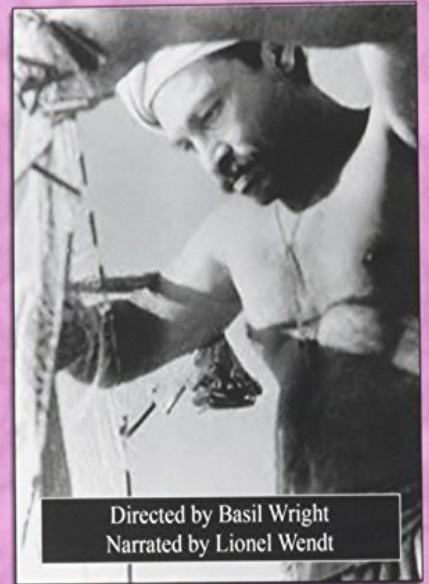




THE SONG OF CEYLON



COVER STORY:

**WHAT HAS BASIL WRIGHT'S 1934 FILM
THE SONG OF CEYLON HAVE IN COMMON WITH
WIRELESS TELEGRAPHY? ANSWER INSIDE!**



The Ceylankam

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The Ceylankam

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From the Editor

Dear Readers

A Happy New Year and welcome to the first issue of 2022, the year that marks the 25th anniversary of the Ceylon Society of Australia (CSA).

The CSA's President Pauline Gunewardene is to be commended for organising the AGM and Social, which was held on 19 December 2021. With the ever present threat of Covid 19 and the possibility of lockdown, Pauline with the assistance of the CSA Committee successfully hosted a wonderful event. A full report of the evening (with superb photos by Mahal Selvadurai) is given on pages 25 to 28.

Readers are asked to ponder the significance of the images in the cover, which started as a question posed by Logan Thurairatnam about whether the photographs in his article were of radio operators in the 1930s. The cover story is Logan's article on his journey into the world of wireless telegraphy. The article is clearly written in conversational style so that non-technical readers such as myself can easily understand the importance of wireless technology as the basis of today's mobile phones as well as its importance in shipping and the development of radio in Sri Lanka. Of course, Logan's question is answered by Thiru Arumugam in the next article.

In that article Thiru Arumugam confirms that the photos were stills from the film *The Song of Ceylon* produced in 1934 directed by Basil Wright. Thiru identifies the stills from the 1934 documentary. The article also gives an insight into the development of Radio Ceylon and its pre-eminence in broadcasting in Asia in the early 1930s. The article begins with a photo of a young boy in his sarong crouching while twiddling the dials of a radio he has built. It is none

other than that of Thiru Arumugam in the 1950s! That youthful look of concentration, curiosity, intensity and wonder at the radio technology is still evident in Thiru to this day. In that respect Thiru hasn't changed one bit!

The scientific theme continues in a fascinating and moving tribute by Logan Thurairatnam to his great grandfather Professor Allen Abraham. His claim to fame is that he was the first native Ceylonese to be elected Fellow of the Royal Astronomical Society, London. During his time he was well known and associated with the 1910 return of the Halley's Comet. Such was his brilliance that he was able to predict the transit of Halley's Comet in 1910 with greater accuracy than any of the other astronomers around the world at that time. It was the inclusion of the gravitational effects of planet Venus in his analyses that gave a more accurate result. However, the British Astronomical Association refused to acknowledge Professor Abraham's work and even continued to discredit him. This year, will be 100 years since his death and Logan thought it timely to publish his biography titled *ALLEN ABRAHAM (Ambalavanar Subramaniam) and the Halley's Comet*. His article is an extract from that biography.

In the final part of his two part series on Robert Knox Thiru Arumugam concludes with the impact of Knox's work on Daniel Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe*, which, essentially, was an act of plagiarism by Defoe. Also mentioned was the legacy of the research of J H O Paulusz in bringing Knox's book *Historical Relation of Ceylon* into the modern world, especially its importance in modern Sri Lanka. I found the Appendix most interesting as the colloquial Sinhala words reported by Robert Knox were so familiar that it made me connect with Kandy in the seventeenth century! It makes fascinating reading.

This makes a nice segue to Kandy in the early nineteenth century, where Dr Leonard Pinto retells the events leading up to the fall of the Kandyan Kingdom in 1815 in Part 5 of his series of that name. Readers can

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.

refer to the previous parts for a sense of continuity.
 Part 4 (*The Ceylankan* J 95 Vol 24 No.3 August 2021).
 Part 3 (*The Ceylankan* J 94 Vol 24 No.2 May 2021).
 Part 2 (*The Ceylankan* J 93 Vol 24 No.1 Feb 2021).
 Part 1 (*The Ceylankan* J 92 Vol 23 No.4 Nov 2020).
 Every Sri Lankan knows the dramatic and brutal story worthy of a Shakespearean tragedy, but Dr Pinto retells it in a way that still makes me want to re-read it!

We then return to the engineering theme with Udaya Peeligama's article on a little known aspect of Sri Lanka's railways - the livery of Class 2 M2 locomotives. Sri Lankans are familiar with the three famous trains the *Udarata Manike*, *Ruhunu Kumari* and the *Yal Devi*, pictures of which adorn the back cover. Udaya mentions the liveries that carried these famous trains and also pays homage to the great General Manager of Ceylon Government Railways in the 1950s B D Rampala who named them.

Harry de Sayrah's short piece on the history of honours in Australia gives a good summary of this country's honours system.

Tulsi Karunanayake, who passed away in August 2021, still elicits affectionate memories of a truly beautiful soul. Tulsi was the wife of founding CSA President Hugh Karunanayake. More warm and moving tributes to Tulsi kept flowing in by former Editor of *The Ceylankan*, Sumane Iyer and his wife Rohini, Chandra Senaratne, Dr Srilal and Savitri Fernando, Amal Wahab and Rohan Sourjah convinced me to have a special section devoted to her memory in this issue.

The two book reviews are of *Narrow Gauge Railways of Ceylon* by Rasika Wickramanayaka reviewed by Udaya Peeligama and *A Heritage Lost* by Dionysia Alwis-de Almeida, a long-time CSA member, reviewed by her niece Leander Kreltshheim. Both couldn't be more different in subject matter. One is about the railways and its impact on the development of Sri Lanka and the other a novel set in the hill country of Sri Lanka where, in the the backdrop of colonisation, rebellion and post-independence politics, characters fall in and out of love and experience loss and infidelity. Dionysia Alwis-de Almeida passed away in December 2021 aged 80. Dionysia's short obituary is written by Leander's father Malcolm Kreltshheim.

Happy reading!

ADAM RAFFEL

Our Readers write

Significance of pre-historic monuments - A reply to Srikantha Nadarajah

I found myself in general sympathy with the tenor of Srikantha Nadarajah's comments on prehistoric Hindu temples in Lanka (*Significance of Prehistoric Monuments* 'Our Readers Write' *The Ceylankan* J 96 Vol 24, No. 4, Nov 2021, p 4), but I had a little trouble with one statement of his: 'Modern Hinduism started with the advent of Indo-Aryan settlements in North India about 2000 BC.' Leaving aside the decidedly vexed question of who or what an Aryan might have been, I would like to inquire what evidence there is for attributing such an ancient provenance to Hinduism and, in particular, Shaivism. I am aware of the horned-sage and bull images found at Harappa but find these somewhat unconvincing as evidence that the roots of Shaivism lie in the Harappan civilization or any other culture of similar age. If there is more conclusive evidence for such a claim, I should very much like to see it.

When did Hinduism, as we know it today, really originate? The Vedas are not, strictly speaking, Hinduism; they are an important precursor to it, but not quite the finished article. As for Shaivism, I think it would be hard to argue that it existed as a separate stream of Hinduism prior to the seventh century AD. And South India, prior to the rise of Shaivism, was largely Buddhist. I don't think we really know what was going on there or in Lanka prior to the rise of Buddhism. In SE Asia, too, Shaivite Hinduism succeeded Buddhism in the historical sequence – except in Indochina, where Buddhism was supplanted by Vaishnava mysticism.

It seems unlikely (given what we know) that temples to Shiva existed in prehistoric Lanka.

Yours sincerely,

RICHARD SIMON
 Colombo
 Sri Lanka

A message of thanks from Doug Jones

Dear Editor

My sincere thanks and gratitude to President Pauline Gunewardene and the entire Ceylon Society of Australia's worldwide family for the magnificent farewell afforded to me on my retirement as Editor of *The Ceylankan* in December last. I enjoyed every moment of time spent carrying out my duties, made a lot easier by the unstinted support and help I received every time. Your generosity is greatly appreciated.

DOUGLAS JONES,
 Castle Hill
 NSW

COVER STORY

My Brief Foray into Wireless Telegraphy

Logan Thurairatnam



Morse Keys used on ships

Texting is a common phenomenon in today's world. Wherever you turn there is someone tap, tapping away on their smart phone. Very few know where all this began and even fewer were part of the earlier texting world.

THE BEGINNINGS

It all began on a winter's evening in the East End of London in 1896. An unassuming young Italian gave the first public demonstration of a device he had created in the attic of his family home near Bologna, Italy. It consisted of two wooden boxes, one of which could apparently transmit messages to the other. Many of those in the audience suspected that they were witnessing a mere conjuring trick. None could have guessed that Signor Marconi's magic box would be regarded as the most remarkable invention of the nineteenth century, and that he himself would become one of the most famous men in the world¹.

Samuel Morse invented morse code in 1832. This gave rise to mass communication via cables linking telegraph stations. The mode of transmission via these cables was morse code. An operator would tap, tap on the morse key letters in the form of dots and dashes (*see photograph above left in the heading*). Each letter and number had a unique collection of dots and dashes. At the receiving end, an operator would decode the dots and dashes to recover the original message. Major cities and industrial hubs were linked by 'cables.' Undersea cables were laid across the Atlantic in 1858 linking the US with Europe. The first India-Ceylon cable was laid in 1858² and the Indo-European link was made in 1864. The term 'sending a message via cable' came into being. The messages thus sent was delivered to the recipient in the form of a 'telegram'. Typically, a London to Mount Lavinia message originating in London would be sent via cable to Bombay first, then resent via another cable to the Colombo GPO. The operator in the GPO would then call the Mount Lavinia post office by telephone to pass on the message or again resend the message by morse code to the operator at the Mount Lavinia post office. The message would be handwritten onto the telegram and delivered by the postman as a special delivery. With the advent of teleprinters and telexes this process was speeded up and the use of telegraph op-

erators slowly diminished. Shown below is a telegram with a message that originated in Karainagar, (Ceylon) being delivered in London. However, it was a different story on ocean going ships.



Telegram & Envelope in 1932

SHIP TO SHORE

At the time of Guglielmo Marconi's invention, the ship to shore mode of communication was either by semaphore (flags) or flashing lights in morse code. Either way, communication was limited to line of sight. Many ships, including passenger ships, disappeared without trace. There was no mechanism available to warn ships of impending bad weather or other maritime hazards. Additionally, ships in trouble could not call for help. Marconi realised very early on, that his invention had tremendous potential on ocean going ships and as such carried out many experiments and tests on boats, yachts, and ships.

TRAGEDIES AT SEA & MARCONI THE HERO

Marconi's company built its own wireless equipment and had its own wireless operators on ships. At that time there were no "rules or protocols" as to how to communicate with land-based stations or between ships. Marconi was not the only manufacturer of equipment, there were others. Again, there were no rules or protocols as to how various company wireless operators would communicate with each other.

On a bitter cold January morning in 1909, the liner *Republic* carrying 1600 passengers was rammed by the smaller vessel *Florida* carrying 2000 passengers off the coast of Massachusetts. The smash wrecked cabins on the upper deck, sliced the engine room and tore away part of the wireless cabin. The Marconi radio operator, Jack Binns sent out the distress message in morse code:

CQD Republic wrecked. Standby for Captain's message.

'CQ' was the general call 'Seek-You' and the 'D' stood for distress.

This message was picked up by the wireless operator in the Siasconset coast station. Soon, tugs were despatched to the rescue. The general distress message relayed by the Siasconset station was picked up by several ships and the closest vessel the *Baltic* went to the rescue of both ships. The accident area was covered in thick fog and the wireless operator Binns was at the Morse key for 15 hours continuously passing messages to and from the *Baltic*, guiding her towards the wrecks. *Baltic* rescued nearly 4000 souls and when the ship returned to New York, Jack Binns and the two skippers were hailed as heroes. Binns was a reluctant hero, but Guglielmo Marconi basked in the reflected glory: it was his invention that had saved nearly 4000 lives. From then onwards the Marconi wireless operator was no longer an intriguing but minor figure who tapped out inconsequential messages for first class passengers: he was the saviour on the high seas.

Around 1912 most ocean-going ships were fitted with a 'wireless room' consisting of Marconi equipment and a Marconi radio operator. These ships had a wireless range of about 200 miles. Since there were numerous ships at sea at any given time, the radio operators could transmit messages from one to another until it reached a coast station, to be forwarded to its destination.

With great fanfare the unsinkable *Titanic* sailed from Southampton on 12 April 1912. The wireless room was fitted with the latest and powerful Marconi transmitter and expecting large volumes of messages from the 1st class passengers, two operators Jack Philips and Harold Bride were on board.

The *Titanic* struck an iceberg on 14 April at 11.40 pm. The distress signal was sent out and was immediately picked up by several ships and Cape Race coast station. However, the two closest ships the *Californian* and *Carpathia* did not respond as the Marconi operators were asleep. Fortunately, *Carpathia's* operator, Harold Cotham who was known to the two operators on the *Titanic* was back on air to alert the two on the *Titanic* that there were messages being held at the Cape Race coast station. *Titanic* replied instantly stating:

'Come at once. We are sinking.'

Followed by the ships position.

Capt. Henry Rostron on the *Carpathia* received the distress message at 12.35 am. He immediately set course for the distress position. The closest ship the *Californian* was oblivious to the drama taking place. The *Titanic's* power started to fail, and the last message received by the *Carpathia* was at 1.45 am. The two operators on the *Titanic* were sending out distress messages until total power failure. At 2.17 am, just before the *Titanic* sank, Jack Philips and Harold Bride jumped into the freezing Atlantic waters. The *Titanic* disappeared at 2.30 am. The *Carpathia* arrived

at the scene just after 4 am and picked up 713 survivors. The rescue operation took about 6 hours. They also picked up those who had died of exposure. Amongst the dead was the *Titanic's* radio operator Jack Philips. Harold Bride was barely alive with his feet frozen. The *Carpathia* made its way through the iceberg fields to New York. More than 1500 persons perished at sea. Guglielmo Marconi was instantly identified as the saviour of the *Titanic* survivors.

SAFETY OF LIFE AT SEA - SOLAS

The international treaty concerning the safety of merchant ships, "SOLAS Convention" was first adopted in 1914, in response to the *Titanic* disaster. The main objective of the "SOLAS Convention" was to specify minimum standards for the construction, equipment and operation of ships compatible with their safety. A section is devoted to radio communications. The convention established the type of equipment to be carried on board ships, the protocols to be followed to transmit, receive and monitor distress messages. Ships were fitted with the "auto alarm" that was triggered by a special signal made up of 12 long dashes. When this signal was received, bells in the radio room, bridge and the radio officers' cabin would go off alerting the crew that a distress message was about to be transmitted. It was the "SOLAS Convention" that formalised "SOS" to signify distress.

QUALIFYING TO BE A RADIO OFFICER

I was focussed on getting a job on completion of my 'A' levels. A school mate of mine mentioned that there was a severe shortage of "Radio Officers" for ships and that with my keen interest in radio I would qualify easily. I attended night classes brushed up on my electronics and practised furiously on my "morse". I sat for the Postmaster General's General Class Certificate examination and passed at the first attempt. Little did I know that the Ceylon Shipping Corporation (CSC) was so short of Radio Officers that they were tracking who was passing the examination. Soon after the results were announced, CSC staff contacted me and offered me a position as trainee radio officer on the tanker *m.t. Tammanna*.

JOINING M.T. TAMMANNA

On 27th June 1977, with the appointment letter in my hand, I walked up the gangway and asked for the Captain. I was pointed towards a short stocky shirtless character whose back was turned to me. He was busy supervising the work being done on deck. I walked up to him and quietly said "Good morning". He turned around, looked me over and growled, "Who the hell are you?!". I gave him my letter of appointment without a word. He read the letter, looked me over again and shook his head and said, "You better not go near the railings, the next wind gust will blow you over". I was 20 years old and weighed 42 kgs.

A few days later, the vessel put out to sea on its next voyage to Iraq with a brief stopover in Trincomalee. The harbour pilot coming on board, and piloting the ship out past the breakwater, was all exciting. I had my very own cabin all spick and span!

