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The Ceylankam

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From the Editor...

Hugh and Tulsi Karunanayake are synonymous with the CSA and *The Ceylankan*. They are Founding Members of the CSA and the only joint Life Members; well earned. But they mean a lot more to the CSA than they will ever concede. Sadly, Hugh and Tulsi will be leaving Sydney, sometime in September, due to family commitments, to reside permanently in Melbourne. We will miss their smiling faces, amiable company and tangible support they shower on the society and the journal. Hugh's Guardian Angel-like help at anytime is considerable. Tulsi is equally supportive. At our Public Meetings, she would be first in the kitchen with other ladies caring for the culinary needs of the night, but not before helping setting up seating arrangements for the guests. I didn't know, until recently, that it was Tulsi who painstakingly printed more than 300 something address labels for mailing the magazine to members everywhere. Also, the editor searching for copy has only to breathe the word to Hugh and he would speedily respond with a well-written article. His generosity extends to reading proofs knowledgeably and with uncanny accuracy. The editor will profoundly miss their talents and ungrudging assistance always. A happy, most enjoyable time with your family Hugh and Tulsi, especially the grandchildren, is our sincere wish to you both!

Happy diamond anniversary to *THE CEYLANKAN*! It took 18 years to reach this milestone, enjoying the inspiration of four presidents, hundreds of committee members, saw the birth of new Chapters Melbourne and Colombo, had three editors and

hundreds of contributors, not forgetting a vast number of readers worldwide. Indeed a great achievement by the CSA.

New technology helped tremendously in producing the journal unfailingly, with ease, expertise and on time; it has also, hopelessly at times, let the side down badly, crashing computers et al. But we managed to get ahead of all that.

In this issue we have Rex Olegasegarem recount reverently his life as an articled clerk in the founding days of the Institute of Chartered Accountants of Ceylon.

Samuel Thevabalan Arnold delineates the lives of two Christian Leaders from Sri Lanka, Dr D.T. Niles and Rev. Sevak S.S. Selvaratnam (PA) who left their indelible footprints in the growth of the religion in the country.

Alan Gill, former writer/reporter on the Sydney Morning Herald, remembers his friendship of multi-talented Noel Crusz, priest, puppeteer, film maker, teacher and writer, who influenced anyone who had the fortune to cross his path. Very readable.

Tissa Devendra returns to days at the University of Ceylon and the antics of the undergrads at the eatery called Lion House.

Of course, we have Thiru Arumugam conclude part two of his absorbing article of the two bridges of Kwai that raised considerable interest here and overseas, also earning a reference by S. Muthiah in his regular column Madras Miscellany in the *The Madras Hindu* newspaper.

August is the month of the great Kandy Perahera. We have included a brief article covering the meaning and reason for this renowned festival.

And many more. So sit back and enjoy.

About the Ceylon Society of Australia

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

Most importantly, it is non-political and non-partisan and endeavours to steer clear of controversial issues.

CSA is not a formal, high profile Society but rather, a gathering of like-minded people, open to receiving and imparting new ideas, who greatly enjoy a quarterly meeting in reasonably modest and intimate surroundings. While Sydney is home to the parent body and looks after the needs of the society in all of NSW and the ACT, the Melbourne Chapter covers members and others residing in Victoria; the Colombo Chapter caters to CSA members and others in Sri Lanka.

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

The Ceylankan is the flagship of CSA. It is a publication much-looked forward to by members and others here and worldwide. Articles published are contributions from members and sometimes, those solicited from outside sources. All opinions expressed are those of the individual writers and do not necessarily reflect those of the 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 24.)

Our Readers Write

Bridge Story

I refer to Part 1 of Thiru Arumugam's article in *The Ceylankan* of May 2016 (J74) on "A Tale of two Bridges". As usual, the article was excellent and well researched which we have come to expect from the "pen" of Thiru. I found it most interesting, not only for the impressive presentation but also because it brought back some memories of my personal childhood experiences in 1942 during the WWII period in eastern Sri Lanka. We were then living in Chenkaladi, a small town 15 kilometres north of Batticaloa, as my father was an Engineer in the Irrigation Department located in this town. I attended the local Primary Methodist Tamil School and was then a kindergarten student. Fearing an air attack by the Japanese after the fall of Singapore, the school conducted regular "drills" in order to mitigate any personal injury in the event of a raid. Although slates were used for written work, students had to carry a few lead pencils and cotton wool to school. We were instructed to plug our ears and bite on the wooden part of the pencil and quickly get under the desk on hearing any warning of an air attack. We were also instructed to observe absolute silence. Around the period of the Japanese attack on Trincomalee, we heard an air raid warning and decisive loud noises of bombing not far away from Chenkaladi. The teachers immediately ordered us to escalate the "drill" practices to a live situation. Absolute silence pervaded among the traumatised students waiting under the desks until the noise from the bombing ceased completely. When the Headmaster decided that the danger had passed, the teachers were instructed to ask us to come out from our most uncomfortable positions. Announcements were made in the old methodology from cars and "tom tom" beaters that it was safe to come out into the streets. Encouraged by the Headmaster, a number of parents came to the school and took the children away to their homes.

On the very next day after the air raid, announcements were made that the raid took place near Sithandikudy (a small hamlet few kilometres north of Chenkaladi) and this had nothing to do with the attack on Trincomalee. It was only a practice exercise by the British Royal Air Force targeting a few coconut plantations. People were allowed to inspect the site of devastation. I recall accompanying my father to one of the affected coconut plantations and seeing the devastation. There were big holes on the ground and coconut trees smashed to the earth. Some residents, including my father, were not totally convinced that the air raid was mere 'practice', although any contrary opinion cannot be voiced during a period of War, least of all by government officers. Perhaps this scepticism was well founded as

the colonial authorities could deliberately resort to misinformation in order to avoid any panic situation arising within the local populace or for any other reason.

At one of our CSA general meetings a few years ago, on the topic of Lord Mountbatten's headquarters in Kandy, the guest speaker alluded to deliberate misinformation being disseminated during times of war for various reasons. I believe the guest speaker was Dr David Donaldson from a renowned university in Melbourne. After the meeting, I did have a chat with him on my experience in 1942 and specifically on the announcements made by the authorities denying any air attack by the Japanese. He told me that the bombing raid in all probability would have been executed by the Japanese as they had an aircraft carrier off the east coast of Ceylon. Perhaps, this was a part of the Japanese fleet mentioned by Thiru.

REX OLEGASEGAREM, East Ryde, NSW 2113.

Great research

A great historical article on the genesis of St. Thomas' College by Hugh Karunanayake. My family who had feet in both camps made it doubly interesting. Our grandfather Gerald H de Saram and his brothers attended school at St. Thomas', Mutwal. Gerald, often referred to his happy school-boy days so that it was wonderful to see a photograph of the school he attended.

A later falling out with Warden Stone of St. Thomas', Gerald sent his oldest son Ged (G.S.W.) de Saram to Royal. Our father pointing out to us The Colombo Academy, later Royal College) at San Sebastian, Pettah, where he attended school. I am unsure if Pettah is the correct location nor can I remember the road on which it was on but I do remember that it was just beyond the Fort Railway Station as one drove out of Colombo.

Years later, Gerald acted for many years as medical doctor to St. Thomas' College, Mount Lavinia where he was dubbed Garibaldi because of his bald head. Ged's four sons, Willie, Chris, John and Allan went to Royal. Our sole Thomian cousin, Edward was forever afterward known as Gary, after his grandfather.

Hugh has to be truly congratulated on this wonderful article.

Meanwhile thank you for the beautiful paintings on the back covers of your magazine and the background to these brilliant artists.
GERALDENE DE SARAM-JANSZ,
Ontario, Canada.

EDITOR'S NOTE: I am certain many of our readers, especially Alumni of the two schools, will be interested in your story Geraldine and maybe you may have an answer to your little query.

75 and not out!

Step by step, *The Ceylankan* has moved up to the 75th rung on the ladder of life, A major milestone for an unpretentious publication sought-after worldwide by devoted members of the Ceylon Society of Australia, many of whom generously contribute their research and knowledge by sharing their findings for publication in a journal they have come to treasure as part of family. Very appropriately called "the flagship" of the Society by founding member, the late Mike Udabage, the journal endeavours to uphold the mission of the Society that has, through the years, been spearheaded by our generous and hardworking Presidents.

