



The Ceylankum

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The Ceylankam

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From the Editor...

Another journal is off the press—somewhat later than usual— but will reach you in time for news of meetings and other information that you look out for. I went overseas for a better part of June/July as a group from Sydney on a 21-day coach tour of Sri Lanka calling on most of the historic towns and cities like Anuradhapura, Sigiriya, Polonnaruwa, Trincomalee and other resorts such as Yala Wild Life sanctuary, Madhu, and Jaffna, of course. While our places of call were not new to most of us, there is always something about Sri Lanka that gives one an inexplicable feeling of 'newness' about a place even on a second or third visit.

The first striking thing about the country is the immensely improved condition of the roads with new motorways cutting down travel time by half in many places despite a marked increase in vehicular traffic. Then there's the ever-changing skyline with numerous multi-storey buildings coming up in Colombo and towns in the outstations. Another pleasant aspect was the conscious drive to keep the streets, especially in Colombo, clean. The big impression is that there is a glimpse that Sri Lanka is very, very slowly on the road to shedding the tag of a developing country and that, with good governance, augurs well for the people.

In relation to the country's growth, looking back in appreciation of the history and culture of Sri Lanka can, as we strive to do in this journal, be enriching experience.

Firstly we have Thiru Arumugam taking an inquiring look at Devimawara -the city of

the Gods, where he sees links of Buddhist and Hindu temples on the same lands, incorporating a common architectural tradition that symbolised the unity and integrity of the island as well as the religious and ethnic harmony that existed in medieval Sri Lanka - depicting the early signs of a country's growth towards nationhood.

Next we have Somasiri Devendra writing straight from the heart about the shenanigans behind the growth of the Colombo Stock Exchange and his total satisfaction of the outcome of his devotion and foresight to ensure it became a reality.

St Benedict's College in Kotahena is celebrating its 150-year anniversary this year and it seems appropriate to trace the historic growth of the oldest Catholic school in Sri Lanka. The author of the story Felix Dias is regarded as the quintessential Benedictine.

Two brothers Mark and Max Gerreyn, both cartoonists and painters of different genres are featured. Older brother Mark succeeded Aubrey Collette when working for the Lake House group (appropriately we have the revered Collette's cartoons of some unforgettable Sri Lankans featured on our back cover). Max, on the other hand, also a cartoonist, has moved to portrait painting and entered several prestigious art exhibitions in Australia including the Archibald.

We would also like to introduce our readers to a new writer Niru Perera, pursuing her PhD in Linguistics at Monash University. No doubt she will grace pages of this journal with her scholarly writings for a long time to the delight of all our learned readers.

All this, plus the usual fare for your enjoyment as always.

About the Ceylon Society of Australia

The Ceylon Society of Australia (CSA) is a non-profit organisation, incorporated in Australia. Its main objectives are to study, foster and promote interest in the cultural heritage of Sri Lanka, especially the post-medieval period when the country was first exposed to, what we now call, globalisation.

Most importantly, it is non-political and non-partisan and endeavours to steer clear of 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 Victoria; the Colombo Chapter caters to CSA members and others in Sri Lanka.

The Society holds meetings quarterly in Sydney, Melbourne and Colombo. Members of the public with an interest in the study of Sri Lankan history, culture and heritage are invited to attend. Young people from the public are especially welcome! Admission to these meetings is free, while a small donation to defray expenses is greatly appreciated.

The Ceylankan is the flagship of CSA. It is a publication much-looked forward to by members and others here and worldwide. Articles published are contributions from members and sometimes, those solicited from outside sources. All opinions expressed are those of the individual writers and do not necessarily reflect those of the editor or the CSA. Articles may be reproduced elsewhere, but must be appropriately credited to *The Ceylankan* and carry suitable acknowledgement thereof. (A note on submitting articles to the journal is on Page 27.)

Our Readers Write

Is it Pattini or Tara?

I was more than pleased to read Thiru Arumugam's contribution to the journal (J70 May 2015) on Ananda Coomaraswamy. I would like to bring to your notice that the Pattini statue you highlighted is erroneously labelled as 'Tara' at the British Museum.

On August 2006 a paper was presented by me at the Royal Asiatic Society (Sri Lanka) confirming Ananda Coomaraswamy's identification of this statue as Pattini. Archeologist Vincent Smith too had confirmed that it is Pattini. But the British Museum continues to call it Tara.

In 2006 J.Robert Knox, the keeper of Asia Department of the British Museum, said that they do not know who called it Tara or when it was called Tara and add that such information is just not available.

As this misleads thousands of visitors to the museum, I feel it is our duty to get it correctly named. I would give all the support to take the matter up with the British Museum.

SRILAL PERERA, Ruwanwella, Sri Lanka
(Committee Member, Colombo Chapter of the CSA)

THIRU ARUMUGAM replies:

Thank you very much for your correspondence. Sometime ago I read somewhere that there was a view about this statue in Sri Lanka and that it is Tara and not Pattini. I have been trying to track down the reference over the past few days but so far no luck. If I

April 1971 Insurrection - My personal experience

Retired DIG Vamadevan's most interesting article which appeared in *The Ceylankan* (J68 November 2014) made me reminisce once more as to what could very well have happened to my friend Jeff and myself, and what a terrible and horrifying experience the two of us had on this very day, some 44 years ago.

Jeff Koch and I were both Tea Planters in the Hatton/Maskeliya District. Whereas Jeff was a keen fisherman and a champion marksman and an excellent shot at both duck and snipe, my interests outside work were more on outdoor sport activities such as rugby and cricket. I, however, accepted his kind offer to join him on a duck and snipe shoot during that eventful weekend.

We left Hatton on the early afternoon of the 4th April, oblivious to what was ahead of us, with Horowpathana our destination. We broke journey at Mihintale and after some light refreshments carried on to Horowpathana and booked into the Rest House for a few days. We telephoned our respective wives and advised them of our whereabouts.

Early next morning we set out on our snipe shoot, walking through soggy paddy fields which had



• Jeff Koch and Fred Kreltszheim (left)

been recently harvested and where thousands of snipe feed on any grain that had been inadvertently left over. By evening, Jeff had a bag of around 85 snipe to my 15. On returning to the Rest House that evening, we endeavoured to contact our respective families again but the lines appeared to be faulty. On listening to the radio we were shocked to hear about the attack on the Wellawaya Police Station. I suggested to my friend, that, in our own interests, it would be prudent to pack our bags and head back home early next morning.

Jeff pleaded with me to give him just an hour to enable him to reach his target of a hundred snipe. I agreed to this and once Jeff reached his goal we set off for home.

We were surprised to notice telephone lines damaged, shops closed and the roads deserted with no sign of life whatsoever. We were dressed in khaki shirts and slacks, with Jeff at the wheel of the company Land Rover and his driver in the back seat. As we approached Mihintale we travelled over a causeway/bund with rather thick vegetation and water on either side of the road. A short while later we heard a loud bang with the vehicle swerving violently and almost taking us off the road. I told Jeff: "Boy you have blown a tyre," to which his response was that it was a gun shot. We came to a grinding halt and on close inspection realised that the damage was due to an SG cartridge going into the rear tyre. We alighted from the vehicle, loaded our guns and took our position on the further side of the road contemplating our next move.

Fortunately, just a few minutes later, a bus approached us from the opposite direction. As our vehicle was on the centre of the road, the driver and passengers alighted from the bus while we changed the damaged tyre, and proceeded to Mihintale where we had the damaged tube replaced. We then made a detour to Anuradhapura to report the incident to the

Police. We were told to please leave the Station as they were expecting an imminent attack themselves and also advised us to take refuge in the town as all roads were unsafe. We, however, decided to return to Kandy via Kurunegala and along the Galagedara Pass. We had hardly driven 10 miles when we noticed an old car parked on the road ahead of us and as we approached them, the occupants, about five people in number, got into their vehicle and sped off as fast as they could. A bullock cart driver who was at the scene advised us that the men were attempting to destroy the bridge and that we were fortunate to have arrived before they had completed their wilful act. We then decided to place the driver in charge of the vehicle and ourselves, both heavily armed, prepared to face any emergency. We kept a healthy distance from the vehicle and only overtook them with some trepidation as we came to a village.

We reached Kurunegala in good time, to learn that bombs had been thrown at a few buildings earlier in the day. We then proceeded along the Galagedara Pass to Kandy arriving at 2.45pm. The Police advised us that there was a 3.00pm curfew and we managed to find accommodation with a relative at Katugastota.

We left Katugastota early next morning and after a much more pleasant and uneventful, yet relaxed drive, reached our respective homes safe but with a rather frightening story to relate to our loved ones. I was quite calm over the entire experience, but must admit that it had quite an adverse effect on me in the days and weeks ahead. So much so that both Jeff and his family as well as my family had decided that, "enough was enough". By October 1971, my wife, myself and our two children were in Australia. Jeff and his family followed a year later.

I have, over the years, been asked why I had left such a prestigious job as Manager of a large British owned Tea Estate and come over to Australia. The future prospects of our two young children were paramount in our decision, precipitated, of course, by the events of April 1971. We could very well have not been here to relate this story had the insurgent aimed his gun at us rather than the rear wheel of the Land Rover.

FRED KRELTSZHEIM (South Vermont, VIC.)

What happened in HAPPENINGS?

Things happen all the time and as luck would have it (or was it the lack of luck?) an unwarranted omission crept into an item where we welcomed our newest Committee member of the CSA. We headed our story: ***Welcome to the Committee, Pauline.*** Great so far; but Pauline who? Our eagle-eyed readers correctly pointed out the omission and we were a tad embarrassed (natch!).



But the gracious lady, when spoken to about our error, simply shrugged it off by saying: "These things happen. People know who Pauline is and there was a photo wasn't there?"

For the record, our sincere apologies to our newest Committee member, Pauline Gunewardene. A very warm welcome to the Committee.

— Ed.

Share your views

Readers' letters are an important part of any publication. That is why we warmly invite you to contribute to our letters column. We like to know what you think about the journal, what you would prefer to see published, in keeping with the journal's editorial policy, of course. We value your thoughts, erudite comments and constructive criticism on the articles that appear on these pages. If through your own research you can shed new light on some subject matter we have published, we will be delighted to learn from you.

A publication like The Ceylankan can benefit immensely from your feedback which has the potential to engender life and vigour to these pages. We urge you to keep those letters coming in.

However, please keep those letters as brief as possible. We will endeavour to accommodate lengthy missives as long as they are constructive and to the point. If your contribution calls for lengthier treatment, we may consider using it as an article.

The editor reserves the right to edit your letters for reasons of length, clarity and content.

How to become a Member of the CSA...

Who can become a member of the CSA? Any person with a common interest relating to the historical heritage of Ceylon/ Sri Lanka and wishes to share that interest with like-minded people worldwide is welcome to seek membership. Younger members of the community are specially welcome. **Annual subscription is AS30 (Pensioners & Students in Australia AS20).**

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Language, religion and identity for Sri Lankan Tamils at a Hindu temple in Australia

by

Niru Perera



The author of this work of research is new to the pages of the Journal. This forms part of her thesis as she is now completing a PhD in Linguistics at Monash University. She already holds degrees as a Bachelor of Business and a Master of Linguistics. There is a lot of promise that this young lady is going places and that this will not be her first contribution to THE CEYLAN. We look forward to her literary work in the future.

The multicultural and multilingual nature of Australian society has been under investigation by researchers for some decades now. Since the 1970s, linguists and sociologists have studied the language and cultural maintenance patterns of various migrant groups and the factors that influence this maintenance, generally in the urban centres of Australia (for example Clyne 1991; Kipp, Clyne, and Pauwels 1995; Smolicz 1981; 1999). As a second-generation migrant, born in Sri Lanka and raised in Australia, I am interested in understanding the range of language and cultural maintenance practices of Sri Lankans and how the second generation is creating new identities in a new country.

As a linguist, I am particularly interested in language use among Sri Lankan Tamils given the role of the discriminatory language policy of 1956 (the Official Language Act) which was connected to ethnic division and eventually migration for many Tamils in Sri Lanka (see DeVotta 2004; Coperahewa 2009). As a Sri Lankan of Sinhalese and Sri Lankan Malay descent, I feel it is important to conduct this research as a contribution to healing the wounds among Sri Lankan Australians partly caused by that language policy.

In 2011, I conducted a small study to compare the language maintenance practices of Sinhalese and Sri Lankan Tamil families in Melbourne. I found that there was no clear difference between the language maintenance practices of members of the two ethnic groups (although I was unable to access many people who came as political refugees). However, I found that those who were more devout in their ethnic religion (Hinduism or Buddhism) and/or nationalistic, tended towards higher language maintenance across both the Sinhalese and Tamil groups. Generally, those that were Christian and had had a lot of experience with English in Sri Lanka (via speaking it in the home or from education) were more likely to shift to English as the language of the home in Australia (for more information see Perera 2014).

The above study led me to my current PhD research project on the influence of Hinduism on the

maintenance of Tamil in Australia. There are two main reasons to study the influence of religion on language maintenance for Sri Lankan Tamil Hindus in Australia. Firstly, there have been few studies on the maintenance of languages from the Indian sub-continent in Australia (Fernandez and Clyne 2007) and the influence of religion on migrants' language maintenance has only recently been investigated, with the focus being on Christian religions (see Woods 2004). Secondly, according to the last census, Hinduism is currently the fastest growing non-Christian religion in Australia (ABS 2012).

My PhD research project is titled 'The maintenance of religion and language at a Tamil Hindu temple in Australia'. Previous research has suggested that a devout faith in Hinduism is a strong influence on the maintenance of Tamil language in Australia (Smolicz et al. 1990; Fernandez and Clyne 2007; Perera 2014). However, it appears that this influence might be changing for the second generation. The aim of my project is to understand the role of the Tamil language for first and second-generation devotees at a Tamil Hindu temple. I also want to know how second-generation devotees draw on their religion, cultures and languages to create their identities and how this is reflected in the way they use language that is a mix of Tamil and English.

I aim to find answers to these questions by conducting an ethnographic study at a Tamil Hindu temple¹. The essence of an ethnographic study is to spend significant time among the research participants to gain an understanding of matters from their perspective. The aim is to reflect the participants' voices more than the researcher's voice. Some of the methods I will use are: • attending and observing temple pooja ceremonies, festivals and events; • attending and observing the second generation at the temple's religious school; • recording the interactions between the students and teacher in one class at the temple's religious school to look for instances when the students use English and Tamil and see if there are patterns to this switching; and, • conducting interviews with temple board members, priests, religious school teachers, parents and students.

I began this research in 2013 and aim to complete it in 2015.

From initial interviews with leaders of a few Tamil Hindu temples in Australia as well as informal conversations with interested members of the Sri Lankan Tamil community, it appears that the second generation prefers to use English rather than Tamil, when possible. The level of concern among the first generation about this is diverse and complex – while first-generation members would say they do not want their children to lose the language or culture, only a minority are making a concerted effort to teach and speak to their children in Tamil. For other first-generation members, the maintenance of Hinduism in the family is far more important as it incorporates a connection to the culture and values associated with the homeland. Religion has been seen as the way to keep children committed to the family unit, to stay pious, studious and respectful (Kurien 1998; Jacob and Thaku 2000; Ebaugh and Chafetz 2000; Perera 2014). Therefore, if the language is lost along the way, it is not as detrimental as the loss of religious values. Lastly, a significant number of first-generation members have told me that they understand that children are focusing on studies and extracurricular activities in their teenage years, but they are confident that second generation members will return to the religion and culture once married with families of their own. This confidence is an indication that the second generation, while not fully maintaining all aspects of its heritage culture, is still identifying with its Tamil heritage.

Observations at the temple and religious schools indicate that the students are engaged with their religion and culture and fluent in their heritage language². A lot of the students in the religious school are also taking Tamil language classes and lessons in some aspect of Tamil culture such as playing a musical instrument like the mridangam or veena, Carnatic singing or Bharatanatyam dancing. They have high receptive competency in Tamil (that is, they can understand most of what is said) even if their oral skills are not strong. At the same time, they sound like any other Australian child when they speak English, using General Australian accents, and they appear to use a lot of English both in the temple and at home. The preference for English can be attributed to macro level factors like globalisation and the dominance of Anglo culture in Australia. However, I believe that there is something happening for the children that is dynamic and innovative. I propose that the second generation is creating its own new identities – ones where children do not need to choose between being an English speaker or Australian and being a Tamil speaker or Sri Lankan Tamil. Rather, they are learning to move between these labels or entities fairly easily. They draw on their various linguistic resources and cultural knowledge and experiences to create hybrid

identities like 'Sri Lankan Australian' or 'Tamil Hindu Australian'. Language, religious or cultural proficiency in the traditional sense is not so important here – the second generation can pick and choose what it wants to use and display in negotiating its new identities.