Trincomalee was the farthest we got before the engine broke down. There ended my first voyage. I was then transferred to the *M.V. Lanka Sagarika*. I was given

a stern lecture by the CSC marine officer that I would only be a trainee for one trip ie 3 weeks and not the usual 6 months. I was to learn as much as possible as I would be taking over as Radio Officer at the end of the trip.

A FEW VOYAGES ON THE *M.V. LANKA SAGARIKA*

Compared to the tanker *M.T. Tammanna*, *Sagarika* was a glorified fishing boat. It was so small; two crew members could not walk abreast in its passageways. *Sagarika* was the training ship for all officers. One's capability was tested on this ship.



Typical radio room equipment

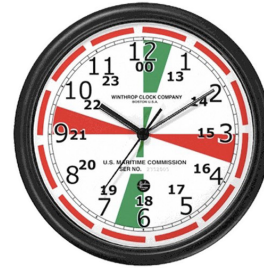
The radio officer was C. Sathiyamoorthy and I was his trainee. The radio equipment was Japanese and quite ancient at that time. We made the best use of it and I learned the ropes. Learning morse in the classroom was one thing but putting it into practice was another matter. Prior to sending a message one had to determine the best frequency. This was done by tuning into the coast station that the message was being sent to. As the *Sagarika* shuttled between Colombo and Singapore, the radio stations used was either Colombo Radio or Singapore Radio. Once the best frequency was selected, the transmitter had to be tuned to that frequency and the coast station called up. When the coast station responded and indicated readiness the message was sent by morse code.

Long distance communication was best after dusk and before sunrise. However, during night time the static was terrible and made reception of morse signals very difficult. Static manifested itself in the form of crashes sounding like someone spilling metal fragments onto a metal sheet. At times static made communication impossible. I learnt firsthand to send and receive messages in wild seas whilst the ship was rolling and pitching in the monsoon season.

There was a piece of timber plank in the *Sagarika* radio room that intrigued me. My curiosity was answered when we ran into a severe thunderstorm and the radio room floor was entirely flooded. Sathiyamoorthy pulled out the piece of timber and placed it at an angle under the desk so that he could place his feet on it without getting wet! As a trainee, I had no choice but to sit on the spare chair with my shoes under water. The power supply to the radio room was 440V with a stepdown transformer to 240V. I shudder to think what would have happened if water had got into the electrics. I was naïve then and did not think too much of the danger.

NORMAL ROUTINE

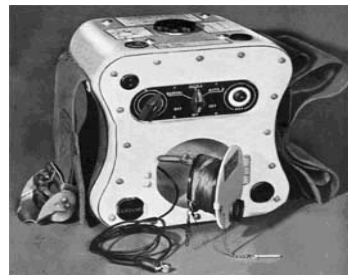
Normal work hours were from 8 am to 12 pm then again from 4pm to 6pm and finally 7 pm to 9 pm, a total of 8 hours. Clocks was advanced or retarded based on the time zone that the ship was in. It was the radio officer's duty to monitor the international distress frequency of 500 khz every 15 to 18 minutes and 45 to 48 minutes of every hour during work hours. These times were coloured red on the radio room clock.



Radio Room Clock

Every communication was logged in the radio log. Coastal radio stations regularly broadcast weather reports, weather warnings, navigational hazards and ships' communication traffic lists. Weather forecasts were usually broadcast every 12 hours and traffic lists were broadcast every hour. The entire communication was in morse code.

Aside from communications, the Radio Officer's duty included the maintenance of the radio equipment and other auxiliary systems such as the emergency power supplies, usually batteries and antennas. A lot of care was taken to ensure the batteries were in topping condition as emergency communication was dependant on the batteries in case the ships power failed. In most cases the emergency batteries were of the lead-acid type like car batteries.



Lifeboat Transmitter

An interesting task was to test the lifeboat transmitter during the lifeboat drills. This unit was very basic that relied on a hand cranked generator for power and a simple long wire for an antenna. Anyone with minimal knowledge could operate it. In the watertight lifeboat transmitter capsule, was a kite antenna. In an emergency one was to put it all together and fly this kite so that the transmitter would have a larger range. I always wondered how one could fly this kite from a bobbing lifeboat. In real life the kite did prove its worth.

Sagarika was soon followed by *Lanka Rani*, *Lanka Shanthi*, *Lanka Ratna* and then British ships based in Hong Kong and Singapore.

COLOMBO RADIO (4PB)

After WW2, Colombo Radio with its powerful transmitters ruled the waves in the Southern Indian Ocean, Bay of Bengal and the Arabian Sea. The operators were efficient and very skilled. Colombo Radio could be heard at nights in the Mediterranean Sea and in the east in the South China seas. The distinct tone and call sign 4PB (.... _ . _ _ . _ _ _) was always a source of comfort. One felt safe. After a long voyage to Europe and returning via the Suez Canal, getting in touch with Colombo Radio was like receiving a "Welcome Home".

Regrettably, the administrators did not foresee the rapid advances in communication or the competition from other coast stations. It was a matter of time before Colombo Radio's pre-eminence was passed over by Singapore Radio, Bahrain Radio and others.

MORSE TO SATELLITE SYSTEMS

As early as the 1970's technology had advanced to the point where satellite systems were being tested on ocean going ships. It took a while to place adequate satellites to provide coverage of the entire globe. Once this was achieved, protocols were established for managing distress messages from ships. These technological advances included the automation of ships including the ships charts (maps) being digitised. In the 1970's ship's crew averaged about 30, over time this number reduced to approximately 12 even though the ship size was 15 or so times bigger.

From 1998, ships fitted with satellite systems did not require a radio officer. From then on, the transformation to satellite systems was very rapid. The last morse code station was switched off in 2000. A colourful period that began with Marconi ended. Morse telegraphy ceased in USA, UK and Australia on the following dates:

| | |
|-----------|-------------------|
| USA | 31st March 1995 |
| UK | 1st January 1998 |
| Australia | 1st February 1999 |

Seeing the writing on the wall, I had to reskill and seek employment elsewhere. I took time off to attend university in the USA to complete my Electrical & Electronics Engineering. On completion of my undergraduate studies, I went out to sea as Radio Electrical Officer. This position had the added responsibility of looking after the ship's automation and heavy electrics.

After 13 years at sea, I walked off the gangway of the *Osprey Arrow* on 19 November 1990 in Osaka Japan, with my wife Premila alongside me. There was no time for nostalgia as a new life awaited us in Australia.

FOOTNOTES

1. Gavin Weightman, *Signor Marconi's Magic Box*.
2. "Laying of telegraph cables began during Governor Ward's tenure. The cable laying began in 1857 and the first lot completed in 1858 linking Galle, Colombo, Kandy, Mihintale & Mannar. A submarine cable was laid between Talamannar and the south coast of India and then extended to Madras." Paul Fletcher, *Communicating Empire*.
3. Degna Marconi, *My Father, Marconi*.
4. R.N.Vyvan, *Marconi and Wireless*.
5. Rohan Wijeratne, *The Unfinished Odyssey*.
6. Patsy Adam-Smith, *There Was a Ship*.

PHOTOGRAPHS OF A RADIO STATION IN THE NOVEMBER 2021 ISSUE OF THIS JOURNAL

Thiru Arumugam

The November 2021 issue of this Journal, on page 32 has an article by Logan Thurairatnam titled "Are these photographs of Colombo Radio circa 1935?" and carries three photographs of a Radio Station. The article goes on to say "The author would like confirmation from the readers of *The Ceylankan* that these photographs are indeed of Colombo Radio at around 1935".

This was an invitation too difficult to resist for this writer who has been a radio construction buff starting from his school days. This photograph shows the writer as a schoolboy in the early 1950s wearing headphones and carefully tuning a short-



wave radio that he had built. At that time over seventy years ago, in the immediate years after World War II, one could buy war surplus radio communication equipment for a song from the scrap dealers in Panchikawatta in Colombo North, and my room had more junk radio equipment than school books!

Comparing the appearance of the war surplus equipment with the radio equipment in the photographs, one is led to the conclusion that the photographs show pre-war radio equipment dating to the 1930s or the late 1920s.

Having identified the era of the photographs, the next problem that the writer had was a nagging feeling that these pictures had been previously seen somewhere else. But where? Finally, after some hours of head scratching, the tube-light finally spluttered into life! The pictures are scenes from the award-winning documentary film *The Song of Ceylon* filmed in 1934!

THE SONG OF CEYLON

On 23 February 2014, the writer gave a talk titled "Basil Wright and the film *The Song of Ceylon* (1934)" at a CSA Sydney meeting. The talk was followed by a screening of the film *The Song of Ceylon*. Subsequently the text of the talk was reproduced in the May 2014 issue of this Journal. The background to the making of this film was as follows.

In 1933 Ceylon tea sales had fallen due to the depression. The Ceylon Tea Propaganda Board asked the Empire Marketing Board Film Unit in London to make a documentary film about Ceylon to be shown in British cinemas to popularise tea sales. They agreed to make the film and John Grierson was appointed as the Producer. He was considered to be the 'father' of the British Documentary, and in fact he was the one who coined the word 'documentary' which he described as 'the creative treatment of actuality'. He appointed Basil Wright as the Director of the proposed film and John Taylor as his assistant.

Wright and Taylor left for Ceylon, arriving in Colombo on 1 January 1934. The Ceylon Tea Propaganda Board provided them with all the local assistance required and appointed Lionel Wendt to be their link man, guide and translator. Lionel Wendt was already established as a still photographer of repute and Basil Wright later described him as “one of the greatest still photographers in the world at that time”. The team spent January travelling around Ceylon selecting sites for filming, which was then done in February and March 1934.

As there were no facilities at that time for recording the sound track in the field, when Basil Wright and John Taylor returned to London in April, they took with them to London the Kandyan dancer Ukkuwa and the drummer Suramba, to record the sound track directly on to the final edited film, to be reproduced photo-electrically. Lionel Wendt was asked to accompany them as chaperone and translator.

Basil Wright had shot about 23,000 feet of film in Ceylon and this had to be edited down in London to about 3500 feet so that the edited final film did not exceed a running time of 40 minutes. The finished film was in four parts titled as follows: Part 1 - The Buddha; Part 2 - The Virgin Island; Part 3 - The Voices of Commerce; Part 4 - The Apparel of a God. Parts 1, 2 and 4 were village and historical scenes from Ceylon and Part 3 described commerce in Ceylon in the 1930s. It is in this section that the pictures of the Radio Station are included.

The world premiere of *The Song of Ceylon* was at London’s Curzon Cinema in late 1934. It had rave reviews. Graham Greene, the famous author, wrote “It is an example to all Directors of perfect construction and perfect application of montage. Perfection is not a word one cares to use, ... Mr Wright uses one of the loveliest visual metaphors I have ever seen on a screen...” Roger Manvell, author of the Pelican book *Film* wrote “*The Song of Ceylon* is possibly the greatest British film in any category up to 1935.”

In 1935 there were no Academy Award Oscars in the category of Documentary films, so *The Song of Ceylon* was entered in the International Film Festival in Brussels in 1935. At the award ceremony, early in the evening, it easily won the prize for ‘Best Documentary Film of the Year’. The award for the ‘Best Feature Film’ went to John Ford’s *The Informer* which won Academy Awards for Best Director and Best Actor. The final award for the night was for the Best Film of the Year in all categories. Competition was intense among the Hollywood block-busters like *The Informer* and Frank Lloyd’s *Mutiny on the Bounty*, made at a cost of two million dollars and which won the Academy Award for Best Film. There was a stunned silence in the hall when the Jury announced that the Prix du Gouvernement for the Best Film of the Year in all categories was Basil Wright’s *The Song of Ceylon*, which had been made on a shoestring budget of only 2500 Pounds and without any professional actors!

With this background, the pictures in the November 2021 issue of this Journal can be compared with the corresponding scenes from the film *The Song of Ceylon*. Pictures from the film have the suffix ‘SOC’ in the Figure numbers to indicate that they are from *The Song of Ceylon*. If we compare **Figure 1** with **Figure 1 SOC** it can be seen that they both show

the same Radio Station, but there is a slight difference in the camera angle. This was puzzling and led to more head scratching, until finally the penny dropped. The answer is in this extract from *The Ceylankan* article of May 2014:

If Wright had been shooting in UK, at the end of the day he could send his films to the laboratory for overnight processing and see the rushes the next day and re-shoot if necessary. There were, however, no cine film processing facilities in Ceylon at that time. As a substitute, John Taylor took the same shots that Wright filmed, but with his Leica still camera, using the same film, filters, apertures and shutter speeds that Wright used and every few days John Taylor went to an English Tea Planter who had in his bungalow a dark room, and processed the still prints there. This gave Wright some idea of the movie shots that he had taken.

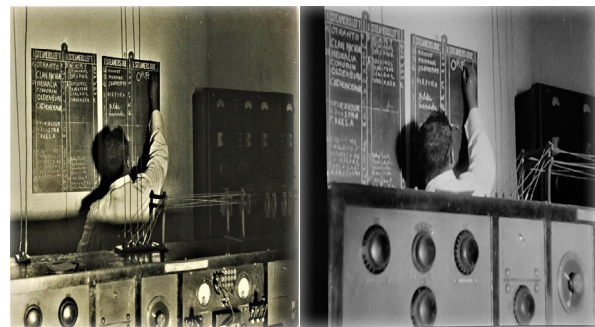


Figure 1

Figure 1 SOC

Since John Taylor would have been taking his still camera shots standing next to Wright who was taking the movie camera shots, there will be a slight difference in the camera angle. This means that **Figure 1** in the November 2021 Journal is a still picture taken by John Taylor.



Figure 2 (pictured on the left) in the November 2021 Journal does not have a corresponding scene in *The Song of Ceylon*. It must be remembered that Wright shot 23,000 feet of film and had to edit it down to 3500 feet. This means that this scene ended up on the cutting room floor in London when the film was being edited.



Figure 3

Figure 3 SOC

It can be seen that **Figure 3** from the November 2021 Journal and **Figure 3 SOC** from the film show the same scene of two radio telegraph operators but taken at a slightly different camera angle. Therefore **Figure 3** is also a John Taylor photograph.

THE STEAMSHIP *ORFORD*

Coming back to Figure 1, it can be seen that the name of a ship is being written by somebody on the blackboard under 'Steamers due'. He has gone as far as "ORF". **Figure 4 SOC** (below) shows that the full name of the ship is *Orford*. The steamship *Orford* was a passenger liner launched in 1928 and belonged to the Orient Lines, a subsidiary of the P & O Group. It had a gross tonnage of 20,000 tons and had accommodation for 520 first class and 1160 third class passengers. It was used predominantly



on UK/Australia voyages, and frequently called at Colombo Harbour. **Figure 5 SOC** (below) shows a picture of the *Orford* in *The Song of Ceylon* steaming majestically into Colombo Harbour with its foghorn blaring. The name of the ship can be seen faintly on the left of the picture. In *The Song of Ceylon*, Lionel Wendt is the narrator in the film and says that the route of the ship from UK was 'Naples – Port Said – Suez – Aden – Colombo'.



From Colombo the ship went on to Australia. On the return voyage from Australia the passengers included the 1934 Australian Cricket Team, including Don Bradman, on their way to England to play the Ashes series. On this trip the *Orford* docked in Colombo Harbour early morning on 4 April 1934. The Australian cricketers, anxious to limber up their sea legs after over ten days at sea proceeded to the NCC grounds to play a pre-arranged cricket match against Ceylon. Australia batted first and scored 284 for 6 wickets with Bertram de Kretser taking 3 for 73. Ceylon then batted and S S (Sargo) Jayawickrema top scored with 56 runs. When Ceylon were 125 for 5 wickets, play had to be called off as the Aussies had to get back to the ship before it sailed! The Aussies went on to win the Ashes and Don Bradman scored a triple century in the Headingley, Leeds, fourth Test Match.

When World War II broke out, the British Government requisitioned the *Orford* for use as a troop carrier. On 1 June 1940, the ship was in the French port of Marseilles when a German Bomber

bombed the ship and it caught fire and ran aground. The ship had to be scrapped because of the damage. Thus ended the short twelve-year cruising career of the steamship *Orford*.

BEGINNINGS OF BROADCASTING IN CEYLON

Ceylon was one of the pioneer countries in the world in broadcasting to the public. In 1922 Britain started public broadcasts. Only one year later, E Harper, the Chief Engineer of Ceylon Telegraphs, started experimental public broadcasts from the Central Telegraph Office (CTO) Building in Duke Street, Colombo Fort. The transmitter was rated at 250 watts and was taken from a captured German World War I Submarine. The transmission frequency was 375 kHz (800 metres wavelength) in the long wave band. The experiments were successful and regular broadcasting was started on 16 December 1925 and Ceylon was the first Crown Colony to have this service. The station was called 'Colombo Radio' and the call sign was 'Colombo Calling'.

