



# The Ceylanikaum

The Journal of the  
CEYLON SOCIETY  
of AUSTRALIA

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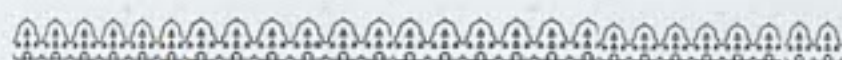
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## The Ceylankam



## CONTENTS

• Our Readers Write .....	4
• Changes in Colombo .....	5
• Lionel Wendt – artist of the highest calibre by Vama Vamadevan .....	6
• Dr Mary Rutnam (1873-1962) Pioneer for Women's Rights by Thiru Arumugam .....	8
• Prof. John Robert Blazè by G.S.W.de Saram .....	13

• Ivan Andree of The Millionaires & Four/Five Sharps by Rosie Zuiderduyn.....	16
• Meals Ammi Made by Chrisanthi Wettasinghe .....	22
• Malay Mercenaries in the Military Service of the Kandyan Kings by M.D.(Tony) Saldin .....	23
• Synopsis of Meeting - Colombo Chapter M.D.(Tony) Saldin .....	25
• Leonard Birchall & the Japanese Raid on Colombo by Capt. (Rtd) Rob Stuart.....	27
• Bookshelf & Web Resources .....	33
• Notice Board .....	34



## From the Editor...

**T**he name Andree was synonymous with entertainment, large scale sporting extravaganzas and big band music in Sri Lanka in the 1950s and 1960s. Donovan Andree comes to mind immediately. He launched and promoted a host of Sri Lankan artistes to international fame and had international entertainment and sporting acts such as 'Holiday on Ice' with the unforgettable Harlem Black Birds; Tony Brent, the Duke Ellington Band, Golden Gate Quartet, International Wrestling and Boxing brought into the country.

Another Andree etched in our minds is that of famous bandleader Ivan. Ivan's daughter Rosie Zuiderduyn recalls, specially for *THE CEYLANKAN*, fond memories of the band leader days of her beloved father in "Ivan Andree of the Millionaires and the Four/Five Sharps" as she traces the history of life and the musical times of that big band era.

Vama Vamadevan has again produced another fine piece of writing with his thoughts on Lionel Wendt. Thiru Arumugam has used his great research skills to produce a three-part essay on the life and times of Dr Mary Rutnam. Part I appears in this issue. Dr Rutnam was very well-known medical practitioner in Ceylon and a campaigner for women's rights.

Reproduced in this issue is M.D. (Tony) Saldin's article about the Malay mercenaries in military service of the Kandyan Kings. First Professor of Forensic Medicine at Peradeniya and a contemporary of the great Prof. John Robert Blazè, Dr G.S.W. de Saram's 1957 tribute to Blazè is another reproduction. We take a look at how Canadian Squadron Leader Leonard Birchall helped thwart the bombing of Colombo on Easter Sunday in 1945. The usual fare of Synopsis of the Colombo Chapter public meeting and Meals Ammi Made as well as Bookshop and Web resources column are included.

So welcome to the 61st edition of the Journal—born not without some unforeseen hurdles to clear, like computer tantrums to appease, scouring the editor's depleted reserve of potential articles to fill blanks (hence our resorting to reprints) and at the end of it all, time was suddenly at a premium. So if your journal is a tad late, you now have an inkling of where it all began.

As mentioned earlier we are in great need of articles for the journal and the editor would appreciate your assistance by contributing your literary work for publication. Some guidelines are published on page 32 to help you if needed. We'd love to hear from you. Soon!

On a happier note ... it is gratifying to see that we have many new members joining CSA. A hearty welcome to you all. We hope there a few writers hidden among them.

## About the Ceylon Society of Australia

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

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



## Our Readers Write

### *The 'X' Factor*

Among the delights you served us up in Journal 60, I particularly savoured Hugh's [Karunanayake] account of the early years of motoring. I cannot try to add to it in any way but it serves as a handle for some thoughts of a personal nature. Hugh, for some reason, does not record the first all-Island license plate: those not registered District-wise. I refer to those carrying the 'X' and 'Z' numbers. My mother remembers how people were awaiting this event when she was expecting the birth of my brother Tissa and that would place the date as 1929. 'X' was the first, perhaps with reason. Then came 'Z' – and one wonders WHY there was no 'Y'!

Be that as it may, we had two 'X' cars (both bought second hand) which had been licensed in 1935. One was a Ford 10, (X-7442) about which there is much to tell, but has been already written about by my siblings Tissa and Ransiri Menike. But what merits mention is the other one, the Adler (X- 9304).

The Adler was an elegant car, way ahead of its time both in design and technology. In keeping with the German name for "Eagle" the outstretched wings of a stylized eagle spread across the radiator grill. The Company had been owned by a Jewish family and was taken over by the State. The dealer in Colombo, whom Hugh names, was the German Consul till the outbreak of war. The model we had was one designed by the renowned architect Walter Gropius (remembered for his dictum: "*Form follows function*") at the "Bauhaus", a prestigious Institute for industrial design. It was a heavy car (21 cwt) and we had quite a time pushing it up and down the village streets of Tirivanaketiya, off Ratnapura, where we lived then: as it was living on the dregs of the pre-war "Varta" battery which may have been 10 years old. For a 1935 car, she sported features that became common only after the war: a foot-operated starter pedal (I had one on an Opel 50 years later), gear lever on the steering column, a cigarette lighter and genuine leather seats. My father bought it off the late L.H.Mettananda, Principal (at different times) of Dharmaraja and Ananda Colleges. There must have been very few of this make: it is seldom talked of and Tissa remembers only one other – a boxy car made of fibre-board.

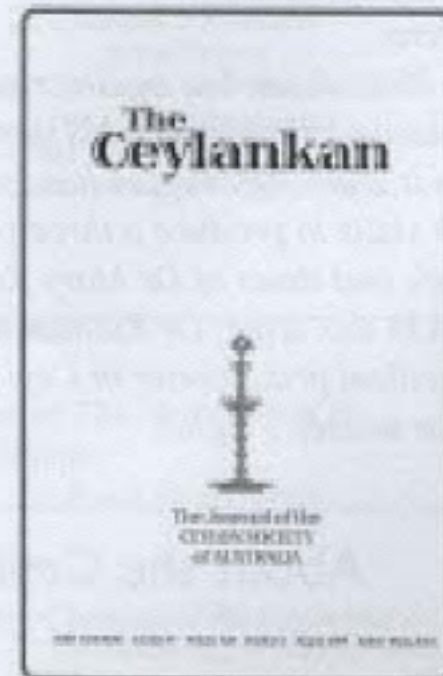
I wish I had a picture of this model: I have no idea what happened to the one we had.  
SOMASIRI DEVENDRA (Dehiwela, Sri Lanka)

### *Your views are valuable!*

*Keep those letters coming in dear readers. We value your thoughts and erudite comments on the Journal and its subject matter. Please keep them as brief as possible.*

*Letters, however, may be edited for reasons of length, clarity and content.*

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## Changes in Colombo

### • New President - TISSA DEVENDRA

Tissa Devendra (pictured left) was elected Local President of the Colombo Chapter of the Ceylon Society of Australia at their Annual General meeting in Colombo.

Tissa is a post-graduate of Cambridge University, former Government Agent of the districts of Matara, Trincomalee and Jaffna with Sri Lanka's Public Service and a well-known author (among other attainments).

Incumbent Local President Chulie de Silva did not nominate for re-election because of her work commitments as Communications Manager of Drik Picture Library in Dhaka, Bangladesh. The Colombo Chapter and the CSA thank Chulie for her inspiring contribution to "Keeping the Heritage Alive." No doubt she will continue to share her immense creative skills with us as always!

Tissa read English and French in the University of Ceylon from which he graduated in 1952. During this period he participated in University Drama Society plays and held office as its President in the E.F.C. Ludowyke era.

### *National expert*

He has worked as a National Expert for F.A.O and the U.N. After retirement, and a short spell in a multi-national company he was appointed Chairman, Public Service Commission and, later, the Salaries Commission. He has the distinction of being the first President of the Colombo University Alumni Association during the Vice-Chancellorship of Professor Stanley Wijesundera.

He writes often to newspapers on his experiences in the provinces, the history, culture and folklore in which he has an abiding interest. He is a Trustee of the George Keyt Foundation. He has published three collections of his writings – "Tales from the Provinces", "On Horseshoe Street", "Quest for Shangri La" and two books of Sinhala folk tales in English – "Princes, Peasants and and Clever Beasts".

Tissa is brother to Lt Cmdr (Rtd) Somasiri Devendra, the first Local President of the Colombo Chapter.



**SRILAL PERERA** is the newest member on the Colombo Chapter's hardworking committee. Srilal received his secondary education at St. Thomas' College, Mount Lavinia and passed out as a Mechanical Engineering graduate from EinShams University, Cairo. For a short while he worked on board an oil tanker in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia.

After his return he joined the Chitrasena Dance ensemble where he played the Kandyan drum and Karnatic Thavil drum. He has taken part in several National Wind Surfing competitions in Sri Lanka. A keen scuba diver, he has participated in the Galle Harbour Archaeology Project with Dr. Jeremy Green of the Western Australian Maritime Museum. He is also the author of the Marine Bio-diversity Mapping project of the Mount Lavinia Reef, and has been involved in monitoring the environmental impact of ornamental marine fish exports from Sri Lanka.

He is also Secretary of the Scientific sub-committee of the National Trust of Sri Lanka. Currently he is in the process of writing a book on "Legends of Ancient Peraharas" for the National Trust. He also holds the office of Basnayake Nilame (Chief Lay Official) of the ancient Pattini Shrine at Kadadora, Ruwanwella.

Since the dawn of the millennium, he is leading the life of a celibate (Brahmachari).



*"The pianist, photographer, critic, and cinematographer, Lionel Wendt was the central figure of a cultural life torn between the death rattles of the Empire and a human appraisal of the untapped values of Ceylon."* – Wendt's friend Ricardo Neftali Reyes Basoalto (1904-1973), Consul of Chile in Ceylon, better known as **Pablo Neruda**, from his *Memoirs*.

## Lionel Wendt – artist of the highest calibre

**L**ionel Wendt is a familiar name to those of an earlier time but not known to the younger generation, hence it is appropriate to recall his achievements as one of Sri Lanka's most reputed artists. Wendt was born on 3 December, 1900 in Colombo of Dutch Burgher parents. He was the elder of two boys, the other being Harry. Lionel died on 19 December, 1944 and his brother died within a year in 1945.

Wendt's father was Henry Lorensz Wendt, a judge of the Supreme Court of Ceylon in colonial times. His mother was the daughter of a distinguished civil servant. Young Wendt too was a barrister, but his interests lay beyond in music and photography. Many may know



that Lionel was a renowned photographer, but few know he was a virtuoso pianist whose performances were highly regarded, and he excelled as a music teacher. In addition to being a man of the arts he had some rare qualities.

Though a lawyer by training and a man of the arts by talent he was very practical, intellectual and business like. In his time and age taking to the arts was not held in very high esteem. But he had an advantage over other artists of his time in that he was a man of means with good financial backing.

At the age of 19, Lionel went to the UK in 1920 and returned to Ceylon in 1924. In England in addition to studying law and qualifying at the Inner Temple as a barrister he studied Piano at the Royal Academy of Music. He tried to return to his legal practice, but the call of the arts was too much for him

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by  
**VAMA VAMADEVAN**

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to resist. Photography was a childhood hobby of his, but scarcely did anyone recognise that it would become his principal pre-occupation and his greatest legacy. Though his interest in photography grew, it was his secondary interest for a long time. It got a tremendous boost and a shot in the arm when Basil Wright arrived in the island to shoot the film 'SONG OF CEYLON' (1934) and Wendt was selected to assist Basil. This film is a landmark in documentary film history and won the first prize for a documentary at the Brussels International film festival in 1935. The director-cameraman of this film was Basil Wright who acknowledges that he drew on Lionel Wendt's experience freely. Lionel did part of the voicing for this film and there by his deep cultivated voice is preserved for posterity.

Wendt first used the Rolleiflex camera and then moved on to the use of the famous LEICA camera. He wielded the Leica with such dexterity that he was given the rare honour of a one-man exhibition hosted by the makers of Leica cameras in London in 1938. By then his photographs had attracted the attention of connoisseurs of photographs in Ceylon and abroad. He experimented with solarised prints as early as 1935.

Wendt died young at the age of 44, in his sleep, of a heart attack on 19th December, 1944. It is tragic, that an over zealous colleague thought it fit to destroy a large number of Wendt's negatives in the mistaken belief that it was the correct custom to follow. Thereby, he did an irreparable damage to a very important heritage. The loss to the world of Art can well be imagined. After his death, his brother Harry and his friend Harold Peris decided to commemorate Lionel Wendt by building an Arts complex. Harry died before the project could take off, and it was left to Harold Peris to complete the dream.



Harold poured large sums of money into the project to complete what was started. The Lionel Wendt theatre was opened in December 1953.

**T**he Lionel Wendt Theatre is located in a prime area in Cinnamon Gardens off Thurstan Road close to the Colombo campus of the University of Ceylon. The Colombo Museum is a stone throw distance away. There could not have been a better location. The building itself is located in a leafy part of the city and is an airy building. The choice of plants and greenery has been made very tastefully to give a tranquil feeling to the visitor. Even the approach roads are wide and add elegance as one drives in. In a city where names of roads are changed with gay abandon, it is a pity no road commemorates the memory of Lionel Wendt who contributed immensely to the country's arts.

The first play to be staged in this theater was Maxim Gorky's 'Lower Depths' directed by Neumann Jubal. The name Jubal will bring nostalgic memories to those of that era, who were at the University of Ceylon, Peradeniya. Sinhala plays such as Prof. Edireweera Sarachandra's "MANAME", Chithrasena's 'Karadiya' with the occasional Tamil play made the Lionel Wendt theatre a truly national venue of the arts. It has also become the venue of the most number of Art and Photographic exhibitions of Sri Lankan artists. It was more prestigious for producers and artists to have a play or exhibition at the Lionel Wendt theatre than anywhere else.

