



Dedicated to the memory of
Tulsi Karunanayake -
Life Member of the CSA



The Ceylankam

The Journal of the Ceylon Society of Australia



The Ceylon Society of Australia

PRESIDENT

Pauline Gunewardene
Mobile: 0419 447 665
email: paulineg@ozemail.com.au

VICE-PRESIDENT

Dr Srilal Fernando

SECRETARY

Sunimal Fernando
Mobile: 0404 462 412
Tel: (02) 9476 6852
email: smfernando@tpg.com.au

TREASURER & PUBLIC OFFICER

Deepak Pritamdas
Mobile: 0434 860 188
email: deepakpsl1@gmail.com

PUBLIC RELATIONS OFFICER

Harry de Sayrah OAM, MJF.
Mobile: 0415 402 724
email: harold.166@hotmail.com

PUBLICATIONS OFFICER

Doug Jones (Actg)
Mobile: 0415 378 861
email: dougjay20@gmail.com

EDITOR

Adam Raffel (Actg)
Mobile: 0407 530 139
email: adamraf2@tpg.com.au

SOCIAL CONVENOR

Amal Wahab
Mobile: 0411 888 182
email: awahab15555@gmail.com

EX-OFFICIO

Thiru Arumugam
Tel: (02) 8850 4798
email: thiru.aru@gmail.com

LIFE MEMBERS

Hugh Karunanayake
Mobile: 0448 998 024
email: karu@internode.net.au

Doug and Hyacinth Jones

Mobile: 0415 378 861
email: dougjay20@gmail.com

EDITORIAL SUB-COMMITTEE

Doug Jones
Thiru Arumugam
Hugh Karunanayake

MELBOURNE CHAPTER CONVENOR

Hemal Gurusinghe
Mobile: 0427 725 740
email: hemguru@hotmail.com

COLOMBO CHAPTER

CONVENOR/LOCAL PRESIDENT

M.D.(Tony) Saldin
Tel: +9411 2936402 (w) +9411 2931315 (h)
Fax: +9411 2936377 Mobile: +94 777 363366
email: saldinclan@sltnet.lk

IMMEDIATE PAST PRESIDENT

Deshamanya Tissa Devendra
Tel: +9411 2501 489
email: tisdev@sltnet.lk

VICE PRESIDENT

Fred Medis
Mobile: +94 722256993

LOCAL TREASURER

M. Asoka T. de Silva
Tel: +9411 2822933 Mobile: +94 775097517
email: desilvaasoka@yahoo.com

LOCAL SECRETARY

Anandalal Nanayakkara
Tel: +077 3272989
email: anandalal10@gmail.com

COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Srilal Perera
Tel: +077 5743785
email: srilalp@ymail.com

Daya Wickramatunga

Tel: +9411 2786783/ +0773 174164
email: dashanwick@gmail.com

The Ceylankan

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From the Editor

Dear Readers

This issue of *The Ceylankan* (my first as Editor) is dedicated to the memory of Tulsi Karunanayake who passed away on 11 August this year. Tulsi was a life member of the CSA and wife of our founding President Hugh Karunanayake. Hugh has written a beautiful and moving tribute to his dearly beloved wife of 52 years, which I have the honour of publishing. Not having met Tulsi, I feel I know her from Hugh's wonderful appreciation of a truly beautiful soul. Also included is a short appreciation by Nihal Seneviratne, former Secretary-General of the Sri Lankan Parliament. Hugh has also written a beautiful appreciation of CSA member Inez Sourjah who passed away on 8 September. Tulsi and Inez will live on in the hearts of those who cherished and loved them both.

This issue commences with a fascinating article by Thiru Arumugam, the first of a two part series on Robert Knox, the English sailor who was held in captivity in the Kandyan Kingdom for 19 years from 1660 to 1679. Thiru quotes extracts from Knox's book *The Historical Relation of Ceylon* published in 1681 on the life and people of the Kandyan Kingdom at that time. There are some fascinating illustrations from the book, including a grizzly scene of an execution by elephant!

Tony Saldin, the Convenor and President of the Colombo Chapter, has written a very absorbing article on Wattala and its precincts. There are some interesting stories of people, places and history of Wattala and its surrounds. Tony also has given a synopsis of the first meeting for 2021 of the CSA Colombo Chapter on 27th February where a talk was given by one of Sri Lanka's leading environmental architects Sunela Jayawardene on rainforest walking trails in the island. Sunela's plea for the conservation of Sri Lanka's rainforests should not go unheeded. The other contribution from the Colombo Chapter is by its Treasurer

Asoka De Silva. Asoka has written an absolutely fascinating article on a 1500 year old port in southern Sri Lanka called Godavaya. As an amateur historian myself I found Asoka's article utterly absorbing and has whet my appetite for more information on this amazing discovery.

In his article on *Old Colombo* Hugh Karunanayake brings to life the lost world of Colombo more than a century ago. Hugh has some amusing anecdotes of some eccentric characters including my great grandfather on my mother's side F J Lucas Fernando (Snr).

In his article *Burghers and Amahs* Earl Forbes documents the White Australia Policy and the indignity of asking Ceylonese Burgher immigrants to remove clothing to check whether their skin colour was a sun tan and not naturally brown!

Also in this packed issue is a short report by CSA member Christopher Lawton on the sapling of the Sri Maha Bodhi Tree in Australian quarantine and a lovely piece by Pamela Ann Ferdinand, a CSA member living in the USA, on Master Chef Dr T Publis Silva of Mount Lavana Hotel (MLH) and a short history of how the MLH got its name. There is a book review of Ashley Jackson's *Ceylon At War: 1939-1945* by Amrit MacIntyre. Amrit mentions that the book has provided new insights into how the War hastened Ceylon's independence. In a 'teaser' to his article on wireless telegraphy, to be published in the February issue, Logan Thurairatnam has posed a question to technically minded readers to identify old photos of Colombo radio circa 1935.

Happy reading!

ADAM RAFFEL

Ceylon Society of Australia

The Ceylon Society of Australia (CSA) is a not-for-profit organisation, incorporated in Australia and its main objectives are to study, foster and promote interest in the historical and cultural heritage of Sri Lanka.

It is non-political, non-partisan as well and endeavours to steer clear of controversial issues. The CSA is a gathering of like-minded people, open to receiving and imparting new ideas, who greatly enjoy getting together on a regular quarterly basis. While Sydney is home to the parent body, looking after the needs of the Society in all of NSW and the ACT, the Melbourne Chapter covers members in Victoria, the Colombo Chapter tends to the CSA members in Sri Lanka. Quarterly meetings are held in Sydney, Melbourne and Colombo where members and guests interested in Sri Lankan culture and heritage are welcome to attend. Meetings are concluded with a brief question time and a social of short eats and tea/coffee.

The flagship of the CSA is the quarterly publication *The Ceylankan* which is much looked forward to by members and others of the Society and is distributed to members worldwide. The articles published are authored by members and other writers solicited from outside sources. All opinions expressed are those of the individual writers and do not reflect those of the Editor or the CSA. Articles may be reproduced in other publications but must be appropriately credited to this journal and carry suitable acknowledgment thereof.

The CSA, when meeting in Australia, acknowledges the Traditional Owners of the land in which meetings are held and pays respects to First Nations Elders, past and present, as custodians of a rich cultural heritage.

Our Readers write

Significance of pre-historic monuments

Thiru Arumugam can be commended for a well researched article on pre-historic temples (*The Ceylankan* J95 Vol 24 No 3 Aug 2021). It is important that we consider the significance of these buildings from perspective of:

- 1) Sri Lankan society in modern times; and
- 2) Hindu religion as it has evolved over a long period of time.

These monuments, which are spread throughout the country, show that there was a pre Buddhist culture in the island from ancient times. These monuments originated from south India where Saivism, a branch of Hinduism was practiced from ancient times. It is a variation from the Venkateshwara tradition of the same religion practised in north India. It is also evidence of the origin of early settlers from South India. It debunks the theory that majority of population originated from North India.

There is a widely held misconception that the two major sections of society, Sinhalese and Tamils belong to two distinct ethnicities. Such a theory has been debunked by anthropologists and historians in recent times on the basis that both sections of society originated from the same bedrock of South Indian and Sri Lankan ancestry. To quote the well-known anthropologist Dr Arjun Gunaratne: "The notion of a Tamil culture and Sinhala culture as pure wholes is fundamentally misleading because both conceptions are an arbitrary imposition on the flow of social thought and action."

Hinduism is arguably the oldest living religion in the world, and its origins can be traced back to a pre historic civilisation in the Indus Valley. Modern Hinduism started with the advent of Indo Aryan settlements in North India about 2000 BC. For a long period of time, it was based entirely on worship and devotion to deities, which is also reflected in the monuments and temples in India and Sri Lanka. Such practices were formalised in the Vedic texts starting with *Rig Veda*.

There was a movement against the caste system that gave privileges to upper caste people and alienated lower castes on the basis of occupation, which became ingrained in religious practices, and continue even to the present day in the Indian sub-continent and Sri Lanka. It gave rise to a revolt against the Hindu religion leading to the introduction of new religions, Buddhism and Jainism in about 600 BC. Such religions were a departure from Hinduism and emphasised the need for good conduct and spirituality.

As a result, there was a movement for reform of Hinduism with the introduction of philosophical writings in the *Upanishads* and *Bhagavad Gita*. It is important to note that the changes introduced did not completely reject practices of worshiping deities and included a more enlightened path to salvation through meditation and spirituality. It is embodied in the prin-

ciple of transcendentalism or evolution, which embraces old and new practices.

The changes introduced required a knowledge and understanding of religious philosophy known as Vedanta, which is the basis of modern Hinduism. The two major organisations that have undertaken the task of teaching the philosophy are the Ramakrishna Mission and the Chinmaya Mission, located in North India with branches in Sri Lanka and Australia.

SRIKANTHA NADARAJAH

The Colombo Bharathas: A Merchant Community

My brother-in-law, Joe Vaz wrote the in-depth article on the Bharatha Community (*The Ceylankan* J95 Vol 24 No 3 Aug 2021) & I wish to proudly pass on the books to the grandkids.

Doug Jones did a wonderful job as Editor & kept us informed of stories from the days of yore. Hats off to Doug & a big thank you.

Best wishes to Adam Raffel as the new Editor. Who can forget his dedicated father; Dr Chris Raffel in Wellawatte who treated an endless stream of patients, often at no charge to those from the poorest of homes. I remember Chappie Vanderwert who worked there too.

ALIX VAZ

More Sri Lankan High Achievers

I read with much interest the contribution on high achievers from Sri Lanka in Australia, written by Mr Srikantha Nadarajah (*The Ceylankan* J95 Vol 24 No 3 Aug 2021). I know it is difficult to name every high achiever there being so many to choose from. However, may I bring to your attention the unique achievement of **Mr Nimal Wickramanayake**, QC, the only lawyer from Sri Lanka, or for that matter the whole of Asia to be awarded silk in Australia. His father the late Mr EG (Guy) Wickramanayake was appointed a Queens Counsel in Sri Lanka in 1950. This is the only recorded instance in the world where father and son have been awarded silk in two different countries. Mr Nimal Wickramanayake and his brother Dr Ranji Wickramanayake are both members of CSA, and members would recall the most entertaining and informative presentation he made at a Society meeting in Sydney in November 2015 on his experiences as a lawyer in Sri Lanka and in Australia. Sincerely,

HUGH KARUNANAYAKE

It was very interesting to read about Leading Sri Lankan High Achievers in Australia by Srikantha Nadarajah. Clearly it is not possible to include everybody in this country from Sri Lanka who has contributed significantly however, the article contained very significant achievers and it was so interesting to read about them. I would include **Keith Potger** from the '60s Rock and Roll band The Seekers in this group. His parents emigrated from their home in Colombo in the late forties and settled in Melbourne. The rest is ofcourse part of Australian music history. Many thanks for a great edition and looking forward to more.

PETER VAN CUYLENBURG



TULSI KARUNANAYAKE – 22 June 1950- 11 August 2021

AN APRECIATION BY HUGH KARUNANAYAKE

*Though my heart is full of tears at this farewell
For you are beautiful, I have loved you dearly and
More dearly than the spoken word can tell*

Roger Whittaker- *The Last Farewell*

Tulsi, my dearly beloved wife of 52 years, mother of three, grandmother of nine, departed her earthly existence on 11 August 2021. She breathed her last as her son, Sumal, daughter Dilukshi, and I were holding her hand and silently praying that she be spared to enrich and grace our lives a little more. Our elder son Harsha unable to travel from London, (due to Covid restrictions), where he has been residing for the past twenty years, was there in tearful spirit and visible, thanks to that marvel of modern technology called “FaceTime”.

Whether it was due to an act of divine intervention, or my karmic credit balance that I carried over from a previous birth, it was my life’s ultimate achievement, blessing, and privilege, to have shared my life with this wonderful woman I had known from the time she was born. She was the youngest daughter of my late maternal uncle Hinton, someone for whom I had unconditional affection. My uncle Hinton and his family left for Singapore in 1954. He had a five-year assignment in the Ceylon Embassy in Singapore. On the day of their departure by ship (the *SS Canton*) I was stricken with measles and in bed, and unable to bid the family farewell. Tulsi was barely 4 years old at the time and as a fond cousin gave me a farewell hug before departing. On arrival in Singapore, it was discovered that she had contracted measles!

Fast forward to 1960 when the family returned to Ceylon, and Tulsi yet a child of 9 or 10 years. On the family arriving to their home, which was two doors next to our own home (we shared a common ancestor in my maternal grandfather who constructed 4 houses in adjoining blocks in 1910), Tulsi was growing into a real beauty and during her teens I just could not take my eyes off her. “Love thy neighbour as thyself” said the Bible; and love my neighbour I did! My courting of her won the approval of her parents, and we married on 20 August 1969 when she was 19 years of age. I simply could not believe my good fortune when I won her hand, which was like winning a multi-million-dollar lottery for me.

In fact, in later life in Sri Lanka I always turned down the relentless offers of itinerant sweep ticket sellers, by telling *sotto voce* to whoever was with me at the time, that I had already won the lottery.

Tulsi’s beauty was not confined to her good looks. She had a golden heart, always caring for others, always helpful, and never ever a word of criticism of anyone. An episode concerning a good friend who was a victim of her husband’s infidelity comes to mind. The friend was the innocent party but was isolated and victimised to the point of utter desperation. Tulsi in her own unobtrusive way, provided comfort and solace to her friend and saw her through her ordeal by providing not only the arms of friendship and emotional support, but with real assistance in the form of accommodation. However, Tulsi never uttered a bad word about the husband of the friend, nor did she speak a word about it to anyone else. That was typical Tulsi, genuine in her friendship and showing absolute lack of guile. Her genteel upbringing of our three precious children, without ever having to smack them for any misdemeanour, influenced me, beyond belief. Ask any former schoolmate of mine, and they will tell you, that in school I was simply a wild, mischievous, youngster devoid of any aim or ambition in life. All that changed radically after my association with Tulsi, and I allowed myself the luxury of setting goals and achieving them. Before I married her, I set my sights on obtaining an external degree in Sociology from the University of Peradeniya. Given that I did not have the opportunity of attending lectures, it was going to be a monumental task. Her encouragement, and the genuine inspiration from her, saw me pass the honours degree successfully. That change in my life I owe entirely to her. I just marvelled at her kindness and empathy. For instance, she never ever dyed her hair saying that it was not her style, and that she did not believe in embellishment. However, when I was in my fifties my own vanity pushed me to using a dye on whatever hair was left on my head! Never did I hear a word of dissent.

Our three children Harsha, Sumal, and Dilukshi have inherited those wonderful qualities, and in turn passed them on to our nine grandchildren who without exception, display the same generosity of spirit, the kindness and care for others. A selfless

person if ever there was one, Tulsi gave most of what she earned to charities, she just wanted to make others happy, and never was concerned about her own personal needs. Her devotion to her family was legendary, being personally present at the birth of all her nine grandchildren in Sydney, Melbourne, and London, and making herself available to provide love and affection to them at any time. She was “on call” 24/7 to them!

Tulsi’s wonderful nature, her care and compassion, has touched the lives of so many. Everyone who had the good fortune of knowing or meeting her will testify to the goodwill she radiated. When the Ceylon Society of Australia was formed in 1997, Tulsi, who had no real interest in matters antiquarian, gave its foundation members all the support she could muster. Many of the early members were drawn in by her magnetic personality and disarming smile. She set the pace for the post meeting suppers by producing some mouth-watering Sri Lankan snacks, helped by a small coterie of friends who joined in unasked but willingly. Among the small band of her friends who rallied round her voluntarily were the late Dr Nalini Kappagoda, the late Lakshmi de Silva (wife of my former classmate Dr Lakshman de Silva), Lena Wijeratne (wife of late Dr Don Wijeratne), the late Inez Sourjah (wife of late Dr Robert Sourjah), and the late Srimi Peris (wife of the late Tony Peris). In recognition of her services she was appointed a Life Member of the Society at the 10th Anniversary meeting held in 2007. That unique honour rested with her very lightly, and never in her life had she spoken about it to anyone, including her children, who were taken by surprise when I mentioned this a few days ago. Tulsi’s culinary skills and her skills as a dressmaker are well known especially in Sydney where we lived for 30 years and where she built up a substantial network of clients. She would design and produce outfits for an entire bridal group including suits for the groom and groomsmen, bridal trousseaus, and on one occasion for an additional eight bridesmaids as well. I record with pride the fact that she was responsible for the bridal outfits of all three brides at the weddings of our three children. For her it was simply an act of motherly love. When she gave up sewing to spend more time with the family, she passed on all her sewing work to someone she had never met. She just wanted to help someone, just anyone. In fact, one evening when we were at a friend’s Christmas party, a lady walked up to our table and asked “is Tulsi here”? When I pointed her out, she embraced Tulsi for the kindness shown to her by passing all her dressmaking clients on to her. The countless tributes paid to her memory by friends, relations, and dressmaking clients have appeared on many social websites as testimony to her extraordinary personality. It was a remarkably happy and contented life that we lived, devoid of unnecessary luxuries but always giving priority to making those near and dear to us to enjoy their connection with us.

