 AD) and Pliny talks of a large settlement called "Hippuros" here. The word



“hippuros” also evokes horses. It is also accepted that Vijaya and his shipload of followers landed on the beach of Thambapanni, not far away from Kudiramalai Point.

It was about 1606 that Christian missionary work began in the Kalpitiya peninsula and the Jesuits (Fathers of the Society of Jesus from South India) started preaching the gospel in the area. However, after Negombo was recaptured by the Dutch in the latter part of 1644, the Jesuits had no choice but to leave the peninsula.

In 1687, Ven. Fr Joseph Vaz, an Indian monk of the Oratorian Order, hearing of the plight of the deserted flock in Ceylon found his way into Jaffna disguised as a labourer. His arrival coincided with the time when the Dutch persecution of Catholics was at its bitterest and when there was a price set on the head of any Catholic priest who might be found in Dutch territory.

Notwithstanding incredible hardships, he ministered to the Catholics in the Jaffna and the Vanni areas. In 1690, he arrived in Puttalam and the presence of a priest just across the water was literally a God-send to the Catholics in the peninsula. By 1705, five new missionaries, including Father Jacome Gonsalves arrived in Ceylon.

Priests were never safe and secure in Kalpitiya as long as it was held by the Dutch. Despite all the dangers to their life and limb, the priests continued their ministry to the Catholics of the peninsula. With the authority and power of the Sinhalese rapidly declining and the ascendancy of the Dutch in coastal areas on the rise, the obstacles to missionary work increased but the Church continued to progress, especially in the King's territory – even if in the know of the Dutch.

Unexpectedly, King Sri Vijaya Raja Sinha died in the prime of life on August 11, 1747 and about the same time, many other calamities befell the kingdom, which were generally believed to be retribution for the injustices done to Catholics. At least, that was the belief of the king's successor, Kirthi Sri Raja Sinha, who therefore, treated the Catholics more favourably.

Meanwhile, the relations between the Dutch and Catholics in the peninsula had also improved considerably, and to such an extent that the priest at Kalpitiya was not only allowed

to carry out his missionary work unhindered, but also came to be regarded as a friend by the Dutchmen.

On February 15, 1796, the Dutch Governor Johan Gerard van Angelbeek surrendered Colombo to the British and from that date on Dutch rule in Ceylon became extinct and on May 27, 1806 all restrictions imposed by the Dutch on Catholics were removed.

What do we know about the humble beginnings of this church? Stories abound, but two plausible and important narratives have stood the test of time and gained credence and acceptance.

In the 17th century, it is said, a poor Portuguese man travelled on foot from Mannar to Colombo looking for gainful work there. Having no success in that regard and disappointed, he returned via the coast route this time. On the way, he happened to fall asleep under a large tree which grew at Talawila, at the very site of the present church. He dreamt that he saw an image at



• The 400-year old rough-hewn original statue venerated by millions at the shrine to this day.

(Photo: with permission from Administrator, Fr Luke Nelson Perera)

the foot of the tree, with lighted tapers burning on each side. On waking up, he was astonished to see that the image was actually there. Amazed at the strange realisation of the dream, he prayed aloud. While doing so, he was dazed by a strong glowing light, that illuminated the form of St. Anne herself. She was physically present, standing before him. The lady told him that the rough-hewn image he had seen was a representation of herself and that he should build a church at the spot, name it after her and preserve in it the statue he had found. Deeply impressed with what he had seen, the poor man hurriedly set about building a small chapel from



material he had obtained from Kurujupitty (near Kalpitiya) as a repository for the image.

St. Anne appeared to him again and left him some gold coins which enabled him to return to his country where he raised funds for the construction of a permanent church at Talawila. He had a third vision of the beautiful saint, upon whose instructions he demolished the old building with the help of two slaves and built a larger church in its place. The image now in the church is believed to be the identical statue discovered by the Portuguese traveller well over 400 years ago.

The second traditional story of the origin of the church is that during the 18th century, an European sailor trading in ebony and other commodities from Ceylon was shipwrecked off the coast of Talawila. The Kalpitiya peninsula was heavily forested and people collected products like elephant tusks, horns, honey, wax and ebony and shipped them off in sailing craft, with Government approval, to the southern ports. As the vessel was dedicated to St. Anne and carried her image, the crew sought her protection and their lives were saved.

The land was foreboding and offered the sailors no shelter. In distress, they saw a large Banyan tree about one and half kilometres to the south on the spot where the present church stands and whose cool shade seemed most welcoming. After reverently placing the sacred image in a hollow of the tree, they rested. Learning that he had no chance of recovering his ship or its cargo, the ship's captain returned to Galle; to his home and business. But, before leaving, he vowed to St. Anne that if his business prospered, he would revisit the spot and build a church, where he would place her image for veneration.

#### ***Place of the shipwreck***

Some men in a fishing craft from Kattaikadu saw the wreckage and made for it in the hope of picking up the goods afloat on the shore. The news spread and more people came to the spot, which gradually acquired the name of Kappaladi, which, in Tamil, means "the place of the shipwreck" or "place of the ship". From

the shore they strayed on to a large Banyan tree, probably to assess their finds under its cool shade. And to their wonderment, they found an image of St. Anne in hollow of the tree. Reports of favours granted spread all over the country and attracted many pilgrims to the spot.

Meanwhile, the merchant from Galle had prospered in business and revisited Talawila



• *The journey from Chilaw to Puttalam took three days in a bullock-drawn hackery.* (Photo: with permission from Administrator, Fr Luke Perera)

as promised. He built a little Chapel and placed in it the venerable image and made a pilgrimage to the Chapel annually when business brought him to Kalpitiya.

From the hollow of a banyan tree, the statue was moved to a cadjan hut and before long, to be replaced by a structure of wattle and daub. As numbers of the pilgrims increased, a church of brick walls and tiled roof was erected.