The posthumously published book Lionel Wendt's CEYLON (Lincoln-Pager) 1950 is today a collector's item. This book with numerous black and white photographs is classified under landscapes, nudes, buildings, ornaments, fantasy, heads and similar subjects articulating the values and life of the people of Ceylon. It has been long out of print and it was only recently that a re-print appeared. This reprint in India does not do justice to his original book which is a work of Art. The first edition of 5000 copies is in high demand and a prized collector's item. It was advertised by BERKELOUW, a renowned Bookseller of rare books, in their catalogue No: 269 for \$ 235/=. Manel Fonseka, a writer and researcher, commemorated his 50th anniversary by bringing out the book 'Re-discovering Lionel Wendt'. She made an outstanding contribution to the memory of Lionel Wendt by publishing this book.

Close associates of Lionel Wendt were fellow artists George Keyt and cartoonist Aubrey Collette, who with a few others formed the well known '43 group. It was a creation of Wendt's and sought to introduce and maintain modern art in pre and post Independent Ceylon. It was founded in his home at 18, Guilford Crescent, Colombo, and Wendt played host at the inaugural meeting. This was a prestigious and exclusive group of artists who fostered the growth and development of all the arts. Others were Ivan Peiris, Lester James Peiris, George Classen, Richard Gabriel and Harry Peiris. It was active for 25 years (1943 to 1968) promoting the Arts. The fact that he was the live-wire of this group is seen from a newspaper reference to the '43 group many years after Wendt's death, with a pun, which read '...wherever Lionel Wendt, the lamb was sure to go...'

It brought home the message that it was Wendt who breathed life into the '43 group even after his death.

Wendt has been variously described as a first-rate photographer, pianist, writer, raconteur, wit, teacher, patron of the arts and a good friend. His humour is illustrated by his habit of entering the same competition one under his name and another with his name written back to front as T.D. Newl. The truth in Ananda Coomaraswamy's aphorism that "nations are made by artists and by poets, not by traders and politicians" needs no canvassing when we see the performance of our politicians and the legacy left by the likes of Lionel Wendt.

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2. 50th Anniversary of the Lionel Wendt Theatre (Sunday Island: 13.7.2003)



#### HANDY HINTS

To remove old wax from a glass candle holder, put it in the freezer for a few hours. Then take the candle holder out and turn it upside down. The wax will fall out.



*"The most famous foreign woman doctor in Sri Lanka."* – Prof. Kumari Jayawardena, 1993.

## Dr Mary Rutnam (1873 - 1962): Pioneer for Women's rights (Part I)

by Thiru Arumugam

**O**n 29 December 1896, Dr Mary Helen Irwin, a young newly qualified Canadian gynaecologist arrived in Colombo to work as a medical missionary in the American Ceylon Mission in Jaffna. Little did she imagine that Ceylon would become her home for the rest of her long life. She passed away in Colombo in 1962 at the age of 89 years. She married a handsome Ceylonese and had five children, four boys and a girl. She had her own private practice in Colombo and was particularly popular among the Muslim ladies. She spent a large part of her time on social service and founded social service organisations many of which function to this day, such as the Lanka Mahila Samiti which is the largest women's organisation in the country today. She started the first family planning clinic in the country in the face of intense opposition and ridicule. Her social service work was finally recognised by her receiving the inaugural Ramon Magsaysay award for Public Service in 1958. The prize money for this award was \$10,000, a considerable sum of money at that time. The award is considered to be the Asian equivalent of the Nobel prize.

### **Mary's early days**

Mary was born in Elora, Ontario, Canada on 2 June 1873, the daughter of Presbyterian parents of Irish-Scottish descent. Her father owned a store and later they moved to Clinton, also in Ontario. In the 1880s Canadian Universities started admitting female students for medical courses for the first time. Mary was an early female admission to the Medical College affiliated to the University of Toronto, graduating in early 1896. Many of these early women doctors worked abroad as medical missionaries particularly in India and China. In fact, the universities offered reduced fees for those who undertook to do medical missionary work after graduating.

Mary responded to an advertisement by the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions (ABCFM) inviting applicants for two posts of Women Medical Officers at the new McLeod Hospital for Women and Children which was fast nearing completion in Inuvil, Jaffna. Out of a total of 17 applicants, Mary and Dr Isabella Curr of Scotland were selected. It is interesting to note that as many as 17 women Doctors were prepared to forego financially glittering careers in the west and work in a remote country and live a frugal lifestyle.

As the McLeod Hospital, Inuvil, would be for women and children only, the ABCFM arranged for Mary to undergo post-graduate training in obstetrics and gynaecology in New York prior to her departure to Ceylon. The training program was arranged by the Leitch sisters, Mary and Margaret, of whom more details are given later. The training was under Prof. Thompson in one of the post-graduate medical schools, and under Dr Peel, Resident Surgeon at the Roosevelt Hospital. The ABCFM paid all of Mary's training fees and living costs in New York. She was also paid a tropical outfit allowance of \$250. In return she had to sign a Bond for \$1500 undertaking to work in Jaffna for five years.

### **S C K Rutnam**

Joseph Seth Christmas was a school teacher in Jaffna who had been educated at the Batticotta Seminary which was run by the Seminary which was run by the American Ceylon Mission (ACM). He was converted to Christianity by the ACM and changed his surname to Christmas as he was born on Christmas Day 1823. Coincidentally, he passed away also on Christmas day in 1904, having served the ACM for many decades as a Pastor in the Tellipallai Church. He named his second son Samuel Christmas Kanagarutnam (1869 -1929), but the latter



found his surname too long when he went to the West and split his last name and became S C K Rutnam. Rutnam was educated at Jaffna

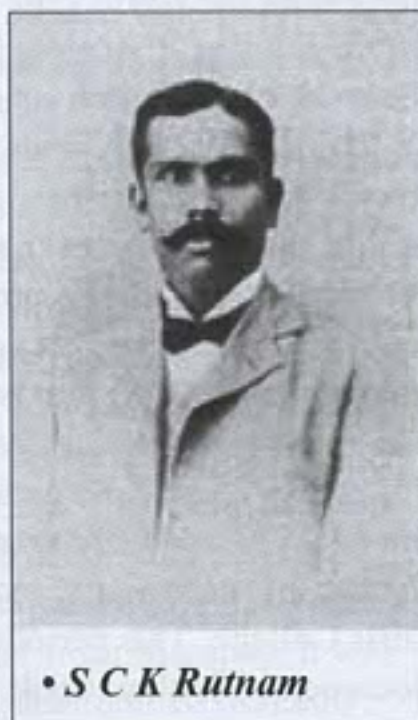


• *McLeod Hospital for Women, Inuvil, 1898.*  
(Sketch by D Rajarayan)

College and then sent for further schooling to Salem, South India where his brother-in-law was a successful lawyer. He entered Madras Christian College where he obtained a Bachelor's degree in Philosophy from the University of Madras. He was appointed Headmaster of a Mission School in Belgaum which is now in Karnataka State. He was a fluent speaker and gave public lectures on the evils of the British Government's covertly funded opium trade.

Similar to the situation today, there was a huge balance of payments problem with China which was exporting vast amounts but was not interested in importing Western goods. Warren Hastings, the first Governor-General of India, hit upon the idea in 1780 of growing opium in India and exporting it to China. This trade grew and peaked in the early 20th century when it provided about 20% of the Indian revenues.

Because of his eloquence and strong views on the opium trade, Rutnam was invited to tour UK and lecture on the subject. He was sponsored by anti-opium campaigners, particularly by the very rich Lady Henry Somerset who was President of the British Women's Temperance



• *S C K Rutnam*

Association. After lecturing for some time in the UK, he proceeded to the USA where he was sponsored by Frances Willard, the USA President of the Women's Christian Temperance Union. She was a close friend of Lady Henry Somerset. In the USA he joined the Princeton Seminary to study Theology but when he later realised that the Americans would never appoint him as a Missionary, he switched over to the Ivy League Princeton University where he ultimately obtained a Master's degree in Logic and Philosophy. In the summer of 1896, he started on a lecture tour in eastern United States and ended up in New York, where he heard that a young Canadian lady doctor was planning to go and work in Jaffna.

Rutnam called on Mary at her boarding house in New York and says that he was greeted heartily as he was the first Ceylonese that she had ever met. Mary was anxious to learn more about Ceylon, its people, life, customs and invited Rutnam to call on her frequently. In addition she *"wished to improve her evenings by taking lessons in Tamil from me"*. They spent many hours together and discussed literary, religious, philosophical topics and also international marriages. They agreed that in such an event, however precious the counsels of parents and friends may be, *"the actual decision always rests or rather should rest with the individuals concerned"*.

### ***Their marriage***

It was not long before their friendship turned to mutual affection and thoughts of possible marriage. They *"discussed minutely the advantages and disadvantages of such an alliance, the inevitable mountain-like opposition that we must be prepared to meet in carrying out our plans"*. Rutnam took great care *"to describe to Dr Irwin as fully and truthfully as ever possible, differences between oriental and occidental tastes, disposition, manner and life"*. Rutnam goes on to say that *"the day we arrived at a decision to marry, or as Dr Irwin put it, the day on which 'possibilities were resolved into certainties' was one of special prayer"*.

They then carefully considered their circumstances. Mary was due to proceed to Ceylon in a few months time while Rutnam wished to pursue his studies in the USA for three or four more years. A long engagement and a long separation were by no means a desirable



state of affairs. They decided to make their engagement more binding if such a thing was possible. They considered a registry marriage, but that would entail going to a public place like the City Hall in New York City and have the ceremony performed in the presence of the Mayor or Justice of the Peace. They decided that *"such public function at this stage of our love story, was by no means desirable"*.

It is not difficult to see why they were reluctant to have a public marriage. Although they lived in cosmopolitan New York, a little further south, lynching of coloured people for similar acts was not uncommon, although the first wave of Ku Klux Klan organisations had begun to fade away.

The couple considered an alternative. Through an intermediary minister they made contact with two other ministers, one Episcopalian and the other Congregationalist, who *"fully satisfied themselves as to the purity of our motives, before they approved of our judgement to have the marriage ceremony secretly performed"*. On 16 July 1896, the two ministers performed the marriage ceremony in a Church.

At this stage, Mary and Rutnam considered this to be a "betrothal" rather than a marriage. Mary would continue to go under her maiden surname and leave for Ceylon in three months time and Rutnam would remain in the USA for four years and complete his studies. The marriage was not consummated at this time, and they looked forward to repeating the ceremony in Ceylon in about five years time, after which only would they become man and wife.

### ***Mary travels to Ceylon***

Mary completed her post-graduate training and sailed for Ceylon on 10 October 1896. During their separation they agreed to write to each other daily and mail the letters twice a week. They never sought to conceal their frequent correspondence. Mary sailed from New York for Scotland where she met Dr Isabella Curr, the other doctor selected by the ABCFM to work in Jaffna, and they travelled together to Ceylon. They landed in Colombo on 29 December 1896 and after a sojourn of a fortnight in the capital, they travelled to Anuradhapura by train and from there they took a coach to Jaffna, arriving there on 17 January 1897.

In her letter dated 17 March to Dr Barton, Secretary of the ABCFM, Mary says that she was disappointed that the completion of construction of McLeod Hospital would take several months and that she is meanwhile working in the Green Memorial Hospital in Manipay. She added that Dr Curr and herself *"are both very much in love with the country, surroundings and people"*. One of Mary's early letters to Rutnam from Jaffna implies that her mother is aware of the relationship and quotes her mother's letter as saying *"We three still keep the secret, Mary. But of course you will both be true to the Board for five years at any rate"*. Mary's letter to Rutnam continues *"You see by this that mother is beginning to look upon this as a settled thing for the future. She at least does not discourage it... I today for the first time saw your father and mother and I like them so much"*.

By this time Rutnam realised that however equal he may be in qualifications and training to the Americans, who were being sent abroad as missionaries, the ABCFM would never appoint a native as a missionary. He therefore abandoned his study of Theology at the Princeton Seminary and started a fund raising campaign in the USA to build and run a school in Anuradhapura. He estimated that he would need \$12,000 to build and run the school for three years, after which period the school would become self-supporting from school fees.

### ***Mary and Margaret Leitch***

Mary and Margaret Leitch were born in Vermont, USA in 1849 and 1857 respectively. Ian Tyrell, who retired last year as Professor of History, University of New South Wales, has devoted the whole of Chapter 2 of his recent book *Reforming the World: The creation of America's Moral Empire*, Princeton, 2010, to a survey of the work of the Leitch sisters and says that they *"had ordinary beginnings but extra-ordinary lives"*. The Leitch sisters, or the Misses Leitch, as they preferred to be known, signed almost all their letters with the common signature "Mary and Margaret Leitch". It would appear that the younger sister, Margaret, was the more dominant. Their first jobs were six years spent teaching young ex-slaves in Virginia. In 1879, they joined the ABCFM and were posted to Jaffna where they spent seven years, mostly teaching at Uduvil Girls College. This period of their lives was documented in their book: *Seven years in Ceylon*:



*Stories of Missionary Life*, which was published in 1890. The book contains copies of many beautiful wood engravings and photographs



• **Pastor J S Christmas and son Rutnam**  
(Courtesy J Somasundaram)

and provides a vivid 'snapshot' of Jaffna in the closing years of the 19th century.

In 1886, the ABCFM informed the Leitch sisters that they would have to do their own fundraising to continue their work in Jaffna. They spent the next three years travelling around and lecturing and fund raising in the UK and the USA and collected the colossal sum of \$150,000 for mission work in Jaffna. These funds were used for major building construction in Jaffna College, Uduvil Girls College, Udupitty Girls College and Green Memorial Hospital, Manipay. As Helen Root, a contemporary American missionary in Jaffna records, the American missionaries in Jaffna "were embarrassed by

*the receipt of larger funds than they saw how to expend wisely at that stage of the work".*

The surplus funds were used to fund many scholarships and bursaries for students in the mission schools.

Out of the funds raised, the Leitch sisters specifically allocated \$30,000 for the purpose of setting up a Medical School at Jaffna College. However, due to personality clashes between the Leitch sisters and Rev Hastings, the Head of Jaffna College, nothing was done to implement this project. The Leitch sisters therefore withdrew this allocation from Jaffna College and used the money to fund the construction of a purpose built hospital for women and children at a green field site in Inuvil, not far from Manipay. It was to work in this hospital, later named McLeod

Hospital after the principal donor, that Mary Rutnam was recruited by the ABCFM.