I have been fortunate enough to have known and loved this most unique and unforgettable partner in life, to whom I owe a deep debt of gratitude. She will live in our hearts forever, and not a minute shall pass without thinking of my dear, departed Tulsi.

She is survived by me, her mate for 52 years, her precious children Harsha, Sumal, and Dilukshi, much loved daughters in law, and son in law Manoji, Naomi, and Pavi de Alwis; adored grandchildren, Liam, Miles, Tiyahni, Eva, Heiran, Kallin, Finley, Elle, and Jamie; her cherished sisters Rohini and Damayanthi and their families. Her dearly loved parents Hinton and May, and her much loved brothers Nihal and Yasa, predeceased her.

*My precious Tulsi
In the sweet by and by
We shall meet on that beautiful shore.*

**Your devoted
Hugh Aiya**

TULSI KARUNANAYAKE: The loss of a lady with a genteel personality

*A tribute from Nihal Seneviratne (former Secretary
General of the Parliament of Sri Lanka)
Colombo – 12 August 2021*

I did not have the privilege of knowing Hugh at Royal College as I was senior to him at our alma mater. I joined in the mid-forties, and Hugh, a year later. On my frequent visits to Sydney, to see my elder sister, I started my association with Hugh and Tulsi. The bonding grew stronger and stronger over the years. I found him to be a person with an intimate knowledge of Sri Lanka, its history, culture and its antiquities, which is rare to find these days. During these long conversations I began to learn so much, and which I enjoyed so much. It was on these occasions that I got to know Tulsi for the first time. I was struck by her simplicity, graciousness, and the affectionate way she looked after her visitors on every such occasion.

As I chatted along with Hugh, she never did allow me to leave without having a meal. All these attributes were the ones that endeared her to all those who came to know her. On one occasion she told me about her brother who was in hospital for a long time and requested me to try and visit him on my return back to Sri Lanka. I made it a point to comply with her request. On meeting him having conveyed her loving regards I asked him to talk to her on my mobile phone. She deeply appreciated my gesture.

Hugh will find it extremely difficult to be without her, she was always by his side. Their long steady meaningful marriage stands ample testimony to this. During the last few years when he cared for her, and earlier this year when she entered a nursing home, he visited her daily, and on each of those visits he put her in the car and drove around to enjoy the scenery. He told me that he was getting ready to move into an apartment close to her nursing home, so that he would be able to spend more time with her. That was Hugh’s loving affection for her, and I am confident that the children will fill the berth left behind by her loss and give him the comfort and company he will need so much. May Tulsi attain the supreme bliss of nirvana.

A THREE HUNDRED- AND FORTY-YEAR-OLD BOOK ABOUT CEYLON – PART 1

Thiru Arumugam

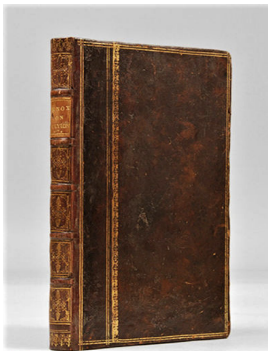


Figure 1

There exists a 340-year-old book about Ceylon which was published in 1681. Although there are other books about Ceylon in other European languages written in the 17th century, this is the oldest book about Ceylon in English. Other books of this genre include the manuscript of Fernao de Queyroz's book in Portuguese titled "*The Temporal and Spiritual Conquest of*

Ceylon" which was completed in 1687 but the author died a few months later in Goa and the book was never published until Father S G Perera translated it into English and published it in 1930. Another book is by Phillippus Baldeus titled "*A true and exact Description of the Great Island of Ceylon*" which was published in 1672, but this was in the Dutch language.

As you probably would have guessed by now, the book referred to in the title of this article is the one written by Robert Knox (see Fig. 1), based on his knowledge of Ceylon gathered during his captivity of nearly twenty years by Rajasinha II, the King of Kandy (see Fig. 2). In the 17th century it was the fashion for books to have long subtitles, and the full title of Knox's book is:

An Historical Relation of the Island Ceylon, in the East-Indies: together with an Account of the Detaining in Captivity the Author and divers other Englishmen now Living there, and of the Author's Miraculous Escape.

In the interests of brevity, future references to this book in this article will be to *Historical Relation*. In Australia, copies of this book printed in 1681 can be seen in the Australian National Library in Canberra and in the State Library of New South Wales in Sydney and in the State Library of Victoria in Melbourne. CSA's founder, Hugh Karunanayake recounts how CSA Member the late Dr Brendon Gooneratne, when he was a 15-year-old schoolboy in Royal College, won some prize vouchers. He immediately made his way to H W Cave's Bookshop in Colombo Fort and purchased a 1681 edition of *Historical Relation*. In later years Brendon became an avid collector of antiquarian books about Ceylon and his collection included copies of *Historical Relation* translated into German (1689), Dutch (1692) and French (1693). These were all pirated translations; copyright law initially came into effect in England only when Parliament passed the Copyright Act in 1710.



Figure 2

Rajah Singah, the King of Ceylon

Early years of Robert Knox

Robert Knox was born in Tower Hill, London on 8 February 1641. His father, who was also called Robert Knox, was a sea-faring ship's captain. Young Knox was sent to a school in Roehampton, London, run by James Fleetwood. The call of the sea was too strong for young Knox and in 1655 at the age of 14 years he joined as a crew member the 230-ton ship *Anne* captained by his father, sailing to the East Indies. The ship returned to London in 1657 after a successful voyage, calling at Madras and other ports in India. They were, however, distressed to find that meanwhile Abigail Knox, wife of Robert Knox Senior, had died in 1656 and was buried in Wimbledon. In 1657 Oliver Cromwell issued a charter granting the East India Company a monopoly of the eastern trade and Robert Knox Senior had to join the East India Company to continue trading in the East Indies.

The next voyage of the *Anne* was in January 1658 when Captain Knox and his son sailed under the flag of the East India Company to Persia, India, Sumatra and back to the port of Masulipatam, north of Madras in India. Now known as Machilipatnam in the State of Andhra Pradesh, it was the first British settlement in the Bay of Bengal. On 19 November 1659 they were here, loading the ship to return to London, when they were hit by a severe storm and the only way of saving the ship was by cutting the main mast. A message was sent to the East India Company Office in Madras asking for instructions. Captain Knox was told that there were no straight trees in South India of sufficient girth and height to be used as a main mast. He was asked to limp along using the mizzenmast and sail to Kottiyar Bay in Trincomalee, Ceylon, where suitable timber for the mast could be found in the surrounding jungles. Kottiyar Bay is part of Trincomalee Harbour which is the second largest natural harbour in the world. Captain Knox was told that it was a safe place because there was no Dutch presence in Trincomalee at that time.

Taken captive

The *Anne* arrived in Kottiyar in early February 1660 and the ship's crew spent about two months collecting timber from the jungle to repair the ship. At this point Captain Knox made a major error of protocol. He failed to send a messenger with gifts to Rajasingha II, the King of Kandy, informing him of his presence in Trincomalee and that he was here only to repair his ship. When the King heard about the presence of an English ship, he immediately became suspicious. He was wondering whether this ship was the vanguard of an English invasion and immediately despatched one of his Generals, a Disawa named Tennekoon with troops to apprehend the English.

The Disawa reached Trincomalee and sent a message to Captain Knox who was on board the *Anne*

on 4 April 1660 to come ashore to receive a letter from the King. Suspecting a trap, Captain Knox did not come ashore but sent his son Robert together with John Loveland who was the representative of the East India Company on the ship. When they came ashore, they found that the Disawa was actually camped out 12 miles inland. They went and met the Disawa who told them that his instructions were to hand over the letter personally to the Captain. They were given accommodation for the night and the following day a message was sent by the Disawa, with gifts, to Captain Knox that if 12 miles was too far inland for him, they could meet at a tamarind tree upriver and nearer to the shore. Captain Knox proceeded in a longboat with rowers to the designated place where they were all promptly arrested, as were the carpenters from the *Anne* who came ashore the next day searching for timber.

The Disawa then asked Captain Knox to inform his crew to bring the *Anne* close to shore. Captain Knox said that his crew would now be aware that he had been arrested and therefore they would not follow his orders. Meanwhile, Captain Knox had informed the Chief Mate on board the ship that if he did not return within twenty days, he should sail off back to Madras. A standoff had been reached. After twenty days the ship sailed off and Captain Knox, his son and fourteen other crew members began their forced march to Kandy.

Death of Captain Robert Knox snr

The long march to Kandy took about a fortnight. When they came near Kandy there was a message from the King that the captives were to be kept individually in different villages as the King was worried that if all sixteen were kept together, they may plan to escape. Feeding sixteen captives would be beyond the resources of a village. Fortunately, Captain Knox and his son were allowed to stay together. They also had with them a young Indian who was their translator as he was fluent in English, Portuguese and Tamil. Knox does not give his name but describes him as the 'black boy'.

The village to which Knox was assigned was Bandara Koswatte in the Hath Korales. It is about thirty miles north of Kandy and is about five miles north of Dodangaslanda. They reached there on 16 September 1660. The accommodation provided was a hut with a thatched roof but without walls. Captain Knox was provided with a wooden bed with a mat, but his son had to sleep on the floor. The villagers daily provided them with two rice and curry meals each.

Captain Knox and his son Robert were stricken with malaria and ague. The 19-year-old son was not so seriously affected but Captain Knox who was in his fifties was bedridden for several weeks. On 9 February 1661, Captain Knox called his son to his bedside. Here is the extract from Robert Knox Jnr of his father's last words:

In the first place and above all, He charged me to serve God, and with a circumspect care to walk in his ways, and then, God would bless me and prosper me. And next, he bad me have a care for my Brother and Sister. And lastly, He gave me a special charge to beware of strong Drink, and lewd Company, which as

by Experience many had found, would change me into another man, so that I should not be myself.

Captain Knox passed away in the early hours of the morning of 9 February. Robert Knox Jnr sent a message to the villagers asking for help with the burial, but they declined to help and only sent a rope with a halter so that he could drag the body to the jungle, where they buried the body in a shallow grave. To this day the local villagers can indicate the exact spot where he was buried. Since then, the village was known as Parangi-vatta. Devasted by his father's death, Robert Knox states:

Thus was I left Desolate, Sick, and in Captivity, having no earthly Comforter, none but only He who looks down from Heaven to hear the groaning of the Prisoners, and to shew Himself a Father of the Fatherless, and a present help to them that have no helper.

Robert Knox continues to live in Bandara Koswatte

In order to earn some money to buy necessities like clothes, Knox learned the art of knitting caps. The thread required for a cap cost the equivalent of three English pence whereas the completed knitted cap could be sold for nine pence, providing a steady income.

Robert Knox had only two books with him. The first was *The Practise of Pietie* by Lewis Bayly, printed in 1654, which was given to him by his mother when he set out on his first voyage as a 14-year-old. The second book was *The Practice of Christianitie* by Richard Rogers (printed in 1629). These were the only reading material that he had. Robert Knox read them from cover to cover many times.

One day when Knox was fishing in the village stream, a villager who was passing by asked him whether he would be interested in buying from him a book which he said he had obtained from the Portuguese some years ago when they vacated Colombo. Knox sent his 'black boy' with the villager to see what the book was about since he was fluent in Portuguese. The boy returned a while later and told Knox excitedly that the book was a Bible in English. Knox could not believe his ears. The only money he had was a gold coin and he was prepared to part with that in exchange for the Bible. The 'black boy' however negotiated with the villager and the final price agreed was one of the caps that Knox had knitted. His reaction when he saw the Bible was:

The sight indeed of this Bible so overjoyed me, as if an Angel had spoke to me from Heaven. To see that my most gracious God had prepared such an extraordinary Blessing for me: which I did, and ever shall look upon as miraculous, to bring unto me a Bible in my own Native Language, and that in such a remote part of the World ... it being the thing for want whereof I have so often mourned, nay and shed tears too; and than the enjoyment whereof there could be no greater joy in the world to me.

In the middle of 1662, Knox had a surprise visit from a fellow crew member, John Gregory, who brought news of the other captives. Most of them had adopted native dress, become fluent in Sinhala and some of them had got married. Meanwhile, Knox decided to do his own cooking and asked the villagers to supply provisions to him instead of cooked meals. As he now required a kitchen, he built a mud hut for

the purpose. He also started rearing pigs, goats and poultry.

Rebellion

In December 1664, Knox and all the other crew members were told that King Rajasingha (residing in Nilambe) had received a letter from the East India Company in Madras (supported by the Dutch in Colombo) pressing for their release. While they were waiting to be released when on the night of 21 December 1664, a rebellion broke out led by Ambanvela Rala who wanted to replace King Rajasingha by the King's son Prince Vimala Dharma Surya who was about 15 years old. The King escaped and chaos reigned in Nilambe for a few days. This was compounded by the Prince refusing to be enthroned and fleeing the palace. Meanwhile both parties to the conflict tried to recruit the English captives to join them, but they wisely remained neutral. Within a few days the rebellion petered out ending with the capture of the rebels and their leader Ambanvela Rala. Instead of executing him, the King sent him to the Dutch in Colombo where he expected the Dutch to torture and execute him. The Dutch decided that he was more valuable alive than dead, and he became an unofficial adviser to the Dutch on affairs of the Kandyan Kingdom. King Rajasingha had a long reign of 52 years from 1635 to 1687. Many executions were carried out on the King's orders. Knox wrote that a King's duties in order of priority were (see Fig. 3):

First, to woo peace of mind through a bout of random killing; next, enjoy perfect health for some time: then, last of all, attend to state affairs ...



Figure 3
An Execution by an Elephant.

Dayaladahamuna Pattuva and Legundeniya

When the dust settled after the rebellion, the captives had lost their previous places of residence and for a few weeks were virtually beggars in the streets of Nilambe. Then, the King assigned them to the village of Dayaladahamuna

Pattuva, west of Kandy. Knox built a mud hut for his residence where he planted fruit trees.

About two years later in 1666 Knox had completed about eight years in captivity. The King was worried that Knox may try to escape to the Dutch garrison in nearby Beligal Korale about six miles south-west of Kegalle and was again moved to a village called Legundeniya. This was a small village situated on a mountain top, often covered with mist, with only about five houses. It had a beautiful view of the Mahaweli Ganga down below. At Legundeniya, where Knox was living with John Loveland, he heard that there was a plot of land for sale. As only priests could own land freehold, Knox inquired from the King's representative for the area whether he would be allowed to buy the land. Having obtained the required permission, the sale of the land which was in Eladetta

was concluded and the transaction recorded on ola leaves. The price paid was the equivalent of five dollars, a princely sum of money at that time.

Eladetta

Eladetta was a village about five miles north of Gampola. The plot of land was surrounded by paddy fields on three sides and had plenty of water. It had eight coconut trees and plenty of fruit trees. Knox set about building a commodious house and was assisted by three other fellow captives, Roger Gould, Ralph Knight and Stephen Rutland. The house included a separate kitchen. In return for helping build the house, the three of them were allowed to live in the house as long as they remained bachelors. When they got married, they would have to move out.

The four of them lived happily. Knox planted more fruit trees on his property, knitted caps and sold them. He also loaned seed paddy to farmers during the planting season and when the farmer harvested his crop, he had to return to Knox 50% more paddy than he borrowed, which was the accepted rate of interest. Then on 22 October 1670 Knox's close friend, John Loveland (living in a neighbouring village) fell sick and died in Knox's arms.

The years passed and the captives were beginning to lose hope of ever getting their freedom. In 1672 Gould and Knight decided to get married and moved out. Knox and Stephen Rutland continued to live in Eladetta, breeding goats and starting a new business of going round the countryside peddling goods and different kinds of wares. Although this gave them additional income, the main idea was to study the layout of the country to see where the watchpoints were so that they could ultimately plan their escape route.

About the year 1673 he adopted a local girl named Lucea who was three years old. He employed a servant, who looked after the girl and also did the cooking (see Fig. 4). He taught Lucea to read and write English and read extracts from the Bible to her. He also wrote a will in which he said that in the event of his death or if he left Ceylon never to return, Lucea would inherit the Eladetta house and all his belongings in Ceylon. Lucea continued to haunt him for the rest of his life. Decades later he heard that Lucea was living in the Eladetta house. In 1698 long after his escape when he had an opportunity to send a letter to his fellow captives in Ceylon he wrote:

I have herewith sent my picture to the Girl I brought up, Lucea, and you know I loved the Child & and since have no cause to hate her.



Figure 4
The Manner of their Eating and Drinking.

Escape

By 1679 Knox had been a captive for 19 years and in the last few years Knox and Rutland wandered around the Kandyan Kingdom as peddlars.

They had gained a good idea where the various checkpoints were on the paths linking the various towns. They realised that it would have been impossible to escape westwards to Colombo. To pass a checkpoint one needed a Royal Pass. A bid for freedom was considered treason. They decided that their best chance would be to go northwards towards Anuradhapura which was the limit of the Kandyan Kingdom. If they could get past Anuradhapura, they would go north-west to Mannar where there was a Dutch fort, and their freedom would be assured.

On 22 September 1679, 38-year-old Knox and Rutland left Eladetta. As pedlars they carried with them items in demand in the northern parts of the Kandyan Kingdom such as "*Tobacco, Pepper, Garlick, Combs, all sorts of Iron Ware etc*" plus provisions, knives and axes and set off on their way. They used talipot leaves as shelter from the rain and as a tent at night (see Fig. 5). The talipot palm has the largest inflorescence in the world, going up to eight metres.

They proceeded north stopping briefly at Knox's father's grave in Bandara Koswatte. At the various checkpoints they were able to convince



The manner of their sheltering themselves from the Rain by the Talipot leaf
Figure 5

the guards that they were genuine pedlars. Proceeding further north, they felt that their presence so far from their place of residence may be regarded as suspicious. They reached the village of Kaluvila and went to the house of the King's representative. They gave him some gifts and explained to him that they had come to

sell some goods and buy dried deer meat for which there was demand in Kandy. He was satisfied with their explanation and arranged for safe passage to Anuradhapura.