In a strange turn of events, 1943 saw the hull of a shipwrecked vessel beached on the nearby shores which those loyal to the legend believed to be the shipwrecked vessel of the European tradesman who founded the church. Despite the inhospitable environment, thousands of pilgrims, from all walks of life and every corner of Sri Lanka and elsewhere, throng this church dedicated to St Anne, the mother of Mary of Nazareth and therefore, the grandmother of Jesus Christ. After the death of her husband Joachim, St Anne lived in Nazareth with her daughter and a young Jesus. She died there at the age of 80, many years before the birth of Christianity. Pilgrims come all year round,



especially at Lent and for the traditional feast of St Anne which is celebrated on the first Sunday in August.

In 1837 the foundation stone for a new church was laid by Fr. Pedro Caetano and in 1843, Fr. Pedro de Noronha completed the church. Fr. Froilano Oruna replaced him and

introduced great changes to the church. The little Chapel dedicated to the Sacred Heart, where the Blessed Sacrament is revered with great honour was constructed in 1877. As more and more pilgrims visited the shrine, development to the church and surrounds to meet these demands had to take priority.



• *Fr Luke Nelson Perera*  
*Administrator, St Anne's.*

*(Photograph by the author)*



• *Historic statue of St Anne is carried in florally decorated chariot in procession on the saint's feast day and at other important festivals.*

*(Photograph with permission of the administrator Fr. Luke Nelson Perera)*

With the 250th jubilee year in 2012, an unprecedented number of pilgrims are expected to throng the shrine. Fr Luke Nelson Perera, the current administrator, is acutely aware of the developmental needs at the present time. Top of the list of priorities is the renovation of the roof and colour washing of the whole church before jubilee time; repairs to priests' cottages and construction of new rooms for visiting bishops; construction of overhead bridges at the approach roads at the entrance to the shrine; renovate the chariot used at processions; the provision of a suitable drinking water system and the construction of additional cottages to house

pilgrims; the protection of the shrine from sea erosion; tree planting to protect the environment. These improvements can happen, according to Fr Luke, only through public donations.

With wider roads and modern conveniences for swift and comfortable travelling possible today, it is difficult to imagine what earlier devotees underwent on a pilgrimage to St. Anne's shrine about 100 miles from Colombo.

For them it was altogether a slow, penitential and prayerful progress. Wherever they come across a church, they would necessarily stop to offer prayers and make vows for the safety of their journey. For they travelled in primitive ways, crossing waterways, through thick jungle infested with wild animals.

With the construction of the bridges, regular coach services and the introduction later of a bus service, the journey from Chilaw to Puttalam which took three days in a bullock-cart, was done in seven hours by bullock coach and in about half that time in horse-drawn coach. By motor bus the trip was completed in three or even two hours. In 1926, the first train ran to Puttalam and the journey to St. Anne's became easy, though it lost much of its romance and adventure. In 1950, a fine broad road, 16-feet wide was completed and opened to the public.

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*Congratulations and a  
Warm Welcome to our  
New Members*

MR MAURICE ANGHIE Hammersley, WA  
MR GAMINI DE ALWIS, Mulgrave, VIC





Readers will recall *Shelagh Goonewardene's* personal view of the great Sri Lankan artist George Keyt (J54). Here **TISSA DEVENDRA** brings readers up to speed with a Keyt painting that was adapted into a stained glass window, exhibited at the World Expo 1967 in Montreal, Canada. As it turned out, the stained glass reconstruction of the George Keyt classic painting was far too good to be regarded as a mere passing exhibit. Today *Lanka Matha/Mother Lanka* is on permanent display in the foyer of the Bibliotheque (Library) Marie-Uguay, Boulevard Monk in Montreal, Canada for posterity.

## GEORGE KEYT - Lost and found



• *The unique stained glass version of George Keyt's **Lanka Matha/Mother Lanka** displayed in the foyer of the Bibliotheque (Library) Marie-Uguay, Boulevard Monk in Montreal, Canada.*

**T**his story has more than one beginning. I might as well start with the beginning of my friendship with George Keyt.

Some time in 1982 or so, I was invited by television station Rupavahini to script a documentary on Sri Lanka's greatest artist George Keyt, to celebrate his 83rd birthday on April 17, 1984. The last, and only, time I had met Keyt prior to that was more than 50 years earlier as a schoolboy in Kandy, when I accompanied my father D.T. Devendra who called on him to collect the drawing the artist had gifted to be the front cover of the Dharmaraja and Mahamaya College Souvenir for their Exhibition and

Fun Fair. I wonder whether either school has preserved a copy of this historic magazine.

As for script writing, I had known next to nothing till I participated in a brief course conducted by the American documentary filmmaker Dr. Wilbur T. Blume. However, Anura Gunasekera of Rupavahini, unlike me, was confident of my capacity to do the job. And so to work...

The first thing to do was to meet Keyt. His fellow-artist and my colleague in the administration, Stanley Kirinde, readily accepted my invitation to call on the great man and introduce me to him. It was here, in the simple



Sirimalwatta home he shared with his consorts Menike and Kusum, overlooking the lush green paddy fields of Dumbara that our acquaintance ripened into friendship over the next few months.

Keyt was a fine raconteur and while master film-maker Tissa Liyanasuriya and his team pottered around with their cameras, Keyt enthralled me with the story of his life and art on which I was to base my script.

In the course of one of our many conversations he spoke with some regret of the large painting he had been commissioned to do for the Ceylon Pavilion at the International EXPO 1967 at Montreal, Canada.

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*Invited to participate in EXPO 1967 in Montreal, Canada, Prime Minister Dudley Senanayake, also Minister of Foreign Affairs, instructed Foreign Secretary G.V.P. Samarasinghe to spare neither expense nor effort to make the Ceylon Pavilion truly memorable.*

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However, it was not the painting that had been on display but, as he seemed to remember, it was a large "tapestry" version. Keyt had never been invited to the exhibition and never saw this work of art as it was left behind in Montreal, too delicate to be shipped to Ceylon.