### ***The Misses Leitch swing into action***

When the Misses Leitch who were now back in the USA heard about Rutnam's fund raising campaign in the USA for a proposed school in Anuradhapura, they swung into action. In a long letter to Rutnam, dated 27 May 1897, they pointed out that his article in the Christian Herald about his scheme was misleading. They said that while it is true that there is no missionary living in Anuradhapura, it is visited regularly by English missionaries. They pointed out that Ceylon already has 61,986 children in mission schools, which is three times the number in China, and Anuradhapura already has a small mission school. The climate is malarial and it will be difficult to recruit teachers. They told him that he was educated in mission schools and had received much help from mission sources but he had not cared to consult any missionaries about his scheme, and that they did not believe a single missionary would endorse his scheme.

They added that "*we would be untrue to the truth and remiss in our duty to the public, to your Committee, and to yourself if we remained silent at this time. It does not seem to us desirable that every foreigner who comes to this country and is aided in his education should attempt when about to return to collect a large fund, establish an independent mission work in his country entirely controlled at that end by himself...We do not wish to put anything in the religious or secular papers which would discredit you before the public and will not do so if you will give us as soon as you conveniently can after receipt of this letter, your written assurance that you will not proceed to collect funds for this scheme*". (Emphasis in original). In other words, keep clear of our patch.

### ***The bursting of the storm in America***

On 02 June 1897, Rutnam wrote to Dr Barton, the Secretary of the ABCFM, formally applying for a job as a Missionary in Jaffna. Barton replied that it was not the policy of the Board to employ natives in foreign missions. Rutnam replied to this on 14 June that his case was special because he was 'engaged to be married' to Mary. He mentioned his betrothal to Mary to Barton because he mistakenly thought that Mary's father had already written to Barton about it. Barton



immediately wrote a letter to the Leitch sisters stating that: *"Of course he cannot be appointed even if they are engaged. Unless the engagement is broken I cannot see how Dr Irwin can continue her work in Ceylon as a missionary ... the whole affair is most unfortunate."*

The Leitch sisters replied to Dr Barton on 19 June that: *"With regard to what Rutnam has told you of his engagement we believe it is pure fabrication Dr Irwin wanted to learn a little Tamil while she was in New York and he gave her a few lessons. He once or twice brought her some flowers and she was much annoyed by that much attention ... You perhaps know that it is very hard for a native of India to discriminate between what is true and what he wishes should come true ... We have studied him pretty carefully and he does not appear to us to be a man of spiritual power or moral earnestness. It would be preposterous to give him the salary of a missionary in Jaffna when a native of his ability and education would be receiving in Jaffna about \$20 a month"*. Note: Rutnam had an American Master's degree which would have been extremely rare if not unique for a Ceylonese at that time. American missionaries were paid about \$100 per month plus children's allowances and free housing and they very rarely had Master's degrees.

#### ***The bursting of the storm in Jaffna***

Meanwhile the storm had burst in Jaffna also. The missionaries were suspicious of Mary's frequent letters from America in the same handwriting and one of her letters was stolen from the Manipay Post Office. The contents of the letter were made public and Mary was asked by the ACM if she was married to Rutnam which she admitted. Her 'trial' was conducted at a Committee Meeting of the ACM held on 19 June 1897 which she was asked to attend. The Committee recorded that *"she had acted under pressure from Mr Rutnam, and with the idea that it was to be an utter secret between them, a sort of special betrothal, the actual union not to be consummated till after a public marriage in Ceylon some years later"*. The main points of a lengthy Minute that was passed were as follows: *"... we do sympathise with Mrs Rutnam in the embarrassing position in which she now finds herself placed ... Mrs Rutnam should at once join her husband... but failing this, we believe that Mr Rutnam should come out at once to relieve his wife of her present embarrassment... the*

*Prudential Committee to secure as speedily as possible a new colleague for Dr Curr to take the place of Mrs Rutnam"*.

Mary objected to the statement in the record of the meeting that she had acted under pressure from Mr Rutnam and that it was incorrect. She was told that there was no time to make any corrections as it had to be sent off to Boston urgently. In the event the statement was only despatched to Boston, uncorrected, 12 days later on 1 July 1897. On the following day, Rev T S Smith wrote a 19-page letter from Jaffna to the Leitch sisters stating that his letter was written as a Missionary and not as Secretary of the ACM. He said that Mary does not regret the alliance and scarcely seems to see how wrong it is even now. She claims that one of her letters was opened by the Acting Postmaster in the Manipay Post Office. Their persistent correspondence had excited gossip even earlier. He said that Rutnam's *"conduct was simply dastardly, to worry her into a secret marriage ... letting her come alone ten thousand miles ... and making her bear the brunt of all this gossip"*. He added that Mary says that it is a legal marriage and that Rutnam has the marriage certificate. He went on to say that we should all oppose Rutnam's plan for a school in Anuradhapura.

With the opening of the Suez Canal, sea mail letters between Jaffna and Boston took about five weeks each way. The verdict from Boston regarding Mary's future was therefore not expected in Jaffna until early September.

#### **AUTHOR'S NOTE:**

Sources of information for this article include microfilms in the National Library, Canberra of original handwritten letters by the following: Mary; her husband, S C K Rutnam; the American Missionary sisters, Mary and Margaret Leitch who were in Jaffna for seven years, mainly at Uduvil Girls College and raised funds for Jaffna projects in UK and USA thereafter; the American Ceylon Mission (ACM) based in Jaffna; and the parent body the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions (ABCFM) based in Boston. Other sources of information include *Race Antagonism in Christian Missions*, a book published by Mary's husband S C K Rutnam in 1899 in which two chapters are in Mary's own words, and Prof. Kumari Jayawardena's book *Dr Mary Rutnam; a Canadian pioneer for Women's Rights in Sri Lanka* which was published in 1993 and describes Mary's social service work in detail. The other major source of information was Brian Rutnam, a grandson of Mary. He is a Sydneysider and an active member of the CSA and he kindly provided access to the text of Mary's personal diary covering the period 1906 to 1910 and also to his own personal notes on the Rutnam family. Information has also been taken from the extensively detailed Family Tree prepared by CSA member Jayantha Somasundaram of Canberra. He is a great-grandson of Elizabeth Agnew Chellama, a sister of S C K Rutnam. Rutnam was very close to this sister. All direct transcripts from these sources are printed in italics in this article.

(To be continued)



*G.S.W. de Saram, or Ged as he was casually known, was a contemporary of Prof. Blazè at the University of Ceylon and was, for several years, Judicial Medical Officer (JMO), Colombo. In 1951, he was appointed First Professor of Forensic Medicine, University of Ceylon, during which period he gave medical evidence on several important murder cases. An enthusiastic athlete, he was President of the Amateur Athletic Association encompassing the year in which Duncan White won the bronze Olympic Medal. On his retirement he spent a brief time in Canada. He died on his return to Colombo in 1963. His daughter Geraldine Jansz, CSA member and contributor to the Journal, sent us this tribute first published in The Ceylon Medical Students' Journal 1957.*

## Prof. John Robert Blazè

– An Appreciation

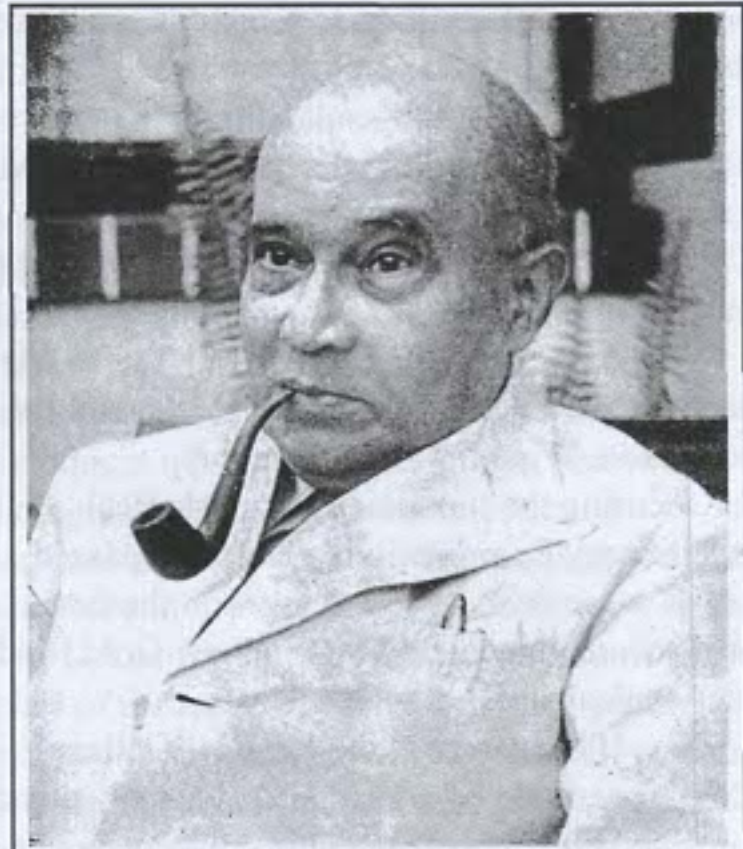
by G.S.W. de Saram

**J**ohn Robert Blazè, OBE, FRCP (Lond.) MBBS (Lond.), LMS (Ceylon), Co-Professor of Medicine, University of Ceylon, left our shores on the 11 June, 1957, to join his wife [Carlotta Bianca Milani - nee Sansoni] \* and their two children, John Bertram and Mary Ann, in London where they had preceded him. It is typical of John that he had, on his way to the quay, paid a farewell visit to a non-academic member of the University staff whom he holds in high regard.

There will be many who will miss his familiar presence in the corridors of the General Hospital and the University. There will also be a far wider circle of patients, associates, intellectuals, those in the professions, in the Government and mercantile services and elsewhere, from the highest to the lowest, who will remember this son of the soil.

Undergraduate students of the Medical Faculty of the University, in particular, will regret their loss of his teaching and guidance, for he was a great teacher who sought to inspire his students, not only a rational and scientific approach to the art of Hippocrates, but also those high ethical standards of which he himself was a master.

Blazè was born at Badulla on 23 March, 1893, of a family which has always been held in high regard especially for its contribution to the legal and educational spheres of the country. His brilliant scholastic career at the Royal College, Colombo, which he entered at an early age, was, therefore, not surprising. Among a number of double promotions and other achievements, Blazè gained seven and five distinctions at the age of 13 and 15 years in the Junior and Senior Cambridge Local examinations



• Prof. John Robert Blazè  
(Photo Hudson Silva & The Ceylon Medical Students' Journal 1957).

respectively. He also won the much coveted Shakespeare, Dornhorst and Turnover prizes and proved himself a scholar of the classics, with which he continued to keep in touch.

He was, however, deprived of the hallmark of scholastic achievement of those times, for he failed to win "the London Inter-Arts Scholarship". The first year he was eligible for the examination he was unfortunately struck down with typhoid fever and the next year, by strange coincidence, he contracted typhoid fever for a second time. He recovered just in time to sit for the examination, but with scarcely any preparation. Such was his ability, however, he was placed second.

His interests at the Royal College were not restricted to books; for in his early years he showed great promise as an athlete, excelling in the 100 yards race. He would, in later years, recount with relish how, at an annual sports meet of the school, he beat a prominent lawyer of today who had prepared himself on the



unusual and ultra-modern lines of taking oxygen inhalations just before the race.

He rose to be sergeant of the school cadet platoon and won the drill prize. The story is told, how at the contest for the prize, Blazè could not get platoon to correctly carry out a manoeuvre. "Damn it," roared the exasperated Sergeant Blazè with a stamp of his foot and the platoon, jerked to a realisation of their fault, so retrieved their lost prestige, that Col. T.G.Jayawardene, who was both donor of the prize and the judge, conferred the prize for that year on the young sergeant.

But Cadet Sergeant Blazè had one great failure, which he acknowledges even today with much remorse. He could never get a certain Cadet Attygalle, [Sir Cyril Attygalle] to march in step.

After devoting his school years to "Arts", he switched over to "Science" for his medical education. Winning the scholarship for securing the first place at the Medical Preliminary Examination in 1913, he passed out as a doctor in 1918 having won the first professional medal and the Mathew Gold Medal for Medical Jurisprudence.

If his career at the Medical College, Colombo, could be considered to have been not quite so brilliant as that of his school years, it may be attributed to the protracted illness of his father who eventually died about the time. Blazè qualified as doctor. Thereafter Blazè looked after his widowed mother with devotion until the time of her death some years later.

After passing out, he joined and spent several years on the preventive side of the Ceylon Government Medical Service. The additional allowances etc. attached to preventive work was an attraction to one who had not the wherewithal to prosecute his further studies abroad and to help with the education of the younger members of the family. His conscientious work in the fight against cholera and smallpox epidemics and the control of the serious menace of typhoid fever, prevailing at the time between Colombo and Matara, won him recognition as a "Pioneer in Public Health work in the island."

On obtaining his MBBS (Lond.), he joined the curative side and on his return was attached to the General Hospital, Colombo, as Physician, Out-Patients Department. He proceeded again to England to obtain the M.D. (Lond.) and the M.R.C.P. (Lond.). Later he had

the proud distinction of being one of the first Asiatics to have the Fellowship of the Royal College of Physicians, London, conferred on him – an honour which he shared with Professor P.B.Fernando.

He was attached for many years to the General Hospital, Colombo, of which he was the Senior Physician for an appreciable time. As a physician he was seen at his best when the chances of a patient's recovery were poor. He was never, however, content with only treating patients under his charge, but would use every means in his power to see that they were afforded adequate facilities and comfort while in hospital.

He gave freely of his time for service on medical boards, committees etc., and was always available, whenever expert advice was required, to his departmental chiefs. He was a member of

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*His large library included a unique collection of old and new books on Ceylon, probably the best in private possession in the country at the time.*

*He had a much admired collection of "china" and some elegant pieces of Old Dutch furniture.*

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the Ceylon Medical Council from August 1942, its vice-president from 1952 and a member of its penal committee from 1953 up to the time of his departure from Ceylon. He was on the panel of medical researchers over the whole period of his service at the General Hospital. Besides being an examiner in the final medical examinations, he also served as an examiner in Physiology and on the M.D.(Ceylon) examination ever since its inception. He took a fuller share of teaching when he joined the university as Co-Professor of Medicine. One of his proudest claims as a teacher was that he never appeared before a class without adequate preparation, for, he explained, he was too terrified of its critical acceptance of what he had to say.