In December 1927 due to space problems in the CTO Building, Colombo Radio moved to a premises in Torrington Square. When World War II broke out, the Government commandeered the Torrington Square premises for use as an office for the Royal Air Force aerodrome constructed in the grounds of the nearby Colombo Racecourse. Colombo Radio moved to temporary accommodation in Cotta Road, Borella and moved back to new purpose built premises in Torrington Square in 1949 and Radio Ceylon was inaugurated on 1 January 1950.

In 1952, B V Keskar was India's Broadcasting Minister. He was a Brahmin and an Indian classical music purist and he banned the broadcast of pop and film music on Indian radio stations. The Commercial Service of Radio Ceylon seized this opportunity to fill in the gap and using the very powerful 100 kilowatt radio transmitters left behind by Radio SEAC (South East Asia Command) after war time use in Ekala, started beaming short wave radio broadcasts to India. These were among the most powerful short wave radio transmitters in the world at that time.

The transmissions were manned, among others, by: English channel - Jimmy Barucha and Greg Roskowski (whose family owned Hotel Nippon in Slave Island); Hindi channel - Ameen Sayani and Sunil Dutt (later to become a famous Bollywood Hindi film star); and Tamil channel - S P Mayilvaganam. It is said that the latter would fly by the 8 am Air Ceylon flight from Ratmalana to Madras, buy the latest issues of Indian film music records in Madras, return by the afternoon flight to Colombo and play the records hot hot on Radio Ceylon that very same evening!

The net result was that in the 1950s and 1960s the Commercial Service of Radio Ceylon was by far the most popular radio station listened to in India, playing wall to wall pop and film music. Fan mail from Indian listeners writing to Radio Ceylon was more than a thousand letters a day with requests for records to be broadcast. The top program was the Binaca Hit Parade which had a listener base of several millions. A survey at that time showed that 99 percent of Indian radios were tuned in to Radio Ceylon, with the balance one percent being radios out of order! The Commercial Service of Radio Ceylon had a very good advertising revenue. When the top of Mount Everest was scaled for the first time ever by Hillary

and Tenzing on 19 May 1953, they carried with them a small radio which they switched on. The only station they could hear from the top of Mount Everest was the Commercial Service of Radio Ceylon! Those were the glory days of Radio Ceylon.

IDENTITY OF THE RADIO STATION IN THE PICTURES

The November 2021 article raises the question as to whether the pictures are of Colombo Radio. Figure 1 shows a blackboard on the wall on which the names of ships entering and leaving Colombo Harbour are written down. Also, the radio operators are using morse keys for radio telegraphy. **Figure 6 SOC** (below) is a composite montage image



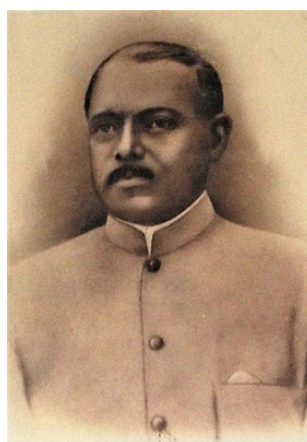
of the station's horizontal and vertical transmitting and receiving aerials. This means that the pictures are of a 'Ship to Shore' radio telegraphy station to communicate with ships coming to Colombo Harbour and not a public broadcasting station like Colombo Radio.

Ship to shore radio communication started in Colombo in 1925 using morse telegraphy. Two transmitters were used, each rated at 1500 watts. One was tuned to the common frequency of 500 kHz and the other was tuned to the specific frequency of 482 kHz. Both frequencies are in the long wave band. Morse telegraphy rather than voice communication was used because telegraphy has a much longer range than voice communication and also cuts through radio interference. This would enable ships to contact Colombo when they were further out at sea. Colombo's ship to shore call sign was '4PB'. This radio station would have been originally located in the CTO Building in Colombo Fort but when Colombo Radio moved to Torrington Square in 1927, it is likely that it would also have moved with it.

To summarise, the photographs on page 32 of the November 2021 issue of this Journal are of the Colombo 'Ship to shore' radio communication station taken in February/March 1934 by John Taylor of the GPO Film Unit, London while the documentary film *The Song of Ceylon* was being filmed. Shall conclude with what used to be written in schooldays at the end of the proof of a Geometry theorem: "*Quod erat demonstrandum*".

Professor Allen Abraham: Illustrious son of Jaffna College

Logan Thurairatnam



14 April, 1910 - Prof. Allen Abraham sighted the Halley's Comet with his naked eye from his home base of Karaitivu, Ceylon. He was the first in the world to do so. His sighting and claim are recorded in *The Jaffna College Miscellany*, June 1910 edition as "With the naked eye it was first seen by us in Jaffna on 14 April 1910." Professor Allen Abraham was an Astronomer, Professor

Prof Allen Abraham BA, FRAS
1865 - 1922

of Mathematics and Tamil at Jaffna College and a composer. He joined Jaffna College as a student in 1884, then Professor of Tamil in 1891. In 1893 he was appointed as Professor of Mathematics. He continued his teaching until his death in 1922. He is considered one of Jaffna College's greats. He was a poet. He composed lyrics of which ten are included in *The Church of South India Song Book*. These songs are still sung in churches today.

The Halley's Comet was expected to return in early 1910 and there was great excitement among astronomers as this return was to be the first opportunity to photograph the comet as well as observe the transit of the sun (when viewed from earth the comet would move across the face of the sun). The transit of the sun occurs once every 650 revolutions ie approximately 50,000 years.

It was made known that a prize would be awarded to anyone who could predict the date of the perihelion - the closet point to the sun. There were two submissions for this competition. On 11 September 1909, Dr. Max Wolf of the Heidelberg Observatory sighted the comet using his telescope and photographed it. When the sighting was announced the perihelion was calculated and the winners of the prize were Dr. A.C.D Crommelin and P.H. Cowell from the Greenwich Observatory in London. In their essay the perihelion was calculated to be 16 April 1910 but the true date calculated after sighting was 19 April 1910. Messrs Crommelin and Cowell were given numerous awards and accolades for their great achievement. In November 1909, after making observations of the comet, they published the revised date of the perihelion and the date and time of the transit. These were published in the November notices of the Royal Astronomical Society (RAS), London.

On the obscure island of Karaitivu, off the island of Ceylon an unknown astronomer Prof. Allen Abraham (named Ambalavanar Subramaniam at birth) was also calculating the trajectory of the Halley's Comet. He was also writing articles in the local newspapers and school journals about the Halley's Comet. The newspapers carried sensational news about the comet and possible disaster befalling the earthlings. Some reports said that the comet would crash into the earth while others claimed the comet would brush past earth and the poisonous gas in the comet's tail would kill many of the inhabitants on earth. Unfortunately, many in the public believed these stories. In addition to writing articles, he was giving lectures about the comet and providing a rational explanation for the comet's appearance.

On 26 March 1910, Prof. Abraham gave a lecture to about 500 people at the American English school, in Karaitivu about the Halley's Comet. In attendance was the *Ceylon Observer* reporter who filed his report which was published on 28 March 1910. The news report stated that during the lecture it was said that:

- i) The comet had already become a morning star and would be visible to the naked eye in the Eastern sky from the middle of April to the middle of May.
- ii) It will be almost in conjunction with Venus during the first week of May when its motion will be affected by that planet.

THE FIRST PREDICTION CAME TRUE WHEN HE SIGHTED THE COMET ON 14 APRIL 1910.

As predicted by the British astronomers the perihelion occurred on 20 April 1910. The next event expected was the transit and the predicted date was 18 May 1910, visible in Australasia - India, Ceylon, Australia etc. All was well until 17 May 1910 (day before transit was to occur), when the Comet Committee of the Astronomical and Astrophysical Society of America requested Berkeley University Astronomical Department to recheck the transit calculations of Dr. A.C.D Crommelin and P.H. Cowell. The initial calculations were checked by Professor Crawford and Mr. Meyer. They corrected the information provided by Crommelin and Cowell in November 1909 and determined that the transit would occur one hour later. This information was then relayed around the world to leading observatories by telegram. They also determined that Mars did not affect the calculations, but perturbations were caused by the actions of Venus and Earth.

Observatories in Sydney and Kodaikanal among others were in preparation to observe the transit. One of the astronomers in the Sydney observatory did not pass on the corrected transit time to the astronomers who oversaw the transit. As a result, they reported "..... not a trace of the comet could be found." Kodaikanal Observatory reported:

The calculated time of the comet's ingress, as communicated to us some time before, was 7h 50m and so everything was in readiness but at 8 o'clock we received a Kiel telegram giving the corrected time of ingress and egress as 8h 59 and 9h 59m L.S.T.

Interestingly, in Tasmania, Australia a member of the public, J.B. Bullock observed the transit with the naked eye. The news report stated:

.....the comet, he states, could be seen with the naked eye, and at 11 o'clock a vestige of the tail in the shape of a fan with radii opening upwards was visible. Mr. Bullock not only conducted observations himself, but his results were checked by members of his household and other people. His mode of procedure was to shut the sun out by an adjoining roof and then examine his neighbourhood through his glasses with the result that he obtained some interesting observations. The mistake which other observers made was to examine the sun and region surrounding through smoked glasses with the result that they saw nothing.

A subsequent astronomical paper stated the following:

It was supported as well as communicated to the newspaper by Alexander McAulay, a Professor of Mathematics and Physics at the University of Tasmania. Second, in his letter to the newspaper, McAulay expressed annoyance at a colleague, Dr. Baracchi, for failing to telegraph the latest revised transit times for the comet. The times with which Bullock and McAulay had been working were 12h22 – 1h22m L.M.T. However, Bullock continued to observe the comet in daylight before transit, up to 1h28m L.M.T., which corresponded to the true time of beginning transit....

This sighting by J.B. Bullock is the only reported sighting of the beginning of transit anywhere in the world. Furthermore, it validates the transit times calculated by the Berkeley University members Dr. Crawford and Mr. Meyer.

PROF. ABRAHAM'S SECOND PREDICTION WAS PROVEN TRUE WITH THIS VALIDATION OF THE CORRECTED TRANSIT TIMES

In June 1911, with the recommendation of three Indian Astronomers, Sree Rajah A.V. Jugga Rao Bahadur Garu, J.D. Bhargava and K.D. Naegamvala, Prof. Abraham submitted his application to be elected Fellow of the Royal Astronomical Society and he was elected Fellow in January 1912, the first native Ceylonese to be thus elected. *The Jaffna College Miscellany* of 1912 celebrated his achievement as:

..... He predicted and explained with diagrams that the comet would be visible to the naked eye in the middle of April 1910, while other astronomers thought that it would not be seen so soon Again, he pointed out in his lectures and explained with diagrams that the comet would enter the orbit of Venus and reach so near it during the first week of May, that its motion would be retarded by that planet. Mr. Abraham has indeed done real service in popularising Astronomy and amply deserved the honour conferred on him by a scientific society of such high rank as the Royal Astronomical Society of England.

Subsequently in 1913, *The Missionary Herald*, Boston, USA stated the following:

ALLEN ABRAHAM, for twenty-one years professor of astronomy in Jaffna College, Ceylon, has recently been elected a fellow of the Royal Astronomical Society of England, the first native Ceylonese to receive that honour When Halley's Comet was being studied in 1910, his prediction as to the time of its visibility, earlier than

that of other astronomers, was proved true; moreover he noted, what many eminent scholars overlooked, that the entrance of the comet into the orbit of Venus would retard its motion and affect the calculation of the time of its crossing the sun's disc.

CONTROVERSY

In 1914 the British Astronomical Association published the *Report on Halley's Comet*. The co-author was Dr. A.C.D. Crommelin. This report was all about the 1910 appearance of the Halley's Comet. His report refers to Prof. Abraham as follows:

In the Ceylon Observer of March 28, 1910, I read that Prof. Abraham, of Jaffna College, has traced the appearance of Halley's Comet to 5012 B.C. Unfortunately the dates of the intermediate returns are not stated, so that Dr. Crommelin will not get much assistance from that source.

There is no other reference to Prof. Abraham. His predictions reported in the *Ceylon Observer* of 28 March 1910 was ignored. This negative piece raises many questions:

- i) Was it necessary to include this negative piece in this report?
- ii) Was the author reading every newspaper in the colonies between 1910-1914 for articles on Halley's comet?
- iii) Why specifically refer to the *Ceylon Observer* of 28 March 1910? One can only assume this piece in the report was to discredit Prof. Abraham's predictions.

Prediction 1 – Visibility with the naked eye

The *Report on Halley's Comet* explicitly stated that:

Prof. Wolf saw the comet with the naked eye on February 11. He was the first to discover it with the camera, and the first to see it with the naked eye.

However, it is widely reported and accepted that Prof. Wolf was the first to see the comet with the telescope but other than the *Report on Halley's Comet* nowhere else is it stated that Prof. Wolf saw the comet with his naked eye on 11 February. Casting doubt is the paper by Dr. Donald K Yeoman of Jet Propulsion Laboratory/NASA (California Institute of Technology) titled *Great Comets in History* (April 2007). The paper lists great comets from A.D 66 to 2007 giving various information about the comets including the first reported sighting with the naked eye. The 1910 return and the first sighting with the naked eye is listed as 10 April 1910.

Prof. Wolf's reported sighting in the *Report on Halley's Comet* two months previously must be dismissed as an error. The observational logbooks at the Heidelberg observatory (Landessternwarte Königstuhl) shows that on 11 September 1909, the comet was photographed on the photographic plate number D571. However, there are no observational records for 11 & 12 February 1910.

In two months, the comet would have been several million miles further from earth and its visibility with the naked eye in February must be questioned. It appears that Dr. Wolf did not make this claim, but is an error introduced by the *Report on Halley's Comet* author.

Prediction 2 – Motion of the Comet affected by the planet (Venus)

The transit section of the *Report on Halley's Comet* was very brief and said:

A transit took place in the night of May 18, which was expected to be visible in India and Australia. Mr. Leuschner calculated

Stating "Mr. Leuschner calculated" is untrue. The transit time was given by Cowell and Crommelin in the November 1909, number of the RAS monthly notices as:

..... a nearly central transit of the comet over the sun results on 1910 May 18d 14h, visible in the Pacific Ocean, and in Asia, Australia, etc

The *Report on Halley's Comet* importantly omits that the elements, given by Cowell and Crommelin in the monthly notices, were corrected. These corrections were made by Professor Crawford and Mr. Meyer. Problems with Cowell's & Crommelin's predictions were identified by the Comet Committee of the Astronomical and Astrophysical Society of America, the day before transit. At their request, Berkley Astronomical Department carried out computations of the transit. The corrected transit times were then telegraphed to all the major observatories around the world. In addition, the Berkley Astronomical Department went onto say:

.... The perturbations due to the action of Venus and the Earth, during March, April and May, were computed with great accuracy.

The entire background regarding the corrections to the transit times and specifically the corrections made to Cowell's & Crommelin's November predictions was not included in the *Report on Halley's Comet*. In addition, the fact that the corrected transit times being approximately one hour later was excluded from the report. What is also missing is that the perturbations were caused by Venus and Earth. Furthermore, J.B. Bullock's sighting in Tasmania was dismissed by Dr. A.C.D. Crommelin without explanation.

Collectively the errors and omissions in the *Report on Halley's Comet* suppressed Prof. Abraham's predictions and discredited his work and he was denied due recognition. Furthermore, linking him to the news report of 28 March 1910 and associating him with an irrelevant portion of the lecture taken out of context to portray to the reader that the lack of intermediate returns was of no assistance to Crommelin was an effort by the *Report on Halley's Comet* author to discredit Prof. Abraham.

The 1910 return of the Halley's comet was an European story. The prediction of the perihelion to within 3 days was a tremendous effort but the recognition of the errors in the calculation of the transit and the corrections to the timing was done by the Americans. The new transit time was validated by the clever observation of the comet in Tasmania by an Australian. Above all, the prediction that the comet's motion would be affected by Venus thus affecting the transit time was by Prof. Abraham a native Ceylonese.

The *Report on Halley's Comet* author did not give credit to the Americans, Australian or the Ceylon astronomer. The report was biased as the co-author was Dr. A.C.D. Crommelin and it was engineered to benefit him.

The story did not end there. A team of researchers from Leiden University in the Netherlands published a paper titled, *The Origin of Chaos in the Orbit of Comet 1P/Halley*, in 2016. This paper was accepted by the Royal Astronomical Society for publication. The paper explained the chaotic orbit of comet Halley. The university website stated the following regarding this research:

Despite the regular return, the comet's orbit cannot be predicted exactly. This is partly due to processes inside the comet and partly because the orbit of Halley is disturbed by the chaotic interaction with the planets and minor bodies in the solar system.

The publication further stated:

.... Halley's orbit was most strongly influenced by the planet Venus and not by Jupiter, the planet that was always pointed to as the biggest spoiler.