#### ***Flashback to 1966***

The account that follows is largely "intelligent conjecture" as almost all the main actors are no longer alive and as a retired pensioner, I have no access to the archives of the Foreign Ministry. As for me, I was no participant in these "earth-shaking" happenings but only a district officer in the outstations.

To the best of my recollection, Independent Ceylon had never participated in any of the prestigious international expositions held, at irregular intervals, as grand national displays of tourism, industry and culture. We were now invited to participate in EXPO 1967 to be held in Montreal, Canada. Prime Minister Dudley Senanayake, who held the Ministry of Foreign Affairs portfolio, instructed Foreign Secretary G.V.P. Samarasinghe to spare neither

expense nor effort to make the Ceylon Pavilion truly memorable.

Ceylon's High Commissioner in Canada, L.S.B. Perera, wealthy racehorse owner and top administrator, was a key figure in the organisation. His wife Nimal was an aficionado of Ceylon's art and culture. It is, therefore, most likely that it was Mrs. Perera who inspired the idea to have a large painting by our greatest artist, George Keyt, as the centrepiece of the Ceylon Pavilion.

Keyt rose to the opportunity of exposure to an international audience and painted a large canvas (529 cm x 260 cm) of **Lanka Matha/ Mother Lanka** in all her luxuriance as a village maiden carrying on her hip the *punkalasa* (amphora) symbolising abundance and fertility.

The identity of who was responsible for what happened next remains a mystery. This was the decision to reinterpret Keyt's mural, with his consent, in the medium of stained glass panels (not a "tapestry" as the artist seemed to remember a couple of decades later).

The painting was transported to London. Proper research had obviously been done before Keyt's painting was entrusted to 'Studio Stained Glass' at White Friars. The studio transformed the painting into seven panels of 67cm x 260cm each. These panels were then shipped to Montreal where they were meticulously reassembled at the Ceylon Pavilion to be its greatly admired centrepiece.

At the conclusion of the EXPO, a major issue that arose was the disposal of Keyt's mural. Apart from the inevitable logistical problems of shipping these panels intact to Ceylon, there was the organisers' awareness that there was no gallery in Colombo that could house it for display with the extraordinary care it deserved.

The Foreign Ministry and our High Commission in Ottawa then came up with the brilliant idea to gift the mural, as a gesture of gratitude, to the City of Montreal that had hosted the exposition. That was that and Keyt's mural now disappeared from Ceylon's official records and personal memories.

#### ***The search begins - 1984***

In 1984, Rupavahini honoured Keyt's 83rd birthday with its production of 'George Keyt - Artist of Sri Lanka', scripted by me and filmed by Tissa Liyanasuriya. My friendship with Keyt continued till his death nine years later. Although



our conversations ranged far and wide, to my regret, never again did we discuss the EXPO "tapestry". I did make a few desultory inquiries from a Canadian acquaintance who had visited

not having thought of him earlier.

#### ***Found at last -2010***

I lost no time telling Mahinda of my quest and he promptly got in touch with his friend Mme.

France Malouin. She, in turn, contacted M. Claude Brault of the Montreal Directorate of Cultural Development who has now provided us with the desired information about this work of art, its provenance and photographs in location.

This work of art is part of the permanent Art Collection of the City of Montreal. The stained glass installation of 'Lanka Matha' is now beautifully displayed in the foyer of the Bibliotheque (Library) Marie-Uguay, Boulevard



• *A close-up of the stained-glass reinterpretation of Keyt's classic mural 'Lanka Matha/Mother Lanka'.*

Montreal only to be informed that this work of art was in storage in the museum and could not be displayed.

And there the search rested, in "neutral gear" as it were, until in 2007, when I serendipitously met Canadian diplomat Jean-Philippe Linteau at Rohan Edrisinha's home. When I discovered that JP (as he facetiously called himself) was a French Canadian from Montreal, I thought I had hit "pay dirt" and invited him to locate Keyt's "tapestry" secreted somewhere in Montreal. Unfortunately, before we could proceed further, JP was transferred to the Canadian Embassy in Washington.

Conscientious as he was, he put me in touch via e-mail with Mlle. Amelie Boucher of the Montreal Directorate of Cultural Development. I corresponded with her, in my rather rusty French, but was not able to get a photograph of this work of art. However, she seems to have sent one to JP in Washington who seems to have sent it to me, but I never received it at the time. He sent it again. I received the customary New Year card from our dear friend Mahinda Pathmasiri in Montreal. We had known him since his youth as a fellow student at the Alliance Francaise while working as an assistant in a well-known optical firm. He was now in Montreal as the Chief Executive of a Canada-wide optical firm. I could have kicked myself for

Monk in Montreal.

It is mounted on a steel frame and illuminated with neon backlighting (see photographs). Till now, the authorities in Montreal knew little about Keyt whose wonderful mural attracts great attention in this library. I hope that the information I have provided them will go some way to remedy this.

On behalf of the people of Sri Lanka, I must express my sincere gratitude to all those who assisted in this re-discovery of Keyt's wonderful stained glass mural – Canadian diplomat Jean Philippe Linteau, Amelie Boucher and Claude Brault of the Montreal Directorate of Cultural Development, France Malouin and my dear friend Mahinda Pathmasiri, President-Directeur-General, Optique Nikon Canada.

On April 17, 2011 was the 110th anniversary of George Keyt's birth and the long lost masterpiece re-emerged just prior to his 109th anniversary in 2010.

But there yet remains a mystery to be solved. Where is Keyt's original painting on which the stained glass mural was based?

