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The Ceylankam

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From the Editor...

Once again we have come the full circle with this final issue for the year. Well may we say that it was a good year. We saw through the vagaries of producing four issues without too much drama. That, as always, was made possible by a regular supply of articles submitted for publication. We are grateful for so much quality writing contributed by you. This diminishes the huge weight off the editor's shoulders, frail at the best of times. What is more, we can move on to preparing subsequent publications with a degree of confidence that we will see our 36-page journal come through to fruition on time. Our regular contributors, unfailingly each quarter, send scholarly and most readable articles. Then there are those who intermittently submit valuable pieces of writing, which we are delighted to publish. In recent days we have also had 'new' writers showing considerable talent with their scholarly and well-researched contributions. To them we say your work is most welcome, is enjoyable and your writing adds a touch of freshness to our columns.

In this issue we have a diverse selection of topics, all of which we are sure you will lap up avidly. Firstly, we have a writer who is non-Sri Lankan born, but she recently toured the country with a group of Sri Lankans. Reading her work, one would appreciate that she looked at the new country with childlike wonderment. Nahir Nolan is from Bangladesh originally, who is now domiciled in the UK, and shares her Sri Lankan experience in a simple, engaging style. Makes fascinating reading.

Another newcomer is Mervyn Andriesz, a professional prawn farmer who recounts the vagaries of successfully breeding Tiger Prawn in the Chilaw area, not to be daunted by the infestation of venomous snakes near the hatcheries. His workers surprised him with a simple solution on a platter.

Tissa Devendra writes engagingly about how *hoppers* (*aappam*) were not of Sri Lankan origin but came from Kerala, as did bone setters (*common* or *garden* variety of orthopaedicians, nowadays) botanists and *ganja* and does not exclude Sri Lanka's first Saint Joseph Vaz, also from Kerala.

The Rambler takes a close look at the early rubber planters of Kalutara and their contribution to the growth of the industry in the country. At the same time, in another essay, he traces the growth of Tea plantations in the south of Ceylon.

Thiru Arumugam re-visits, in typical scholarly fashion, the story of the O'Deans, the first Ceylonese family in Australia. The 200th anniversary of O'Dean's court martial in Colombo on 04 May 1815, that led to his banishment to the penal colony of Australia falls this year – a good enough reason for Thiru's re-visiting the subject.

The usual fare – the Ammi inspired recipe, synopses of meetings, detailed list of books in our library and a few other snippets of interest like when 'jumbos' towed military aircraft in Ceylon and Ceylon's connection, even if a minute one, with the Battle of Waterloo – will make good reading. So shall we please, get on with it?

PS: Oops! we did not get any Reader's Letters for this issue,

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 globalisation.

It is non-political and non-partisan and endeavours to steer clear of controversial issues. CSA is 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 and heritage are invited to attend. Young people are especially welcome! Admission to these meetings is free, while a small donation to defray expenses is appreciated.

The Ceylankan, a publication much-looked forward to by members and others here and worldwide is the flagship of CSA. Articles published are from members and 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 31)

UK resident NAHID NOLAN recalls her visit to Sri Lanka like a charmed first timer as she explores this exotic land and wades her way with childlike delirium to share with us the wonders she discovered on ...

A coach voyage in Sri Lanka



In the English summer of 2015, I journeyed to Sri Lanka with a friend of mine from London and a group of her family and friends who live in Australia. I was asked if I would write about my impressions of the country. Sri Lanka - just to hear its name and all at once I am transported back to my teenage years at an all girls secondary school in London. My sewing teacher was from Sri Lanka, at the time known as Ceylon. I still remember her fondly - she had great faith in my ability to sew well. Many times she trusted me to cut out her own patterns. As I finally visit Sri Lanka with a dear friend who is British but Sri Lankan born, I see my life pan out and I know for sure I take with me a deep connection with the people of Sri Lanka.



• Fascinating to learn that people of all faiths come to St Anthony's Catholic Church to pray devoutly, holding long tapered lighted candles up high to be surrounded by the glow. Interesting!

When we arrived at the Bandaranaike International Airport my friend and I were greeted by a driver, sent by the hotel, with garlands of orchid flowers. Having recently carved out a new profession as a florist I have an affinity to flowers and am affected by their symbolism. Driving away from the airport I noticed the wonderful flowers on trees, shrubs, climbers and vines. There are in an abundance of colours - Araliya, red anthurium, starflowers, Ceylon leadwort, Roselle, temple flowers, lobster claws, bougainvillea - the flowers overflow the roadsides. In Habarana, as we crossed on a catamaran, I saw water lilies cover the shallow waters. Inside of the Thuparamaya - a

dogoba - was adorned with lotus flowers, as was the underneath of the sacred Bo Tree in Anuradhapura.

Although it had been a long journey on our first day in Colombo, we could not resist going out to watch the sea by the hotel and walk up Gale Face Green. As we walked along the sea front the mild, humid wind blew away memories of the past. We checked out the stalls, displaying various traditional deep fried foods. We saw school children in their pristine white uniforms, uniforms which were introduced in the colonial past. They came from the north, from Jaffna, on a school trip to visit the Colombo seaside for the day. The girls wear their hair in two long black plaits while boys wear theirs parted on the side and cut short so it glistens as they move. There was a feel of festivity, the school children stood close to each other in a circle and danced to the beat of a drum played by one of the students. From time to time some children would thrust themselves into the centre of the circle to show off their dancing skills. Occasionally others would wander off towards the sea or gather around another group, dancing to the beat of the drum. Some other little children flew kites and some took pony rides. Later on, I watched the sunset over Sri Lanka, behind the beach promenade, colourful and vibrant, spread across the sky.

On a few occasions during our stay, we passed the street stalls of Pettah and the Fort, where cranes line the harbour, located in east Colombo. There is something quite different about this place - one gets the sense that there are a whole host of different ethnicities and religious groups living here. This area might not be similar to the location of the Queen's House but I am fascinated by different types of houses and buildings. They reflect the complex and interesting nature of the neighbourhood. The influence of the Moors is obvious here and most impressive of the structures is the Jami Ul-Alfar Mosque. Built in 1909 with its red and white coloured bricks it dominates the other buildings around it. Along the way a



• Jami Ul-Alfar Mosque built in 1909 with its red and white coloured bricks dominates building in the Pettah area.

few people stepped off the bus and visited St Anthony's Catholic Church to make their prayers. It is an interesting place to visit as I have heard that people of other faiths who feel an affinity to St Anthony also go there. At the side entrance to the church devotees light long tapered candles, holding them high, they become surrounded by the glow of the flames. One may never see such a sight outside of Sri Lanka.

We made a visit to the Seema Malaka Temple on an island on the Beira Lake and saw the reclining Buddha and the Buddha seated in contemplation surrounded by water. I was instantly affected by the serenity of the place. Hindu deities are housed at the side of the temple, ornately dressed and colourful. From here we made our way to the Gangaramays Temple where a visual feast awaits - innumerable Buddha statues in all shapes and sizes are to be found here, together with various other items that have been donated to the temple by visitors. I loved the place; it felt

like a home belonging to someone with a deep adoration of Buddha. What I noticed is that Sri Lankans have unique qualities; they have an ability to intermingle with different cultures



• *Affected by the serenity of the Seema Malaka Temple on an island on the Beira Lake after seeing the reclining Buddha and the sedentary Buddha in contemplation.*

and religions and make them their own. But whether they are Tamils, Sinhalese, Malay or Burghers they try and keep their distinct identities too, maintaining their own languages and the way they dress with saris and sarongs specific to their traditional cultures.

How can one forget the Bullion Exchange to my mind the Mecca for gold and precious gems. I am inclined to say that most people from our group visited it and spent the most amount of time there. In a place of worship one has dialogue between God and oneself but here in the Bullion Exchange, contemplation was not of God or Buddha or Krishna or Allah, but with the glistening objects designed to adorn the human flesh.

We made the most of our time at Cinnamon Gardens in Colombo and Independence Square, which is a significant landmark in Sri Lanka, as the country gained its independence from British rule in 1948. These places can provide opportunities for reflection, perhaps for those that have gone through the changes, as they serve as a reminder that, until not so long ago, the people of Sri Lanka lived under the colonial rule

of so many outside governments - the Portuguese, the Dutch, followed by the British. The legacy of this past history is visible in the landmarks, in religions, in customs, in the people and in the traditions of Sri Lanka. On the way to Anuradhapura, the first capital of Sri

Lanka, the place of ancient ruins and the dagobas, we visited the Rock Temple of Dumbulla in the heart of the country. One cannot but be impressed by the magnificent craftsmanship of the Buddha carved out of rocks in the Rock Temple, built in the 1st century

BC. The climb up through the carved paws of the lion in Sigiriya to reach the Rock Fortress was breathtaking. How ingenious to carve out a pool, compartments and military units from rocks!

I was bowled over by the size of a jakfruit tree that stood outside the temple and thought how wonderful it was that it bore at least 100 jakfruits and that the whole tree was carved by nature. I came away from the jakfruit tree though to try my first golden king coconut water and sure enough green coconut water is no match. Next time I will give green coconut water a miss altogether as king coconut is life's nectar.

What amazes me about Sri Lanka is the food from trees, vegetation, shrubs and climbers are all in abundance. There are the double headed coconut trees too, which I saw at the Botanical Garden in Colombo. How can I forget the rambuttan? Every time we passed a stall, the cry from the coach was "Oh the rambuttan, look how big they are and can we stop now to buy some?" But the durian fruit was referred to as the smelly ones and not much else about it was mentioned. There are also mangosteen, breadfruit, bananas of all sizes and colours, with red coloured skin too; guava, passion fruit and various types of mangos. Of course, the fruit is significant to my Australian traveller friends as most of them were born in the country. It is the memories of the past they come to re-live and relish. It's comforting for them that these familiar things are still here in their beloved Sri Lanka. They



• *A tree carved by nature, this jakfruit tree outside the temple was teeming with fruit.*

savoured the idli, muscat sweets, sandalwood soaps, ate cadju poolang (the luscious fruit that the cadju seed encased in an outer kernal develops) and king-size roasted cashew nuts which they purchased to bring back to Australia.

I enjoyed my stay at the Palm Garden Village hotel in Anuradhapura; the cabins were surrounded by forest trees and the interiors decorated



• Abundant fruit is amazing; mangosteen, breadfruit, bananas of all sizes and colours, guava, passion fruit and various types of mangos. Australians who were born in the country come to re-live and relish the memories of the past.

with colonial style furnishings. You feel removed from ordinary life: from the sounds of traffic on the road, the tuk-tuks, the red terracotta roofed houses with flower pots around the sides and the plastic seats and tables on the verandas, the stupas, the ornately carved Hindu temples, the front of the shops display dried fish and spices in sacks, the mangroves, the grave yards and the homemade curds being sold on the sides of the roads. Here, instead, we embraced a refined life in the midst of a romanticised forest with its own swimming pool. Not far from here are the sacred ancient ruins and stupas of Sri Lanka, the proud history of its religious glory, a history which is also still so present in everyday life.

Although this island is small you would never guess how varied the landscape is. However, in Jaffna, the land is somewhat flat and the climate is hot and humid. Within the Jaffna Fort lies the new memorial to commemorate the thousands that died during the uprising in the 1980s. Some from our group are Burghers of Dutch descent and they visited Neduntheevu (Delft Island). They also wanted to see if records of their Dutch ancestors could be traced in the public library archives. The library was rebuilt in 2003 after it burned down during the 1983 Sri Lankan civil war. I was intrigued by Jaffna, it felt like a place well lived in. It was interesting to see women here riding motor bikes. Exploring the area, I could not

help but think to myself that I'd like to come back here someday soon and visit many of the wonders of this beautiful island.

Many European trees and African tulip trees have been introduced to Sri Lanka. We saw them as we ascended the beautiful vegetable planted hills, away from Nuwara Eliya where we stayed at the Grand Hotel by the famous golf course and tea plantations. We visited Labukalle Tea Plantation and sampled broken orange pekoe tea, but not the silver tips tea, as this is only afforded by the royals and the aristocracy. Nuwara Eliya is a lovely place, with its cool air and mists that hang over the edges of hills and houses; it feels a little like England.

Kandy is similar to Nuwara Eliya in its beauty and has well developed buildings among the winding hilly roads, one of which was the Regency Hotel where we stayed. I wanted to ensure that I visited the Kandy Temple of Tooth where the Relic of the Buddha is repositied.. You cannot but marvel at this building and it's interior. As you enter you can hear the deafening beat of drums played out where the Tooth Relic is housed, both pilgrims and tourists alike keep moving their way through to make way for more people to come.

We passed Matale where the sky is lined with a canopy of lush green fruit bearing trees and we stopped at the Spice Garden to sample vanilla, peppers, cloves, cardamoms, cinnamons, rose petals. But soon we became sidetracked by offers of massages and ended up purchasing truck loads of ayurvedic lotions and potions to rid us of all the ailments we brought with us to Sri Lanka. Similarly a visit to the Kanniya hot springs in Trincomalee was a must, as was a visit to the beach to restore our health to perfection. The best experience was going to the Seetha Amma Temple, not far from the Hakgala Botanical Garden, which I found fascinating. The carving on the exterior of the Temple depicts the entire story of Rama and Sita.

As our trip was coming to an end, we stayed in the Yala National Park, among the monkeys and wondering elephants. Not far from our hotel was a little island and in the waters were floating crocodiles and giant water buffalos. The kingfishers came in as the sun was going down and perched on branches to catch fish. Those of our group that went on an afternoon safari had ventured off in search of leopards. Sure enough they had seen them, gathered on a hill top, but the highlight of their expedition was seeing an alligator snapping away at the flapping bird that it had caught between its teeth. We finished off by visiting the city of Galle. It has a rich Dutch history and beautiful architecture. The buildings are preserved pristinely in white paint work, just as white as the uniforms of the children I saw in Colombo.



"Before my return to Sri Lanka in 1976 I lived in England for 30 years and worked in the Seafood industry for many of those years as an Importer of frozen prawns and other seafood products from Asian countries including Sri Lanka. It was during a visit to Colombo that by chance I met Mr J.R.Jayawardena. He was in the Opposition then but assured me that he would soon be the Prime Minister and having learnt about my background, he urged me to return to Sri Lanka saying: "Our country needs people like you".

Due to a change in my personal circumstances, I decided to leave England and remembered what JR had said to me when I decided to return to my birth country.

I did not meet him again until he presented me with my first Presidential Export Award in 1983 which I won again in 1984 and 1987. By then I was No 1 seafood exporter and had large processing factories in Colombo and Jaffna employing upto 1000 persons - but that is another story. (Author's note).

Intensive prawn farming in Sri Lanka

It was in 1983 that I happened to read about the success of Prawn Farming in Asia with Taiwan leading the way, followed by Indonesia and Thailand. Some attempts had been made at farming in Sri Lanka but without success and I felt that we could not ignore this new development using intensive methods of prawn farming.

Problem was, how do I get started? I hired so called experts from Japan and India and travelled to India twice, only to find out that neither the Indians nor the Japanese knew much about prawn farming. In fact, India started several years after we did. Eventually, through a contact in Hong Kong, I went to Taiwan and to the prawn farms in Kaohsiung in the south and was amazed at the scale of what I saw. Hundreds of small farms, usually operated by families.



• Johann David's photograph showing some of the ponds used in the early days for prawn breeding by subsidiary Andriesz Mariculture (Pvt) Ltd.

Two prawn farmers were hired and they would come to Sri Lanka no sooner than we found a suitable site.

Tiger Prawns (*Penaeus Monodon*) was the species most suitable for farming and they needed brackish water to grow in.

We started our search in the Chilaw area and were lucky to find a 100 acre site in a village called Bangadeniya almost straight away and negotiations were quickly completed with the local authorities for

by
Mervyn Andriesz



a 33-year lease, subject to approval of the site by the Taiwanese. Site approval was obtained and we were ready to go. A new company, Andriesz Mariculture (Pvt) Ltd., was incorporated as a wholly owned subsidiary of Andriesz & Co.

I had to find suitable staff and hired young graduates with a marine biology background while some were from the Fisheries Department. An engineer from Andriesz & Co was in charge of construction of the ponds, starting with two out of a targeted 50 ponds. Water would be pumped from the nearby Hamilton Canal.