In the world outside, he was a member of the Old Boys' Committee of his old school, a member of the Classical Society and of the Council of the Royal Asiatic Society in the deliberations of all of which he took a full share. He was also a founder member of the Orchid Circle and had a large collection of Ceylon orchids. His large library included a unique collection of old and new books on Ceylon, probably the best in private possession in Ceylon



at the time. He had, besides, a much admired collection of "china" and some elegant pieces of Old Dutch furniture.

He loved the wide open spaces and the jungles and in his earlier days, when he had more time, he was a frequent visitor to the ancient ruins at Anuradhapura and Polonnaruwa of which he was a keen student.

Latterly he interested himself in "coats of arms". In furtherance of this, he purchased the wood of a tamarind tree (which had collapsed at Point Pedro) under which Baldeaus, the Dutch pastor, is said to have preached 175 years ago. This wood he had fashioned into miniature shields on which, with the aid of Mrs. Blazè, were painted the "coats of arms" of the old Dutch families whose names have been carried down to us by many a Burgher family in our midst today.

Space will not permit adequate appreciation of the man, John Blazè. Suffice it to say that, in spite of his high academic attainments, he was, in truth, the personification of humility, based on the appreciation that Man's span of life is too short for him to enjoy the whole of the vast heritage of Knowledge that is his. The highest tribute paid to his humane outlook on life was by an old female patient, in one of the non-paying wards of the General Hospital, who encouraged a nervous new arrival with the words: "He may not get angry, but don't be worried - he is like one of us."

As the eldest brother in the family he has been friend, counsellor and guide to his brothers and sisters and indeed to many who sought his advice, for he is a veritable compendium of

information both ancient and modern. He had, albeit, a mind which could appreciate and make allowances for a changing world, and, what is more, he could bring himself to abandon a project which, after due consideration, he regarded futile. He was once quipped by a friend for abandoning a project as "a rat that was leaving a sinking ship." Blazè's characteristic rejoinder was the wisdom of the rat concerned could not be justifiably questioned, for it would be a foolish rat who insisted on staying on a sinking ship.

The appreciation of his contribution to the country's welfare and advancement was shown by the conferment on him the O.B.E. by His Majesty King George VI and by a public dinner where so many gathered together to wish him farewell. His Excellency the Governor-General, Sir Oliver Goonetilleke, who presided, paid eloquent tribute to "John's" long record of distinguished service, to his intellectual attainments and, above all, to his sympathetic and humane care of the sick and the needy.

Let us for our part remember him as a member of the medical profession who, placing service above self, always gave to his fellow man of his best, regardless of financial gain, while at the same time denouncing anything unethical, improper or untrue.

*(AUTHOR'S NOTE: Much of the information was kindly furnished to me by Dr L.G.Blaze, former Deputy Director of Health Services and Mr. C.W. Nicholas, retired Game Warden of Ceylon.)*



### **Congratulations and a Warm Welcome to our New Members**

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MR & MRS GEORGE COOKE  
Kelleyville, NSW.  
DR SIRI KANNANGARA  
Eastwood, NSW.

MRS CORRINE FERNANDOPULLE  
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*from Michael Berman*





# Ivan Andree of 'The Millionaires' & the Four/Five Sharps *by Rosie Zuiderduyn*

*This memoir of Ivan Andree, born in 1914 and educated at St Thomas College, Mount Lavinia, was authored by his daughter specially for THE CEYLANKAN. Here, with a lot of help from her father's fellow bandsmen and friends, she fondly recalls the family life and musical times of someone who had earned a name for himself as a versatile musician and band leader— among the very best in Ceylon of the 1940s and 1950s. He migrated to Australia at the age of 50 in 1964 and his departure created a huge void in the music scene in Colombo. Apart from his family, his consuming passion was music in which he continued to engage himself in his newly adopted homeland. He passed away in Perth in 1975 at the age of 61 after 11 years of life in Australia.*



• (From left) Ernie Walker, Ivan Andree, Dallas Achilles, Elmo Mulholland.

As I reflected on Dad's life, I became aware of how little had been written about Ivan Andree and his two fantastic bands. After Arthur Vanderwert, saxophonist in The Millionaires, passed away, Dallas Achilles helped me locate band members' families in Australia, and I received photos, newspaper cuttings and listened to many nostalgic memories. Arthur's demise at 90 years reminded me that Dad passed away too soon!

My parents celebrated their 35th wedding anniversary less than four weeks before he died. He was only 61 years old and had just enjoyed their first glorious holiday with us in Karratha after 11 years in Australia. Too soon, those long nights of playing, living hard



and ignoring doctor's advice took its toll! On 24 October, 1975, we suddenly lost our Dad, a magically talented pianist and accordionist and a most gifted musical arrangement writer.

During our first 11 years in Claremont, Western Australia, the De Rooys, Von Bergheims, Gerreyns, Stephensons, De Sarams and many close friends had great times singing favourites whenever they visited. In later years, Mum sadly reminisced about Dad's poignant last sing-along on their 35th Wedding Anniversary. Music was Dad's priority, his life-long passion, with Mum and the four of us vying for this special place in his heart. We understood his passion, and knew how important his band practices and ensuing weekend functions were. It was quite fascinating watching Dad stand over the piano with his



• Ivan Andree belting out "Thanks For The Memories" at his Farewell at the DBU Hall in February 1964. Behind Ivan is Elmo Mulholland (Bass), Podge Vandort (Drums), Romany Pietersz (now Sheddon) on Accordion, Dallas Achilles (Trumpet) and Ernie Walker (seated) Clarinet.



## IVAN & THE FOUR SHARPS

1954 - 1964

Ernie Walker  
Sax & Clarinet

Dallas Achilles  
Trumpet

Podge Van Dort  
Drums

Ivan Andree  
Piano & Accordion

Elmo Mulholland  
Bass & Vocals

humming, tapping, whistling and composing and writing clarinet, saxophone or trumpet parts for the boys! This was quicker than waiting for music sheets to arrive from London, New York or Singapore.

**The Five Sharps** in 1954 were Rudy Bernardo/Podge Van Dort (drums), Mervyn Cherrington (bass), Derek Ewatts (saxophone), Raife Jansz (keyboard), Tom Menzies (trumpet/Piano). Later, when three of them migrated, Dallas Achilles (trumpet), Ernie Walker (saxophone and clarinet), Elmo Mulholland (bass and vocals) and Podge Van Dort (drums) were his **The Four Sharps** until 1964. Ernie encouraged by Dad had attended practices and

readily stepped into Derek's shoes. Acker Bilk style, Ernie mesmerised us with "Stranger on the Shore". Dallas, tutored by Tom, ably took his place entrancing us with "Lonely Bull" and "Il Silencio". Cherille and I "helped" by choosing favourites! We tuned in to Sunday's Binaca Hit Parade on the radio on the mantel and listened closely to the lyrics. Dad was rather amused that our adoration of Nat King Cole, Pat Boone, Jim Reeves suddenly changed into being in love with Cliff Richard, the Beatles, Elvis Presley and Buddy Holly to name just a few of the new singers. Dad quickly transcribed the early 60s music weaving in his subtle magic, getting arrangements ready for the regular functions



• Andree family at our home in Borella on Peter's 1st birthday, 19 November 1956





at the Otters Club, the Dutch Burgher Union (DBU), the Havelocks or grander dances at the Grand Oriental Hotel (GOH), Mount Lavinia or Galle Face Hotels.

Mum accompanied us when as teenagers our involvement grew, Cherille and Gary were dating, and he would drive us to the



band functions. We would squeeze into Von Bergheim's Vanguard and attend Havies or Otters Socials, or the DBU on weekends. Ballroom dancing, twisting, rock'n'rolling or cha chas, whatever we desired, Dad and his Band played from 8pm-6am!! One extra long session at the Havies went for 75 minutes!! The incredibly



steamed up dancers stomped, clapped and clamoured for more each time the exhausted band vainly tried to wind up the session!! Dad's signature tune was "Among My Souvenirs". I loved it when he sang dabbing his forehead and imitating Louis Armstrong's gravelly voice. It was great when escaping from

the piano and stage he would start his fabulous accordion playing. Everyone loved singing those romantic Continental songs like "Chanson D'Amour," "Come Prima" and "Al Di La" as he walked among the crowd encouraging them.

While the band had a much needed break, Dad revelled in these uninhibited, intimate sessions with the happy dancers loudly singing popular medleys from bygone war years. It didn't matter how warm the night was, dancers did not

stop until the band did! Then they relaxed on the lawn enjoyed the stars, moonlight and party lights, sipped icy cold lime drinks, Portellos or Coca Colas. Dad teased us, chatted to Mum or his fans, and walked around with his beloved accordion for a sing-along. His band played at Donovan Andree's international shows like:

*"The Parisian Follies" or "Holiday on Ice," and at his popular Stadium in Bambalapitiya for the Tombola devotees, and at some nightclubs in Colombo. Ernie Walker recalled: "On my first up-country booking, we travelled in Mathun's rust bucket jeep. I was at the back and the exhaust fumes wafted through holes in the floor making me chuck up. My dad was always so supportive and lent me his car for our Colombo engagements. When Rugby Club dances finished at Badulla, Ivan played sing-along tunes for the*

*planters while we froze and waited in the car! Even though it was freezing cold, he emerged in the shortest shorts and thin singlet at about 5 or 6 am, for our return trip with two stops en route to Colombo. After the Galle Gymkhana Club Dances, on approaching Ambalangoda, he spotted toddy tappers walking across the ropes collecting pots of toddy. Oh yes, they knew him well! "Ivan mahathaya" they'd call and rush over with a drink of fresh toddy for him! Just when we thought we'd be home soon, he'd call 'stop at Kalutara for egg hoppers and liver curry at the kade!' "*

Dallas Achilles, Dad's protégé, a superb

trumpeter, are fondly remembered, "Ivan was like a father to me! I'll never forget all he did for me!" The Four Sharps boys: Dallas and his sensational trumpet, Ernie



with his dreamy saxophone or clarinet and Elmo's smooth voice, had young girls' hearts a-flutter especially when they confidently took centre stage for their solos or whenever they sang!



Eustace Rulach's "PLAYTIME," **Ceylon Observer, Jan. 25th, 1964:** described Ivan their leader so well! *"Ivan was a familiar sight at dances, head tilted, eyes shut and fingers caressing the piano keys—to produce one imaginative improvisation after another. The other members of the band were given every*

was a brilliant scholar, but gave up these plans and looked for employment. In 1932, Ivan (18) met the girl of his dreams Verna Ferdinands (15) and decided that he wanted to marry her. Mum's parents thought she was far too young and not ready for marriage, even at 23 years! Mum went on a hunger strike, won her heart's desire and



*opportunity to solo with Ivan feeding them with rich chords and Podge bent over the drums to provide the steady beat. There will be many who will miss Ivan. They will miss his easy, relaxed swinging style; his slow drawl saying 'It's our pleasure and delight to play the tunes you like, so keep the requests rolling up,' his long sessions till the wee small hours of the morning and his delightful piano accordion playing when moving among the diners and then starting a good old sing-along with Ivan between sessions."*

Ivan's pre-war musical debut was fraught with difficulty. He had been duly chastised for joining a University jazz combo! Grandad, a purely classical pianist/organist and violinist, stopped Dad's allowance because he refused to give up his all-consuming hobby and source of enjoyment. Post-University days were tough, he had been qualifying to be a teacher and

• **(Above) Ivan and Verna's 13th Wedding Anniversary, 13 September 1953. The Millionaires "boys" are on the left.**

they were married on the 28 September, 1940, at Christ Church and honeymooned at Bevis Bawa's lovely residence.

**The Millionaires Dance Band** was a big dance band having 12-15 musicians for large functions or 8-9 for smaller affairs. My memories of Dad's Millionaires Band are rather sketchy and rely on anecdotes and oral history. The Millionaires great musos were highly popular and included: **Vocalists /Musicians:** Earl and Clair Meerwald, George and Gerry Crake, Erin de Selfa; **Trumpeters** Latiff Miskin, Imbuldeniya, Hugo Jayamaha; **Saxophonists:** Arthur Vanderwert, Austin DeVos Derrick Ewerts, **Drummers:** Rudy Bernardo, Lloyd de Kretser,



Cass Ziard; **Guitarists:** Mervyn Cherrington, Gazali Amit, Percy Bartholomeusz, **Bass:** Frosty Van Langenberg, Emil Hunter, Merrill and Cuckoo Kerner, **Keyboard:** Eric Bartholomeusz. Then there was Ralph Maas, Fazli Sameer, Stuart De Silva and Michael Senn. Many others played occasionally. Its origins were in the turbulent Second World War years ending in 1954.

**Radio Ceylon** recorded them from 10-12 midnight at the well known **Town Hall Dances** and grand hotels in Colombo, playing to enormous dance crowds. Also remembered are the Band practices at: Arthur Vanderwert's or Brian Ebell's in Havelock Town, Kerner's "Fountain House" in Dean's Road, or an Edwards Lane home where Erin De Selfa's crooning of *Blue Moon*, *As Time Goes By* and *I Can't Help Falling in Love*, and The Millionaires superb rendition of *Take the A Train* were legendary. Dad hurried away to practices on Tuesdays. He would emerge for breakfast on Wednesdays, tired but happy about his arrangements. He would be humming or whistling, checking some changes which he would quickly note on the manuscript books.

Looking pleased he would then quiz us on our tables or spelling before cycling or taking a train to work. Some weekends, Dad took us on the little launch to that island of fun for all ages "San Michelle" where he played. We amused ourselves in the playground or gamblers asked us

to call a suit, pull poker machine handles or place chips on the tables because we kids were "lucky!!"

Customs Dances at the GOH had two bands: Tony Felice's and Ivan's often played in the two grand ballrooms on the upper floors. The accordionists quickly scooted down to the ground floor during raffle drawing times or when the band took a break. They went to the Missions to Seamen and "La Mere" and collected generous tips to boost their income. Ever resourceful guys they were, but always keen to bring enjoyment to the homesick sailors and the avid dance patrons alike.

**Babs Lawson**, a family friend, reminisced: "*Ivan was my office boss in the Ministry of Defence & External Affairs. Don't you remember me, dear? I played games with you kids and sang when I visited your home back in the '40's / 50's. I sang whenever Ivan played at the sing-alongs and parties. Ivan and Verna were always kind, generous, and hospitable. Their friends absolutely enjoyed their evenings with them and Ivan's band. He was truly well loved by his band boys and the fans who followed them.*" (Deja vou!) Just amazing that I had recognised Bab's voice at a West Australian – Sri Lanka (Ceylon) Association (WASLA) function last year, after so many years of not seeing her!)