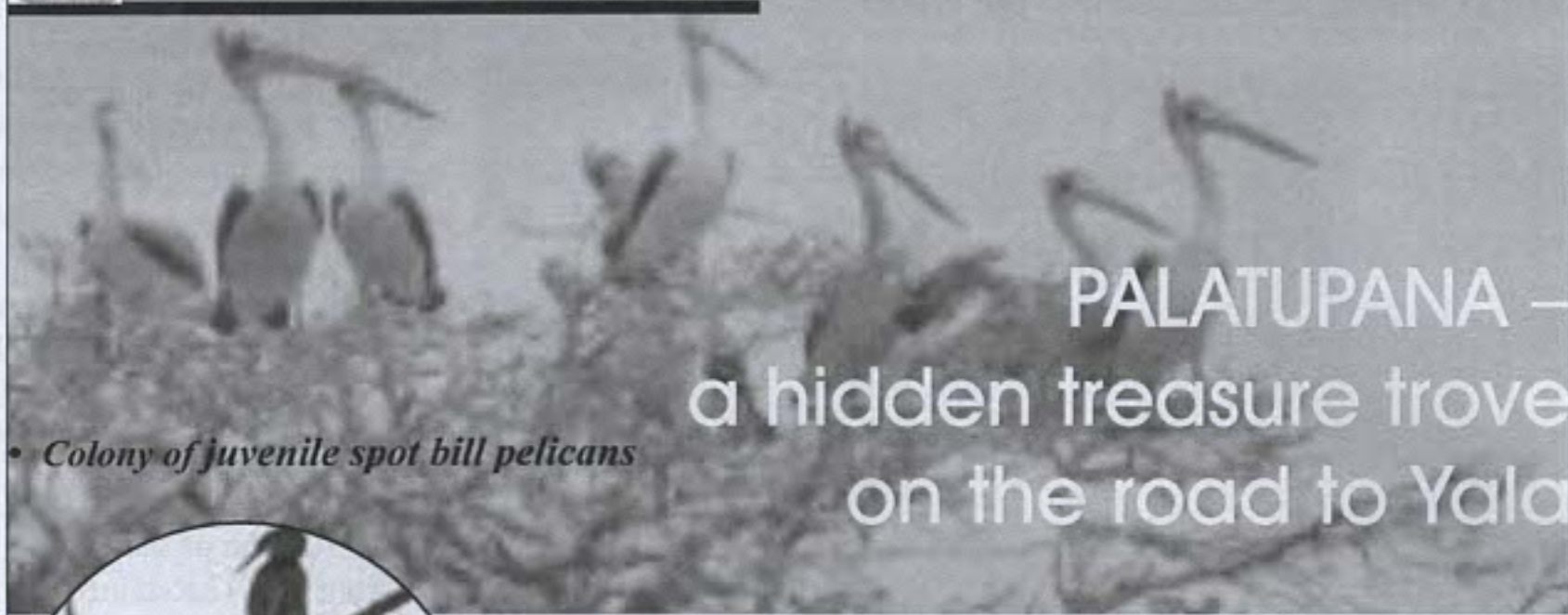
*(This article was first published in the Sunday Times of April 18, 2010)*



**Architecture is the art of  
how to waste space.**

– Philip Johnson; *New York Times* 27 December 1964





• *Colony of juvenile spot bill pelicans*

## PALATUPANA – a hidden treasure trove on the road to Yala



• *Indian Darter  
and chicks*



• *Painted Stork  
Chick on nest*



• *Egret chicks on nest*



• *Ibis and darters sharing tree*

A mere five minutes drive (or less) from the main ticket office to Yala National Park is the location of Palatupana. Hundreds, if not thousands, of tourists from overseas and Sri Lanka drive past this location eager to enter Yala National Park and enjoy what that Park has to offer.

To the more observant and to those interested in seeing more than the 'big five' within Yala, the surrounds of Yala have much to offer. I have been most privileged to visit the hidden nesting colonies of Palatupana.

Black-headed Ibis, Indian Darters, Grey Herons, Egrets and Spot-bill Pelicans amongst other varieties; share the available trees to nest in their hundreds in these colonies. If one is lucky enough and with some patience the cycle of life is also observed as birds of prey swoop down to snatch a young chick from time to time. Grey Langurs, Wild Boar and Spotted Deer also visit the location.

Herds of domestic water buffalo owned by the local people 'guard' these colonies as they wallow in the water holes or mud holes and some 'tip toeing' past the stare of these animals is a necessary act of bravado if one wants to gaze in amazement at the noisy colonies.

Needless to say these colonies are kept away from general tourist traffic and the sensitivity of the annual nesting cycle must not be disturbed. However, one can certainly observe a variety of birdlife in the lagoon by the roadside. Many different types of water/marsh birds share the same lagoon and tree branches. The visibility is great and some great photo opportunities present. All one has to do is slow down! And take note.

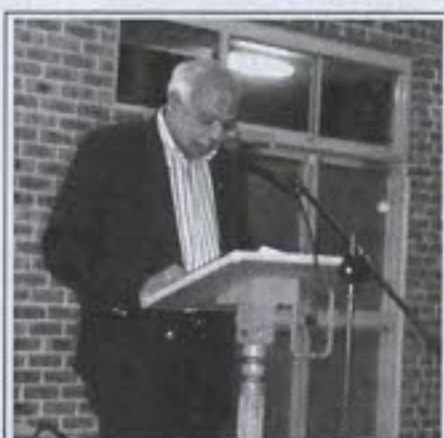


## SYNOPSIS OF MEETINGS

Sydney May 29, 2011

There were two speakers at this well attended meeting chaired by the CSA President, Harry de Sayrah. **Srikantha Nadarajah** spoke about *Banking and Business in Sri Lanka* and introduced his recent book of the same title.