The farm site was infested with snakes – cobras and vipers – and the workers were very uneasy but the problem was solved by the Taiwanese who ate all the snakes!

Pond construction is a skilled procedure because the level of the pond bottom had to be just right to allow water to drain out through the sluice gates at an ideal speed during daily partial exchange of water and also at harvest time. The Taiwanese were experts at this and to their credit, our local staff learned quickly and two ponds were ready to start farming in 1984. Four more followed quickly.

First we had to get the mother prawns from the ocean and a local fisherman was encouraged to do this and was supplied with a portable aerator to keep the prawns alive between capture and delivery to the farm. The prawn had to be ready to spawn and expected number of eggs would be 500,000 to 1 million of which 60 to 80 percent could possibly hatch into larvae and possibly a further 60 to 80 percent would survive and be introduced into a grow-out pond for seven days prior to stocking in the pond. The ponds were on average 0.5 hectare in size and 100,000 to 150,000 Post Larvae (PL's), in effect 17 days after hatching, would be stocked. They would be carefully nurtured for 120 days reaching 30 to 35 grams each and then harvested and dispatched to our factory for processing and export primarily to Japan.

The great day for the first harvest arrived and I had invited the then Minister of Fisheries, Festus Perera, to be present which he duly did bringing along his media unit. We were all delighted to see that the volume of prawns being harvested would be more than expected and the Minister was amazed. The eventual total was 3,500 kilos and that meant since a pond could be stocked twice a year, allowing for the pond to be dried and cleaned between stockings, a yield of about 7,000 kilos per pond per year was possible. Since the pond was 0.5 hectare that meant 14,000 kilos (30,800 lbs.) per hectare and this harvest quantity was among the best in the world.

The Taiwanese most surprisingly decided to leave because they could not manage the size of the farm we envisaged and then we were on our own.

Soon afterwards the Business page of a popular Newspaper carried the banner headline "THERE IS GOLD IN THOSE PRAWN PONDS" and that is when the gold rush started and everyone and his aunt wanted to get into prawn farming. There was no regulatory body and haphazard development took place. However, we continued to build and operate more than 40 ponds successfully.

By 1986 the cost of a Mother Prawn had risen from Rs.400 each to Rs.8,000 and supply was diminishing fast, so we decided to set up our own hatchery and this was completed in 1987.

Live mature males and females were placed in growing tanks and fed a high protein diet and a process called Eye Oblation, whereby one eye stalk was cut, resulting in rapid maturation due to increased hormone secretion. We now had our own reliable supply of mother prawns and whereas one from the ocean laid up to one million eggs, ours laid up to 500,000 and the survival rates were similar. Over the years we sold several millions of PL's (Prawn Fry).

In essence, by using intensive farming methods, we were trying to beat nature at its own game of natural spawning in a big ocean.

The pre-requisite of successful prawn farming is a supply of clean water to ensure good pond quality and to achieve this daily exchange of 10 percent of pond water with fresh supply is essential. Overstocking of ponds and improper feeding methods are other causes of bad pond quality and when that happens NATURE FIGHTS BACK. In addition, bacteria which can trigger a viral infection, are endemic in wild prawns. However, as the prawns are not under stress, these are kept under control. With farmed prawns, the stress factor is increased and viral infections raised their ugly head in 1990 starting with Monodon Baccular Virus (MBV) in 1990 and the more serious White Spot Disease in 1995, which decimated the prawn farming industry in Sri Lanka.

As President of the Prawn Farmers Association and The Seafood Exporters Association, I appealed several times to the Fisheries Minister to

urgently open up the Hamilton Canal to the ocean to allow disposal of pond water and allow supply of fresh sea water but there was no response. Intake of water for the ponds was from the Hamilton Canal and so was the disposal of effluent and the pollution of the water supply was inevitably leading to disease and closure of almost all the prawn farms. Due to the ongoing war, supplies of sea foods from the North and East were cut off and Processing Factories depended heavily on farmed prawns. When farming stopped most of the factories closed down, including my own, resulting in a loss of several billion rupees of export revenue to the nation. Thousands of jobs were lost and cost the banks a fortune in irrecoverable loans.

As for me the Prawn King (a.k.a. King Prawn) I retired hurt from the seafood industry but won more battles than I lost and live to fight another day!



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, at all times. 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, we urge you to please keep those letters as brief as possible, but 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 necessarily reserves the right to edit your letters for reasons of length, clarity and content.

Quaint queries

- *Saving is the best thing. Especially when your parents have done it for you.*
- *Wise men talk because they have something to say; fools talk because they have to say something*
- *They call our language the mother tongue because the father seldom gets to speak.*

Hoppers, bone-setters, botanists & The Weed



by Tissa Devendra

What inspired this story is the last item in the title – The Weed – better known as ‘Kerala ganja’ whose all-too-frequent detections, on land and sea, feature almost daily in our newspapers. The high quality of this illicit import, from Kerala, is a sad reflection on the poor quality of the stuff yet flourishing in the wilds of Hambegamuva. A few of us ‘senior citizens’ may remember old Sir John’s farcical army raid, led by an armoured brigade, into these wilds to rid the jungle, “forever”, of ganja cultivation. The “success” of this foray is shown by the fact that, almost 60 years later, vast extents of ganja yet flourish in these very same wilds and are regularly raided by the Police. Kerala ganja, however, is not the only high quality import that Sri Lanka has welcomed from Kerala over many centuries. I thought of recording some of these items, which I have listed in the title of this story, as well as some others unlisted.

Hoppers and tappers

Friends visiting Kerala were pleasantly surprised to be served crisp ‘hoppers’ for breakfast, imagining this was a gesture of courtesy to Sri Lankan ‘aappa’ eaters. They were, however, even more surprised to be informed that this ‘aappam’ is a typical Kerala product! The now ubiquitous ‘hopper’ (to use the accepted Singlish term) never seems to have featured in Sinhala menus of historic times. D.T. Devendra makes no mention of it in his article on Sinhala cuisine in the age of Mahavamsa. Nor does it occur in Knox’s ‘An Historical Relation of the Island of Ceylon’, Ananda Pilimataluwa’s book on Kandyan recipes, nor in the researches of legendary Chef Pabilis Silva, relying entirely on oral history of British Colonial rule, it appears that ‘hoppers’ arrived with the influx of dock workers from Kerala, in the late 19th century, to work in the Colombo Harbour. Both Ceylon and India were under British rule and there were no restrictions on travel or residence between their peoples. Sinhala peasants and fishermen preferred to toil at their traditional occupations rather than become wage slaves in heavy, uncongenial and unfamiliar tasks. This was also the case in the Kandyan hills where British planters had to import starving Tamils from South India as semi-slave labour to work on coffee and tea estates.

Kerala had a centuries-old flourishing (wooden) shipbuilding industry and a large corps

of dock-workers to service the traditional coastal shipping trade. It was this pool of experienced dock-workers that the British shipping firm in Colombo and Galle, decided to tap for work in the harbours. They came to be called ‘Kochchi’ (after the principal town Cochin). Many of the work-chants that today’s dock-workers yell while handling cargo, are a ‘pidgin-Hindi’ first used by their Kochchi predecessors. These coconut belt, rice-eating South Indians seem to have fitted seamlessly into their new environment. As time went on, many took unto themselves local ‘wives’, during their sojourn here, persuading them to venture on ‘baking’

their favourite food ‘aappam’. It proved to be so popular that it spread like wild-fire – beginning with the urban maritime areas and gradually spreading country-wide. Few know of the non-native origins of Sri Lanka’s favourite food – now up-market enough to feature in menus of 5-Star hotels.

The coconut palm is tapped for toddy both in Kerala and southern ‘Ceylon’. Enterprising arrack renters from Panadura came to know that there was a ‘cohort’ of excellent toddy tappers in Kerala. They decided to exploit this human resource and established a regular seasonal flow of migrant tappers from Kerala. They came to work in such toddy-rich areas as Payagala during the tapping season and went back to Kerala, with their earnings, at season’s end. These tappers never planned to settle down in Ceylon. They were reputed to be faster and more expert than our more primitive brethren. It is possible that the Sinhalese tappers we see tight-rope walking in Payagala learnt some of their Kerala skills. This interesting ‘human traffic’ seems to have begun in the early 20th



• *Toddy Tapper.*

century and petered to a halt with the end of *Pax Britannica* and the free flow of British subjects between newly independent India and Ceylon.

Setting bones, casting spells, debunking myths

Over the last few years our urban streetscape has sprouted quite a few vividly illustrated signboards advertising foot massage, foot therapy, pedicure, physio and such-like services provided by young ladies in white uniforms in sterile-looking parlours. All cater to an up-market clientele. Many decades ago, before the cosy little backwater of Ceylon was inundated by globalisation, internationally branded cosmetics and hitherto unknown medical conditions, many of these needs were met by a cohort of 'vedaralas' from Kerala. They probably arrived, in the wake of the Kochchi dock workers, to minister to an essential need – to alleviate the sprained limbs, torn muscles and assorted aches and pains of their compatriots toiling in the harbour.

It did not take very long for the reputation of the 'Kochchi Vedas' to spread far and wide. Their little shopfront work cubicles nestled amid little 'kadays' and tea-shops in many towns, with a Sinhala signboard proclaiming 'Kochchi Vedarala'. These bone-setters and traditional masseurs were, generally, grizzled old gents. The only equipment in their cramped work place where a few wooden stools, a string-bed ('lanu enda') for massaging and a small glass-fronted cupboard for oils and nostrums in odd shaped bottles. After the Veda's wiry fingers carefully probed the affected area, the patient had to place the limb in question on a suitable bench. The veda then selected one from his array of herbal oils, poured a small amount on to his cupped palm, spread it on the affected limb and then began a slow, occasionally painful, massage with strong fingers probing deep into the sprained tendon. Several visits later, and the pain was gone. These vedas were also adept at resetting dislocated bones and gradually came to be patronised by handicapped footballers and rugger players. Colombo's cricketers were a more up-market class who scorned mere Vedas and, generally, relied on the skills of a diminutive masseur who rode a Vespa scooter.

As the years rolled by, rules and regulations swamped everyday life, questions of citizenship and work permits led to the Kochchi harbour workers "folding up their tents" and reluctantly going back to Kerala. *Pax Britannica* and the freedom of travel between British India and Colonial Ceylon had now, sadly, come to an end. Faced with a diminishing 'pool' of walking wounded from the harbour, the Kochchi vedas too diminished to a trickle and by the 1960s or so, not one was to be found. There are, however, a few Sinhala vedaralas who dubiously claim to have acquired the same skills.

I must confess that the prevalence (if any) in Sri Lanka of spell casting 'witch doctors' from Kerala is a subject of which I have only a shadowy idea

based on conjecture. Unlike their vedarala countrymen whose signboards in bazaars competed with the grinning denture. However, the persistence of their reputation leads me to conclude that there must have been quite a few of these practitioners around. One has only to glance at the 'smalls' in newspaper Classified Advertisement columns to see advertisements for "Malayalee charms" to win hearts, out-fox enemies, restore virility etc. Kerala yet seems to be a good brand name for quality products from ganja to magic.

A few decades ago, one of our great newsmakers also came from Kerala. This was Dr. Abraham Kovoor, head of the Rationalist Society (is it yet around?). He waged a relentless campaign against all forms of superstition (as he called it) which more glib souls considered as revealed truth. He revelled in pouring scorn on séances, rebirth, fire-walking, spirit-possession, astrology. He had a fine sense of publicity and enjoyed public debates with the 'superstitious' and 'charlatans' – as he contemptuously called his opponents. He often challenged them to publicly display their 'specialties', which he threatened to rationally expose. I do not recall anyone taking up his challenge. It is a pity that Dr. Kovoor is no more around to debunk the current crop of astrologers etc. who seem to dominate today's political landscape.

Teachers, botanists and a saint

Before the socio-political upheaval of 1956, English was the medium of secondary education in both Ceylon and India. In the early 20th century our students even sat for Cambridge examinations. Our pool of graduate teachers was very small. Ceylon had no University – only a University College which prepared students for degrees from London University. Those who could not afford this enclave of the elite, struggled through as external students to earn the same London degree. However, there were too few graduates, produced locally, to staff the higher classes of the many secondary schools that now flourished in our bigger towns. India, however, was home to many universities and a multitude of graduates. Kerala always had a strong entrepreneurial tradition, thanks to its maritime history and trading connections. Underemployed graduates from this state became aware of the vacancies that existed in the staffing of Ceylon's secondary schools. Schools in Ceylon were only too glad to hire these graduates from Kerala – particularly Science teachers as our production of science graduates was woefully poor. Before long our schools 'boasted' of Keralite teachers carrying Biblical names – Abraham, Joshua, George, Matthew, Kurien and so on. There was, however, J.R. Bhatt, a Brahmin Hindu. He spent many years here and wrote a popular textbook in Botany. This was a text in Buddhist schools which, understandably, steered clear of using the Botany textbook written by the Jesuit Father Le Goc, Rector

of St. Joseph's College. J.R's younger brother V.R was a senior student at Nalanda Vidyalaya where my father taught. I yet remember the story where a band of schoolboys returned from a few days hike in elephant country. An old villager, who claimed to be able to 'charm' charging wild elephants into turning tail, shared one such mantram with them "Om ! Nalagiri Hasthiraja diri, diri BHAA". Young Bhatt was thrilled his name was in the spell. Many years later, he visited DT, my father and former teacher, as the London correspondent of the Hindustan Times – and remembered that mantram.

Many decades ago, students had to pass in one 'science' subject at the SSC to qualify to sit the HSC. Maths was the easiest option for most – but I had a terrible allergy to the subject. I decided on Botany on the strength of a readable book by two science teachers from Kerala, Joshua and Pulimood. Their names always stuck together as Hall & Stevens (Arithmetic), Laurel & Hardy (Comedy), Fred Astaire & Ginger Rogers (Tap dancing). I could never split

the calyx of a shoe flower with a safety blade like my cleverer classmates (who ended up as doctors) but, thanks to Joshua and Pulimood, I earned the qualifying 'Pass'. Also my imagination was enriched by scientific names such as 'Grandiflora' and 'Gloriosa Superba'. I am afraid, however, that 'cannabis sativa' (ganja, marijuana, pot, weed) did not feature in this fascinating book – though the authors' homeland seems to produce its best quality!

I conclude with a grace note – Kerala's greatest contribution to Sri Lanka was none of the above – but Joseph Vaz, the Catholic priest, given sanctuary by the Buddhist King of Sinhale and canonised as Sri Lanka's first Saint by Pope Francis on 14 January 2015.

Kerala has done us great !