This research points out that for the next several appearances of comet Halley, it is Venus that would have the greatest effect. The research paper further stated:

..... perturbations in Halley's orbit has important contributions not only from Jupiter, as is already known, but also from Venus. Indeed, currently Venus is the dominant perturber, and Jupiter takes over only after about 3 kyr from now. that the distance of closest approach to Venus can compensate for its low mass.

The research results from Leiden University in 2016, Berkeley Universities revised times and further revision of Berkeley University times after transit confirms the brilliant prediction three months previously of Prof. Allen Abraham that:

..... its motion will be affected by that planet.

and suggests the factor which he may have considered in his calculation/observations that his contemporaries did not. It took 106 years to prove mathematically what Prof. Allen Abraham predicted on 26th March 1910 on the island of Karaitivu.

Jaffna College Vice Principal, Lyman S Kulathungam in 1947 summed up Prof. Abraham as follows:

We students of the Bicknell period respected and esteemed various teachers for various qualities, but we did not come across another combined in himself the brilliancy of a student, the ability of a teacher, the love and care of a fond parent, the thoroughness and punctuality of a well-disciplined life, the nobility and great-heartedness of a generous nature, the upright character and saintly conduct of a perfect Christian gentleman like Mr. Abraham.

The above has been extracted from the author's book titled: *Allen Abraham (Ambalavanar Subramaniam) and the Halley's Comet*, published in 2021 Neptune Publications, www.neptunepublications.com

A three hundred- and forty-year-old book about Ceylon – Part 2

Thiru Arumugam

LIFE IN ENGLAND

On his return to England, Robert Knox found that the East India Company had changed its policy of allowing Captains of their ships doing trade on the Company's account and expense during their voyages. In future, the only income for the Captain would be his wages. Knox therefore decided to call it a day and resigned from the Company.

Knox decided to spend his time writing the manuscript of the second edition of *Historical Relation*. There were two points of view regarding the additional contents of the second edition. Scientists like Hooke and Historians asked for more information about Ceylon whereas Knox's family and friends wanted more biographical information about Knox's life after his escape from Ceylon. To meet these conflicting requirements, Knox continued to write about Ceylon in the manuscript that he already had with him, and in addition he asked the printer Chiswell to bind another interleaved copy of *Historical Relation* with blank pages. In the latter copy he would write his autobiography about his life after Ceylon, this to be published after his death.

Knox completed the first draft of his autobiography in 1696. He also had himself painted and engraved by Robert White, the picture to be a frontispiece illustration for the autobiographical book. This picture can be seen in **Figure 7 (below)**. Below the picture is a poem written by Hooke which reads as follows:



See Knox's Aspect here by White designd
Peruse his book thou'lt better see his Mind.
Captive, like Jacob's Ofspring, long detain'd.
Like them at last by Grace he Freedom Gain'd.
Parting for Spoils they Egypts Jewels took.
He Ceylon's left yet strange they'r in his Book.

Robert Hooke 1695

Knox completed the manuscript of the second edition. Robert Hooke also went through it carefully and made numerous corrections and additions. It was then sent to Richard Chiswell for printing. To their surprise, Chiswell declined to publish it saying that it was lengthy and cumbersome. Knox had now spent four years in London and decided that it was time to go to sea again.

He was appointed Captain of a 500 ton ship *Mary* which had a crew of 100 men. It was a private ship not belonging to the East India Company. He sailed from England on 3 May 1698 with the first stop in Cadiz and then on to Surat in the East Indies. The ship stopped very briefly in Colombo and then went on to Cochin where he met a Dutch sailor. The sailor said that he could arrange to send a letter from Knox to his fellow captives still in Ceylon. Knox wrote the letter and he also enclosed a miniature of Robert White's engraving of Knox, to be given to Lucea, the girl whom he had adopted in Ceylon. It is not known whether the letter and enclosure ever reached its destination.

RETIRED LIFE

The ship *Mary* returned to London in 1700. The voyage had been a financial failure. Knox was now sixty years old and decided that his seafaring days were over and he would live a retired life. His life can be divided into twenty-year blocks. The first twenty years of childhood, the next twenty years of captivity, then twenty years as a ship's Captain and the final twenty years of retirement.

Five times during his life he was literally left with only the clothes on his back and had to start life all over again. The first time was in 1660 when he was taken captive in Kottiyar Bay. The second time was in 1664 when he was in the King's palace and the rebellion took place and he became a beggar on the streets. The third time was in 1666 when he was forced out of his house in Dayaladahamuna Pattuva because the Dutch had a garrison nearby. The fourth time was in 1679 when he escaped to the Dutch Fort in Arippu, losing his house and land in Eladetta. The final time was in 1685 when his crew mutinied and sailed off with the *Tonqueen Merchant*, leaving Knox "poorer and more destitute than when I came out of my Ceylon captivity".

For his retired life, Knox lodged with a family named Bartlett who lived in St Peter le Poer near the Hackney Marshes, where he was also given exclusive use of part of the garden attached to the house. He lived there for the rest of his life and he was happy in his life there.

Meanwhile his Publisher, Chiswell, passed away in 1711 and his partner Daniel Midwinter took over the business. Knox approached him about printing the second edition but Midwinter was not interested and said that the cost of paper was too high! It appears that the manuscript remained with the printer. Knox continued work on the other manuscript which contained the autobiography, updating it at intervals. In 1711 Knox wrote his will. Since he never married he did not have any direct descendants. He shared out his estate among his grand-nephews and grand-nieces and the Bartlett family. Regarding his manuscript with auto-biography, his will says: "I doe here by give to Knox Ward who beareth my Name viz: my Booke of Ceylon with Manuscripts of my own Life". He bequeathed it to his grand-nephew Knox Ward because he bore his name, in the hope that it would be published one day. Perhaps, he was not particularly

hopeful that it would ever be published because he wrote:

These Notions & Contemplations I have scribbled one my owne paper, for my owne use, & to please myself, & wheather hereafter they are ever read by any one it is equally the same to me, as to a dead beast what use his skine is put to ... for when the Soule is departed hence into the everlasting state, what matters it

Knox died on 19 June 1720 at the age of 79 years, in the Bartlett home. As directed in his will, he was buried in the Wimbledon Churchyard, next to his mother. His father's gravesite on the edge of the paddy fields of Bandara Koswatte does not have a grave-stone, but the local villagers can even today point out the place where he is buried.

DANIEL DEFOE AND *HISTORICAL RELATION*

Daniel Defoe's book *The Life and Strange Surprising Adventures of Robinson Crusoe, of York, Mariner* was published on 25 April 1719, about 38 years after *Historical Relation*. Defoe's book is fiction but there are so many similarities between Crusoe's life on a tropical island and Knox's account of his captivity, that it is generally believed that Defoe was inspired by *Historical Relation*. The initial print run of *Robinson Crusoe* was 1000 copies but it sold out almost immediately. Within a year it was reprinted four times and also translated into many other languages.

Encouraged by the success of *Robinson Crusoe*, Daniel Defoe then wrote another fictional book titled *The Life, Adventures and Pyracies of the Famous Captain Singleton* which was published in June 1720 a few days before Knox died. Unlike *Robinson Crusoe* which was about a fictional castaway, this book was about the adventures of a fictional pirateering ship's captain and Defoe plagiarised large chunks from Knox. Singleton even visits Ceylon.

Katherine Frank has made an in-depth study of the subject in her 2011 book *Crusoe, Daniel Defoe, Robert Knox and the Creation of a Myth* where she says (pp 248-9):

Defoe then quotes, or more accurately plagiarises, directly from the 1681 edition of Knox's *Historical Relation*. He copies, almost word for word, large chunks of Knox's narrative between pages 117 and 165, inserting, here and there, brief linking passages to stitch the long extracts together. Eight pages of Captain Singleton come straight out of Knox's book.

HISTORY OF THE TWO MANUSCRIPTS

As mentioned earlier, Knox worked on two versions of the manuscripts of the proposed second edition of *Historical Relation*, neither of which was printed in his lifetime. It is interesting to see what happened to these two Manuscripts which disappeared from view for the best part of two hundred years.

The first manuscript was on a copy of the first edition specially interleaved with blank pages by the Publisher Chiswell on his own initiative and given to Knox in 1681 to write in all the changes he wanted to make in a second edition about the fauna, flora and history of Ceylon. Knox worked on this for

many years and it went up and down to the Publisher many times and he finally completed it in 1713 but the Publisher was not satisfied and did not print it. When Knox died in 1720 the Manuscript was still with the Publisher.

The Manuscript then disappeared for about 170 years until it was acquired by Sir Augustus Wolaston Franks in the early 1890s. Franks was an ardent English collector of antiquarian objects and was one of the greatest collectors of his age. He joined the British Museum and became the Keeper of British and Medieval Antiquities. In 1895 he presented the Knox Manuscript to the British Museum. When he died in 1897, he bequeathed his entire massive private collection to the British Museum.

The Manuscript lay there unidentified and uncatalogued until 1925 when Franks' successor and Keeper of the Ethnographical Department of the British Museum, H J Braunholtz identified it as the missing Knox second edition Manuscript. However, Braunholtz reported the discovery to the Trustees of the British Museum only in 1939. Braunholtz passed away in 1963 and the Manuscript is in the British Museum's Christy Library.

Knox's relations wanted him to write his autobiography so that he would be known in posterity for his exploits as a ship's Captain, so around 1700, Knox asked his Publisher to bind another copy of *Historical Relation* with blank sheets so that he could insert autobiographical notes for future publication. He worked on this for the rest of his life and in his will he bequeathed this Manuscript to his grand-nephew Knox Ward who was about 16 years old when Robert Knox died. Knox Ward never married and died in 1741 when he was 37 years old, and the book remained unpublished. Knox Ward's belongings were sold soon afterwards and the Manuscript was purchased by Bishop Richard Rawlinson.

Rawlinson, who was educated at St John's College, Oxford, was a Clergyman and an antiquarian collector of books and manuscripts. When he died in 1755 he bequeathed his entire collection of 5205 manuscripts, including the Knox Manuscript, to the Bodleian Library in the University of Oxford. This Library is the second largest Library in the UK after the British Library and today holds 13 million items. When Rawlinson bequeathed his collection of 5205 manuscripts in 1755, the Library was hopelessly understaffed and the Knox Manuscript lay unidentified and unclassified for about 150 years. It was only in 1910 that the Manuscript was identified as Knox's autobiographical second edition Manuscript. It has remained in the Bodleian Library since then.

This Manuscript has an interesting insertion on the first interleaved page (see Figure 8). On top an unknown hand has written in Latin "*Liber olim Knox Ward armigeri Clarenceux Armorum Rex*". The translation of this is "A book formerly (of) Knox Ward, arms bearer (of) Clarenceux King of Arms". Knox Ward was Clarenceux King of Arms from 1726

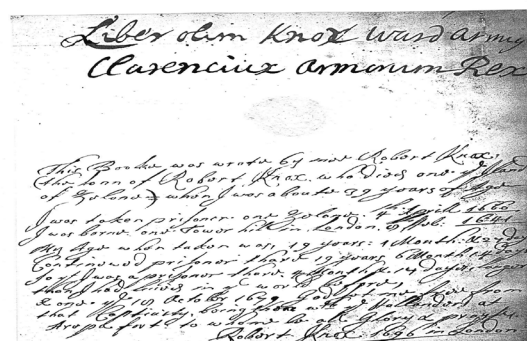


Figure 8

till he died in 1741. The College of Arms in London was founded in 1420 and still exists. It is the official repository of the Coats of Arms and is the Office regulating heraldry and the grant of new armorial bearings. Below this is an insertion in Robert Knox's own handwriting which reads as follows. Note that he uses the word 'one' instead of 'on' and that his father was also Robert Knox:

This Booke was wrote by mee Robert Knox (the sonn of Robert Knox who died one the Iland of Zelone) when I was aboute 39 years of Age. I was taken prisoner one Zelone, 4th Aprill, 1660. I was borne one Tower hill in London, 8th Feb. 1641. My Age when taken was, 19 years: 1 month : & 27 dayes. Continued prisoner thare 19 years 6 month 14 dayes So I was a prisoner thare 4 Month & 17 dayes, longer then I had lived in the world before, & one the 18 October 1679 God set mee free from that Captivity, being then with the Hollanders at Arepa fort to whome be all Glory & prayse.

Robert Knox, 1696 in London

VERSIONS OF *HISTORICAL RELATION*

Historical Relation was not reprinted during Knox's lifetime, and not for nearly the following hundred years. Since then, there has been a steady stream of versions of his book published both in the UK as well as in Ceylon. In recent years with the advent of print-on-demand facilities, the stream has become a torrent with reprints of reprints. There have also been three Sinhala translations of *Historical Relation*.

In 1817 Robert Fellowes under the pen name 'Philaethes' published a 383 page *History of Ceylon* to which was attached *Historical Relation*. This was printed by J Mawman in London. This was followed almost immediately afterwards in 1818 by *An Account of the Captivity of R Knox* which was printed for J Hatchard, Booksellers to the Queen. In 1911 the Publishers, James MacLehose of Glasgow brought out a version of *Historical Relation* edited by James Ryan, who was formerly resident in Ceylon. This 459 page book included Knox's autobiography for the first time, taken from the manuscript in the Bodleian Library, Oxford.

There have also been versions produced by Ceylonese writers. In 1948, E F C Ludowyk, who had a PhD in English from the University of Cambridge and was Professor of English at the University of Ceylon wrote a 175 page book titled *Robert Knox in the Kandyan Kingdom* which was published by the Oxford University Press. The book was based on

the 1681 edition of *Historical Relation* but does not include the full text of Knox's original work.

In 1958, S D Saparamadu (Ceylon Civil Service) published his version of *Historical Relation*. It included the introductory pages of Knox's autobiography. It was published by Saman Press, Maharagama and had 304 pages. H A I Goonetilleke who was the Librarian, University of Peradeniya and author of the *Bibliography of Ceylon* brought out his version of *Historical Relation* based on the 1681 edition. It was 189 pages long and published by Navrang Booksellers and Publishers, New Delhi in 1995. It will be noted that none of the above versions, whether published in UK or Ceylon, contained the material in Knox's second edition manuscript which is in the British Museum Library, but this was remedied in 1989 when J H O Paulusz published his version of *Historical Relation* and this is the most comprehensive version, and he was entitled to call it the 'Second Edition' of *Historical Relation*.

JHO PAULUSZ AND THE 'SECOND EDITION' OF *HISTORICAL RELATION*

Jan Hendrick Oliver Paulusz was born in Colombo on 21 September 1900. He studied at Royal College where his father was a Teacher. He was awarded the Shakespeare Prize in Royal College in 1917. In 1920, a year before the Ceylon University College was founded in 1921, he was awarded a Government Scholarship to proceed to UK for undergraduate studies. He obtained a BA degree from the University of London and an MA from the University of Oxford. When he was in Oxford it is quite possible that he would have seen Knox's second edition manuscript which was in the Bodleian Library in Oxford. Returning to Colombo in 1928, he joined the Archives Section in the Chief Secretary's Office. He retired from government service in 1956 as Government Archivist, after which he served as Ceylon's Ambassador in Indonesia.

As we have seen, H J Brauholtz of the British Museum reported the identification of Knox's second edition Manuscript to the Trustees of the British Museum in 1939. He immediately set to work on preparing for printing a second edition of *Historical Relation* with the help of H W Codrington. The latter was educated at Oxford and was a member of the Ceylon Civil Service, retiring in 1932. He was the author of *Short History of Ceylon* which was published in 1929. However, World War II intervened and no progress was made and Codrington passed away in 1942.

Paulusz was sent to London to work in the Public Record Office from July 1948 to September 1949. It is likely that he met Brauholtz at that time and the two of them started collaborating on the second edition. In 1955 the Hakluyt Society agreed to sponsor the publication of the second edition. The Hakluyt Society is a text publication Society founded in 1846 in London. It publishes editions of historic voyages from primary sources. It is named after Richard Hakluyt (1552-1616) a collector and editor of narratives of voyages. To date, the Society has published over 200 editions. However, Brauholtz passed away in 1963 and Paulusz had to continue to work on the

second edition on his own. Progress by Paulusz was very slow and in the late 1970s the Hakluyt Society abandoned the idea of the Society publishing the second edition.

In the second edition, Paulusz was determined to incorporate the contents of both of Knox's manuscripts, the British Museum version which came from Knox's Publisher as well as the autobiographical version which came via Knox Ward. This would include virtually every word that Knox had written on the subject. The net result was a two-volume work running to a total of over 1200 pages compared with Knox's first edition of 189 pages. The flyleaf of the second edition has the following note:

The Second Edition includes all additional material written by Robert Knox for his second edition during the years 1681 to 1713 and hitherto unpublished. It also includes all the glosses inserted by Knox between the lines of the printed text. There have been numerous editions of Knox's book in many languages and in many forms in the 308 years between his first edition and the second.