He said that he had 38-years' experience in the field of Banking and that his non-political, non-academic approach covered the last 150 years of Banking in Sri Lanka. Formal banking in Sri Lanka started in the mid-nineteenth century with British and Indian Banks serving the plantation sector and Indo-Lankan trade. The Sri Lankans had recourse only to pawnbrokers and Afghan money lenders. In 1934 the Government



• President Harry de Sayrah

appointed the Pockhanwala Commission to investigate banking facilities for Sri Lankans and as a result the Bank of Ceylon was established in 1939. This Bank made gradual progress under colonial rule and by 1948 had eight branches. After 20 years of existence, it generated about 50% of the banking operations of Sri Lankans. The Bank of Ceylon was nationalised in 1961 and the Peoples Bank was also established in the same year. Their activities were limited in scope until the advent of the Hatton National Bank and other commercial banks in the 1970s.

The Central Bank was established in 1950 with the function of regulating commercial banks, managing public debt, exchange control, providing advice to the Government and overseeing the Employees Provident Fund. The problem area was rural banking and rural credit. From the mid-nineteenth century, Sri Lanka had a plantation economy with the principal exports being tea, rubber and coconut. In the mid-1970s the plantation sector was nationalised and individual ownership of land was limited to 50 acres. This had an adverse effect on the economy. Insurgencies and youth unemployment were also a setback in the 1970s. There was a change from the free market economy to a controlled economy with restrictions on foreign exchange allocations and import controls.

Free Trade Zones were started up to attract foreign direct investment and tax and foreign exchange incentives were provided. Late in the 1970s and 1980s there was an expansion in business particularly in the garment sector. In the early 1990s there were incentives for business with the privatisation of plantations. Incentives were also provided for opening business facilities outside Colombo and outside the Free trade Zones.



• V.S. Nadarajah's book launch

By the 1980s, the garment sector grew rapidly with export expansion and by 1992 it replaced tea as the major export. Due to international competition, the world market share of Sri Lanka's export of tea dropped. This led to diversification of the economy with new export products and the economy became more stable.

The country has achieved considerable progress by diversification of the economy and achieved the status of a newly industrialised country and further expansion can be expected with the restoration of peace.

The next speaker **Dr Tom Silva** talked about *Governor William Manning (1918 - 1925) and seeds of communal discord in Ceylon - a layman's impression*. Dr Silva said that there was harmony between sections of the community in the Legislative Council in the first two decades of the 20th century, whereby all sections had representation and there was no animosity.



• Dr Tom Silva

Manning introduced the principle of communal representation from 1921 with a seat for Tamils in Colombo, resulting in the break-up of the Ceylon National Congress. It was followed by the Manning Constitution of 1923 – a major departure from the past. This led to continuing political dissensions between majority and minority communities until Independence.

British imperialist rule of Sri Lanka went on for about 150 years, during which period there were 30 British Governors. For the first 50 years from about 1800 to 1850 they were military men, for the second 50 years, they were builders like Ward and Gregory who built and restored tanks, built railways and roads. For the final 50 years till



1948, they were mandarins who were expected to fob off native aspirations for Independence.

The Colebrook-Cameron Reforms of 1833 which established the Legislative Council, the McCallum Reforms of 1910 which allowed the first ever election and the Manning Reforms of 1920 were all during periods of non-Tory governments in Britain. The Colebrook-Cameron Reforms pulled Ceylon out of the old feudalism of the ancient kings and started the market economy. It released people from caste-orientated occupations to jobs outside their caste. However, political battle lines were still drawn on caste up to Manning's time. In the Legislative Council, the Governor selected one representative each from the Sinhalese and Tamils. These were non-official members who could contribute to the debates but did not have the power to vote at meetings. The Governor selected one representative from the Sinhalese Goigama Bandaranaike or Obeysekera Protestant families and one representative from a Tamil Vellala Hindu family. Meanwhile, those from other castes went into business and did very well, owning large tracts of land and plantations. In the 1880s, the De Soysas and the De Mels and their sons-in-law like James Peiris and Marcus Fernando were overlooked for the Sinhala seat, with the Governor appointing a Bandaranaike.

Marcus Fernando was sent to England to campaign for the right of Ceylonese to elect representatives to the Legislative Council and in 1911, the first election was held under the McCallum Reforms for the Educated Ceylonese seat. To be eligible to vote, one had to be male, over 21 years of age, owning property and educated to a certain level. The net result was that only 4.5% of the population of about 4.5 million were eligible to vote. In this first ever election of 1911, Marcus Fernando was a candidate. The Sinhalese Goigamas were unable to field a suitable candidate and supported the candidature of the Vellala Tamil, Sir P Ramanathan who won the seat by a substantial margin. Voting had been on a caste rather than a communal basis.

In 1912, D S Senanayake's father started the Temperance Movement. In 1915 the Sinhalese Muslim riots took place and the brothers F R and D S Senanayake were arrested as instigators of the riots, incorrectly as it turned out. Sir P Ramanathan had to bail them out. This was also the end of the Temperance Movement. In 1919, Sir P Arunachalam, who had a broader vision, found voting on caste lines intolerable. He

mooted the idea of territorial seats and formed a federation called the Ceylon National Congress. It consisted of the Ceylon National Association, Ceylon Liberal League, Sinhala Mahajana Sabha, Jaffna Association, Ceylon Reform League and the Kandyan Association.

Governor Manning vowed to demolish the Ceylon National Congress as he felt that it was getting to be too powerful. The Kandyans felt that they were behind the others and asked for a communal seat for the Kandyans. Manning sent representatives of the Kandyan Association to London and they were granted two seats for the Kandyans—this was the Manning Reform of 1920 and Manning could select the two Kandyan representatives. The 1921 elections were on a territorial basis and there were 13 seats for the Sinhalese and three seats for the Tamils.



• Governor William Henry Manning

Manning saw this as an opportunity to destroy the Ceylon National Congress. He said that there should be a communal seat for the Tamils in Colombo, which was favoured by Arunachalam, but James Peiris was against this on the grounds that 'no communal seats' was a fundamental plank of the Ceylon National Congress. This led to the break up of the Ceylon National Congress. The Sinhala Mahajana Sabha was favoured by the Sinhalese and the Tamils formed the Tamil Mahajana Sabhai. Sinhala communalism started in 1912 with the Temperance Movement and was reincarnated in 1918 as the Sinhala Mahajana Sabha. When F R Senanayake died in 1925, the Sinhala Mahajana Sabha was eclipsed and re-started as the Sinhala Maha Sabha, later to become the Sri Lanka Freedom Party. Manning had achieved his goal by 1925.