Canagarajah (2012), who has conducted extensive research with the Sri Lankan Tamil diaspora in Canada, Britain and the United States, uses the term 'self-styling' to describe what he similarly observed in the second generation in those countries. He spoke to young people who were not fluent in Tamil, yet drew on their limited proficiency in the language to participate in 'in-group' activities. It was important to them to feel a part of the Tamil community and to incorporate their Tamil identity into their behaviour. Some examples of this were using Tamil words like 'paNTi' (pig) to playfully interact and show affection for friends and relatives, participating in Tamil conversations with the first generation (even if the young spoke in English), reciting bhajans (without understanding the meaning), and wanting to wear Tamil dress at community events (Canagarajah 2012, 129).

I hope that this research project will help us to understand how the second generation performs its hybrid identities through the use of language. If we know that students of Tamil are likely to use a mix of Tamil and English (and possibly other languages) and that this is an affirmative expression of their Tamilness, then does this alter the way that Tamil is taught to heritage language learners in Australia? On a macro level, I hope that this research may inform the wider Australian community about some of the language, religious and cultural maintenance patterns of Sri Lankan Tamils living in Australia, so that community initiatives can be supported at the public institutional and government levels. With the growing presence of cultures from the South Asian region, it is important for the wider population to understand how South Asian migrants are establishing communities in Australia.

Footnotes:

1 The name of the temple has been withheld for the purposes of privacy.

2 Heritage language is a language other than English to which an individual has familial or ancestral ties (Hornberger, N.H., and S.C. Wang. 2008. "Who Are Our Heritage Language Learners? Identity and Bilingualism in Heritage Language Education in the United States." In *Heritage Language Education: A New Field Emerging*, 1–35. New York: Routledge.)

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Those delightful days at the foothills of Hantana (Part IV)

A salute to a free spirit

by Gamini de Alwis

My father had passed away when I was just eleven-years old and I had not yet been able to contribute to my family. When I reached my fourth and final year at the university, I was eager to go out into the real world and earn some money. That last year was a bitter-sweet time, torn between the desire to move out and the urge to stay on at such an enjoyable place. I was about to leave a place where my life had been greatly influenced, not only by what we learned but also inspired and often enhanced by the lecturers and peers with whom I engaged. One would expect it to be, particularly, the case at a residential campus.

There were many who made a lasting impression on me. There were many great scholars, some exposed their talent in music and drama, others presented an incisive argument, some were admired for their prowess in the field of sport or some even for the magnetic aura they exuded towards the opposite sex.

Gunner was not known for any such ability. His genius was to indulge in the unusual and the unexpected behaviour. A student from Jaffna was expected to be rather cautious and to conduct his life with a disciplined air. Although Gunner hailed from Jaffna, he proved to us, at an early stage, the dangers of stereotyping people.

(Continued from previous page.)

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Most of us who enter the university, perhaps enjoy the finest hours of our lives in that first year. We are wide eyed with wonder. The freedom around us is exhilarating, the company of youth from the different walks of life stimulating, the environment salubrious and the setting spacious. By the time we reached our final years, we were ready and eager to get out into the real world.

Not so for Gunner. When I joined the university, he had already completed five years or so at the medical faculty. It took another four years after I had left, for Gunner to reluctantly complete his degree in a record period of 13 years. He would not readily give up the campus experience. He was happy to engage with his juniors and each year relive the wonder with them. When he was threatened by the faculty to be thrown out, he passed one or two of his subjects and with his genial manner won a reprieve from his professors to live out yet another year.

I noticed Gunner for the first time at a hall social in Hilda Obeysekera hall. A social was a party thrown by the residents of a hall and its purpose was to meet each other from different faculties and halls you would not usually encounter otherwise. It was the very first social I was invited to. Hilda was still a girls' hall then. I was dressed in my only tweed trouser and wore my shoes which were well polished. We were standing around the rectangular Hilda pond situated between the first and second wings of the hall. As decorations, there were a number of Nelum flowers made out of rigifoam material floating on the water. A girl in our company casually admired the flowers. Gunner who was nearby asked her whether she would like to have one. When she nodded in amusement, without a moment's hesitation Gunner casually walked into the muddy water treading on the slimy steps at the edge of the pond. He made no attempt to save either his shoes or his trousers. He picked up a flower, came out dripping from below his knees and presented it to the flustered girl. He then proceeded to enjoy the rest of the evening in his soggy trouser and shoes as if he had just straightened his tie.

A few days after this incident, I was pleased to find that Gunner had joined us for a drink at the Peradeniya rest house. I did not know at the time

that he had the habit of breaking into a run when he had had a few. "Shall we muchang?" was his clarion call. That evening was no exception. He made the call, broke free from those who tried to prevent him and ran along the Peradeniya road past the turn off to the campus. We ran in pursuit. When we reached the Peradeniya Bridge, he had climbed onto the parapet wall. He was holding on to a lamp post and was threatening to jump into the dark waters of the Mahaweli flowing below. A few of us held on to his legs. Others pleaded with him to get down. This was going on for some time when a fellow from our midst got everyone to step back and told Gunner to jump in. To our relief, with a sheepish grin he climbed down.

On another Saturday night, we found ourselves at the Charles bar. It was the less fashionable bar of the Queens hotel and the only place we could afford to have a drink. In between drinks, we had dinner at the El Sombrero adjoining the bar. It served hoppers with a large brim, hence its name. We stayed well past the closing time and were forcibly ejected from the bar. It was too late when we realised that we would not get a bus back into the campus. We began to walk back past the bus stand where a number of Yaka busses were neatly parked. It was then that Gunner got it into his head that he should drive us back in one of the buses. Before we knew what was happening, he was inside the nearest bus trying to start it up. He must have released a break because the bus slowly rolled back and hit the one parked behind it.



• Path to Sangamittha Hall.

There was no damage as they are always parked very skilfully almost touching each other. However, a few of the drivers sleeping inside the busses felt a jolt and they streamed out with a war cry. They got hold of us and we were marched towards the police station which was not very far from the bus stand. While we were crossing the railway line, Gunner made his famous call "Shall we muchang?" We responded instantly and took off along the railway track. The bus drivers were



• Mara Tree

taken by surprise. They gave us a token chase. I think they were secretly relieved to get back to their sleep from which they had been rudely awakened.

Despite the wonderful meals we were served at the time, some students were never satisfied. At the beginning of the each year there was the recurrent ritual of determining the common menu. In that year Gunner was made the President of the Jayathilaka hall. A meeting was called up. Gunner turned up in sarong which was unusual to say the least. The request from the resident students to present the common menu was being totally ignored by Gunner. As they lost patience and began to become boisterous and abusive, Gunner got up and asked the assembly: "So you want to see the common menu?" He asked the question a third time and said "I will show you the common menu". He turned around quickly, raised his sarong and exposed his bottom ending the meeting in disarray. That was the last we heard of the common menu. I am still amazed as to how he got away with it.

(Continued on page 23)

Devinuwara - the City of Gods

Devinuwara, literally the City of Gods, is the southernmost point in Ceylon. It is just past Matara on the coastal road to Tangalle. During British days it was known as Dondra and its Tamil place name is Thondeswaram. The southernmost point on the sea-shore is called Dondra Head and Ceylon's tallest and most powerful lighthouse is located here. It was built in 1890 and it is 49m tall with its beams visible up to 50 km away. All materials for its construction came from UK, including the granite rock bricks. For further information on the lighthouses of Ceylon please see the November 2013 edition of this Journal for the Colombo Chapter Synopsis of Muhaj Hamin's talk on "Lighthouses in Sri Lanka and life in a Lighthouse".

Devinuwara has a historical connection with Gods. In 1917 the renowned historian, P E Pieris, who held a Doctorate in Literature from the University of Cambridge, wrote an article titled Nagadipa and Buddhist remains in Jaffna which was published in the Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society (Ceylon). In the article he wrote that (p 17/18) "Long before the arrival of Vijaya there were in Lanka five recognized Isvaram of Siva which claimed and received the adoration of all India. These were Tirukketisvaram near Mahatittha, Munissaram dominating Salawata



• Fig 1 : Ptolemy's 110 AD Map of Taprobane (Courtesy Wikipedia)

and the Pearl Fishery, Tandesvaram near Mantota, Tirukkonesvaram opposite the great Bay of Koddiiyar and Nakulesvaram near Kankesanturai." Tandesvaram near Mantota (Matara) is his reference to Thondeswaram or Devinuwara.

Local legends believe that Ravanna (circa 2500 BC), the King of Lanka had his main palace near the Dondra lighthouse in an area which is still known as Kovil Watta. Ravanna was a Brahmin and an ardent worshipper of Siva and it is therefore probable that he would have built a temple for Siva here. Local



By Thiru Arumugam

belief is that the final epic battle between Ravanna and Rama also took place in Devinuwara.

Around 110 AD the Greek cartographer Ptolemy drew a map of Ceylon which is probably the oldest known map of Ceylon. In this map he identifies the southernmost tip of Ceylon as Dagana, civitas sacra luna and has drawn an icon of a temple at this point. Ptolemy did not personally visit Ceylon but relied on information and sketches from Greek sailors who visited the Island. As a result there has been some corruption in place names in his map. For example, Anuradhapura is marked as Anurogramum. It is therefore likely that his Dagana is a corruption of the place-name Deva-nagara, an alternative name for Devinuwara. As regards civitas sacra luna this means 'city sacred to the moon'. An alternative name for Siva is Santhirasekarer, because he is depicted with a crescent moon in the locks of his hair. It is therefore possible that Ptolemy's icon and reference was to a Sivan temple in this location. Ptolemy's map of Taprobane is reproduced in column.

Devinuwara today

The artefacts that exist today at Devinuwara include the 7th century AD Galge (a stone temple), a Pansala, the Othpilima Vihara, a Dagaba, a recent standing statue of Buddha, a three storey Vishnu Devala, an elaborately carved 14th century stone archway large enough for an elephant to pass through during the perahera (the only archway remaining of four that were here originally), about 200 stone pillars over three metres tall, a Kataragama Devalaya, seven Devalayas in a row in one building, the Simhasana shrine of Skanda, and a four metre high lamp post with four relief carvings which have been identified by Paranavitana, the first Ceylonese Archaeological Commissioner, as Siva, Ganesha, Karthikeya and Brahma.

The Galge is a small all-stone temple about a kilometre north of the main temple complex. It is about eight metres long and five metres wide. It consists of two rooms, a garbha-grha (or holy of holies), with an ante-chamber in front. There are no windows and ornamentation is limited. It has been studied in detail by Paranavitana. He is of the opinion that this temple is pre-Chola in style and is therefore of the Pallava period, and he dates it at around the 7th century AD. This would probably make it the oldest existing all-stone temple in Ceylon, and make it contemporaneous with the Pallava Shore Temple in Mahabalipuram, Tamil Nadu, which is considered



• **Fig. 2 Galge: 7th century AD Stone Temple, Devinuwara (Photo: Thiru Arumugam)**

to be among the earliest all-stone temples in India. There are no inscriptions in or near the Galge (above) to enable us to identify what deity was enshrined in the 'holy of holies'. Local legends are that Rama stood on this spot and fired the fatal arrow which killed Ravanna who was standing at the location of the present Vishnu Devale in the valley below.

The three storey Vishnu Devale (below) is probably about hundred years old and is in the Kandyan style of architecture. The Kataragama Devalaya of Skanda is a separate small shrine and the seven Minor Devalayas are in seven rooms in one building. The seven deities are Valli Matha (Skanda's consort), Pattini, Saman, Gana Deviyo (Ganesha),



• **Fig 3 : Three storey Vishnu Devale, Devinuwara (Photo: Thiru Arumugam)**

Aluth Deviyo (Dadimunda?), Basnaiva Deviyo and Devol Deviyo.

Administrative control of the Devales is the responsibility of the Basnayake Nilame. He is neither appointed, nor is it a hereditary post. He is elected for a five-year term by the votes of the 650 Grama Niladharis (formerly called Village Headmen) in the region. The persons responsible for the religious services in the Devales are called Kapuralas. It is a

hereditary position and the Devinuwara Kapuralas can trace their lineage back over ten generations or more. The Kapuralas act as intermediaries between the devotees and the deities. The devotee gives a tray containing the offering of betel leaves, flowers, fruits, rice etc. to the Kapurala and tells him the nature of his problem e.g. health, financial, employment, downfall of enemies etc. The Kapurala then goes into the inner sanctum sanctorum and implores the help of the deity in solving the devotee's problem. The Kapurala chants an appropriate yatika (petitionary prayer) addressed to the deity. The deity being a Bodhisattva (enlightened being) also gains merit by helping the devotee. The Kapurala retains a part of the offering and returns the rest to the devotee.

Another God associated with Devinuwara is Skanda. Local belief is that Skanda (son of Siva) crossed the Indian ocean in a Gal-pahura (granite raft) and landed at Devinuwara. He rested on a stone slab near the beach, called the Simhasana, while local residents paid obeisance to him. A shrine has been built to enclose the stone slab, which is close to the beach and about a kilometre directly south of the main temple complex. A 1950s picture of the Simhasana shrine with a thatched roof is shown in Fig. 4 on page 12. Two stone pillars which formed part of the original temple here can be seen in the front of the picture. The thatched building has since been replaced by a permanent building. From Devinuwara, Skanda made his way overland to Kataragama where he courted and married the Veddah Princess, Valli, and he is venerated as the Kataragama Deviyo.

Fig. 5 is a picture of a Siva Lingam (also page 12) which was unearthed by a gardener digging a flower bed in the garden of the Othpilima Vihara about twenty years ago. The proportions of the Lingam which is tall and slender, and the fact that it only has a base and no pedestal seem to indicate that it is not of the Chola period and could be early Pallava period or around 7th century AD or earlier. At the top there is recess where there would originally have been a large precious stone. The recess is surrounded by a carving of a crescent moon pointing upwards. The crescent moon is found in the locks of Siva's hair, and this Lingam may have been the holy of holies of an ancient Sivan temple and could have been the reason for Ptolemy's description of this place as a 'city sacred to the moon'.

Time line of past events

The earliest reference in the Mahavamsa to the building of a Vihara here is that it states that about 659 AD King Dappula 'erected the Khadirali-Vihara and offered to the God'. In the year 790 AD King Dappula Sen had a vision that a red sandalwood log would land

at Devinuwara floating across the sea. He had this log carved into an image of Vishnu and built a temple here and installed it as the principal deity. This image remained here for about two centuries and was later moved, finally to the cave temple in Dambulla. The reason for the veneration of Vishnu by Ceylon Buddhists arises from events arising during the passing away of the Buddha as described in Mahavamsa Chapter VII, Verse 5. He called upon Indra, King of the Gods to protect Vijaya and Lanka. "When the lord of gods heard the words of the Tathagata he from respect handed over the guardianship of Lanka to the god who is in colour like a lotus". Geiger, the translator of the Mahavamsa, adds a footnote at this point "Devass' uppalavannassa, that is Visnu. The allusion is to the colour of the blue lotus (uppala)". Over the subsequent centuries, it would appear that the gods Vishnu and Upulvan had independent identities in Ceylon until about the 15th century, when the identity of Upulvan was subsumed into that of Vishnu. As a result the Devalas in Devinuwara, Kandy, Alutnuvara, Hanguranketa, Gadaladeniya, Lankatilaka, Dambulla, Aluthgama, etc., are now described as Vishnu Devalas.

There are many subsequent references to Devinuwara in the Mahavamsa including the restoration of the Vihara by Vijayabahu in 1058 AD, the building of a monastery named 'Nandana' (The



Fig 5 : Ancient Siva Lingam found near Othpilima Vihara, Devinuwara (Courtesy: Institute of Fine Arts)

Delight) by Vira Bahu in 1244 AD, the restoration of the temples by Parakramabahu II in 1250 AD and the building of an image house and four stone gateways (one of which still exists) by Parakramabahu IV in 1325 AD.