The journal, the brianchild of **Hugh Karunanayake** (and, no doubt, his co-founder Chris Puttock) has grown into adulthood. Hugh still guides the Society in his quiet, unobtrusive way, to what it is today. An unfailing contributor to the journal with his most readable articles that filter all the nuances of Sri Lankan heritage and culture. "Hugh has had a long and abiding interest in antiquarian matters relating to Sri Lanka," said David Goodrich, founding editor of *The Ceylankan* writing in the February 1998 issue. "His interest also covers a wide variety of subjects from art and architecture, natural history and antiquities and to the study of the Portuguese, Dutch and British periods of the occupation. He owns a unique and extensive library of antiquarian books on Sri Lanka including a substantial collection of maps, prints and old postcards." David goes on to say that Hugh is always eager to share his knowledge with anyone who asks. From my own personal experience, that trait has kept growing and improving like a good Red.

Incidentally, Hugh and his wife Tulsi (both Life members of the CSA) will be leaving Sydney shortly to permanently join their family in Melbourne. Our best wishes to both for every happiness in the future,

Succeeding Hugh as President in November 2004 was the genial **Tony Peries**; an equally dedicated and devoted member. He came to Australia after an eminent career in the Corporate sector in Sri Lanka. Starting as a Tea Taster at George Steuart & Co. in



sectors until retirement in 1999. Tony's expertise and wise counsel has been an invaluable resource to the CSA at all times. We wish him well as Tony is not in the best of health at the present time.



The next President of the CSA was **Sunil de Silva** elected at the AGM in November 2007. Sunil was born on 30 January 1941 and is married to Senanie



(nee Gunasekera) and they have two children, a son Sidat who is a cinematographer and a daughter Samanti who was enrolled as a legal practitioner but prefers her career as an educator.

Sunil had his primary education at Richmond College, Galle and in 1952, was admitted to Royal College, Colombo. He joined Ceylon Law College in 1959 as an Advocate Student. While at Law College in 1961 he obtained a Bachelor of Arts degree from the London University and an LL.B from University of Ceylon, Peradeniya. Sunil passed his Advocates Final in 1962 and commenced his apprenticeship with his maternal uncle A.C. Gooneratne Q.C.

On 27 March 1963, Sunil was enrolled as an Advocate of the Supreme Court in Ceylon, one of the youngest graduates to do so. After a few years in private practice, Sunil joined the Attorney General's Department as a Crown Counsel and was promoted through the ranks as a Senior State Counsel, Deputy Solicitor General, Deputy Director of Public Prosecutions, Additional Solicitor General and finally as the Attorney General of Sri Lanka. After four years in the post, Sunil retired from service and migrated to Australia in 1992.

While in the Attorney General's Department, Sunil was awarded a Colombo Plan Scholarship for post graduate study in International Law and Human Rights in London as well as a UN Fellowship for a post graduate course in Human Rights and Implementation of Human Rights in domestic legislation.

This knowledge and experience played a significant part in his representation of Sri Lanka at UN Sessions in Geneva and New York.

On migration to New South Wales, Sunil served in the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions and retired from the post of Crown Prosecutor which he held for 17 years. He also served a few years as a Senior Solicitor Advocate with the Legal Aid Department.

Acting in stage plays, cinema and television served as a rewarding extra curricular activity out of the court room. He was a widely acclaimed actor in plays by Sri Lanka's pre-eminent producers for many years.

Sunil joined Ernest MacIntyre's group and continued his acting career and took part in teledramas with great success.

Sunil received a National Award in Sri Lanka for the best translation to English of Dr Gunadasa Amarasekera's *Vilthera Maranaya* as "Death by The Poolside"

Sunil was also the President of the Sri Lanka Association of NSW, President of the Old Boys Association of Royal College, Colombo in NSW and the ACT. He is also Committee Member Sinhala Cultural Forum and the Sri Lanka Reconciliation Forum.

Harry de Sayrah OAM JP succeeded Sunil who served with dedication for three years in November 2010. Harry had a successful career in Commerce in Sri Lanka ending as Executive Director of Castle finance Ltd and the Rowlands Group of Companies. He also served as Chairman of the Finance Houses Association of Sri Lanka. An active member of the Lions Club of Kollupitiya, he was also Zone Chairman of Lions District 306. In Australia, Harry was President of the Bankstown Lions 1993-1994 and is its current Treasurer. He was Deputy District Governor and recipient of the prestigious Melvin Jones Fellowship. Harry was awarded the Medal of the Order of Australia (OAM) in the Queen's Birthday Honours in 2007.



The mild mannered **Thiru Arumugam** was elected fifth President of the CSA in November 2013. Thiru received his education in at St Thomas'



College, Mount Lavinia. A Chartered Engineer, he graduated from the Engineering Faculty of the University of Ceylon in 1957. After a brief employment with the Ceylon Government Service, he began work in Nigeria in 1974 and

then proceeded to the UK in 1981 where he became Principal Engineer with one of the largest companies of Environmental Consulting Engineers, while his wife Malini was Consultant Paediatrician in the

National Health Services in the UK. On retirement, the couple migrated to Australia and are settled in Sydney, fighting a losing battle trying to coerce their two sons and their families who are domiciled in the UK (the third is in the USA) to join them here. Thiru is well known to the readers of The Ceylankan from all over the world due to the copious contribution he makes to the journal. The author of three books on the history and heritage of Sri Lanka, he has a fourth book, just out of the press entitled *Writings and Musings* – a collection of 22 articles published in this journal and already receiving public acclaim. (See Book Review on Page 28).

THE EDITORS

The first issue of the journal edited by **David Goodrich** was published in February 1998 under the tentative title of "Ceylon Research Society of Australia". At a meeting on 2 May 1998, the journal was christened THE CEYLANKAN, a name coined by David who was a Founder member of the CSA. David was born in Auckland, New Zealand. Sadly he passed away in December 2001 after a courageous battle with cancer, having produced 16 issues of the widely read journal. **Sumane Iyer** filled David's boots admirably. Soon he imbued the publication with his own style of editorship, also encouraging numerous readers to contribute to the journal, most of whom were amateurs in the field. Soon he was reaping a vast crop of contributors.

After a magnificent tenure of editing and publishing a looked-forward to and widely read magazine, Sumane relinquished his position as editor in 2009 with **Doug Jones** succeeding him. Doug endeavours to keep up the great work started by David and continued so well by Sumane. Doug is most grateful for the support he receives from contributors, the editorial team and the readers.

HAPPENINGS

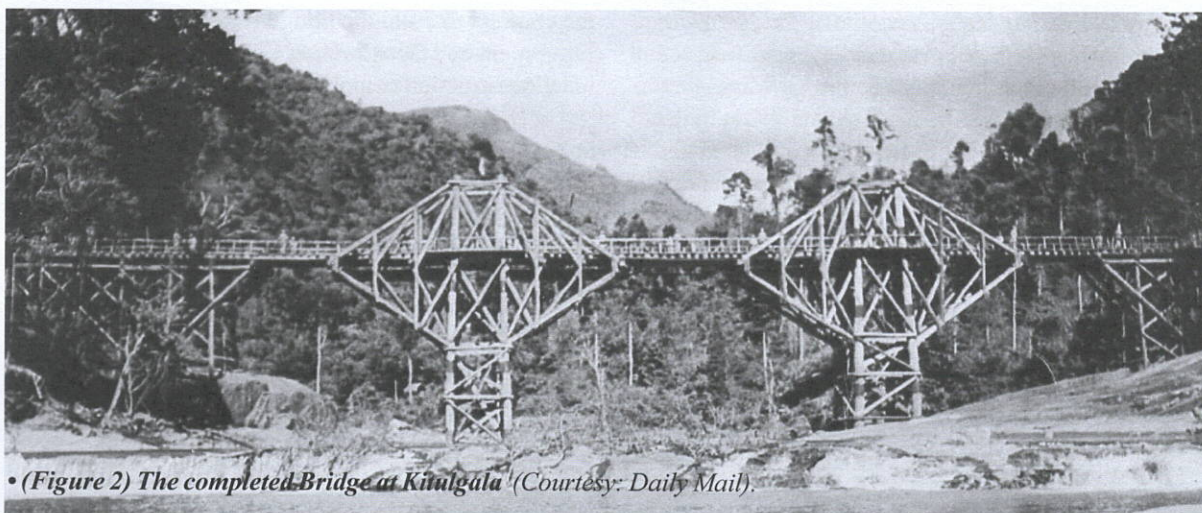
THE PIACHAUDS BID FAREWELL TO SYDNEY

Chris and Cynthia Piachaud, popular members of CSA, bid farewell to their many friends, relatives, and former colleagues in Sydney, with their departure from Australia in June. They have settled in Scotland where they will continue their lives in retirement in close proximity to their daughter Bianca's family. As members will recall Chris served CSA admirably during the early years as Honorary Secretary for three years, not long after taking permanent residency in Sydney after a long career with Glaxo Allenburys where he served as CEO in Sri Lanka, Jakarta, and Thailand. Their original intention to live out their retirement in their magnificent home in Sydney's North Shore, however, had to be jettisoned with the burning desire to be with their daughter's family. When one chapter closes another opens for the Piachauds who, no doubt, will relish the opportunity to spend prime time with their precious grandchild. Their many friends will agree that their departure after years of globetrotting epitomizes the saying "when parting is such sweet sorrow"!