The first volume of the second edition has a total of 524 pages. The bulk of this volume is a 470 page long rambling 'Introduction to the Second Edition' written by Paulusz. This is not only an introduction to the book, it is also a detailed history of the Kandyan Kingdom in the seventeenth century. The second volume has a total of 740 pages, out of which the body of the text of *Historical Relation* about his life in captivity takes up 476 pages compared with 189 pages in the first edition. This shows the amount of additional material inserted by Knox in the interleaved pages for the second edition. The main text is followed by 'The Epilogue or Autobiography' written by Knox and taking up 158 pages. This is about his life after he left Ceylon and includes his adventures as a ship's Captain working for the East India Company.

Paulusz has very thoughtfully used different fonts for the different components of the second edition so that the reader can easily identify the source of any part of the text. Material which previously appeared in the 1681 first edition as well as the autobiography are in 10 point Times New Roman. Material written for the second edition by Knox and hitherto unpublished is in 12 point Times New Roman. The interpolations in Knox's material by Robert Hooke (identified by different handwriting in the Manuscript) is in 12 point Times New Roman Bold type.

Tisara Prakasakayo Ltd of Dehiwala were the Printers and Publishers of the second edition. The Chairman of this firm at the time the book was published in 1989 was S D Saparamadu, formerly of the Ceylon Civil Service, who himself previously published a version of *Historical Relation* in 1958. He was therefore fully sympathetically aware of what was required in the production of the second edition.

A great deal is owed to Paulusz for his monumental effort spread out over 60 years in collecting, collating and editing the second edition and writing a 470 page Introduction. He was 89 years old when the book finally came out in 1989. He has added greatly to our knowledge about the Kandyan Kingdom in the seventeenth century and his book has been the primary source of information for this article.

APPENDIX

This Appendix gives some extracts from the second edition of *Historical Relation* to give a flavour of the book.

Proverbs:

1. Take a Ploughman from the Plough, and wash off his dirt, and he is fit to rule a Kingdom. Spoken of the People of Cande Uda [High lands], where there are such eminent persons of the Hondrew [Honduru] rank: because of their Civility, Understanding, and Gravity among the poorest of them. Particularly ment of the People of Eude Nure and Yattanure [Udunuwara and Yatinuwara], where many of them are related to Noble families.

2. Miris dilah, ingurah gotta. I have given Pepper, and got Ginger. Spoken when a man makes a bad exchange. And they use it in reference to the Dutch succeeding the Portuguese in their Island.

Jakfruit:

There is another fruit, which we call Jacks, The Inhabitants, when they are young call them Polos, before they be full ripe Cose; and when ripe, Warracha or Vellas; But with this difference, the Warracha is hard, but the Vellas as soft as pap, both looking alike to the eye no difference; but they are distinct Trees.

The small fruit when they as bigg as large Cowcumbrs they pare of the outward prickly rine [rind] and take out the core that is in the middle thare of, and cut it into small peeces and boyle it tell soft-then very good to eate with butter or ground Cocornut or mixed with ground Mustard will keepe 7 or 8 dayes, which they so prepare to Carry with them to eate with their rice.

The understanding of Elephants:

As he is the greatest in body, so in understanding also. For he will do anything that his Keeper bids him, which is possible for a beast not having hands to do. And as the Chingulayes report, they bear the greatest love to their young of all irrational Creatures; for the Shees are alike tender of any one's young ones as of their own: where there are many She Elephants together, the young ones go and suck of any, as well as of their Mothers.

Appeals against Court Convictions:

They [the accused] may appeal to the Adigars, or the Chief Justices of the Kingdom. But whoso gives the greatest Bribe, he shall overcome. For it is a common saying in this Land, That he that has money to fee the Judge, needs not fear or care, whether his cause be right or not. The greatest Punishment that these Judges can inflict upon the greatest Malefactors, is but Imprisonment. From which money will release them. Centence of death comes from none but the King.

Marriage:

Here is no wooing for a Wife. The Parents commonly make the Match, and in their choice commonly more regard the Quality and Descent than the Beauty. If they are agreed, all is done. The Match being thus made, the Man carrieth or sends to the Woman her Wedding Cloths; which is a cloth containing six or seven yards in length, and a Linnen Waistcoat wrought with Blew or Red. If the man is so poor that he cannot buy a Cloth, it is the Custom to borrow one. (See Figs. 9 and 10).

Work that can be done by a Gentleman:

Nor is it held any disgrace for Men of the greatest Quality to do any work either at home or in the Field, if it be for themselves; but to work for hire with them is reckoned to be a great shame: and very few are here to be found that will work so; But he that goes under the Notion of a Gentleman may dispense with all works, except carrying, that he must get a man to do when there is occasion. For carrying is accounted the most Slave-like work of all.

Thou or You:

They have seven or eight words for Thou or You, which apply to persons according to their quality, or according as they would honour them. And they are so: To, Topi, Umba, Umbela, Tomnai, Toms, Tomsela, Tomnanxi. All these words are gradually one higher than the other.

Receiving Gifts:

When one proffers something as a gift to another, altho it be a thing that he is willing to have, and would be glad to receive, yet he will say, 'E eppa queinda', No, I thank you; how can I be so chargeable to you? And in the same time while the words are in his mouth, he reacheth forth his hand to receive it.

They have certain words of Form and Civility, that they use upon occasion. When they come to another man's house, and they ask him what he came for, and they answer Nicam, I come for nothing, which is their ordinary reply, though they do come for something.

Writing Documents:

They write not on Paper, for of that they have little or none; but on a Talli-pot leaf with an Iron Bodkin, which makes an impression. This leaf thus written on, is not folded, but rolled up like a Ribbond, and somewhat resembles Parchment.

All that is written for the Kings buisnesse is wrote only on leaves, for they never write on paper neither have they any. This manner of writing or engraving on leaves is far more dureable than on paper, for if it be wett with watre it will take no harme.

Mourning for the dead:

Their manner of mourning for the dead is, that all the Women that are present do loose their hair, and let it hang down, and with their two hands together behind their heads do make a hideous noise, crying and roaring as loud as they can, much praying and extolling the Virtues of the deceased, tho there were none in him. Mean while the men stand still and sigh.



A Noble Man

Figure 9



A Gentlewoman

Figure 10

Events that led to the fall of the Kandyan Kingdom Part 5: Betrayal and Brutality

Dr Leonard Pinto

Three names of Kandyan Nilames reverberate in the history of Sri Lanka during the last stages of the Kandyan Kingdom. One of them was Maha Adigar (Prime Minister) Pilimathalauva, executed at Bahirawa Kanda in 1811 by King Sri Wickrema Rajasingha. The other was Maha Adigar Ehelepola (Pilimathalauva's nephew) appointed to that office by the King. Ehelepola betrayed the King to the British and died in exile in Mauritius. The third was Monarawila Keppetipola Disawa the brother-in-law of Ehelepola, who led the Uva-Wellassa rebellion against the British (1817-1818) and was executed in 1818 at Bogambara.

Since 1658 the Dutch had occupied the coastal land of Sri Lanka taken from the Portuguese, excluding the stretch from Waikkal to Wilpattu and from Kuchcheveli to Yala, except the harbours. After 1766 they had annexed the entire coastal region, leaving the rest of Sri Lanka to the Kandyan Kingdom as shown in **Figure 1**. The Kandyan Kingdom was

divided into 21 territories and governed by *adikar-ams*, *disawas* and *rate-ralas* and their subordinates, *korales*, *mohottales*, and *vidanes* under the King of Kandy. The 21 territories were divided into 9 *ratas* close to Kandy and 12 *disawanis* located away from Kandy (Fig. 1). *Disawanis* were subdivided into *korales* and they were subdivided into *pattus*, under which the villages were grouped. Kandyan nobility of the *radala* caste held senior administrative positions and they could carry out executive, legislative and judicial functions, with serious matters reserved to the King and his council (*amatya mandalaya*). All political and economic powers and rights originated from the King, and were based on land tenure, caste and *rajakariya*, similar in most aspects to European feudalism. Powerful and despotic kings including Rajasingha II and Sri Wickrema Rajasingha used these powers to govern the country with authority. In the Kandyan Kingdom the 'superior property rights' emanated from the King. All the land which was cultivated and habitable was divided into 3 categories; crown land (*gabadagam*), the land enjoyed by the nobles (*nindagam*) and temple lands (*viharagam*, *maligagam* and *devalagam*). The King granted his *gabadagam* to his nobles as reward for exceptional loyalty and valour in battles, which became *nindagam*. The *nindagams* enjoyed by the nobles were hereditary, if granted through *sannas*, but others were temporary tenures during the office of *disawas*. However, the King could confiscate any land, if the holder committed a serious crime, such as treason (Kulasekera 1984).

The highest officers of the State were the *Pallegampaha Adigar* (1st Adigar) and *Udagampaha Adigar* (2nd Adigar), the former having precedence when in Kandy. Through the villages under their jurisdiction, they provided services and managed daily operations of the palace, city, roads, ferry service, the police, jail (*maha hirage*) and the execution of criminals. In Kandy they were the intermediary between the King and the public and they communicated the King's orders. They also had a general jurisdiction over the whole of Kandyan provinces. The powers of the 1st Adigar extended to part of the north-western, the northern, eastern and parts of south-eastern provinces comprising Seven Korales, Uva, Matale, Walapane, Velassa, Bintenne, Nuvara Kalaviya, Tamankaduwa, Harispattuwa, Dumbara and Hevahata. Southern and south-western provinces came under the powers of the 2nd Adigar, and included Four Korales, Three Korales, Sabaragamuwa, Udapalata, Udunuwara, Yatinuwara, Tumpane, Kotmale and Upper and Lower Bulatgama (Fig.1). In the presence of the King in all public occasions, the two Adigars had the precedence and held the first seats in the Great Court of Justice (*maha naduwa*). They carried a cane curved at the top, the staff of their office, delivered to them at their appointment. They had special honours and privileges, including cracking whips, carrying flags



and beating tom-toms before them, right to elevated seats covered with white cloth, right of way when moving, riding elephant, horse and palanquin, but only in the absence of the King. Before the King three prostrates were required and they had to be on their knees when they discussed matters with the King (D'Oyly 1835).

After the death of Adigar Megastenne, Ehelepola was appointed the Udagampahe Adigar (2nd Adigar) in 1808 to succeed him (Fig. 2).

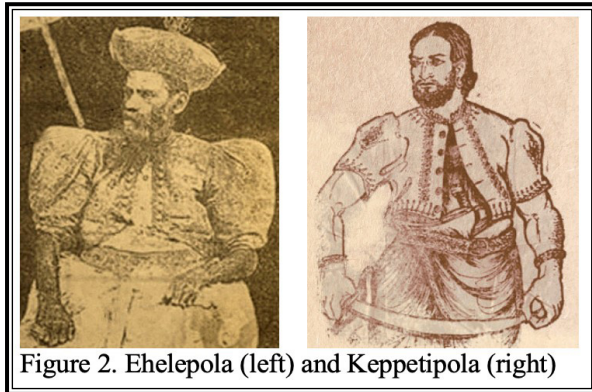


Figure 2. Ehelepola (left) and Keppetipola (right)

Ehelepola was also the Maha Disawa of Sabaragamuva. Sath Korale, which was also held by Megastenne was divided between Molligoda and Ehelepola, which was unprecedented and caused unrest amongst the people. It caused riots in 1811, which was put down by Pilimatalauva Maha Adigar. King Sri Wickrema Rajasingha, though considered a devout Buddhist was suspicious of his Kandyan chiefs and divided their authority or created duplicates to check on their loyalty. The King had concerns about Ehelepola, who was a warrior and intelligent, being fluent in Sinhala, English, Tamil and Pali. After the execution of Pilimathalauva his uncle, the King appointed Ehelepola to the position of 1st Adigar in addition to Disawa of Sabaragamuva. At that time Ratnapura was not developed, and Batugedera was the central city of Sabaragamuva (Fig 1). '*Ehelepola Walauwa*' (became British GA's office, now the National Museum of Ratnapura with a paelo-biodiversity park of models of primitive animals recorded from the area) and his *Bisso* Palace (harem palace), which are located north of present Batugedera across Kalu Gange and off A4 road can be visited today in Ratnapura.

It was the King's order to provide labour (*rajakariya*) to rebuild Kandy, including the lake, which was not a popular activity for farmers as well as for businessmen. Malabar merchants also had complained to the King that taxes on account of sale of areca nuts have not been paid by people of Sabaragamuva and they were asked to be brought to Kandy for punishment. When the people of Sabaragamuva revolted against *rajakariya*, the King sent Ehelepola to suppress the revolt, but he joined the rebels. When Ehelepola failed to return on the King's summons, he sent Adigar Molligoda to capture Ehelepola. By 14 May 1814, the King's forces were confronting the rebels. Ehelepola and Disawa Eknelligoda were requesting at least 50 British soldiers and 25 Malay soldiers to join the forces from D'Oyly through the

influence of Hevagam Korale Mudaliyar. Eknelligoda had about 500 men. They were moving by way of Batugedera, Kuruvita and Panavala and were desperate. On 17 May Eknelligoda and Delgoda Atapattu Nilame waited for D'Oyly to present their complaints about the King and their loyalty to the British.

Molligoda returned to Kandy with 47 chiefs of Sabaragamuva and they were executed for treason. He reported to the King that Ehelepola may have escaped to the British territory. On the following day, 17 May 1814 the brutal execution of Ehelepola family took place between Natha Devale and Vishnu Devale, facing the Queen's apartment of the palace. Today monuments in memory of the massacre stands be-

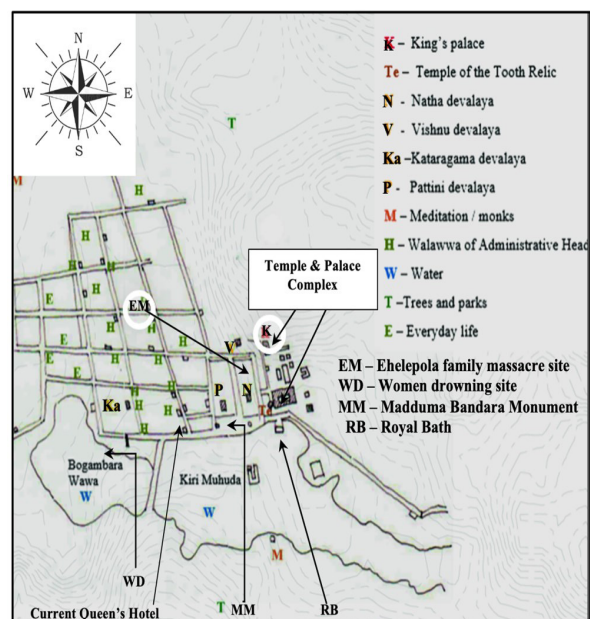


Figure 3. Ehelepola family massacre sites. Note that Bogambara Wewa has been filled.

tween Paththiruppuwa and Sri Dalada Veediya (Fig. 3). Some reports say that the King watched the execution, but others refute it. There are some discrepancies in the records on (1) how many and who were killed and (2) on the brutality of the execution with mortar and pestle. The location of the monuments may have been decided by the availability of land and its visual amenity. Some reports state that Ehelepola Kumarihami and 3 children were executed, but others say 4 children were killed with her. Palace records would have kept this information as there were secretaries (*lekams*), who maintained other records, but authors have not found such records to authenticate facts. She remained loyal to her family and husband till the end.

Family genealogy can be considered as the next best source of facts. Accordingly, Ehelepola Kumarihami and 4 children were executed, although the names of girls were not recorded. The first English official record of the fate of Ehelepola's family was a letter from John D'Oyly, a civil servant to Robert Brownrigg the Governor (3rd Governor, 1812-1820), dated 23 May 1814 from Sitavaka. It states, "there is a general report that the wife and 4 children of the Adigar and his nephew (?) have been put to death, as well as Puselle late Disawa of Nuwara Kalaviya, with his wife, children and relations. Puselle is said to have

been treacherously seduced to Kandy by the promise of office of Adigar and the King's increased favour, but was cruelly cut to pieces. These executions are said to have taken place in Kandy on Saturday or Sunday sennight." Some reports state Ehelepola's brother and nephew, Pusselle's wife (Ehelepola's sister or sister-in-law) and daughter (?) were killed together while Disawa Pusselle himself was killed earlier. It can be confidently said that Ehelepola Kumarihami (Keppetipola's sister), daughter Tikiri Menike and Pusselle Kumarihami were killed by drowning in Bogambara Wewa, preceded by the beheading of Loku Bandara (11), Madduma Bandara (9), Tikiri Menike and Dingiri Menike. Dingiri Menike was taken from mother's arms and beheaded. In addition to this 6, Ehelepola's brother, nephew, Ehelepola Kumarihami's sister-in-law and Pusselle's children also may have been executed. Palipana Disawa seeing the drowning of ladies, fainted and was rebuked for his weakness (Davy 1821). When Loku Bandara ran to his mother seeing the executioner, Madduma Bandara his younger brother, said "Fear not dear brother, I will show you how to face death," as given in the inscription at the monument. Our history books describe the brutality of the King in demanding that the heads of children be put into a rice mortar and pound with a pestle by the mother. However, Peiris (1939), Obeyesekere (2017) and others think that this is a fabrication of the British writers including surgeon John Davy (1821), John D'Oyly, Major Forbes and others to present the King as a barbaric and a cruel man. The Sinhalese who hated the King also wrote poetry and plays on the cruelty of the King (e.g. *Ehelepola hatana*). On the other hand, Prof Anura Manatunga says that grim incident would have taken place and British authors may have exaggerated it. He was able to track the descendants of those who witnessed the brutal event and find the rice mortar used for pounding heads in the village of Kehelpannala.