• The Millionaires with several guest musicians at one of Donovan Andree's great shows. Arthur Vanderwert is in front, third from right.



Prior to migrating to Australia, on most Sundays it was church at 8 am, breakfast and then a swim at the Otters or Mount Lavinia Beach. All year round, Mum would get Dad's ultra smart dinner suits, shirts, cummerbunds and bow ties ready for his weekend functions. It was the normal pattern, it was the same when we left home and got married in Perth, and continued until he died in 1975. We only had family times when Dad had a free weekend. They were very rare! Once we went away to Bandarawela, and twice to Galle to visit dad's parents. I also remember some Sunday evenings when we'd squash into a taxi with Dad and Mum. Dad relaxed after another swim at the Otters and then played the accordion at the bar while we watched movies from Australia: newsreels, cartoons and documentaries about the Great Barrier Reef or Australian Animals. Dad was a supporter of the Hospital Lottery and in 1963 he won a big prize which set the wheels in motion for our migration to Perth. He then made us manage with only a little help, dismissing some of Mum's home helpers, and the girls had to wash and iron clothes and help to do the cleaning!

Ivan's musical career in Perth, West Australia, really lacked the excitement of his engagements in Colombo. He took a long while to adjust to his new life, badly missing his band and his boys. It was three months of fruitless looking before he found employment in 1964 with the PMG (later called Telecom). He was happy having regular gigs with **Victor Mistocheelli's** band, playing the accordion /piano. Younger sis Mel joined the team to pick tunes, and Dad simply memorised them! Victor's three piece band gave him opportunities to continue his pas-sionate love affair with music. They played at dances and weddings at Function Centres. The Perth music scene was smaller,

much quieter than that of Colombo. He often travelled to functions either by arranging a lift or carrying the accordion case and walking down to Stirling Highway to catch his bus. Very rarely would he take a taxi!! Mum bought him a Yamaha organ and those sing-alongs continued every week! Every Sunday at 8 am, after a late night, he played the organ at St Andrews, our local Anglican church just as he did at St. Luke's, Borella. He would be able to lift any hymn from becoming a 'dirge' to a 'song of joy' by simply altering the key and lifting the tempo with ease.

WASLA functions in Perth were really enjoyed by Dad. He especially loved playing for their Christmas and New Year parties as they had the greatest sing-alongs. There were Christmas carols and those ever-popular, nostalgic wartime medleys with which we would grown up.

*Such beautiful memories are shared by our family! He is probably amused that we still play a great deal of easy listening, jazz and dance music, love dancing and still long to hear his band play our favourite numbers! He lives in our hearts, and I am sure he and Mum are playing on the heavenly tennis courts just like they did when they first met whilst mum was holidaying in Galle in 1932.*

**AUTHOR'S NOTE:** *Thanks so much! Dallas Achilles, Ernie Walker, Rod Vanderwert, Babs Lawson, Brian Ebell, Stanley Kremer & Maurice Raymond who responded to emails and phone calls helping me to put these memories and anecdotes together. Thanks to my sisters Cherille Von Bergheim, Melanie Robbins, brother Peter Andree and Fred who restored old photos or scanned them, and for the rich memories of Dad and Mum we have shared.*

### *The Man may kill whom he finds in Bed with his Wife*

It is a Law here, that if a Man catch another in Bed with his Wife, he may, be it whofoever, kill him and her, if he pleafe. It hath happened, that the Man hath come to the Door, when another hath been within with his Wife, there being no way to efcape, the Woman has took a pan of hot afhes, and as he opened the Door, her Hufband being entering, caft them in his Eyes, and fo the and her Bedfellow made an efcape.

*This extract (on left column) reproduced from page 92 of the original 1681 first edition of Robert Knox's **An Historical Relation of the Island Ceylon in the East Indies**, which is available for reference at the National Library of Australia, Canberra. You must, however, wear the soft kid leather gloves which are provided, before you can handle the 332 year old book. Following the practice at that time, the letter 's' is written as 'f' unless it is the last letter in a word.*





## Meals Ammi Made

### Fish Swirls and Petit Beurre Gateau (Chocolate Biscuit Pudding)

*Chrisanthi Wettasinghe (Castle Hill, NSW)*

FISH SWIRLS were a favourite snack when friends and relatives visited at short notice. These tempting snacks are easy to make and feature a savoury fish filling simply rolled up in a light dough and sliced into pinwheels. They can also be frozen and baked when needed. The fish filling can be substituted with prawns or crab.

#### Ingredients for dough

250 g flour  
4 tsp. baking powder  
½ tsp. salt  
2 tsp. sugar  
½ cup butter  
⅓ cup milk

#### Ingredients for filling

250 g fish boiled and flaked or tinned fish  
1 tablespoon oil  
1 onion diced  
2 cloves garlic crushed  
2 chillies finely diced ( ½ tsp. chilli powder optional)  
1 tablespoon parsley or dill  
Salt and pepper to taste  
1 tablespoon tomato sauce  
1 egg

#### Method for dough

Rub fat into the flour which has been sifted with the baking powder and salt. Add the sugar and moisten mixture with milk to form a soft dough. Roll dough on gladwrap or a baking sheet until it is ¼ inch thick and rectangular in shape (approx. 12 x 8 inches)

#### Method for filling

Sauté onion and garlic and chillies. Add the fish, salt and pepper, tomato sauce, parsley and cook for a few minutes. Remove from heat and add the egg to moisten the filling. Spread the filling on the dough and roll as for

Swiss roll. Wrap with baking paper or glad wrap and freeze until firm. This makes it easier to slice. Cut into about 20 (1½ inch) slices and arrange it on a baking tray lined with baking paper keeping the swirls 2 inches apart. Bake in a hot oven (400 F) for 20 minutes. Cool on wire rack. Serve with chilli sauce .

### Petit Beurre Gateau (Chocolate Biscuit Pudding)

This is a much loved dessert in Sri Lanka. It used to be made with Petite Beurre biscuits in my mother's era hence the name.

1 packet biscuits (Arrowroot, Marie or Milk coffee biscuits if Petit Beurre biscuits cannot be found)

2x 180 g slabs milk chocolate (dark if preferred)  
125 g Icing sugar  
125 g Butter  
4 ounces chopped cashew nuts roasted  
1 cup milk  
1 tin Nestles Cream (or 200 ml whipping cream)  
3 eggs

Melt the chocolate in ¼ cup of milk and add the beaten yolks and stir till it thickens on a very low temperature. Leave to cool. Cream the butter and sugar and add the chocolate mixture a little at a time. Whip the cream and fold it into the mixture and lastly fold in the beaten egg whites. Soak the biscuits in the balance milk and arrange in layers in a serving dish. Each layer of biscuits should be covered with the chocolate mixture and sprinkled with the chopped nuts. Repeat layers, finishing with a layer of nuts. Refrigerate and serve chilled.

### Send us your recipes

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

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



# Malay Mercenaries in the Military Service of Kandyan Kings

by M.D. (Tony) Saldin

Referred to as "*Ja Minissu*" by the Sinhalese, "*Java Manusar*" by the Tamils, "*Malai Karar*" by the Moors, and "*Orang Melayu*" & "*Orang Java*" by the Malays themselves, the Sri Lankan Malays are a pot pourri descending from Javanese, Madurese, Sumnapers, Bandanese, Buginese, Amboinese, Macassarese, Sumatrans, Balinese, Moulucans and people from Penang, Keddah, Johor, Melaka, Singapore and other islands in the Eastern archipelago. The present day Sri Lankan Malay community with roots in Indonesia and Malaysia and numbering around 60,000 are descendants of nobility, political exiles, soldiers, adventurers and mercenaries from the time of Dutch and subsequent British rule in Sri Lanka

While the role played by the Malays who served the Malay Corps of the Dutch Army in Ceylon and the subsequent 1st Ceylon Regiment of the British Army and its successor the Ceylon Rifle Regiment (CRR) is well known, little is said about the role played by the Malays who were in the service of the Kandyan monarchs.

Who were these Malays who were in the Kandyan Kings service? Records indicate that during the Dutch-Kandyan war of 1765/66, the remnants of the Dutch Army commanded by Governor Baron Van Eck were left behind in the hill capital and these men probably joined the service of the Kandyan monarch. Others were former soldiers of the of the Dutch Malay Corps who deserted to the Kandyans, since they did not want to join the British after the Maritime Provinces were surrendered by the Dutch in 1796. There were also those Malay soldiers who had taken loans from their officers and being unable to pay them back, melted away into the countryside and later joined the Kandyan King who was always on the lookout for trained soldiers for his army.

According to Hussainmiya writing in 1990, the Kandyan Kings employed Malays for the defense of the interior, as well as palace guards, for immigration duties and for guarding the "*Kadawatha*" or passes into the Kandyan Kingdom. Their importance grew when the Nayakkar King Sri Wickrama Rajasinghe (1798-1815) looked for foreigners with no local blood ties, to serve as bodyguards to protect him from scheming Kandyan nobility. These Malay soldiers were paid in cash for their services, while their counterparts received grants of land for their sustenance.

The inner circle of the King's personal bodyguard were Malays, Malabar and Caffres or Kaffirs (Africans of Mozambique origin). The "*Appuhamis*", a cadet corps of the sons of local nobility formed a further ring around the King.

According to Ralph Pieris writing in 1956 this stipendiary class of Malay soldiers (Sinhalese - *Padikara Peruwa*) was instituted during the reign of the Nayakkar King Kirthi Sri Rajasinghe (1747-1782). It then consisted of four Companies. His successor Rajadhi Rajasinghe (1782-1798) increased it to

seven companies which was later increased to 50. The last King Sri Wickrama Rajasinghe raised its strength to 22 Companies with 32 men each. The Kandyan Malays normally resided in the Katukelle area which was one of the Southern "*Kadawatha*", or entry points into the city. They were armed with muskets of European make and wore their poisoned daggers or *Kreese* at their sides at all times.

The King also appointed Malays as "*Java Muhandirams*" or chief military officials to his court. Assana Kapitan, Creasy and Chief Kuppen were some of them.

A famous Kandyan Malay chief was Prince Sangunglo, (also referred to as "*Sankelan*" by Prof. Paul E Peiris), Captain of the Kandyan Kings Malay mercenaries, who led the Kandyan attack on the British garrison in Kandy on 24th June 1803.

After over-running the first line of defence and in the subsequent close quarter combat with the British, Sangunglo stabbed Quartermaster Brown with his *Kreese*, but, in the melee, he was bayoneted by Ensign Barry and the death blow was delivered by Major Davie with his sword. The first attack was



• *Corporal and a Jemider (Lieutenant) of the Malay Rifle Corps.*



repulsed but the Kandyans re-grouped and kept up a harrying musket fire at British positions. After a short resistance, Major Davie raised the white flag and negotiated terms with Adigar Pilimataluvava for a withdrawal. Incidentally, Sangunglo's half brothers Captain Noordin Gowa and Captain Karaeng Sapinine, both of the 1st Ceylon Regiment who were captured by the Kandyans, were executed by King Sri Wickrama Rajasinghe for their refusal to sever their allegiance to the British. Even though they were brothers, they were on opposite camps with their loyalties to their respective masters. Their grandfather was Batara Gowa Amas Madina II, the rebellious ex King of Gowa, Sulawesi, exiled to Ceylon by the Dutch in 1767.



• *Two Malay mercenaries.*

Another well known ex-soldier was Drum Major O'Deane, a Malay non-commissioned officer of the 1st Ceylon Regiment, who deserted to the Kandyans in the war of 1803. He was absorbed into the service of King Sri Wickrama Rajasinghe and provided with a Sinhalese girl as his wife. For over ten years he lived there contentedly and had three children. But the happy days were to end soon. The British invaded Kandy again, and this time they had the backing of several Kandyan Chiefs. When the Kingdom was captured by the British in 1815, O'Deane and his family were among those captured. He was arrested for his act of treason by deserting to the enemy, summarily court-martialed, and then sentenced to be shot. However O'Deane had much information about his former Commanding Officer, Major Davie, whilst he was a captive of the Kandyan monarch. In addition, Governor Robert Brownrigg was impressed with the 'uniform good conduct' of the 1st Ceylon (Malay) Regiment. Taking these factors as mitigation, O'Deane's sentence was subsequently commuted to "transportation to the Penal settlement of New South Wales in Australia". And so, O'Deane and family sailed away from Ceylon in Jan 1816 on

board the "*HMS Kangaroo*". A chapter in his life ended and a new one began.

O'Deane was subsequently appointed as a Watchman, then Constable of the Government domain and as Malay Interpreter for the Australian Government until his retirement. He was stationed at Fort Wellington, Raffles Bay in the Northern Territories and acted as interpreter with Indonesian (Maccasarese) fishermen who used the Australian coast to dry their harvest of sea cucumber. O'Deane died on 23 May, 1860, after being resident for 44 years in Australia.

With the take over of the whole Ceylon by the British in 1815, the destiny of the Sri Lankan Malay community was sealed; to provide a regular source of military manpower to the Ceylon Rifle Regiment (CRR) which was the back-bone of the military establishment in Ceylon, until its disbandment in 1873.

All the Kandyan Malays too became subjects of Great Britain in the end, and the former mercenaries were gradually absorbed into the regular force of the CRR.

References: (1) *Orang Regimen - The Malays of the Ceylon Rifle Regiment* by Prof. B.A. Hussainmiya

(2) *The Kandyan wars, The British Army in Ceylon 1803-1818*, by Colonel Geoffrey Powell

(3) *Tri Sinhala* by Professor Paul E Peiris (4) *The First Ceylonese Family in Australia*, by Glennys Ferguson in the "Ceylankan" Feb 2002 issue published by the Ceylon Society of Australia.

(This article first appeared in *Sunday Island* of 24th October 2010).