— Thiru Arumugam

#### Melbourne June 26, 2011

Mrs. Shelagh Gunawardene addressed the meeting and informed the audience regarding a project to build an Art Gallery at Peradeniya University (Sri Lanka) to exhibit George Key's work. She said all proceeds from card sales



would assist the project and that donations were also welcome.

Mr. Chandra Wikramagamage, who is a Professor Emeritus, University of Sri



• Mr. Chandra  
Wikramagamage

Jayawardhanapura, Sri Lanka and has worked at various universities in Sri Lanka and was the Archaeological Director, working for the UNESCO – Sri Lanka Cultural Triangle Project, spoke on **“Misrepresentations and Misinterpretations**

#### **of Mahawamsa”**

The Mahawamsa, or the Great Chronicle of Sri Lanka, consists of five volumes describing the history of the island from 600BC to 1978 AD. Volume 1 was written by *poranas* (ancient historians) in Sinhala during 550 BC – 362 AD, while King Vijaya to King Mahasena ruled the country. Volume 2 was written in Pali by unknown authors from Mahavihara during the reign of King Mahasena to Sri Wickrama Rajasinhe 362 AD – 1781. Volume 3 written in Pali and Sinhala covering the British colonial era ranging from 1815 – 1936 was penned by Ven. Yagirala Pannananda in Sinhala and Pali. Dr. Nandadeva Wijesekara was the author of Volume 4, (1936 – 1956) also written in Pali and Sinhala, covering time of pre-independence to the leadership of S.W.R.D. Bandaranaike. Volume 5 also in Pali and Sinhala, was compiled by Ven. Bellana Gnanawimala. It covered 1956 – 1977 during the period of S.W.R.D. Bandaranaike to J.R. Jayawardene. This was published in 2011. The Ministry of Cultural Affairs and Art has commenced writing the Volume 6 of Mahawamsa. *Buddhawarsa* (Buddhist era) was utilised up to the Volume 3 of Mahawamsa, While Volumes 4 and 5 *Kristuwarsa* (Christian era) was used.

Mahawamsa is a continuous record of Sri Lanka from 600 BC to 1978 expounding the political history and the history of Theravada Buddhism. It should be considered as a world heritage book, Mr. Wikramagamage said.

The Mahawamsa was edited, translated and published under different titles, which hampers the existence of it as a continuous historical record.

The author of Mahawamsa according to modern historians is Ven. Mahanama. Al-

though *poranas* were its authors, the author of Vamsatthappakasini (Mahawamsa translation into Pali) says that Ven. Mahanama was the translator of Mahawamsa Volume 1. Prof. G.P.Malalasekara re-edited Mahawamsa Volume 1 in Maghadi with Roman letters. The Sinhala translation of Mahawamsa Volumes 1 and 2 by Ven. H. Sumangala and Andris de Silva Batuvantudave have indicated Sanskrit *sa* instead of Maghadi *sa*.

The Volume 1 (Ven.Mahanama's translation) and Volume 2 which were translated and edited into English by W. Geiger has mistakenly named the first volume as Mahawamsa and the second volume as Culawamsa. Culawamsa was referred to as a type of ruler.

As the second editor of Mahawamsa Volume 1 (Ven. Mahanama's translation) and Volume 2, Ven. Buddhadatta published these volumes under the title of Unapuranasahito Mahawamso. His Unapurana only refers to an appendix to his edition but not a part of the body of the text. Ven. Y. Pannananda in his Mahawamsa Volume 3 has made the same mistake.

Ven.Moggalana is the author of Mahawamsa according to some modern writers. But he is only the editor of Ven. Mahanama's translation of Volume 1. Modern historians have a misconception in saying that Dipawamsa is older than Mahawamsa Volume 1. In fact, Mahawamsa Volume 1 is older than Dipawamsa.

The book entitled *“Corrections of Geiger's Mahawamsa”* by Ven. Polwatte Buddhadatta highlights the misinterpretations by W. Geiger in his edition and English translation of Mahawamsa. The local legend of Vijaya influenced the *poranas* in writing the early history of Sri Lanka, but there are several different versions of the North Aryan invasions in 600- 500 BC.

S. Paranavitane in his *“Stupa in Ceylon”* mentioned that Abhayagiri stupa was built by Vattagamini Abhaya in the 1st century BC. Later, he said that it was not Abhagiri stupa but Silathupa was built by Vattagamini Abhaya. The stupa at Abhayavihara (Abhayagirivihara) was built by Gajabahu I according to Dipawamsa. The Mahawamsa says that King Gajabahu built Abhayagiri stupa as the largest stupa. King Gajabahu enlarged the Abhayagiri stupa according to W. Geiger. King Gajabahu was one

(Continued on page 32)



## 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 to promote these materials 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.

### Banking and Business in Sri Lanka

by V.S.Nadarajah Foreword by Rienzie Wijetilleke, Chairman, Hatton National Bank.



Published by Kandy Books (2010)

This book gives a non-technical and non-political perspective on economic and social background to developments, especially since independence.

### Synopses (from page 31)

of the descendents of Lambakarana rulers and built the Abhayagiri stupa in commemoration of three heroes and named it "Abayagamaniutara Mahaceta". Both Paranavitane and Geiger have misinterpreted the Mahawamsa account.