They reached Anuradhapura safely and sold their wares and bought provisions for ten days. They made some inquiries and heard that the north road leading towards Jaffna and Mannar had many checkpoints near the border of the Kandyan Kingdom. There was no way they could get past these checkpoints without a pass. They decided that the only possible route to Mannar was to go through the jungle following the Malvatu Oya which flows north-west past Anuradhapura and enters the sea a few miles south of Mannar.

They left Anuradhapura on 12 October 1679 and followed the banks of the Malvatu Oya. They found the going difficult because there was no footpath and plenty of thorny scrub. In the night they had to light fires to keep away wild animals like elephants, bears and leopards. After five days of walking, they found that they were in Malabar country and were outside the Kandyan Kingdom.

They arrived at the small Dutch Fort of

Arippu, ten miles south of Mannar on 18 October 1679. The Fort was built by the Portuguese and taken over by the Dutch in 1658, the ruins of which can be seen to this day. They were warmly welcomed by the Dutch. No foreigner in living memory had previously escaped from Kandy. Knox records the event as follows:

I was detained prisoner one this Iland one the forth day April 1660, and by the great providence of God was set at Liberty one the eighteenth October 1679, by which it doth appear that I was prisoner one Ceilon nineteene years six months and fourteene days, which is fower months and seventeene days longer than I had lived in the world before I was taken prisoner thare.

Freedom

The next day they were escorted to the Dutch Fort in Mannar, where they were well received by the Dutch Captain there. Knox said that it was a strange experience eating at a table with chinaware and wine after nineteen years of eating seated on the floor off plantain leaves. Knox and Rutland arrived in Colombo on 2 November 1679 accompanied by the Dutch Commander of the Mannar Fort.

Knox and Rutland created a lot of curiosity among the European residents of Colombo as they were unshaven, barefoot and dressed in local clothing. They were tidied up and given a full outfit of clothes and shoes and taken to meet the Dutch Governor of Ceylon, Ryklof van Goens. The Governor cross-examined him in detail about life in the Kandyan Kingdom, the state of health of the ageing King of Kandy and news of other European captives in Kandy, particularly Dutch captives. He finally asked Knox what his intentions were. Knox said that he would like to be sent to Madras where there was an East India Company presence, and he could get a passage to England from there.

The Governor considered the matter and finally said that he would send Knox to Batavia, in present day Indonesia. Batavia was the Dutch centre of operations for the East and the Governor's father was the Governor-General of the Dutch East Indies. The Governor said that his father, who was formerly Dutch Governor of Ceylon, would be very interested to hear first-hand from him about conditions in the Kandyan Kingdom. Knox was not very happy with this arrangement as he was sailing away from, rather than towards England, but he had no say in the matter. Knox set sail from Colombo on 24 November 1679 in the 800-ton Dutch ship *Nieuw Middleburg*, reaching Batavia on 5 January 1680.

In Batavia, Knox was given a right royal reception by the Governor-General, Ryklof van Goens Snr. Two suits of European clothes were stitched by tailors and he was wined and dined. He was again de-briefed about the Kandyan Kingdom and the Governor-General was keen to send him to the Netherlands for further de-briefing.

The Governor-General gave Knox permission to go with two English merchants to Bantam, where the English East India Company had a base. In Bantam the English Agent there told him that there was no point in Knox going back to Batavia because an English ship the *Caesar* was about to sail to England, and he could sail to England on that ship,

which he did, reaching England on 6 September 1680 after a seven-month voyage.

It was during this long sea voyage that Knox started writing *Historical Relation*. He says that there were three reasons for writing this manuscript, which he says in his own words:

First to Record God's great mercies in so plentifully sustaining me in the land of myne enemies in despite of those who boath invied & hated me ... & after a detainement of 19 yeares 6 months & 14 dayes his providence so disposed of & directed me to escape thence ...

Secondly: that after my death if had died by the way my Relations might know what became of my Father & of how & after what manner the Almighty had dealt with me which I could not but thinke they would be glad to be informed of.

Thirdly to exercise my hand to wright for in all the time of my Captivity, I had neither pen Inke nor paper ...

Regarding the third point, Knox did write a few letters during the nineteen years of his captivity, but these were inscribed on ola leaves. It is amazing to think that Knox remembered all the incidents and place names of his captivity, even though he had not previously written them down.

Back in England

The *Caesar* docked in Greenwich on the River Thames on 6 September 1680. Knox had returned to his home country more than 22 years after he had left it. A gentleman by the name of Short boarded the ship and asked the Captain who was this strange man. When he was told that he was Robert Knox he said that he knew his brother and sister and gave their addresses. Knox immediately went to the city of London and tracked down his brother James who was naturally overjoyed to meet him. They then went to his sister's house, but she was initially quite cold to him thinking that he was an imposter, perhaps a fellow captive in Ceylon. Robert allayed her fears by relating some childhood incidents and showing her a birthmark, which she remembered.

A few days later Knox went to the London Office of the East India Company and reported his arrival. He found central London quite devastated by the Great Fire of 1666. He was paid only twenty pounds as an ex-gratia payment for his captivity, the Company pointing out that according to the terms of his contract, mariners were entitled to wages for a voyage only if they successfully completed a voyage. Knox met Sir Josiah Child who was on the Committee of the Company and lent him the manuscript of his travels.

A few days later Sir Josiah returned the manuscript and said that it had some interesting material and that the Company would sponsor its publication, but the text required editing. Knox enlisted the editing help of his cousin John Strype, who was a priest and had publishing experience having written some ecclesiastical works.

It was at this time that Knox was introduced by his brother James in a coffee house to Prof Robert Hooke (1635-1703). Hooke was an English polymath who was a scientist and an architect. He helped found the Royal Society and he was its first 'Curator of Experiments'. In 1678 he enunciated Hooke's Law which every school student of Physics remembers as

stress being proportional to strain. It was the beginning of a lifelong friendship. Hooke read the manuscript of *Historical Relation* and said that it definitely needed to be published. Hooke questioned Knox for more details about the geography, animal and plant life of Ceylon. Hooke and Strype started editing the book which at this stage was more or less disconnected jottings. A very detailed contents list running to about eleven pages was prepared and the book laid out in chapters. When completed, about three-quarters of the book was about Ceylon in general and balance about Knox's life there. Hooke also wrote a Preface for the book and arranged for the printing to be done by the Printer to the Royal Society, Richard Chiswell. Chiswell gives the address of his Press as at the Rose and Crown in St Pauls Churchyard. It must have been refreshing to have a pub next door to the Press!

On 23 March 1681, Knox's brother James fell ill and died suddenly at the age of 32 years. This was a severe blow to Knox, but at least they had the pleasure of each other's company for six months, after a separation of 22 years. James was only nine years old when Knox left on his voyage to Ceylon. James had been doing the engravings for the fifteen illustrations in the book and a new illustrator had to be found to complete the work.

Richard Chiswell completed printing the book and it was released for sale on 1 September 1681. The first page is reproduced in Fig. 6. It was advertised for five consecutive days from 1 September

in the *London Gazette*. It was priced at ten shillings. Publicity was also by word of mouth in the London coffee houses. Chiswell, the Printer and Publisher of the book, was so impressed by the book that he bound a special copy interleaving over hundred blank pages in the book and asked Knox to write additional material in the blank

pages so that he could bring out a second revised edition of the book in due course. The interleaving doubled the size of the book.

The Tonqueen Merchant

Meanwhile Sir Josiah Child had been promoted as Governor of the East India Company. Knox met him on 12 May 1681 and asked for employment in the Company. Child told him that a new 130 ton ship to be named the *Tonqueen Merchant* was being built. It would need a crew of 25 and Knox would be the Captain. It would be ready to sail by September and the first destination would be the port of Tonqueen in China, hence the name. Knox would remain in command of this ship for the next thirteen years, making four voyages to the East Indies. The ship set sail on 4 September 1681, a few days after *Historical Relation* was published.

Knox took with him the interleaved copy of *Historical Relation* and during the voyage he started

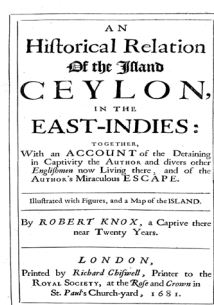


Figure 6

told him that it was indeed the *Tonqueen Merchant* and that the ship had been abandoned in Cowes in the Isle of Wight.

The Company informed Knox to proceed to Cowes and recover the ship. Knox went to Cowes and found that the mutineers had looted the ship but amazingly his manuscript of the second edition of *Historical Relation* was safe and sound in his cabin to his great relief. Knox met Sir Josiah Child who insisted that he remain in command of the *Tonqueen Merchant* although Knox felt that he had let down the Company by allowing a mutiny to occur.

Meanwhile the Company had declared war on the native rulers of India and the *Tonqueen Merchant* was fitted out with additional guns, making a total of 24 and also accommodation included for 30 soldiers. The ship sailed out as a privateer (a form of licensed piracy) for Bombay with instructions to commandeer any Indian vessels that he might encounter. He commandeered an Indian vessel but due to the prevailing winds he had to take the ship to Persia. As there was an ongoing war he could not do much trading with India so after loading a cargo of coffee and pepper from the Malabar coast he set sail for England returning in 1688.

Knox's final voyage in the *Tonqueen Merchant* was in 1690 when he was instructed to go to Madagascar and purchase slaves and take them to Bencoolen in Sumatra and bring back a cargo of pepper. He sailed out from England on 7 January 1690. In Madagascar he purchased about 100 slaves and sailed for Sumatra arriving there in December 1690 where the slaves were sold. On his return voyage he called at Madras and Calcutta and loaded more goods. He started his return voyage and arrived at Cork in Ireland on 23 December 1693 and then made his way from there to Plymouth. The Company sold the cargo that Knox had brought for the princely sum of 90,000 Pounds.

In St Helena the slaves were sold off for about 15 Pounds each to the plantation owners and a replacement main mast was fitted to the ship. On the evening of 29 May 1685, he was standing on the beach and signalling to the ship to send a boat for him to get onto the ship, when he was amazed to see the ship hoist anchor and sail off without him. The crew had mutinied and were sailing off with the ship. The tragic loss for Knox was that the manuscript of the second edition of the book was in his cabin. At a subsequent inquiry by the Company, crew members said that the reason for the mutiny was the poor food provided on the ship. They said that just because the Captain had been a captive in Ceylon and lived on turnip tops for 19 years he could not give similar food to the crew!

Knox waited in St Helena for the next Company ship bound for England. Surprisingly the ship turned out to be the *Caesar*, the same ship in which he had sailed from Bantam to London five years ago. Knox arrived in Plymouth Harbour and was standing on the bridge when he saw a ship sail in which looked remarkably like the *Tonqueen Merchant*, but the ship suddenly turned around and sailed off. Knox made some inquiries and he heard that when the crew of that ship heard that the *Caesar* had just arrived from St Helena they had turned around. Knox was now certain that the ship was the *Tonqueen Merchant*. He got in touch with the Company in London and they

(In the next issue this article concludes with a discussion on the impact of *The Historical Relation* had on Daniel Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe* and subsequent Editions especially the Second Edition compiled by THO Paulusz)



PLACE NAMES IN THE PRECINCTS OF WATTALA

M D (Tony) Saldin

Wattala is a large township of Colombo city in the Western Province, approximately 9 km away from the Colombo city centre. It is located on the A3 Highway from Colombo to Negombo and belongs to the Gampaha District. There are many villages in and around Wattala. A mixed crowd of traditional fisher-folk, working-class people, white-collar personnel, professionals and even some very wealthy people live in this town. Churches, Buddhist temples, Hindu kovils, masjids (mosques), and many schools abound in the area. Though the majority are Roman Catholic, people of all faiths live here in peace, amity and co-existence. There are 27 schools, 2 private hospitals, 4 leading supermarkets (with the major ones having a swell of outlets in every 2 km or so), 12 restaurants/fast-food joints and over 10 department stores for shopping. (Ref: 1)

I will now name a few place names in Wattala, and the folklore surrounding such places, after having personally interviewed a section of residents. It was essentially Rajapaksa Pathiranalage Alfred, now aged 78-years, (affectionately called Alfred Mudalali



(pictured)) who operated a grocery store under the name and style of Samagi Groceries in Pokuna Junction, along Kerawalapitiya Road, who gave me insights into the folklore of the following place names. Alfred Mudalali studied at the Nayakananda School (now Nayakananda Maha Vidyalaya) and was either the 1st or 2nd in class. However, he was unable to continue his studies due to various reasons. In contrast, his neighbour and schoolmate from the same village completed his schooling, graduated from university, entered government service and rose to become Commissioner of Buddhist Affairs.

Pokuna Junction: Off Kerawalapitiya Road

The squire of the area who owned many acres of land in the vicinity asked a couple of his workers some-time ago, to dig a pit to excavate earth in one of his properties. Whilst the digging was going on, their metal implements suddenly struck a smooth stone surface. Further digging revealed neatly cut and sized stone steps leading to an intricate pond below. Immediately the digging was ceased, and the pit was covered up. Legend says that royalty with their retinue used to visit this pond (*pokuna*) to bathe in days gone by. Many houses have been built over this area now.

Jawagehena: Off Kerawalapitiya Road

During British colonial times a Javanese man (a Malay) used to cultivate a large plot of land (a *chena*) about a 100-yards down Kerawalapitiya Road

with various types of fruits, vegetables and varied crops. He had no family and lived alone in a hut in the premises. He was a generous man and shared his produce with his neighbours as well. After reaching a ripe old age, he passed away and the villagers brought a Muslim priest from Hunupitiya to perform his last rites, and he was buried within the premises itself. Since there were no owners, people began encroaching on the premises with the passage of time. In order to prevent this intrusion, the Village Council stepped in and took over the land which was subsequently converted into a cemetery. The road bordering this land is now called Kanatte Road.

Kudagahapitiya: Off Kerawalapitiya Road

According to folklore, the king used to visit this place to hold court, to inquire into the well-being of the people and to receive complaints. Before his visit, the *Arachchi* (Village Headman) arrives and proclaims to the villagers of the impending visit of the monarch. The villagers then gather and construct a large umbrella, similar to a *Muthukuda* (i.e., silk umbrella held over the king or prime minister), out of cadjan as a shelter for the king and his officials who comprised of *adikarams*, *mohottalas*, *korales*, and *vidanes*. Hence, this area came to be known as “*Kudagahapitiya*”, which translates into “umbrella-tree-grounds.”

Balagala Road in Elakanda



In the days gone by during the colonial period of the Dutch and British, movements of foreigners, troops and ships in the Colombo harbour and its environs were closely monitored by a contingent of *Hewayo* (Sinhalese soldiers) who reported their findings to the king, through his officials. The observation or vantage point was a high *cabook* outcrop known as “*Balana Gala*,” which translates as “Vantage point.” As time went by, “*Balana gala*” came to be known as “*Balagala*”. Unfortunately, this outcrop does not exist anymore since the villagers have excavated the earth for filling.

Keragapokuna

Keragapokuna lies midway between Mabole and Mahabage on the main Negombo Road and was thus named due to an unusual incident. In days gone by, a pretty maiden used to come to the “*Pokuna*,” or pond, in this location to bathe. However, this maiden had a pronounced limp and the sympathetic villagers used to say “*Koragahgena enawa pokunata*”. Later the *pokuna* and the area surrounding it came to be known as “*Keragapokuna*”.

Raththaran Watta: Off Matagoda Road, Wattala

A worker named Maana who was called Maanaiya by his friends, lived in Matagoda on rent in or around the year 1900. He obtained a contract, with four others to cut some drains in *Wanawasala* (which means “Palace in the Forest”). Wanawasala is on the border between Wattala and Kelaniya. After working for some time, they decided to have tea by visiting a nearby boutique. However, Maanaiya told them to go ahead and bring him tea instead, and he continued with his work. Whilst digging, his mamoty suddenly struck metal, and, after further digging, he partly unearthed a large urn, which was filled with chunks of metal.



Before his friends could return, he quickly thrust a few handfuls of these chunks into the fold of his sarong, out of sight. When his four friends returned, they saw the urn and asked him whether this was a “*Nidhanaya*” (treasure). Immediately the urn “disappeared”,

and no amount of digging could unearth it. Maanaiya returned home and placed the pieces of metal under his bed, which were getting scattered whenever the house was swept. His mother then collected all these pieces into a coconut shell and kept it on the hearth. It was much later that it dawned on her that it was gold. Maanaiya then decided to sell the gold and approached a gold jeweler through a broker, who, after weighing them, said “*Ambadu-pon*,” which meant 50-sovereigns in Tamil. However, the cunning broker quickly said, “50 rupees,” which was a princely sum at that time.

Using this money, Maaniya bought a plot of land near the Matagoda church. It was only later that he realised that he had been well and truly swindled by the broker. He used to lose his temper whenever the villagers teased him by calling him “*Ambadu-pon*.” Because of this incident, the land he resided in came to be known as “*Raththaran Watta*” and the villagers also fondly addressed him as “*Raththaran Aiya*”.

Yodaya Kanatte Road – off Alwis Town



In days gone by there lived a well built giant of a man 7 feet tall in Alwis Town. Mothers used to frighten their small children to eat, study or stop crying as the case maybe, saying that if they did not, the “*Yodaya* (giant) will come and take you away”. After some time, the

“*Yodaya*” passed away, and the villagers buried him in the Kanatte Cemetery which is now called “*Yodaya Kanatte Road*” (pictured).

Kerawalapitiya Road

According to Mr Thiyagarathne de Alwis (pictured), the Chairman of the Wattala Pradeshiya Sabhawa, Kerawalapitiya is now a well-developed



area which encompasses the Muthurajawela Industrial Park, where the 310 megawatt Yugadanavi Power station, Litrogas Plant, CPC tanks, and where various industries and warehouses are located.

The government of the day gave a contract to a Dutch company to pump sea sand to reclaim thousands of acres of land from the Muthurajawela marshes to create the industrial park. It is also the location of the highway interchange which connects the Katunayake Expressway and Outer Circular High-



way (OCH), which in turn connects to the Southern Expressway.