## Just a touch of England

*Nuwara Eliya is nestled in a wooded basin about 6128 feet at the foot of Mount Pidurutalagala, Sri Lanka's highest peak. Even after 350 years since the British departure from Ceylon, the town is still reminiscent of the British Lake district. Victorian and Tudor-style cottages still overlook a blue lake, colourful flowers bloom*

*profusely in gardens and parks. Trophies won at trout fishing and hunting still enrich the walls of homes and old hotels.*



## SYNOPSIS OF MEETING

### Colombo Chapter - 23 November 2012

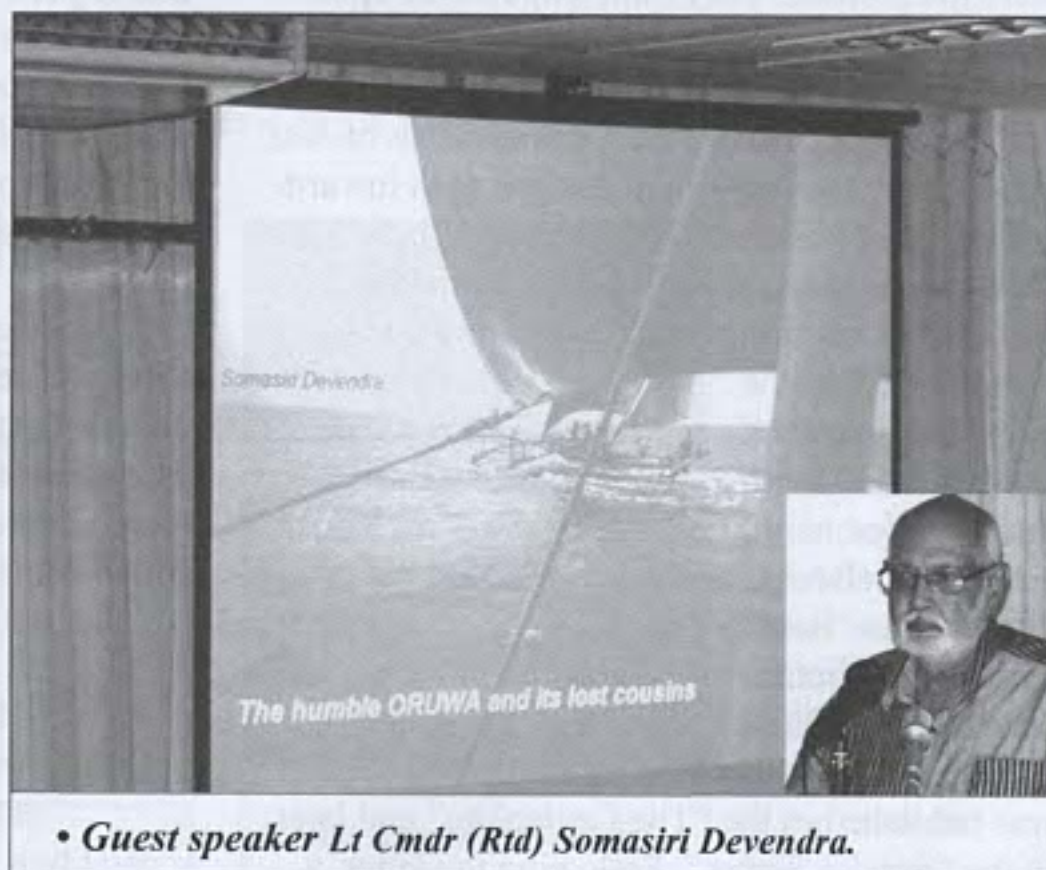
The quarterly meeting was chaired by Daya Wickramatunga, *Protem Chairman*. *Hony. Secretary* Tony Saldin introduced the Guest Speaker Lt Cmdr (Rtd) Somasiri Devendra as a graduate of the University of Ceylon, who joined the Navy as an Instructor and retiring as Commandant of the Naval and Maritime Academy. He is also a Naval Historian and Maritime Archaeologist; Consultant, Maritime Heritage Impact Assessment; Member, Advisory Board to the Director-General, State Department of Archaeology; Founder Member, ICOMOS International Committee on the underwater Cultural Heritage (ICUCH); Member, ICOMOS Sri Lanka. He was also formerly an Adjunct Associate Professor, James Cook University, Australia; Vice President, Royal Asiatic Society of Sri Lanka; Chairman, Colombo Brokers Association; Founder Director, Colombo Stock Exchange and President, Sri Lanka Naval Association.

The topic was **"The humble Oruwa and its lost cousins – An audio visual exposition of Sri Lanka's multi-ethnic nautical culture"**.

With a video of sailing an *oruwa* as a backdrop, the speaker recalled talking with the late Rev. Fr. Marcelline Jayakody who was troubled by excessive westernization. He came to understand that we were witnessing the end of Sri Lanka's technical and maritime heritage; one which had been vibrant till World War II and forgotten a scant ten years later. He respected the *oruwa* for being the last remnant of a technology that has been scientifically dated to the 4th century BC and now embarking on a new cycle of development and their being the guardians of our nautical heritage, he dedicated this talk to the fishermen (*dhivara*) and sailors (*navika*), paying his homage to the *oruwa* with a DVD of the "Song of the Kelani Boatmen" from the National Trust's album "From Metre to Melody"

He then made his 73-slide Power Point presentation, starting with the Great Colonial Myth that "The Sinhalese people never went to sea" and described his search for the roots of the National nautical cultures – Sinhala, Tamil and Indo-Arab. Early British codification of orally transmitted Admiralty Law, indicated

that Indo-Arabs dominated trade and shipping but interestingly, it was the Sinhala and Tamil communities which had been the shipbuilders, sailors and keepers of the heritage and skills. He had discarded literary and second-hand material, opting for "hard" evidence such as paintings, carvings and models; technical and perspective drawings; photographs; and existing traditional



• Guest speaker Lt Cmdr (Rtd) Somasiri Devendra.

craft. His work followed accepted models of Classification by Definition and Analysis (Sean McGrail) and Development Paths (Phillips-Birt) as a framework, quoting examples from local watercraft.

He then named the parts of an *oruwa*, stressing the fact that all materials were environmentally friendly and locally available in the area identified as the heart and the start of the "ORU culture", of which the other end was Kerala. Not a single nail was used. He traced its history from river craft to seagoing craft by adapting itself to maritime conditions, while remaining essentially humble fishing craft.

This craft had "cousins" in other, non-Sinhala cultures, but it also had a sibling, the *yathra*, which evolved from the *oru* to become a dugout-based, plank-hulled, outrigger-equipped cargo ship – the only such craft known to exist – which lasted till the 1930s. He quoted several Sinhala verses of the sailors about sailing to Malacca, sailing directions to enter the Walawe Ganga from seawards, appeals to St. Anna for a fair wind and promises to Lord Kandaswamy to fulfill a vow.



From the *Yathra* he went north to the ships of Kayts and Velvettithurai (VVT). Stressing that while Jaffna had no one indigenous "style" of its own, seagoing and shipbuilding were very advanced there. Seamen and shipwrights were from there while the financiers and owners were Chetties from South India. The shipwrights of the north were magnificent, as were the seamen. They built ships based upon South Indian and European models. They were not considered complete without a row of false gun-ports like British 19th Century Men-of-war. Older ships had traditional designs with inward-coiling stem-post (*surul*) and oculii. The VVT men were also adept at salvaging abandoned vessels and restoring them. The "Crown Jewel" of this type was the "Annapoorani", which was bought by an American and named "Florence C. Robinson", with a crew of five VVT sailors he had sailed her to Boston and the Americans could not believe that she was real and not a ghost of the "Bounty". In appreciation of this feat and the fact that the sailors all came back home, the speaker showed the names of all five on the screen. An account of this epic voyage was published in the "The Ceylankan" and later in the "Sunday Times". Following the latter, a VVT-born Tamil reader had contacted him and provided two books in Tamil, and also an English translation of one from which he got the names of 113 ships, their Captains and owners.

He then described the Indo-Arab tradition of the east coast. He spoke of an Arab settlement in an inlet in Trincomalee now called Nicholson's Cove. He spoke of the shelter it gave to cross-oceanic ships to riding out the inter-monsoonal cyclonic weather. He spoke of the gravestones – one which was of a lady who had died (according to today's reckoning) on 12th September 1329 or on 17th September 1523 (the slab is damaged) – and his discovery of the sweet water wells that had been essential for centuries-old seasonal settlement. Even a Royal Navy engraving of 1829 shows an unmistakable Arab *Dhow* in the Dockyard. Across the Bay from the Cove is Muttur, the home of a Muslim farming community which had retained its seagoing skills, traditions and traditional boats. In these boats they ferried their cargo of rice from Muttur to the Town Jetty. Perhaps the only picture in colour shows this boat and the speaker regretted that, while living in Trincomalee, he had so often seen these lovely boats sailing but

had not known that they represented – in the 1970s – the last of the Sri Lankan sailing ships.

In the end, he back-tracked to the way in which the *oruwa* is changing itself, while yet remaining an *oru*. It is no longer a sailing craft, no longer double-ended, no longer built of wood. Yet it retains its narrow, linear silhouette, with a single outrigger and the one irreplaceable part that is yet made of naturally curved wood – the booms. The *oru* has changed, as it has always changed, for survival. Specific reasons and agents were identified and the speaker was confident that the evolutionary process will continue but that the *oruwa* will remain the *oruwa* for a long time more.

The Hony Treasurer Asoka de Silva, while proposing the vote of thanks, complimented the speaker who was the founder President of the CSA CC, on his very interesting topic and the lively questions and answers that followed.

-M.D. (Tony) Saldin

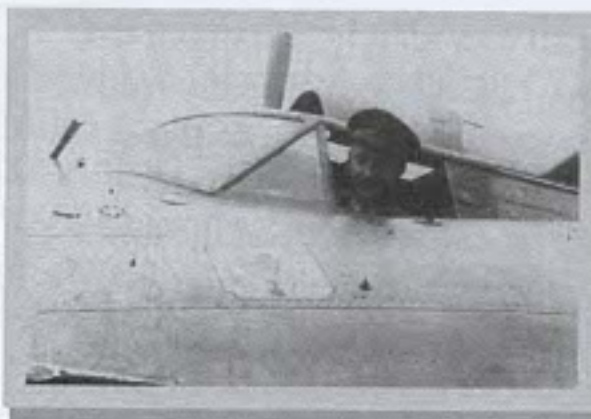
## CORRECTION

**TONY SALDIN writes:** "I made an error in the Synopses of Meetings - Colombo Chapter of 7th September 2012 which appeared in Journal 60 of THE CEYLANKAN on "Elephants in Sri Lanka and Human-Elephant Conflicts". The first sentence therein should have read: 'The quarterly meeting was chaired by Chulie de Silva, President' instead of Daya Wickramatunga, Protém Chairman." Apologies for any inconvenience caused to any of our readers.

## JOURNAL REPRINTS

Wish to bring your collection up-to-date? Yes you can! Reprints and some back issues of the Journal are available in limited quantities. The cost to members is \$7.50 per copy. Non-members pay \$10.00 per issue. This does not include postage and handling. P&H within Australia is \$5.00; Asia/Pacific \$10.00; rest of the world \$15.00 per package of up to 5 issues. Contact Hugh Karunanayake Int. + 61 2 9980 2494 or hkaru@optusnet.com.au





• *L.J. Birchall in the cockpit of his Catalina.*

*Air Commodore Leonard Joseph Birchall is credited with discovering the approach of the Japanese fleet over Ceylon on 4 April 1942 while on patrol duty leading a 413 (RCAF) Squadron of Consolidated Catalina flying boats. Before his capture by the Japanese, Birchall radioed a report of the sighting that led to the discovery of full operations of the Japanese fleet conducted off and over Ceylon between 26 March and 9 April 1942. As a result of Birchall's heroic actions, the British were able to repulse the Japanese raid on Ceylon. This article by (Retd.) Capt. Rob Stuart of the Canadian Armed Forces, was first published in the Canadian Military Journal on 14 July 2008.*

## Leonard Birchall and the Japanese raid on Colombo

**T**he force Birchall spotted was the First Air Fleet, the carrier battle group that had previously attacked Pearl Harbour. It was commanded by Vice Admiral Chuichi Nagumo, and it consisted of the carriers Akagi, Hiryu, Soryu, Shokaku, and Zuikaku, the battleships Kongo, Haruna, Kirishima, and Hiei, the heavy cruisers Chikuma and Tone, a light cruiser, and eight destroyers. It was a well-trained and powerful force, with more than 300 modern combat aircraft embarked, including considerable numbers of the superb Mitsubishi A6M Zero fighters. The primary purpose of the Japanese mission, which they called Operation C, was to secure Japan's western flank by neutralising British naval and air forces in the Indian Ocean. Secondary objectives included disrupting shipping in the Bay of Bengal, and encouraging the Indian independence movement, which desired to take India out of the war. In other words, this was a raid, and not an invasion of Ceylon.

The British were still reeling from a string of recent disasters. Hong Kong, Malaya, Singapore, Borneo, and much of Burma had fallen, and the Japanese Army was approaching India's eastern border. To stem the Japanese advance, such reinforcements as were available had been dispatched to the Far East. Among them was the 413 Squadron, which, at the end of February, had been ordered to move to Ceylon from Sullom Voe in the Shetland Islands. The squadron's four Catalinas departed Europe in



• *Vice Admiral Chuichi Nagumo.*

mid-March, and its ground crews soon followed by ship. A new British Eastern Fleet was assembled in Ceylonese waters, and Admiral Sir James Somerville assumed command on 26 March 1942. It consisted of the modern fleet carriers Indomitable

and Formidable, the small carrier Hermes, the battleships Warspite, Resolution, Ramillies, Royal Sovereign, and Revenge, the heavy cruisers Dorsetshire and Cornwall, five light cruisers, and 14 destroyers. This was a substantial force, but it had only just been assembled and it had not yet been trained to operate as a fleet. The four R-class battleships were old, slow and short-ranged, and several of the cruisers and destroyers were past their prime. Most importantly, the two fleet carriers embarked only 80 aircraft between them. There were no dive bombers, and the 45 torpedo bombers were lumbering, antediluvian Fairey Albacore biplanes. The 35 fighters, comprising 14 Grumman Martlets, as the American-made Wildcat was known in British service, 9 Hawker Sea Hurricanes, and 12 two-seater Fairey Fulmars, were all inferior to the Zero, especially the Fulmar 3. The author of *The World's Worst Aircraft* was perhaps going a little too far when he included the Albacore and Fulmar in his 2005 book, but it makes the point that the Royal Navy was stuck with some rather mediocre aircraft at the time.



On the plus side, the British had radar and the Japanese did not. The Eastern Fleet was well equipped with air search, surface search and fire control radar sets. Most of the Albacores also had radar, the air-to-surface-vessel (ASV) Mark IIN, which could detect a medium-sized ship at up to 15 miles range. Finally, the British had a



•Admiral Sir James Somerville inspecting Wrens in Colombo.