We wish Chris and Cynthia all the very best in their retirement in Scotland.



• **Chris Piachaud**
(Photo courtesy LinkedIn)



A Tale of Two Bridges: over the River Kwai in Thailand and over the River Kelani in Ceylon – Part 2

by Thiru Arumugam

Part 1 of this article which was published in the last issue (J74) of this Journal described the building of a Bridge over the River Kwai in Thailand which was part of the railway line built by the Japanese in 1942 during World War II, linking the railway networks of Thailand and Burma. This article describes the bridge built over the River Kelani at Kitulgala, which was built by Columbia Pictures in 1957, as a set for the film *The Bridge on the River Kwai*. It was the largest film set ever built up to that time.

The Book

Pierre Boulle was a French engineer working in rubber factories in Malaya. When the war broke out he was arrested and was a POW but did not work on the Thai-Burma railway. After the war, he listened to stories about the wartime experiences of British rubber planters who had worked as POWs on the Thai-Burma railway. The net result was the publication of his semi-fictional book in 1952, *Le Pont de la Riviere Kwai*. This was translated into English in 1954 as *The Bridge on the River Kwai* and was a multi-million copy best seller. The character Colonel Nicholson (Col.) in the book is purportedly based on Col. Toosey who was the senior British Officer in the POW camp at the bridge site in Tamarkan. The difference is that Col. Nicholson is portrayed as a collaborator, whereas Col. Toosey argued long and hard with the Japanese to improve the conditions of the POWs and was often assaulted for his pains. Also the entire section in the book about commandos parachuted into Burma to go and blow up the Kwai bridge is pure fiction because, as we have seen, the bridge was demolished by Allied bombers.

The film

In 1956, Horizon Pictures of UK decided to make a film of the book. They had the backing of

Columbia Pictures of Hollywood who financed the film and were also responsible for its world-wide distribution. Sam Spiegel was selected as the Producer and David Lean was the Director. The main members of the cast were William Holden, Hollywood's Number One box office draw at that time, Alec Guinness and Jack Hawkins. The Japanese Sessue Hayakawa was selected to play the role of Col. Saito. He was a famous 68-year old veteran actor from the silent film days.

Sam Spiegel sent Donald Ashton, the Art Director, to Thailand to have a look at the bridge site and select locations for filming. Ashton found that the Tamarkan bridge site was on flat land and was not scenic, whereas the book describes a bridge site in a mountain gorge. Furthermore, it was the dry season and the flow in the river was a trickle. Ashton was married to the daughter of a British tea planter working in Ceylon. He remembered seeing, on his way to his father-in-law's estate, the River Kelani in a picturesque mountain gorge in Kitulgala. He suggested to Spiegel that the location for shooting the film be shifted to Ceylon and Spiegel agreed.

The Bridge

Sam Spiegel did not want the bridge in the film to be a mock-up. He wanted a full size solid timber bridge. Husband & Co. was a firm of Civil Engineering Consultants based in Sheffield, England. They had a roads contract in Ceylon and had an office in Colombo. Keith Best was the Chief Engineer and he was commissioned with the task of designing the bridge. All the wooden bridges in the Thai-Burma railway were trestle bridges, based on a standard American pattern. However, at Kitulgala the bridge would be up to 70 feet above the river bed and it would be difficult to build a trestle bridge. Keith Best

therefore decided to design a cantilever bridge using the shape of the Firth of Forth cantilever railway bridge in Scotland as a guide. The bridge would be 425 feet long and would be the largest film-set built bridge up to that time. Keith Best had completed his bridge design when there was a new development.

In the 1890s the rubber planters in the Kelani Valley complained to the Governor that whereas the up-country planters could send their tea to Colombo by rail, they had to send their rubber to Colombo by bullock cart. The Governor approved the construction of the Kelani Valley railway line and construction work started in 1900. It was a narrow gauge two-foot

the contract to build the bridge was awarded to Equipment and Construction Co. (ECC) a leading local construction company.

ECC started work on building the bridge at Kitulgala. They used over 500 workers. Trees were felled in the jungle on the opposite bank and dragged by 35 elephants to a saw mill and from there to the river bed. It was a difficult job dissuading the elephants from flopping down to have a bath every time they crossed the river. Fig. 1 shows the construction of the bridge by ECC. Wooden piles were driven into the river bed to support the cantilevers. Concrete foundations were also used. Fig. 2 shows the completed bridge.

Filming details

Apart from the bridge at Kitulgala, other locations in Ceylon were used for the shooting of the film. Scenes were shot on the beach at Mount Lavinia Hotel, at the Peradeniya Botanical Gardens, the POW camp site was at a quarry believed to be near Mahara, and at various jungle locations. There were no studio shots, it was filmed entirely in Ceylon. The parts of the British soldiers were played by Ceylonese. They were young Burghers, the Bambalawatte boys. They were paid hundred rupees a day, which was quite good because it would take them about a week to earn that money in an office job. Chris Greet of Radio Ceylon played the role of a British Officer and spoke a few lines. Chandran Rutnam, straight from school, was an assistant to the Props Manager.

He appears briefly in the film pushing

a boat in which William Holden is riding. Rutnam subsequently made the film industry his career. Denis Flamer-Caldera has a similar build to William Holden and he was Holden's stunt double.

Sir Malcolm Arnold was the Music Director, with music played by the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra. The Colonel Bogey March was a popular march in the British Forces dating from World War I. Arnold wanted this to be the theme music but Columbia objected and wanted to have 'Bless Them All' as the theme but Arnold finally had his way. Arnold wanted the troops marching into the camp to sing the song, but it was pointed out that the words would never get past the Censors because the words compared a part of the anatomy of Hitler, Himmler, Goebels and Goering! It was finally decided that the troops would whistle the song. The disc of the music was in 'Top of the Pops' for several weeks.

With the completion of the bridge, everything was ready for the climax of the film which was the blowing up of the bridge. Unlike the other scenes, there could be only one 'take' as the bridge could

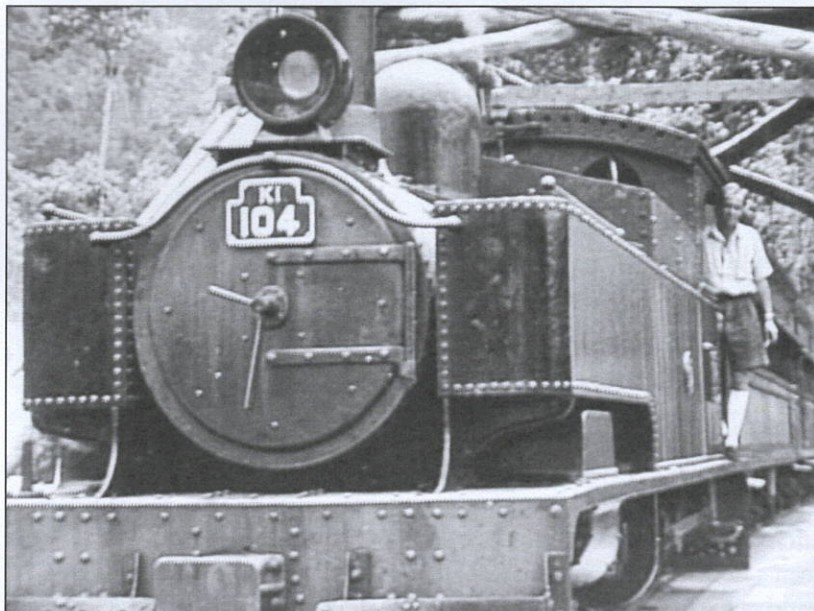


• (Figure 1) Kitulgala Wooden Bridge under construction
(Courtesy: Columbia Pictures)

six inch railway compared with the five-foot six-inch broad gauge railways in the rest of Ceylon. By 1912 the line was completed from Maradana to Yatiyantota with a branch line from Avisawella to Opanayaka. The first batch of seven steam engines for this line were ordered from Hunslet, an engine manufacturer in Leeds, UK. The engines were numbered 102 to 108. In 1957 a Board of Survey in the Ceylon Government Railway had recommended scrapping the 55-year old Engine No. 104 as it was no longer economical to run. The Minister in charge of the railways contacted Sam Spiegel and told him that they were prepared to give him Engine No. 104 and a few carriages and that they could be blown up with the bridge in the climax of the film.