Kalutara and its pioneer Rubber Planters

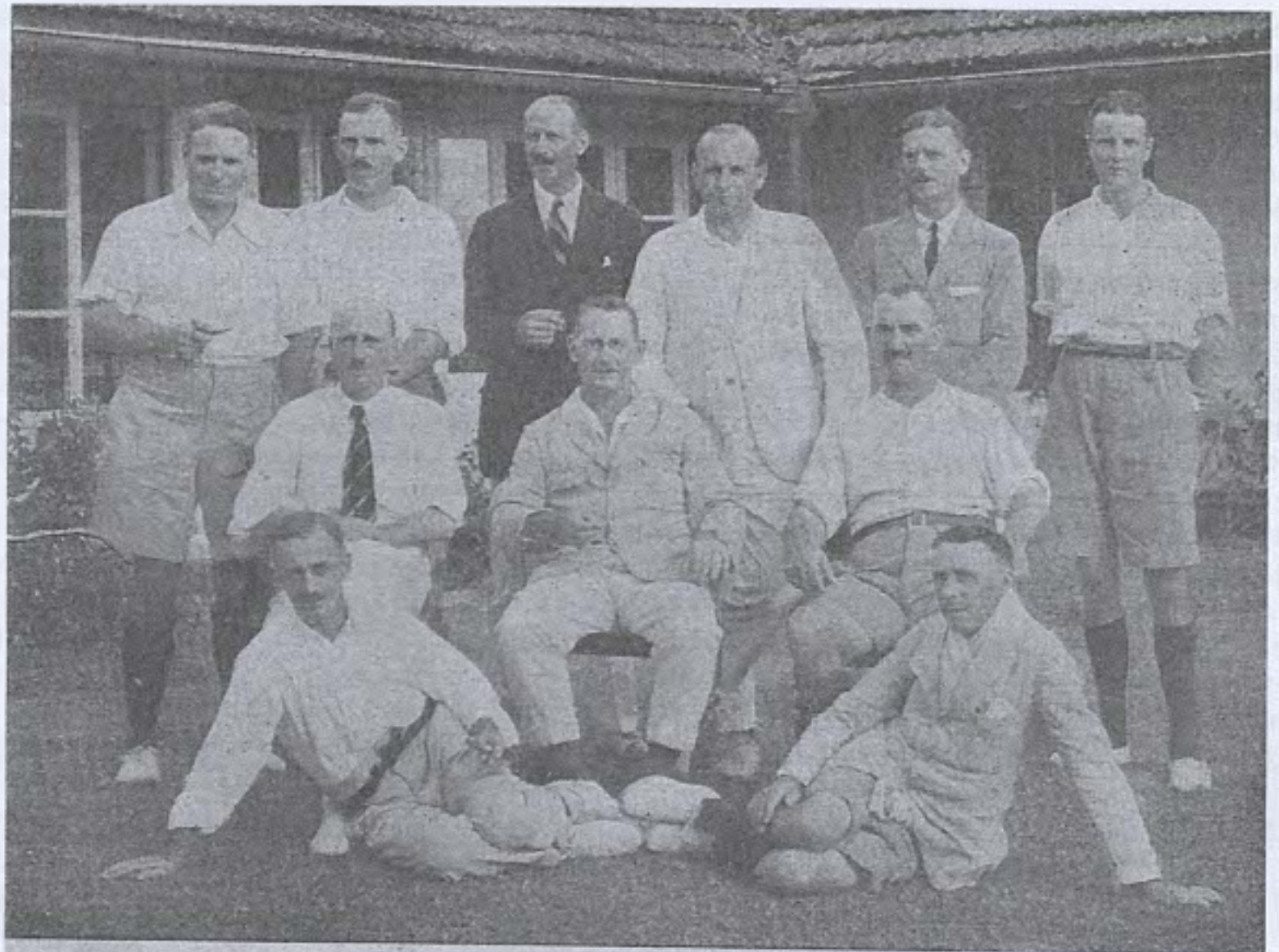
by The Rambler

The planting of rubber as a commercial crop took place several decades after tea production had almost reached its peak in the hill districts of Sri Lanka. Since up-country areas were almost saturated with tea cultivation, mid and low country areas were being looked upon as potential locations for other crops. Henry Wickam's importation of rubber seed from Kew Gardens in 1876 that were successfully grown in the Botanic Gardens of Heneratgoda provided a great opportunity for this to materialise. The first commercial planting of rubber was in 1883 and by 1904, 25,000 acres were under cultivation. Agro climatic conditions in the Kalutara district and the Sabaragamuwa area seemed to be ideal for the cultivation of rubber. In fact, the Kalutara district came to be the better suited area for successful cultivation of rubber. In 1904, 34 tons of rubber were exported from Ceylon. By 1928, the area under rubber cultivation had increased to over half a million acres.

Some of the major estates in the Kalutara District at mid-20th century were Clyde Tebuwana (1500 acres), Culloden, Neboda (1600 acres), Dalkeith Group, Latpandura (2500 acres), Frocester, Govinna (1200 acres), Gikiyanakanda, Neboda (3300 acres), Halwatura (2100 acres), Maddeggedera (1300 acres), Neuchatel (2200 acres), Neboda Group (1600 acres), Sirikandura, Matugama (1000 acres), Vogan, Matugama (1800 acres), Yahalakelle (600 acres) and Mirishena (900 acres).

The group photo shown overleaf was taken in Vogan Estate, Neboda around 1920, almost 100 years ago. They were all pioneer planters in the district and were in charge of some of the most productive rubber properties in the country. The men shown here are P.R. May, Manager of Dalkeith Group, Latpandura; WT Miller of Tudugalla, Tebuwana; RM Ash of Pantiya, Neboda; JW Oldfield of Gallawatte, Agalawatte; TH Hadden of Vogan, Neboda; KA Burns of Pallagoda, Bentota; R Garnier of Millakanda; RD Vizard, FR Dakeyne of Vogan and LP Gapp of Mirishena.

The Kalutara district comprising of Kalutara, Matugama, Agalawatte, Neboda, Tebuwana and surrounding areas was found to have agroclimatic conditions eminently suitable for rubber cultivation. With its salubrious climate, Kalutara was called the "Richmond of Ceylon" by Britishers living in the island. Among its famous 19th Century residents was the legendary Charles Ambrose Lorenz who lived in his home called "Teak Bungalow" in Kalutara and, of course, the Padikara Mudaliyar NDA Silva Wijeyesinghe who built his mansion "Richmond Castle", now an orphanage. The oft asked query on the delicious fruit, the mangosteen, which grows only in the Kalutara area, reinforces the belief in the unique soil and climate of Kalutara. Is it the soil, the elevation, rainfall or a combination of all these factors?



Standing :—P. R. May, W. T. Miller, G. B. Stevens, R. M. Ash, J. W. Oldfield, & T. H. Hadden.
Seated :—K. A. Burne, R. Garnier, R. D. Vizard. *Seated on ground* :—F. R. Dakeyne, L. P. Gapp.

Objectives of British rule

The lives of the planters seen in the photograph typify to some degree the objective of British colonial rule in India and Ceylon. The colonials did not intend “settling” in the sub-continent as they did in America, Africa and Australia. The general trend was to come over to the colony and engage in a productive occupation and retire to the home country at the end of their career. The careers of some of them illustrate this observation.

Phil May was a graduate of Cambridge University when he arrived in Ceylon in 1914 to work on Ellakanda and later on at Dalkeith where he was Manager for many years. He was an outstanding cricketer and an authority on rubber cultivation and Estate Management. After working for nearly 40 years in Ceylon, he retired to Hants in England. W.T. Miller, who arrived in Ceylon in 1904 was in charge of Tudugalle Estate, Tebuwana, for many decades and lived out his life in Ceylon. RM Ash arrived in 1911 and was in Pantiya, Neboda for a few years before transferring to the Avissawella area.

JW Oldfield who came out to Ceylon in 1907 was in charge of Gallawatte, Agalawatte and was acknowledged an expert on rubber. He served with the Ceylon Planters Rifle Corps in World War 1. He had an illustrious career serving as Chairman of the Planters Association and appointed a MP in

Ceylon's First Parliament of 1947. He served as a Director of Lee Hedges and Co. for several decades. He was closely associated with the social and political life of his adopted homeland and was the rare exception serving his retirement in his seaside home in Negombo. Frank Dakyne who arrived in Ceylon 1906, worked for many years on Vogan at Neboda, was a great half back at rugby. Tom Hadden, who came out in 1912 worked as Frank's assistant at Vogan. Burns who arrived in Ceylon in 1901 was on Pallagoda, Bentota, and Vizard returned to England after about 10 years. Poodle Gapp who arrived in 1908 always worked on estates managed by Lee Hedges and Co. where he later was a Director for many years and finally returned to London where he lived in retirement in his home in St James St. which he named “The Thatched House” to remind him of his entire working life in Ceylon.

A planter's life in the Kalutara District was comfortable as could be, given the amenities available in the early 20th Century. There was no electricity off the grid, however, and bungalows were lit by paraffin lamps. If the estate had a factory driven by a generator, the Superintendent's bungalow almost always was also connected to the power supply. Bungalows had latrines with a “thunder box” and night soil disposed was by conservancy labourers. Those were the standards of the day and would suffer

in comparison to the amenities available later in the 20th century. Life went on at an easy pace with limited opportunities for socialisation beyond the confines of the estate.

The Tebuwana Club was a popular centre of social activity in the district, with hostel accommodation, a well maintained cricket ground and a nine hole golf course. The club was then the hub of social activity. Most planters travelled to Colombo at least once every month for shopping and for visits to the cinema, almost the only source of entertainment available then. There was also the prospect of returning to England on furlough every three years with first class shipping facilities provided, an opportunity to break the monotony of life on the estate. Michael Speer, who was born in Ceylon in 1938 in the Joseph Fraser Nursing Home and whose father H.P. Speer was Superintendent of Glendon Group, Neboda and Yatadola Group, Matugama in the 1950s, recalls some aspects of social life in the district: "For my father's next posting in Matugama (Yatadola Group) our local club was at Tebuwana which, like the Talduwa Club, also flooded regularly every year. But Tebuwana had a nine hole golf course and this is where I first learned to play this most frustrating of all games. My wife and I also visited Tebuwana Club in 1984 and talked with an old club retainer who obviously missed the old life of the planters and even remembered my father. Up until a few years ago, he always sent us a Christmas card every year addressed to "Lady and Master". He obviously had high hopes of our marriage, as one year the card mentioned "Lady, Master and Baby!"

"A word about visits to Colombo is also necessary. These took place approximately once a fortnight, usually for the important purposes of picking up cash to pay the estate workers and visiting Elephant House to fill the "beef box". It was also a much needed break for the family from the lonely estate routine. In the fifties, when estate workers' union militancy was at its highest, the drive to Colombo was often made in convoy with other planters, as there had been a number of cases of armed robbery of payroll cash. Fortunately, nothing particularly bad ever happened to us and our visits to Colombo were spent pleasantly at the GOH, Mount Lavinia or at the Colombo Swimming Club, with, of course, shopping trips to Millers, Cargills, Colombo Apothecaries, Lalchands and a number of other household names familiar to the visiting planters of those days. Infrequent visits were also made to the Bolgoda Yacht Club, where I learned the rudiments of sailing in 1957."

The loneliness in the life of a rubber planter combined with the area's "embracing climate" sometimes resulted in liaisons with local women and as one planter exclaimed disdainfully "the seed that was sown was not always rubber!" Many British

proprietary planters sold up and returned to the UK after 1948. Local investors stepped in and gradually assumed a dominant position in the industry and were able to capitalise on the soaring rubber prices triggered by the "Korean boom of the early 1950s". A landmark Ceylonese acquisition was the purchase of Gikiyankanda and Meddagedera Estates totalling around 5000 acres of tea and rubber, previously owned by Lord Elphinstone and purchased by the bus magnate Leo Fernando. There was also frenzied acquisition by traditional coconut estate owners who used their accumulated capital to invest in sizeable rubber properties. There were, however, a few Ceylonese who played pioneer roles in rubber cultivation from almost the inception, along with the pioneering British. Notable among them was CEA Dias who owned Wawulagala, Milleniya and Mukalana Estates from the 1920s and was reputed to be one of the first, if not the first, to introduce budding as a replanting technique to the district.

It is hoped that these notes inspired by the group photograph featured here, will serve to focus on the significant role played by the pioneer planters of Kalutara district in the development of the rubber industry of Ceylon.



Tea plantations of South Ceylon

BY THE RAMBLER

My first occasion to travel from Colombo to Galle on the southern expressway was during a recent visit to Sri Lanka. On two previous occasions I was told that the route was not interesting as the journey was largely through uninhabited areas and I, unhesitatingly, bowed to local opinion. While much of what I was told was correct taken in its own context, travelling along the new highway yielded some fascinating insights to me. The expressway does provide other compensating factors of which the principal one should certainly be the reduction of travel time from about three hours to a little over an hour. Other piquant features of this drive through the hitherto publicly unexplored countryside of Southern Sri Lanka, is that the journey now takes you through places one heard of but never ventured to visit (unless there was a specific reason for it) obviously because there was no special interest in those almost concealed areas for travellers. Previously it was the Galle Road that took you to Galle through all those familiar towns and landmarks and the housing and urban development that sprung up over

the years on both sides of Galle Road. In far off days one only heard of fascinating names of Rubber and Tea estates like Clyde, Culloden, Deviturai, Vogan, Citrus *et al* and did not see what the places looked like, as they were all tucked away from the beaten track and almost secluded behind a green curtain. With the building of the expressway the curtain has been drawn open and one gets at least a fleeting glimpse of those areas which generations of Sri Lankans have only heard of but never had an opportunity to see. Many of the estates were either mainly of rubber or tea and rubber, or of low grown tea.

The plantation era of Ceylon began with the British opening up thousands of acres of fertile land for planting with coffee in the early 19th Century. Most coffee plantations were in the hill country area where soil was fertile and the land overgrown with thick forest teeming with wild life. There were hardly any habitations or local villages. It was just a matter of clearing the forest and planting coffee, no simple task, but carried out efficiently given the limitations of that era. Almost the entirety of the pioneering plantation enterprise was undertaken by British interests in the country with the indispensable help of South Indian labour, since domiciled in the country to form a new community – an additional segment to its ethnic composition. With blister blight devastating coffee plantations a few decades later, British estate owners replanted former coffee plantations with tea. Much of what was called “up country” was planted with tea, while mid-country including, the Kelani Valley, Kalutara and Sabaragamuwa districts, were some decades later, planted in rubber. There was not much British interest in developing the fertile regions of south western Sri Lanka in previous years, possibly because those areas were fairly well populated in long established villages and incursions may have had to break through old systems of land tenure and so on, incurring additional costs for land acquisition. This situation did not take long to change, mainly due to a combination of British and indigenous planting enterprise driven by emerging capital formation mainly during the late 19th Century and thereafter. The notorious Paddy Tax and the Waste Lands Ordinance also contributed to the wide scale sequestration of land traditionally owned by the peasantry.

The tea growing industry in the hill country of Ceylon was almost exclusively dominated by British interests in the period up to independence in 1948. There were rare exceptions - the most prominent being the acquisition of Hatton Estate by CEA Dias in 1919 and the pioneering work of Charles Henry de Soysa in Hanguranketa in the mid-19th Century. In the early 19th Century, before the advent of coffee, Governor Barnes showing an abiding interest in sugar cane cultivation encouraged sugar cane planters from Mauritius to settle in Ceylon. The Governor himself

purchased a large holding in Gannoruwa where Samuel Northway and James Laing, among others, were to try their hand in growing sugar cane in a climate which proved to be quite unsuitable for the crop.

Those intrepid pioneers and others like the Anglo Belgian, Vander Poorten and the Winters, Bowmans, Hawkes, Gotteliers tried their hand at sugar production, with varying degrees of success. All eventually scattered around different parts of the island seeking to extract the best from the soil through other commercial crops. AW Winter moved to Gintota and set up a sugar mill which perhaps was the only successful sugar milling venture. The Mill House at Gintota was later occupied by the Anthonisz family and was featured in Barbara Sansoni's book “Vihares and Verandahs” but a later owner had demolished the building apparently seeing value in the large amount of quality timber used in its construction! The difficulties faced by the pioneer sugar cane culturists can be imagined when considering the life of Robert L Craig who died on 3 March 1846 aged 63 years and laid to rest at the Dutch Cemetery in Galle. AM Ferguson writing in the Ceylon Literary Register stated: “Mr Robert Craig lost his money, and I may add his life, from embarking on sugar culture. He worked up a coffee estate in the Kadugannawa District in the early days of 10 cwt an acre until he was able to sell out for £12,000. To him and to his family this was considerable wealth, but he was unfortunately induced to spend the price received for his coffee estate in opening a sugar plantation near Matara. The enterprise was a failure, poor Craig had lost his all, and he died like so many others from heart disease, the result doubtless of anxiety and depression”. Local entrepreneurs in the South, having seen the failure of sugar cane culture as a plantation crop, turned mainly to rubber which required less labour input and where agroclimatic conditions were more suitable for the crop.

Last of the Kandy Arrack Renters -1922 (Left) P. Alf Dias & Richard Salgado.

With the advent of the Buddhist revival movement in the late 19th century, wealthy entrepreneurs who had accumulated capital from arrack renting were looking for new areas for investment. Prominent among them were the Amarasuriya family from Unawatuna, the Perera Abeywardenes from Galle, Rajapakses of Deniyaya, Abeysundera's from Galle, the De Fonsekas, Dias's and Salgadoes from Panadura.





• (From left) William Abeysundera, Donald Ranaweera and Simon Perera Abeywardene.

They, together with some of the old British plantation companies, became pioneers in low grown tea cultivation. Growing tea at low altitudes, no doubt, required greater capital outlay for land acquisition (in contrast coffee planters bought crown land at 5s per acre) establishing a plantation and also for continued maintenance.

Three of the four Amarasuriya brothers



• Henry W., Buddhadasa and Thomas.