When the King was in British custody, the officers questioned him about the execution of Ehelepola family, and the King did not deny it. In a short response to His Majesty's Commission of Enquiry, Ehelepola wrote the following note from Mauritius, "In consequence of my becoming a friend to the English Government the lives of my wife, my children and relations were destroyed, and all my property taken by the King," but did not elaborate on the method of killing. It is also said that Molligoda assisted the King in the verdict of gruesome execution of Ehelepola family, as he had been appointed the 1st Adigar by the King, after Ehelepola's defection. In a note to D'Oyly, the chiefs mentioned that following Ehelepola's defection 73 Sinhalese were killed by impaling. While Davy (1821) put it to thousands of Sinhalese executed by impalement, in Brownrigg's despatch to England on 6 August and 5 September 1814, he referred to the occurrence of "tyranny and oppression, suffering, violence and injustice" in the Kandyan Kingdom and the desire of the chiefs to be ruled by the British.

Ehelepola and his friends Eknelligoda Disawa, Dolasvela Disawa and Delgoda Attapattu Nilame were in communication with John D'Oyly to

obtain arms and military support to invade Kandy. He planned a military invasion for which he had the support of the rebels of Sabaragamuwa, Three Korale and Four Korale, Udanuwara and Yatinuwara and possibly of Uva and Matale (Disawa Keppetipola). D'Oyly insisted that "English could not act unless there was unequivocal proof of a general wish on the part of the people, for they wanted not conquest but peaceful friendship and commercial intercourse. Military action was out of the question until it was established beyond doubt that the people withdrew their allegiance to their King" (Peiris 1939). D'Oyly shrewdly manoeuvred the replacement of the King, during these troubled times. On midnight 23 May 1814 D'Oyly received the news that Ehelepola had crossed into the British territory at Avissawella, and he went there to give him a ceremonial welcome. Ehelepola had transferred his baggage, about 200 men and the elephant, which he was willing to give as a gift to D'Oyly. D'Oyly refused to accept personal gifts and moved him to the safety of Vidane Arachchi's residence at Kosgama. Ehelepola travelled to Colombo and had discussions with various British officers. At Carlo Walauwa Mutwal, he had a discussion with Governor Brownrigg on a possible Kandyan Treaty, the role of sub-king for him and for British to peacefully govern the coast and Sinhalese to govern the Kandyan Kingdom.

At this time, Brownrigg had some reasons to send troops to Kandy, as the Kandyans had intruded in to British territory and attacked the garrison at Sitavaka. Some traders from the British territory have been mutilated by the Kandyan army, suspecting them to be spies. Following the executions in the city Kandyan aristocracy and people openly revolted against the King and set fire to the palace. The King escaped to the fortifications of Hangurankeha. British declared war on Kandy on 11 January 1815 and entered Kandy on 10 February 1815. Ehelepola, Eknelligoda and a number of others, including Molligoda joined the British. The city was taken and a search for the King began.

An armed party of Ehelepola led by Eknelligoda Disawa and accompanied by Lieut. Col. Hook captured Sri Wickrema Rajasinghe after a brief skirmish, on 18 February 1815 night. He was at the house of Bomure Udupitiye Arachchi at Gallewatte, a mile from Medamahanuwara, where a monument stands to date. The King was with Queen consort Venkata Rangammal Devi and royal concubine Muthu Kannammal. In the mayhem their clothes were partially removed, and Rangammal Devi's ear ring taken, tearing her ear (Kiriporuwa Mohottala?). Her blood-stained jacket is displayed in Colombo Museum. The King was bound with ropes and Eknelligoda wanted to carry him like a pig and tried, and the queens were to be taken half naked and drowned, as he had done to others. The translator D.V. Dias (identified as Adrian William Dias Bandaranayake by Peiris) was perturbed by the situation and called D'Oyly to come to the rescue. D'Oyly sent them clothes and palanquins and next day met them at Teldeniya. The King introduced his aged mother and four queens, including the two other concubines who had joined, but

complained about the insults. As the Kandyan were angry the King was brought to Kandy under guard. They arrived in Colombo on 6 March 1815. The Kandyan Convention was signed on 2 March 1815 and Ceylon became a colony of Great Britain under King George III, around the same time when British and coalition forces were fighting the Battle of Waterloo with Napoleon, which ended with his defeat on 18 June 1815. Thus ended the 2357 years of Sinhalese monarchy from 543 BC.

For some historians, Sri Wickrema Rajasinghe was a Waduge Indian king, Hindu at heart, a despot, a cruel tyrant, a drunkard and a sex maniac. This is the image that British writers created. For the others, he was a great king, grown up as a Sinhalese, a devout Buddhist, kind to his subjects, punished defectors to protect the country, built Kandy city and defeated the British at battles from 1803 to 1805. The King, his queens, mother and aids were deported to Vellore via Madras from Colombo on 25 January 1816 in HMS Cornwallis. He died in a house in Vellore prison on 30 January 1832 at the age of 52. Inaugurated by M. Karunanidhi in 1990, Muthu Mandapam is the memorial site of his tombstone near Palar River off Katpadi Road, Vellore. It is a tourist site in Chennai, and his descendants hold 'guru pooja' at the site on his death anniversary.



Figure 4. Capture of king Sri Wickrema Rajasingha at Medamahanuwara

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Little Known Livery of Class M2 Locomotives

Udaya Peeligama

They are the most recognisable and unquestionably most written-about locomotives in the history of the Sri Lankan railways. In their distinctive silver, light blue, and dark blue livery with yellow trim lines, combined with the deep two-stroke throb of their diesel engines and lyrical tones of 'Airchime' horns, they still present a formidable and magnificent appearance despite more than 60 years of service. Yes, 'they' are the Class M2 locomotives, dubbed the 'Canadians' by adoring Sri Lankan rail fans and general travelling public alike.

It is not intended here to regurgitate oft-repeated facts on these glorious machines. As stated, much has appeared in many a publication; however, a brief introduction would not be out of place. Over the years 1954 to 1961 the then Ceylon Government Railway (CGR) received a total of 12 locomotives, classified M2, from General Motors Electro-Motive Division (GM-EMD) in Ontario, Canada under the auspices of a Colombo Plan aid program. An additional two units were obtained in 1966, specifically for cement haulage, but were soon consigned to general railway operation in common with other members of the Class. These last two arrived from EMD's factories at their headquarters in Illinois, USA.

Equipped with 12-cylinder EMD 567 two-stroke diesel engines of 112-litre capacity, their horsepower (hp) ratings of 1,310/1,425 may not appear to compare favourably with the higher power ranges of nearly 3,000 hp produced by several other locomotives in operation at present in Sri Lanka. However, the M2s have more than made up for this now seemingly low power rating with their legendary performance and reliability, while several other later, more powerful makes have literally 'fallen by the track side' and been scrapped. As that iconic railway man, General Manager of Railways B. D. Rampala stated in his well-publicized paper to the Institution of Locomotive Engineers, London, in 1956, "They sailed up to 6,000' with a full load and over the top at the first attempt", referring to the M2's commissioning; and they haven't disappointed since. It is no exaggeration to claim that the Class M2 'Canadians' were and still are the most reliable and long-lasting of all the locomotives to grace Sri Lanka's rail tracks. Of the 14 locomotives received, all but 12 of which were named after Canadian provinces or cities, 13 are understood to be in service apart from number 571, which was destroyed during the civil war with Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) terrorists.

The M2's renowned performance is a tribute to the EMD moniker, and could be traced back to one man, Richard Dilworth, the extraordinarily gifted EMD engineer who in 1949 created the famed model GP7 diesel locomotive which spelt the death knell for steam operations in North America. Sri Lanka's

Class M2, designated as EMD G12 by the builders, is an export version derived from the GP7. More than a thousand units of the G12 were constructed in both the USA and Canada, and even in Australia, for use all over the world, with many said to be in service to this day. Furthermore, the skill and dedication of the railway staff who maintained the M2s over the years have contributed in no small measure to the locomotives' remarkable longevity.

Although publications on Sri Lankan railways abound with accounts of the Class M2, none have ever commented, even in passing, on the original livery of these machines; not even David Hyatt's tome *Railways of Sri Lanka*, widely regarded as the most comprehensive work produced to date on the island's railways. If it were to be revealed that the first batches of these units received were painted in a livery different to the now familiar colour scheme of silver and blue, one could be excused for expressing disbelief. That silver/blue livery is indelibly synonymous with the M2. Yet the writer distinctly remembers, as a young boy in 1954 accompanied by his father, witnessing number 569 or 570 at Polgahawela station in an orange/dark red livery. A year or so later the same locomotive was observed by the writer at the head of the *Ruhunu Kumari* but repainted in the characteristic silver/light blue/dark blue livery.

It is worth mentioning here that a former General Manager of the Sri Lankan Railway remarked, after checking with an officer of the railways who retired several years ago, that M2 locomotives of the first batch which arrived in 1954/55, numbered 569 to 573, were indeed finished in a yellow/red livery, as were the next batch, M2A numbers 591 to 593, that arrived in 1956. The officer further recalled that when number 591 Manitoba was being repaired after it was damaged in the tsunami of Boxing Day 2004, traces of the old paintwork could be detected beneath later coatings. It would therefore seem to suggest that after arrival from Canada the locomotives were repainted at the CGR workshops in the now familiar livery of silver/light blue/dark blue, ostensibly to match the cream-and-blue coaches of the named long-distance trains *Ruhunu Kumari*, *Udarata Menike* and *Yal Devi* introduced in 1955. However, the later batches of locomotives received from 1956 onwards, had all been factory-finished in Canada in the silver/blue livery.

Another point of note is that GM-EMD of Ontario, Canada appears to have factory-finished most of their export locomotives of the early 1950s in a two-tone yellowish orange/dark red livery as evident from photographs available on EMD websites. Thus, it is highly likely that the original livery of the first two batches of CGR M2s was a yellowish orange for the top section and dark red for the lower, as remembered by the writer. Regrettably, no colour photos of the M2s showing them in their original livery appear to be available. However, scarce black-and-white photos of the early M2s in operation immediately after arrival do show a two-tone livery, presumably the yellowish orange/dark red colour, quite distinct from the later three-tone scheme. EMD's websites also con-

tain black-and-white builder's photos of number 573 and 595 taken outside the EMD factories in Ontario, Canada. Reproduced as Figs. 2 & 3 respectively, below, they clearly indicate the original two-tone livery of 573 and the later three-tone of 595.

Also included at Fig 4 is an 'artist's illustration', created by the writer, of M2 number 570 in its original livery. In the absence of any colour photos it is hoped that this painting may convey an impression of how the locomotives looked when received. But unquestionably, the later and now widely recognized livery of silver/light blue/dark blue is by far the more attractive and impressive looking.



Figure 1 - M2 Number 570 'Alberta' at Bentota



Figure 2 - Number 573 at GMD-EMD Factory Ontario Canada



Figure 3 - Number 595 at GM-EMD factory in Ontario, Canada

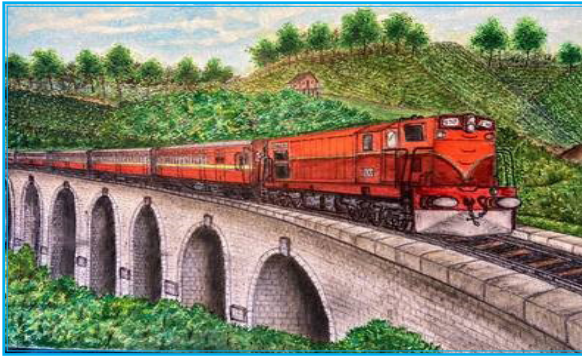


Figure 4 - Artist's impression of Number 570 in original livery



SLR Class M2 569 at Kurunegala 1990



Ruhunu Kumari in Matara



A HISTORY OF HONOURS IN AUSTRALIA

By Harry de Sayrah OAM J.P

Life Member of the Order of Australia Association

Each year on Australia Day and on Queen's Birthday come the announcements of the latest appointments to the Order of Australia.

Since the Order of Australia was created in February 1975 new awards have been announced on Australia Day in January and on the Queen's Birthday in June but the tradition of a January honours listed has existed since much earlier. Before 1975 Australians were eligible for British honours which were announced each January and June at New Year and on the King's or Queen's official Birthday.

The number of Australians honoured increased considerably in the 20th Century after the Order of the British Empire (OBE) was created in 1917 as an instrument for rewarding many people who had contributed to the War effort during WW1. Importantly the new order allowed women to be members.

In 1957 Pastor Doug Nicholls was made a Member of the British Empire (MBE) perhaps the first appointment of an Indigenous Australian to the Order. Nicholls was later elevated to OBE and in 1972 was the first Aboriginal person appointed Governor of an Australian State.

Another longstanding issue in the history of Honours in Australia as in other former British Dominions in Australia was the creation of a unique National award to replace the Imperial one such as OBE.

It wasn't until 1975 that the National Honours System took shape. Its key component was the Order of Australia modelled on the Order of Canada (OC) with 3 grades Companion Officer and Member.

In the years that followed a dual system operated some States and Federal Governments making use of British Honours and others preferring the Australian Awards.

After no recommendations were made in 1990 the Queen suggested that Australia abandon Imperial Honours in favour of the Order of Australia. The last list of Imperial Honours were announced in January and June of 1989 although Australians are still eligible for a small number of British Honours which are in the Queen's personal gift such as the Order of Merit and The Royal Victorian Order.

In 2014 another chapter in the history of the Australian Honours system opened. On March 25th the Prime Minister Tony Abbott announced the reinstatement of Knighthoods and Damehoods in the Order of Australia. For many people the announcement was unexpected as they opposed the introduction. This chapter has been abandoned since. However it has been restored in New Zealand in 2009.

The Ceylon Society of Australia (CSA) Annual General Meeting and Social on 19 December 2021 at the Pennant Hills Community Centre was a fitting finale to a very challenging year of lockdowns. The AGM re-elected the Committee with three new members for another year. Pauline Gunewardene, the President of the CSA, is to be commended for her tireless hard work in organising this event with the help from Committee members. Her address is reproduced here for the benefit of our members worldwide.

CSA's AGM and Social - 'a memorable event'



Pauline Gunewardene addressing the AGM with Thiru Arumugam (stand-in Secretary in the absence of Sunimal Fernando) on her right.

Good evening, guests and members of the Ceylon Society of Australia, and welcome to our 2021 Annual General Meeting and Social.

We've now notched up 24 years! - that is indeed an achievement of significance, and is due to the Committees who have gone before and to all of you Members without whose interest, of course, there would be no Society. I look forward to your continuing attendance and active participation in our Meetings, and to contributions to our journal.

Over the past year we have managed to hold at least the two General Meetings in Sydney in February and May, but the August Meeting had to be cancelled due to lockdown.

February 2021

The speaker was Prianga de Fonseka, a well known architect who has worked for high profile companies in Sydney and then in Qatar. Prianga had his creative talents honed during the time he worked in Sri Lanka with the famous Geoffrey Bawa and his interesting talk on "The History and Development of Architecture in Sri Lanka" spanned the ancient to modern.

May 2021

Martin Pieris was the speaker in May, an academic who is a lecturer at a couple of universities. He gave us an interesting talk on "The Evolution of Art in Sri Lanka", and took us through old temple art to the significant '43 Group, as well as touching on current trends.

The AGM and Social for 2020 had to be postponed from the scheduled November date due to the Covid19 lockdowns and we ended up holding it on

Sunday 28 February 2021 as a precursor to the February General Meeting. It was sadly the same day when Sunil de Silva passed away, one of our former Presidents and a long time Committee Member holding the post of Publications Officer. So there was a pall on the evening.

This past year also saw the sadness of our Founder President and Life Member, Hugh Karunanyake, losing his beloved wife Tulsi, who was a strong source of assistance in helping with so much of the social activities of the CSA over very many years. Tulsi was an integral part of the Sydney meetings, with her ever cheerful, helpful and pleasing personality. The November *Ceylankan* was dedicated to her memory.