Sam Spiegel jumped up at the idea and informed Keith Best about this new development. This required a total re-design and strengthening of the bridge. Originally it was designed to take the load of a company of soldiers marching across the bridge. It would now have to carry a 30 ton train travelling at about 20 mph. The bridge was re-designed and

be blown up only once. Many VIPs including the Prime Minister, S W R D Bandaranaike, were present to witness the scene. The contract to supply the explosives and blow up the bridge was given to Imperial Chemical Industries (ICI). The explosion was filmed by four cameras, two on either side of the bridge. A switch was installed near each camera and



• *Engine No. 104 steamed up for her last journey, like a condemned man led to the gallows. (Courtesy: Columbia Pictures).*

this was connected to a bulb on David Lean's desk. When the train approached the bridge the cameramen had to start the camera rolling, turn on the switch and run away to a safe distance. A fifth switch was fitted at the beginning of the bridge. This switch was to be turned on by the engine driver who had to jump off the moving train. David Lean was to give the signal to ICI to blow up the bridge only when all five bulbs lit up.

When all was ready, the engine driver was signalled to start the train. The top photo shows 55 year old Kelani Valley Engine No. 104 steamed up and ready for its final run, like a condemned man waiting to be led to the gallows. As the train approached the bridge, one by one the bulbs lit up. But only four bulbs

came on. What could have gone wrong? Was one cameraman still at his post, or worse still, was the engine driver still on the train? David Lean had to make a split second decision. He played safe and decided not to signal ICI to blow

up the bridge. The train thundered across the bridge at speed. At the far end, the railway line ended in a sandbagged wall which the driverless engine would have hit at full speed, head on and get badly damaged. Fortunately, somebody had carelessly parked a mobile generator on the railway track. The engine hit the mobile generator which went flying. The engine was

derailed, but damage to the engine was minimal except to the cow-catcher.

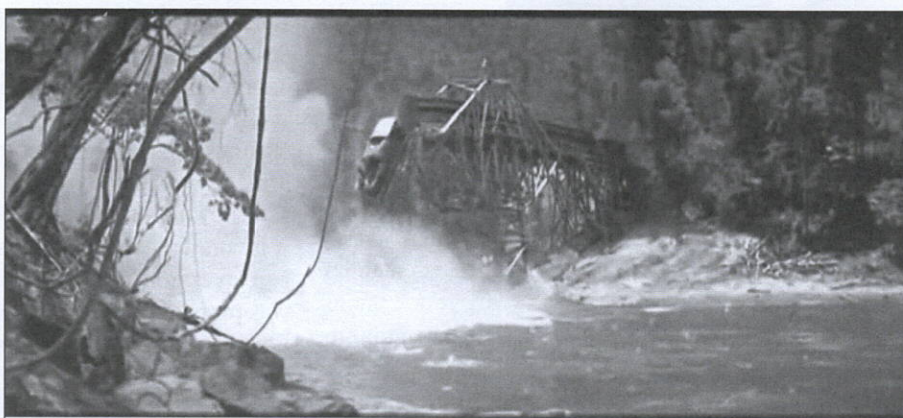
What had happened was that one cameraman in his eagerness to run away to a place of safety, had forgotten to turn on his switch. The engine was jacked up back on to the track and two days later the blowing up scene was shot, this time without any ceremony or VIPs present. Everything went well, the bridge was blown up and the train fell into the river, and it was a dramatic climax to the film. The photo below shows the bridge being blown up with the train.

Film release

The film was completed and released in UK on 02 October 1957 and in USA on 14

December 1957. The film cost

about three million dollars to produce. During the initial release alone, the Box Office takings were over 30 million dollars. It had the highest Box Office takings of any film in the USA in 1958. The British Film Institute rated it the 11th greatest British film of all time. At the 1958 Academy Award ceremony it won seven Oscars, a record for a British film. The



• *Kitulgala Wooden Bridge blown up with the train. (Courtesy: Columbia Pictures)*

Oscars were for Best Picture (Sam Spiegel), Best Director (David Lean), Best Actor (Alec Guinness), Best Screenplay, Best Music, Best Editing and Best Cinematography – it was among the first films in

Cinemascope. Sessue Hayakawa was nominated for Best Supporting Actor but failed to win the award.

Latest development

The stretch of the River Kelani near Kitulgala has five major rapids and four minor rapids. Kitulgala has become the base for white water rafting in Ceylon within the last few years. Many tourists flock to the place and the tourist infrastructure has been established with restaurants, cafes, guest-houses etc. However, as pointed out in the article D J Wimalasurendra – Pioneer Ceylonese Engineer in the November 2011 (J56) edition of this Journal, the Broadlands Hydro Electric Scheme is being constructed. When it is completed next year, the water flowing through the Kitulgala rapids will be reduced to

a trickle as it will be diverted through the hydro power station and that will be the end of white water rafting there. The white water rafting associations protested and as a compromise, the Ceylon Electricity Board (CEB) agreed to release water down the river during daylight hours for rafting, even though it would be a loss of revenue to the CEB. The rafting associations were still not satisfied and said that there would be a drop in tourist visits. As a further concession, the Minister of Power and Energy announced a few months ago that “Steps will be taken to restore the bridge, which was used for the film *The Bridge on the River Kwai*, to its original state to attract the attention of tourists”. So the Bridge at Kitulgala is going to rise again to its former glory.

Deshabandu Jezima Ismail: Belonging to something larger than oneself – by GERALDENE de SARAM JANSZ

Jezima Ismail, an educator for over three decades, has served on various international committees on women's rights and is a recipient of various awards in recognition of her work. She is the founder of the Muslim Women's Research & Action Forum and President of the Sri Lanka Muslim Women's Conference.

Our family first met Jezima and her husband Dr. Mahroof Ismail in the mid-sixties on their arrival in Canada. Jezima was working toward her Master's degree in Education at McGill University's Macdonald Campus on the West Island of Montreal conveniently close to our home for regular visits.



• Deshabandu Jezima Ismail

(Photo courtesy yahoo.com).

On several of those happy occasions Jezima spoke highly of her Irrigation Engineer father whose keen interest in education decided that he educate his daughters beyond conservative Muslim tradition. Her grandfather, a trustee of the mosque meant that the original family background was based on just this tradition.

Her father's interest in education that began from an early age took seriously the Koran's injunction – Seek knowledge and education – in

the belief that it was through education that the Koran could be interpreted and manifested in life. Jezima dedicated her Master's thesis to her father.

Reflecting on those days today, it seemed evident even then that Jezima's unusual potential still lay in abeyance. Elegant in personality and mental outlook Jezima in a quiet way portrayed the boundless enthusiasm and enterprise that would conduct her life in the future.

Soon, however, it was time for the Ismails to return to Sri Lanka. We parted with assurances of keeping in touch but time and geography intervened and consequently it was some years later that we learned that Jezima was now Principal of Colombo's Muslim Ladies College, a post she held for 13 years.

Jezima's future as a social activist, educationist and humanitarian would now spread over a vast canvas. In a ceremony celebrating her award as deshabandu in 2011 – deshabandu is the third highest national honour awarded in Sri Lanka for 'meritorious service' – the ceremony recalled the revolutionary changes she had brought to the education and lives of Muslim women.

In the following biographical examples that were drawn from a large list of her achievements one perceives how the future vision of father and daughter was propelled forward in such an exceptional way: Founder and Chair - Academy of Adult Education for Women. Chancellor, South East University; President of Sri Lanka's Muslim Women's Conference; Investigating and Inquiring into violations of Human Rights; Member UN National Agency; Member Board of Trustees International Institute of War Trauma of Humanitarian Intervention and many more.



• The bridge being built in Sri Lanka for the movie, *The Bridge On The River Kwai*

A BRIDGE NO MORE

From CSA member S.Muthiah's regular column in *The Hindu Times* (Madras).