The more prominent estates in the South that produced tea by the end of the 19th Century were Deviturai, Fred's Ruhe, Monrovia, Citrus, Olympus, Talgaswela, Walahanduwa and Enselwatte all excepting Deviturai and Talgaswela were owned by local entrepreneurs. Deviturai opened by Samuel Northway in the 1840s with 50 acres of cleared land expanded to 700 acres by the end of the 19th century and further expanded to over 2300 acres by the early 20th century. It was a tea cum rubber estate with its tea component amounting to about 700 acres. It could be safely assumed that the expansion of Deviturai under three generations of the Northways was the result of "aggressive acquisition" from peasant small holders. The Northways did not own the estate, but managed it on behalf of the proprietary company. The wheel turned its full circle 150 years later when under Land Reform introduced in the mid 70s, much of Deviturai was broken up for village expansion. Fred's Ruhe estate owned by the Abeysundera family had over 250 acres under tea. Monrovia, Citrus, Olympus and Diyadawa were all initially acquired by Thomas Amarasuriya who, at the time of acquisition in the late 19th century, comprised of 800, 750, 240 and 200 acres respectively, of which the tea component was 258,300, 118 and 100 acres respectively. Thomas Amarasuriya's extensive plantation holdings were inherited by his only son Henry who further expanded

the estate portfolio. Henry (Senior)'s sons Henry Woodward, Thomas, Buddhadasa and Francis inherited Henry (Snr)'s estates which by the middle of the 20th Century had the following acreages. Monrovia 1156, of which 203 were in tea, Citrus 2419 acres of which 1862 were in tea, Olympus 843 acres of which 401 were under tea and Diyadawa 600 acres all under tea.

Other notable tea estates in the south all owned by local entrepreneurs were Walahanduwa, and Enselwatte in Deniyaya. Walahanduwa planted by Simon Perera Abeywardene, the laird of Closenbergh, consisted of 1312 acres of which 478 acres were under tea. Enselwatte estate owned by the Panadura Tea and Rubber Co. (of the Salgado and De Fonseka families) comprised of 5500 acres of which 1200 acres were under tea. Tea estates were stable investments and a solid base for further capital formation. While pioneering families made judicious investments combined with hard work and self deprivation at times, it was often the case that succeeding generations did not build on the base built by their forbears. Henry Woodward Amarasuriya was an exception. He not only conserved his inheritance, but expanded his holdings considerably extending his tea estate interests to Dickoya where he acquired Castlereagh, Carfax, Blair Athol, Newton and Penrhos and Holmwood and Sutton in Dimbula among other estates. The Ranaweera family which started off in Yatiyana by Donald Ranaweera's grandfather popularly known as "Yatiyana Ralahamay" bought into Panilkanda Estate in Deniyaya and later moved to acquiring Fetteresso and Attabagie Group in Dickoya and Gampola respectively among other plantations.

Capital concentration in the hands of a few, however, had its social consequences and the emerging disparities in wealth resulted in the Land Reform initiatives of the mid-1970s which placed a ceiling on the size of holdings. Many of the descendants of those pioneer tea planters are today in reduced circumstances although some have sought other areas of enterprise where they have achieved mightily. If we look at the period of about 100 years between the late 19th and late 20th century, it will reveal an era in which indigenous enterprise intervened actively to make a substantial contribution towards plantation development in an economy dominated by agricultural produce. It served to form a strong bulwark of nascent indigenous capital accumulation.



Quaint queries (2)

- Regular naps prevent old age, especially if you take them while driving.
- I believe we should all pay our tax with a smile. I tried - but they wanted cash.

(Submitted by Harry de Sayrah)

The first Ceylonese family in Australia – revisited

by THIRU ARUMUGAM

The subject of the first Ceylonese family in Australia has been previously discussed in this Journal in the February 2002 issue by

considerable research on the life of O'Dean and his work as a Malay Interpreter in Australia. This research has resulted in his publication of a twenty page article

Hoodine				CP	Kangaroo	life Watchman Dockery? Dr
Hoodine	Luc		CT			Ship of Hoodine's
Hoodine		27	BC			
Hoodine	Sarah	18	CT			
Hoodine	Sancho	16	BC			
Hoodine	Cameron	14				(Childhood to Dr)
Hoodine	Cooper	14				
Hoodine	Moore	2 1/2				

• (Fig. 1) The "Hoodine" family 1824.
(Courtesy: State Records NSW 1787-1859 and findmypast.co.uk)

Sydneysider Glennys Ferguson in her article *The first Ceylonese family in Australia*. She is a direct sixth generation descendant of William O'Dean who arrived in Sydney as a convict with his family from Colombo in the Brig *Kangaroo* on 07 February 1816, about 28 years after the First Fleet, and they were the first Ceylonese family to settle in Australia. CSA Member M D (Tony) Saldin has also written about O'Dean in the February 2013 issue of this Journal in his article *Malay Mercenaries in the Military Service of Kandyan Kings*.

No apology is offered for revisiting this subject for the following reasons. Firstly, a rough survey of current CSA members shows that about two-thirds of them joined CSA after February 2002 and are therefore unlikely to have read Ferguson's article. Secondly, this year marks the 200th anniversary of O'Dean's court martial in Colombo on 04 May 1815 and his banishment for life to Australia. He left Colombo with his family on 19 August 1815. Thirdly, the digitisation of some records by the National Library of Australia, the State Library of New South Wales (NSW) and State Records NSW has given easy access to finding more information about O'Dean without having to pore over reels of microfilm. Finally, Paul Thomas is a Lecturer at Monash University, Melbourne and has recently done

titled *Oodeen, a Malay Interpreter on Australia's frontier lands* which was published in May 2012 in the Journal "Indonesia and the Malay World", 40:117. He has also written five pages about O'Dean under the sub-title *Oodeen: Diplomacy and trade in the north* in the book "Macassan History and Heritage: Journeys, Encounters and Influence" edited by Marshall Clark and Sally K May, ANU, 2013. This article draws on all of the above mentioned sources, together with much additional material.

O'Dean in Ceylon

As Ferguson has pointed out, one of the difficulties in searching for information about O'Dean is the many variations in the spelling of his name in official records. The variations include O'Dean, O'Deane, Odean, Odeen, Oodeen, Hoodine and Wooden. His first name as used by him in Australia is William, but towards the end of his long life he used the first name of John, and the name on his tombstone in St Stephens Church, Camperdown, Sydney, is John Odean. The Blogspot "Vinod's Places" gives his original surname as used in Ceylon as Jainudeen, which could very well have been his original surname, which was later anglicised to John O'Dean. This propensity towards name variation also extended to his six children who used different first names at different times. In this article he will be referred to as William O'Dean.

William O'Dean was born about 1775, either in Ceylon or possibly in Ambon Island. This small island is in the Maluku Archipelago in Indonesia and is near New Guinea. Ambon was the original headquarters of the Dutch East India Company until the founding of Batavia, now called Jakarta. There is some evidence that O'Dean may have served with the Dutch Ambonese Regiment in Ceylon.

When the British took over Ceylon from the Dutch, O'Dean was appointed a Drum Major, a non-commissioned officer in the British 1st Ceylon (Malay) Regiment. In 1803 Governor Frederick North decided to attack Kandy, but the war turned out to be a disaster for the British who had to surrender. Meanwhile, according to sources quoted by Thomas (2012), O'Dean had already become concerned about

deteriorating conditions in the Malay Regiment including poor wages and decrease in the opium allowance and he deserted the British Army and he was soon followed by 50 or 60 others. O'Dean joined the King of Kandy's troops and actively fought against the British. He married a Kandyan lady, whose first name is given in subsequent Australian records as Eve, and they had three children born in Ceylon, a girl followed by two boys, and they lived peacefully in Kandy until 1815.

In 1815, Governor Robert Brownrigg launched an attack on Kandy. This time the British campaign was successful. O'Dean was taken prisoner by the British near Gannoruwa on 23 February 1815. He was court-martialled in Colombo under Case No. 72 on 04 May 1815 on charges of desertion and sentenced to be hanged. However, the sentence was commuted to transportation for life to Australia and he was also allowed to take his family with him, a rare privilege for convicts at that time. Thomas (2012, p.127) says that: "*The commander of the Malay Regiment had successfully argued against a sentence of capital punishment for Odeen, but the court made it clear it was not for 'any feeling of the Traitor Odeen' that it offered the pardon; the primary motivation for the change in sentence being consideration of the sentiments within the Malay regiment.*" Perhaps it was felt that execution of O'Dean would affect the morale of the Malay regiment.

The voyage of the Brig *Kangaroo*

HM Colonial Brig *Kangaroo* was a two masted sailing ship with square sails which was launched in 1812. It was an armed Brig which was based in Australia from 1814 to 1817. Lachlan Macquarie was the fifth Governor of NSW and held the post from 1810 to 1821. He oversaw the transition of NSW from a penal colony to a free settlement. Previously he had served the British Army in India and Ceylon and commanded the 73rd Regiment of Foot. In 1796 he was directly responsible for the capture of Colombo and Galle Fort from the Dutch, the latter with barely a shot being fired.

He has ensured that his name will never be forgotten in NSW by naming many places after himself. Bill Bryson in his travelogue *Down Under* makes a droll dig at the Scotsman Macquarie:

"You really cannot move in Australia without bumping into some reminder of his tenure. Run your eye over the map and you will find a Macquarie Harbour, Macquarie Island, Macquarie Marsh, Macquarie River, Macquarie Fields, Macquarie Pass, Macquarie Plains, Lake Macquarie, Port Macquarie, Mrs Macquarie's Chair (a lookout point over Sydney harbour), Macquarie's Point and a Macquarie town. I always imagine him sitting at a desk, poring over maps and charts with a magnifying glass, and calling out to his first assistant 'Hae we no' got a Macquarie Swamp yet, laddie? And look here at this wee copse.

Campbell-town Assizes.

The Court was opened here this day by his Honor the CHIEF JUSTICE, and a Jury being impannelled, the following prisoners were placed at the bar:—

Jean Herman Maas and Thomas McGibbon, charged with defrauding our Sovereign Lord the King, by forging a certain document, being a provision ledger or check list, of a detached party of the road gang No. 38.; also a receipt for provision stated to have been furnished for the use of the said party, by Mr. Thomas Rose, the contractor, between the 25th May and 24th June last, and purporting to be signed by John Lambie, Esq. J. P. Assistant Surveyor of Roads.

The prisoner Maas, on being called upon, addressed the Court as follows:—I have been accused of the heinous crimes of fraud and forgery, and found guilty; I know I am doomed to die and expect no pardon, but my crime should have been discovered in the first month, for the person under whom I was employed had done his own duty, of which Mr. Rose, junior and Mr. Wilson could have given evidence if called as witnesses.

His Honour charged the Jury, who returned a verdict, finding both prisoners Guilty.

SATURDAY, AUGUST 14th.

The Court opened this morning at 10 o'clock, when

Jean Herman Maas and Thomas McGibbon were placed at the bar, and His Honour the Chief Justice passed sentence of Death on both prisoners.

The conduct of these two unhappy men exhibited great levity and unconcern throughout the trials, which conduct, however, was much altered after receiving sentence.

• Trial of Jean Herman Maas (Extracts from The Sydney Gazette, 17 August 1830).

It has nae name. What shall we call it, do you think?

And that's just some of the Macquaries by the way. Macquarie is also the name of a bank, a university, the national dictionary, a shopping centre and one of Sydney's principal streets. That's not to mention the forty-seven other Roads, Avenues, Groves and Terraces in Sydney that, according to Jan Morris, are named for the man or his family."

In early 1815 Macquarie instructed Lieutenant Jeffries who commanded the Brig *Kangaroo* to sail from Port Jackson, Sydney to Colombo and back. The *Kangaroo* set sail on 19 April 1815 from Port Jackson. According to the 11 May 1816 issue of *The Hobart Town Gazette and Southern Reporter* on board were about 100 members and families of the 73rd Regiment. The *Kangaroo* sailed along the east coast of Australia following the route taken by Captain Cook barely 35 years earlier. However, before reaching Cape York the ship grounded on a sand bank and could only be set free by jettisoning some of her fresh water stocks and part of the passenger luggage. The ship sailed through the Torres Straits and reached Timor where she anchored for a week and took on board fresh supplies. The *Kangaroo* finally reached Colombo Roads on 24 July 1815.

On 02 August 1815 the Governor of Ceylon, Sir Robert Brownrigg, instructed Jeffries to sail to the Gulf of Mannar to help free the Arab ship *Shaw Aram* which was stuck in a shoal with detachments of His Majesty's 22nd and 87th Regiments on board. The mission was successfully completed and the *Kangaroo* returned to Colombo, setting sail for Sydney on 19 August 1815. On board were O'Dean, his wife and three children and also eight convicts who had escaped from Australia as stowaways on ships but had been apprehended in Ceylon and India. The *Kangaroo* on her return voyage called at Point de Galle, Trincomalee, Penang, Acheen in Sumatra, Prince of Wales Island in the Torres Straits and finally reached Sydney on 07 February 1816.

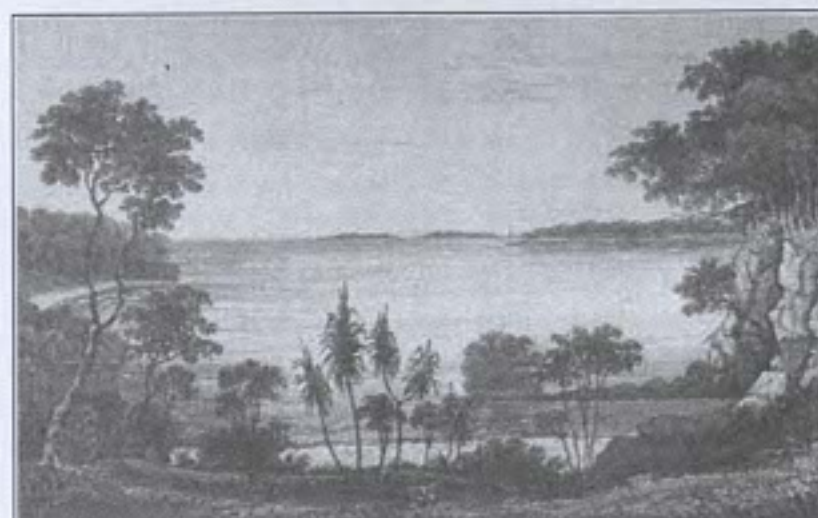
O'Dean in Sydney

The arrival of an Asian convict family was considered an interesting event and was recorded on page 1 of the Sydney Gazette of 17 February 1816 in an article written by the Editor. The article comments that *"The appearance of this little family is truly interesting: and the more so, when the feeling mind considers that misfortune has brought them to a part of the world in which it is scarcely conceivable that they can find any means of contributing to their own support. Their native country abounds in fruits, and all natural luxuries of the East, which are attainable almost without the necessity of human exertion"*.

O'Dean, however, was soon able to contribute to his own support by obtaining a job as a Watchman in the Sydney Dockyards. He had a record of good conduct and as a result he was able to get a

Ticket of Leave from Governor Macquarie, who was known to be lenient in these matters, even before he completed the minimum period of service for a Lifer which was 8 years service under one Master. The Ticket of Leave permitted him to work or be self-employed within a given district of the Colony, and to acquire property. Church attendance was compulsory, as was appearance before a Magistrate when required. The Convict Index Citation 4/4430, Reel 774, page 174 (State Records NSW) states that on 28 November 1821, the Governor granted O'Dean a Conditional Pardon (CP). This meant that he was now free, the only condition was that he could not return to his home country. In March 1826, O'Dean successfully petitioned the Governor and obtained employment as a Constable of the Government Domain.

An extract from a register of ex-convicts and their families prepared about late 1824 is in Fig 1. The family name is stated as Hoodine. There is no first name for the head of the family, his status is given as CP (Conditional Pardon), arrived in Sydney in the ship *Kangaroo* with a life sentence and presently employed as a Watchman in the Sydney Dockyards. His wife's first name is given as Eve, with status CF (Certificate of Freedom). A total of six children are listed. The first is an unnamed two month old infant with status BC (Born in the Colony). She was subsequently named Esther. The oldest is the 18 year old daughter Sarah (CF). Next is a 16 year old son Sancho (CF) followed by 14 year old son Cameron. The three oldest children were all born in Ceylon, and the three



• Fig.3 Raffles Bay, 1827, site of Fort Wellington.

younger children were born in Sydney. Next is a daughter Cooper, although her age is given as 14 years she cannot be the same age as Cameron and must be younger. She is followed by a two year old daughter named Moore.