However, these developments occurred not many years ago, when the 3 km Kerawalapitiya Road (pictured) ended in the present location of the Highway entrance area in a marsh. It was aptly named “*Kerawala*,” which means “end” in Sinhala in the real sense. During that period of time there was no access road from Kerawalapitiya to the Negombo Road/Welisara/Mahabage areas and a solitary old man, a boatman by the name of “*Aaron Aiya*” operated a catamaran to ferry passengers for 5 cents, between Kerawalapitiya and the Negombo Road. Kerawalapitiya Road is now connected to the Negombo Road via Gunsekera Mawatha, which falls opposite the Navy Petrol shed at Mahabage.

Alwis Town, Hendala

According to Mrs. Deluni Weerasinghe, her paternal great grand-father Daniel de Alwis lived in Hendala, Wattala, midway between the main Negombo Road and Elakanda. He was a wealthy landowner during the time of the British colonial government, and had a son Henry de Alwis. Henry had two sons Emille and Norwin. Emille’s son Diluksha de Alwis (now deceased), who was Deluni’s brother, contested and was elected as the Chairman of the Wattala Pradeshiya Sabha. Daniel de Alwis’s brother-in-law,



Porolis de Alwis was the Village Headman for the Hendala area and was known as “*Maha Daham Ralahamy*”.

Commenting further on the family history of the de Alwis clan, Mrs. Sunethra Wani-gasekera de Alwis (pictured), Attorney at law and lawyers to the above de Alwis family, said that the clan was started by two brothers Rathu Banda and Kalu

Banda from the Kandyan Kingdom who migrated to the maritime provinces during Portuguese colonial rule. Both the brothers gave up Buddhism, embraced Catholicism and received the title (*nambu nama*) of “*De Alwis*”. Being loyal subjects of the Portuguese

colonisers, they were given the privilege of being in the lucrative trade of being “arrack renters”.

A *cabook* (laterite) quarry which belonged to the De Alwis family in Matagoda was acquired by the local council and converted into a large playground for use by the public. *Cabook* blocks were the preferred raw material used for building instead of clay bricks, during that period of time. The De Alwis family also donated a plot of land of theirs opposite this playground to be used as a Catholic cemetery, which exists to this day. Since the late Daniel de Alwis was a prominent citizen of the area, a branch road of Hendala Road leading to the Negombo Road, was named



“Alwis Town,” where the Lyceum International School is located.

Before the *cabook* quarry was acquired by the local council, this area was thick jungle where wild animals such as mouse deer, hare, jackals and porcupines abounded. There were no roads at that time but only

footpaths. A villager by the name of Juvanis (name changed to protect privacy) was walking along this footpath one day when he came across a small puppy. Feeling sorry he took the puppy home and hand raised it. However, after it grew up, he found that it had a habit of chasing and catching chickens. When it started howling at night, he realised that it was not a dog but a jackal, after which the villagers began referring to him as “Nari Juvanis”. Feeling embarrassed by this whole episode he took the jackal deep into the Muthurajawela marshes and released it.

Independent research

Akbar Town, Wattala

This township was named “Akbar Town” in honor of Justice Maas Thajoon Akbar, or M T Akbar (15 June 1880 – 22 April 1944) who hailed from the Sri Lankan Malay community.

He was a Judge of the Supreme Court and Solicitor General of Ceylon. Born to M S J Akbar, a wealthy coconut estate owner, Maas Thajoon Akbar was educated at Royal College, Colombo, where he got a 1st class division pass at the London Matriculation Exam, leading him to win the coveted scholarship to the University of Cambridge. He was the first Muslim judge to adorn the Supreme Court bench and was earlier a Member of the Legislative Council. The Akbar Hall in the University of Peradeniya, Akbar Town Jumma Mosque in Hunupitiya, Wattala and Justice Akbar Mawatha in Colombo 2 are named after him. The Masjidul Akbar Jumma mosque on Kew Road, Slave Island, Colombo 2 was founded by Justice Akbar’s grandfather, Talep Akbar, in 1859 during British colonial rule. (Ref. 2)

Enderamulla, Wattala

Scrub jungle was what covered this area in the old days, so much so that land cost only around Rs 200 per acre. Herds of goats were being reared in large numbers and hence this area came to be known



as “Enderamulla” since the Sinhala word for goat/sheep herder is “Endera” and “mulla” means corner.

However, there is also an alternate explanation to this name according to the late Al Haj T M (Dada) Packeerally (pictured) from Dippitigoda, Hunupitiya, Wattala, who told me the following story before his demise. According to Haji

Packeerally, a Malay chief named Endra, usually dressed in a robe and a flowing white turban, used to ride his horse, in the vicinity. The Malays of the area called him “Endra Mula” which means “Chief Endra” and hence an alternate theory for the name “Enderamulla”.

Ambassador Lane, Hendala Junction, Wattala

Mohan (Loni) (pictured) and Monica de Lanerolle are long-time residents of this lane, which originally had no name.



When the Wattala-Mabole Urban Council wanted to name this lane as “De Lanerolle Lane,” Mohan suggested “Ambassador Lane,” since his company Ambassador Tea (Pvt) Ltd, a tea exporter, is also located in these premises. There was another reason as well. Mohan is a direct

descendant of the famous French Ambassador, Monsieur Pierre Laisne Sieur de Lanerolle. Like his esteemed ancestor, Mohan is also a skilled equestrian owning more than 15 racehorses at one time or the other. Monsieur de Lanerolle arrived with the French fleet in Trincomalee in 1672 under the command of Admiral De La Haye. Their mission was to establish a trading post in Ceylon to deal in spices, on behalf of the French East India Company. The maritime provinces of Ceylon at that time were under Dutch rule, with Ryckloff Van Goens as Governor. King Rajasingha II was worried about the increasing power of the Dutch in the island and wanted the French to act as a counter measure. Accordingly, he gifted to the French the Trincomalee Harbour on 17 June 1672.

On the 6th of July 1672, a French embassy comprising of the Ambassador, Pierre Laisne Sieur de Lanerolle, accompanied by Monsieurs Lessert and Duplessis and three valets, one of them Gascon, began their journey from Trincomalee to the Kingdom of Kandy. They were accompanied by 300 locals, some of whom were carrying gifts for the King. Incidentally, Gascon’s son, Pedro de Gascon (*Dascon* in Sinhala), later became *Maha Adikaram* or Prime Minister to King Narendrasingha (1707-1739). He was, however, executed for having an illicit affair with the Queen. Monsieur de Lanerolle’s background shows that he was of nobility, since his father Francois Laisne was Lord of Nanclas and La Nerolle, and who received

titles as nobles from King Charles VIII in 1491. The Lanerolle family were from Segonzac, not far from Jarnac in south-western France.

According to Robert Knox (1641-1720) (Ref: 3) who was an English sea captain in the service of the British East India Company, and who was a captive of King Rajasingha II, Monsieur de Lanerolle had not dismounted from his horse when reaching the precincts of the Royal Palace even though advised by the Court officials, an act that was a breach of Court etiquette. However, the King chose to ignore this incident and the Ambassador and his entourage were warmly welcomed and provided with comfortable lodgings.

After some time, the King summoned the French entourage for an audience. They were kept waiting for 2 hours, which annoyed de Lanerolle, and he left for his lodgings. The courtiers tried to block his path by using elephants, but he evaded them and proceeded to his lodgings. The King was offended by this high-handed behaviour and put de Lanerolle and his men in chains for 6 months. He was later pardoned and made a *mohottala* (a palace official) and given the title of *Amarakone Mudiyanse*. He wielded great influence in Court and married Bandara Menike, the daughter of Rajaguru Panditha Mudiyanse of Uda Kottemulla in Veuda. (Ref. 4) Incidentally, King Rajasingha II also had a reputation for keeping a large number of Europeans in his kingdom, who, in the space of time, got gradually absorbed into the local populace.

Hamilton Canal

Hamilton Canal is a 14.5 km canal that connects Puttalam to Colombo, via Negombo. Contrary to popular belief, the canal was constructed by the British in 1802 (not by the Dutch) and completed in 1804. The canal was named after Gavin Hamilton, the Government Agent of Revenue and Commerce, to drain the salt water in the Muthurajawela marshes, and also as an economical mode of transport. It discharges into the Kelani River close to the sea near the bridge connecting Elakanda and Mattakuliya. This canal is a busy waterway at all times of the day, and fishing boats, which move out to sea, are anchored alongside the canal banks.

The Dutch colonial government (1658 – 1796), prior to the British, attempted to grow paddy in Muthurajawela, but found that coastal tides inundated the fields with sea water. Around the 18th century they commenced the construction of a network of dams and canals using and enhancing the original system of waterways in an attempt to drain the salt water from the rice fields and transport cinnamon in barges to Negombo. This canal, known as the “Dutch Canal,” which is infested with vicious estuarine crocodiles, is still in existence and runs more or less parallel to the Hamilton Canal.

It is the Dutch Canal which crosses the Negombo road near the Wattala Police Station bridge and meanders its way along the Lyceum International School/ASP Liyanage Mawatha, where it discharges into the Kelani river after crossing Hekitta Road. You don't see boats on this canal, or people fishing, prob-

ably due to the presence of crocodiles. This situation had been made worse by butchers and poultry shop owners throwing bones, meat and offal into this canal from various bridges.

Coming back to the Hamilton Canal, Gavin Hamilton, after whom the canal was named, died in February 1803, prior to its completion. After his death it was found that he had embezzled 19,675 Pounds Sterling from the project. (Ref. 5).

Muthurajawela

Muthurajawela is a marsh in the Gampaha district and southern region of the Negombo lagoon covering an extent of 7,580 acres. It is the country's largest saline coastal peat bog and is believed to have originated around 7,000-years ago. In 1996, 4,390-acres of the northern part of Muthurajawela was declared a wetland sanctuary. The region supports a wide variety of fauna and flora and is a major tourist attraction. The name *Muthurajawela* translates into Sinhala as “Swamp of the Royal Treasure.”

However, other sources give a different interpretation as “*Muthu Rajah*” or “*Muttu Raasa*,” as the Dutch preferred to call it, after Prince Muthu Rajah, a Royal Commissioner who was entrusted with the supervision of the paddy cultivation in the area by Veera Parakrama Bahu VIII (1447-1497), the King of Sri Jayawardenapura, Kotte. It was the “rice bowl” of the Kotte Kingdom at that time.

It was during his reign that a canal was cut to use small craft as a means of transport. The effect of “opening this channel was disastrous” to the rich stretch of the Muthurajawela fields, which now became subject to submersion by salt water from the Negombo Lagoon and subsequently uncultivable. The loss inflicted on the inhabitants of Aluth Kuru Korale was so great that they rose in revolt against the King and besieged him in his capital. Subsequently the previously thickly populated area, became waste, after most of the people left the area (Refs. 6 and 7).

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M D (Tony) Saldin is Convenor and Local President of the Colombo Chapter of the CSA.

MEMORIES OF OLD COLOMBO, OLD FRIENDS, AND TIMES LONG AGO

HUGH KARUNANAYAKE

The year 2018 saw the departure of two nonagenarian Old Royalists, Ian D T de Mel and Ana Goonesinha. They were each vying for the honour of being the oldest living Old Royalist when they were taken away, Ian in June 2018 and Ana in October the same year. There are now two nonagenarian old Royalists both excellent sportsmen in their day now approaching the mid-nineties and have taken over the baton from Ian and Ana. The two I refer to are Hugh Aldons the triple international living in Melbourne, and Summa Navaratnam champion athlete and rugby player still coaching Royal College rugby players.

I did not know Ian de Mel and have not seen him either but managed to have a couple of transcontinental conversations over the phone that resulted in Ian recollecting his school days at Royal in an article for *The Ceylankan* (Vol 19 No1). Ian was the Director of Meteorology in Sri Lanka a position he held with great distinction. Ana, the only son of Labour leader A E Goonesinha would have left Royal when I joined the school in 1946 as I cannot remember seeing him in school. I first encountered him in the late 1950s in the airconditioned saloon bar of the Hotel Metropole in the Fort, which was probably the cosiest bar in the Fort apart from those at the GOH and GFH of that era. Ana was a regular there with his friend Rajah Gunasekera, both very nattily dressed in Fuji silk shirts and Dak trousers the most desirable outfits for young men of the time. (Ana wrote about his days at Colombo University which made very interesting reading and was published in *The Ceylankan* (Vol 19 No 1).

Rajah played rugby for Royal College in the late 1940s and was an Executive at C W Mackies. The Metropole was a congenial pub and attracted some fairly well loaded bachelors especially on weekends for drinks and dinner. The barkeeper D G Barnes was a genial man not averse to sharing his cocktail recipes. In fact, I cajoled him one evening to disclose his recipes for his John Collins and Bloody Mary, both of which could not be equalled in flavour in any bar in the country. I still make them when the mood permits! A John Collins (called Tom Collins by some) was the surest antidote for a hangover! D G Barnes was a portly, sarong wearing bar keeper, but quite capable of a conversation in basic English, much like his better-known brother D G William also known as Galle Face William (having begun working life as a room boy in the GFH) who became a leading light of the LSSP at the time and was elected a Senator. Of those who were regulars at the Met were Ajit Saravanamuttu, then tea tasting at Liptons (after abandoning a potential great future in law), Mahen Vaithianathan former scrum half of the Royal College rugby team, a barrister who did not seek to spend time at the bar, ie the other bar. There was Brian J Lucas Fernando who was quiet, but reflective, and an amused participant at

the conversations around the bar. All who met at the Met were good conversationalists and not all agreed with each other. Ajit could be scathing but annoyingly sarcastic when at the losing end of an argument. He and Mahen were both increasingly intemperate with their language as the evening went on. Rajah also fell into this category. They were unable to handle a losing argument and with each drink their sense of reasoning seemed to be deserting them. At the end of the evening however, friendships were intact, and the parry and thrust of argument all gone. Mahen, the son of Sir Kanthiah Vaithianathan lived alone in his parental home in Charles Circus was a great reader and had amassed a good collection of old books on Sri Lanka.

I saw him after many years, not long before he passed away when I visited Sri Lanka about 20 years ago. He wanted to bequeath his collection of books to the Jaffna Library that was rebuilt after the destruction of 1983, but I do not know whether his wishes were ever fulfilled. Brian also passed away in Colombo in the 1980s. He was a man who inherited enormous wealth lived a quiet life and was always a thorough gentleman. His father F J Lucas Fernando (Jnr) (old Lucas or Lucas Jnr) was an old Royalist but had to send Brian to St Joseph's as was expected from Catholic parents after St Joseph's College was established in 1897. Most of Brian's friends were old Royalists and he seemed to lament the fact that he could not school there. The Fernandos lived in a house called "Norwood" (pictured) the second house on the left as you enter Layards Road from Dickmans Road.



It was a single storied enormous house spread over a large area and originally built by F J Lucas Fernando Sr. It had a large side garden and about an acre of bare land which was used by washer families to dry their laundry. Facing the house from the road on the right-hand side was the billiard room with a full-sized billiard table. There were two well maintained tennis

courts on the property. Each evening friends of Brian and Jayantha would gather for snooker or billiards. They had a butler, whose name I cannot recall, who used to call old Lucas “Big Master” and Brian, “Master Brian”. Beside the house was a large garage which housed the family cars including a Cadillac, a Jaguar, a Morris Oxford, and Brian’s Morris Minor. The Cadillac was fitted out with a mini cocktail cabinet replete with crystal decanters and tumblers, the unit built into the rear of the front seat of the car. The family consisted of Lancelot, Brian, Jayantha, and Ula the sister who married J P R Fonseka, Govt Mineralogist of the time, in around 1955, and lived in her home given as part dowry in Elibank Road where the family owned several other houses. Old Lucas referred (within the family) to his son-in-law as “*pambaya*” and Brian as “*yakadaya*”. The youngest son Jayantha excelled in sports, encouraged by the brothers, but the father never witnessed him play, even at the St Peter’s College annual cricket match against St Joseph’s where Jayantha captained the St Peter’s team. He also represented St Peter’s College at tennis and rugby.

F J Lucas Fernando (Jnr) (old Lucas or Lucas Jnr) was educated at Royal College, and a Proctor by trade but never practised his profession. He had no need to. He owned over 3000 acres of coconut mostly in the Kurunegala and Kegalle areas and large house and property holdings in Havelock Town and Kotahena. He was a typical misanthrope and did not like to socialise and never attended either a wedding or funeral, content to live out his life in his home. He had one or two friends who dropped in almost daily to have a chat. One of them was D L Jayawardene nicknamed Hujjay who chatted with the old man daily and shared a drink. Lucas’ favourite drink was Jamaica Red Heart Rum which he used to shandy with orange juice. The house was full of expensive and beautiful antiques including two massive Louis XIV style chandeliers which were rarely switched on. Old Lucas was parsimonious despite his enormous wealth. During his time the main hotels in Colombo were the GOH, Galle Face Hotel, and Mount Lavinia Hotel none of which he would visit. Lucas married Phoebe the eldest daughter of L H Peiris of Kandy who was married to the youngest daughter of 19th Century millionaire Sir Charles Henry de Soysa. Despite their wealth, Phoebe contracted consumption during the war years and was sent for treatment to India where she passed away. Since then, Lucas had led a reclusive life, hardly ever stepping out of his house. No one in the house had to shop for groceries as everything was ordered by the butler and delivered to the house. Lucas had accounts with the big department stores of the time like Cargills, Millers, Colombo Apothecaries, Cold Stores, and even Hunter and Co! He would sometimes perhaps once in three months visit his estates and on one such occasion, I joined him together with Brian.

We left on a Saturday morning and reached a place called Uhumiya in Kurunegala. We stopped at the large coconut estate called Gondamanne and his superintendent was there by the roadside to greet us. The three of us alighted from the car and walked alongside the superintendent on the road that ran

through the property. From the time we alighted, old Lucas was in a belligerent mood. He pointed at certain coconut trees as we walked, drawing attention in Sinhalese to defects he could identify. All this was carried out in vituperative language which was a great shock to me. I had never heard him use such obscene language before. After walking for about a mile we got into the car and visited another property where the conductor was awaiting us together with another man. Old Lucas got off the car, and spoke to the other man quite sternly, whereupon the other man fell on his knees and worshipped him. Apparently, he, a watcher on the property was guilty of stealing a few coconuts. The man was sacked on the spot and was asked to collect his belongings and leave. It was a pathetic sight to see the man and his wife with their little son placing all their worldly belongings into a cane ‘*wattie*’ and walk out of the estate. That image is still etched in my mind as a very sad memory.