Madras Miscellany:

Life is full of strange coincidences. The other day, I was looking for a photograph of P.H. Mortensen, then in charge of the Engineering Construction Corporation (ECC), now a part of industrial giant L&T. He had considerably helped the NGO Bala Mandir that has been founded by Kamaraj and Manjubhashini and I was involved in writing a book in which the NGO figured. When I got back home after that search, what should I find but the *Ceylankan*, a heritage-oriented publication the mail had brought me from Australia. And in it was an article about the bridge over the River Kwai that Mortensen and ECC had reproduced in Ceylon for the shooting there of what has become a film classic.

Said to have been the biggest film set ever to have been constructed till then, the bridge was built over the river Kelani near Kitulgala and had become a major tourist attraction. Now, sadly, it has made way for development. In the process, it has passed into history.

The bridge at Kitulgala was meant to be a wooden bridge like the original, but Mortensen had it built of steel and clad it with wood from the surrounding forest. The quote for the job had been Rs. 8 lakhs but, when completed, it had shot up to Rs.16 lakhs. Sam Spiegel shouted that he wouldn't pay a nickel more than the 800,000 quoted. Toubro, the T in L&T (L was Larsen), said that was fine, but he (Spiegel) wouldn't be able to blow up the bridge

because ECC had got an injunction against it. With a high-power cast and crew standing by on full salary, Spiegel had to finally agree to pay more than a nickel but not quite what Mortensen had billed him.

The real bridge in Thailand was, however, not over the River Kwai. There is no such river. Kwai apparently means river in Thai, so River Kwai would have been River River! But Pierre Boulle, the author of the book on which the film was based, gave it the name — and it stuck. But the river across which the bridge was actually built in the early 1940s was Kwai Yai (Big River). It was further north, on a tributary, the Kwai Noi (Small River) that the film's action was actually set.

NOTE: S Muthiah was Editor of the Sunday Times newspaper in Colombo at the time when "The Bridge over the River Kwai" was being filmed in Ceylon in 1957. He now lives in Chennai and writes a regular column for The Hindu newspaper. In his column in the 8 May 2016 edition of the newspaper, he quotes extensively from the May 2016 edition of the "heritage-oriented publication" The Ceylankan in his article about the Bridge over the River Kwai. The May 2016 edition of The Ceylankan carried Part 1 of the article about the Bridge over the River Kwai, Part 2 appears in this issue. The full article is also included in the book "Writings and Musings" — a collection of articles published in The Ceylankan, the Journal of the Ceylon Society of Australia".

"Throughout the history of Ceylon there have been numerous foreign invaders (including the Chola invasion in the Polonnaruwa period) but it was in 1815 when the Kandyan Kingdom was conquered by the British that the whole country fell under foreign rule" writes DR PALITHA GANEWATTE. "Up to 1815, all that the invaders captured were only certain parts of the country. This means it was only in 1815, that Ceylon came under foreign rule after 2357 years of Independence."

Sir John D'Oyly – an Englishman with a Ceylonese heart

The year 2015 marked the bicentenary of the signing of the historic Kandyan Convention in Ceylon, the document that brought to an end 2357 years of Independence of our motherland, Sri Lanka.

The Maritime Provinces of Ceylon were under Colonial rule for over 300 years. First, the Portuguese landed in Ceylon in 1505, then the Dutch in 1660 and finally the British who took the Maritime Provinces under their control in 1796. The only unconquered domain at this stage was the Kandyan Kingdom. The Kandyan Kingdom fell into the British only in 1815. The official document which paved the way to this historic event was the Kandyan Convention.



The convention was signed on 2 March 1815 by the Kandyan chieftains. The last King of Kandy, Sri Wickrama Rajasingha had already been captured by the British the previous month in

February 1815. He played no part in the signing of that Convention. Sir John D'Oyly was the man, who drafted the Kandyan Convention, the act of settlement between the British and Kandyan chiefs in 1815.

So who then, is this John D'Oyly? Some historians say that John D'Oyly was responsible for handing over our motherland of 2357 years of Independence to the British. Our historic records indicate that D'Oyly was very proficient in the Sinhalese language. He communicated with Kandyan Chiefs in Sinhala and his spy network greatly facilitated the British in general and to the then Governor Sir Robert Brownrig in particular, to capture the Kandyan Kingdom without resistance.

John D'Oyly was born on 11 June, 1774 and was educated at the Westminster School in London and Corpus Christi College in Cambridge. He has a remarkable university career winning many prizes and excelling in both Classics and Mathematics. He had diverse interests and studied Botany, Zoology,

Geology, Epigraphy and Ethnology. He was also good at cricket, loved horse riding and sailing boats.

After a short period of administration by the East India Company in 1802, Ceylon became a Crown Colony. D'Oyly was among the first batch of Civil Servants sent to the newly established Colony of Ceylon. He was posted as Second Member of the Provincial Court of Colombo but within a few months, he was appointed the President of the Provincial Court of Matara.

It was in Matara that D'Oyly developed an interest in the Sinhalese Language. He took Sinhala lessons from a leading Sinhalese scholar of that time, Ven. Koratota Dharmmarama Nayaka Unnanse of Veragampitiya. D'Oyly was promoted Agent of Revenue and Commerce for the Matara district. It was during this time that he started a friendship with the famous Sinhalese poetess Gajaman Nona, when she addressed a set of verses to him.

In 1805, D'Oyly was appointed Chief Translator to the Ceylon Government. He then became responsible for all negotiations with the King of Kandy, Sri Wickrama Rajasingha and the rebellious chiefs, who were working to overthrow the King.

One of the most important historical records of this period is D'Oyly's famous diaries, in which he meticulously noted his daily activities. The diary disappeared for more than a century and was later discovered in the Kandy Kachcheri and published in 1917 by the Royal Asiatic Society (Ceylon Branch) with an introduction and notes by Mr H. W. Codrington, another British Civil Servant, scholar and historian.

The Act of Settlement or the Kandyan Convention was prepared by D'Oyly. After it was signed, he was appointed the first resident in Kandy of the British Government.

D'Oyly knew more about the Sinhalese people in Kandy than any other British official of his time. Besides his diary, he has left a valuable historic document "A sketch of the Constitution of the Kandyan Kingdom."

D'Oyly was created a Baronet of the United Kingdom on 29 August 1821 in recognition of his distinguished service to the British Government. This was the highest honour conferred on any member of the Ceylon Civil Service throughout its history.

D'Oyly never returned to England. He died on 25 May 1824, not yet 50 years of age, from a fever, he contracted while on tour in the Sath Korale.

He was buried in Garrison Cemetery in Kandy.

John D'Oyly had played a major role in capturing Kandyan Kingdom by the British. On 14 February 1815, the British forces under the personal command of the Governor, General Sir Robert Brownrigg, entered Kandy. The King, Sri Wickrama Rajasingha was captured and later sent to his homeland in India, where he died in exile in 1832.

The precise details of capture was described by D'Oyly in a letter sent by him to the Governor Brownrigg on 19 February 1815. The King was captured on the previous day. D'Oyly writes:

*King's Granary Teldeniya
February 19, 1815*

Dear Sir,

I have the sincerest joy in reporting to Your Excellency that the object of your anxious wishes is accomplished and the King of Kandy a captive is in our hands. He was surrounded yesterday by the people of Dumbara in conjunction with some armed Kandyans sent by the Adikar at about 5 pm. In a house at Doraliyadde and taken about an hour before dark in the house of Udupitiye Aratchy at Galleyhewatte, a mile beyond Meyda Maha Nuwara, with two of his Queens. A few of his attendants, after the house was surrounded, made a show of resistance, and wounded 2 or 3 men but fled after a few shots at the assailants. I went forward with palanquins to meet him at Rambukkyelle, and have conducted him to this place with his Queens – from whence, after rest and refreshment, they will be sent to Kandy under a sufficient military guard.

The King's mother and two of his Queens are at Hanweyyle, and a detachment will be sent immediately to conduct them in safety, and to secure from plunder any treasure and valuables which may be found. I have written Olas to be sent to the King's relations and Mayakkaras, informing them of these events and inviting them to come without fear.

I have the honour etc.,

JOHN D'OYLY

He was the chief translator to the British and later in Colombo, he was engaged in espionage. He built up an extensive network of correspondents who provided him with the information he required to affect a bloodless capture of Kandy. The Kandyan Kingdom was captured without a shot being fired or a soldier being lost. That feat earned him a Baronetcy.

Before the convention was signed, D'Oyly met Maha Adikaram Ehelepola and Adigars Molligoda and Kapuwatte in the Audience Hall to decide on those who should be appointed to the Board from the Kandyans.