Senarat Paranavitane, in Mahawamsa (Chapter on Vijaya's arrival) says that Sri Lanka was named Simhaladvipa because the inhabitants were Simhalas which is incorrect. A person called Simhala from Simhakalpa in India came to Tamradvipa island as the leader of a group of 500 people and joined 200 men from Madyadesa in India as recorded in Mahavastu and the Divyavadana (Buddhist Sanskrit texts). Simhala as the king renamed the island as Simhaladvipa; island of Simhala. The first Indo-Aryan ruler of Sri Lanka is Simhala according to Indian and some Sri Lankan literary works, other than the Mahawamsa. The interpretation of the Vijaya legend claims that Simhabahu killed his father who was a lion and obtained the name Simhala. The term Simhala in early sources does not mean a lion killer.

A North Indian Aryan brought Maghadi (Pali) for the first time to the island. Sinhala is derived from the Magahdi language.

The talk was concluded by a lively discussion.

– Dilhani Kumbukkage

### THE HEART IN THE HARP

by Shelagh Goonewardene

Foreword by Yasmine Gooneratne

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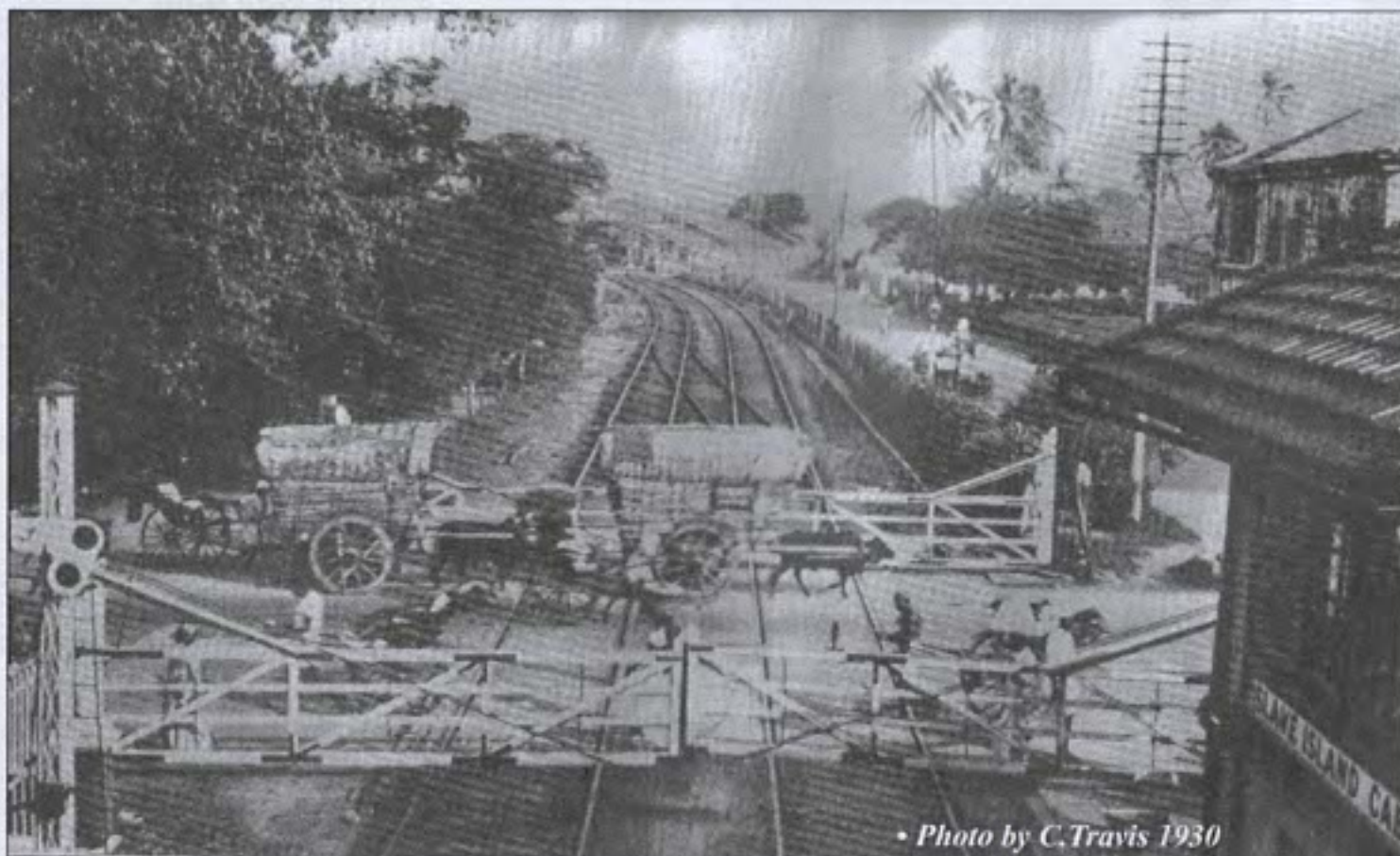
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## Then and Now



• Photo by C. Travis 1930

The Slave Island Railway Station (better known as Kompannya Vidiya Railway Station) is one of the oldest legacies of the British heritage. This photograph was taken from the level crossing early one morning, 81 years ago. An important station for suburban traffic in the Colombo area at the time, this interesting photograph shows bullock carts and rickshaws, both of which were extensively used in those days.

The area got its name during the British occupation and originates from the Portuguese and Dutch periods of administration when slaves, mostly African, were brought there. Built under the Governor Gregory regime, it was, latterly, the first station on the coast line route to have a double platform, following duplication of the coast line from 1913 onwards.



• Photo by Stefan D'Silva 2011

The coast line rail track, initially built from Fort to Moratuwa in the 1870s, was subsequently extended to Matara.

Since then, the area has evolved into a commercial locale with business establishments, hotels and shopping centres, making it an appropriate central railway station location.

Starting in 2002, under commercial sponsorship, the station has been



• Photo by Stefan D'Silva 2011

refurbished while preserving its colonial architectural value – restoring the station to its original splendour while enabling modern facilities to compliment the age-old architecture.

The level crossing, bridge and other amenities within the station have been refurbished and modernised on these lines. Slave Island is now regarded as one of the oldest and cleanest railway stations in Sri Lanka.