Ibn Battuta was a Moroccan who lived in the 14th century. He was the world's greatest traveller, travelling continuously for nearly thirty years and visiting the countries of the world where Muslims lived, including Ceylon. He came to Ceylon in 1344 AD and visited Devinuwara and wrote that in the temples "there are about a thousand Brahmins and Yogis,

and five hundred young women, daughters of the nobility of India who sing and dance all night before the image. The idol is of gold, and as large as a man. In place of eyes it has two large rubies".

A stone inscription found in the district dated 1410 AD, which is now in the Colombo Museum, has

similar text in three languages Chinese, Persian and Tamil. The Tamil text describes gifts from the Ming Dynasty Chinese Emperor Yung Lo to the God of the Tenavaram (another name for Devinuwara) Temple. The gifts include 1000 kalancus (5 kg) of gold, 5000 kalancus of silver (26 kg), 50 rolls of silk, copper vessels, gold stands, scented oil and sandalwood. The Chinese Emperor wanted to curry favour with the Ceylonese as he was desperately anxious to acquire Buddha's tooth relic.



• Fig 4 : The Simhasana where Skanda rested, Devinuwara (Courtesy: Archaeological Dept.)

Sandesa Poems

In the 14th and 15th centuries the popular genre for Sinhala poems was the Sandesa poems. In these lengthy poems a bird flies carrying a message from somebody at a starting point to a recipient at its destination. During its flight the bird describes the starting point, the sights it sees along its route and finally describes the destination. Sri Rahula Thera, the leading scholar of his day, was an exponent of this style of poetry. The Sandesa poems which describe Devinuwara are the Paravi Sandesa, Kokila Sandesa, Mayura Sandesa and the Tisara Sandesa. The following verse from the Paravi (Dove) Sandesa written by Sri Rahula Thera in 1445 AD describes the temple dancers of Devinuwara. Paul Pieris, who had a Doctorate in Literature from Cambridge, said that this is the finest description of temple dance in Sinhala poetry. The translation is as follows:

*With flowers entwined in the tresses of their hair,
And garlands pendant from their necks,
The women dance, as dances the budding leaf
Of the mango twig to the music of the breeze.*

The Kokila (Cuckoo) Sandesa, was written by a poet who was a 15th century Principal of the Irugalkula Pirivena in Dondra. The verse which commences the description of Dondra, the starting point of the Cuckoo's flight has been translated as follows:

*Know Dondra is this place, this city fair,
Where stately mansions, bright as Meru, shine;
Where gems and coral show in plenteous store,*

*In princely shops adorning lively streets;
Where lotus blows in orchards e'er in bloom,
And strains of music fill the balmy air.*

Based on the information provided in the Sandesa poems and in the stone inscriptions, Archaeological Commissioner Paranavitana concluded that Devinuwara had four categories of holy places: (1) Viharas (Buddhist monastic establishments); (2) Devales (Shrines of Sinhalese Gods); (3) Kovils (Shrines of Hindu Gods) (4) Agrahara (Area for residence of Brahmins).

Tragic event

In 1587 AD, King Rajasiha I laid a siege of the Portuguese Fort in Colombo. In retaliation the Portuguese despatched Thome de Sousa with a fleet to create a diversion by ravaging the southern coast of Ceylon. The fleet arrived at Devinuwara and the Portuguese historian Diogo do Couto describes "the pagoda of Tanavarem half a league from this city, the most celebrated and most resorted to by pilgrims of all in the Island, excepting that of Adam's Peak". On seeing the arrival of the Portuguese ships, the inhabitants of Devinuwara fled leaving a ghost town. Diogo do Couto described the action of Thome de Sousa and his men in the following words:

"The first thing in which they employed themselves was to destroy the idols, of which there were more than a thousand of diverse forms, some of clay, others of wood, others of copper, and many of them gilt. Having done this they demolished the whole of that infernal structure of pagodas, destroying their vaults and cloisters, knocking them all to pieces, and then proceeded to sack the storehouses, in which they found much ivory, fine clothes, copper, pepper, sandalwood, jewels, precious stones, and ornaments of the pagodas, and of everything they took what they liked, and to the rest they set fire, by which the whole was consumed. And for greater insult to the pagoda, they slaughtered inside several cows, which is the most unclean thing that can be, and for the purification of which are required great ceremonies. And they also set fire to a wooden car made after the manner of a towered house of seven stories."

When the destruction was completed all that remained were only some of the stone structures: the Galge stone temple up on the hill; one of the four stone gateways; and about four hundred stone pillars, some standing, some fallen and some broken, and all of these still exist.

The recovery

Then followed a bleak period for Devinuwara, until the middle of the 17th century when King Rajasiha II regained control of this area by driving out the Portuguese. He built a simple Vishnu Devale. In 1807 Cordiner visited Devinuwara and reported that there was a Vishnu Devale and a humble Vishnu Kovil

of mud and thatch. The 20th century saw considerable rebuilding activity with the construction of a three storey Vishnu Devale, Pansala, Viharas, Dagaba and a standing Buddha statue the height of a coconut tree. Improvements to the temple complex are still ongoing. In the thirteenth century Parakramabahu II inaugurated an annual Esala Perahera which is since held every year in July/August. Archaeological Commissioner H C P Bell claims that this "was the origin of such processions in the Island" and this would therefore considerably pre-date the Kandy Perahera. The Devinuwara Vishnu Devale authorities claim that over 750 such annual peraheras have been held. The organisation of the Perahera is the major annual task for the Basnayake Nilame and the Devinuwara Perahera is second only to the Kandy Perahera in grandeur and popularity.

Anuradha Seneviratna was formerly a Professor in the University of Peradeniya and Head of the Department of Sinhala. What he wrote about Polonnaruwa in the introduction to his book *Polonnaruwa: Medieval Capital of Sri Lanka* applies equally appropriately to Devinuwara: "With Buddhist and Hindu shrines in the same grounds embracing a common architectural tradition.... (it) was a city that symbolised the unity and integrity of the island as well as the religious and ethnic harmony which prevailed in medieval Sri Lanka."

CAPTIONS

*Fig 1 : Ptolemy's 110 AD Map of Taprobane
(Courtesy Wikipedia)*

*Fig 2 : Galge: 7th century AD Stone Temple,
Devinuwara (Photo: Thiru Arumugam)*

*Fig 3 : Three storey Vishnu Devale, Devinuwara
(Photo: Thiru Arumugam)*

*Fig 4 : The Simhasana where Skanda rested,
Devinuwara (Courtesy: Archaeological Dept.)*

*Fig 5 : Ancient Siva Lingam found near Othpilima
Vihara, Devinuwara (Courtesy: Institute of Fine Arts)*



All about chaps!

The art of biography is different from geography. Geography is about maps, But biography is about chaps!

— Edmund Bentley

Weapon of the weak

The weak have one weapon: the errors of those who think they are strong.

— Georges Bidault (the Observer 1962).

A Stock Exchange for Colombo

How the warring tribes buried the hatchet

by SOMASIRI DEVENDRA

(Former Chairman, Colombo Brokers' Association)

The Colombo Stock Exchange is very much in the news now, perhaps for the wrong reasons. But it merits serious mention in the financial pages and that is balm to the soul of those of us who had to contend with the facetious scribbling of 'whistle-stop' visiting journalists in the 1980s. For it was in 1984, that the Colombo Brokers' Association (CBA) abandoned its hoary "call-over" system of share trading in favour of open-floor trading and kick-started the Colombo Stock Exchange. But there have been so many changes to what we started that seems History now and, like most of History, largely forgotten! So this is an attempt at putting together the events that led to the establishment of the exchange as I, personally, experienced and remember it.

The CBA had begun share trading in an organised manner in 1896, when it was yet the "Colombo Sharebrokers' Association". Later, the tea and sundry produce departments of the member firms were also admitted to the Association which then took on its present name. Perhaps due to this dilution of interests, or other reasons I am unaware of, share trading did not result in the creation of a Stock Exchange, as it should have done. Although share brokers generally led the CBA – I remember the late Mark Bostock (John Keells) saying that it was "not their line of country" for tea brokers – the CBA became increasingly concerned with the problems of share brokers. This was the situation at the time my association with the CBA began. (I was with Somervilles'). Every morning, the share brokers would meet round a table for the daily 'call-over' and transact business with each other. It was a strictly limited operation then, in the late 1970s. By this time the Plantation companies had been nationalised and, since the bulk of trading had been in their shares, pretty little business there was to transact. Hotels were gradually entering the scene, since Agency House funds which could not be repatriated could be invested in this area. A few Industries/Commercials were emerging as promising investments but, by and large, the market was in the doldrums. What happened at these daily share meetings? Even as late as 1984, the scene was that of an earlier era: a handful of white-clad figures around a table intoning time-honoured phrases and desultorily murmuring set responses, before laying down pen and paper for a confidential and cordial chat: for the meetings were also a Clearing House of mercantile (and other) gossip!

I had joined Somervilles' to manage – and finally liquidate – a tea shipping facility (the Trincomalee Tea Trading Co. Ltd.) and had gradually drifted on to Rubber and Sundry produce broking. It was then that it became Somervilles' turn to nominate the Deputy Chairman of the CBA who would become Chairman the next year.

Somervilles' decided to nominate me. True, I knew something about tea and produce broking but hardly anything at all about share broking and the Chairman (Arjuna Dias) decided to throw me into the deep end: I was instructed to attend the daily share meetings and learn to trade in shares. So every morning, I would go to the offices of Ernst & Young, CBA Secretaries, where the meetings were held. The share subcommittee of the CBA was, then, led by the late Chairman of Forbes', Siri Wijesekera, who had a great interest in keeping the share market alive in those dog days. So I cut my teeth in the delightful – and educative – company of Ajith Jayaratne and Sydney Wanigasekera (Forbes'), Ariyaratne (John Keells') and Linton Soysa (Bartleets) – the last, a Prince among raconteurs!



• *Founding of the new Colombo Securities Exchange, 2 December 1985; Chairman, directors and alternate directors of the new Exchange (from left) Somasiri Devendra, (the late) K. Ariyaratnam, Ajith Jayaratne, (the late) Mallory Wijesinghe (Chairman), (the late) N.U. Jayawardene, (the late) Askar Moosajee, Z.A.I. Jafferjee, Malinda Moragoda (alternate director).*

What my Chairman knew (and I didn't) was that better days were around the corner and that matters would come to a head during my term as Chairman CBA. The first intimation of change was the rash of applications to join the venerable CBA, which had had only six members for umpteen years. Suddenly, there was a queue outside the door – Bankers, Exporters, Financiers, Tour Operators and what-have-you – all wanting to be brokers overnight. We took in a few non-controversial ones (like Merchant Bank) but soon had to call a halt since events outside were fast overtaking us.

What was happening was that we were getting involved in the "Stock Exchange Stakes". Some time before my term as Chairman (1983-84) the Finance Minister had initiated moves to set up a Stock Exchange, using the Chamber of Commerce as the forum for

consultations with the mercantile sector. Siri Wijesekera had been nominated by the CBA and talks were going on. It began to dawn on the CBA that, notwithstanding its near-hundred year record of fostering share trading in the country, the emerging plan was to set up a totally new company, which had already been incorporated under the name of the "Colombo Stock Exchange Ltd." Not only had it been incorporated, it already had recruited functionaries and certain CBA members were actively involved in it! This problem, which rocked the CBA, was now my headache. The Finance Minister - this was Ronnie de Mel - had summoned a meeting of concerned institutions at his Parliamentary office and the CBA felt that it should now be represented, not by its former nominee, but by the Chairman (me) and Chairmen of the member firms. I recall lunching with Mark and Mallory at the Colombo Club, planning how to keep CBA firmly in the saddle, now that ours was a house divided. Strings were discreetly pulled, and we were asked to attend. The Minister, astute and well-informed politician that he was, sensed the split between the very people he wanted to work together, and insisted that the warring "tribes should bury the hatchet" and (to mix a metaphor) produce a blueprint for a Stock Exchange. The alternative, he made us understand, was a State-run Exchange. Rushing in where angels fear to tread, I undertook the thankless task of bringing these fractious people together and my offer was, with a sigh of relief, accepted by the Minister. It was 22nd November 1983.

By this time, the Colombo Stock Exchange Ltd., under the able leadership of Siri Wijesekera and Dr. Darryn Gunasekera, was engaged in setting up the infrastructure required to start trading; actual trading, however, was done only by the CBA. Anyway, in keeping with my undertaking, I invited this company and the Federation of Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FCCI) to meet with the CBA and work on the elusive blueprint. Among those who turned up were all CBA members (the Merchant Bank was a member by then) and a large number of Chambers who were members of FCCI. Among those absent, though, was the Colombo Stock Exchange Ltd. So it looked like a case of "Hamlet without the Prince". But a Director, representing one of the Chambers, was present and agreed to contact his colleagues and arrange another meeting, this time under the aegis of FCCI to avoid any (real or imagined) personal animosities. I reported the progress to the Minister and awaited developments with bated breath. By this time it was December, 1983, and the meeting was fixed for the following month, January. Again, at the very last minute, there was a hitch; the Colombo Stock Exchange Ltd. refused to be a party to a joint proposal to the Minister. The meeting could not take place and, in a letter to the Minister, dated that day, I said: "We would like to assure you that we are most anxious to work with you towards setting up a Stock Exchange, particularly since our Association has, for nearly a hundred years, tried alone to provide a service to fill the gap occasioned

by the lack of an Exchange. May we, therefore, with respect, suggest that you direct all parties to appear before the Cabinet sub-committee so that the consensus desired by you could be arrived in the open."

The Minister, who had kicked the ball off in the first place, now deftly collected my pass and carried it towards the goal. By mid-February, the Secretary to the Cabinet summoned us: this time there were only two gladiators, CBA and the Colombo Stock Exchange Ltd. I decided to go alone, so that none of my colleagues would see me in, what I hoped, wouldn't be my hour of defeat. Our opponents were ably represented by three eminent men. The President viewed us bleakly, like a disapproving Headmaster, asking us why we could not get on together. I had decided that I would hold my tongue unless directly addressed. The other side had no such inhibitions and launched into an explanation. H.E. listened for all of 15 seconds (or so it seems to me, now) and butted in. "Yes, yes, I know all that. I don't think we can leave this to you, now. We will have to take over." There followed some discussion with Ronnie de Mel and Lalith Athulathmudali who flanked him and the decision was made. Lalith, then Trade Minister, would summon all parties (including FCCI) and would get a blueprint drawn up.

The scene now shifts to the Trade Ministry. We were summoned in late March, by which time I was nearing the end of my term of office. Again, I opted to go alone but, this time, armed with some documents that could break a deadlock. I seated myself far down the table; the others flanked the Minister. Discussions commenced, with only modest contributions from me. I felt deeds spoke louder than words for the CBA. Finally, the Minister asked us for our Articles, Bye-laws, Trading rules, etc. The FCCI, being merely *amicus curiae* did not have to comply. I handed over ours; comprehensive and time-tested. The "other party" had come unabashedly empty handed. Expecting such a stone-walling tactic, I had brought with me their glossy, untested documents, which I apologetically handed over to the Minister. The deadlock was averted. The Minister promised to study them and on that note, the meeting ended.

My term of office also ended a few days later. The appearance of non-CBA brokers on the scene provided me with my theme at my Review of the past year, at handing over: "...In this bright day it is our duty to afford a sober counterpoint to the dazzling new apostles of a New Deal in Brokering. The danger is very great that the stock-in-trade of the would-be Brokers would be innovative in nature. It is the older, more sober Broker who has now to come forward and convince the powers-that-be of the merits of the standards, the ethics and the objectivity that have earned for our profession only one epithet in all its years in existence. I refer to the term 'the honest broker'. Gentlemen, we are in danger of witnessing the demise of the honest broker.

"I take as my theme today' the need for this Association to foster and nurture the traditional values

of a Broker. That it can be done, I am certain of. Equally am I certain that it can be done only if we take a long, hard look at ourselves. Let us ask ourselves whether we are professionally competent; whether we are doing the best by our principals; whether we are following, in letter and spirit, the ethical standards of our profession; whether we are joining hands with those who are our colleagues; whether we are training the next generation in the techniques and standards that we uphold ourselves. Brokering, gentlemen, is no high technology, no esoteric discipline. It is only an education in honesty."