O'Dean in Fort Wellington

At that time (1825) the western border of New South Wales was the 129 degree longitude line (Thomas 2012, pp 129/130). At present this line is the eastern border of Western Australia. The States of Queensland, Victoria, South Australia, Western Australia and the Northern Territory and the

settlements of Brisbane, Darwin, Melbourne, Adelaide and Perth did not exist at that time. Tasmania was a penal colony named Van Diemen's Land. New South Wales therefore covered nearly two-thirds of the country and present day Western Australia was known as New Holland.

The Government was aware that Indonesian fishermen were seasonally visiting the northern coast of Australia to fish for trepang (sea cucumber) which they dried in temporary campsites on land and exported to China. The Government was anxious to establish contact with these fisherman to trade with them and also obtain information from them



• Fig. 4 Cairn marking site of Fort Wellington
(Source: Prof Jenny Edwards, UTS, Sydney)

about Dutch activities in Dutch East Indies. The establishment of a Fort would also to discourage the Dutch from getting ideas about settling in New Holland (i.e. Western Australia). There were also vague hopes that this settlement would one day become a second Singapore. The latter had already been founded in 1819 by Stamford Raffles and was a successful trading post.

A settlement was therefore established in 1824 called Fort Dundas in Melville Island which is due north of present day Darwin. It was found, however, that this location was outside the sea route of the Indonesian fishermen and it was not possible to establish contact with them. It was therefore decided to found a new settlement in Raffles Bay in the Coburg Peninsula which is about 300 km north-east of present day Darwin. This was called Fort Wellington after the Duke of Wellington because it was founded on 18 June 1827, the twelfth anniversary of the Battle of Waterloo.

An interpreter was required for communication with the Indonesian fisherman, and O'Dean fitted the bill perfectly. He was of Malay ancestry, spoke the Malay language and was a Muslim. All this would help build confidence with the

Indonesians. O'Dean was offered the job on a princely salary of 70 Pounds per annum. To get this amount in its proper perspective, the Fort's Surgeon, Dr Davis, was paid 90 pounds per annum. O'Dean was also given permission to build a home at Fort Wellington and was provided with rations. The weekly rations of a colonist at that time were 4lbs salted pork or 7 lbs beef, 7 lbs flour, 3 pints dried peas, ½ lb rice and 6 oz. butter. O'Dean accepted the offer and reported at Fort Wellington with one of his sons in July 1827, one month after the settlement was founded. The rest of the family remained in Sydney for the time being.

Conditions at Fort Wellington were far from congenial. The problems included: loneliness; total isolation, with the only other European settlement in the northern region being Fort Dundas about 300 km to the west; scurvy due to lack of fresh vegetables and fruits; night blindness often caused by Vitamin A deficiency; and conflict with the indigenous Iwaidja people. Meanwhile O'Dean continued with his work as an Interpreter conveying much useful information from the visiting Indonesians to the Fort Commandant, Captain Henry Smyth. However Captain Smyth soon fell ill with scurvy and returned to Sydney. His position as Fort Commandant was temporarily filled by Lieutenant Sleeman. By mid 1828 O'Dean had built a cottage for the family, and obtained permission to return to Sydney on the *Mary Elizabeth* to bring his family, arriving in Sydney on 20 August 1828 (Thomas, 2012, p. 133).

In Sydney, O'Dean was devastated to find that his family had already left for Fort Wellington. He must have crossed his family on the high seas. His resourceful wife, Eve, had taken with her, five children, furniture, household utensils and also a goat. The same ship that took O'Dean's family to Fort Wellington also took the new Fort commandant, Captain Collet Barker.

To make matters worse, the new NSW Governor, Ralph Darling, refused to sanction O'Dean's return passage to Fort Wellington on the grounds that he was reconsidering the future of the settlement. Governor Darling was an enlisted man who rose to the rank of General. He is remembered in the history of Sydney for preventing the establishment of theatres. He passed a law banning the performance of drama and did not allow music concerts to take place.

O'Dean submitted a petition to the Governor pointing out that he was separated by half a continent from his family and even offering to work on half wages. Darling finally relented and allowed O'Dean to return to Fort Wellington. O'Dean left Sydney in January 1829 in the *Lucy Anne*, arriving in Fort Wellington on 17 February 1829. Also travelling on the same ship was a 22-year old Ceylonese convict Jean Herman Maas who had just arrived in Sydney and was posted to Fort Wellington. No doubt O'Dean

and Maas would have had long conversations about life in Ceylon.

was reviewed in the August 2007 edition of this Journal.)

An unsettled settlement



Part of the low northern coastline, sketched by Phillip Parker King in 1818.

Fort Wellington, Oct 27. The second British station on the northern coast, Fort Wellington on Raffles Bay, has been beset with problems since its establishment on June 18.

The founding officer was Captain James Stirling, who earlier this year was so keen to start a settlement on the Swan River, but was sent north instead.

He was initially very impressed with the site and the friendliness of the local Aborigines.

But, by the end of June, things were starting to go wrong. The first outbreaks of fever had occurred, and the Aborigines had stolen and stripped a whale boat.

The building of the fort and the barracks continued, and friendly

terms were re-established with the Aborigines before Stirling left at the end of July.

Since then, there have been bad outbreaks of both scurvy and night blindness, and the surgeon has died. There have been attacks by the Aborigines, with people speared, and reprisals by the settlers.

Major John Campbell, who is now visiting Fort Wellington from the other northern settlement at Melville Island, has found the place in great distress. Two white men have been killed, food is short, and it is now the wet season, when sickness and disease are the greatest danger.

"Gloom hangs over both these settlements", he reports (→ 13/9/28).

• **Figure 5: Problems at Fort Wellington 1827** (Courtesy: John Ross *"Chronicle of Australia"*, Viking Publishers, 1993).

Jean Herman Maas

Jean Herman Maas was of Ceylonese origin, the son of a public servant, and of Dutch-Sinhalese descent. As an 18-year old he was convicted of forgery in Ceylon and sentenced to transportation for seven years to Isle de France (i.e. Mauritius). He arrived there in June 1825 travelling from Colombo on the same ship *Alexander* which carried Ehelapola Maha Nilame who was also banished to Mauritius. (See pp 142-3 of CSA Member Prof Raja C Bandaranayake's book *Between Isles*, 2006. The book

In Mauritius, due to his literacy and part European parentage, Maas was not put on a road gang but was attached as an assistant to a British Engineer. Within a year he was again arrested trying to pass off a forged coin. A search of his belongings found coining equipment and 47 forged coins. (See pp 44-6 of *Subaltern Lives* by Clive Anderson.) He was charged and sentenced to transportation to Sydney for 15 years.

Maas embarked as a convict on the ship *Celia* and reached Sydney in early 1829. He was assigned to Fort Wellington as copying clerk and to assist O'Dean, because he had some knowledge of Malay, but not as extensive as O'Dean. In the latter part of 1829 Maas was sent back to Sydney where he was assigned to the Liverpool Commissariat's Office as a clerk. At that time there was an extensive road building program as new roads were being built to the Blue Mountains. Maas had to assist John Lambie, the Assistant Surveyor of Roads. Maas had the task of preparing Invoices for work done by Contractors which were certified by Lambie and payment made. In July 1830, Maas decided to do some creative accounting and prepared two spurious invoices for 137 pounds and 51 Pounds, forged Lambie's signature and payment from the Commissariat Pay Office was collected.

The fraud was detected and the case heard in the Campbell Town Assizes on 13/14 August 1830. According to The Sydney Gazette of 17 August 1830 when Maas was asked to address the Court he said: "*I have been accused of the heinous crime of fraud and forgery and found guilty; I know I am doomed to die and expect no pardon.*" He was found guilty and sentenced to death and hanged on 01 September 1830. Figure 2 reproduces extracts from The Sydney Gazette report of his trial. He was the last person to be hanged for forgery in NSW. After 1833, forgery and cattle theft were no longer hanging

offences. In his short life of 24 years, Maas had the dubious distinction of being convicted for forgery in three countries, Ceylon, Mauritius and Australia.

O'Dean returns to Fort Wellington

O'Dean arrived back in Fort Wellington on 17 February 1829 to be re-united with his family, but to his dismay he found that the new Fort Commandant, Captain Collet Barker, had already arranged for his family to return to Sydney in the same ship, *Lucy Anne*, that had brought O'Dean. This was on the grounds that he did not have the resources to provide rations for the large O'Dean family. The *Lucy Anne* left for Sydney on 25 February 1829, the family had been re-united for only eight days, after a separation of eight months.

O'Dean continued his work as an Interpreter obtaining information from the Indonesian trepang (sea cucumber) fisherman. They would arrive in fleets of *praus* (sailing vessels) capable of carrying a crew of about 30 sailors. They set up camps on the beaches, harvested trepang at low tide, dried and smoked them and took them back for export to China. They mostly came for Makassar which is the capital of South Sulawesi and is now the fifth largest city in Indonesia. One of the problems that O'Dean had in interpreting was that only some of the fishermen spoke Malay, their mother tongues were the Sulawesi languages of Makassarese or Bugis, with which O'Dean was not familiar. The other problem was that these fishermen did not use maps or charts, navigating by a simple compass. They were therefore unable to identify places which were shown to them on maps and charts.

Captain Collet Barker

The new Fort Commandant, Captain Barker, kept a detailed personal Journal of daily events during his one year stay at Fort Wellington. This has now been reproduced in the book *'Commandant of Solitude: The Journals of Captain Collet Barker, 1828 - 1831'*, by John Mulvaney and Neville Green, 1992. The section about Fort Wellington covers about 200 pages, with many references to O'Dean and the work they did together.

However, Sir George Murray, the Secretary of State for the Colonies who was based in London, gave instructions to NSW Governor Darling to close down the Fort. The reasons he gave were: *"lack of any substantial trade with the islands of the Eastern archipelago, the sickness suffered by the settlement residents, and the difficulty in supply of provisions to the settlement."* On 28 August 1829 Fort Wellington was abandoned.

Captain Barker sailed off the next day anti-clockwise round Australia in the ship *Governor Phillip* to his next assignment, to found a settlement in King George Sound, presently the site of the town of Albany in Western Australia. On 29 March

1831 he was ordered by the NSW Governor Darling to hand over the King George Sound settlement to the Governor of Western Australia and return to Sydney. On his way back he was instructed to stop at the mouth of the Murray River in South Australia and explore the possibility of a settlement there. He anchored and proceeded up the river bank on foot with six others. In both of his previous settlements, Barker had built up the trust of the indigenous people and would go their camps unarmed. This proved his undoing here. He saw a high sand bank on the opposite side of the river which he wanted to explore. He was the only swimmer in the group so he stripped to his underwear, swam alone across the two hundred metre wide Murray River and was seen climbing the sand bank. He was never seen again.

Subsequent investigations revealed that on the other side of the sand bank he was confronted by three indigenous people armed with spears. Because he was not in uniform, they did not know that he was an Army Officer. They assumed that he was a member of a sealing party that had caused them much harassment. Sealing parties had abducted indigenous women and killed as well. He was speared to death and his body was thrown into the Murray River and never seen again.

Perhaps Captain Barker had a premonition of his death because the very last entry in his Journal are lines from Alexander Pope's poem *Ode to Solitude*, written by Pope in 1700 when he was only twelve years old. The last verse in this poem is particularly poignant:

*Thus let me live, unseen, unknown,
Thus unlamented let me die;
Steal from the world, and not a stone
Tell where I lie.*

There is a stone, but not where he lies. His brother Officers of the 39th Regiment led by Colonel Lindesay did leave a stone. They built a tomb five feet long and installed a tablet nearly three feet high in St James Church in the heart of Sydney. (*The Australian*, 13 July 1832; Mulvaney and Green, pp 3, 22-26.)

Today the site of Fort Wellington in Raffles Bay is uninhabited and access is only possible by boat. It is now part of the Garig National Park in the Coburg Peninsula. The only reminder of its existence is the Cairn and inscription in Fig. 4. This was erected in 1977 to commemorate the 150th anniversary of the founding of the settlement. The text is repeated below as some words in the inscription are no longer readable:

"This Cairn marks the site of Fort Wellington, the second British Settlement in North Australia from June 1827 to August 1829, garrisoned by men of the 39th Regiment of Foot and Royal Marines. It was unveiled by the Hon. Mr Justice W E S Forster, Acting Administrator of the Northern Territory, on Monday 26th September 1977 to

commemorate the 150th anniversary of the founding of the Settlement. It also honours the Aboriginal and White peoples who lived here."

O'Dean back in Sydney

With the closure of Fort Wellington in August 1829, O'Dean returned back to Sydney and to his former job in the Sydney Dockyards. At that time the population of Sydney was about equally divided between those of convict background and free settlers. In order to maintain law and order, strict sentences were imposed as this incident reported in the Sydney Gazette of 24 November 1836 shows:

"On Sunday morning as John O'Dean, the Cingalese priest and interpreter, was standing at his gate, a woman of colour named Jane Cox, a native of King's Island, who had been sixteen years in the Colony, came up and said she was out of place, he asked her what she could do, she replied washing, ironing and needlework, he then engaged her as a servant; shortly after nine o'clock O'Dean's daughter saw a ring belonging to her father valued at nine pounds, safe in the till of a chest in his bedroom, at ten o'clock it was missing, Cox went into the room at this time; at five o'clock in the evening Cox went out on a plea of getting a clean gown, but did not return. On Monday morning O'Dean saw her in Prince Street, when she ran into a public house, he followed her and gave her into custody. She delivered up the ring to the Constable."

The case was heard a few weeks later and Jane Cox was found guilty and sentenced to transportation to Van Dieman's Land (i.e. Tasmania) for five years. On the other hand O'Dean was perhaps fortunate to get off lightly when he had a minor brush with the law as this incident reported in the Sydney Monitor of 12 September 1838 shows:

"Yesterday, O'Dean, the Cingalese interpreter, was charged by a Lascar [i.e. seaman] named John Williams with robbing him under the following circumstances. Williams stated that on Monday, as he was proceeding along Kent Street, with his bedding and baggage to join ship, he encountered O'Dean, who alleged that he was indebted to him for 12 shillings for board and lodging; this William denied, when O'Dean seized upon the baggage, and carried it off. O'Dean's defence was that when the prosecutor was last in Sydney, he resided with him, but went away in his debt, and now meeting him, and he refusing to pay, he thought he had a right to make a reprisal by seizing his property. The Bench discharged O'Dean, but cautioned him not to take the law into his own hands – if Williams owed him any money, he could obtain his remedy in the Court of Requests."

He supplemented his income by taking in boarders and also interpreting for Indonesian Lascars appearing in court cases. He also claimed to have the

only copy of the Koran in Sydney and charged the princely sum of five pounds for a Muslim who had to swear an oath in court. However this lucrative income ceased when a rival turned up with a copy of the Koran and charged only ten shillings for swearing an oath.

Eve O'Dean died in 1839 aged about 50 years. She was buried in the Devonshire Street Cemetery, Haymarket (Ferguson). In 1901, this cemetery space was required for Sydney's Central Railway Station and Belmore Park. All remains were exhumed and transferred to a number of other cemeteries and Eve's final resting place has not been traced.

Over the next few years four of his children passed away and O'Dean died in 1860 at the ripe old age of 87 years, after living in the Colony for 44 years. He was survived only by his second daughter Cooper who died in 1867 and his youngest daughter Esther who died in 1861. He was buried in the 18,000 grave St Stephens Church Camperdown Cemetery, Newtown where his tombstone still stands (Ferguson).

Thomas (2012, pp 138-9) offers this assessment of the life of O'Dean:

"Oodeen's arrival in Australia and his eventual employment as a Malay Interpreter appears unexpected in the context of popular narratives on Australian history.... As a historical figure, Oodeen was undoubtedly a pioneer in terms of his profession, his religion, and as a settler of an Indonesian/Sri Lankan heritage. In this context he has a place at the beginning of each of these histories.... However, it is as an interpreter that Oodeen provides an understanding into the motivation and context in which an English-speaking colonial bureaucracy felt it necessary to ensure it could communicate with the cultures in its periphery."

Thus ended the saga of the first ever Ceylonese family to settle in Australia, but their numerous direct descendants live on in Australia.