On the way back I asked old Lucas who I called uncle, (as was the custom in those days) as to why he had to use the language he used. He seemed to think that that “was the only language they understood” and “if one gives the slightest indication of leniency they would steal”. Old Lucas said “*putha* we have to look after what we have, otherwise we will be reduced to nothing”.

He related the story of his father (F J Lucas Fernando (Snr)) who inherited considerable wealth but engaged in some speculative ventures which nearly bankrupted him. Consequently, the downturn in fortunes made friends and relatives distance themselves from the family, but his father by sheer hard work and determination increased his land holdings considerably. He then permitted himself some luxury and imported a pair of Spanish Lippizan prancing horses that raised their front legs when trotting and was an attractive sight. The old man used to sit in his landau drawn by the pair of stallions with the son by his side, as they did their Sunday afternoon drive through Galle Face where the assembled folk in those days were mostly Europeans. As the landau passed through Galle Face Green many European men would doff their hats respectfully. Lucas Sr snidely remarked to his little son Lucas Jnr seated by his side “*putha, oye thoppi ussanne apita nemai, eya ussanne aswayo dennata*”*. In other words, the quality of the horses indicated wealth, and what they were doing was acknowledging wealth!

What a perceptive observation which seemed to have impressed Lucas Jnr so much that his guiding philosophy in life seemed to be “conserve every penny”! Lucas Jnr passed away around 1957 and the task of running the family enterprise fell on the three sons. Lancelot the elder son of Lucas was educated at Cambridge and was the pride of old Lucas’s life. While studying at Cambridge he wrote to his father saying that he needed a car. The problem however was that Lancelot could not drive. That fact would not deter old Lucas as he learnt that another kinsman Sir Wilfred de Soysa’s son Lalith (late member of CSA) was bought a new Wolseley for his use as a student in Cambridge. One-upmanship was in play when old Lucas bought a brand-new Jaguar for use by Lancelot complete with a

paid liveried British chauffeur!

After completing his studies Lancelot returned home and worked as a Senior Executive at Gordon Frazer and Co. He was later instrumental in persuading his two brothers to buy outright H W Cave and Co. They ran the business successfully until tragedy shattered the family. Lancelot died tragically in 1963 when he was shot dead by the Asst Manager at Cave's Vicky Abeywardene who committed suicide immediately after, by drinking a glass of sulphuric acid. Apparently, Vicky an old hand at Caves was insolent to the newly installed General Manager Jennings and was warned by Lancelot. Matters came to a head when Vicky after an argument with Jennings had slapped the latter. Lancelot promptly sacked Vicky and the result was the double tragedy. I attended Lancelot's funeral at Kanatte which was held on the same day as that of his killer Vicky Abeywardene, also from a seemingly staid middle-class family. Brian and Jayantha have since passed on, and with them passed a lifestyle that is seldom encountered today, where the wealthy are more inclined to a crass display of wealth, acquired sometimes through dubious methods!

**Son, they are not doffing their cap at us, but in the hope we give them our horses!*



The Lucas Fernando family in 1907. Standing in middle: Lucas (Snr). Seated on ground are:- Lucas (Jnr), the son and heir, and youngest daughter Beatrice, maternal grandmother of the current Editor of The Ceylankan. (Source: Arnold Wright, Twentieth Century Impressions of Ceylon, London: 1907).



Galle Face Green circa early 1900s. What it may have looked like when Lucas Fernando (Snr) and son rode on their landau. (Source: https://www.pinterest.com.au/gallefacehotel/_created/)

BURGHERS AND AMAHS - FIRST TO ENTER WHITE AUSTRALIA FROM INDEPENDENT CEYLON

Earl Forbes

The diplomatic relationship between Ceylon and Australia commenced even before the formal declaration of Ceylon's Independence. Australia established a Representative Office in Colombo on the 29th April 1947. On Independence Day, (4th February 1948) this representation was upgraded to High Commission status. As further indication of the importance placed on the relationship between the two countries, the Australian High Commission Office was moved from its temporary location at the Galle Face Hotel, to more permanent premises at Gafoor Building, in Fort, Colombo. Following diplomatic representation established in London, New Delhi and Washington, Ceylon established its fourth diplomatic office in Canberra. In January 1949, Mr J A Martensz was appointed as Ceylon's first High Commissioner to Australia, (*See Image 1*). Mr Martensz was a member of the Ceylonese Burgher community. Although probably underestimated in importance in the planning stages of the Australian High Commission in Ceylon, immigration to Australia soon became a matter of growing contention in the workings of this office. Developments in both countries contributed to a great deal of expectation, as well as misunderstanding, in the early immigration process.

In Ceylon, independence from British occupation, was viewed with a degree of apprehen-



IMAGE 1: The Independence Day of Ceylon, 4 February 1949, was marked in Canberra with a formal reception of more than 350 distinguished guests - High Commissioner for Ceylon, His Excellency Mr Aubrey Martensz (right) talks with Mr David Dexter, who was until recently Secretary to the Australian High Commission in Colombo.

sion by sections of the minority communities. The Donoughmore Commission in 1931 granted adult universal suffrage to all Ceylonese, ignoring the call from the minorities for communal representation. In a country where over 70 percent of the population are

Sinhalese, universal suffrage could not but ensure political domination by the majority community. Added to this, the call in the early 1940s, for the medium of education to be changed from English to the 'mother tongue' of the student, further served to convince some among the minority communities to seriously consider moving out to pastures new. The United Kingdom was a first option, followed by Canada, as countries to which one could re-locate. Australia was considered to be open by a section of the Ceylonese Burgher community who considered themselves to be of 'European Origin'. One may ask why 'European Origin' was important.

Australia's restrictive and discriminatory attitude to immigration goes back to pre Federation times. In 1891, the Premier of South Australia, Charles Kingston, stated: 'I regard second only to the necessity of protecting our shores against actual invasion, the necessity of protecting Australia against the influx of aliens, Asiatics, criminals, paupers and other undesirable classes'.

The coming together of the Australian Colonies in 1901 (Federation) did not change things. That a central and important policy of the new nation of Australia was to keep the country 'White', soon became blatantly obvious. In its first year after Federation, the Australian Federal Parliament passed two Acts restricting immigration to the country; i.e. the Pacific Island Labourers Act 1901 and the Immigration Restriction Act 1901. The first Act had dual purposes; to stop more 'Kanakas,' (indentured labour from the Pacific Islands) being brought into Australia; and to send back to the Islands from whence they had come, those who had previously been brought to Australia as almost slave labour. The purpose of the second Act was to ensure that future migrants to Australia would be sourced only from the 'Mother Country' (the UK) and Europe.

In Ceylon, some Burghers who viewed Australia as being both climate wise and opportunity wise, a much better option for migration than either the United Kingdom or Canada, soon came to realise that their 'European Origins' could be used to advantage. Broadly, the Ceylonese Burgher community could be divided into three groups, mirroring the three European powers that had occupied parts of Ceylon, (and latterly the entire island), from 1505 to 1948. Of the three groups, those of Dutch origin had for many years prior to 1948, placed great emphasis on their ancestry and being distinct from Burghers of Portuguese and British ancestry. As far back as 1908, the Burghers of Dutch ancestry formed a representative organisation called the Dutch Burgher Union (DBU). The DBU Journal had for many years published genealogies of local families. Relying on these genealogies it was not difficult for some Burghers of Dutch origin to make a case for being 'European'.

To this 'European qualification' must be added the fact that Dutch Burghers also held themselves out to be 'British Subjects'. Australians had for many decades prior to this time, considered themselves to also be, 'British Subjects'. The status and rights of British Subjects were not clearly defined in the mid

twentieth century. Be that as it may, British subjects were in general looked upon as more suitable candidates for admission to Australia as migrants, than others.

All of this seemed to have blindsided the newly established Australian High Commission staff in Colombo. Applications for entry to Australia (as migrants) were now increasingly being made by persons claiming to be, 'British Subjects' as well as of, 'European Origin'. Prima facie, these applicants appeared to the Australian High Commission in Colombo, to have satisfied the tests for entry to Australia. However, under the strict interpretation of the White Australia Policy, (which was alive and well at the time) there was more to it than meeting the basic tests. To be welcomed into Australia as a migrant at the time, one had not only to, 'play the part but look the part as well'. Subsequent developments, as outlined below, showed this to be the case.

The First Australian High Commissioner to Ceylon was Charles W Frost, an easy going retired politician who had held the Tasmanian seat of Franklin for several years and who in the later part of his political career, served as a Federal Minister. The High Commissioner and his Secretaries, supportive of applications by members of the Burgher community for admission to Australia, issued 'Certificates of Eligibility' to several applicants.

This practice was seen by the Canberra 'Bureaucrat Bubble' of the time as being highly unacceptable. In an official dispatch dated 19th April 1948, Secretary T H E Hayes, of the Department of Immigration Canberra, wrote to the Commonwealth Migration Officer in Sydney stating:

It has come under notice that a number of Ceylon Burghers who have been granted "Certificates of Eligibility" by the Australian Commissioner, Colombo, have on arrival in Australia been reported as being of predominantly non-European descent.

In all future cases it is desired that action in the following lines be taken;

- (I) On arrival the individual to be requested to make application for a certificate of exemption for a period of three months;
- (II) Arrange an interview with the person and if it is considered that he is of predominantly Non-European descent issue a Certificate of Exemption valid for a period of 3 months and warn him that it will be necessary for him to leave the Commonwealth within the validity of this exemption;
- (III) If considered predominantly European permanent admission to be approved;
- (IV) Borderline and special cases to be referred to this office of decision. A full report should be forwarded with any such case.

(See Document 1).

The above dispatch was a clear attempt by Canberra to rein in the actions of the Ceylon High Commission, in regard to administration of immigration policy. The dispatch stated very clearly that if the so called 'Ceylon Burghers' did not have convincing proof of European descent or could not be 'considered predominantly European' they were to be put on notice to leave Australia in three months.

Back in Colombo, the High Commissioner and his Secretaries were dissatisfied and took exception to the stance Canberra was taking regarding

the good Burghers of Ceylon. High Commissioner, His Excellency Charles Frost, was apparently able to effectively put his case of unfair treatment of Ceylonese Burghers at the point of entry, (or post entry) to Australia.

On the 22nd December 1950 the Department of Immigration in Canberra sent out a memorandum to the Migration Officer, Sydney, which stated:

1. About 18 months ago a number of British Subjects from Ceylon who claimed to be wholly of Dutch race and who had been passed by the Australian High Commissioner, Ceylon, as suitable migrants for Australia, were reported by Boarding Officers on arrival as predominantly non-European in appearance.

2. Correspondence on the subject has since passed between this office and the High Commissioner's Office and in a recent communication, the High Commissioners Office stated inter alia:-

"An enquirer here the other day told us that his brother who was passed by Mr. Frost last year was asked by the Immigration Officer at his port of entry to remove some of his clothing so that he could decide whether his complexion was light enough to pass and had only been tanned by exposure to the sun or whether he fell below the standards which he set. I think tests such as these are unfortunate since word of them spread very quickly in Colombo. It should be possible to make a reasonable assessment on an appearance basis without recourse to such measures. Another resident of Colombo reported earlier to Mr. Frost that a similar suggestion had been made to her daughter by a male boarding officer. I think you will agree that incidents such as these ought to be avoided".

(See document 2)

At the time this Memorandum was sent Mr Frost had left Colombo. Very likely he made representations to Canberra earlier which resulted in the subsequent issue of this memorandum. Strangely the position of Australian High Commissioner to Ceylon was left vacant for about two years (1950-1952). In 1952, A R Cutler was appointed as the second High Commissioner to Ceylon.

This memorandum highlighted the humiliating treatment meted out to some migrants from Ceylon. Immigration officers on the ground in Australia had moved the 'goal posts' and were requiring Ceylonese entering Australia to not only be of 'European descent' but also be European in appearance. One could produce family genealogies with some effort but changing one's appearance was near impossible. Also, it is interesting to consider what repercussions there would be today if a woman, (as in the daughter of the migrant in question) was requested by a male boarding officer to remove some of her clothing to pass a skin colour test!

Staff attached to the Australian High Commission in Ceylon, were apparently having to handle nasty rumours and deal with harsh criticism of Australia's discriminatory immigration policy.

Amahs

As if handling immigration applications for entry to Australia of Ceylonese who were British Subjects claiming to be of Dutch ancestry, but some of whom were not European in appearance, was not enough of a problem, the officers at the Australian High Commission in Ceylon were increasingly requested by

influential and wealthy travellers to issue entry permits to their Amahs and other domestic help.

Under the prevailing policies it appears a French maid or Swedish nanny could accompany her employer to Australia with little restriction. Such was not the case for non-European domestics seeking to enter Australia with their employers. Prior to 1950 domestic servants of non-European race were admitted to Australia for a limited period if they were; in the employ of Foreign Ambassadors; High Commissioners; were accompanying foreign Government officials visiting Australia on official business or for a conference; or accompanying Indian and Pakistan tourist and business 'visitors of good standing'.

By 1950 the question of non-European domestics entering Australia seems to have grown in importance. This matter was not only of general concern but of particular relevance in regard to entry of domestics from Ceylon. The need for the Australian Department of Immigration to rule on this matter was evident and on 16th February 1950, the Commonwealth Migration officer wrote to all concerned stating:

AMAHs AND SERVANTS OF NON EUROPEAN RACE INCLUDING EURASIANS

I refer to my memorandum of 20th January 1949, regarding the above subject, and desire to inform you that the classes of persons who may bring non European servants to Australia with them have been extended.

The position now is that the following may introduce servants of non European race:-

Up to the time the above communication was issued there were, as mentioned above, four categories of persons, [(a) to (d)] who could bring non European servants into Australia.

In the above Instruction of 16th February 1950, three new categories of persons were added to the existing list of those who could bring non European domestic servants to Australia. The three new categories were:-

(e) Ceylonese tourist and business visitors of good standing;

(f) European visitors British or non British who would be accompanied by young children;

(g) Europeans, British or non British, whose state of health necessitates their being attended by a servant.

.....Those accompanying classes (d) (e) (f) and (g) should also hold return tickets.

(See Document 3).

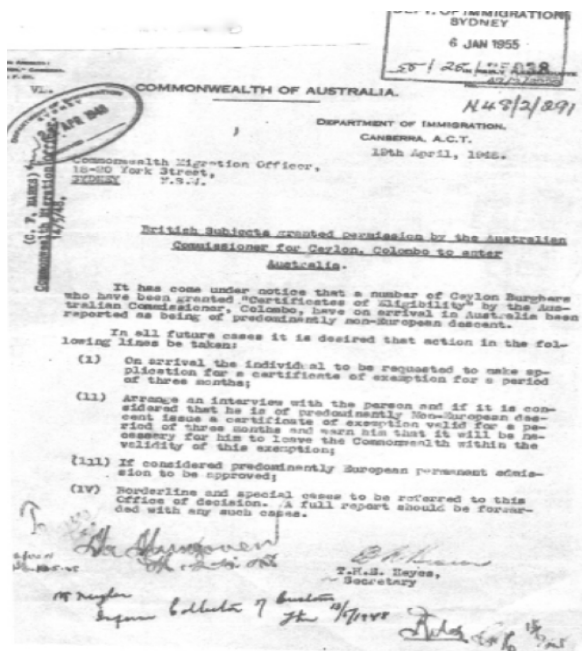
This official communication is of significance as it was the first time Ceylon was separately categorised in an official instruction regarding admission of Amahs and servants of non European race, to Australia.

The two other new categories (f) and (g) are also of significance as they opened the door to Europeans (British or non British) to bring into Australia non European domestic servants on the grounds of family or health needs. The health needs category (g) did not mention, (as did some of the other categories), that the concession was open only to "tourists and business visitors". Being far less restrictive the health needs category was soon seen as one which could be (and was very likely) exploited.

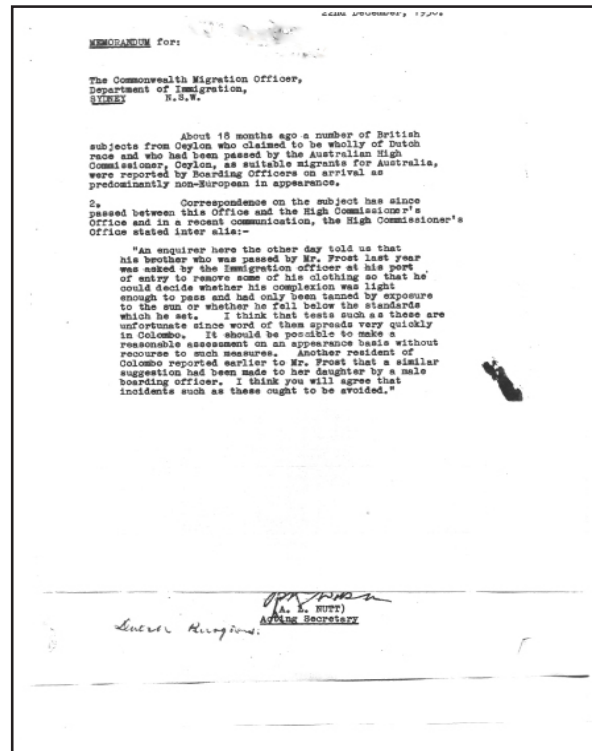
Many Burghers who migrated to Australia in the second half of the twentieth century did not experience the same difficulties as did the very early migrant Burghers. During the second half of the 20th Century Australia's immigration policy underwent many changes which brought it more into line with emerging liberal attitudes. Passed by the Australian Federal Parliament, The Migration Act 1958, did away with archaic tests (such as the Dictation Test) for entry to Australia and replaced it with a widely based Visa system. The White Australia Policy was still in operation but it was weakening. Many large scale events and programmes brought Australia into direct contact with countries other than Britain. Independence for India, Pakistan and Ceylon (1947/48), establishment of the Colombo Plan (1950), the Snowy Mountains Scheme (commenced 1949) and the Melbourne Olympics (1956) are some of these occurrences. This was followed in the 1960s by a successful Referendum which recognised rights of indigenous Australians. Finally in 1973 the Whitlam Government adopted 'Multiculturalism,' which officially eliminated discrimination on the grounds of race and colour from immigration policy.