It was singularly fortunate that Mallory Wijesinghe of Bartleets' was the next Chairman. What a good thing it turned out to be! Using the leverage of his personal standing, he was able to do a great deal. We were agreed that it would be disastrous to await a government-brokered Stock Exchange. Lalith Athulathmudali had taken over the new Ministry of Internal Security and our problem was relegated to the back burner. Mallory decided that we would just walk away from the morning meetings and conduct our trading in the open, in full view of the public: we could draw a chalk line on the floor, he said, between the public and ourselves, and set up shop. But before that, we decided, we would pick up some ideas from another Stock Exchange. Bombay, the oldest in the region, was not far away. So, in May 1984, away we went to 'Bombay Merry Hai': Mallory, Percy de Silva (our Consultant), Sivaprakasam (Forbes'), Ariyaratnam (John Keells'), Linton (Bartleets') and I (Somervilles), with Susantha Fernando as Secretary.

We arrived in Bombay at Vesak time. We had many, many talks with people who mattered; discussions over 'parata' lunches to squeeze in as many productive hours as possible; spoke to IAS administrators, Brokers, Bankers (people whose names cropped up later in India's biggest Stock Exchange scam); saw the enormously noisy Bombay Exchange housed in its new (yet being built) 28-story building on the site of the tree under which the 'Native Brokers' started trading a hundred and fifty years ago; were initiated into the arcane world of "tharani wallahs" and "sadha blocks" and "kerb trading"; saw the Indian-built computers keeping track of the trading. We went, we saw, and we came back.

We came back feeling that, while Bombay was an education, we had to evolve our own system. And we set up the Share Trading Floor. We had blackboards with the names of listed companies painted on. We had a nylon cord separating the public from us, their brokers. We had some potted palms to relieve the bareness of our surroundings. And we had Percy, our Consultant, a benevolently beaming referee of our stumbling steps. We abandoned the old "Call-over" system, opting for the "Open outcry" system for transparency. Due to the vagaries of the English alphabet, I was able to put through the first sale: a small lot of Abans'.

Under Mallory, expansion took place fast. We were incorporated as a company ("The Colombo Securities Exchange") Limited by guarantee and it's

nice to know that my signature appears on the "Birth Certificate", as it were, of what was to become the Colombo Stock Exchange. We formed ourselves into sub-committees to evolve systems, we acquired office space and a staff, partitions and new boards for listing came up. And yet, all the while, the Colombo Stock Exchange Ltd. remained "in being", claiming to be trading in shares, somewhere. And then, suddenly, Siri Wijesekera of Forbes' passed away: the man we fought with but deeply respected. His successor in the Colombo Stock Exchange Ltd. was N.U. Jayawardena. Lingering animosities died with Siri and the time was ripe to work out some sort of alliance. Under Mallory's strategy, Ajith Jayaratne (Forbes') worked as the 'honest broker' and, finally, the "Stock Exchange" and the "Securities Exchange" agreed to merge.

So one day, I went to the Floor as usual, only to find this, the 2nd of December, 1985, was THE GREAT DAY. All the heavy-weights were there, dressed up to the nines and I, alone, in my traditional Somervilles' white shirt and slacks. Having just come off the Floor, hastily borrowing somebody's tie, I posed with the others for a formal photograph. There, Mallory and N.U. stand tall, flanked by Asker Moosajee, Ajith Jayaratne, Ariyaratnam, Milinda Moragoda, Z.A.I. Jafferjee, and myself. Behind us, the board proclaims "The Colombo Securities Exchange Stockmarket." On my wall hangs a framed copy of this photograph which was presented to me when I was dined-out by the share broking community when I left Somervilles' the next year.

My story should really end here, with the twinning. But the name itself needs to be explained away. Soon after all this, the Colombo Stock Exchange Ltd. decided to go into liquidation, since its day was done. This left the name "Stock Exchange" available to us and, without undue hurry, and in the fullness of time, we became the Colombo Stock Exchange in name as well as in fact.

So, ten years after the 'parting of ways', it was pleasant to be invited by Mallory, on behalf of the Colombo Stock Exchange to write the history of Share Trading in Sri Lanka for the volume commemorating a hundred years of the trade.

A talk with Hitler

This morning I had another talk with the German Chancellor, Herr Hitler and here is the paper which bears his name upon it as well a mine ... 'We regard the agreement signed last night and the Anglo-German Naval Agreement, as symbolic of the desire of our two peoples never to go to war with one another again.'

- Neville Chamberlain; speech at Heston airport 1918

All I need to make a comedy is a park, a policeman and a pretty girl.

- Charlie Chaplin *My Autobiography* 1964.

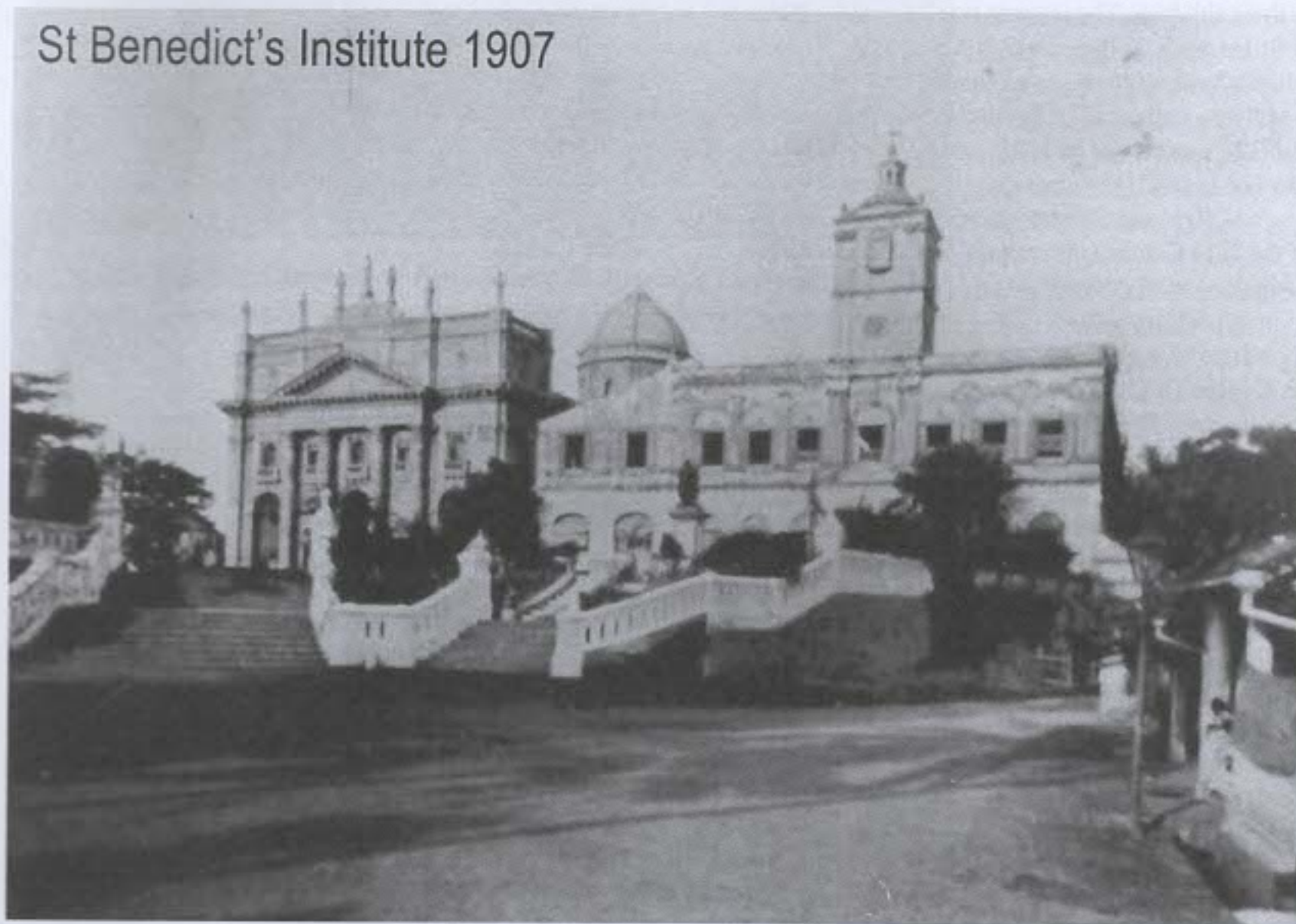
Felix Dias *is a former captain of his College cricket team and spearheaded many committees that ran numerous school activities and is regarded, unquestionably, as the quintessential Benedictine. Here he traces how some "Holy Rebels" brought about the birth of Kotahena's pioneer Catholic school as...*

St Benedict's College celebrates its sesquicentenary

A heroic tale of Catholic Missionary love and labour unfolds itself in the history of the past 150 years of St Benedict's College. If one counts the preceding 26 years of its existence in the little English School at Wolfendhal Street under its Colonial title of 'The Roman Catholic Seminary', St Benedict's is the first Catholic English school in the island.

same year, three De La Salle Brothers who were on their way to Europe from Mangalore disembarked at Galle and paid a visit to Colombo. Bishop Sellani seized his chance and prevailed upon the Brothers to stay in Colombo and take charge of the college to which they agreed without any reference to their superiors in Europe. The college under the three 'Holy Rebels' Bro Hidulphus (Director), Daniel and

St Benedict's Institute 1907



The school at Wolfendhal was managed by the Oratorian Fathers. Three Irish principals Lennon, Doiley and O'Connel and two Ceylonese heads Don Domingo Wijesinghe and Francis Sales were in charge till the school moved to Kotahena in 1865 and became St Benedict's College under the Sylvestro – Benedictine monks.

The De La Salle Brothers came to St Benedict's by one of those providential designs. In 1865 Bishop Sillani, the Apostolic Vicar of Colombo had completed a monastery for the Sylvestro – Benedictine monks in Kotahena. In December the

Leo were given the Monastery for their residence and classrooms. This building now houses the Brothers Quarters and the Cathedral Parish Hall.

The official and legal take over of the St Benedict's College came about on 23rd April 1868 under Bro Pastoris, Provincial Visitor. A German Bro Modesta Marie (1868 – 1875) was the first official Director of the College. His group of Brothers made a vigorous start with 200 pupils and seven classes and in their very first year impressed Government officials and the Central School Commission. General Hodgson, who made the first inspection expressed his

'unqualified satisfaction at so complete a success in so short a time'. Bro Modeste conducted the first prize giving, inaugurated a debating club, and introduced Art and Modern Languages.

Things moved fast and the Brothers Gabriel (1880 -1887) and Maurice (1887 – 1889) saw the College pioneering in Commercial Education, being the FIRST SCHOOL in the country to introduce this stream. With the number of students increasing, new buildings were erected at the site, then an unused graveyard, to accommodate the students.

However, there was a knotty problem that dogged the education given by the Brothers. They did not teach classics, being forbidden by the Rules of 1717 of their Founder John Baptist De La Salle, who feared that he would lose his Brothers to priesthood, if they became proficient in Latin. This situation created the need for a School in Colombo that taught classics to their children. The answer was the establishment of St Joseph's College, which Archbishop Bonjean initially contemplated as a branch institution under the Oblate Fathers. The Latin problem was eventually resolved much later in 1923, when the Brothers were allowed to teach the classics.

Arts and Science prospered in the early years of the 20th Century, the pupils' work reached such a standard as to deserve an invitation from the organisers to a place at the Ceylon Court in the famous Paris Exhibition in 1900. They also exhibited their work at St Louis and London Industrial Exhibitions. The first three decades of the new century under Directors, Christian, Camillus, Cyprian and Bolcan could be termed it's Golden Era for Academic results as it reached it's harvest of Science Scholarships, Exhibitions and Hewavitharana Mathematics Prizes. In fact, St Benedict's became known as 'Home for Science and Mathematics'. The Roll of Honour included among many others, Gregory Weeramantry, U. D. R. Caspersz and the Prodigious Peter A. Pillai, who with his gamut of distinctions, was reputed to be one of the finest brains in the British Empire. In fact, at the prizegiving in 1920, the Colonial Secretary Sir Graeme Thomson in his speech stated, 'Mr Pillai will need a bullock cart to carry away all his prizes'. After Cambridge, where he obtained his first PhD, he decided to enter Priesthood and after his doctorate in

Divinity in Rome, he returned to Sri Lanka to become the first Ceylonese Rector of St Joseph's College. He served St Joseph's for over 20 years and also began the Aquinas University College which is the only Catholic University in Sri Lanka.

The erudite Brother Wulton James (1921 – 1923) a great visionary, already in 1922 advocated vocational and agricultural education and also the wider use of the vernaculars of the country, long before it was thought of by governments. Brother Luke (1931 – 1939 & 1943 – 1947), an Old Benedictine and the older brother of Fr Peter Pillai, the first native Director of St Benedict's College was a strict disciplinarian and a man with grit and determination. He adorned his alma mater with an awesome 3-storey block to house the boarders and the physics, chemistry and biology laboratories and a lecture hall, which were the envy of other schools and even the University. Under his vigilant eyes there was born out of the Bloemendhal marshes a magnificent playground, which was initially ready for use by 1940, but taken over soon thereafter by the Royal Navy with the outbreak of World War II. His first seven-year stint was termed 'Seven years of plenty' and he is widely regarded as probably the greatest Director of the College.



• The main building

The war years were very painful seeing the exodus of students and Kotahena residents. The most unenviable task of finding alternative places for the College fell on Brother Hugh Farrington (1942 – 1943), who after much travelling and meeting people decided to open two branches, one at Veyangoda and the other at Wattala. Wattala branch later became St Anthony's College. The regrouping and rebuilding after the war fell on Brother Luke on his second term and the Englishman Brother Austin. The playground

also had to be rehabilitated and that was completed in time for the start of the 1950 Cricket season.

Brother Oliver (1951 – 1955) gave the College another 3-storey structure with a new Hall on the third floor. Brother Alban (1956 – 1958) came to St Benedict's after building St Anne's Kurunegala into a top grade school, was a great lover of sports



• *An iconic landmark of Kotahena, St Lucia's Cathedral and parish church of St Benedict's.*

in addition to his other abilities. He was overjoyed to see St Benedict's becoming the All Island cricket champions after 40 years in 1957 under L. P. Rayen. He rewarded the school building with an up-to-date pavilion and laying turf pitches, which were available to only a very few schools at that time.

To steer St Benedict's through probably its most critical period of its existence there was Frenchman Brother Athanatius. He was at the helm of affairs during the Schools Take-Over in 1961. He rallied round him loyal alumni and students, parents and friends of the College and decided to run St Benedict's as a private non-fee levying school. It was a very trying time and yet he kept the Green & White fluttering in a troublesome and stormy atmosphere. He was succeeded by genial Brother Lawrence (1962 – 1964), whose love for his alma mater egged him on to keep his dear College going, maintaining its high standards.

To youthful Brother Flavian (1965 -1968) fell the duty of guiding the college during her centenary year. With his liberal outlook he increased staff and student participation in administration. The Centenary Celebration were held on a grand scale, the highlight being the visit of the Prime Minister Dudley Senanayake to preside at the Prize Giving. Under Brother Benildus (1974 – 1983), the school achieved financial stability, while the much revered Brother

Alexander (1984 – 1989) brought back the Old Boys of 1950s and 1960s vintage, including the overseas Bens, in large numbers, to support the school. Several branches of the OBU were formed in main cities in Australia, U.K, Canada and United States.

The 125th Anniversary of the College was celebrated in 1990 during the tenure of Brother Philip with

the opening of the Luke Memorial building by President R. Premadasa. The building boom which started under Brother Alexander continued under succeeding Directors. The school now has new facilities in both the Primary and upper school including three computer laboratories, more classrooms, and library space, a completely revamped playground with an efficient drainage system, a modern swimming pool, new basketball courts etc. The tenure of Brother Granville (2003 – 2012) was also fruitful with good academic achievements and an upsurge in sports all round. The College, for the first time

in its history won the All Island Schools Athletics Championship in 2007. The good work started by Brother Granville is being continued by the present Director Brother Janaka, with Bens excelling in Athletics. Among the present young athletes is 15-year old Sahan Thenuka Rajapakse and 17-year old Supun Nimansa, who are Sri Lanka's brightest Olympics prospects. The College is fortunate to have one of the National Coaches I. D. Premasiri as its Head Coach. Just last week St. Benedict's College finished overall runners-up in senior Sir John Tarbat public schools meet, breaking 4 long standing records, a performance never seen in its long history. St Benedict's also won the All Island Inter School T20 Cricket Championship in 2015 with Mahel Jayalath as Prefect of Games and Master in charge Vivian Saverimuthapulle. Music, both western and eastern, oriental dancing and English Shakespearean drama and Sinhala debating are ingrained in young Benedictines and they have performed creditably in All Island schools competitions.