Once the agreement was ratified, D'Oyly entered into his new role as Chief of the Chieftains with great enthusiasm. He was appointed the first Resident of Kandy. He conducted himself more like

a Sinhalese Chieftain than the bureaucrat of a foreign ruling power.

He joined in ritual processions and carried the sacred insignia and even distributed panduru (offerings) to the four temples as was the custom of the king previously.

The Ceylon Government Gazette Extraordinary of 6 March 1815, which is an official bulletin for this purpose, issued from the British Headquarters, notes that there was a solemn conference at the Audience Hall of the Palace of Kandy. There is no mention of a Convention or agreement on the 2 March 1815. This statement is made after four days of reading the Convention.

Historic records point out the Kandyan Convention was not signed on a single day of 2 March. It was signed at various points up to 18 March by Adikaram Ehelepola, Galaboda and Pilimalawa. Literally, this document was in the 'pocket' of D'Oyly who carried it where ever he went in search of the Nilames.

Before the signing of the convention, British soldiers took down the Kandyan flag and hoisted the Union Jack in its place. A Buddhist monk, Ven. Wariyapola Sri Sumangala Thero, saw what had happened and quickly took it down and raised the Sinhalese flag once more, declaring that until the convention was signed, the country still belonged to the Sinhalese and their flag will fly until that time. The soldiers got angry but before they could do anything, Sir John D'Oyly who was nearby, quickly defused the situation.

It was a well known fact that D'Oyly had a close acquaintance with Gajaman Nona. It was during 1802 to 1806, when Sir John D'Oyly was the Government Agent and Fiscal Collector in Matara and Hambantota districts that he met the famous Sinhala poetess who lived in Matara.

Gajaman Nona was left almost destitute by the death of her husband. She could not get a proper job. As she had several children to take care of, she asked John D'Oyly, the Government Agent, for some kind of assistance.

This is when she wrote her famous poem of 12 verses to John D'Oyly.

The kind-hearted John D'Oyly was deeply moved by this famous poetess's request and granted a Nindagama to her. Nindagama is an area of land in which one is able to live and farm for one's needs. There is a statue of Gajaman Nona at the Ambalantota - Nonagama Junction (Nonagama derived from her name Gajaman Nona). In gratitude, she composed the poem to Sir John.

There are numerous rumours that a romance existed between this young British gentleman and the 46-year old Sinhala poetess. While some biographers also hinted about it, there is no evidence whatsoever to prove this rumour.

D'Oyly neither married nor returned at any time to England after he took up his appointment in Ceylon. His mother and brothers in England wanted D'Oyly to return home and settle down there. The letter below was sent to him by his mother, Mary D'Oyly on 29 August 1815. It was received by him in Kandy on 17 June 1816.



'If you must stay much longer at Kandy as you cannot have such pleasant society as you had at Colombo is there no English young Lady who you would like to marry as I am sure you would not spend more with a wife & she could manage your own affairs for you as you say you have not time yourself or if that is not the case & you chuse (sic) to stay some years longer in Ceylon would it not be better to come to England and stay one year & carry a wife back with you'

Three years after the signing of Kandyan Convention in 1818, the Kandyan war broke out. D'Oyly, as the Chief Administrator of Kandy, was unable to settle this event. His failure to anticipate and prevent the outbreak of the Kandyan War in 1818 was attributed to his closeness to the local Sinhalese. This event lead to suspicions and divided loyalties to the British Government. From the very commencement of the war, Governor Brownrigg and others in the British community began to look on him with distrust.

After the war, D'Oyly found himself in an increasingly difficult position to rule the Kandyan Kingdom. He was disillusioned by Imperial practices to control and exploit the people after the termination of the Kandyan war. He had seen Kandyan Chiefs with whom he had worked closely and whom he personally trusted executed or exiled for life. Keppetipola Dissave and Ehelapola Adigar were beheaded after the Kandyan war.

When the King of Kandy Sri Wickrama Rajasingha was captured, the King's royal regalia was handed over by D'Oyly to the British Government. D'Oyly requested that those items to be protected as sacred items and not to be exposed or sold to

common people. But those concerns were completely disregarded and sold by public auction in London.

All these concerns have impacted heavily on his mind at this low point in D'Oyly's career. We do not really know how he really felt as he did not leave any letters, diary entries or any other evidence of his personal feelings. Prof. E. F. C. Ludowyke's described him as an "inscrutable Englishman".

His old school friend, Sir James Mackintosh, who visited him, wrote: '*... He is the only Cingalese scholar in the Ceylon Civil Service, and like many Orientalists has almost become a native in his habits of life. He lives on plantain, invites nobody to his house and does not dine abroad, and seems an amiable though uncouth recluse. When I saw him come into dinner at Mr. Woods, I was struck with the change of a Cambridge boy into a Cingalese hermit, looking as old as I do'*

As I mentioned earlier, D'Oyly never returned to England. He died on 25 May 1824, not yet 50 years of age from a fever he contracted while on tour in the Sath Korale (Seven Korale). He was buried in Garrison Cemetery in Kandy.

Sir John D'Oyly had accomplished, in 1815, what had seemed impossible for three centuries—the annexation of the Kandyan Kingdom to the British Crown. It seemed a great loss to the Sinhalese but an enormous gain to the British.

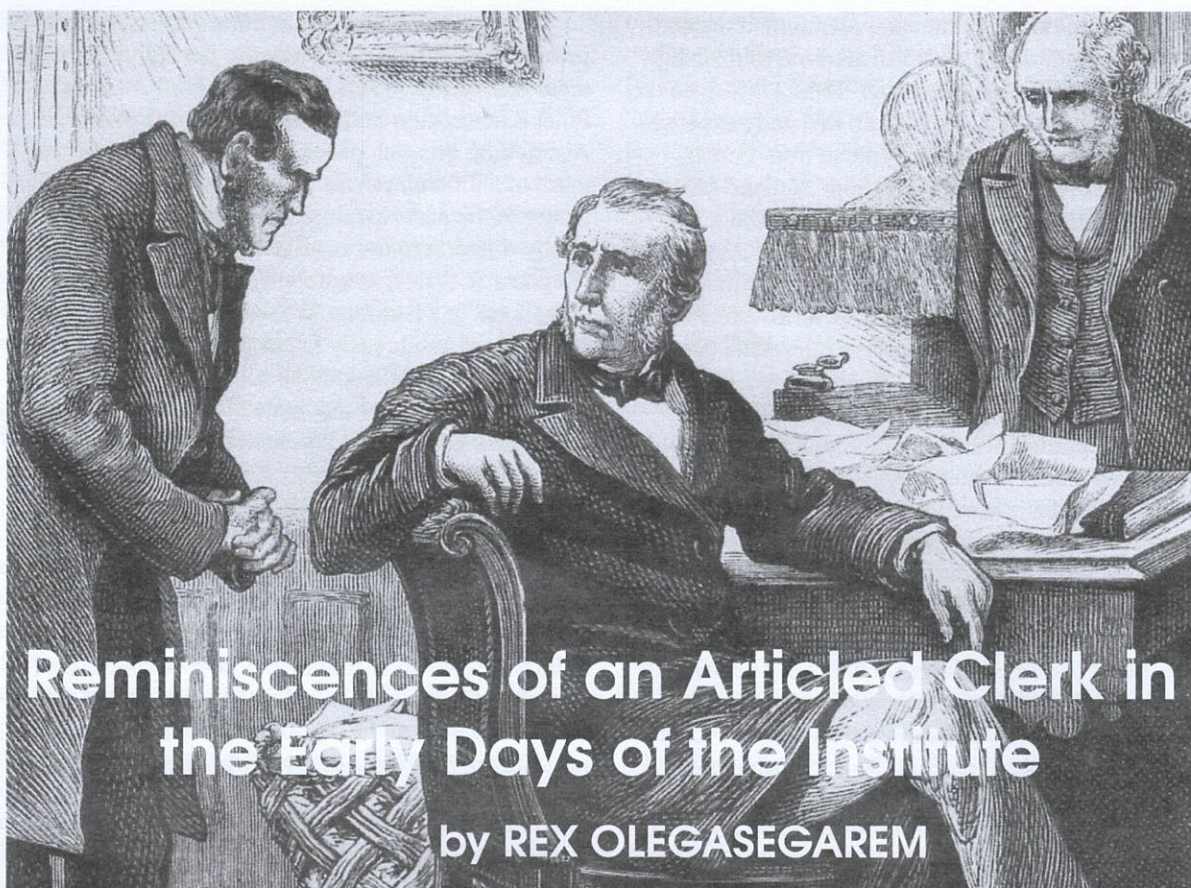
The Kandyan Kingdom fell into British hands without a life being lost, due to D'Oyly's shrewd diplomacy and his spy work. All this, I believe was due to his understanding of the heart of the Ceylonese people. He could peacefully negotiate with Kandyan chieftains, who wanted to overthrow the King.