Reference to 'race' was also excised from criteria for admission of Amahs and domestic help. The current Immigration Department fact sheet states:- 'Australian immigration regulations provide for entry of domestic workers to Australia in specific circumstances, such as when the employer is posted to Australia as a Diplomat. Overall visitors are generally encouraged to seek domestic workers from the domestic market'.

Document 1



Document 2



Document 3.

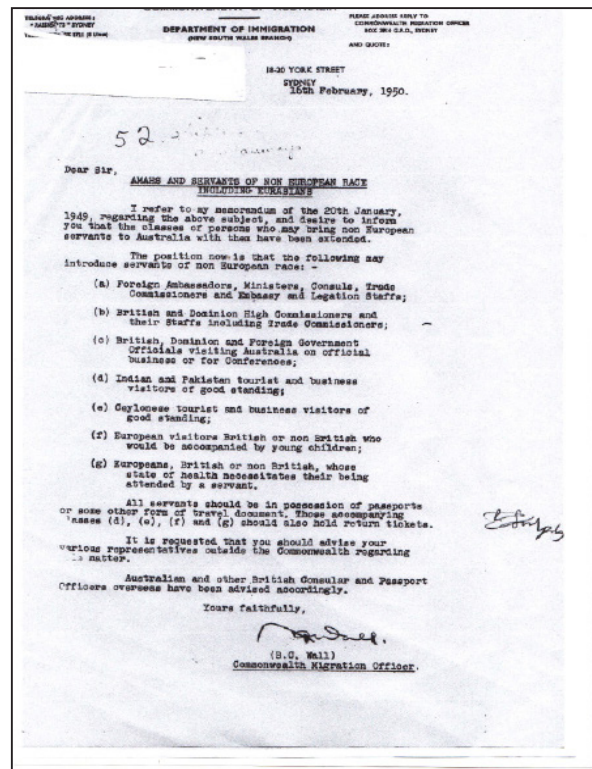


Image and documents courtesy National Archives of Australia.

Earl Forbes is a History (Hons) Graduate of Peradeniya University. He was Taxation Officer/ Administrator, in Ceylon, Samoa, Papua New Guinea and Australia. After retirement he has contributed many articles on History and other topics to the Ceylankan.

GODAVAYA THE PICTURESQUE 2ND CENTURY AD PORT IN SOUTH SRI LANKA HAD FEATURES OF A MODERN HARBOUR

M Asoka T De Silva

Godavaya or Godapavata is a 2nd Century AD harbour in a small fishing village between Ambalantota and Hambantota near the old river mouth of the Walawe River. This river which had apparently changed its course as well as its discharge mouth due to natural causes that included the build-up of a huge deposit of sand, is now claimed to flow to the sea at a point close to Ambalantota, 3 km west of Godavaya (See Fig: 1). The discovery of this harbour in the mid 1990's drew the attention of archeologists of the Maritime Archeology Unit of the Central Cultural Fund of Sri Lanka. Susanne Loos-Jayawickrema (www.VirtualLibrary-Sri Lanka), a marine archeologist of the same Unit visualised Godavaya as the picturesque harbour town in the south located around a huge rock overlooking the Indian Ocean, the gemming area of the Lower Sitracala Wewa, and the inland shipping route of the Walawe Ganga.

Professor W I Siriweera, Emeritus Professor of History of the University of Peradeniya, was of the view that although the ancient ports of the South had not been mentioned in the ancient Pali and Sinhala chronicles, like those of northern, north-western and the eastern parts of the Island during the early Anuradhapura era, the port of Godapavata (Godavaya) in the Hambantota District had been a distinct exception. He further states that in an inscription of King Gajabahu I (114 – 136 AD) found in Godavaya, it is stated that the customs duties collected in the Port were dedicated to the Godapavata Vihara.

The present author in the meantime, who was collecting and compiling information in the first decade of this century on ancient harbours of Sri Lanka, for a manuscript titled, "Glorious Historical Antecedents of a Cultured Civilization: Sri Lanka", kept a close vigil, tracking and recording with enthusiasm the developments unfolding in the vicinity of this small fishing village in Southern Sri Lanka. The findings of this mission were fortunately reported regularly in the national news media as well as through the internet, which enabled the current author to monitor all the significant on-site discoveries of the mission.

It is well known that Sri Lanka sitting in the middle of the Indian Ocean, and tipping the southern extremity of the Indian Peninsula, was a strategic meeting point for sea routes from the West as well as the East from ancient times. It was therefore not surprising that the Island had hosted several strategic landing points to seafarers and merchants during that bygone era. In fact, many such ancient ports of call for trade and commerce are said to be referred to in the Sinhala and Pāli chronicles as well as in the Jāthaka stories.

From around 1994, concerted efforts had been made by the Archaeology Department in collaboration with a German Team of archeologists led by Prof. Helmut Ruth to excavate the site of this once vibrant harbour.

According to the findings of this archaeology mission, this harbour looked almost like a modern harbour, though built around 2nd Century AD. An exciting discovery at this site had been the remains of a Customs Office building on the eastern side of the ancient temple, which had apparently been decorated with an ornament showing an elephant placing his trunk on lotus flowers. It had been noted that normally only the King was allowed to collect taxes, but in Godavaya the tax fees were apparently donated to the temple for its maintenance. Clay seals bearing the emblem of a lion had been used to stamp goods and cargo as proof that customs duty was paid (Loos-Jayawickrema, www.VirtualLibrary.Sri Lanka).

The temple area had apparently been a religious administrative centre since the time of King Gajabahu I. A Brahmi inscription on a rock next to this ancient temple expresses the significance of Godavaya as a sea trading port, while the second inscription reports that King Gamini Abhaya (identified as King Gajabahu I) had advised the donation of customs duties charged at this port to the vihara at this location (See Fig: 2). These inscriptions had been deciphered and translated by Dr S Paranavitana in 1983. According to Mutucumarana (www.archaeology.lk), the text of this second inscription reads as follows:

1. *Siddham Godapavata Patanahi Su (ri) yi*

2. *Raja Gamini Abaya viharata dini,*

which is said to mean, "*Success! The Customs Duties of the Port of Godapavata, King Gamini Abhaya Granted to the Vihara*".

Further excavations by the German-Sri Lankan archaeology team had led to the discovery of old maritime structures, which according to Mutucumarana (www.archaeology.lk), had apparently appeared to look like the parts of a jetty or stone bridge (See Fig: 3).

According to Loos-Jayawickrema (www.Visual.Library.Sri Lanka), such a landing jetty may have been built of stone pillars up to 3.5 meters in height as part of the ancient harbour. Another significant discovery near the fishing village in the year 2003 had been an old stone anchor bearing a hole at the centre (See Fig: 4). Many such anchors made of different materials are said to have been found at the Galle Harbour during excavations.

Interestingly, in an amusing and speculative *ad libitum* portrayal of the hustle and bustle on the

arrival of a cargo boat at Godavaya, Susanne Loos-Jayawickrema, makes the following comment:

Imagine the scene: It is a rush hour in the Godavaya Harbour's Tax Office. Ships from all over the world are rocking on the waves, secured by the heavy bell-shaped anchors. Sweaty labourers are carrying loads of cargo into the harbour, and tax collectors are busy stamping the cleared freight with a lion seal. It seems almost a modern harbour, but all this happened as far back as the 2nd Century AD in Godapavata Pattana, west of Hambantota. Evidence is being unearthed every day to prove Godavaya's importance in the Maritime Silk Route, with excavations and research revealing connections with China in the East and the Red Sea and the Mediterranean in the West.

In 2004, two local divers from Godavaya are known to have discovered some extremely valuable artefacts of great archaeological value. These include a small stone object resembling a small bench, and potshards in a location 3 kilometres away from the coast, at a depth of 30 metres (See Figs: 5 and 6).

In October 2008, a planned archaeological expedition had been initiated with funds from UNESCO, to further study the Southern coast that included Godavaya. To their great surprise this research team had discovered not only potshards, but also jars as well as fragments of some rare types of plates and bowls (See Fig: 6). These have been identified as 'Black and Red Ware', which they claim may date back possibly to a period prior to 4th Century BC, which is considered to be the latest chronometric boundary for Black and Red Ware. This category of glazed artefacts had also been traced far back to the 20th Century BC. Significantly, they had also found fragments of wooden components possibly from a shipwreck. These components had been subsequently identified as remains of an old shipwreck, which had later been recognised as the remains of the most ancient shipwreck discovered in the Indian Ocean.

References

M De Silva, M Asoka T De Silva, *Glorious Historical Antecedents of a Cultured Civilization*: (Colombo: Vijitha Yapa Publications, 2013).

Source for images: Rasika Muthucumarana and Sanath Karunaratne (photos) Web. www.archaeology.lk (2003)

Figure 1 - Map of the old and new mouth of the Walawe River



Figure 2 - Inscription of King Gamini Abhaya (Gajabahu I) allowing the charging of customs duties at this port to be donated to the vihara (temple)

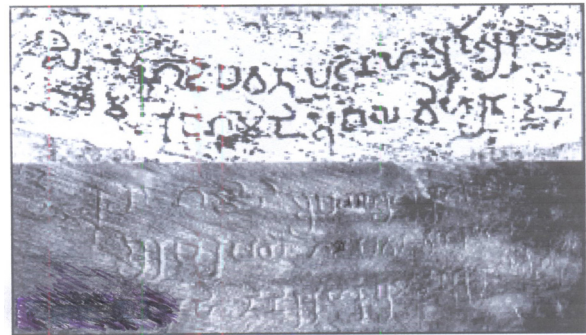


Figure 3 - Excavations of parts of a jetty or stone bridge found near Godavaya



Figures 4, 5 and 6 - An old stone anchor bearing a hole at the centre found in 2003, a bowl, stone bench and plate fragment with patterns



M Asoka T De Silva is Treasurer of the Colombo Chapter of the CSA.

TRAILS THAT THE WILD MEN TREAD

Synopsis of the 1st quarterly meeting for 2021 of the Ceylon Society of Australia Colombo Chapter (CSACC) held on 27th February 2021 at the OPA Auditorium, Colombo

Sunela Jayawardene

CSA CC President Tony Saldin introduced the guest speaker Sunela Jayawardene as a leading environmental architect (*Time* March 2007; *India Today* 2008). Her award-winning hotel projects include Jetwing Vil Uyana, Rainforest Ecolodge and Colombo Court. She was the first Chairperson of the Federation of Environmental Organizations of Sri Lanka. Her book, *The Line of Lanka, Myths and Memories of an Island*, explores Sri Lanka's legends and myths. Here is the text of Sunela's speech:

Today, as our familiar wilderness is being compromised by overcrowding and deforestation, to find true wilderness, one has to be on foot. Now, it is the only way to discover and protect the gifts of the jungles. As convoys of a new breed of 'wild men' in their powerful 4X4 vehicles, plough down ancient foot-paths and cart tracks, in their quest for driving thrills, not only is the archaeological value of these ancient pathways being diluted but also, this harsh approach destroys potentially, precious biodiversity. In this era of dwindling wild country, 'going off the beaten path' responsibly, can only mean hiking the hard way, with little comfort en route.

When I was asked to speak of wilderness trails to this august assembly, my mind sped to August - that month, which I await each year. It is when the Kachaan wind drops; that dry, desiccating wind that sweeps down from the North west, and is the forerunner of the winter of our Dry Zone. When this wind ceases, the danger of falling branches in the forest reduces. August is the best time to walk in the Knuckles Range and throughout Sri Lanka's Dry Zone. Then the mountain trails are no longer slippery, the sandbars are dry enough to camp on and the chance of a flash flood is slim. Even on the most benign of our rivers, the chances of a flash flood exist. I recall the old Tracker Menika's, tale of the ghosts of the Kumbukkan Oya, heralding a flash flood.

Jungles are my kryptonite. I wonder about this longing for the jungles — how ingrained is it? How wild are we? Is it learned values or a natural affinity that has been suppressed? As a child I think I learnt to love the jungles from my father's best friend, Upali Senanayake. I eventually learnt to sit still and watch the jungle like he always did, rather than let the jungle watch me pass. Time in the jungle became a passion or was I just a wild child? I hung around Trackers, Bungalow keepers Poachers and wildmen. I recall some of the great trackers: Hendrik Appuhamy, Seedrik Appuhamy, (P)Fakirdeen, Sarath, who died in the Wilpattu massacre in 1985, Sumanadasa, Muthubanda.... From them I learnt to test the wind, read the clouds and the sun, animals tracks and alarm calls. I

learnt to follow the gaze of a primate troupe's sentry, pick up the smell of an elephant in musth or the hysteria of mating bears. I will always be learning trees and medicinal plants.... I listened, read extensively on jungle craft, worked in the zoo — obsessive indeed.

In the early 1990s I ran a program for the Department of Wildlife Conservation called, Wild Lanka, an Introduction to the Wilderness. My fellow guide was my friend, Commissioner Cedric Martenstyn - wild and fearless jungle man extraordinaire. Crawling into crocodile dens, night hikes on Horton Plains, spelunking or Caving, but we lost him to the war in 1996. I had learnt so much and realised how little I know.

Sri Lanka has distinct seasons despite being a tropical country, due to its geography of a central mountain massif. To me, this is a clear calendar for hiking — if you live in Sri Lanka avoid being a tourist and plan your travel around the monsoons. But despite all the skills & plans nature cannot be predicted. The last time I camped in Yala, unseasonal rain swamped our camp in August, and we sat under canvas, getting up every few minutes to tip water out. But the rain wasn't our problem — we camped in grove of Ma Dhun (*Syzygium cumini*). Beautiful trees, but they were laden with fruit and sloth bear love that fruit. Every mongoose scuffle and piggy grunt became a bumbling bear, heading for the Ma Dhun and accidentally stumbling on us. A wonderful campsite but we should have avoided it while it was a magnet for bear, but the light was slipping, and we didn't have time to find another campsite.

Everything changes when you are on foot and all you have is a stick. But what do you prefer? Tucked safely in a cluster of jeeps or being awe-struck with every step, beneath a magnificent forest canopy? Sri Lankan jungles are beautiful but have many dangers: elephants, buffalo, mines, trap-guns. Therefore, a sharp sense of place is important when you're on foot. There is no getaway, so a safe campsite is helpful. Finding a campsite by 4pm is a rule I try to adhere to. Ready for bed by nightfall is not a bad thing as it gives you an early start, before the heat of the day. The jungle is most wonderful when on foot for what you can see and do. From the details in caves that can only be crawled in to, vibrantly coloured lichen on a tree trunk, some rarely seen insect or even simply sitting in a tree.

But I'm terrified as the jungles of Sri Lanka are disappearing before my eyes. For our children to learn about their environment, Discovery or NatGeo is never going to be as good as the real thing. Jungles are addictive. I am addicted, my children are addicted, and I have a granddaughter who deserves the luxury of our forests. The question is, will our future genera-

tions have the luxury of forests? Sadly, our children's heritage is being stolen. Our wildlife is under serious threat from the State as we are faced with ecocide by our elected guardians. Sadly, we have a leader who doesn't seem to understand or care that piecemeal land grabs for hotels, roads, factories and outdated monocultures, such as corn (for which 5000 acres of forest have been decimated in Ampara District), damages ecosystems. Not just the forest that is being accounted only for its timber value, but in the process, so much more is being destroyed.

Roads are on offer to the poor — even in areas where roads exist! Precious habitat is valueless: the road through the Knuckles, from Meemure to Ranamure, despite contrary promises, cannot be built without extensive damage. This is valuable monsoon forest is rich in unexplored archaeology. And for wildlife, roadways translate to fragmentation: the partitioning of forests into small blocks that are dangerous for animals to cross. For the first time in the history of our island, the chieftain of the Veddha people, Uruvarige Vanniale Attho is suing the Government for deforestation. In his words, We don't need even a grain of salt... please protect these forests! Can we all take up this gentleman's plea? Help the fight to conserve highly valuable land. Please support organisations such as the CEJ, EFL and WNPS and protest this ignorant and greedy leadership.

Or Rewild! Buy land that is valueless and plant it with indigenous species. Because, if we don't each make an effort and reform, the Anthropocene will end. Some of the wild species will recover, as they have in Chernobyl, taking over the human landscapes that our species can no longer live-in. Then, it is the human species that will be left behind when Noah's Ark II, sets sail.

A lively question and answer session followed. The vote of thanks was delivered by Hon Treasurer Asoka de Silva.



SRI MAHA BODHI TREE SAPLING IN AUSTRALIAN QUARANTINE

Christopher Lawton



A sapling from the sacred Jaya Sri Maha Bodhi tree in Anuradhapura, Sri Lanka has been imported into Australia in what can only be described as both a cultural first and a great bio-security success story.

Mr Andrew Tongue, Deputy Secretary of the Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment said:

The sapling is from the famous Bodhi tree (*Ficus religiosa*), under whose shade Gautama Buddha achieved enlightenment. This specimen is a direct descendent of the original Bodhi tree in India, from which a branch was taken to Sri Lanka in 288 BC. Imported plants can carry a range of biosecurity risks for Australia, and this sapling had to comply with our strict import conditions and thus will spend 12 months at our Post-entry Quarantine (PEQ) facility in Melbourne. These conditions will help to ensure that the sapling is free of potentially dangerous plant diseases, including the deadly *Xylella fastidiosa*, which is Australia's number one plant pest threat. It is being monitored and checked weekly by our plant pathologists and undergoing testing during its 12-month quarantine before being released in May 2022. Upon being cleared as pest and disease free, the sapling will be planted at the Bodhi Dhamma Vihara temple, built by the Sri Lankan Community at Myers Flat, a few kilometres North-West of Bendigo, in Victoria.

Despite receiving a blessing during a spectacular farewell in Sri Lanka, it has not been all smooth sailing for the little tree. When the PEQ staff collected the sapling in May 2021, from the airport's clearing agent, it was discovered to be a bare-rooted plant and in a fairly-stressed condition.