## NEXT SYDNEY MEETING

*A night of nostalgia, culinary insights  
and Sri Lanka pride*



with Paul van Reyk  
on Sunday 28th August 2011  
commencing 6.30 pm

at the Thornleigh Community Centre  
Corner Phyllis & Central Avenues  
(off Pennant Hills Road) Thornleigh

*Paul is a passionate advocate for the right of Sri Lankan cuisine to take its place among the world's greatest fusion cuisines. From his earliest experience of licking the mixing spoon of his grandmother's Christmas cake through his restaurant reviews to his on-going research into the origins of the cuisine, Paul has been keen to liberate Sri Lankan cuisine from the put-down that it is just an 'India Lite'. Paul has spread his message through the SBS Food Safari program, his catering business, his cooking classes for over 300 Sydneysiders, his food tours of Sri Lanka and his Buth Kuddeh website.*

ADMISSION IS FREE. ALL ARE WELCOME  
especially interested young people

The talk will be followed by a brief question  
time with some short eats, coffee and tea  
available thereafter.

Attendees who are able to do so are requested to  
bring a plate of savoury finger food (no sweets  
please). To avoid duplication of food, please con-  
tact **Chandra Senaratne (Social Convenor)** on  
(02) 9872 6826. Otherwise, a monetary donation  
as an alternative, to help defray cost, would  
be appreciated.

## MELBOURNE MEETING

Sunday August 28, 2011  
starting 5:30 p.m.

at

St Scholastica's Community Centre  
(behind St Scholastica's Church),  
348 Burwood Highway, BURWOOD  
(Melway 61 D6)

**Dr. Tony Donaldson**

will present an illustrated talk on

**"Ceylon through the eyes  
of Benjamin Britten  
and Sir Peter Pears"**

In early 1956 the British composer Benjamin Britten and the tenor Sir Peter Pears visited Ceylon as part of a tour of the Far East. Britten and Pears performed two recitals in Colombo, visited Kandy, Polonaruwa, Sigiriya and Haputale. They met local personalities including Devar Surya Sena and George Keyt. In Kandy, the artist George Keyt introduced Britten and Pears to local dancers and drummers and the two made a recording of the drummers. During his short stay in Ceylon Britten was able to gain a clear sense of the tensions simmering beneath the surface of Ceylon in 1956 and left the island with a strong impression of its cultural and political life. Drawing on personal correspondence, travel dairies, films, newspaper reports, and accounts of the Ceylonese Britten and Pears met, this talk investigates Britten and Pears visit to Ceylon, their interactions with local personalities, their perspectives of the cultural and political life of Ceylon and how their views were formed.

Dr TONY DONALDSON

has a PhD from Monash University. His thesis, on the Temple of the Tooth, won the Edward Gray Prize in 2006. In 2009, he was a Visiting Research Fellow at the Institute of Southeast Asian Studies in Singapore. His present research interests are focused on British organisations in Ceylon (1942-46), the overseas Ceylonese/Sri Lankan communities, Buddhist and Hindu temples, and contemporary artists in Asia.

For further enquiries contact  
**Hemal 0427 725 740**



## YOUR LITERARY CONTRIBUTIONS

THE CEYLANKAN is published quarterly and the editor is on the look-out for your literary contributions. Be assured that your work will be given careful consideration with a view to publication at all times.

While every effort is made to print material that is relevant and correct, we do not take the responsibility for errors. The editor would appreciate any inaccuracies being brought to his attention.

Original, previously unpublished, material is sought, preferably of an anecdotal, historical nature, but any material will be considered provided it contributes to the CSA's ideals of being non-racial, non-political, non-religious and non-controversial.

To facilitate the design/layout, we request that your word processing/typing be unformatted. Where applicable, contributors are also requested to annotate bibliographical references to help further research and study by interested members.

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## WE NEED SPEAKERS

The Society welcomes knowledgeable and academic persons to speak at our meetings in Sydney, Melbourne & Colombo. You may have potential candidates for speakers in your families, among friends or relatives who live in or visit Australia or Sri Lanka. Our meetings are held quarterly in February, May, August & November of each year. Dates can be arranged to suit the availability of speakers. Overhead projection and PA facilities are also available.

If you would like to share your knowledge and expertise among a group of like-minded people, please contact our President Harry de Sayrah on (Mob) 0415 402 724 or Shelagh Goonewardene (03) 9808 4962 (Melbourne) or Somasiri Devendra (Colombo) 2737180.

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## OUR SPONSORS

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- Lions Club of Bankstown, NSW, Australia, courtesy of our President Lion Harry de Sayrah, OAM JP; and

- Universal Magazines Pty Ltd of North Ryde NSW 2113.

## OUR BACK COVER

*Photographer Chulie de Silva writes:*



The photograph of the mural is from a series in the Image House (Buddhu Medura) of the Sri Sunandaramaya Temple at Katudampe.

A picturesque little village, Katudampe lies on the landside of the seaside town

of Ratgama.

I have not been able to trace any mention of these murals but according to the Chief Scholar Priest Rev. Tilaka, artists might have commenced paintings as far back as 200 years ago. The origins of the temple go back about 300 years when the village had only 13 families and was on land gifted by the government. The Image House and the "Vehera" were the first to be built. There were no accessible roads and entry to the temple was from the adjoining river.

The murals are in the Kandyan tradition of temple paintings. The artist(s) of these murals are not known but they might have been completed by pupils/apprentices of M.Sarlis, the well-known temple artist and illustrator.

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## CSA's Annual General Meeting and Christmas Dinner

Sunday November 27  
at KURING-GAI TOWN HALL,  
PYMBLE.

More details as they come to hand.  
**KEEP THIS DATE FREE**



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*Fresco at Katudampe temple, Ratgama, Sri Lanka*  
Photograph © Chulie Kirtisinghe de Silva. Reproduced with  
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