In additional to the many great Directors, there were several other Brothers, who toiled hard for the students of St Benedict's. The most loved among them undoubtedly was Brother James from Burma. He provided spiritual guidance to thousands of students and trained hundreds to be Altar Servers with a number of them later becoming Bishops and

Priests. Brother Francis from India prepared thousands of primary students for First Holy Communion and deservedly a 4-storey new block in the primary is named after him.

Brothers Mathias and Modestus were more like fathers to many Boarders who came under their care. Brother Theodoret was the Dean of the Faculty of Science, during whose time St Benedict's produced great many doctors, engineers and scientists. In an earlier era Pro Director Brother Cassian was the right hand man of the great Brother Christian, who in addition to teaching planned and supervised the construction of the iconic Clock Tower Building. One must also never forget young Brother Edward, who was like a breath of fresh air with his song request programme during the interval and the launch of 'Our Own Shows' in the sixties. This was re-enacted on 6 June 2015 to a packed audience at the BMICH with an absolutely brilliant display of vocal talent and equally

organised a number of Geography exhibitions. K. S. Perera, art teacher, George Atkinson, gymnastics coach and prefect of discipline, Horace Perera, historian, Major Douglas Chapman, commander of the cadet corps are all remembered with gratitude. In more recent times, Wilfred Perera, Sinhalese and Arts teacher, J. F. Jegarajasingham, Editor of many College magazines including the Centenary and Millennium 2000 issues, Alfred Fernandopulle, the trilingual science and mathematics teacher, C Pathmanathan, the scout master and mentor stand out.

Sports at St Benedict's in general and cricket in particular suffered a great deal in the first half of its existence due to the unavailability of its own playground. There were, however, some notable feats such as Norman S. Koelmeyer's champion cricket team of 1917, the first champion football team of 1928 led by Edward Jayatunge. Soccer tradition was, however, maintained from that time up to recent years.



• The clock tower now a heritage site.

The 1950s and 1960s were the Golden Years of Benedictine Sports, reigning supreme in football, hockey, basketball and cricket with excellent coaches in Albert Fernando (football), Brian Assey (hockey), Ram Sundaralingam (basketball) Edward Kelaart and Bertie Wijesinha (cricket) and exemplary Prefects of Games in Brother Ladislaus, A Gnanapragasam and Bede Puvimannasinghe. Several national stars were produced during this period, notably Percy Perera, Asia's best shooter and Cosmas Perera (basketball), Rayen Brothers L. P. and J. P, Dennis de Rosayro, Fernando Brothers Stanley, Homer and Subhas (hockey) Rohan Gunaratne

(rugby), T. Wanigaratne (football) and Lionel and Ranjit Fernando (cricket). Angelo Santiago led several Benedictine teams to championship honours in table tennis in the late sixties and early seventies. He reigned supreme in table tennis becoming the National Champion in 1971, '74, '78, '85, and '86. In cricket, the 1964 champion cricket team of Sunil Fernando, termed the 'Invincibles', remains the best team in the school's history. Coaches Edward Jayawardene (football), Batcho Selvaraja and Ravi Irugalbandara (hockey) also produced many champion teams.

strong performances on instruments, the whole show being of international standard.

There were also hundreds of lay teachers who gave their lives' services to mould the students of St Benedict's. It is too numerous to name them all. However, it is my duty to name a few. Standing tall among them was R. H. Phillips, the doyen of Ceylon's science teachers, who was called the perfect Catholic educator by the Head Prefect Anslem Gunasekera, now a Medical specialist in Australia, when Mr & Mrs Phillips were invited to be Chief Guests at the 1960 Prize Giving. Bonny Fonseka was the much loved commerce teacher and the choir director. The choral tradition of the College which peaked under him is being still maintained under the present young Choral Director Krishan Rodrigo. A Gnanapragasam

The contribution made by St Benedict's to the Catholic Church and catholic education is immeasurable. It gave the church its first Ceylonese bishop in Dr Bede Beckmeyer, the first Indian bishop of Latin Rite Dr Tiburtius Roche, the first Ceylonese

bishop of Jaffna Dr Emilianus Pillai, the younger brother of Father Peter Pillai and Brother Luke and two current bishops Archbishop Emeritus Dr Oswald Gomis and Auxiliary Bishop Dr Emmanuel Fernando. Lasallian education which began at St Benedict's spread its wings all over the island with sister schools coming up in all parts of the country, which thrived upto the time of the schools take over and less so thereafter, left it's mark on the Catholic Church with seven of the eleven Bishops of Sri Lanka at present being products of Lasallian Schools. It also provided Directors for all Lasallian schools and many other Catholic schools, with four of St Peter's Rectors being Old Benedictines, including it's first Rector Fr. Nicholas Perera and it's present Rector Fr. Trevor Martin.

In the fields of science, medicine, engineering, law, academia, business, architecture, arts, media, advertising and other fields, Benedictines stand out compared to many other schools. The Old Boys Union was founded in 1904 by two of Ceylon's most illustrious sons, Sir Thomas De Sampayo, the first Ceylonese acting Chief Justice and Sir Marcus Fernando, the first Ceylonese to obtain Doctor of Medicine degree (M. D.) of University of London. Among the many Benedictine elite are Prof P. B. Fernando, first Professor of Medicine of the Faculty of Medicine, University of Ceylon, Prof A. W. Mailvaganam, first Professor of Physics, Professor Terrance Chapman, first Ceylonese Professor of Bacteriology, Dr A. W. R. Joachim, first Ceylonese Director of Agriculture, Prof A. Kandiah, first Ceylonese to obtain the Doctor of Science (DSc) Degree, Dr C. V. S. Corea, father of Homeopathy in Sri Lanka, Dr A. N. S. Kulasinghe renowned multi-discipline engineer and innovator, who was the first chairman of Sri Lanka State Engineering Corporation, Prof Amirtharajah Appiah, world authority in environment engineering, Architect Prof Lakshman Alwis, Prof. Nihal Amarasinghe, development banker and international Civil Servant, Dr Oswald Fernando, world renowned Kidney Transplant Surgeon, senior engineer Dr Michael Joachim, incumbent chairman, Sri Lanka State Engineering Corporation. engineer John N. L. C. Fernando, pioneer IT professional in Sri Lanka who introduced computer technology to students of St Benedict's way back in the early 1980s. Dr Rohan H. Phillips, chief engineer McDonalds Worldwide, Service Commanders Air Chief Marshal Dick C. Perera, Inspector General of Police Herbert Weerasinghe, Army Commander General Cecil Waidyaratne, V. A. Sugathadasa, first Minister of Sports, House Speaker Stanley Tillekeratne, Reggie Candappa, father of advertising industry in Sri Lanka, Newspaper editors Felix Goonawardena (Times of Ceylon), Clarence Fernando (Daily News), Lasantha Wickramatunge (Sunday Leader), E. C. B. Wijesinghe (Sun Newspaper) who was also the legendary stage

actor well known for his roles in 'He Comes from Jaffna', 'Well Mudaliyar', 'The Dowry Hunter' etc, still remembered by the Colombo society. Sinhala cinema has also been enriched by Old Benedictines Vijaya Kumaranatunga, Ravindra Randeniya and Robin Fernando. St Benedict's has produced some of best entrepreneurs like Sir Chittamplam A. Gardiner, Hubert A. De Silva, Herbert Cooray, K. C. Selvanathan, founders of large business conglomerates'. Being the pioneer of commerce education St Benedict's have produced a host of bankers including Edgar Gunatunge and heads of many private and public sector institutions and several Ministry secretaries. Last but not least World renowned Buddhist monks Most Venerable Narada Thera and Most Venerable Soma Thera are proud products of St Benedict's College.

Any description of St Benedict's is incomplete without mentioning the groundsman par excellence Rogus Perera, who shed more sweat for the College than any other employee. Rogus was the ground boy for 56 years and always tried to do a perfect job. His aim was to provide the best playing conditions for the students. He needed no supervision whatsoever in carrying out his duties.

The main event of the Sesquicentennial celebration was held on Friday, 10 July 2015, beginning with concelebration of Holy Mass by His Eminence Malcolm Cardinal Ranjith with Benedictine bishops and priests at St Lucia's Cathedral, Kotahena at 8:00 am. This was followed by an assembly under the Banyan tree presided over by President Maithripala Sirisena. A first day cover was handed over to the President to commemorate this occasion.

(This article was first published in the Sunday Times of 28 June 2015 and is used with permission)



Fourth rate

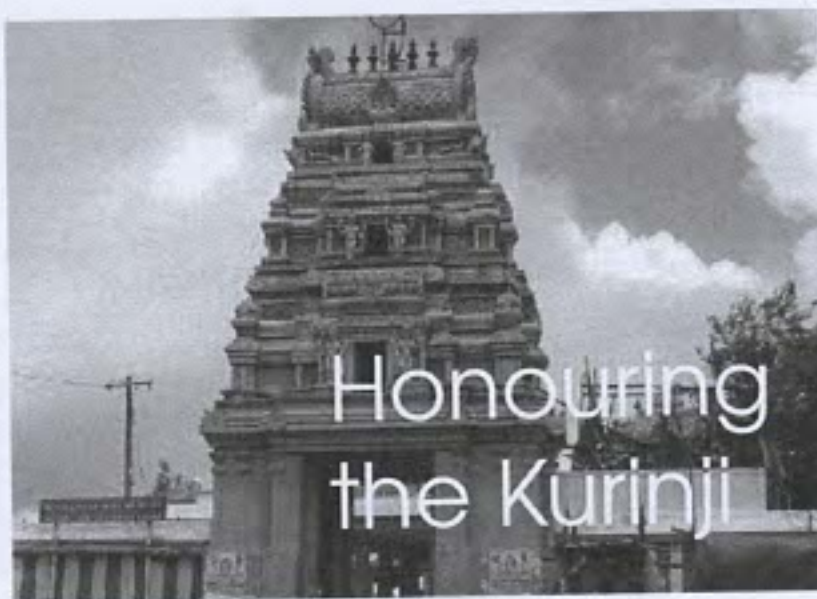
We do need a sense of urgency in our outlook in the regeneration of industry and enterprise, because otherwise what really worries me is that we are going to end up as a fourth rate country and I don't want to see that.

— Prince Charles; speech at Edinburgh 1985

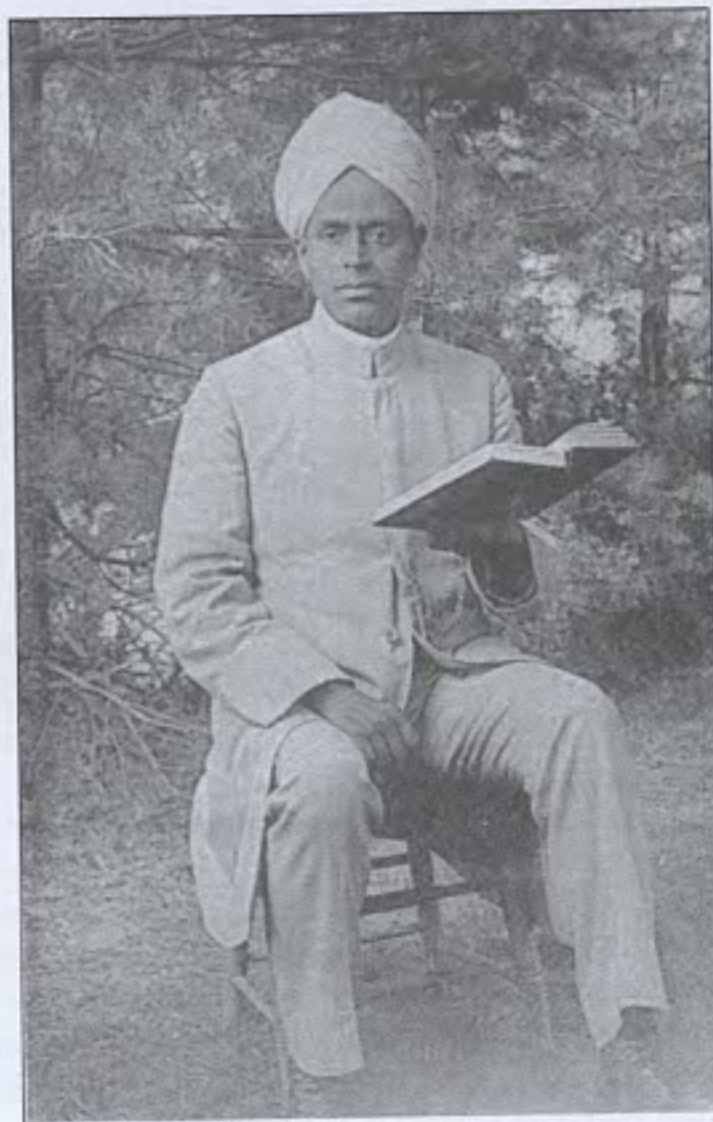
Won't be dictated to

Ten thousand women marched through the streets of London [in support of women's suffrage] saying: "We will not be dictated to," and then went off to become stenographers.

— G.K. Chesterton 1986



It was in 1820 that the first American missionaries came to South Asia, establishing a mission in Ceylon. In the 1830s they moved to Madras before moving into the Arcots and Madura, establishing in one, in due course, a hospital now with an international reputation, and American College, another outstanding institution, in the other. But



• *Sir Ponnambalan Ramanathan*

with the heat of Jaffna, Madurai and Vellore rather overwhelming them, six weeks in the hills is what they sought. Ooty of the British was too snooty for them. Sirumalai near Madurai was not cool enough to prevent the toll of summer heat and the diseases it brought with it. Then they 'discovered' Kodaikanal, raising in 1845 the first two houses there, Sunnyside and Shelton. And so South India got its second hill station, a less formal one for the times. Telling that

story and detailing Kodaikanal is an eponymously titled book compiled by INTACH Kodaikanal, with Pradeep Chakravarthy, Anil Choudhury, Jayashree Kumar, Girija Viraraghavan and a host of photographers playing leading roles.

With Pradeep involved, it is no surprise that we go to 'Kodai's' beginnings in inscriptions and beyond, the Mahabharata. During the Pandava-Kaurava battles, Arjuna decided to take a break and headed for the Palani Hills. There, he laid down his bow and arrows in a forest and took a nap – and Vil(bow)patti village, gateway to Kodai, was born.

And when the Pandavas and Kauravas gambled at dice, it was at Dolphin's Nose *aka* Joothadumparai (joothum = dice, adum = playing, parai=rock). Fortunately for me there was much of the present in the pages that followed, particularly the stories of houses and institutions. And when I came to the Kūrinji Andavar temple, a long forgotten connection suddenly dawned on me.

The temple was built as the Sri Kūrinji Easware temple in 1936 by Lady Ramanathan. Now, Lady Ramanathan was an Englishwoman who was born in Australia where her father was into gold mining. All references to her maiden name record her only as R L Harrison. She, as a young woman, had been attracted by the Theosophical Movement in Australia and, searching for further spiritual enlightenment, arrived in Ceylon where Sir Ponnambalan Ramanathan became her guru.