Wrapped in paper, and in a polystyrene box, it had a rough journey here, sustaining a snapped stem and some insect damage. The PEQ plant pathologists examined and checked it for obvious illness and nematodes.

According to Mr Tongue:

Even though the importer had done all the right things, including washing the plant before packing it, PEQ staff

still found insects on it and they had to remove most of its foliage to lessen the pest risk... It looked a bit like a stick after treatment, but Bodhi trees are used to hot and humid conditions, and to help it grow it was put in a special hot house where temperatures can range from 25 to 35 degrees Celsius. The PEQ staff also provided the plant with extra light, because of Melbourne's winter days being so cold and short. The small sapling must have felt at home with the warmth and extra light because new leaves grew within the first week of quarantine and it is now very healthy and standing almost one metre tall. The Australian Bodhi is a great story of importers doing the right thing and I wish this little Bodhi tree well and hope it goes from strength to strength when it reaches its permanent home at the temple in Bendigo.

Interesting facts associated with the Bodhi tree:

- The Bodhi tree ("the tree of awakening") is a large and ancient fig tree and the Jaya Sri Maha Bodhi tree in Anuradhapura is the oldest known tree to have been planted by a human with a known planting date over 2300 years ago, rather than by natural seeding.
- Gautama Buddha attained enlightenment under this tree, and thus it symbolizes wisdom, compassion and awareness in the Buddhist faith.
- Sanghamitta, the eldest daughter of King Asoka (304 BC to 232 BC) and first wife Devi (born in 302 BC and who was a Buddhist) and her elder brother Mahendra (known as Mahinda in Sri Lanka) came at the request of King Devanampiya Tissa (250 BC to 210 BC) to his court in Anuradhapura, to spread the teachings of Buddha.
- Sanghamitta Theri, accompanied by an entourage of 10 other Buddhist nuns, brought a branch from the original Bodhi tree at Bodhgaya in India, which was ceremoniously presented to King Devanampiya Tissa who planted this branch in the Mahamevana Gardens at Anuradhapura. This particular transaction is the oldest-known record of official import and export of the plant between two countries.
- Sanghamitta Theri is recognised as the founder of an order of Buddhist nuns "Buddhist Female Monastic Order of Theravāda Buddhism" in Sri Lanka, Burma, China and Thailand. This is the oldest example of women's empowerment and Sanghamitta Theri is considered the first woman, environmental ambassador and a spiritual leader.
- The Uduvap Poya festival observed in Sri Lanka at the Full Moon in the month of December commemorates both Sanghamitta Theri's arrival in Sri Lanka and to mark her bringing the branch from the original Bodhi tree in Bodhgaya and it being planted in Anuradhapura.
- Historian and novelist H G Wells commented – In Ceylon, there grows to this day the oldest historical tree in the world, which we know certainly to have been planted as a cutting from the Bodhi tree and from that time to this, it has been carefully tended and watered.

Acknowledgement is made for material from articles in Timberbiz & DAWE and research by C Lawton.

Christopher Lawton is an executive manager (QHSE Risk & Assets) with a road and rail freight operator with over 25 years experience in higher engineering. He was the first Sri Lankan-born Tennis Umpire to officiate at the Australian Open Tennis Tournament.

THE CULINARY HERITAGE OF SRI LANKA: THE CUISINE OF SRI LANKA AND CEYLON

Pamela Ann Ferdinand

THE ILLUSTRIOUS CAREER OF MASTER CHEF (DR) T PUBLIS SILVA



As this article is written in 2021, the Mount Lavinia Hotel (MLH) in Sri Lanka has a history of 215 years from the original mansion to the hotel it is today. For 65 of those years, Mr Publis Silva has been affiliated with the hotel as Executive Chef, and now as

current Director of Culinary Affairs. He is a legend in the culinary field and has been a great influence on the cuisine at the hotel. In a recent interview, Chef Publis said, "I am 85 years old. I eat food thinking of it as medicine for my heart and soul and that's what I want to share with my country."¹ This is the inspirational story of legendary Master Chef (Dr) T Publis Silva and the hotel he cherishes so dearly. He is a true example of someone who has worked his way up to prestigious positions with hard work and determination.



1956 was the start of the legendary career of T Publis Silva at the Mount Lavinia Hotel. He was 19 years old (pictured) when he joined the hotel staff for the job of hauling bags of coal to fire the kitchen ovens. He also had the duty of scraping coconuts along with other fellow coconut scrapers. From humble beginnings:

in a small village on Sri Lanka's southern coast, Chef Publis had many odds stacked against him, he says. But succeed he did, rising through the ranks in the kitchen to become executive chef of Mount Lavinia Hotel in 1982, and since 2003, the hotel's director of culinary affairs. In 2004, Chef Publis was awarded an honorary doctorate from the Open University of Sri Lanka and in March 2017 he received one of Sri Lanka's highest civilian honors, the title of Deshabandu, from the president of Sri Lanka, in recognition of his service to the country.²

An article published in 2013 states that "Publis Silva day begins at 3 a.m. Before his beloved wife Vimala awakes Publis starts the first job in the morning making *kola kenda* herbal porridge." Chef Publis is quoted as saying, "We used to prepare a pot of *kola kenda* every day. My wife prepares it while I

prepare tea. I like to start my day serving a tea to my wife with a fruit. After that we pluck flowers to worship.” The article goes on to say that, “Then it is time to have a bath, and after that two (of) them worship Lord Buddha together. Offering a pot of *kola kenda* to the temple is a daily ritual of Publis and he leaves the house exactly 5.30 am to the temple. Publis Silva reports to work at 6.30 a.m. every day and he works 365 days in a year.” The author’s humble opinion is that, “you cannot find another chef in the whole world of this calibre”³

Through his many years of service to the hotel, Chef Silva’s devotion and loyalty are because he considers that Mount Lavinia Hotel is also a home to him, and the staff are his hotel family. He is known for a healthy style of Sri Lankan cooking that is traditional and uses locally sourced fresh ingredients.

On the occasion of the hotel honouring him for his 60 years of service at the Hotel’s Annual Staff Day in 2016, Sanath Ukwatte, Chairman of Mount Lavinia Hotel Group and the Hotel Chairman delivered this tribute:

We are honoured and proud to have a person such as Chef Publis with us, who is an ambassador of Sri Lankan cuisine and has taken the name of Mount Lavinia Hotel as well as Sri Lanka to the international world. He has done immense service to the hospitality industry through his research and teaching. His loyalty to the hotel has been a strength to us.⁴

Chef Publis is currently the Director of Culinary Affairs at Mount Lavinia, previously holding the title of Executive Chef for 21 years. He is involved with the International Hotel School at MLH, and he has written 23 books, including *Traditional Cookery of Sri Lanka* and *The Art of Cooking with Chef Publis*.⁵

HISTORY OF MLH (also see *The Ceylankan*, May 2014, page 26, “The Mount”)

The Mount Lavinia Hotel has a rich history. During British rule, Colonial Governors were assigned to Ceylon with their first official residence at the Dutch built Kings Mansion (currently Queens House) located in Fort. However, Lieutenant-General Maitland, the 2nd British Governor of Ceylon from 1805 to 1811, preferred not to be at these quarters in the heart of Colombo. He was a career British Army officer, originally from Scotland. In 1806, he had a new official residence built on a scenic bluff overlooking the Indian Ocean in the village of Galkissa, south of Colombo. The new mansion was named Mount Lavinia House, and the grounds had 35 acres (14 hectares). Mount Lavinia House was the residence to four different British Governors: Sir Thomas Maitland, Sir Robert Brownrigg, Sir Edward Paget and Sir Edward Barnes. Four plaques were installed on 31 January 2011 in the main lobby of the Mount Lavinia Hotel



with each of their names.⁶ Sir Thomas Maitland (pictured) had never married, but he became enchanted with a beautiful mes-tizo dancer from Galkissa named Lovina Aponsuwa (pictured), whose back-

ground was half-Portuguese and half-Sinhalese. As the British Governor, he lived his life in colonial English society in Ceylon, and at the time, there is no question that this relationship would have been frowned upon by both the British and Sinhalese. Perhaps this was the reason why he decided that the Fort location was unsuitable. The new location would be close to Lovina but away from the prying eyes of English society.

As is often the case, stories without documentation usually become legends, with perhaps, only glimmers of truth. Legend has it that Lovina was part of her father’s dance troupe that performed for Maitland when he first arrived in Ceylon, and subsequently, he saw her bathing at a well in a location called Mount Lihiniyagala. He was so charmed by her that at his request, a 300 metre underground tunnel was built from an abandoned well at Galkissa to his property to keep their trysts a clandestine affair. The tunnel went from the well to the wine cellar of the newly built mansion. The tunnel still exists today, although sealed in 1906, and the wine cellar is now the main hotel kitchen. Years later, the new railway divided the tunnel into two sections.

Their secret did, however, become known to the British after 6 years, and Maitland was recalled back to England, much to his dismay. His recall also has a different version in the legend, saying that he returned to England due to illness. Perhaps this was the official version to avoid scandal, or perhaps he was ill at the time of the recall. Besides being a professional soldier, Maitland was also a politician, representing a constituency of Scotland in British Parliament, both before and after his Ceylon assignment. However, Maitland became disillusioned with English politics, and then accepted the position of Governor of Malta from 1813 to 1824, as well as for part of that time, administration of the Ionian Islands as Lord High Commissioner from 1815 to 1823. Maitland never returned to Ceylon and died in Malta on the 17th of January 1824.⁷

Legend also has conflicting conclusions to Lovina’s story, with one version saying Lovina was heartbroken and took her own life. Another says that he gave her land in Attidiya, and yet another, that Maitland provided her with money to buy a house in Galle where she lived out her days. Of course, with legends, there often come ghosts. Lovina’s friendly ghost is alleged to have been sighted, dancing of course, in the surrounding area of the hotel.⁸



Statue of Lovina in the Courtyard of Mount Lavinia Hotel

The naming of the hotel also has different stories. One says it was named after Lovina, being changed to Lavinia. Another says that the name Mount Lavinia was derived from its location- Mount Lihiniyagala, which the British had trouble pronouncing correctly.

Mystery surrounds the legend of Lovina, but even so, the tribute at Mount Lavinia Hotel to the

beautiful Lovina is her statue in the fountain in the courtyard (pictured) that one first sees upon entering the premises. The MLH website states that:

The Maitland State Room [pictured below] is located on the top floor of the hotel and is part of Sir Thomas Maitland's original mansion built in 1806. This elegant room is designed in period style with high ceilings and wooden flooring and contains portraits of former Governors of Ceylon, a painting of Lovina and a majestic chandelier at the centre.

In addition, the hotel has a museum showing a view of the tunnel.



Although Mount Lavinia House was home to Maitland and two subsequent Governors, by the time Sir Edward Barnes, the 4th British Governor, arrived in

1824, the building was in need of extensive repairs. The building was partially demolished and rebuilt on the original foundation, and part of the original building forms the centre of the present hotel. The designer and builder was Captain Sanderson of the Royal Engineers. Renovations were completed in 1830, but then Barnes was transferred to a new position in India. The new Governor of Ceylon chose not to live there, so the Governor's official residence moved from Mt. Lavinia to The Pavilion in Kandy. This building is now the official residence of the President of Sri Lanka, when he is in Kandy.

The British government sold the building at Mt. Lavinia at auction in 1842 to a chaplain named Rev Dr John MacVicar, who turned it into an asylum for the insane. 35 years later, a second railway line was constructed linking the hotel to Colombo Harbour. By this time, the facility was again in a dilapidated state. Business developers performed renovations resulting in a magnificent structure that opened in 1877 as The Mount Lavinia Grand Hotel. 50 years later in 1927, the hotel was bought by hotelier Arthur Ephraums and managed by Cargills.

During the WWII, Mount Lavinia Grand Hotel became a military hospital and base for the British Army as they defended Ceylon from Japanese bombing. Then in 1957, the film *The Bridge on the River Kwai* was filmed in Ceylon. The Mount Lavinia Hotel was used for filming scenes recreating the WWII military hospital.

MLH was left to the Government of Ceylon after WWII, and the government sold the property. Several private investors took ownership, and in subsequent years, the facility reverted back to a hotel. Investors over the years included: 1944 Ceylon Hotels Corporations, 1948 H J Pilbrow, 1955 P A Ediriweera and 1975 U K Edmund. Then in 1985, Sanath Ukwatte, son of U K Edmund, took the helm as Chairman of the Hotel, and he remains there today.⁹

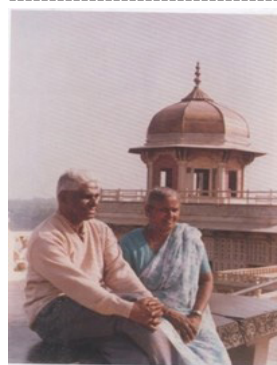
Today, the Hotel where Chef Publis has spent his career prides itself as being an elegant historic hotel, but also a modern facility that offers lavish to reasonable accommodation, sumptuous Sinhalese, Western and other cuisines and a venue for small to large social or business functions, with weddings their

speciality. Chef Publis has made significant contributions to the Hotel's success. The Hotel website states that the "Mount Lavinia Hotel is a British Colonial themed beach-front resort in the city. With a selection of 210 rooms with idyllic views of the ocean, thematic dining experiences, dream weddings, enthralling entertainment and impeccable service together with a legacy of heritage, we offer the best of Sri Lankan hospitality."

REFERENCES

All photos are from mountlaviniahotel.com or facebook.com/mountlaviniahotel/photos, except Chef Publis and his wife is from facebook.com/pg/chefpublis/posts

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5. <https://www.themorning.lk/the-art-of-cooking-chef-publis-to-release-three-new-books/>
6. <http://www.thesundayleader.lk/2011/02/06/signs-of-the-times-unveiled-at-mlh-%E2%80%94-the-first-in-sri-lanka/>
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Chef Publis and his wife Vimala in India in the 1990s



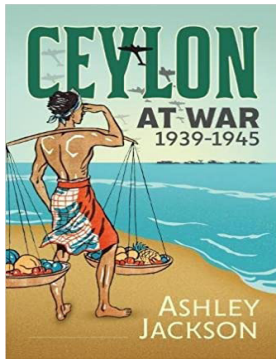
Chef Publis in front of MLH

Pamela Ann Ferdinand is a retired director of government service with an MBA from Rutgers University residing in New Jersey, USA.

BOOK REVIEW

Ashley Jackson, *Ceylon at War: 1939-1945* (Helion & Company, 2019)

Reviewed by Amrit MacIntyre



The Second World War profoundly shaped the world of the 20th century. While the War itself ended with the defeat of Fascism and set in motion the Cold War, one of its key consequences was also decolonisation in Asia and Africa, including the coming of the independence for India, Pakistan and Sri Lanka.

Engaging the population of most of the world on an unprecedented scale, both in combat and on the home front, the small but important contribution of Sri Lanka to the Allied war effort is little known. Despite its fundamental impact on their own lives, Sri Lankans and other South Asians showed little interest in their own role in the War during the decades following the end of the War. Why this indifference came about is an intriguing question. Perhaps, avoidance of the topic was in a large measure due to the perception that the War was not their war but that of the coloniser. There may also have been ambivalence among South Asians arising out of participation in the War under a foreign flag. The result of these mixed perceptions was amnesia, both among scholars¹ and the public, about the very fact that millions of South Asians volunteered to fight for the Allied cause. Regardless of the later disinterest in the War, the important role played by India, Sri Lanka and other colonies in bringing about an Allied victory stands out in the historical record.

Ashley Jackson's new book *Ceylon at War 1939 - 1945* is a pioneering work examining the particular role of Sri Lanka in the Second World War and its modest but important contribution to the Allied war effort. Jackson begins his narrative by highlighting the crucial strategic position of the island. That function became critical following the fall of Singapore in 1942, leaving Sri Lanka as a key British base for prosecution of the war against Japan. Sri Lanka became a "surrogate Singapore", with British strategists at the time recognising that the island covered "all vital lines of communication to the Middle East, India, and Australia."

Sri Lanka became directly involved in the War following the Japanese raid on Colombo in early 1942. The Japanese task force undertaking the attack was largely the same as that attacking Pearl Harbor in 1941, seeking to achieve the same knockout blow against the British Navy that the US Navy endured in Hawaii. The results were uncannily similar. As in the

case of Pearl Harbor, the Japanese Navy sunk several major British war ships during the first few months of their Indian Ocean campaign but British aircraft carriers survived the attack. The British Prime Minister described the attack on Sri Lanka as "the most dangerous moment of the war". The British saw that capturing the island by the Japanese would allow the Axis control of the Indian Ocean at a time when a German occupation of Egypt looked possible, allowing the Axis powers to link hands across the Indian Ocean. Most Sri Lankan leaders offered the Allies full cooperation. Notably, the Trotskyist LSSP did not, distributing a pamphlet to British service personnel on the island asking them, "What freedom do you have at home?" and telling them not to sacrifice their lives "in the interests of your oppressors and exploiters at home". An alarmed colonial government declared the party illegal.

Anti-war propaganda however appeared to have little effect on British military personnel or Sri Lankans. The people of the island were urged to enlist in order to "defend your home". Intriguingly British war propaganda efforts utilised Sri Lankan national sentiment. One recruitment poster urged "Forward together! British Lion and Lion of Lanka" (See below). Military recruitment raised 26,000 men by 1945, a not insubstantial military force given the small population of the country.



The nationalist factor in the motivation of many of those recruited also reflects the comparable motivation of the much larger number of Indians (two to three and a half million), especially officers, who joined the Army.² Although desiring an end to British rule, Sri Lankans (and Indians) were willing to fight under the British flag, in the expectation of independence after the War. Fear of the consequences should the Axis prevail, also appears to have been a motivating factor. One Sri Lankan soldier wrote that "sudden realisation that the whole world was reeling under the onslaught of the Germans and Japanese, made me seriously consider defending everything we held dear". There were also economic motivations. Recruitment was recognised as opening up new training and employment opportunities for Sri Lankans, as a result of the training that the military provided in various areas that after the War could be deployed in the civilian economy.