Photos: Canadian Military Journal (CMJ)

secret anchorage, Addu Atoll, at the southern end of the Maldives, some 600 miles southwest of Ceylon. In fact, the Japanese did not learn of this hideaway until after the war.

Somerville knew he would be outmatched if the Japanese sent their main striking force against him, but believed he could deal with a smaller detachment and also that he would have an advantage at night. To avoid battle on unfavourable terms, the admiral needed early intelligence with respect to any Japanese force entering the Indian Ocean. The key intelligence organisation supporting him was the Far Eastern Combined Bureau (FECB). This formation was a signals intelligence (sigint) unit, and it received a steady flow of Japanese radio traffic from intercept stations located throughout the Far East and Pacific, including one based at Esquimalt, British Columbia.

The FECB, in conjunction with US Navy sigint centres, was beginning to read main Japanese fleet code successfully from their encryption devices, known to the Allies as JN-25. By March 1942, the latest variant introduced during the previous December and known as JN-25B, had been reconstructed to the point where substantial portions of many messages could be read with little delay. Before the end of the month, US cryptographers determined that Japanese carriers were about to enter the

Indian Ocean, and accordingly, a warning was sent to Colombo. FECB also repeatedly read of an imminent operation by a carrier force in the area of "D," and an air raid on "DG" planned for either the first or second of April. The meaning of these geographic designators, a sort of 'code within a code,' was not clear, but "D" was thought to be either India or Ceylon. Fortunately, the meaning of "DG" was not clear to all the Japanese either, for on 28 March, one of their operators advised a colleague, in a JN-25B message read by FECB, that it represented Colombo. Somerville was warned the same day and advised that the Japanese would have "two or more" carriers, plus cruisers, destroyers and perhaps Kongo-class fast battleships. There were, in fact, five carriers, as we have seen, and they were accompanied by all four Kongos.

Somerville thought the Japanese would probably attack Colombo and Trincomalee, Ceylon's principal ports, simultaneously, and he estimated that their launch point would be about 5° 20' N, 80° 53' E – roughly 100 miles southeast of Ceylon, and 180 to 200 miles from both ports. Catalina searches were therefore organised to a distance of 420 miles from Colombo, between the bearings of 110° and 154°, the direction from which the Japanese were expected to approach. In fact, the Japanese planned to hit only Colombo during their initial strike, so their actual launch point proved to be well to the west of Somerville's estimate.

Initially, only six Catalinas were available for operations. As the patrols lasted up to 32 hours, only half the available aircraft could be available for patrol each day. This meant that each of the three aircraft had to cover an arced sector of about 15 degrees. In comparison, two months later, the US Navy dispatched 22 Catalinas from Midway Island to search a 180 degree arc for the Japanese task force predicted by sigint to be approaching, a resultant search arc of just 8 degrees per aircraft. This limitation highlights the weakness of the reconnaissance force upon which Somerville depended.

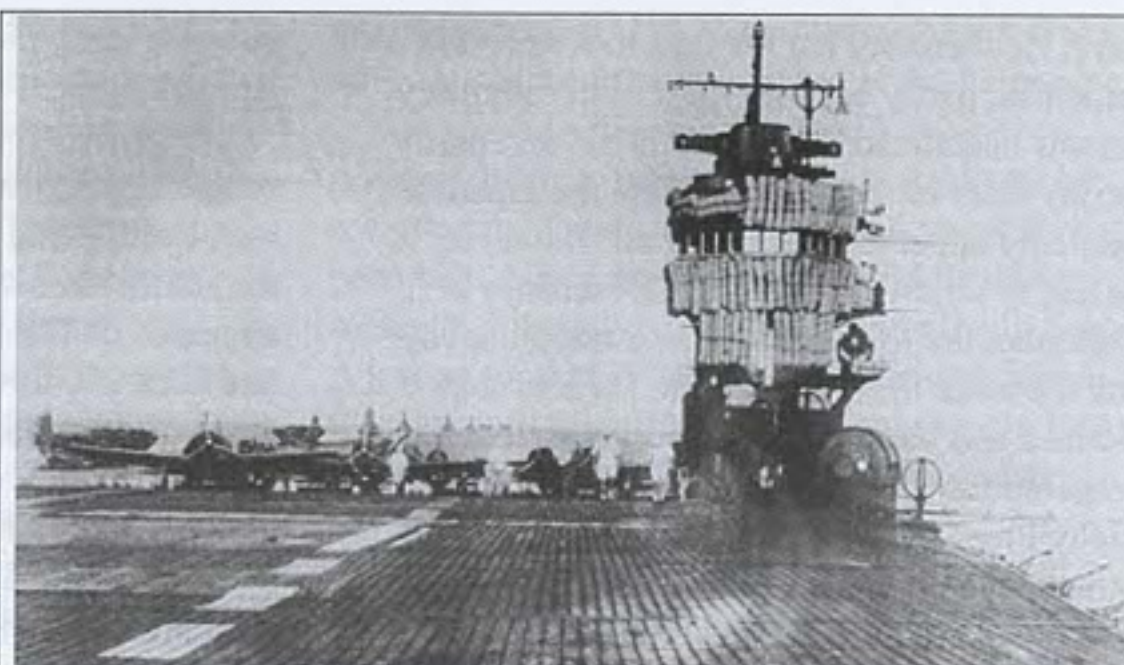
Fortunately, the small RCAF contingent was starting to arrive, in the proverbial nick of time. The first 413 Squadron aircraft, flown by RAF Flight Lieutenant Rae Thomas, DFC, arrived on 28 March and flew its first mission three days later. Birchall, then a squadron leader, arrived on 2 April with the second aircraft. Somerville ordered the Eastern Fleet to sea on



30 March. His ships left Colombo, Trincomalee and Addu Atoll, and rendezvoused 80 miles south of Ceylon at 1600 hours the following day. Seeing them assembled for the first time, he signalled, "So this is the Eastern Fleet. Never mind, many a good tune is played on an old fiddle."

The Admiral also organised the fleet into two divisions. Force A, led by himself, included Warspite, Indomitable, Formidable, Cornwall, Dorsetshire, two light cruisers, and six destroyers. Force B, the slow division, consisted of the four R-class battleships, Hermes, three light cruisers, and eight destroyers.

As Admiral Somerville had been instructed by London that it was more important to preserve the Eastern Fleet than to defend Ceylon, one might have expected him to lead his ships well out of harm's way. There were two reasons why he did not. The first was his native pugnacity. In his own words, he wanted to give the enemy "a good crack." It was not for nothing that his eventual biography was to be entitled 'Fighting Admiral'. The second reason was that the available intelligence led him to believe he could seek battle on favourable terms. He had been told when the enemy would arrive, and that there might be as few as two carriers opposing him. Furthermore, British naval intelligence had underestimated the capabilities of Japanese carriers. For instance, it was thought that the Shokaku and Zuikaku carried 60 aircraft apiece, but in reality, they could operate 72 aircraft each and carry another 12 for spares. The performance of their aircraft was likewise underestimated. Despite such occurrences as the participation of the Zero in the 8 December attack on targets near Manila, 450 miles from the Japanese bases on Formosa (Taiwan), its tremendous range was not yet fully appreciated. This was partly due to the fact that the various Allied commands did not broadly or promptly share their after action reports, which worked to their mutual disadvantage.



• *Operation C* gets underway, 26 March 1942: *Akagi* leaves Staring Bay, to be followed by *Soryu*, *Hiryu*, the battleships *Hiei*, *Kongo*, *Kirishima* and *Haruna*, then carriers *Shokaku* and *Zuikaku*. Note that *Akagi* and *Hiryu* have portside bridge structures.

Somerville thought the Japanese aircraft would probably attack in moonlight – there was a full moon on 1 April – and arrive back over their carriers at dawn, at approximately 0600 hours. To accomplish this, Nagumo would have to reach his launch point by about 0200 hours. Somerville decided to ambush him. If his radar-equipped force found radar-deficient Nagumo during the night, he could launch a torpedo aircraft strike with a fair prospect of inflicting damage. Until last light on 31 March, he kept well to the west, out of range of Nagumo's search aircraft, and then headed straight for the anticipated Japanese launch point, which he reached at 0230 hours.

Not finding Nagumo during the night of 31 March/ 1 April, the admiral withdrew southwestward to remain out of range of his opponent's daylight searches on 1 April, in case the Japanese appeared on the scene unexpectedly. He then headed back toward Nagumo's anticipated launch point during the night of 1/2 April, and withdrew again before daylight on 2 April. At last light on 2 April, the third night, he again started searching to the east.

By 2100 hours on 2 April, having seen no sign of the Japanese after three days, Somerville decided that their attack had likely been cancelled. He could not keep his fleet at sea much longer in any case, as his four R-class battleships could not produce enough fresh water for their boilers for more than a very few



days. He therefore led the fleet to Addu Atoll to replenish, partly because most of his auxiliary vessels had already been sent there, and partly to stay clear of Colombo, in case the Japanese belatedly appeared there after all. However, he had to send Cornwall and Dorsetshire to Colombo, the former to escort a troop convoy, and the latter to resume a refit. He also sent Hermes and Vampire to Trincomalee, to resume preparations for the upcoming occupation of Vichy French-controlled Madagascar, code-named Operation Ironclad.

Operation C had not been cancelled. It was, in fact, carried out as predicted by sigint, but not on the first or second of April. One source explains the delay by claiming that Nagumo decided to wait until 5 April, as that was Easter Sunday and he hoped to catch the British in port for the holiday. Other sources note that between 11 and 16 March, Shokaku and Zuikaku made an unplanned sortie to search for a US carrier task force thought to be approaching Japan, and they did not rejoin the First Air Fleet at Staring Bay, off Kendari on the island now known as Sulawesi (then Celebes), until 24 March. Nagumo set sail on Operation C from there on 26 March but it is not clear if that was the originally planned date, or if it represented a postponement for either of the aforementioned reasons.

At 1600 hours on 4 April, Birchall and his crew sighted the First Air Fleet 360 miles from Dondra Head, the southernmost point in Ceylon, bearing 155 degrees from Ceylon. As noted earlier, they had just arrived in Ceylon on 2 April. They were given 24 hours to rest after their 10-day trip from Sullom Voe, but then, before being given any opportunity to familiarise themselves with their new operational area, they were ordered to join the search for Nagumo. They took off from Lake Koggala, the Catalina base on the south coast of Ceylon, before dawn on 4 April, and they were scheduled to return after dawn on 5 April.

Birchall arrived in his patrol area just as the sun rose. Hour after hour, the Catalina flew 150 mile-long east-west lines, spaced 50 miles apart, at an altitude of 2000 feet over the water. While they were flying the last assigned leg, Birchall's navigator, Warrant Officer Onyette, the only other Canadian aboard, pointed out that if they flew an extra leg, he could confirm their actual position by using the moon, which was then rising. Since they were required to remain

airborne until after dawn the next day in any case, Birchall agreed.

Birchall's crew had been assigned the southernmost search sector. And just as they were completing this extra leg and were at the southernmost point in their search, ships appeared on the southern horizon. If the Japanese had been any further to the south, or if the Catalina crew had not flown the extra leg, they almost certainly would have escaped detection until their aircraft arrived over Colombo the next morning. What follows is Leonard Birchall's own account of what happened next:

"As we got close enough to identify the lead ships we knew at once what we were into but the closer we got the more ships appeared and so it was necessary to keep going until we could count and identify them all. By the time we did this there was very little chance left.

"The Catalina was then attacked by up to 12 Zeros.

"All we could do was to put the nose down and go full out, about 150 knots. We immediately coded a message and started transmission ... We were halfway through our required third transmission when a shell destroyed our wireless equipment and seriously



• RCAF pilots serving with the RAF's 30 Squadron in April 1942. All seven survived the 5 April attack on Colombo.

injured the operator; we were now under constant attack. Shells set fire to our internal tanks. We managed to get the fire out and then another started, and the aircraft began to break up. Due to our low altitude it was impossible to bail out, but I got the aircraft down on the water before the tail fell off."



The one-sided fight lasted just seven minutes. Stupidly, the Zeros strafed and sank the Catalina after it alighted, possibly forfeiting an opportunity for it to be boarded and searched for items of intelligence interest. The strafing also killed two wounded survivors floating in their life jackets, when they were about to be captured and could also have been interrogated. The destroyer Isokaze picked up the six surviving crew members.

The Japanese wished to know if the crew had transmitted a sighting report, but could think of no more sophisticated way of learning this



• *RCAF ground crew from No. 413 Squadron service a Consolidated Catalina flying boat in Ceylon during the spring of 1943.*

then by administering repeated beatings. The airmen stuck to their story that they had not had time to use the radio before being shot down, but then the Japanese intercepted a message from Colombo asking the Catalina to repeat its report. This sigint success, apparently the only one the Japanese enjoyed during Operation C, led them to conclude that they had lost the element of surprise – and prompted them to beat the Catalina crew again.

The element of surprise had indeed been lost. Birchall's message galvanised the British commanders. Colombo's garrison and the RAF units on the island were ordered to stand-to from 0300 hours the next morning, and the harbour was cleared of warships and merchant vessels. About 60 vessels had been sent out of harm's way following the 28 March sigint warning, and another 25 were dispatched now, including Cornwall and Dorsetshire. Two destroyers, a submarine, a submarine depot ship, an armed

merchant cruiser, and 21 merchant ships were unfit for sea, and they remained in the harbour.

Somerville was now badly out of position, having just entered Addu Atoll. As he recorded it: "Damn and blast it looks as if I've been had...here I am miles away and unable to strike." Ultimately, the Admiral sailed with Force A just as soon as it finished replenishing, which was not until midnight, and steered straight for the Japanese. Force B followed about eight hours later.

The Japanese carrier task forces used the floatplanes of their escorting battleships and cruisers for reconnaissance and anti-submarine patrols, partly in order not to reduce the number of carrier aircraft available for offensive operations. Accordingly, at first light on 5 April, several floatplanes were launched to search the surrounding seas. A short time later, the carriers dispatched 127 aircraft to attack Colombo. Commander Mitsuo Fuchida, who had led the strike on Pearl Harbour, led the strike force.