The most critical and important change that had to be dealt with over the year was our Editor, Doug Jones, having to give up his 12 years of running the journal due to health issues. He had been battling to keep going from mid 2020, but finally had to give in to the inevitable. His dedication and commitment over the years to keep the journal coming out on schedule, with a consistently high standard, made this a great loss to the CSA. We will be marking his retirement at the end of the AGM with a presentation.

Editors do not grow on trees, of course, and finding a replacement became a tortuous exercise. However, we were so very fortunate to be able to persuade Adam Raffel to come on board as our new Editor from July. Being a working editor, he had all the knowledge and skills necessary to bring to bear on this important role in the CSA and has taken to it with great aplomb and success.

Special thanks are due tonight to Les Perera, who gave in his resignation as an Ex Officio Committee Member in August. Les was a long time Committee Member who has served as Secretary as well. He has been a valued member of the CSA Committee and his service will be missed. Our thanks and best wishes go to Les.

The past year has necessitated factoring in Covid19 lockdowns, as in 2020. However, the Committee Members have worked hard to keep your Society going, with having to engage in email exchanges and Zoom in lieu of face to face meetings, which were not possible due to the restrictions.

A special mention is due this year to our Treasurer Deepak, who has been working assiduously in identifying possible cost saving measures to cope with the difficulty in maintaining a breakeven financial



CSA Committee (from left) Amal Wahab (Social Convenor), Harry de Sayrah OAM JP (Public Relations), Pauline Gunewardene (President), Doug Jones (Life Member), Adam Raffel (Editor), Thiru Arumugam (Ex Officio). Absent: Deepak Pritamdas (Treasurer / Public Officer) and Sunimal Fernando (Secretary). Dr Srilal Fernando (Vice President), and Hugh Karunanayake (Life Member) are located in Melbourne.



Earlson Forbes (Publications) Kumar Rasiah (Ex Officio)

Photography by Mahal Selvadurai

status, despite the ever increasing substantial costs of postage to send out the journal and its printing. As a result, the printing and despatch of the journal for Colombo Chapter members is now being done in Sri Lanka from the copy sent by Editor Adam Raffel to the printer there. Our appreciation and thanks are due to Tony Saldin, the Local Convenor/President of the Colombo Chapter, who gave Deepak every cooperation and assistance – an exercise in collaboration which has saved the CSA approximately \$500.

Our overall membership now stands at 289 - 234 in Australia, 22 in Sri Lanka, 24 in other overseas countries, 2 Life Members and 7 gift subscriptions, with 20 Complimentaries of the journal being sent out to various institutions. Meetings by the Melbourne and Colombo Chapters were at a standstill due to the Covid19 situation. Our parent body Sydney General Meetings take place on the last Sunday evenings of February, May and August, with the AGM and Social date for next year to be confirmed. Please diarise the dates and I look forward to your attendance.

My plea as always to you all is to please try to introduce at least one new member to CSA from among your circle of friends and colleagues – that would work wonders for our member base! In particular, new younger age group members would ensure the Ceylon Society of Australia continues to flourish and evokes more interest in the wonderful historical and cultural heritage of Sri Lanka.

The Accounts for the year ended 30 June 2021 have been audited by Rienzie Fonseka. Our thanks to Rienzie for helping us with this over the last six years.

Copies of the audited Accounts have been emailed to Members for information. The cost of postage for Australia and Overseas has gone up astronomically from November. So Deepak has now got the journal registered for Printpost for Australian subs

which will help CSA by around \$200.

For Overseas Members other than Sri Lanka, we will regrettably have to consider increasing the Subscription from 2022 by \$5 to \$50 to meet the cost of mailing the journal – that is just the straight cost and has no extra factored in, so we do hope Overseas Members will understand. All other Subscriptions will stay unchanged.

Lastly, I would like to thank you most sincerely and particularly for your presence here tonight despite the pressures Covid has brought to bear on us all. It is a time of stress and trying to adapt to what has been called the “new normal” with observing recommended precautions. So we hope you will enjoy the evening of fellowship and socialising and the traditional Singalong – which will move into dancing as well as singing at halfway point. Catering this year is by the well known Flavour of Ceylon, and I hope you will enjoy the dinner.

Tonight has been difficult to organise with working around the up and down restrictions and problems, but with luck 2022 will be a more normal year. The CSA turns 25 next year and we are hoping to celebrate on a somewhat bigger scale if at all possible. Please stay tuned and make sure you join us! Meanwhile, let's make the most of this evening and have fun together in a pre Christmas celebration!

Thank you.

Pauline Gunewardene

President, Ceylon Society of Australia
Sunday 19 December 2021

A selection of photographs of the evening taken by Mahal Selvadurai of Mahals Photography

Doug Jones receiving his award from Pauline Gunewardene, CSA President, in appreciation of his service as Editor of *The Ceylankan*



If music be the food of life, play on Roger Menezes!



CSA Choir: (from top down) Daya Gonsalkorale, Lucien Wijetunga, Aubrey Joachim, Melanie Rankine, Rosani Wahab and Hyacinth Jones



Food glorious food!



Harry and Imelda de Sayrah



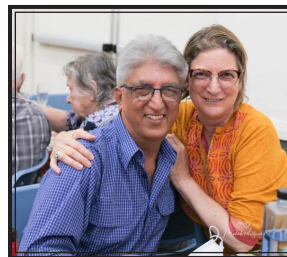
Doug and Hyacinth Jones



Amal and Rosani Wahab



Dr Malini Arumugam



Martin and Sue Pieris



Kanthi Perera



Srikantha Nadarajah and Earl Forbes



Daya Gonsalkorale collecting his trivia prize from Pauline Gunewardene for his perfect score! Thiru Arumugam was very pleased.



Shirani Rodrigo: the pianist who accompanied CSA Choir and Singalong



Octavia Perera and Prema (not pictured) sponsored the Entry Door Prize



Senanie de Silva donor of liquor for Raffle prizes



Avinder and Nirupa Paul sponsors of the Event



Rex Olegasekaram



and Lucien Wijetunga lucky recipients!



Gunasmin and Esme Lye



Shantha and Rienzie Fonseka



Singalong



Aubrey and Nelum Joachim



Prianga and Devika de Fonseka



Hyacinth Jones and Kantha Abeysinghe



Pauline and Shantha Fonseka



Earl Forbes and Rex Olegasekaram



Pauline and Octavia Perera drawing the Entry Door Prize



Nelleke van Essen, Leela Rasiah and Kumar Rasiah



Suzette Wright, Roderick de Sylva and Pauline



Kantha Abeysinghe (centre) dancing Baila with Amira and George Cooke and Elaine Tissera

More Tributes to Tulsi Karunanayake



TULSI KARUNANAYAKE – REMEMBERED WITH LOVE: SUMANE & ROHINI IYER

Metta, wish for all beings to be happy, *Karuna*, compassion, *Muditha*, unselfish joy particularly in the good fortune of others, and *Upekkha*, equanimity - the four immeasurables in Buddhism all came together harmoniously in the person of Tulsi Karunanayake.

We have known Tulsi for over thirty years initially seeking her skill in making fabric and thread into a perfect garment, a joy to behold, delivered in her characteristic self effacing manner with a smile that tells all. In later years, when we got to know her better within the Ceylon Society of Australia we got to see other facets of her that were to leave an indelible impression on us. As a gracious hostess at many of their lunches, Tulsi matched her skills with needle and thread with her culinary skills. A dish among the many she produced on every occasion, we remember most, is the simple fried dried fish (*karola*), Hugh's favourite done to perfection. It was so because she was doing it for her Aiya – her best friend and partner for over half a century. We called them the "Golden Couple".

A quiet achiever behind the scenes, Tulsi gave of her best at our regular CSA meetings. The role of the President's wife came with commensurate responsibilities and she carried it with great aplomb and quiet dignity. Usual mishaps that can occur at such events were handled with a gentle smile which required no words but meant: "no problems I will fix it!"

We began this appreciation by reference to our shared cultural and religious background, as Buddhists. But Tulsi had many friends of other persuasions and beliefs including Rohini. Without fear of contradiction it could be said, in her company we all walked with a Saint in our midst.

Rohini recalls: One of my lasting memories is, on my birthday Tulsie never failed to surprise me pleasantly with a phone call to wish me even after she moved to Melbourne and not long after was sadly diagnosed as ill. I felt blessed and felt that she was trying to reach

me through layers of fond and misty memories - that she remembered me was most important to me.

Tulsi was a platinum friend and though we miss her, lives on in our memory as well as in our children's memories as one who definitely enriched our lives with her beautiful and serene presence.

Hugh, Harsha, Sumal and Dilukshi, your loss is immeasurable. But you all are immensely rich from having had the fortune to be nurtured by a Saint a Bodhisatva.

May she attain Nibbana.

Sumane and Rohini Iyer
Young NSW 2594
15 January 2022

(Sumane was Editor of *The Ceylankan* for 7 years)

'TULSI-' AN APPRECIATION FROM CHANDRA SENARATNE (FORMER SOCIAL CONVENOR OF THE CEYLON SOCIETY OF AUSTRALIA)

"As one lamp lights, another nor grows less. So nobleness enkindleth nobleness" -James Russell Lowell.

It was a privilege to meet Tulsi, for the first time, at the inaugural meeting of the Ceylon Society of Australia, where I was elected Social Convenor. Her genuine loving and caring disposition is indelibly etched in my mind.

One of my duties was to liaise with members who express a desire to bring some finger food for the social which follows the talk. At the first general meeting, I noticed that when Hugh and Tulsi arrived, Tulsi instead of socialising with a number of her friends who had come for the meeting did a 'bee line' to the kitchen. She was seen sorting out the finger food, as and when they were being brought in by the members, and was kept busy until the meeting commenced.

About half an hour before the end of the meeting she would 'tip toe' out of the hall into the kitchen to warm some items and to arrange the finger food in a presentable fashion. She would also replen-

ish the dishes, as and when required. After that, we would see her making the teas and coffees. The next task was the clearing of the table and to do the washing up. In this work, she was assisted by a few other ladies. Tulsi's organising abilities and altruistic nature were apparent to all concerned.

Tulsi's wonderful nature and the care she showed for others was displayed when Tulsi, accompanied by Hugh, walked to my home on the morning of the funeral of my wife Marlene. She volunteered to assist in the food preparation, which was for 100 members of the congregation expected to arrive after the church service for the 'wake' at my home. When I did not see her in church, I made enquiries and was told that she returned to my home to complete the work she had undertaken.

When I decided to form a Royal College Old Boy's, Senior's Group (with spouses included), I received the wholehearted co-operation of both Hugh and Tulsi. Their 100% attendance particularly encouraged the spouses to attend.

I have also been fortunate to have been invited for dinner, on a number of occasions where Tulsi displayed her culinary skills.

"She walks in beauty like the night of cloudless climes and starry skies And all that's best of dark and bright Meet in her aspect and her eyes." - Lord Byron.

Tulsi, may the goodness you meted out to others be returned to you tenfold. Rest in peace, in the lush and verdant valleys of life hereafter.

Chandra Senaratne

AMAL WAHAB REMEMBERS A KIND AND GENTLE SOUL IN 1971

Most people living in Sri Lanka remember 1971 as the year of the JVP Insurrection. However, I remember that year as the time I met one of the kindest, gentlest ladies – TULSI KARUNANAYAKE.

Tulsi and "Uncle" Hugh had moved to a place in Wellawatte, next-door to my best friend Travis Victoria. Travis and I were in school at that time and used to meet almost daily after school.

Tulsi would greet us with a lovely smile, never too busy or proud to say "Hi" to two school-boys, one sitting on his bicycle and the other standing nearby, next to Tulsi's gate chatting about the next important rugger or cricket match.

Invariably Tulsi would be our only spectator when Travis, his siblings and I played Badminton, using Tulsi's garden as one half of the court, the gate as the net and the Victoria's garden as the other half of the court.

After a game of Badminton, we would see Tulsi sitting at her front door step waiting patiently for Uncle Hugh to return from work.

Uncle Hugh when passing Travis and me on his walk to their front door, would always greet us and sometimes join in the debate of the evening: who was a better cricketer etc.

Years went by and I next met Tulsi and Hugh in Sydney, in the early 90's and only one thing had changed – I now dropped the "uncle" when addressing Hugh. By this time Tulsi had three children, who had inherited the best qualities of Hugh and Tulsi. She remained the same kind, gentle and humble lady I had known as a school child. She was a fantastic cook and entertained us with the most sumptuous meals.

We miss Tulsi but we are thankful for the memories that we have of this lovely lady.

Amal Wahab

FAREWELL TO TULSI: DR SRILAL AND SAVITRI FERNANDO

It was in the 1990's that Savitri and I had the fortune of meeting with Hugh and Tulsi. It was a common interest in Ceylon postcards that brought Hugh and myself together through a mutual contact Chris Puttock. We floated the idea of forming a small group of people with similar interests, who could meet from time to time. It was before the time of email and communication was by telephone or Australia Post.

On a visit to Sydney, Hugh and Tulsi invited us for lunch. Savitri and I connected with them easily, and led to meeting with them whenever we were in Sydney or they were in Melbourne. While Hugh and I talked of books, postcards, people and wherever the conversation led us, Savitri and Tulsi had equally important discussions about dress, food, and whatever else that interested them. The conversation was never boring and lunch would end with afternoon tea and virtually till the sun got tired and sunk into the deep blue.

It was clear that Tulsi was not interested in the ephemera like collectibles that filled Hugh's and my existence. However she was very supportive of what Hugh did. Hers was of a higher order where material things did not matter that much. Her nature was such that she was gentle and helpful to everyone and this pervaded her actions and speech. Right thought, right speech, right action did not have to be cultivated by her. It came naturally and without effort to her. No wonder Hugh loved her dearly.

She would call him Hugh Aiya and we thought that this was a form of endearment, till we realised later that he was actually her cousin Aiya she had known all her life.

Later in life when the illness was beginning to show up, she became very quiet. However her gentle manner and composed countenance never left her. She would quietly talk to Savitri in the kitchen or dining room while Hugh enjoyed a drink in the sitting room. Without fail she would invoke a blessing Budu Saranayi many times.

After they moved to Melbourne, Tulsi would quietly sit at the window, immersed in her word puzzle book while Hugh and I talked of mice and men.

Savitri and I are very fortunate to know Tulsi who was kind, gentle, sincere and the loveliest person we have known.

Dr Srilal and Savitri Fernando

REMEMBERING TULSI: MICHAEL ROHAN SOURJAH

I came home after work one day about 20 years or more ago and the landline rang and I had a conversation with a very rude telemarketer. The phone rang immediately afterwards. The guy on the other end of the line was Hugh and he asked me a question, which I can't remember. I rudely told him I was not interested and Hugh said sorry for disturbing me. But then I realised he was talking about Ceylon books and I apologised and we got into a conversation which has become a strong friendship until now.

My dad had collected antique and vintage books about Ceylon/Sri Lanka since the 1970s and I initially bought books for him. But then I became a collector too. And Hugh was always my competitor in buying those old books. Hugh was the driving force in starting the Ceylon Society of Australia and our first meeting was held in his house. That was when I met his wonderful wife Tulsi. We have always kept in contact and Tulsi always cared for me. At all the Ceylon Society meetings I attended, Tulsi was the first to greet me. And she always showed me what she had cooked for the guests and asked me to sample that food.

Kids came along and, regrettably, I could no longer attend the Ceylon Society meetings. Dancing classes, soccer, basketball, baseball, netball and school events took over my life.

But my parents had migrated to Sydney by that time and they had many parties at their house where I kept meeting Hugh and Tulsi. Always, I was the first person Tulsi greeted with that beautiful smile on her face.

A couple of years before Hugh and Tulsi moved to Melbourne, I realised that dear Tulsi kept repeating the same things she had spoken to me. She always thanked me, and I don't know why, but what she always said made me happy.

I miss dear Tulsi, as much as I don't have Hugh in Sydney anymore. Tulsi was such a kind and wonderful person. She was indeed an Angel born on this planet.

Thank you dear Tulsi for all the wonderful memories. One day we will all meet again.

Michael Rohan Sourjah



BOOK REVIEWS

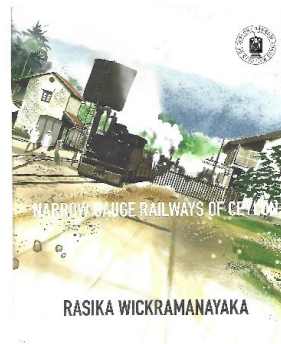
Book Title: Narrow Gauge Railways of Ceylon

Author: Rasika Wickramanayaka

Published by Author, August 2021

450pp; hardbound with dust jacket

Book reviewed by Udaya Peeligama



Rasika Wickramanayaka has produced a handsome hard cover volume dedicated entirely to a single theme, namely the narrow gauge railways of then Ceylon, which had hitherto not received the thorough examination it so deserves in the annals of rail transportation in Sri Lanka. Though several tomes had been written on Sri Lanka's railways in the past, almost all have referred to the narrow

gauge railways 'in passing', not even David Hyatt's epic work, *The Railways of Sri Lanka*, considered the most complete works to-date on the island's railways. Rasika, a Chartered Architect and Certified Project Manager, had been a railway enthusiast since childhood, especially on the narrow gauge, and has drawn on over fifteen years of thorough research and accumulation of a vast storehouse of information on the subject to create this remarkable publication. It is indeed a work of supreme passion and a testimony to the author's enthusiasm, courage, and determination, to delve into a realm none had contemplated before in such a comprehensive approach.