Happened in Dubbo

"When my husband and I arrived at a car dealer to pick up our car, we were told the keys had been locked in it. We went to the service department and found a mechanic working feverishly to unlock the driver's side door. As I watched from the passenger side, I instinctively tried the door handle and discovered that it was unlocked.

'Hey,' I announced to the technician, 'it's open!'

His reply, 'I know - I already done that side.'



Meals Ammi Made

DATE CHUTNEY

by Alix Vaz

My mum learned to cook in Australia using the Daily News Cookery Book and Charmaine Solomons' recipe book given to her by a family member on her arrival in Sydney so long ago. A colourful version of this same book is sold at book stores today.

However, ¼ I will give you a recipe for Chutney given to me by my loving mother-in-law, Mary Vaz (nee Paiva) of Paiva's Tea Rooms fame in old Ceylon. She was an excellent cook - even breakfast was a sumptuous feast!

2 lbs Dates
¼ lbs Sugar
1 ½ bottles White Vinegar (Coconut)
½ oz Garlic
½ oz Ginger
1 oz Dry seedless Red Chillies - ground

Method

Grind the ginger & garlic separately using some of the vinegar (to soften & smooth out the texture).

Boil vinegar & sugar for 10 mins

Add chillies & ground ingredients to the mixture &



*Congratulations & a Warm Welcome
to our New Members*

HEMA & PRINZIE PERERA, Cherrybrook
NSW 2126;
CHANDANA & SHANTI BOPITIYA, Englewood,
Florida 34223-1485, USA;
VIJAYA & DINELI SAMARAWERA, Waltham
MA02452, USA;
LESLIE & JEANNE SEBASTIAN, West Preston,
VIC 3072;
JOTHI & SHANTHI JOTHILINGAM,
Cherrybrook NSW 2126;
RANGA & SRIEKA PERERA, Wantirna South,
VIC 3152;
Ms MARLENE GUNASINGHE, Gosford, NSW
2250;
Dr SIVALOGANATHAN & GUNAPOOSHANAM
SOMASUNDARAM, Essex IG8 0QG, UK.



boil for a further 10 minutes on a low fire.

Now add the finely minced dates, stir well for 8 mins.

Lastly add half a lime pickle, finely cut, into this pan.

If you wish to have more lime pickle flavour, you may add the other half of the lime pickle.

As for lime pickle, jars can be bought from any Sri Lankan grocery store. But you can make it yourself as I have. When you have access to an abundance of limes, simply cut the lime into 6, making sure not to cut right through, only so you can cut it to resemble a half open lotus & fill it with rock salt & leave out in the sun (or indoors) to dry out for a week or so. Then fill a few glass jars halfway with the limes & a few small chillies & top up with vinegar. Leave in a cool place. You will find after a period of time, the colour of the limes turn dark brown & the liquid become gelatinous. Your own home-made lime pickle.

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.

How to become a Member of the CSA...

Who can become a member of the CSA? Any person with an interest in the history and 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).**

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

OBITUARY

Stuart de Silva
21.03.1935 – 16.08.2015



Stuart De Silva, outstanding jazz pianist who lived most of his life away from his country of birth, was farewelled by friends, relatives and fellow musicians at the Pinegrove Memorial Park, Eastern Creek, Sydney on 26 August 2015. For several decades Stuart graced the music scene in the major cities of America and Europe and wherever the true cognoscenti of modern jazz music gathered.

Born to a family immersed in the western music tradition, Stuart was literally brought up on the "milk" of music. He was heir to a family musical tradition spanning several generations. His father Herman de Silva, no mean pianist himself, played background music for silent movies at the Empire Theatre and his grandparents too were adept musicians. It could be said that he was born to music! At the age of four he studied classical piano under Rupert Wagn, better known as an acclaimed violinist who, with his brother Carl, an artist, were well known personalities in Colombo of the 1930s and 1940s.

Stuart went to school at Royal Primary and then to Royal College where as an adolescent, school studies were not of prime importance to him. He was deeply involved in the music scene in Colombo. By a strange quirk of fate, Nimal Mendis also well known as a composer and pianist, a contemporary of Stuart at Royal College, also sadly passed away earlier this year.

While still a student at Royal College, Stuart along with his father, took a lease of a building in Galle Road, Kollupitiya, where they founded the Pigalle Night Club, possibly the first ever jazz club in Sri Lanka. Dave Brubeck, who performed in Colombo

in the late 1950s at the Orchid Room in Victoria Park, was quick to recognise Stuart's talents and arranged a musical scholarship to study and further enhance his skills in jazz music at Berklee School in Boston. On completion, he spent the next few decades in London, New York, Paris and other European capitals performing at glitzy night spots.

Stuart joined CSA a few years ago and marked his enrolment with a biographical essay titled "*All that jazz*" which appeared in the May 2012 edition of *The Ceylankan*. That most interesting article would provide the reader with a sense of his involvement with the music world in Sri Lanka, Europe, America and Australia. It also provides an interesting historical sketch of jazz in Sri Lanka not only with reference to his own involvement, but also as a commentary on the various local and foreign personalities who participated in and influenced the music scene in Sri Lanka during the 1940s, 1950s and 1960s. In about 1980 Stuart decided to return to Sri Lanka and thence to Sydney, Australia where he lived for the past three decades. The last few decades of his 80 years were very much a lonesome existence, with not many friends around to share memories of his days of triumph, achievement and pleasure as a renowned Jazz pianist. He married while living in Paris but the marriage failed after a few years. His son by that union lives in Paris. On the few occasions that he would join a small group of his old schoolmates for lunch in Sydney, we found that it was near impossible to draw him into talking much about his halcyon days in Europe and New York, despite the fact that he was always gregarious and a keen conversationalist. In recent years other interests began to creep into his life and he was well into writing a thesis on the Mathematics of Ancient Egypt that coincided with his sudden demise. A man who loved his scotch and glass of red, he was never able to shake off his smoking habit which began in his younger days. As a symbolic gesture to his earthly existence, a bottle of Chivas Regal, a bottle of cabernet sauvignon and a carton of Marlborough cigarettes accompanied him on his last journey.

The final curtain was drawn on the life of Stuart Cyril Horace Antony de Silva at the Pinegrove Cemetery, Sydney, to the background of a poignant recorded rendition on piano by him of the plaintive "*Quando, quando, quando* – when will you be mine". His friends, including many from the music world, participated in a jam session as a celebration of his life in the wake which followed the funeral at the Hubertus Country Club, Luddenham.

May he rest in peace.

– Hugh Karunanayake



Synopses of Meetings Sydney 30 August 201

The third Sydney meeting of the Ceylon Society in 2015 took place at the Community Centre in Pennant Hills on 30 August 2015.



• Nimal Wikramanayake QC
Photo by Senanie de Silva

The Guest speaker was Nimal Wikramanayake QC and the title of his talk was "My fifty four years in the Legal Profession in Ceylon and Australia". Nimal is the son of Guy Wikramanayake QC and the father and son have the unique distinction of being Queen's Counsel in two different Commonwealth countries. A number of his grand uncles were

Proctors of the Supreme Court and he can trace his ancestry back to the Crown Proctor in Galle in 1848.

Nimal was educated at St Thomas College, Mount Lavinia and from there he proceeded to Trinity Hall, in the University of Cambridge where he read for a law degree from 1955 to 1958. He was called to the Bar in England by the Inner Temple in February 1959.

He returned to Ceylon shortly afterwards but he was the first victim of the Basnayake ruling which resulted in his English Barrister's qualifications not being recognised in Ceylon. He had to sit for four papers, two in Civil Procedure and two in Property Law, which he completed in August 1959. As a result of the Basnayake ruling, Ceylon law qualifications are no longer recognised throughout the English speaking world and Sri Lankan lawyers now have to sit for various subjects in different countries if they wish to practise in those countries.

Nimal had a large and wide ranging practice in the District Court of Colombo for 12 years from 1959. He was a leading member of the Junior Bar and he had several lawyers who trained under him who later became leading members of the legal profession. Political changes in 1971, including changes in the language of the Courts, made him decide to leave his mother country and chance his arm in Australia. To this day he wonders why he ever made the change.

He arrived in Melbourne in 1971 and commenced work as a Solicitor. His career as a Solicitor was short lived as his Principal was a

martinet and advised him that he had no future in the field of law and terminated his services saying that he had no brains! However, his wife, Anna Maria, was very supportive and encouraged him to try his hand at the Victorian Bar. He was admitted to practise as a Barrister and Solicitor of the Supreme Court of Victoria in December 1971. He was the first 'brown skinned' Barrister in Australia. When he told the Ceylonese Solicitors in Melbourne of his decision to go to the Victorian Bar, they were horrified. They told him that no Australian Solicitor would brief him. A Ceylonese Solicitor said that there were easier ways of committing suicide!

As he anticipated, the first few years were extremely difficult and briefs were few and far between as Australian Solicitors were reluctant to take a chance. The few who did take a chance were well rewarded and his practice slowly improved over the years. The rest is history and he specialised in property and commercial work. On 18 December 2002 he took his oaths as the first 'brown skinned' Queen's Counsel in Australia.

He was befriended by the late Louis Voumard QC who asked him to help him with his celebrated treatise on *The Sale of Land*, to which he agreed. This is a complete guide to understanding the principles of the sale and conveyance of land in all Australian States, and provides a detailed analysis of the rights and duties of both buyer and seller. Unfortunately Voumard died suddenly and his Secretary informed the publishers, the Law Book Company that a young man named Nimal Wikramanayake had been helping Voumard with the preparation of the book. The Law Book Company asked Nimal to complete the book which he did. The book is a complete reference work on the subject and is recognised as the ultimate guide to land sale in Australia.

Mr Justice Peter Young, Chief Judge in Equity of the Supreme Court of New South Wales and General Editor of *The Australian Law Journal* conducted a survey and included *The Sale of Land* in his list of top 20 legal books written in Australia, a fitting tribute to Nimal's legal acumen.

Nimal included several interesting anecdotes of incidents which happened in Courts, both in Ceylon and Australia. He has now started writing his memoirs which he intends to call *The Long Lonesome Road: A Journey in Time*. No doubt it will be interesting reading when it is published. Friends who have read the draft say that it is racy, humorous, but a trifle sad because in his early years in Australia as a pioneer 'brown skinned' Barrister he had to endure the buffets of fate. But as he pointed out, in order to succeed in life, you need the heart of a lion, the patience of Job and the skin of a rhinoceros!

Nimal's talk ended with a lively discussion and the usual Social.

— Hugh Karunanayake

Melbourne Chapter

23 August 2015

Cresside Collette presented an illustrated talk titled **"Aubrey Collette: art, life and politics- a profile of my father"**. The speaker said that by delivering this talk she is attempting to learn more about her father without being an expert.

Although Cresside wished for the love of her father in her childhood and as an adult it was not fulfilled. In 2004 Cresside met Barbara Sansoni a contemporary of her mother and Chandraguptha Thenuwara (artist) who both urged Cresside to visit Sri Lanka that she did not visit since 1979. When the speaker visited Sri Lanka in 2009 it became clear that she is linked as a daughter and as an artist to Ceylon's 1st modernist art movement, 43 Group, of which Cresside's father was a founding member.

Aubrey Collette was born in 1920, youngest of three sons. The family lived in a house in 17th Lane, Bambalapitiya. Aubrey's father died when he was only 12 and grandmother and father's eldest brother cared for them. Collette attended the Royal College and practised drawing constantly and on matriculation, he got a job in the same college. When Cresside researched this paper she had been contacted by many of Aubrey's Art students fondly him teaching them painting and drawing in 1941 and art appreciation in 1944. In the course of these lessons students learnt about Lionel Wendt and the 43 Group. Aubrey was responsible for the development of at least four students who later achieved recognition as artists -Lawrence Max, Gamini Warnasuriya, Noel Abeysinghe, and Ranjith Fernando. Ivan Peries (fellow painter) and Aubrey were on a course which changed the history of art in Sri Lanka.

Cresside then outlined the formation of 43 Group in 1943 whose objective to break away from the Ceylon Society of Arts and the School of Mudaliyar A.C.G.S. Amarasekara inclusive of Technical College traditions directed by J.D.A. Perera. 43 Group consisted of George Keyt, Justin Daraniyagala, Harry Pieris, W.J.G.Beling, George Classen, Richard Gabriel, Ivan Peries and Aubrey Collette. The group had the blessing of Lionel Wendt, a professor of music, fine pianist and a world class photographer. When Lionel Wendt passed away Harry Peris guided the group. The 1st exhibition of the 43 Group was held in a warehouse in Union Place but in 1953 the group exhibited in Venice where Justin Daraniyagala won the UNESCO Prize. This was followed by an exhibition in Paris and Sao Paulo where George Classen won the main prize. Ranjith Fernando promoted the work abroad. The last 43 Group exhibition was held in 1957.

Aubrey began cartooning in *Times of Ceylon* while teaching at Royal College. As cartoonist with the Times he earned a salary of Rs.200 a month which was increased to Rs. 1500 in 1944. Collette's talent

flourished after becoming an official cartoonist at the paper, documenting politics and history of Sri Lanka from colonial rule to Independence.

In 1946 he met Joan Gratiaen who was a journalist at the same paper and on 14th November 1947 they were married. The next nine years were the golden years of Cresside's parents. Aubrey and Joan considered as friends of the leading artists of the time as well as the members of 43 Group inclusive of Bevis and Geoffrey Bawa. They spent time at Bawa's home. Aubrey met Sir John Kotalawela at Kandawela and Sir Oliver Goonetilleke at Temple Trees and also counted Dudley Senanayake as a friend. Aubrey undertook many commissions, one of the well-known was the dining room frieze at Sir John Kotalawela's residence at Kandawela which consisted of caricatures of leading political figures in pre- independence era. In 1948 his only book of Ceylon cartoons was published by *Times* titled *Ceylon Since Soulbury Part 1* which had a cover illustration showing the installation of D.S. Senanayake by Lord Soulbury. Ceylon Independence Act was passed by the House of Commons on 21st November 1946 and Ceylon gained Independence on 4th February 1948. In his *Modern History of Ceylon* Prof. Ludowyke says a powerful financial group gained control of the new freedom and the architect of this movement was D.S. Senanayake. With the dawn of the independent nation, Cresside's parents resigned from *Times of Ceylon* and joined Lake House which published the *Daily News* and the *Observer*. Until Collette's appointment there had not been a local political cartoonist and papers published work of English cartoonists.

In 1952 Aubrey won a prestigious scholarship awarded by the State Department of United States. During this trip Cresside's parents met eminent American cartoonists and leading politicians such as Richard Nixon. From New York they travelled to London and were hosted by Cresside's mother's cousin Doris Gratiaen (mother of Michael Ondaatje). Cresside's parents sailed home on the Queen Elizabeth. The Gratiaen name lives on in Sri Lanka as the title of the literature prize inaugurated in 1992.

Aubrey held his first solo exhibition of portrait caricatures in October 1954 at Art Gallery in Green Path, Sri Lanka. It consisted of 73 works of politicians and public figures and were of colored pastels on paper. Three of the portraits; Dudley Senanayake, Sir John Kotalawela and J.R. Jayawardene are with Jayawardene collection in Ward Place. All works at the exhibition were produced in 10 months; while being a newspaper cartoonist and attending to other commissions. In February 1955 Collette was assigned to the Asia Africa Conference in Bandung, Indonesia.

Year 1956 was an eventful one for the Collettes; Aubrey and Joan got divorced and the

Sinhala-Only Act passed, S.L.F.P. leader S.W.R.D. Bandaranayake initiated a social revolution, English educated elites were replaced by the Sinhalese educated, Sinhala was established as the national language. The English educated sought refuge in England, Canada and Australia.

Collette was the cartoonist for both the *Daily News* and the *Observer*; Citizen Perera and Punchi Singho were his creations. He had real fun in the post 1955 era. Freedom of press deteriorated after 1960 and Collette left Ceylon for England in 1961 with his second wife Pauline and two daughters. Cresside's mother arrived in Melbourne in February 1962 with the two children and Aubrey arrived in Sydney following month. Aubrey contributed to *Asia Magazine* and *Orientations* published in Hong Kong. In 1965 he joined *The Australian* as a political cartoonist and won the Walkley Award for the best cartoonist in 1970. He later joined the *Melbourne Herald* and moved to Melbourne in 1971. He retired from the *Herald* in 1985 and was requested to be a political cartoonist for *Singapore Straight Times*.