Ramanathan, an outstanding personality in South Asian history, was a leading advocate in the Island who was honoured by the Inns of Court with the rare distinction of 'Barrister honoris causa', without having sat for any exams or Inns of Court dinners in England. He went on to become, in 1879, the youngest nominee, at 28, to the Ceylon Legislature, representing the Tamil-speaking constituency. A decade later, his were the first steps that were to lead Ceylon into Independence when he founded the Ceylon National Association and, in 1890, petitioned the British Parliament seeking greater rights for the Island's people. This led to the Donoughmore Reforms and universal franchise. Ramanathan, who had given up law (he was the Island's first Ceylonese Solicitor-General and even acted several times as Attorney-General) and politics for spiritualism, was persuaded to return to politics and contest the first universal elections in South Asia, when Ceylon polled on December 13, 1911. And he won in a canter, the first Ceylonese Member to be elected to the reformed Legislative Council and was described as "the fittest person to be elected to the Ceylonese seat." He was to have a magnificent tenure in the Council but outside it, his commitment to spiritualism never wavered after Arulparanandha Swamigal of Tanjore came into his life. Thereafter, Ramanathan became a regular visitor of Tanjore and, in time, a leading interpreter of Saiva



• Lady Leelavathi Ramanathan

Siddhanta. His erudition on the subject took him to America on a year-long lecture tour in 1906, for which he gave up his seat in the Legislative Council after serving it for 13 years. He was, to many, the Swami Vivekananda of Ceylon.

As his Secretary on this tour went his disciple R L Harrison. After the tour, she married Ramanathan

Hugh Karunanayake adds this interesting sidelight on Sir Ponnambalan Ramanathan

Rev James Cartman former Principal of Central College, Batticaloa, and Wesley College Colombo, was a keen student of Hinduism and published his work "Hinduism in Ceylon" in 1957. He referred to the death and internment of Sir Ponnambalan Ramanathan as follows.

"Sir P. Ramanathan died on the 27 November 1930 at the age of ninety. He had been an eminent politician and patriot, a member of the Legislative Council, a most devout Hindu, and an altogether an outstanding man. For high caste Hindus, cremation is the normal custom, but a recognised saint may have a Samadi burial ie burial where the body is placed in a sitting position in a vault. In his will, Sir P. Ramanathan prescribed for himself a Samadhi burial. His corpse was placed in a sitting position inside a wooden box which had a glass case immediately above his head. This box was lowered into a concrete cell (previously prepared) and a stone slab was placed above it. On the top of the stone slab, a linga has been set up, and this linga is now the main object of worship in the inner shrine of the temple built over this mausoleum. A Brahmin priest daily performs the religious rites at the temple. The temple is called the Sri Rama Nathesvara Temple, Imuvil."

who had been a widower for many years. She became a Hindu and took the name Leelavathi. After the reformed Council years, they spent much of their time in Kodaikanal where they had three houses, Ammanadi, Sivanadi, and Muruganadi. When Sir Ramanathan died in 1924, she took to wearing the white of a Hindu widow, built the temple in her husband's memory, overlooking the Palani shrine of Lord Muruga and the slopes that would be covered with kurinji flowers, and would worship there every afternoon.

The Ramanathan's only child, a daughter, married S. Natesa Pillai, the grandson of Ramanathan's Tanjore guru and they settled in Ceylon. After Lady Ramanathan's death, she handed over the temple to the Palani Devasthanam. And there it stands as memorial to a Western-oriented Jaffna statesman who became an ardent preacher of Siddha Siddhantha and his English wife who became a devoted Hindu and who honoured with a temple not only her husband's memory but also the flower of the Palani Hills.

This article is published courtesy of CSA member S. Muthiah's widely read weekly column

Madras Miscellany of India's THE HINDU newspaper.

(From page 9)

His pranks were usually harmless. However, sometimes they ended with unexpected consequences. On one occasion, he had gone to Chennai, Madras in those days, to be with a family friend. A few days before he was due to get back, a telegram was received notifying that Gunner had drowned in Chennai. When the sad news reached Colombo, two of my friends rushed to Jaffna. While they were having lunch with the family, Gunner turned up and told them: "Ada! you beggars are having a paka feed on my account?" It later transpired that he had sent the telegram himself as if it was from his friend. When his mother saw him, she was in shock and had to be taken to hospital. Not everyone was very amused at the time.

I lost touch with him after my first year and so I am unaware of the many interesting escapades others would have experienced with him. When there were so many who had gone on to achieve bigger and better things in life, you may wonder why I should write about Gunner with such affection and admiration. Perhaps it may be because every now and then in our journey through life we meet someone who shows us that there is much sparkle and joy to be derived from life. By romping along the risky edge they remind us that there is more to life than a dreary trudge along the trodden path.

(Gunner is a fictitious name. Many who knew him would tell me that it is futile attempt to protect his identity).

(CONCLUDED)

The Gerreyn brothers Mark and Max — by RIVIKULA

Brothers Mark and Max belonged to a long line of the Gerreyn family who hailed from Kotahena in Colombo and its surrounds. They had been surrounded by a family of prominent artists from infancy – their paternal grandfather was a painter, mother an Art teacher and older brother Malcolm was a gifted artist and all great lovers of the human figure and a great source of inspiration to them.



• A youthful Mark Gerreyn.

Of all of them, it was perhaps Mark and younger brother Max, both artists of different genres, who reached international stature – the first, as a professional cartoonist and the other, as a portrait painter, a caricaturist – for Max,

mainly as a devoted hobby.

Mark, who died in November 1989 at the relatively young age of 58, reached the pinnacle of his profession as a political and humorous cartoonist and visual satirist. He was acknowledged as Sri Lanka's best political cartoonist for the 35 years after the famed Aubrey Collette. Mark wore the mantle of Collette when the famed Lake House editors Cecil Graham, Tarzie Vittachi and cartoonist Collette had no choice but to flee the country to escape imprisonment for their open journalistic disapproval of the new political regime that replaced the previous UNP government.

From a very young age Mark displayed a prodigious talent for drawing and cartoons as a student at St Benedict's College, Kotahena (which celebrate their Sesquicentenary this year) where he received all his formal education. Later, in school years, he dropped out of Commercial studies and with a lot of coaching and encouragement from KS Perera, the legendary art master in the school, he went on to study art briefly under Mudaliyar ACGS Amerasekera and followed that with studies at Heywood (later Government) College of Fine Arts in Colombo under



the then Principal, specialist in portrait painting JDA Perera.

His first job, however, was a brief stint as a steno-typist at Free Lanka Insurance Company and with his marriage to childhood sweetheart Leonie Joseph in 1953 also came a career change. The Lake House Newspaper Group offered him a job as cartoonist on the 'Dinamina'. This paper was in Sinhala and at that time had a wider readership than the 'Ceylon Daily News'. Mark coped because he got peer help with translations and technical issues and anyway management quickly transferred him to work in the more familiar English medium of 'The Daily News'. His skills blossomed as a very astute and humorous political commentator and the icing came on the cake when Mark created his iconic character strip-cartoon 'Simple Simeon'. In today's idiom 'Simple Simeon' went viral and to those aged enough to recall it remains as Mark's fabulously autobiographical, droll and very hilarious visual cartoon legacy.

Mark was warmly befriended by Presidents J.R. Jayawardene and R. Premadasa and honoured with a presentation on national television by the former. President JR, in fact, had his own personal collection of his favourite Mark Gerreyn cartoons which are to be found in the book 'JR in Cartoons' edited by the JR Jayawardene Cultural Centre. Mark's won international recognition when the prestigious International Pavilion of Humour honoured him five times over a period of ten years and The International Salon of Cartoons selected his cartoons on nuclear war and the horror of famine as exceptional works for the year 1986. Uniquely these plaudits came

for Mark after he had moved on from his long service with Lake House and served on the 'Sun' and 'The Island' in turn as their leading cartoonist. His last two cartoons were published posthumously, one on Friday the 17th November 1989 – poignantly barely twenty-fours after he had passed away. The second and final work titled 'Born Shri' appeared on Sunday the 19th November 1989 in 'The Weekend Sunday'.

Young brother Max's career in the world of art was somewhat different and as he puts it: "I had a dream. I was determined to outdo them and win my place in the sun."

Says Max: "However, I evaluate that love for drawing the human figure had always been my predilection and passion and the works



• Max Gerreyn.



of Michaelangelo, Leonardo Da Vinci, Velasquez, Hals, Goya, Gainsborough, Augustus John were inspirational. I owed a lot to the venerable Mudaliyar ACGS Amerasekera, the doyen of Sri Lankan portrait masters and the other 'greats' like Stanley Abeysinghe, David Paynter, JDA Perera and my own old college art teacher the gentle KS Perera."

As a schoolboy, Max had his cartoons and drawings published in various College publications. From the time he left St Benedict's, his cartoons were published in various newspapers in Sri Lanka. He created cartoon characters *Chula* and *Thilaka* and cartoon strips featuring them were published in the Dawasa group of newspapers. His *Chula* which appeared in the "Weekend Sun" newspaper was the first cartoon strip to appear in colour.

In Australia, Max obtained Diplomas in Fine Art at Claremont College of Art and Cartooning from the College of Journalism NSW. Max retired from the public service in 1999 and since then has devoted his time to drawing, painting and cartooning in several media. His works in oils, cartoons and sketches have sold to collectors in Australia, UK, USA and Sri Lanka. Max, however, did not rest on his laurels and had his dreams switched on to big and better venues. He aimed his canvases on the Archibald Prize, held annually in Sydney and where the country's best artists show off their creations.

The Archibald

In 2005, Max had Rev. Roger Herft, the Sri Lankan-born Anglican Archbishop of Perth sit for a portrait, which he entered for the Archibald Prize, but it did not make the 'cut' by a narrow margin.

The Archibald Prize, first awarded in 1921, is Australia's favourite art competition, and one of its most prestigious. Awarded to the best portrait painting, it's a who's who of Australian culture and is open to any man or woman distinguished in art, letters, science or politics to be featured, and can be painted by any artist resident in Australasia.

His love of caricature and satirical counterpoint lured Max to try his hand at the Bald Archy Art Award, created in 1994 by the Riverina Shire Council in country NSW, as a friendly lampooning of the serious Archibald Prize. It provided artists of all styles and standards giving them an excellent opportunity, ranging from the hilarious to the

bizarre, to create portrait paintings of humour, light comedy, dark satire and caricature.

Max submitted, in 2007, a portrait, (or rather a rude caricature) called *The Year Shane* (pictured) into an oils on canvas cartoon portrait, measuring 60cm x 50cm that merited a place from among 40 finalists out of a total 400 entries Australia-wide. He entered three other caricatures of well-known Australian personalities to the Bald Archy between 2007 and 2014.



• Caricature of Shane Warne entry to Bald Archy exhibition.

The Black Swan Prize, one of Australia's richest Portraiture Prizes held in WA was next on his bucket list. He submitted four entries though the years and Russell Raymond and Buddy (his pet dog) was his first entry at this prize. He followed this up by WA's King of the Blues, Rick Steel, Fr. John Jegorow,



• Max's second entry to the Archibald – friend Russell Raymond and Buddy.

Parish Priest of Saint Mary McKillop Church in Ballajura, WA., and Dominic Menegaldo, a former Press Photographer. While these failed to make the cut, three of these sitters purchased their portraits.

Max says that he wanted to paint, portray or cartoon great and prominent people because he admired their deeds or skills. "I did feel that I had achieved my goals when viewers made complimentary comments on either how well I had captured the resemblances and the essence of the figures, personalities, I had drawn...and I have been more successful at winning plaudits for my cartooning work."

Max is dedicated to his art like a professional and spends every spare moment with brush and pencil still honing the *Swift stroke* first taught him by SBC art master KS Perera, more than half century ago.

What is politics, after all?

Politics is not the art of the possible. It consists in choosing between the disastrous and the unpalatable.

– J.K. Galbraith (In Letter to President John F. Kennedy, 1969)

OBITUARIES



Amita Perera
(19 November 1933 – 29 July 2015)

We regret to record the death of Mrs Amita Perera who together with her late husband M.S. Perera were CSA members for over 15 years. After MS passed away in 2009, Amita took over membership which continued until her demise. She was an avid reader of The Ceylankan and was a regular attendee at the CSA Quarterly Meetings in Sydney.

Amita Perera (nee Jayasekara) was born in Balapitiya from where she moved to Colombo to attend Visakha Vidyalaya. She married MS at the age of 18 years, and took on the role of wife to a busy public servant, a member of the coveted Ceylon Civil Service. MS was involved as pioneer administrator of a number of State institutions formed in the 1950s and 1960s – he was the Chairman of the Ceylon Transport Board, Chairman of the Mahaveli Development Board and General Manager of the Ceylon Petroleum Corporation among other important positions. As a devoted housewife Amita was a tremendous asset to her husband who was deeply engaged in economic and social reform and in her own manner helped to reduce the stresses and tensions in the life of a busy public servant. She did not confine herself to domestic chores however despite being mother to two young children. She took an active part in social work both in Sri Lanka and later in the Phillipines where her husband was working as a consultant to ADB and the United Nations Development Programme.

Amita and her husband both enjoyed a long life characterised by frequent travel to many foreign lands and they both lived a relaxed life style. They migrated to Australia 30 years ago and soon became active members of the Sri Lankan community in Sydney. They were members of the Epping Senior Citizens Club where Amita was a popular bridge player. She was a devoted Buddhist. She is survived by her son Dushyantha and daughter Yasanti, and their families.

I want a girl just like the girl who married dear old dad.

– William Dillon

Celia Doreen de Silva
(19 October 1917 - 24 July 2015)



Celia Doreen was born in Colombo, Sri Lanka on 19 October 1917 to Lawrence and Lilian Arnolda. She was the eldest of 12 Children - 9 girls and 3 boys. She was very studious and attended St Paul's Milagiriya where she won a scholarship to the University of Sri Lanka and sat for the University of London Examination in Arts in 1938. She excelled in everything the University offered, was involved in the Drama & Literary Associations and fulfilled her passion to be a teacher. She was also the President of the Student Union. Doreen was one of only 2 girls selected to have tea with Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, India's 1st Prime Minister when he visited the University.

She loved music and dancing and was a very talented pianist, trained as a child to play classical and contemporary music. For music exams as she was only tiny the examiner had to carry her on to the seat to play. In 1930 she passed the Trinity College of Music, London Examination in Pianoforte. During her University days, her friends would gather around the piano at her parent's home and have sing-alongs. It was a very happy household and almost once a month the family would be woken up by the sound of Chinese crackers and to the strains of "Happy Birthday" from the old gramophone. Her career as a Teacher led her to be appointed as the Principal of Alethea School, a private co-ed, inter-denominational School which is now an International School of repute in Colombo. She was Principal for 33 years from 1940, leaving in 1973 to migrate to Australia. It was not only Reading, Writing and Arithmetic, but Drama, Sports and Religious studies. When Australia introduced New Mathematics to Sri Lanka, she was one of the first teachers to be trained. Although an Anglican she also studied and taught Roman Catholicism to students, as religious studies was compulsory in Sri Lanka. She dedicated herself to the teaching profession without seeking monetary consideration.

Doreen also tutored in French, Latin and Maths but was often teased for not being able to cook or sew. However, she did learn to cook in Australia.

Doreen and Sam migrated to Australia in 1973. They had a very happy and fulfilling life in Sydney with a daughter, son and their families.

*Life is but a stopping place,
A pause in what's to be,
A resting place along the road, to sweet eternity.
We all have different journeys,
Different paths along the way,
We all were meant to learn some things,
but never meant to stay...
Our destination is a place,
Far greater than we know.
For some the journey's quicker,
For some the journey's slow.
And when the journey finally ends,
We'll claim a great reward,
And find an everlasting peace,
Together with the Lord.
May the Lord God grant her eternal rest.*

(Celia was the mother of **Alix Vaz** one of the newest members of the CSA. – Ed.)



Complete list will be published from time to time,
Enquiries contact Librarian on
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Subscriptions – staying up-to-date

A treasurer's job can be a thankless task at the best of times. Nothing can cause more trepidation to the person managing our money as reminding us members our fees are now due, or worse still, overdue.

It is within our ambit to ensure that we stay ahead of our subscription obligations. The treasurer is only too aware that payments can be overlooked at the best of times. Unwittingly falling behind on our subscriptions is one of the easiest things that can happen to us. It is never done deliberately or on purpose. It happens to all of us everywhere, and can at anytime.

The CSA's sole income is from member's subscriptions and if we are to maintain a healthy financial status, it is important we ensure the flow of finances is not interrupted in anyway. So please have a word with your treasurer and give yourself an idea if you are up-to-date.

Send us your literary contributions!

The Ceylankan, is a quarterly publication that is a much-looked forward to here in Australia and worldwide. The editor is constantly on the look-out for literary contributions from our members and others. All articles are given careful consideration for publication at all times.