Sri Lankans though principally deployed on the island in anticipation of a Japanese attack, also served overseas. St Thomas' former head prefect Dugald Amaresekara was killed over Germany while in action. Ananda Kularatne, son of the principal of Ananda College, also lost his life in action while

his Halifax bomber was conducting a mission over Germany. Sri Lankan servicemen saw action nearer to home in the crucial battle of Kohima Imphal in 1944, known as the “Stalingrad of the East”, when Indian and British troops defeated an attempted Japanese invasion of India.

Early in the War, the Governor was at pains to apprise Whitehall of the attitudes of Sri Lankan politicians who though “supportive of the war effort would not be deflected from the nationalist agenda”. The position put to the British government by local political leaders was that it was “anomalous that the people of Ceylon, a subject people, should be participating in a War effort to restore freedom to European nations, while they themselves are to continue indefinitely in a state of subjection within the Empire”. The situation in India was comparable where both civilians and servicemen participated in the final push for independence. Churchill acknowledged the significant role of India in the war but at the same time had badly misread the motivations of the South Asians who fought for the Allies, declaring that:

... the only great volunteer army in the world that fought on either side in that struggle was formed in India. More than three and a half million men came forward to support the King-Emperor and the cause of Britain; they came forward not by conscription or compulsion, but out of their loyalty to Britain and to all that Britain stood for in their lives.³

British officials on the ground however read the situation more accurately as did Churchill’s successor as Prime Minister, Clement Attlee.⁴ Demands for independence of India and Sri Lanka received support from the United States. In 1943, a delegation of American senators arrived in Sri Lanka on a fact-finding mission. They were particularly interested in making contact with local politicians, despite efforts by the colonial government to prevent meetings of this kind. On return to the United States, the Americans gave a bad report of the situation in Sri Lanka “adding another layer to the mountain of condemnation of British rule”.

The British authorities towards the end of the War noted that the War “so profoundly affected the economic and social structure of the country” that this made “a return to anything like pre-war conditions most unlikely”. Independence came three years after the end of the War.

Sri Lanka also hosted large colonial forces including soldiers from India, Australia and Africa. African troops deployed to help defend the country, encountering prejudice from local people, were not impressed. Even as some were prejudiced, others thought that the Africans were “the best troops in Ceylon”. Although the arrival of thousands of foreign troops may have “created racial tensions and misunderstandings”, encounters with servicemen from far-away places may have provided many Sri Lankans with their first direct contact with the outside world. Despite the important role played by India and Sri Lanka in the Second World War, it is only recently that interest in the role they played in the Allied victory, especially by India, has arisen among scholars and the

public. That interest also finds a voice in international relations. In 2015 at the annual Victory Day Parade in Moscow which commemorates the victory of the Soviet Union over the Axis, for the first time, a contingent of the Indian Army took part, in recognition of India’s role in the Allied victory.⁵

Stories are told in Sri Lankan families about a grandfather or great uncle who fought in the War. However, unlike their Russian, American, British or Australian counterparts, there is little written on the subject that allows Sri Lankans to understand the context for these stories. Jackson’s work helps fill that gap. It is hoped that further works on Sri Lanka’s role in the Second World War will allow for a better understanding on the part of Sri Lankans of the small but not insignificant role that they played in the Second World War and consequently in the creation of the contemporary world.

End Notes

1. The small number of works specifically on World War II in Sri Lanka, apart from primary sources from the period, include N Cruz, *The Cocos Islands Mutiny*, Fremantle 2009; See also Anton Muttukumaru, *The Military History of Ceylon - an Outline*, New Delhi, 1987.
2. See T Barkawi, *Soldiers of Empire, Indian and British Armies in World War II*, Cambridge, 2017, p 104ff.
3. INDIA (GOVERNMENT POLICY) (Hansard, 6 March 1947) (parliament.uk).
4. Dhruv Shevgoankar, “Why the British Left India: A confluence of factors resulted in their departure” in *History of Yesterday* (website: <https://historyofyesterday.com/why-the-british-left-india-2fa5e54b8a48>).
5. “On Victory Day in Moscow, Indian soldiers make a point”, *Indian Express*, 10 May 2015.



Elephant power replaces horse power. At Royal Naval Air Station Puttalam in Ceylon (now Sri Lanka) during the Second World War, Fifi the “Duty Elephant” was a legend who brought smiles to the faces of Fleet Air Arm aviators long after the war. With fuel at a premium, roadways and taxi strips almost impassable after monsoon rains and tow vehicles prone to breakdown in the humidity and tropical temperatures, Fifi and other Indian elephants saw plenty of work towing fuel bowsers and aircraft like this Royal Navy Fleet Air Arm Corsair fighter. Photo: Imperial War Museum, London
(Source: <http://www.vintagewings.ca/VintageNews/Stories/tabid/116/articleType/ArticleView/articleId/597/Every-Picture-Tells-a-Story.aspx>)

Amrit MacIntyre is a lawyer based in Sydney. Amrit's parents, Ernest and Nalini MacIntyre are long term CSA members.

ARE THESE PHOTOGRAPHS OF COLOMBO RADIO CIRCA 1935?

Logan Thurairatnam

Photographs, Figures 1, 2 & 3 appear to show radio operators at their operating consoles at Colombo Radio circa 1935. These photographs belonged to S Rajanayagam who was the Chief Telecommunications Engineer, Posts & Telecommunications Department, Ceylon, from 1956 to 1963. Unfortunately, these photographs are not dated nor is there any description where exactly they were taken. Figure 1 shows an operator updating the ships names that have left the harbour and those that are due with their dates and direction of travel, ie east or west. The ships' names when googled assigns a period between 1925 and 1936. Figure 2 shows a map of India and Ceylon on the side wall. Note the morse key in the foreground. The communication equipment shown in the three photographs are about circa 1935.

The author would like confirmation from the readers of *The Ceylankan* that these photographs are indeed of Colombo Radio at around 1935. At Colombo Radio, the operators and the receiving equipment were located at Torrington Square, the transmitting antennas at Welikade and the receiving antennas at Manning Town.

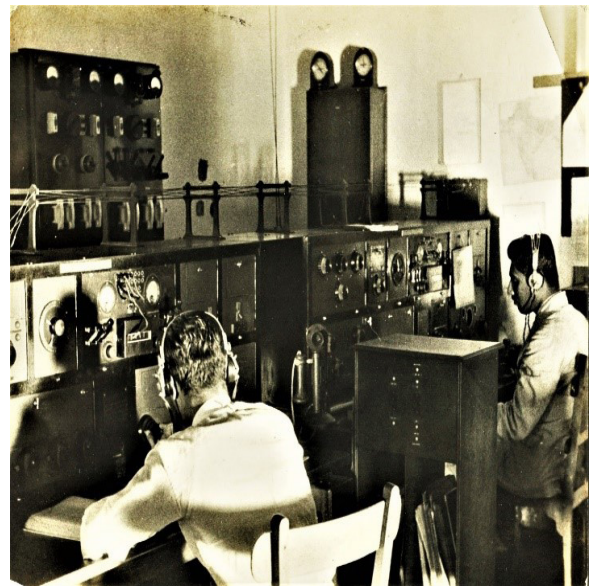
FIGURE 2



FIGURE 1



FIGURE 3



Logan Thurairatnam's article *My Brief Foray into Wireless Telegraphy* about the development of wireless technology in Ceylon in the 1930s and 1940s will appear in the next issue in February 2022.

OBITUARY

Inez Sourjah

6 October 1929- 8 September 2021



It is with much sadness that I refer to the death of a dear friend, CSA member Inez Sourjah who died in her sleep in the afternoon of 8 September 2021.

Inez was the dearly beloved wife of the late Dr Robert Sourjah who died

last year. She was the mother of Rohan and Lalin. Rohan is of course the founding Honorary Secretary of the Ceylon Society of Australia, a foundation member, who has rendered yeoman service in the formation of the Society nearly 25 years ago. I recall the pre-foundation dinners that were hosted by a small coterie of friends and fellow travellers in pursuit of memories and links with an almost forgotten country then called Ceylon. Rohan and his wife Deanne hosted the third such dinner. Those get-togethers were to herald the formation of what is now known as the Ceylon Society of Australia. Rohan was then living in Seven Hills, Sydney, and his parents Robert and Inez well settled in Sri Lanka where Robert was enjoying a popular practice as a Physician. That did not prevent them from making frequent trips to Sydney to visit Rohan and family, and which inevitably brought them into the fold of Rohan's friends of whom I was privileged to be counted as one. In fact on a visit to Sri Lanka sometime in 1996, my wife and I were hosted to a dinner by Robert and Inez at their home in De Silva Road, Kalubowila. This was the first of many such sumptuous meals we shared with Robert, Inez, and their many friends after they migrated to Australia around that time. Robert and Inez were the quintessential hosts, with Inez and her culinary skills evident in a wide repertoire of mouth-watering dishes, and Robert as the quiet but forceful conversationalist with a remarkable memory.

During their stay in Sydney over the past two and a half decades, the home of Robert and Inez was like a honey pot attracting bears. They needed no excuse to host a lunch or dinner for numbers ranging at times to over 50 or 60. Inez revelled in this role, and was the happy host very satisfied by the obvious enjoyment of her guests. Robert was often referred to as the Grand Old Man of Trinity College, having captained the first Trinity rugby team in 1945 to inaugurate the Bradby Shield series. Robert was awarded the honour of the highly coveted Trinity Lion, and the

sons Rohan and Lalin also keeping their tryst with destiny by being made Trinity Lions, a generation later. All that history woven together by the quiet matriarch of the family, Inez. The old boys of Trinity College in Sydney, found a veritable second home in the Sourjah residence, with no major event of the OBU passing without a celebration at the Sourjahs. Robert was a Committee member of the Ceylon Society of Australia, and was a genial host to the Committee on more than one occasion. When the Sourjahs celebrated their 60th wedding anniversary a few years ago, at a golf club in Sydney attended by over a hundred guests it was my privilege and pleasure to propose a toast to the health of the couple.

Inez Sourjah was born in Kandy the daughter of Mr and Mrs John Jackson- Smale. Her father was the librarian at the Department of Agriculture in Peradeniya. While her brothers were educated at Trinity Collge, Kandy, Inez and her sister attended Good Shepherd Convent, Kandy for their education. Inez represents a generation that lived the greater part of their lives in Sri Lanka, and brought up in a culture characterised by a genteel life governed by values such as honesty, sincerity, and goodwill to all. That generation was brought up to enjoy the environment around, and appreciate the country's history and culture, cultivate long lasting friendships, with an underlying emphasis on decency. It seems that those societal values are gradually being eroded with modernisation. Inez has left behind a fragrant memory of her life on this earth, as fragrant as the beautiful roses she cultivated with such expertise in her garden. May she now be rewarded with eternal peace.

Hugh Karunanayake

Obituary notices published in *The Ceylankan*

All Obituary notices and Appreciations of Life recorded on these pages are restricted to deceased CSA members only. In keeping with that policy all notices are accompanied with a note indicating such membership status.



Ceylon Society of Australia

AGM, Dinner & Social for 2021
on Sunday 19 December 2021

5.15 pm for a 5.30 pm start AGM for Members
6.00 pm - 10.00 pm Dinner and Social for Members and Guests
at

**Pennant Hills Community Centre, Main Hall, Level 1 Ramsay Road, Pennant Hills
(cnr Yarrara Rd, enter via Ramsay Rd for parking).**

**For further information
& bookings please contact:**

- Pauline Gunewardene
(0419447665)
- Deepak Pritamdas
(0434860188)
- Amal Wahab
(0411888182)

Music by Roger Menezes
\$50.00 per person

**Soft Drinks & Dinner provided
BYO wine and spirits**

Dress: Smart Casual

**Please Note: Proof of full vaccination required
for attendees.**

Note: All meetings are subject to Covid19 restrictions/lockdowns. Events that go ahead will be held strictly in compliance with safety regulations as required.

WANTED...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.

Original, previously unpublished, articles relating to the history, culture and heritage of Sri Lanka are sought, while any material of an anecdotal nature will also be considered provided they conform to the CSA's ideals of being non-racial, non-political, non-religious and non-controversial.

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 notice without delay.

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

MEMBERSHIP RATES

- **General Subscriptions for Australia:** \$35 per calendar year;
- **Pensioners' subscriptions:** \$25 per calendar year;
- **Sri Lanka:** Rs.3000 per calendar year;
- **Overseas members from USA/UK/Canada/Israel/ Thailand and other countries:** \$45 per calendar year. If payment is not possible in Aust Dollars, please pay by Bank Draft or Bank Transfer in USDollars or Pounds Sterling and add Aust \$10 to the Aust \$45 for bank charges due here for converting a foreign currency payment to Aust Dollars.

Payment Methods

1. Pay by cheque in favour of the Ceylon Society of Australia and post to Deepak Pritamdas, Treasurer, PO Box 489, Blacktown, NSW 2148, Australia.
2. Pay by Bank Transfer to:
Account Name: Ceylon Society of Australia
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Reference: Payee Name

Note: Please email all payment details in confirmation to deepakps11@gmail.com

Notice to Members - Contact Details

Could we request all members to please advise Treasurer Deepak Pritamdas - deepakps11@yahoo.com - and Secretary Sunimal Fernando - smfernando@tpg.com.au - of any changes to contact details for phone, email address and home address. We need to make certain our records are correct for mailing *The Ceylankan* as well as for getting in touch with members, and would appreciate your assistance. Thank you.

WE NEED SPEAKERS

The CSA welcomes professionals and others interested in speaking at our General Meetings. Meetings are held in Sydney, Melbourne and Colombo, quarterly in February, May, August and November.

If you know of anyone, please contact as relevant:

- CSA President Pauline Gunewardene

Mobile: +61 419 447 665

Email: paulineg@ozemail.com.au

- Melbourne Chapter Convenor Hemal Gurusinghe

Mobile: +61 427 725 740

Email: hemguru@hotmail.com

- Colombo Chapter Secretary Anandalal Nanayakkara

Mobile: +94 77 327 2989

Email: anandalal10@gmail.com

ADVERTISING IN *The Ceylankan*

For some time, CSA members and others have indicated an interest in advertising to promote their goods and services in the Journal. However, we have been maintaining the ideal of the founders of the CSA, that the Journal must not be made a means for commercial profit, but only as a vehicle for research, study and promotion of the rich heritage and culture of Ceylon/Sri Lanka.

Now, with the constant rise in costs of delivery of the Journal to members worldwide, we need to look at additional sources of revenue. Accordingly, the Committee has decided to accommodate advertising and promotional matter in the form of loose-leaf flyers, but not as part of the body content of the Journal.

Suitable material, in keeping with the non-political, non-partisan aims and ideals of the CSA, will be considered. All such copy is to be submitted to the Editor for consideration.

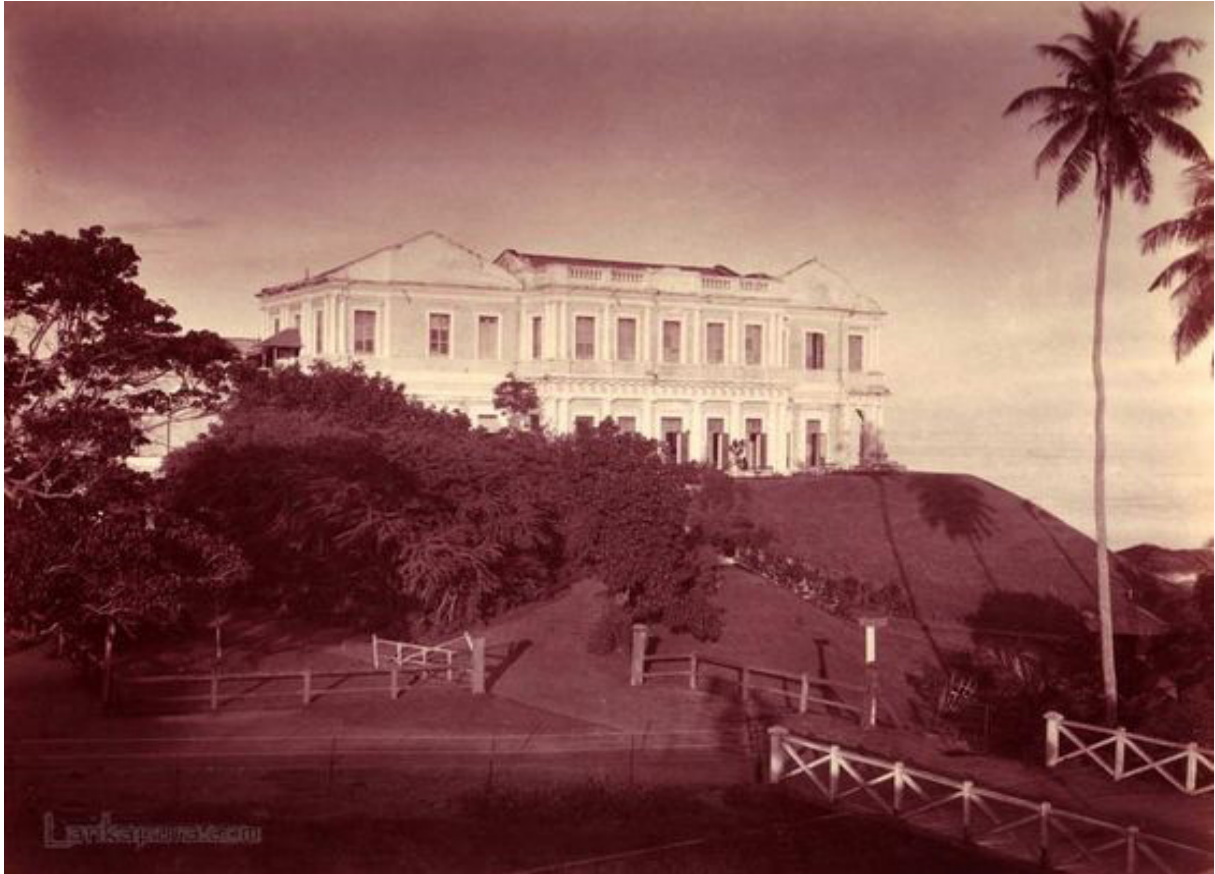
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Sources for the images in the back cover were Lankapura.com and Tripadvisor

Mount Lavinia Hotel 1880



Mount Lavinia Hotel 2020