He was happiest living in Ceylon; the second part of his life he considered to be in exile and uncomfortable. Cresside had no contact with her father for 26 years but met him in 1986 with Adrian (Cresside's brother).

Aubrey Collette passed away on January 1992 aged 71 after gradual deterioration in health due to diabetes. Talk was illustrated with slides of all relevant Collette's works of political and public figures.

A lively discussion and refreshments followed the presentation.

—Dilhani Kumbukkage.

Colombo Chapter 11 September 2015

Tissa Devendra, President introduced the Chief Guest Mr. Asiff Hussein as an author of a number of publications including "*Sarandib - An Ethnological Study of the Muslims of Sri Lanka*", "*Zeylanica, a Study of the Peoples and Languages of Sri Lanka*", "*Ivilly Pevilly*."



• Mr Asiff
Hussein

The Gastronome's Guide to the Culinary History & Heritage of Sri Lanka," "*Caste in Sri Lanka - from Ancient Times to the Present Day*", "*The Lion and the Sword*" – an Ethnological study of Sri Lanka" Vol 1 & 2 and "*Tolerance in Islam*," also translated into Sinhala as "*Islamaya Desana Agamika Ivasima*". He has also co-authored "*Memons of Sri Lanka. Men,*

Memoirs, Milestones" with Hameed Kareem (2006) and co-edited "*The Muslim Heritage of Eastern Sri Lanka*" with S.H.M.Jameel (2011)

Hussein has contributed numerous articles to *Explore Sri Lanka* and *Business Today*. He was employed as a journalist at the *Sunday Observer* and the *Sunday Times* and is presently Editor-in-Chief of *Islamic Finance Today*, a magazine exclusively dedicated to the promotion of ethical interest-free banking and finance. There are three legendary peoples who are believed to have inhabited Sri Lanka in the olden days, namely, the Rakshasas, Yakshas and Nagas.

Rakshasas

Among them, the Rakshasas belong to the realm of myth more than reality as far as Sri Lanka is concerned though such a race may have well existed in South India. The Rakshasas do not find mention in the Mahavamsa among other well known local historical works. Besides, the Sinhala word *rakusa* is a semi-tatsama derived from the Sanskrit *rakshasa* and suggests not a real people but demons of superstitious belief (eg. *diya-rakusa* 'water demon' believed to haunt water bodies).

The Rakshasas find mention in the Indian epic Ramayana as inhabiting Lanka. However, the Lanka of the Ramayana is not Sri Lanka. Among the facts that preclude Sri Lanka being identified as Ravana's Lanka are that Sri Lanka did not have an advanced Chalcolithic culture C.1000 BC as portrayed in the Ramayana, the seas (between Sri Lanka and South India) are not infested with crocodiles or alligators (*makara*) as related in the Ramayana, and place names like *Ravana-Ella* and *Sita-Eliya* cannot be ancient as they would be subject to phonetic change over 3000 years. For instance the name *Ravana* would have evolved into *Rona* and *Sita* into *Iya* in keeping with the phonetic laws of Sinhala. Take for instance the Sinhala word *oya* 'river' which derives from the Pali *sota* and Sanskrit *shrota*. However, no such changes are evident in the local place names associated with the Ramayana story.

In the Indian context the Rakshasas were probably a real people, and very likely Dravidians. They seem to have inhabited a region in South or Central India. In fact, *Lanka* is an ancient Dravidian word originally meaning 'island' from the root 'to rise'. In fact islets in the Godavari river are to this day known as Lanka. Besides, Lanka is described in the epic as a city atop trikuta mountain surrounded by a *sagara*, and *sagara* may mean 'lake' as attested in its derived form *sayara* found in the modern indo-Aryan vernaculars. It seems very likely from the above evidence that Lanka of the Ramayana was a mountain fortress surrounded by a large moat or lake.

That the historical Rakshasas were Dravidians there can be no doubt. In the Ramayana, Rakshasas are called *Anarya* 'Non-Aryans' and are described as being dark in complexion like the black cloud. Their leader Ravana is described as being of the colour of the rain cloud or mountain of collyrium. Ravana itself

seems to be a Sanskritised form of the Tamil *iraivan* 'king'. Among the people who show a connection with these ancient Rakshasas are the Koya Gonds who formerly practiced cannibalism, marriage by capture and preserved folklore of events taking place in their region of Godavari District.

But why would Sri Lanka want to promote the view that the Lanka of the Ramayana was Sri Lanka? One is India's Sethusamudram Project which envisages dredging the Palk Strait so that Indian and other ships could sail round the coast of the southern part of the Indian Peninsula instead of circumnavigating Sri Lanka. Such ships would benefit from saving fuel while ports located along the southern Indian coast will also benefit from this development. The previous regime promoted the idea of Lanka being in Sri Lanka because it went well with the Hindu belief that Rama, whom they regard as a god, built the *Ramsethu* or Rama's Bridge (Adam's Bridge) connecting India to Sri Lanka to rescue his beloved Sita. In fact Hindu fundamentalists have even sought legal recourse to stall the Sethusamudram project due to the sanctity in which the Ramsethu is held. Needless to say, this tallied well with Sri Lanka's interests, since the project, if it went ahead, would impact our port interests, not only in connection with Colombo port, but also Hambantota which the previous regime promoted in a big way.

Another is the potential in promoting the so-called *Ramayana Trail* for Indian tourists.

Yakkhas

The Yakkhas were, no doubt, an ancient people of Sri Lanka. They occur in the Mahavamsa in the historical context, namely in the chapter dealing with the coming of Vijaya. The context suggests they were human since Vijaya had children through the Yakkhini Kuveni.

They were no doubt the descendants of Stone Age Balangoda Man and the ancestors of the Vedda aborigines of Sri Lanka. Stone Age Balangoda man's settlements are found in various parts of Sri Lanka, especially in the Sabaragamuwa Province.

Thus there were a Pre-Aryan People in Sri Lanka and it is they whom the ancient Sinhalese called the Yakkhas due to their worship of ancestral spirits.

The Pali word *yakkha* itself means 'spirit' having derived from the Sanskrit *yaksha* and until recently the Veddas worshipped such spirits whom they called *Nae Yaku* 'Kin Spirits'. Thus the Veddas of old were called *Yakku* after the spirits they worshipped.

Other supporting evidence connecting the Veddas to the Yakkhas of old comes from the Mahavamsa which states that the children of Vijaya by Kuveni went to Sumanakuta (Adam's Peak) and that the Pulindas were sprung from them. Till recently Sabaragamuwa Province near where Sumanakuta is located had substantial Vedda settlements borne out by place-names such as Veddagala in Ratnapura district and the ge-name Veddage. Further, the Pulindas mentioned in the chronicle are Veddas as borne out by Sinhala lexicons (Namavaliyas).

Other evidence connecting the Yakkhas to the Veddas are the remnants of Cannibalism. For instance, the Mahavamsa implies the Yakkhas ate people (Kuveni devoured merchants) and until recent times Veddas tasted a piece of dried human liver when angry, which gave rise to the Sinhala saying *mama uge kevutta kanava* (I will eat his liver) uttered when angry.

Also pertinent here is the practice of Silent Trading. Fa Hian, the Chinese traveller of the 5th century refers to *guishen* or spirits (the equivalent of the Pali word Yakkha) who engaged in silent trading, and until recently silent trading was practiced by the Veddas as reported by Robert Knox in his Historical Relation of Ceylon (1681).

Nagas

The Nagas like the Rakshasas are also a mythical people. They find mention in the Mahavamsa in the context of the visit of the Buddha to the island to solve a conflict between the two Naga Kings Mahodara and Chulodara in Nagadipa. However, there is no evidence that the Buddha ever visited Sri Lanka. In fact the story belongs to the mythical stratum of the chronicle preceding the advent of the historical Vijaya.

Some scholars suggest the Nagas were ancient Dravidians and hold that Nagadipa was Jaffna. They also point out that to this day, there are Naga-based Tamil surnames like Nagendra, Nagaratnam, Nagalingam. However, the evidence suggests that Nagadipa was not in Jaffna or Northern Sri Lanka but in the Eastern Province between the Mahaweli Ganga and Gal Oya as seen in Ptolemy's map redrawn by ADN Fernando based on the co-ordinates given by Ptolemy. The word *dipa* itself may mean 'land between two rivers' (not necessarily 'island') while *naga* in Pali may mean 'elephant' (as in the Dhammapada where *Nagavana* means 'forest of elephants') or 'ironwood tree' (*Na-gaha* in Sinhala). Thus Nagadipa may mean 'Land (between two rivers) of elephants'.

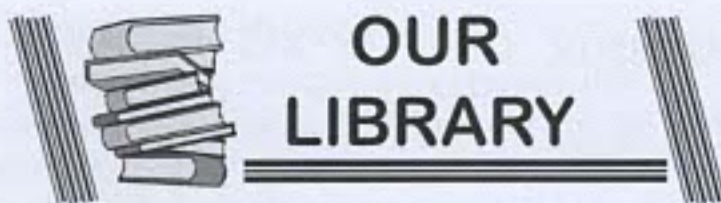
As for Naga-based names, such names reflect belief (eg. Nagalingam 'Naga Phallus') rather than ancestry. In fact even ancient Sinhalese Kings also had names with Naga like Chora-Naga though they were Aryans as suggested by their genealogy.

The vote of thanks was delivered by Somasiri Devendra.

—Tony Saldin

Boeing! Boeing! gone...

Some Boeing employees on the airfield in Sydney decided to steal a life raft from one of the 747s. They were successful in getting it out of the plane and home. Shortly after they took it for a float on the river, they noticed a Westpac Rescue Helicopter coming towards them. It turned out that the chopper was homing in on the emergency locator beacon that activated when the raft was inflated. They are no longer employed at Boeing.



This is a full list of books available from the CSA library. Some of the books in the library have been donated by members and friends out of their goodwill and kindness, while many are donations from authors who have held book launches to promote their books at CSA general meetings. While a complete list will be published for the information of members from time to time, please note that only new additions will be listed on a regular basis at most times, as and when books are received.

- Hundred Hindu Temples of Sri Lanka - Ancient, Medieval and Modern by Sanmugam Arumugam. (See review on page 31).
- Nationalism in Sri Lanka; Origins- Growth - Impact Challenges for democracy in a multi ethnic society by Srikantha Nadarajah.
- ALIYA Stories of the Elephants of Sri Lanka - Teresa Cannon & Peter Davis
- The story of the Sri Lankan Muslims - Vama Vamadevan; 1999
- The Ceylon We Knew (A Journey into the Recent Past) - Vama Vamadevan; 1995
- Wild Life Coservation in Sri Lanka - C.G. Uragoda; 1994
- Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Sri Lanka Vol. XLI Sesquicentennial Number 1995-1996
- Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Sri Lanka Vol. XLV Sesquicentennial Number
- Journal of South East Asian Studies Special Issue Volume XX 1997 (Conflict & Community in Contemporary Sri Lanka)
- Echoes in the Memory - Lloyd Oscar de Silva 1992
- Guide to Ceylon - H.A.J. Hulugalle (Third Edition) 1981
- Post Guide to Sri Lanka - South China Morning Post 1983
- A Tree in a Forest - A collection of Ajahn Chal's Similes 199• The Spectrum of Buddhism - Writings of Priadasse 1991
- The Fauna of British India, Birds (including Ceylon & Burma) - E.C.Stuart Baker; Volumes II to VIII
- Savage Sanctuary by R.L.Spittel
- F.L.Woodward - Out of his life & thought by D.H. Panditha Gunawardene
- Sirimavo Bandaranaike by Maureen Seneviratne
- Colonial Kollupitiya & Its Environs by H.M.Mervyn Herath
- Monarchs of Sri Lanka by H.M.Mervyn Herath
- The Netherlands-Ceylon Heritage by E.Jongens
- History of the Nugegoda Methodist Church by Shirley Somanader
- Headlines & Deadlines - Jottings of a Journo by

E.C.T.Candappa

- Banking & Business in Sri Lanka by V.S.Nadaraja
 - Nineteenth century American Medical Missionaries in Jaffna, Ceylon with special reference to Samuel Fisk Green by Thiru Arumugam.
 - Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Sri Lanka New Series, Volume 58 Part 2.
 - Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Sri Lanka New Series, Volume 59 Part 1
- (Received with thanks on 15 August 2014 from the Royal Asiatic Society of Sri Lanka, Colombo).

LATEST ADDITION

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

Books & other publications FOR SALE

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

Hundred Hindu Temples in Sri Lanka: Ancient, Medieval and Modern - by Sanmugam Arumugam

This 240 page paperback is a new merged reprint of two books by the same author "Ancient Hindu Temples of Sri Lanka" (1982) and "More Hindu Temples of Sri Lanka" (1990). It includes about 100 illustrations and describes most of the well known Hindu Temples in Sri Lanka and is published by Ohm Books, UK. It is available through Amazon.com or Fishpond.com.au . Also available from Thiru Arumugam at AS\$20 plus AS\$5 post and packing within Australia. Contact thiru.aru@gmail.com or phone 02 8850 4798

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Email: deepakpsl@yahoo.com



Pte. T. Halangoda.—Wounded.
Late of Trinity College, Kandy.
Sailed through Passage Fund.
1915. Enlisted Middlesex Regi-
ment. Slightly wounded, July,
1916.

CEYLONESE SOUVENIR OF THE BIG PUSH.



This spoon was in the haversack of Albert Halangoda, while serving in a Machine Gun Section on 1st July 1916, on the Western Front. A Hun shell burst in midst of section and killed them all except Halangoda, who was wounded and for sometime, was unconscious. Everything in his haversack was shattered into fragments except this spoon, which probably saved his life by deflecting a shrapnel bullet, as only one piece penetrated his back and is still in his liver. — A.G.F.

These photos (above) relate to the experience of Private Albert Halangoda (erroneously referred to as T. Halangoda in the caption under the photo) during World War I. The photo of a spoon (top right) in his haversack which saved his life when he was shot at in the battle front. (Source *Times of Ceylon Annual 1916*).

Ceylon link with Waterloo

This photograph of Captain Barton (right) former Postmaster-General of Ceylon, was taken in 1861 by Lt. Col. C.E.H. Symons still of Colombo. Capt. Barton is wearing the uniform he had on at the Battle of Waterloo.

(The Source *Times of Ceylon Annual 1917*).



Nil Manel Sri Lanka's National flower



The Nil Manel (*Nymphaea stellata*) or Blue Star Water Lily is of the genus *Nymphaea* and was chosen as the national flower of Sri Lanka in February 1986.

The Nil Manel is a beautifully common sight throughout in Sri Lanka. It grows in shallow fresh water, blooming all through the year. The majestic lily thrives in the lakes, ponds or marshland and catches the eye of all who behold them in full bloom.

This lily is regarded as a symbol of purity and truth because it thrives in murky muddy water and always brings forth its glorious hues above it all — clean and ever so fragrant as a fitting tribute to our world.

The Nil Manel has been offered in worship to Buddha for hundreds of years. Notably, the ladies on the Sigiriya Frescos are seen raising these remarkable flowers in homage. (Source: *Explore Sri Lanka*.)

Tales from all over

Two engineering students were crossing the campus bridge. One said, "Where did you get such a great bike?"

The second engineer replied: "Well, I was walking along yesterday minding my own business when a beautiful woman rode up on this bike. She threw the bike to the ground, took off all her clothes and said: "Take what you want."

The first engineer nodded approvingly, "Good choice; the clothes probably wouldn't have fitted you."

Proof that four is equal to three

Theorem: $4=3$ Proof:

Let: $a + b = c$

This can also be written as: $4a - 3a + 4b - 3b = 4c - 3c$

After reorganising: $4a + 4b - 4c = 3a + 3b - 3c$

Take the constants out of the brackets: $4 * (a+b-c) = 3 * (a+b-c)$

Remove the same term left and right: Therefore $4 = 3$
Q.E.D.

Lipstic on the mirrors

A girls' hall in a University was faced with a problem. A number of girls were beginning to use lipstick and would put it on in the restroom. That was fine, but after they put on their lipstick, they would press their lips to the mirror leaving dozens of little lip prints. Finally the Warden decided that something had to be done. She called all of the girls to the restroom and met them there with the cleaner.