While original, previously unpublished articles are preferable, submissions relating to the culture and history of Ceylon/Sri Lanka are always welcome. Material sent in will be considered provided they are in keeping with the ideals of the CSA and are of a non-racial, non-political, non-religious and non-controversial nature.

We look forward to hearing from new writers with a passion for the study of Sri Lankan culture and heritage. You do not need to be a professional writer – even work from someone who has not previously put pen to paper with a view to publication will receive careful attention. Who knows, an enormous treasure of literary talent may lie hidden somewhere with a vast knowledge on Sri Lanka waiting to be aired. What better vehicle to do so than through your own journal. Write down those hidden memories of life in the motherland; the people, the places, anything that you may fondly recall, from whatever era, post-colonial to modern. You may have a fascinating story waiting to be written. Something our avid readers will lap up with immense pleasure.

To facilitate design/layout the editor likes to have submissions with as little formatting as possible (no indents or double spacing); single spacing after full stops; per cent, not % or percent and where applicable, contributors are also requested to annotate bibliographical references, both for copyright purposes and to help further research and study by interested members. Attach your article as a MS Word document.

While every effort is made to print material that is relevant and correct, we cannot take responsibility for errors. The editor would appreciate if any inaccuracies found are brought to his attention as early as possible.

BOOK REVIEWS

**MOTORCYCLING
ADVENTURES - A Journey
into Australia's Outback with
Bikes, Beers, Blokes and Babes.**
Author: Michael Rohan Sourjah.
Published by Global Publishing
Group, Victoria.

REVIEWED by HUGH KARUNANAYAKE

Rohan Sourjah's first attempt at authorship is an account of two great adventures into the vast continent that is Australia, and what a fantastic read it turned out to be. A man obsessed with the thrills of motorbike riding which he savoured from the age of 20 when his indulgent father presented him with his first motorcycle, a brand new Yamaha YB90, he delights the reader with the story of two epic motorcycling trips across the great Australian continent. Retiring as a Senior Executive with the NSW State Government at the early age of just over 57 years he resolved what appeared to be a mid life crisis arising from his craving for wanderlust and the great outdoors, and he bought himself a BMW F650 GS. And here the story begins! And what an adventure! Chris-crossing the Australian continent from east to west across the Nullarbor Plain and then back to Sydney in 35 days in 2010, followed four years later by a 24 day journey from Sydney to Darwin all on his beloved BMW F650 GS.



The feature of Rohan Sourjah's narrative is the ease with which he describes his journeys - it is writing that comes straight from the heart from a man who loves the outdoor life and the excitement and sense of adventure that accompanies forays into unfamiliar territory. Both epic journeys are described in detail including the fascinating dynamics of interpersonal relations among fellow riders when speeding through a gruelling itinerary. All the camaraderie, the enthusiasm and the disagreements that sometime arise among riders emerge clearly in the mind's eye of the reader thanks to the author's racy turn of phrase and style of writing. While the descriptions include those of the magnificent scenery of the outback it does not attempt to mask the sometimes bleak and gloomy situations that riders had to encounter including attention from the ubiquitous fly and the mosquito. In his own words "there are many wonderful things to see in Australia but they are often many hundreds of kilometres apart"! Despite his penchant for adventure, the free spirit of the author is sometimes put to the test by the trials of ephemeral life and the lack sometimes of even basic "country comforts" in the great outback. The fidelity in his descriptions are a feature of his writing style and gives the reader an opportunity for vicarious enjoyment of Australia's vast open country sans the flies, the mosquitoes and the aching bum

of the motorcycle rider! The book provides for the reader an armchair ride through Australia's outback! The two journeys totalling to about 18,000 kilometres require planning, coordination and most importantly the capacity to co-habit with one's fellow travellers.

The author provides enough information on preplanning the tours, as also the post mortems which are honest reflections on the tours and what could be done if there is to be a next time.

The book is replete with lists of resources such as places for accommodation, pubs, a listing of the various brews of beers available (It seems that on a tour like this one needs petrol to drive the machine and plenty of beer to drive the man!), and all the wonders of nature. One is inclined to think that the title *Motorcycling Adventures - A Journey into Australia's Outback with bikes, beers, blokes and babes* was most apt as it certainly does relate to all of them.

The author can be called a quintessential "new age" man, someone who has successfully woven his childhood dreams into reality without letting go of the main game which is to be equipped for a successful career and to discharge without hindrance, all of his family and parental obligations, which he has successfully achieved. Well done Rohan you have achieved what most others could only dream of!

This 255 page book is not only a travelogue, and an insightful guide to Australia's vast outback, it is also a tale of one man and his dreams and how he achieved them. A great read - highly recommended not only for its exciting story and information on the Aussie outback, but also for the human interest element in it.

Rohan Sourjah is a man for all seasons - besides being a family man and father of two post adolescent children, a keen motorcyclist, was founding Secretary of the Ceylon Society of Australia, an avid collector of antiquarian books on Ceylon with an extensive library of Ceylonia, a former Rugby Captain of his old school Trinity College, Kandy, and is an internationally recognised public speaker and author. A devoted member of the Ulysses Motorcycle Club of Australia, he has more books in the pipeline, something to be awaited eagerly.

The book is priced at \$29.95 at bookshops. However, the author is making a special offer to CSA members at \$20 inclusive of postage within Australia. Any CSA member from overseas should contact Rohan through his website: www.MotorcyclingAdventures.com.au to obtain a special price.

ADDITION TO OUR LIBRARY

Rohan's book is the newest addition to the CSA Library.



The Great Brown Hunter - Lord Colin of Tanamalwila

This photograph was taken on a trip to Tanamalvila by Dr Colin Fernando and friends in 1958 and is reproduced here by

courtesy of Dr S. Sivaloganathan of London.

Colin is seen standing with his foot on the dead elephant – in the style of the "great" white elephant hunters of the 19th Century. Colin is, of course, not holding a gun but a stick in mock imitation of our former colonial rulers and cannot be accused of hunting elephants for sport! Colin as you may know lives in Adelaide and is a member of CSA.

The elephant in the photo had died of natural causes and the autopsy carried by the Vet in Hambantota revealed that it had died of cirrhosis of the liver - possibly by raiding illicit brews hidden away in the jungle by bootleggers

Wonderful English from around the world

Dress code to a Bangkok temple:

- It is forbidden to enter a woman, even a foreigner, if dressed as a man.

Dry cleaners, Bangkok:

- Drop your trousers here for the best results.

Doctor's office, Rome:

- Specialist in women and other diseases.

In a Nairobi restaurant:

- Customers who find our waitresses rude, ought to see the Manager.

On the main road to Mombasa, leaving Nairobi:

- Take notice, when this sign is under water, this road is impassable.

On a poster at Kencom:

- Are you an adult that cannot read? If so we can help you.

In a City restaurant:

- Open seven days a week and on weekends.

Cemetery:

- Persons are prohibited from picking flowers from any but their own graves.

Tokyo hotel's rules and regulations:

- Guests are requested not to smoke or do other disgusting behaviours in bed.

On the menu of a Swiss Restaurant:

- Our wines leave you nothing to hope for.

SYNOPSIS OF MEETING

Colombo Chapter 13 March 2015

Our guest speaker was Prof.

K.D. Paranaavitana whose topic was **Slaves and Slavery in Dutch Ceylon 1640**

Tissa Devendra the President of the CSA CC welcomed the members and guests present at the first quarterly meeting of the Colombo Chapter. He introduced Professor K.D. Paranaavitana as a graduate from the University of Ceylon, Peradeniya in 1968 who specialised in 17th and 18th century Dutch language in the National Archives of The Netherlands where he obtained his diploma in Archive administration. He also studied at the University of New South Wales in Sydney, Australia where he was awarded his PhD in 1994. Former Professor of Humanities, Rajarata University of Sri Lanka, he possesses 40 years of experience in heritage activities, partly gained and contributed in The Netherlands and in Australia. He is presently a Consultant in Heritage and Culture attached to the Team of Heritage Experts of the Centre for International Heritage Activities, Leiden, The Netherlands. He also functions as a Consultant to the National Archives of Sri Lanka and to the JR Jayewardene Centre in Colombo.



He is a Past-President of the Royal Asiatic Society of Sri Lanka and Honorary Member of the Dutch Burgher Union of Ceylon. In 2002, Her Majesty the Queen of The Netherlands honored him with the Knight of the Order of Orange Nassau. In 2014, he was awarded the *Jatika Uruma Pranama* National Award for contributions made towards the heritage of Sri Lanka.

He is the author of a number of widely known scholarly publications in Sinhala, English and Dutch and the most sought after work is *Galle: The Heritage City*.

The word 'slave' derives from the 'Slav races' of Eastern Europe, members of which were kidnapped and sold in large numbers by merchants to the slave markets in the Moslem East in the Middle Ages. Most of the ancient civilizations in the near East and the Mediterranean were based on slavery, and it was the blood, sweat and tears of the slaves that saw the mighty Pyramids rise up on the Egyptian skyline.

In Sparta, the majority of the inhabitants were slaves and Aristotle, the philosopher, regarded it as 'natural' that those barbarians should be the chattels of the Greeks. By the 17th century, slaves were a commodity open for trade and Dutch Minister Francois Valentijn in 1724 remarked that it is "...the oldest trade in the world".

Slavery was foreign to Ceylon and even during the period of the Dutch, it was not an arbitrary institution. Slavery in Dutch times cannot be compared to the trade in African slaves, but slavery somewhat different had existed in the eastern world even before

Dutch times. Even the Portuguese had brought African slaves with them but there is no trace of them: the Kaffir communities still extant are not descended from them. But it was much later that slaves became a commodity to be bought and sold.

The establishment of the port cities, first by the Portuguese, followed by the Dutch, led to the birth of a new society in Colombo, Galle and Jaffna. In these new "fairly lively port cities" there emerged a luxury and lascivious class of people comprising Europeans, Eurasians and Asians. Around the second half of the 17th century, the Europeans had a considerable number of household slaves and were entirely dependent on them, not even bothering to pick up a handkerchief from the floor.



•The sketch of an European being carried by slaves on a palanquin reproduced from 'The World of Jan Brandes (1743-1808)'

Although the Dutch East India Company (VOC) considered slavery to be despicable in principle, in practice, slaves were used to build fortifications, for domestic work and as agricultural labourers. Dutch policy was not to enslave local subjects residing in the territory under their rule, but this may have resulted from the reluctance of the Sinhalese to do the required work. Wintergerst (1668) remarks in that the local people were reluctant to be slaves: "... I was once sent with two other Europeans and 63 Malabar slaves (since the Singhalese will die rather than become slaves) to go 11 miles inland into the king's territories to bring wood."

The urbanites of those times comprised Company servants, European free citizens and the mixed population which included Sinhalese, Tamils, Muslims, Chetties, slaves and convicts. The population in Colombo in 1688, according to Ward

Superintendents (*wijkmeesters*) was 7,500, excluding lascorins (hired local soldiers), Company personnel in the barracks and company slaves. Company servants alone numbered about 1,500 and Company slaves (as different from privately-owned slaves) some 1,520.

Some Company slaves had been put to work in the immediate vicinity of Colombo on fortifications, loading and unloading of ships and felling trees. Some slaves were brought from South India to meet the increasing demand for labourers and cultivators. Although the slave trade was considered illegal, it existed "below the radar" and the Company refrained from making any reference to them in its documents. Therefore, information on slaves has to be gathered from indirect sources, such as the description of such vessels as the 'Slot ter Hoge', which had left Batavia in 1783 with at least 25 slaves and the boat 'Haasje' in 1790 with 27 crew and 17 slaves.

The slaves were brought to Ceylon from two South Asian 'circuits', namely Malabar, Tanjor, Kanara, Bengal in South India being one circuit and Arakan (Myanmar) Malaysia, Indonesia, Sulawesi, Java, Bali and Ambon being the other. However identification of individuals as slaves is difficult for they were not baptised had been

renamed by the master/owner, there was no mention of their ethnic background or sex and only their first name was used. Some had been given classical names (such as Cleopatra, Leander and Aurora); Biblical names (such as Catherina, Daniel and David) or named after the months / year / or days of the week (such as January, March, April and Saturday.)

There were three categories of 'owners': Company-owned slaves, privately-owned slaves and slaves purchased at an auction. There was no barrier to buying a slave from an owner at a public auction or after the death of the owner as a slave was equivalent "to movables, gold, silver, trinkets, debits and credits". Therefore the owner could decide on emancipation or manumission through a deed as a reward for faithful service or by paying to the Poor Fund Rix 10 for release from bondage. Conditional freedom could also be won by a slave by working for a prescribed number of years in the master's household.



• This Sunday scene has been reproduced from the 'Early Prints of Ceylon' by R.K. de Silva

The slaves' duties were wide-ranging and onerous, with men between the ages of 20 and 60 years being considered capable of heavy work. The majority were employed in the kitchen and lived in the master's house with their family. They were used to carry palanquins, as gate keepers or porters, in repair works, public works, fetching grass for stables, carrying water and firewood and for the upkeep of fortifications.

Moors and Chetties were considered foreigners and obliged to perform *oeliam* or compulsory services. Schweitzer (1680) stated that he met the Ambassador Mierop on his way to Kandy at Sitavaka "... accompanying among other gifts ...two black Persian horses covered ...with green velvet and twenty falcons carried by so many black Malabarian slaves...".

While frequent instances of cruelty to slaves such as chaining, tormenting, torturing, mishandling, whipping and even murder have been recorded, was a "fascinating" criminal case in 1781 in which a master had accused a Malay slave woman of murdering her own son..... "On the day of this grisly event she (Deidamie) had taken a knife which was on the kitchen-table and driven her younger child to the outhouse where she stabbed him in the presence of her elder child. Van Cuijlenburg heard this noise and pounded on the door commanding her to open it. A Sinhalese carpenter who was nearby broke open the door. Then they found the boy lying on the floor with a stab wound on his back."

Murder had followed over a theft of an amulet and led to Deidamie being sentenced to death by strangling.

Interestingly in the Dutch *plakkaats* there were orders for Heathens and Muslims to give up their slaves: non-Christians being debarred from having Christian slaves; and Roman Catholics prohibited from baptising their children and slaves. Slave-owners were warned against heavy punishments without permission from officers. A serf who engaged in adultery with a woman of free origin was liable to do public work for life. If a slave was found guilty of abusing the master's wife or daughter, it was the ultimate punishment of the death sentence.

There is the famous tale of Slave Island, in the Beira Lake where the slaves of the VOC from the Fort area were ferried across at the end of each day after a slave murdered the Dutch master's entire family. Captain Thomas Ajax Anderson of the 19th Foot Regiment in his 'Wanderings in Ceylon' (1819) described it as follows:

Hence, let the eye a circuit take
Were gently sloping to the lake,
A smiling, lively scene appears,
A verdant isle, its bosom rears,
With many lovely villa grac'd
A mid embow'ring cocos plac'd!

*Have once, to all but int'rest blind,
The Colonists their slaves confin'd;
But now the name alone remains,
Gone are the scourges, racks and chains!*

After the passage of time, the slaves metamorphosed into coolies and then to migrant labor and indentured labor. In the modern world, the scourge of slavery has re-emerged as illegal human trafficking.

Among the more mundane are a painting of a 'Mixties' (the offspring of a European and a local woman) on her way to church dressed in all her finery, while a male-slave shades her from the sun and a female-slave steps up behind her with the betel box and spittoon.

- Tony Saldin

Colombo Chapter 19 June 2015

Guest speaker was Mr. Srilal Perera whose topic was

"The Vedi Perehara of the Aadi-vaasi people around Mahiyanganaya"

Tissa Devendra, (President) introduced the Chief Guest Mr. Srilal Perera as a graduate in Mechanical Engineering from Ein Shums University, Cairo, Egypt and Basnayake Nilame of the Kadadora Pattini Purana Devale, Ruwanwella. As a prelude to the topic he gave an insight into the Historical, Political and Religious background of the particular area.

Long before Arahath Mahinda visited this island with Lord Buddha's message, and converted the faith of King Devanampiyatissa (306 B.C.) Lord Buddha himself had set his eyes on this island three times out of which the first time was to Mahiyanganaya.

At Mahiyanganaya the purpose of Lord Buddha's visit was to subdue the Yakksas, *Yaksa Damanaya*.