I believe our history would have otherwise been different. The King Sri Wickrama Rajasingha may have been killed by the Kandyan Chieftains had not D'Oyly interfered and negotiated. This young Englishmen was so fortunate to win the hearts of Sinhalese chieftains.

His failure, his inability to prevent the Kandyan war in 1818 could also be attributed to his closeness to Ceylonese. He was so loved by the Ceylonese chieftains that he could not bear the thought of them being beheaded by the British Government after the Kandyan rebellion in 1818.

These thoughts have led me to consider Sir John D'Oyly as an Englishman with a Ceylonese heart.

Hate empty vessels that make a big noise?
Just fill 'em up!



Reminiscences of an Articled Clerk in the Early Days of the Institute

by REX OLEGASEGAREM

The year was 1959 when the newly formed Institute of Chartered Accountants of Ceylon (ICAC), established by an Act of Parliament (No. 23 of 1959) succeeded the existing Registered Accountancy Board. The qualified Registered Accountants (R.A.) of the Registered Accountancy Board and the members of the Chartered Institutes of England & Wales and of Scotland, resident in Ceylon, were invited to become members of the new ICAC. The first President was the then Auditor-General L.A. Weerasinghe (Member of the Chartered Institute of England & Wales) and the first Secretary was T. Nesaratnam, a public servant. The office of the Institute was located in two rooms in a Government building and was manned by an ebullient, energetic gentleman, A. Fernando. He was the Administration Officer, clerk and messenger all rolled into one. He was really the "face" of the Institute to the few articled clerks there in the early days.

My foray into the Institute was in November 1959, perhaps one from the first batch of the newly recruited graduate articled clerks under the banner of the Institute. There were non-graduate articled clerks as well. I was selected through the Ceylon Government Scholarship Scheme for Graduates to sign Articles with a leading firm of Chartered Accountants, Ford, Rhodes, Thornton & Co. (FRT & Co.); nowadays known as KPMG. The selection process for the scholarship at that time was

in two stages – a panel of University of Ceylon dons interviewed the candidates and submitted a shortlist and this was followed by a panel of representatives (either the chief partner or the staff partner) from the Chartered Accountancy firms interviewing the candidates from the shortlist. Both the representatives of the Accountancy firms and the aspiring candidates were allowed to nominate their preferences and the selection of the successful candidates was determined by matching the preferences. I found the interview with the panel of partners from the respective accountancy firms rather interesting. Mr Turner Green of Turquand Youngs (now Ernst & Young) and B.R. De Silva of B.R. De Silva & Co. were more interested in my sporting achievements in the University, from captaincy of teams, colours awarded to the details of the timings recorded in the athletic events won by me. Mr Turner Green was a sports fanatic and Mr B.R. De Silva was the founder and first president of the Ceylon Track and Field Club (CT & FC). This showed that the top people in the accountancy fraternity at the time were not stereotyped mundane accountants; they had diverse interests on the contrary.

In 1959 and for some years thereafter, the normal articled clerks had to pay a premium (ranging from Rs. 2000 to Rs. 5000, a large amount at that time) to the accountancy firms concerned and did not receive any form of compensation for their services, except a return of the premium in monthly instalments

of Rs. 40 or a refund of the total premium at the end of the articleship. As an articled clerk on scholarship, Ford, Rhodes, Thornton & Co. (FRT&CO) waived the premium requirement and paid all my study expenses including the correspondence course from Foulks, Lynch & Co. (a popular course from England followed by nearly all articled clerks at that time). The firm also paid me a salary - a "princely" sum of Rs.40 per month and increased it to Rs. 75 on completion of the Intermediate Examination. I believe all scholarship candidates from other firms enjoyed the same benefits in terms of the scholarship.

The period of mandatory apprenticeship with an accredited firm of Chartered Accountants for articled clerks in those days was three years in respect of graduates and five years for non-graduates. This period was certainly a very busy one, having to work hard maintaining strict time schedules on all the accountancy/audit/tax assignments and also lead the audit teams to the clients' offices in the latter part of the articled period, interspersed with very demanding examinations. The two examinations - Intermediate and Finals - had two parts each, with a choice to sit for either one or both parts of the same examination at the one sitting. The examinations were difficult and to some extent competitive as the pass or success rates at that time were very low. The low pass rate had more to do with the Accountancy Board and the Institute setting high hurdle rates rather than the performance of the candidates. In the context of only a few venturing into this field, the number of successful candidates passing both the Intermediate and Final examinations could be counted on your fingertips. Although providing very little comfort to the examinees confronting the examinations, this approach benefited the few successful candidates in their ability to command a significantly higher remuneration compared with their compatriots in other professions due to the supply-demand situation.

The incidence of candidates passing both parts of the Final Examination at the one sitting was very rare that, in December 1961, when Norshi Lakdawela of Ford, Rhodes, Thornton & Co. accomplished this feat in his first attempt, A. Fernando of the Institute came to the Company premises to deliver the good news to Norshi personally. Since I happened to be at the office, he informed me also (to my great delight) that I had passed both parts of the Intermediate Examination for which I sat at the same time. Norshi Lakdawela was a model articled clerk, achieving the same result earlier at the Intermediate Examination and leading the audit teams to some of the bigger clients (Walker Sons, Brown & Co. etc.). In earlier years, Norshi was also the All-Ceylon Table Tennis Champion while a student at St Thomas College, Mount Lavinia. This was another example of the extra-curricular achievements of the Chartered Accountants in those days.

In relation to the enormous difficulty in passing the Institute examinations, the story gets even more interesting. When I fronted up for Part I of the Final Examination in December 1962, the Financial Accounting question paper unleashed on us was more of a difficult puzzle and completely different to any of the past examination papers. It was also totally different to the examination papers of the ICA (England & Wales) as embodied in the "Chartered Telephone" publications. We worked on these publications assiduously in our preparation as our Institute was modelled on the ICA (England & Wales) and our answers were moderated by their examiners. On a quick glance of the questions I realised the first (carrying 40 marks) was very long, intricate and some sections unfathomable that it might take me the entire three hours allocated for the whole paper to unravel this one question and yet not assured of getting the full marks for it. Although shorter, the second question was completely mind-boggling. The third appeared to be workable up to a point and then became equally a maze similar to the second. By this time I had started sweating and a certain failure was staring at me with only the last question left - the shortest and worth only 15 marks (out of a total of 100). The last question on "containers" appeared to be workable, hence I launched on to it hoping to collect 15 marks in even time. However, it absorbed nearly one hour (33 per cent of the total time) since it had its own 'twists and turns' as I worked through. I realised that I had absolutely no chance of working out the more difficult problems in the other questions within the balance two hours. It was now a question of collecting as many marks as possible within that time. Alas, this task proved to be extremely difficult as I found to my horror that the other problems were more difficult than anticipated at first glance. By this time I was in a bath of sweat. With tension rising to an unprecedented level, I lost at least ten more valuable minutes having to head for the toilet, followed by an invigilator although there was no possibility whatsoever of my gaining any unscrupulous advantage except to recover some sanity. At this stage I was very tempted to give up as I felt my working through the other problems did not appear to be heading in the correct direction. In sheer frustration I crushed some of my worksheets and put them down on the floor. In the meantime, the closing bell was fast approaching and my tension was increasing further. Then, the dreaded announcement of "five minutes more, please tie up your answer sheets" came on. Fortunately, despite the horrible situation, I had the presence of mind to pick up the crumpled sheets, straighten them and add them on to the answer package in the correct sequence hoping that some marks could be picked up in those workings. However, I was certain that my performance will not secure a pass grade in that subject and this meant I would have to repeat the whole of the Part I examination as there

was no referral in one subject. As I walked out of the examination hall with the horrible prospect of certain failure before me, I noticed the look of bewilderment on the faces of my colleagues. Spotting Vijayan Vijayasekeran (later a partner of Turquand, Young & Co. and now residing in Perth, Australia) who was one of the brighter students in our batch, I asked what he thought of the paper and his immediate response was: "I have no chance at all of passing this paper." It dawned on all that no one will pass Part I of the Final examination on this occasion.