Colombo was defended by 42 fighter aircraft. Stationed at Ratmalana airfield were 30 Squadron, with 22 Hurricanes, and 803 and 806 Squadrons, with just six Fulmars between them. 258 Squadron, with 14 Hurricanes, was located at the local racetrack [Colombo Racecourse], using an improvised strip, of which the Japanese were ignorant. Several of the pilots were Canadians. Colombo was also defended by 18 heavy and 25 light anti-aircraft guns and Ratmalana by four heavy and 12 light anti-aircraft guns.

Despite Birchall's warning almost 16 hours before, most of the defending fighters were still on the ground, with some pilots stood down for breakfast, when the Japanese arrived shortly before 0800 hours. The 30 Squadron on-line history claims that the local fighter controllers, under-estimating the range of the Zero, did not expect an attack that morning, but the First Air Fleet was only 360 miles off the island when sighted by Birchall. Even if the Zeros were as short-legged as the British supposed, Nagumo could easily have moved to a position from which they could reach Colombo early on 5 April. The on-line history also claims that the Colombo radar was unmanned and/or down for routine maintenance at the time. In fact, it had not even been set up yet. At about the same time that 413 Squadron had been ordered to move to Ceylon, the Royal Air Force rushed eight air surveillance radar sets to the island. One was operational at



Trincomalee before the Japanese arrived, but the one deployed to Colombo was not.

Instead of the tactical advantage of having the defending fighters awaiting the Japanese from above, it was now the Japanese who held the advantage of height. And the defenders suffered accordingly. Almost half the defending force – four Fulmars and 15 Hurricanes – was shot down, as were six Fairey Swordfish torpedo aircraft of 788 Squadron, which arrived on the scene from Trincomalee. In fact, the Swordfish, certain that any fighters over Colombo must be friendly, flashed recognition signals to identify themselves as British as the Zeros approached. The attackers also sank an old destroyer and an armed merchant cruiser, damaged a few other ships, and battered various shore installations. Only seven Japanese aircraft were lost, but another 15 were damaged. Ten Bristol Blenheim light bombers of 11 Squadron took off from Ratmalana at 0830 hours to attack the Japanese fleet, but failed to locate it.

The defenders of Colombo were not the only ones to be affected by underestimation of Japanese capabilities. In response to Birchall's sighting report, Cornwall and Dorsetshire left Colombo at 2200 hours on 4 April, but instead of being sent to the west, to get well out of range of Nagumo's aircraft, they were sent to the southwest, toward Addu Atoll. Captain Agar, VC, of the Dorsetshire was the Senior Officer. During the night, he received orders from Somerville to join Force A, and, accordingly, altered course to almost due south at 0700, which kept him within range of Nagumo that much longer.

A floatplane from Tone sighted the British cruisers at 1200 hours. Nagumo promptly dispatched 88 Aichi D3A Val dive bombers, which began their attack at 1338 hours. By 1355, in a remarkable display of bombing efficiency, Dorsetshire and Cornwall were both sunk.

Birchall's sighting report had arrived in time to prevent the loss of these valuable ships, but poor intelligence on Japanese aircraft performance led to their being risked too close to Nagumo's force. To quote Captain Agar: "One point which had escaped the notice of everyone...was the range and performance of the Japanese naval aircraft...We gave them the same performance as our own, but it later transpired that we had sadly underrated them. Actually, they had nearly double our performance. It is not surprising therefore that when next day [5 April] we sighted the first Japanese 'shadower' on the horizon astern, we had no idea at the time that they could possibly reach out so far, otherwise the R/V [the rendezvous with Somerville] would have been placed even further to the west."

A certain lack of enterprise on the part of the Japanese scouting aircraft must also be acknowledged. It apparently never occurred to their crews that the cruisers may have been heading for a rendezvous with other British ships. So far as is known, the floatplanes that found Agar's ships concentrated on maintaining contact with them, instead of searching farther down their apparent track. Somerville was very fortunate that this was the case, as Force A was only 84 miles from the cruisers when the Vals began their attack. This distance is precisely known, since the Vals were detected on Warspite's radar. In contrast, two months later, a group of US Navy dive bombers showed no such lack of enterprise when they came upon a Japanese destroyer proceeding independently on an unknown mission. Altering course to search along the destroyer's track, they found and sank the carriers Akagi and Kaga, turning the Battle of Midway into a great American victory. What is in a name, you say? Appropriately enough, they were from USS Enterprise.



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## YOUR LITERARY CONTRIBUTIONS

THE CEYLANKAN is published quarterly and the editor is always 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, material, preferably 1000 to 1500 words in length is sought. They must be of an anecdotal, historical nature, but any material will be considered provided it contributes to the CSA's

ideals of being non-racial, non-political, non-religious and non-controversial.

To facilitate with design and layout, references we request that your word processing/typing be unformatted. Please do not submit any material in the PDF format. Where applicable, contributors are also requested to annotate bibliographical to help further research and study by interested members. Photographs and other graphics of good resolution to illustrate your articles are most welcome.

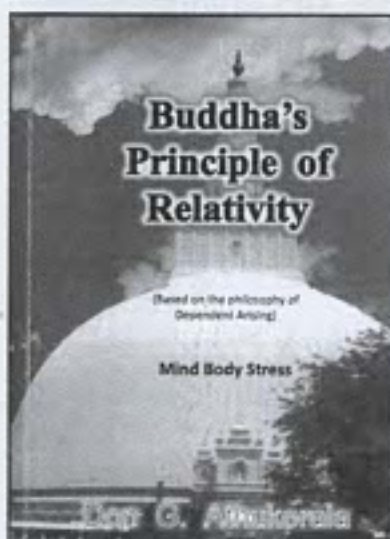
While every effort is made to print material that is relevant and correct, we cannot take any responsibility for errors appearing in the publication.



## BOOKSHOP & WEB RESOURCES

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

### Buddha's Principle of Relativity by Don G Athukorala



#### 1) What inspired me to write this book?

Of recent times, most learned monks including lay Buddhists frankly declared that they did not understand this most profound teaching of the Buddha – *Paticcasamuppada* - commonly known as

Dependent Origination or as I call it "Buddha's Principle of Relativity". It is presently interpreted as a process taking place on a lifetime to lifetime basis taking several years to complete, establishing a case for rebirth. Is this an important teaching? Rebirth was well known among Hindus many years before Buddha.

A Thai monk in his book "Dependent Origination" recently quoted from the *Tripitaka* that this set of guidelines describes a process taking place in the brain in fractions of a second. He called them 'mind – moments'. I took up the challenge, because the 'mind' was Buddha's area of specialisation. This encouraged me to recognize that when a stimulus disturbs the body, *Paticcasamuppada* describes biological processes within the mind/body. Accordingly, I have a detailed explanation this biological process - a pioneering effort unknown for the last 1500 years.

#### (2) The overall theme of the book

Understand Buddha's Code of Practice; apply it in your daily life. Effects are evident immediately or in late adulthood, and most importantly in

old age- a remedy to free ourselves from mental and physical disorder. Applies to the young as well, not evident immediately, but effects are noticeable as they grow older.

#### (3) We are Centuries behind when dealing with mental health

Deepak Chopra in his book says; No one to date has found a connection between psychological factors, and physical influences that hasten activities within our body. Why not, Buddha said so over 2600 years ago that mental states can be stressful. Little did we realise that our 'thought processes' could lead to stress and stress related disease – depression, dementia, or even cancer? The culprits are the hormones we secrete with every thought.

John Hopkins University hotly denies this, but their newsletters worldwide claim that psychological stress leads to cancer. Cancer is a disease of mind, body and spirit. Cancer Society of Australia and SAN Hospital in Sydney, conduct Mindful Meditation Courses for cancer patients as a powerful source of healing.

#### (4) How is this relevant in today's society?

Suffering is caused by intense desire resulting in craving and addiction. As we get addicted we seek for more. Smoking, gambling, illicit drugs are addictive. The inevitable breakdown occurs. Col. Gaddafi of Libya had to die because he was addicted to power.

#### (5) A particular passage to utilise

Understanding is the Key. Without understanding there is no thought. Without thought there is no speech and no action.

**Right understanding - right thought - right speech - right action**

**Book launch day special rate of \$20/- per copy.**

**Interested buyers can order the book by calling Xlibris on 1-800-618-969. Additionally, they can order the book through Xlibris online bookstore: <https://www.xlibris.com.au/bookstore/>.**

**They can search for the book using the author's name, or book title.**

#### HANDY HINTS

A sealed envelope - Put in the freezer for a few hours, then slide a knife under the flap. The envelope can then be resealed. (hmmm)





## SYDNEY

An illustrative talk presented by

**Dr. Tony Donaldson**

*Mountbatten in Ceylon*

6.30 PM on Sunday 24 February 2013 at the  
Pennant Hills Community Centre, 70 Yarrara  
Road, Pennant Hills.

In September 1943 Lord Louis Mountbatten was appointed Supreme Allied Commander of South East Asia Command (SACSEAC). He was 43 and the youngest military commander of World War 2. To those who knew him, he was likable, breezy, flamboyant, and an outstanding military commander.

After setting up a skeleton headquarters in London in September 1943, Mountbatten moved to New Delhi soon after. On 15 April 1944 he shifted his headquarters to Kandy and it remained there until 25 November 1945 when it was finally relocated to Singapore. From his headquarters in Kandy, Mountbatten had over one million personnel under his command of various races. All Allied secret services in Ceylon were also placed under his command including Force 136 (SOE), OSS, ISLD (SIS), and the French DGER.

After considering influences from his early life, the focus turns to the creation of SEAC, the reasons for moving SEAC headquarters to Kandy, its key objectives and operations, security issues in Ceylon, the challenges Mountbatten encountered, and his relationship with General Stilwell (his Deputy Commander).

The final section turns to consider the various Allied secret services operating under SEAC in Kandy and concludes with an account of a Force 136 operation to exfiltrate out of Siam key political and military figures to bring them to Kandy for a secret conference with Mountbatten and his staff. A short extract of a film of SEAC HQ in Kandy will be screened.

**Dr. Tony Donaldson** is a former Visiting Research Fellow of the Institute of Southeast

Asia Studies in Singapore. He was invited as an External Adviser to the Curatorial and Exhibition Design Workshop for The National Art Gallery of Singapore in 2009. After completing a PhD at Monash University, he lectured at RMIT University. His recent research activities have focused on British organisations in Asia 1941-1946, and contemporary art in Asia. He contributed an article for the Juhari Said Yes or No exhibition which was held at the MoMA Art Gallery in Kuala Lumpur in 2012.

**NOTE:** After a brief discussion period, the usual Social will be the next item on the agenda. Those who are able to are please requested to bring a plate of non-sweet savoury finger-food. Please avoid cakes with icing as the general preference is for plain cakes, sandwiches and savoury pastries. To avoid duplication of items, please contact our Social Convener, Chandra Senaratne on (02) 9872 6826 . A donation to CSA to help defray meeting costs, which could be made at the meeting, is an alternative.

**BOOK LAUNCH** *The Buddha's Principle of Relativity* by CSA Member Don Athukorale.  
(SEE PAGE 33 for more details).

## MELBOURNE CHAPTER

At our next meeting **Dr. Tony Donaldson** will present an illustrated talk on  
**"Mountbatten in Ceylon"**

This talk begins by tracing influences from Mountbatten's early life, and then turns to the creation of SEAC, the reasons for moving SEAC Headquarters to Kandy, security issues in Ceylon, Mountbatten's objectives, strategies and challenges and his relationship with the American General Stilwell. The final section explores the Allied secret services attached to SEAC in Kandy and concludes with an account of a Force 136 operation to exfiltrate out of Thailand a delegation of Thai political and military officers to attend a secret conference at the SEAC Headquarters in Kandy.

A short film of SEAC in Kandy will also be screened.

**Date: Sunday 17 February 2013**

time: 5:30 p.m. at **St Scholastica's Community Centre, St Scholastica's Church**(please park on the side streets or behind the church) 348 Burwood Highway, BURWOOD (Melway 61 D6)  
**For enquiries contact Hemal 0427 725 740.**



## DATES FOR YOUR DIARY SYDNEY 2013

- Sunday 24 February from 6.30 pm to 9 pm

Speaker : Dr Tony Donaldson - Subject -  
**MOUNTBATTEN IN CEYLON**

**Book Launch** - "THE BUDDHA'S  
PRINCIPLE OF RELATIVITY" by CSA  
Member Don Atukorale. Copies will be  
available for purchase.

*The above meeting will be at the  
Pennant Hills Community Centre  
(Enter via Car Park on Ramsay  
Road (opposite Pennant Hills  
Railway Station) Pennant Hills.*

### MELBOURNE CHAPTER 2013

Public meeting on **Sunday 17 February 2013**  
time: 5:30 p.m. Speaker is Dr Tony Donaldson who  
will talk on *Mountbatten in Ceylon*.

Time: 5:30 p.m. at **St Scholastica's Community  
Centre, St Scholastica's Church** (please park on  
the side streets or behind the church) 348  
Burwood Highway, BURWOOD (Melway 61 D6).

## WE NEED SPEAKERS

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

If you would like to share your knowledge and expertise among a group of like-minded people, you are most welcome to please contact our President Harry de Sayrah on (Mob) 0415 402 724 or Shelagh Goonewardene (03) 9808 4962 (Melbourne) or M.D. (Tony) Saldin 2440 769.

## OUR SPONSORS

*The cost of production of this journal is supported by generous donations from the*  
• *Lions Club of Bankstown, NSW, Australia, courtesy of our President Lion Harry de Sayrah, OAM JP; and*  
• *Universal Magazines Pty Ltd of North Ryde NSW 2113.*

## Pun-O-Graphics

- When chemists die, they barium.
- Jokes about German sausage are the wurst.
- I know a guy who's addicted to brake fluid. He says he can stop any time.
- How does Moses make his tea? Hebrews it.



# ORIOLES



The Black-hooded Oriole, a strikingly beautiful yellow and black bird that adds colour to any Colombo garden. The photograph of this oriole ground feeding is of interest as they are primarily arboreal feeders. They are often, mistakenly called *Golden Orioles*. The photographs were taken on the shores/scrubland of the Thalangama Lake, in Battaramulla.

The White-browed Oriole is not half as colourful as its 'cousin' and is identified by the white eyebrow. It is a duller olive green in colour. Both of these Orioles are categorised as an *endemic race* of birds to Sri Lanka (*A Field Guide to Birds of Sri Lanka* – John Harrison – Oxford University Press)



Text &  
Photos  
Stefan  
D'Silva