Of the two ancient peoples of this country, the Nagas accepted Buddhism with reverence but the Yakksas refused to accept it and they had to be subdued.

Like the African non-believers of Islam were referred to as *Kaffirs* and the non-believers of Christianity were referred to as heathens, the people who did not accept Buddhism were called YAKKU, the non-conformists who were banished beyond the waters of the Mahaveli River and today we see their Sora Bora Weva abandoned as a result.

But to the Vedda people YAKA means "God" and has nothing to do with devils or demons. To them *Ne Yaka* means Ancestor God, *Bilindu Yaka* means Child God and *Kande Yaka* means God Skanda and most important for a community that lives by hunting is the *Ithale Yaka* who is the God that guides their arrows to their prey. As a rule to keep this deity happy they never pull their bows at a pregnant animal or a mating pair.

They are not the only people who stick to this definition of the word YAKA. The Ves dancers who are now called Kandyan dancers too refer to their God as YAKA. At the overnight ancient dance ritual of Kohomba YAK Kankariya, the Kohomba Yaka is invoked by the Yak dessas, the dance priests. This ceremony is a pre Buddhist Shanthi - karma. **The inversion of the word YAKA to mean the opposite would have taken place after the *yaksa damanaya* and we continue with the confusion that came about since the change.**

At the *Yaksa damanaya*, although the non-believers were subdued, one of them by the name of Saman Rala was converted to Buddhism and attained "*sovan*", which is the lowest of the four mental levels in the disciplining of the mind in the high path towards reaching Arahath-hood. Saman Rala deified is now worshiped as God Saman or *Saman Deviyo*. However, his sister who had stood with the clan is referred to as *Maha Loku Akka*.

Vedi Perahera

The ancient Kandy-Batticaloa road exits via Mahiyanganaya while passing Binthenna, the Vedda country. Ancient Dutch maps refer to this place as Binthanna or Vinthenna and sometimes by both names for either banks of the Mahaveli river.

Annually, at the conclusion of a spectacular cultural pageant of the Buddhists or at the conclusion of *perahera* conducted by the Mahiyanganaya Raja Maha Vihara together with the Saman Devale, and also after the people who come to see the *perahera* have dispersed, the Vedi Perahera starts around midnight. Congregations of 5 jungle Kovils around five water reservoirs in the jungle, participate in their ceremony. They run round the city hooting away as a gesture of happiness and not to jeer anybody as we do today. They make their appearance carrying long poles which they thrash on the floor at the entrance of the Saman Devale until its broken into splinters.

To take part in their Vedi Perahera they have to maintain a dress code. The debutante is permitted to wear only dried banana leaves to cover their nudity. The middle order participants wear straw for the same purpose and the veterans are privileged to participate, having pasted fluffy fiber of Kapok using bees honey as the adhesive.

Finally they congregate at the Saman Devale of the Raja Maha Vihare where the sacred shawl of *Maha Loku Akka* who once ruled the locality, is kept. This shawl of the Saman Rala's Great Elder Sister, is annually brought from their jungle *Kovil* and is deposited in the Saman Devale for the annual rituals. This shawl of the *Maha Loku Akka* is carried in the *perahera* inside the Ran Doli Palanquin and is heavily guarded by females on both sides while men carry the palanquin.

The following morning the Saman Devale devotees go to the Mahaveli river for the traditional

water cutting ceremony but on their return stops at a place called the *sinhasanaya* or throne where the Basnayake Nilame waits with a tray of oranges which is to be rolled down the hillock for the Vedda people to pick up, and while moving in the perahera throw up and hoot until they catch it again. However the Vedda people appears only at their own auspicious time to pilot the water cutting perahera with their own Dodam Perahera. Until they arrive, the Basnayaka Nilame, the Kapu Rala, the dancers, drummers, flag carriers and the elephants etc. of the Maha Saman Devale Perahera have to wait under the hot sun to be piloted back, to conclude the festivities for the year. At the conclusion of the festival the Sacred shawl is taken back, secretly to the jungle shrine.

– Tony Saldin



SYDNEY 30 August 2015

The Third General Meeting of the Ceylon Society of Australia for 2015 will take place on Sunday, 30th August 2015 commencing at 6.30 pm at the Pennant Hills Community Centre, Ramsay Road, Pennant Hills, NSW 2120. Please note the venue. Ramsay Road is off Yarrara Road and the Community Centre is opposite the Pennant Hills Railway Station. The entrance to the building is from the car park at the back of the building. Members and their Guests are welcome. Guest Speaker is Mr. Nimal Wikramanayake, QC. His talk is titled "My Fifty Four years in the Legal Profession in Ceylon and Australia".

Nimal Wikramanayake, QC was the first 'brown-skinned' gentleman to practice as a Barrister in Australia and the first 'brown-skinned' Queens Counsel to be appointed in Australia. He abhors the use of the word coloured for as he quite rightly points out, that would make his Australian friends colourless. He and his father Guy are the only two father and son Queens Counsel in two different Commonwealth Countries. He is the author of "Voumards – The Sale of Land" which was chosen by Justice Peter Young as one of the top 20 legal books written in Australia. Nimal read Law at Trinity Hall, Cambridge, from 1955 – 1958. He was called to the Bar in England by the Inner Temple in February 1959. He returned to Ceylon and practised as an Advocate from 1959 to 1971 when he migrated to Australia. He arrived in Melbourne in November 1971 and was admitted to practice as a Barrister and Solicitor in December 1971. He had to overcome many hurdles at the start

of his career in Melbourne and subsequently decided to go to the Victorian Bar, much against the advice of his friends and colleagues. He achieved great success at the Bar. He started writing his memoirs about 5 years ago before it became a national pastime and it is called "The long, lonesome road. A Journey in Time." Friends who have read it say that it is racy, humorous but a trifle sad for he had to, for many years, endure the buffets of fate, which he did with equanimity. Nimal will be speaking to you about his experiences, firstly as an Advocate of the Supreme Court of Ceylon from 1959 to 1971 and then as a Barrister in Melbourne from 1972 to 2013 – a period of over 50 years. He assures members of the Society that his reminiscences will be interesting, amusing but a trifle sad. The early years were extremely difficult as no Australian solicitor was prepared to brief him although he was a Cambridge Graduate, had practised as an Advocate in Ceylon for 12 years and was a leader of the Junior Bar in Ceylon. But as he points out, in order to succeed in life, you need the heart of a lion, the patience of Job and the skin of a rhinoceros. Social. 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 finger-food. Please avoid cakes with icing as the general preferences is for plain cakes, sandwiches and savoury pastries. Those who are unable to bring a plate are kindly requested to make a donation to the CSA to help defray meeting costs.

Melbourne Chapter 23 August 2015

At our next meeting **Cresside Collette** will present an illustrated talk titled "*Aubrey Collette: art, life and politics – a profile of my father*". Aubrey Collette is still remembered as Ceylon's first home grown political cartoonist whose commentary made an important contribution to the way the emerging nation saw itself in the first years of Independence. He was also a founding member of the '43 Group, Ceylon's first Modern Art movement, now considered to be intrinsic to its cultural development.

Born in 1920, he attended Royal College, and on graduating was appointed art master. In 1946 his talent for caricature was recognised by the Times of Ceylon where he was employed full time. Later he moved to The Observer and The Daily News where Tarzie Vittachi was his editor.

Their witty collaboration documented the country's political trajectory from British colony to Independent nation. In 1961 he left Ceylon under duress and spent a year in London before migrating to Australia in 1962. He joined the staff of The



Australian newspaper in 1965 and began another successful career as a political cartoonist, winning the coveted Walkley Award for best cartoon in 1970. He also worked at The Herald in Melbourne and The Straits Times in Singapore. Always remembered as a gentle, humble and humorous man by all who knew him, Aubrey died in 1992 aged 71.

Cresside Collette is the eldest child of Joan and Aubrey Collette experienced early childhood in Ceylon where her father's art was part of daily life. Cresside trained as a Graphic Artist and was employed as a foundation weaver of The Victorian Tapestry Workshop in 1976. Known primarily as a tapestry weaver, drawing has always been an integral part of her fine art practice and she has exhibited her work consistently since 1971.

Meeting is on **Sunday 23 August 2015, 3:00 p.m. to 5.00pm.** (PLEASE NOTE NEW START TIME)

At St Scholastica's Community Centre, St Scholastica's Church, 348 Burwood Highway, Bennettswood, BURWOOD (Melway 61 D6)
For enquiries, contact: Hemal 0427 725 740

Colombo Chapter 11 September 2015

Mr. Asiff Hussein

will speak on "*Pre-Vijayan people of Sri Lanka(Rakshasa, Yakkha, Naga)*".

on Friday 11th Sept 2015 5.30pm – 7.00pm

Venue: Organization of Professional Associations (OPA) 275/75, Prof. Stanley Wijesundera Mawatha, off Bauddhaloka Mw, Colombo 7

Directions: The OPA is situated mid-way down Professor Stanley Wijesundera Mw, one end of which joins Bauddhaloka Mw, near the Army checkpoint leading to General's House and the other end opposite the Colombo University grounds on Reid Avenue, between the newly refurbished Racecourse Shopping Mall and the University of Colombo Arts/Law Faculty buildings.

Contact: Tissa Devendra, (President) e-mail: tisdev@sltnet.lk 011 250 1489

M.D. (Tony) Saldin (Hony. Secretary) e-mail: saldinclan@sltnet.lk +94 777 363366/2931315 (Res), 2936402 (O)

Asoka de Silva (Hony. Treasurer) email: matdes@sltnet.lk 011 2822933/ +94 775 097517.

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.

Congratulations & a Warm Welcome to our New Members

Mr W.A. Jayasinghe of NSW; **Mr Suranjith Rebera** Blacktown NSW 2148; **Dr Palitha Ganewatte** of NSW; **Mr Ranga Perera** of VIC; **Mr Wadanambi Aratchige Jayasinga & Mrs Evangeline Wickramage**, Kellyville; NSW 2155; **Mr Sunil Amaratunge** of NSW; **Mr Mario Sapramado** of NSW.

GIFT SUBSCRIPTIONS

Ms Kathy van Reyk Boonah QLD 4310 (from Dr & Mrs Robert Sourjah)

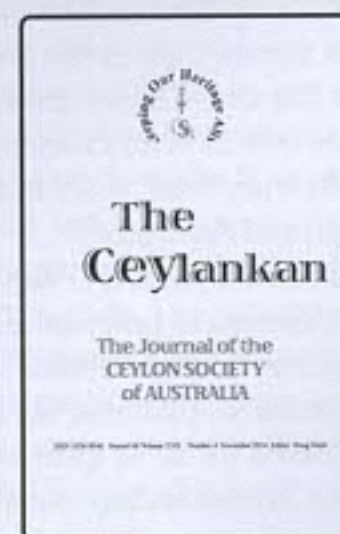
Mr Tommy Slegers Vermont South VIC 3133;

Adrian Assauw Vic 3810; **Gavin Assauw** Glen

Iris Vic 3146 (all 3 from **Fred Kreltzheim**); **Dr**

Marcus Gunaratnam Eastwood NSW 2122 (from **Dr Eulalie Herat**).

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PO Box 489 Blacktown NSW 2148.

BACK COVER Caricatures by Aubrey Collette



Aubrey Collette was renowned both in Sri Lanka and worldwide as a cartoonist. From about the mid-1940s, he was virtually a daily contributor to the *Times of Ceylon* and the *Daily News* and *Ceylon Observer* the Lake House press until the early 1960s when he emigrated to Australia.

His cartoons were acute, visual comments on the social and political climate of his times. Specific issues of the moment, the political developments after Sri Lanka's independence and the far-reaching social and cultural changes of the Bandaranaike era in the 1950s to the late 1960s found expression in the incisive, biting humour of his brilliant line-work. After Mrs Bandaranaike's government came into power in 1960s he became "persona non grata", and in 1961 he left Ceylon with his family, spending a year in London before migrating to Australia in 1962.

He joined the staff of *The Australian* newspaper in 1965 and began another successful career as a political cartoonist, winning the coveted Walkley Award for best cartoon in 1970. He moved to *The Herald* in Melbourne in 1971, followed by *The Straits Times* in Singapore in 1984. A regular contributor to the *Asia Magazine*, his strip cartoon *Sun Tan* ran for many years.

Collette was the creator of the harassed, harried, hapless but nevertheless heroic Citizen Per-r-ra victim of politics, politicians and even an often unfriendly Providence, Citizen Per-r-ra lives on.

Always remembered as a gentle, humble and humorous man by all who knew him, he died in 1992 aged 71. In everything the essential human aspect dominates, (as Tarzie Vittachi, his editor once wrote, political parties may come and go, but human nature goes on for ever).

How to become a Member of the CSA...

Who can become a member of the CSA? Any person with a common interest relating to the historical heritage of Ceylon/Sri Lanka and wishes to share that interest with like-minded people worldwide is welcome to seek membership. Younger members of the community are specially welcome.

Annual subscription is A\$30 (Pensioners & Students in Australia A\$20). Account details for Australia are: BSB 062 308, A/c No: 10038725, Swift Code - CTBAAU2S

Please contact any of the following for further details: In **Sydney**: Contact: Treasurer Deepak Pritamdas PO Box 489, Blacktown NSW 2148 Phone: 0434 860 188 Email: deepakpsl@yahoo.com

In **Melbourne**: Contact: Convenor Hemal Gurusinghe Phone: 0427 725 740 Email: hemguru@hotmail.com

In **Colombo**: Until further notice members are requested to deposit subscription money/cheques at a HSBC ATM machine or transfer to the HSBC electronically. The information you require is for ATMs: Account Name: Ceylon Society of Australia, CSA Account Number- 008-044109-001 - e Transfer above plus: HSBC Swift Code- HSBCLKLX Annual subs: LKR3000.00 Contact: Treasurer M.Asoka T.de Silva Phone 2822933 (Mob.) 775097517 Email: matdes@sltnet.lk

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Contact Deepak on (Mob) 0434 860 188 Email: deepakpsl@yahoo.com



cartoons by



Bevis Bawa is well known for his house and garden called *Brief* one time sanctuary to artists Laki Senanayake, Ena de Silva, the dancers Chitrasena and Vajira and designer Barbara Sansoni. He also played host to a

number of international visitors including Lawrence Olivier, Vivien Leigh, the Duke of Windsor, Agatha Christie and Australian artist Donald Friend (who originally planned to stay for a week and ended up staying for six years).

The name **Bala Tampoe** was synonymous with the Ceylon Mercantile Union (CMU). The highlight of his career was when he was General Secretary of the



CMU and he negotiated with whatever government in power and private sector employers on behalf of employees under the union flag.

Born of a prominent Jaffna family, he received early education at

Royal College in Colombo and later graduated as a BSc in 1943 from the University of Ceylon and the University of London in 1944. Later he studied law at the Colombo Law College and became an advocate in Criminal Law.

As lecturer in Botany and Horticulture in the Department of Agriculture, he participated in a Public Servants' strike in 1947 and was dismissed from the Public Service. He then joined the CMU. He became General Secretary of the union in 1948.

Tampoe passed away on 1 September 2014.

One of Sri Lanka's best known authors, **Martin Wickremasinghe**

was born in Koggala on 29 May 1890. At five, he was taught the Sinhala alphabet at home and the local temple. At seven, he attended an English school Buena Vista in Galle where he mastered both English and Latin. On the death of his father, Martin returned to a vernacular school in Ahangama where he soon lost interest in schooling altogether.

He tried his hand at poetry and was drawn to the Peradeniya School movement but the movement was dissolved because of Martin's great sensitivity to always adhering towards the cultural traditions and the Buddhist leanings of the Sinhalese society. In 1973, he wrote *Bava Taranaya*, a new biography of Buddha portraying the change from royal heir apparent to becoming a common man. He was 86-years old at his passing.



Aubrey Weinman

was the first Superintendent of the Colombo Zoological Gardens after it was established in 1939 following the liquidation of

Zoological Garden Company in 1936. Mobilised for service with the British Army in WWII, he became a POW after the fall of Singapore. He was liberated four years later at war's end and returned to take up position as Director of the Colombo Zoological Gardens once again and held it until his retirement in late 1950s. After retiring he migrated to Australia with his wife Ena. He died in Perth in 1967.