After an introduction to the railways of Sri Lanka, the author, in Chapter 2, goes on to describe the construction of the 2' 6" narrow gauge Uda Pussellawa Railway (UPR), work on which commenced in November 1900. Running from Nanu Oya to Ragalla via Nuwara Eliya, the entire line was completed in July 1904. Many facts including the deliberations entered into by the colonial administration prior to construction, cost estimates, its operation and final closure in August 1948, are enumerated in fascinating manner. The gauge of 2' 6" appears to have been chosen in view of the difficult terrain, steep gradients and expected low traffic volumes on the railway. The rolling stock is not forgotten and is explained in detail including the unique Class H1, 2-4-0+0-4-2 Beyer-Garratt locomotive, one of the smallest Garratts ever to be constructed by that famed Garratt builder Beyer-Peacock of Manchester, England. The well-known Kelani Valley (KV) and Sabaragamuwa Railway is then covered, again in much detail. The agitations of the planters of the area for a railway to transport their produce make captivating reading as do the many propos-

als for the routes. The first phase of the KV line from Maradana to Avissawella had been accomplished in September 1902 and thence the second phase to Yatiyantota in September 1903. The extension from Avissawella to Ratnapura could not be completed till April 1912, and then beyond to Opanake till May 1919. The motive power and rolling stock employed on the KV line are covered extensively while the Chapter also deals with other narrow gauge railways serving various industrial complexes on the island.

Chapter 3 is devoted entirely to the Sabaragamuwa Railway with extensive coverage of the aspects of construction, stations and bridges being provided. The halcyon days of the line are described vividly where rubber and other plantations in the region relied entirely on the line to get their produce across with motor roads still not having made their inroads in grabbing traffic away, which finally led to the downfall and ultimate demise of this charming railway. A methodical discussion is provided on the gradual and inevitable decline of the line and some of the efforts, though seemingly lackadaisical in nature, made by the railway administration in attempting to arrest the deterioration. By the end of 1978, the entire line beyond Avissawella had been removed.

The author in Chapter 4 discusses the ‘broad gauging’ of the line between Maradana and Avissawella, commenced in February 1991 and completed in August 1997, by the addition of a heavier 80 lb per yard rail on the outside to enable 5’ 6” broad gauge trains to be run. As the author states, many of the curves on the line remained unaltered and thus the speed of the broad gauge trains at these curves had to be restricted to no more than 19.2 mph, thereby negating any speed advantages that may have been envisaged. The chapter also deals significantly with efforts made at preserving some of the narrow gauge motive power and rolling stock. It is interesting to note that a Class V2 Sentinel-Cammell steam railcar, constructed in 1928, was operable till 2008 and at the time, was considered the only such operable narrow gauge steam railcar in the world. The writer of this review remembers approaches made by a heritage organisation in Britain to procure and remove this vehicle to Britain. The final Chapter, Chapter 5, amongst other material, provides eyewitness accounts and personal anecdotes associated with the narrow gauge and accidents that had occurred.

The book is also replete with more than 250 pages of appendices containing numerous timetables, extensive details on motive power and rolling stock inclusive of rare drawings, track layouts and gradient sheets, maps, and photographs some of which had not been seen before.

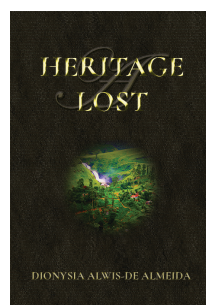
Narrow Gauge Railways of Ceylon is the only known detailed history of such railways in the island in a single volume dedicated to the topic. It is a remarkable contribution to railway literature, and is an offering to thoughtful followers of railways, a

reference work, especially to those with a penchant for detail. No question, it should find a ready nook on the bookshelves of enthusiastic Sri Lankan rail buffs and indeed of international narrow gauge aficionados alike.

Book title: *A Heritage Lost*

Author: Dionysia Alwis-de Almeida

Book reviewed by Leander Kreltszheim



In early 2011 I travelled to Nuwara Eliya as part of my honeymoon trip to Sri Lanka. While born and bred in Melbourne, Australia, I was overcome by the inexplicable connection I felt to this central region of what I then considered to be ‘the land of my parents’. The ‘hill country’ of Sri Lanka was not just visually stunning, but viscerally moving. When forced to return to the more urbanised capital of

Colombo a week later, I physically grieved my loss.

Over a decade later I can recognise this grief in *A Heritage Lost*, a fictional novella penned by Sri Lankan-born Dionysia Alwis-de Almeida. The saga is predominantly set in the central hills of the island and follows the intertwined stories of the Scottish manager of the St Clair Nil Diya tea plantation and a Tamil family working on his estate. We begin the journey in the late 1930s, and continue against the backdrop of the Second World War and into Sri Lanka’s post-Independence 1970s. To disclose more of the plot would be to give away much of the joy of reading *A Heritage Lost*, as Alwis-De Almeida weaves an intergenerational story of misguided love, infidelity, mystery, colonisation and, ultimately, loss both within the lives of its central characters and for the country more broadly as it transitions into a modern nation-state.

Observations about Sri Lankan culture form the glue of the novel, as characters dine on egg hoppers, various sambals and exotic fruits. Perhaps more interestingly, however, are Alwis-de Almeida’s references to the various tensions forming the background of the story – for example, those between British and Sri Lankan work values, parenting principles and, most interestingly, attitudes towards ‘primitive’ ideas such as superstition, astrology, intuition and karma. The author is evidently fascinated and well-versed in the Buddhist traditions of the country, and intertwines this with the strong Christian history of Sri Lanka and her own upbringing. ‘Eden’ and ‘Nirvana’ are continuously referenced. The author views the pre-colonial country as an unblemished paradise and her nostalgia for this permeates the book; for her, the country is ultimately forfeited to “the last invading foreigners” at its own expense.

While the narrative voice shifts throughout the book, my favourite moments are those that provide a voice for its diverse female cast. We share in the reflections of Yasmin, the spirited young lawyer who

ponders the impact that marriage will have on her career: “I am already wondering if, once married, my dreams and ambitions will be in tatters.” We are guided through the concluding twists of the mystery by Ione, the inquisitive expat through whom Alwis-de Almeida filters her own views of returning to the tea plantations after decades living abroad. The character of Nalini poses a personally fascinating vignette of how people of differing religions have been able to peaceably co-exist in what were then (and possibly now) viewed as ‘mixed marriages’. If there is one voice missing from the novel, however, it is the voice of its central character, Radhika, whose story is told for her but not by her. Her telling of the tale could fill a whole other book, and I’m left to ponder her own motivations and experiences.

At its heart, though, *A Heritage Lost* is a story of loss. For its central characters Radhika, Sunda and Kaali, the story tells of lost dreams that result from their interactions with the local Scottish landowner, Rannoch. The impact of these interactions can be followed throughout the following decades as subsequent generations are affected by the decisions of their ancestors. Loss also relates to the cultural losses experienced by the island as a result of waves of Portuguese, Dutch and British imperialism. As one of the British plantation-owners concedes to a Sinhalese colleague “our Western missionaries ... kept you away from whatever they didn’t understand about your culture and religion.” Loss of language has globally been identified as a violent consequence of colonisation, and Alwis-De Almeida laments “the language of her erudite ancestors being given such second-class treatment.” She observes: “verbal communication of any kind in the [native] vernacular was now a well-established public indiscretion.” The author is sceptical of subsequent post-colonial attempts to repair the past under the guise of international sustainable development movements that basically replace the term “uncivilised” with the word “underprivileged”. Despite the process of decolonisation since Sri Lanka’s independence, any nation-building will forever be framed by western intellectual thinking; a truly ‘Sri Lankan’ country void of European influence is one that is arguably lost forever.

And finally, all fiction, at its heart, is autobiographical. Through *A Heritage Lost*, Alwis-de Almeida attempts to make sense of her own connection to her homeland. A sense of sadness pervades the novel. This is emphasized by the very description of Sri Lanka as “this tiny piece of land, torn off and left hanging as it were off the subcontinental shelf, [... that] was like a teardrop at this parting, and now, frozen in time.” The author’s feelings are navigated through the characters of both Ione (a Sinhalese expat) and Andrew (a British plantation owner) whose return to Nuwara Eliya in the 1970s leaves them “longing for the lost splendour of a bygone era” as they witness “the erosion of all that once stood respectable and elegant.” The author returned to Nuwara Eliya in 2007, and it would have been inevitable for her to wonder ‘what might have been?’ If I was moved to tears having grown up half a world away, I wonder how she felt about her homeland on that visit?

I have countless more questions for the author about her story. Sadly, she passed away in December 2021 in Kent, UK. She was my mother’s elder sister and my godmother. ‘Auntie Diony’, as she was known to me, was clever, ambitious, enlightening, dramatic and vocal – all words that aptly describe *A Heritage Lost*. Her personality seeps through every pore of the book. Importantly, after working on the draft and production for over a decade, she was finally able to hold the finished book in her hands early last year. And while our family grieves her loss, it brings me much solace to know that women of my aunt’s generation (which is to say that of my mother) have been able to take their experiences of decolonisation and emigration and create literature, art and other forms of beauty out of such lived experience. Her experience may not be your own, but I am endlessly grateful that she was able to share her reflections with us all.

Leander Kreltszheim is a Sri Lankan-Australian social designer based on the traditional lands of the Wurundjeri people in Melbourne, Australia. She is also a qualified historian, which continues to guide her passion for looking backwards as a means to creating more desirable and ethical futures for both people and planet. She can’t wait to see the landscapes of Nuwara Eliya again. She will be ready with tissues! *A Heritage Lost* will be available soon via Amazon. In the meantime, please send any enquiries to info@almeidaarts.com

OBITUARY

Dionysia De Almeida (13 October 1941 - 3 December 2021)

Born in Ceylon, Dionysia (Diony) de Almeida (nee Alwis) entered the University of Ceylon, Peradeniya, from St Bridget’s Convent, Cinnamon Gardens, Colombo. She was a Graduate Teacher by profession. Lionel (Alwis), Neloo (Kreltszheim) and the late Bernadette (Perera) are her siblings. She married Rienzie (de Almeida) and made her home in England [in 1971], raising a son, Antonio and a daughter, Anoushka. The next generation additions to her now ‘extended’ family are the little ones, Lorelei and Kristian (Carragher).

Whilst *A Heritage Lost* [which relates the story of British tea planters who flourished on the tea estates in Ceylon] is a homage to the land of her birth, it is also a tribute to those whom Diony loved and respected.

Malcolm Kreltszheim

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.



CSA Notice Board

CSA General Meetings for 2022

General Meetings (Sydney)

- Sunday 27 February 6.30 pm
- Sunday 29 May 6.30 pm
- Sunday 28 August 6.30 pm

AGM & Social (Sydney)

- Saturday 19 November 6.00 pm to midnight

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

Please note: All meetings are subject to Covid 19 restrictions / lockdowns. Events that go ahead will be held strictly in compliance with safety regulations as required. Please provide proof of vaccination on entry.

The **First General Meeting for 2022** will take place on **Sunday 27 February 2022 at 6.30 pm** at the venue specified above. The Social following the talk will have some short eats and refreshments provided. Admission is free for members and guests.

The guest speaker on the evening will be RODERICK DE SYLVA on the Development of the Tea Industry in Sri Lanka



In 1824 tea was experimentally planted by the British in Sri Lanka with seedlings from China and India. The first commercial tea plantation was begun with a small estate in Loolecondera near Kandy in 1867. The first tea factory was built there in 1872, and in 1875 the first consignment was shipped to the London Tea

Auctions. Tea then began to overtake coffee, which was devastated by the fungal Coffee Rust blight.

The first public tea auction in Sri Lanka was held in 1883 by Sommerville & Co. The Colombo Tea Auction is the oldest and biggest Tea Auction in the world. Tea brokers and potential buyers taste and evaluate thousands of teas before buying at the auctions, based on mostly overseas customers' requirements. Teas may be shipped as they are or blended into consistent standards, ready to be packed.

In 1955 the first commercial vegetative propagation of tea plants commenced from clonal varieties rather than from seedlings, and in 1965 Sri Lanka became the world's largest exporter of tea. Ceylon Tea has a unique flavour and is sought after. It is still the main export for Sri Lanka, and holds a vital place in the economy as the second most consumed beverage in the world next to water.

About the Speaker:

Roderick joined Lipton Ceylon in 1973 as a 'Trainee Tea Executive', with the title Tea Executive encompassing the roles of Tea Taster, Tea Buyer, Tea Blender and Marketer of tea.

After training in the administration and support departments, he learned aspects of tea cultivation and manufacturing on the model Lipton tea estate, Dambatenne in Haputale. He then entered the world of tea, specialising to be a Tea Taster. It is a role much like that of a Wine Taster as tea quality is impacted by ecological, climatic and manufacturing factors. Besides tasting, buying at the tea auctions requires the skillset needed to blend different teas to achieve a consistent standard.

During his 14 years with Lipton Colombo, Lipton was acquired by Unilever, with Brooke Bond also being acquired by Unilever several years later. He climbed the ladder to be a senior Tea Executive, with time in Malawi and Singapore as Acting General Manager for the Unilever Tea Divisions there. A few years after migration to Australia in 1987, he was head hunted back to Unilever by an English expat he had trained in tea tasting in Sri Lanka and joined their Tea Division in Sydney in 1994, where he tasted and bought teas from the tea auction centres around the world's tea producing countries. He had the responsibility for blending the teas from samples, before releasing the blends for packing by the packing plant in Melbourne, into the Lipton, Bushells and LanChoo brands of tea.

The 10 years in this role came to an end when Unilever closed the packing plant in Australia and imported the brands as a finished product from bigger volume packing plants overseas, based on the same blend standards established in Australia. With the end of his time in the tea industry, Roderick moved careers into Compliance roles in Health Safety Environment and Quality Management.

CSA - MELBOURNE CHAPTER

At our next meeting Prof Anoma Pieris (an architectural historian and a professor at the Melbourne School of Design, The University of Melbourne) will present an illustrated talk on:

Mrs. B. BMICH and the Non-Aligned Movement Summit Architecture

**Sunday, 13th March 2022, 5.00pm
at ASHWOOD HALL 2 (small hall)
21a Electra Avenue, Ashwood**

for enquiries contact **Hemal 0427 725 740**

The fifth Non-Aligned Movement Summit in Colombo hosted by Sirimavo Bandaranaike's 1970-77 government was a spectacular international event famous for its anti-imperialist politics and calls for nuclear disarmament. The host venue for the conference was the China-designed BMICH, Lanka's first indoor air-conditioned auditorium complex. Using the lens of the architecture associated with this Summit, the talk describes how successive strategies for political self-determination were inscribed in Colombo's built fabric.

Prof Pieris has published books on Sri Lanka, *Sovereignty, Space and Civil War in Sri Lanka: porous nation* (2018); *Architecture and Nationalism in Sri Lanka: the trouser under the cloth* (2012) and *Imagining Modernity: the architecture of Valentine Gunasekera* (2007).

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 US Dollars 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
Bank Name: Commonwealth Bank of Australia
Bank BSB: 062 308
Account No: 10038725
Swift Code for overseas remittances: CTBAAU2S
Reference: Payee Name

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

Congratulations and a warm welcome to our New Members

KANTHI ARIARAJ, Stourbridge, UK (Gift by Herbert Kanagasabai);

STEFAN D'SILVA, Colombo, Sri Lanka (returning member);

ROSHINI FERNANDO, Colombo, Sri Lanka (Gift by Sunimal Fernando);

SHAYMON JAYASINGHE, Dandenong, VIC 3175 (Gift by Ranjan Pethiyagoda);

ROSHINI JAYAWARDENE, Seaforth, NSW 2094;

PHILIP RAJKANTHA MUTTUKUMARU, Canberra ACT 2611;

SOMASUNDERAM SKANDAKUMAR, Colombo, Sri Lanka (returning member);

INDIRA WATHUGALA, Cherrybrook NSW 2126.

Notice to Members - Contact Details

Could we please request all members to 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.

Once accepted, the advertiser will need to supply the printed flyers in sufficient numbers for inclusion in that particular issue of the Journal.

The cost of inserting such flyers is \$500 per issue of the Journal, paid in advance.

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on 0434 860 188

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