She explained that all these lip prints were causing a major problem for the cleaner who had to

clean the mirrors every night. To demonstrate how difficult it was to clean the mirrors, she asked the cleaner to clean one of them. He took a long handled squeegee, dipped it into the toilet bowl and then cleaned the mirror. Since then, there have been no lip prints on the mirrors.

Intimate with a ghost

A professor lecturing on the supernatural, asks the audience, "How many of you believe in ghosts?"

About 80 students raise their hands. "That's a good start," says the professor, "For those who believe in ghosts, do any of you think you've ever seen a ghost?" About 40 students raise their hands.

"That's really good," continues the professor, "I'm really glad you take this seriously. Has anyone here ever talked to a ghost?" 15 students raise their hands.

"That's a great response," remarks the impressed professor, "has anyone here ever touched a ghost?" Three students raise their hands.

"Brilliant. But let me ask you one question further... Have any of you ever been intimate with a ghost?"

One of his students raises his hand. The professor is astonished. He takes off glasses, takes a step back, and says, "Son, all the years I've been giving this lecture, no one has ever claimed that. You've got to come up here and tell us about your experience." The student replies with a nod and begins to make his way up to the podium. The professor asks, "Well, tell us what it's like to have made love to a ghost." The student replies, "Ghost?... Heck, I thought you said 'goat.'"

Send us your literary contributions!

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

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

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 hidden literary talent with a vast knowledge of Sri Lanka may be 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. Your fascinating story, waiting to be written, may well be something our avid readers will lap up with immense pleasure and maybe inspire another aspiring writer.

To facilitate the design/layout, we like to receive articles with as **little formatting as possible - no indents or double spacing; single spacing after fullstops (please!) percent or per cent, not %**. Mere trifles, but can save hours of an editor's time. Where applicable, contributors are also requested to annotate bibliographical references, both for copyright purposes and to help further research and study by interested members.

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.

CSA Annual General Meeting & Dinner



Ceylon Society
of Australia



SYDNEY 28 November, 2015
at the Thornleigh Community Centre, Phyllis Avenue
(corner Central Avenue) Thornleigh.
Nominations for Office Bearers and Resolutions are
to be forwarded to the Secretary, CSA by email to le-
sanvee@bigpond.com or by post to Les Perera, 4/9-23
Bruce Avenue, Killara, NSW 2071 no later than
13 November.

The Agenda is as follows:

1. Apologies
 2. Approval of minutes of last meeting
 3. President's report
 4. Treasurer's statement
 5. Election of office bearers for 2016
- The current office bearers have indicated their willing-
ness to stand for office in 2016.
6. Any other business

Followed by our traditional **Christmas
Dinner & Carols** for Members and Guests.

Tickets only \$ 35 per person
BYO Wines & Spirits

Raffle, Door Prizes, Quiz, Carols & Sing-along with
Shirani Rodrigo on the piano.

A short skit entitled "A real wedding no?"
– "Harima Magulak".

A sumptuous buffet dinner by "Sweet & Spicy"
BYO Wines & Spirits. Soft drinks provided.

Those with special dietary requirements please
contact Chandra Senaratne on (02) 8972 6826
or email charboyd@iprimus.com.au

For reservations & purchase of tickets contact
Deepak Pritamdas on 0434 860 188 or
email deepakpsl@yahoo.com

Cheques to be made out to
"Ceylon Society of Australia" and posted to
Deepak Pritamdas POBox 489, Blacktown NSW 2148.



**Colombo Chapter
Friday 11 Dec 2015**

Commodore Y.N. Jayarathna, RWP,
RSP, USP, psc, MSc (Defence Studies),
Kelaniya, MSc (Hydrography) Goa,
Commandant, Naval & Maritime
Academy, Trincomalee

will speak on
Are we a maritime nation?

Starts at 5.30pm
Questions and discussions will follow.

Venue: Organisation of Professional Associations
(OPA) 275/75, Prof. Stanley Wijesundera
Mawatha, off Bauddhaloka Mw, Colombo 7
(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) email:
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Saldin (Hony Secretary) email: saldinclan@sltnet.
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JOURNAL REPRINTS

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world \$15.00 per package of up to 5 issues. Contact
Hugh Karunanayake Int. + 61 2 9402 6342 or
hkaru@internode.net.au

The All Saint's Anglican-Church, Galle Fort



All Saints' Church - an Anglican church located on Church Road within the Galle Fort was initiated by the first Bishop of Colombo, Rt. Rev. James Chapman.

The foundation of the church was laid on 30 October 1868, by Rev. Dr. Piers Calveley Claughton, the second Bishop of Colombo. The construction of the church was facilitated by a grant of the land and £600 from the 13th Governor of Ceylon, Sir Hercules Robinson. A further £1,000 contribution was received from an English parish.

The church was designed by J.G. Smithers, the government architect, who later designed the National Museum of Colombo. The church was constructed on the site of a former Court House (1780s). The gallows it is said stood on the site of the present altar. The Anglican congregation in Galle which, up to then, worshipped in the Dutch Church.

The church was consecrated on 21 February 1871 by Bishop Claughton, assisted by the church's first vicar, Rev. Dr. George Justus Schrader (1829-1875)

In recognition of Rev. Dr. Schrader's significant contribution to the church, a large bell was placed in his memory in the centre dome of the church in

1876. In the mid 1960s, for security reasons the bell was lowered and was left to be sold. It was subsequently bought by the diocese and is now housed in the Cathedral of Christ the Living Saviour, Baudhaloka Mawatha, net to BMICH in Colombo.

The current bell was acquired by the church in 1968. The bell came from the Liberty Ship, "Ocean Verity", and was donated by the Clan Line Steamship Company.

The church is built on a basilican plan in a Victorian Gothic Revival style of architecture, modified to suit local climate. The plan of the Church is cruciform firmly supported on stone columns and arches carved beautifully in timber. Masonry arches built in local kabuk and lime mortar. The heavy pews, with carvings of the Jewish Star of David, and the sanctuary are all made from Burmese teak.

(Source Wikipedia)

Stories from Brisbane

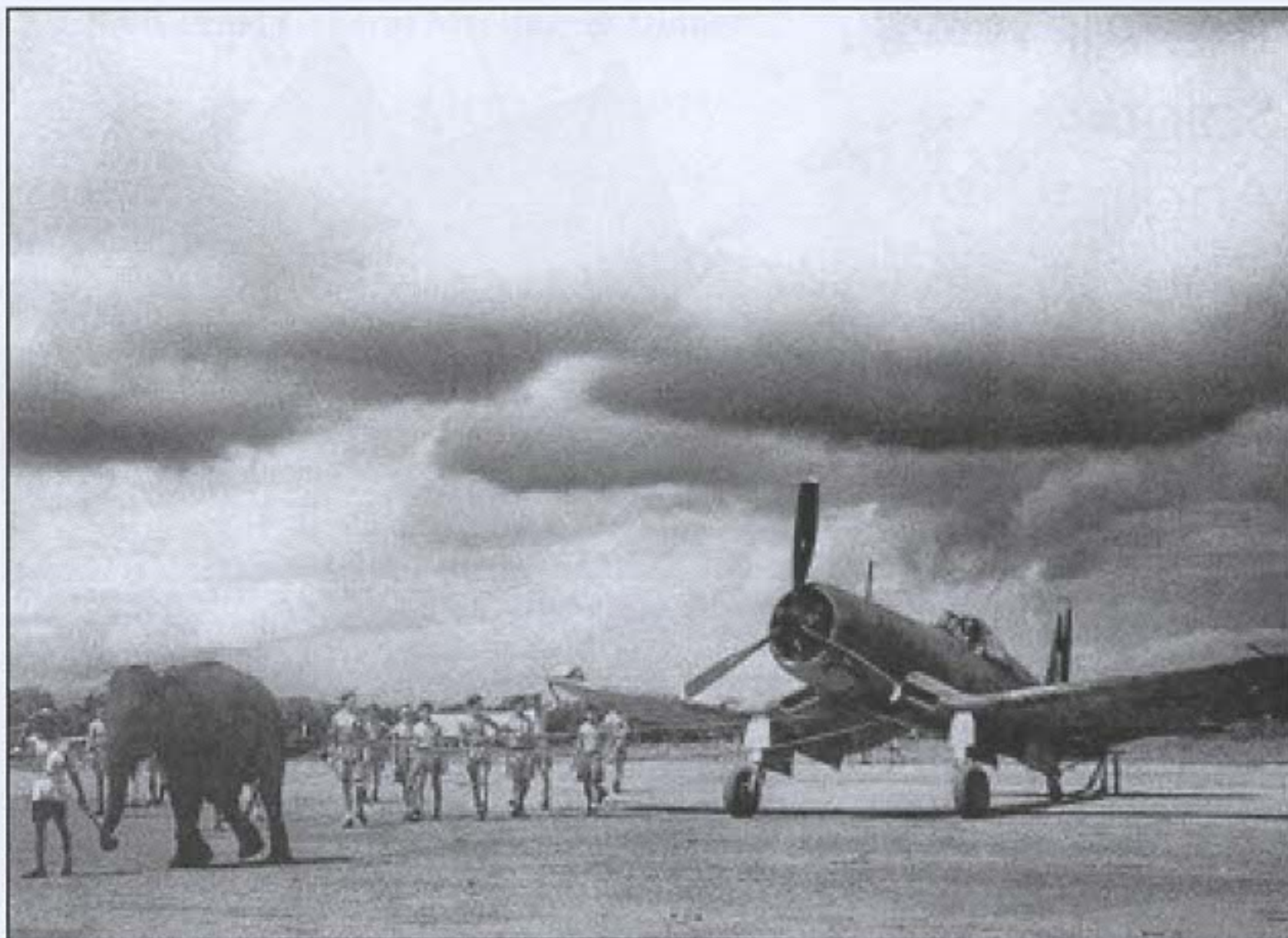
"I am a medical student currently doing a rotation in toxicology at the poison control centre in Brisbane. Today, this woman called in very upset because she caught her little daughter eating ants. I quickly reassured her that the ants are not harmful and there would be no need to bring her daughter into the hospital. She calmed down and, at the end of the conversation, happened to mention that she had given her daughter some ant poison to eat in order to kill the ants. I told her that she better bring her daughter into the emergency room right away".

88888888

A man, wanting to rob a Bank of Queensland, walked into the Branch and wrote 'Put all ya munny in this beeg.' While standing in line, waiting to give his note

to the teller, he began to worry that someone had seen him write the note and might call the police before he reached the teller's window. So he left the Bank and crossed the street to the NAB Bank. After waiting a few minutes in line, he handed his note to the teller. She read it and, surmising from his spelling errors that he wasn't the brightest light in the Harbour, told him that she could not accept his stickup note because it was written on a Bank of Queensland deposit slip and that he would either have to fill out a NAB deposit slip or go back to Bank of Queensland. Looking somewhat defeated, the man said, 'OK' and left. He was arrested a few minutes later, as he was waiting in line back at the Bank of Queensland.

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(Courtesy Wikipedia)

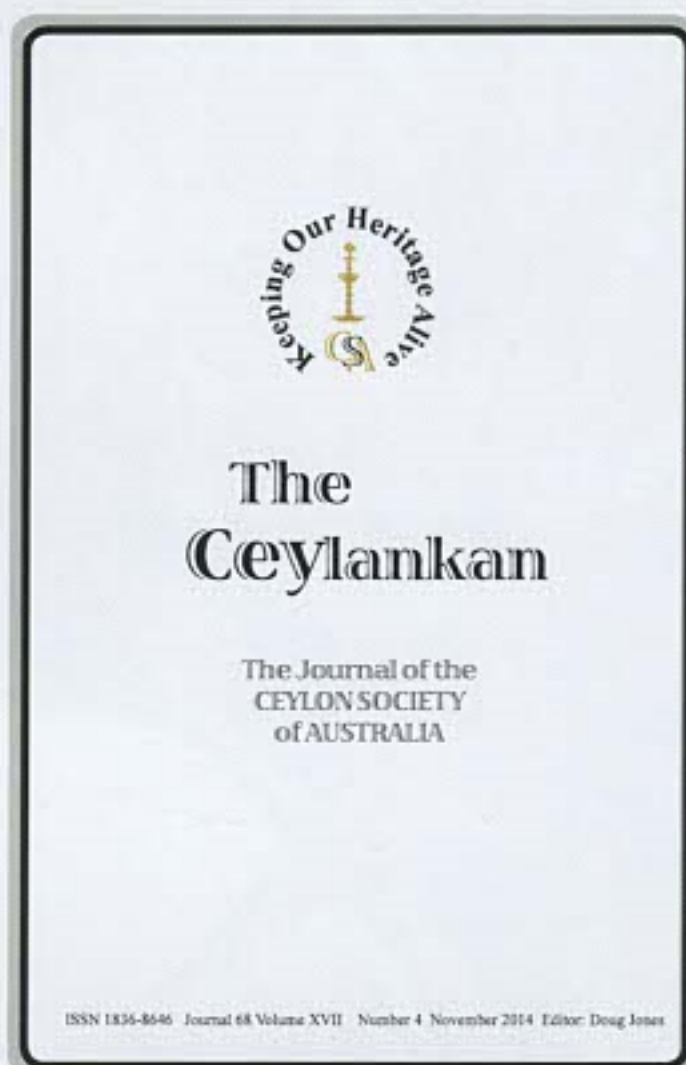
When ‘jumbos’ towed Corsair Chance Vought F4U fighter aircraft in Ceylon

Ceylon, now Sri Lanka, was a strategic bastion commanding the sea routes from Europe to the Far East during World War II. In 1942 Ceylon was narrowly saved from an impending Japanese invasion after being alerted by Canadian Squadron Leader Leonard Birchall (see J61 -Leonard Birchall and the Japanese raid on Colombo) flying a Catalina 250 miles south of Ceylon. Because of Birchall's timely warning the British forces overcame Japanese air and naval assaults on the island's capital.

As part of the expansion of British operations on the island, the hastily built airstrip HMS Rajaliya was carved out of dense forest at Kalpitiya, near Puttalam. The soft grass strip, reinforced with metal and Somerfield tracking (lightweight wire mesh type of pre-fabricated airfield surface) enabled the heavy American-built Chance Vought F4U Corsairs to use the runway.

However, in the monsoon season the Corsair's tricky landing characteristics made the aircraft to often slip off into the water-logged ground. The Navy resorted to using the so-called ‘Puttalam Elephants’ to haul the Corsairs back to firmer ground. Operating in conditions where even towing tractors became quickly bogged down, these elephants provided an invaluable service, much endeared by the pilots and ground crews.

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or friend
a Gift Subscription
of**



**The Ceylankan
for just \$30.**

Your nominee will have four quarterly issues mailed to his/her home. Please contact the Treasurer Deepak on 0434 860 188 or email: deepakpsl@yahoo.com
PO Box 489 Blacktown NSW 2148.

OUR BACK COVER



Gynea Lily

On our back cover is a watercolour image of Gynea Lily (*Doryanthes excelsa*) by Dr Nalini Kappagoda.

The Gynea Lily is endemic to coastal areas near Sydney. With sword shaped leaves more than a meter long, it sends up flowers in spring and summer up to six meters high. At its apex is a large bunch of shiny red flowers with each 10cm across.

Nalini and her late husband Dr MB Kappagoda were founding members of the CSA, both took to painting as a pastime after retirement. Nalini specialises in botanical drawings and several of her paintings have been exhibited at the Royal Botanic Gardens in Sydney.

WE NEED SPEAKERS

The CSA welcomes interested persons (both members and non-members) to speak at our meetings in Sydney, Melbourne and Colombo.

Our meetings are held quarterly in February, May, August and November of each year. Dates can be arranged to suit the availability of speakers. Overhead projection and PA facilities are also available.

You may know of potential candidates for speakers from among your family members, among friends or relatives who live in or visit Australia or Sri Lanka.

If you would like to share your knowledge and expertise among a group of like-minded people, please contact our President Thiru Arumugam on (02) 8850 4798 or Hemal Gurusinghe (Mob) 0427 725 740 (Melbourne) or M.D. (Tony) Saldin 22936402 (Colombo) and they will be delighted to forward you with details about forthcoming meetings envisaged and any other information you may require.

***Age is an issue of mind over
matter. If you don't mind, it
doesn't matter !***