The untenable situation at this examination produced a swell of agitation among the examinees. We had a protest meeting at the Institute and a small committee was appointed headed by that "maestro" John Dianas of Macan Markar. The committee was empowered to dissect the questions for any anomalies, evaluate them in relation to the purpose and fairness of the examination and also liaise with the local examiners, external moderators from the U.K. and the Institute. The external moderators had commented that the questions were more of a difficult quiz or puzzle rather than an assessment of the candidates' knowledge in financial accounting. There were a number of anomalies as well in the questions which made it difficult for the candidates to work through. The examination committee of the Institute considered the representations carefully and lowered the hurdle rate or the total marks required to pass the paper in Financial Accounting. Consequently, six candidates (including Vijayan Vijayasekeran and myself) passed Part I of the Final examination. Perhaps attaching my crumpled worksheets helped me get over the line.

In view of the number of articled clerks being limited, we had the benefit of knowing well each member of the fraternity in our batch from all accountancy firms. I recall there were only 25 signatories to the attendance sheet for the intermediate lectures from all firms in 1960-1961. We had five articled clerks in my batch in Ford, Rhodes, Thornton & Co. (FRT&CO.) with one ending up as my bestman later on. However, there were a few more senior articled clerks either preparing for the final examinations or repeating the intermediate examinations. FRT&CO. had very strict codes regarding dress and general presentation. We had to be clean-shaven at all times and wear well-laundered white shirt, white trouser and tie. The tie can be somewhat irksome walking or travelling by bus to the client office in the sweltering humid heat of Colombo and it was difficult for the young articled clerks to be spotlessly clean-shaven at all times. Consequently, some of us got pulled up for letting down the tie knot or not using the best blades for the shave. "We don't like uncouth Frenchmen," thundered the Anglo-Saxon senior partner. Despite our busy working schedule and demanding examinations, the articled clerks at FRT&CO. had an enjoyable social life. Every Friday

morning, when we all came to the office (then located on the fifth floor of the Times building in the Fort) for our weekly reporting session, we would adjourn to the Colombo YMCA cafeteria for a quick cup of tea before dispersing to the client offices. Our group also met for drinks and dinner almost monthly, and these events sometimes ended up with singing popular songs and bailas rather raucously, fuelled by "high spirits". We also ventured out on a very enjoyable trip to Kandy, Okanda and Yala in a minibus. Apart from the thrill of watching the birdlife in Okanda and the animal life in Yala, we also enjoyed excessively the fresh curd and treacle, with some having to pay for this excessive indulgence by frequent bowel evacuations in the most natural of environments. It was not always easy to make it to the next town in time.

A very memorable experience as an articled clerk came to an end in June 1963 when I completed the Final examination – six months after the minimum period as I spread out Parts I and II over two separate sittings. Two remarkable gentlemen during this period had a significant impact on my career. N.G.P. Panditharatne, then a senior partner of FRT & Co. was my Principal and mentor. He was well respected in the professional business and political circles, yet down-to-earth, capable and very helpful at all times ensuring that his articled clerks wishing to move into the commercial arena after completion were set up in good positions. The other gentleman was S.Thillairajah, then Chief Accountant of Whittall Boustead & Co. and our lecturer/tutor in Financial Accounting. When I commenced my course I was not very sure whether accounting should be my career although I graduated in economics with accountancy as my special subject. While at University, accountancy did not really grab me. However, S. Thillairajah, brilliant in his field brought home the basics of accounting including "Debits and Credits" so much alive and meaningful that I began to enjoy my course. When the examinations were around the corner, S.Thillairajah would give very useful hints on how to approach them, including saving time on long problems and earning as many marks as possible from difficult questions although unable to arrive at the ultimate correct solutions. All these helped me in the dreaded examination of December 1962.

The other huge factor helping me to enjoy the course was the breadth and intensity of practical experience gained at FRT & Co. The large clientele of this Firm was spread out into all sectors of the economy. The popular "Lander" system of management information reporting for the Plantation sector was developed by Mr Lander, a former chief partner of FRT & Co. This was an excellent management reporting package which could hold its own to this day and helped to underpin the efficient tea industry in Sri Lanka. The Lander prize for

Accounting in the Intermediate examination for an outstanding performance was named after this gentleman.

Subsequently, I did have the pleasure of serving on a few committees of the Institute in the 1970s, including the one responsible for the award for the best Annual Corporate Report. Hayleys Ltd. was the winner then and I note that it had continued to win this award on many occasions thereafter – a

remarkable performance. I also had the pleasure of conducting a few lectures and tutorials in Management Accounting for the students in the early 1970s at the request of the very respected and capable Director of Studies, A.T. Benedict.

The Institute has come a long way since then. To this day, I enjoy reading the journals of the Institute and it is heartening to note that the Institution has grown in size and diversity.



NOTE ON THE COLOMBO CHAPTER

from Tissa Devendra, President, CSA CC

The list of lectures below shows that over the last several months, our members have had the pleasure of listening to a variety of exceptionally gifted and well informed speakers on a fascinating variety of topics ranging over diplomacy, wild life, art, dance, primitive man and many others equally interesting.

Our members have always provided an appreciative audience while certain speakers and subjects attracted more visitors. We also had the pleasure of interacting with The Ceylankan Editor Doug Jones and his wife when they visited the 'old country' some months ago.

- 3 June 2016 – Lecture on 'The evolution of Sri Lankan dance costumes and Somabandu Vidyapathy' by Ravibandu Vidyapathy a well known Choreographer and accomplished artist.
- 4 March 2016 – Lecture on "Nittaewo - the Hobbits of Sri Lanka" by Pradeep Jayatunga, Attorney-at-Law.
- 11 December 2015 – Lecture on "Are we a Maritime Nation"? by Commodore Y.N. Jayarathna, Sri Lanka Navy.

• 11 September 2015 – Lecture on "Pre-Vijayan people of Sri Lanka – Rakshasa, Yakka, Naga by writer Asiff Hussein.

• 19 June 2015 – Lecture on "The Vedi Perahera of the Aadi vaasin of Mahiyangana" by Basnayake Nilame of the Kadadora Pattini Devale, Ruwanwella Srilal Perera.

• 13 March 2015 – Lecture on "Slaves and slavery in Dutch Ceylon 1640 – 1796" by Professor K.D. Paranawithana.

• 12 December 2014 – Lecture on "Royal Rituals in Thailand and Sri Lanka" by Professor J.B. Disanayaka.

• 26 September 2014 – Lecture on "Vestiges of Greek influences in Sri Lanka" by Frederick Medis.

• 4 July 2014 – Lecture on "Some important early firearms of native manufacture in Sri Lanka and foreign museum collections" by Anandalal Nanayakkara, Attorney-at-law.

• 7 March 2014 – Lecture on "Places once denied and Serendipitous travel" by wildlife and nature photographer Stefan de Silva.

Subscriptions – staying up-to-date

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

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

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

Oh the Irish!

Reilly went to trial for armed robbery. The jury foreman came out and announced, "Not guilty."

"That's grand!" shouted Reilly. "Does that mean I can keep the money?"

• Irish lass customer: "Could I be trying on that dress in the window?"

Shopkeeper: "I'd prefer that you use the dressing room."

Remembering two special Christian leaders from Sri Lanka's Ecumenical world: Rev. Dr D.T. Niles and Rev. Sevak S.S.Selvaratnam

OUTSTANDING CHRISTIAN LEADERS FROM SRI LANKA

by Samuel Thevabalan Arnold

"ECUMENISM is any effort aimed at the unity of Christians through the world. Most often it specifically means the visible unity of Christian churches in some form". (Wikipedia)

In the 20th century, famous Christian leaders from a small country like Sri Lanka have made a mark in the Ecumenical movement in global Christianity.

During the last 200 years, Protestant Christianity spread throughout Sri Lanka due to the arrival of missionaries, Baptist Missionary Society (BMS) from Britain in 1812, Wesleyan Methodist Society (Methodist) from Britain in 1814, American Ceylon Mission (ACM) from USA in 1816 and Church Missionary Society (CMS – Anglican) from Britain in 1818. Churches, schools and hospitals were established and many converted to Christianity. Reputed schools imparted English education. Special mention must be made of the ACM in the north. The BATTICOTTA SEMINARY was founded in 1823 by Rev Dr Daniel Poor which was the first university of Western learning. The Uduvil Girls School was the first boarding school in Asia started in 1824. THE CREAM OF ECUMENICAL LEADERS in Sri Lanka in the 20th century included Rt Rev Dr Lakdasa de Mel, Rt Rev Harold de Soysa, Rt Rev Lakshman Wickremasinghe, Rt Rev Dr Sabapathy Kulandran, Rev Willie Wickremasinghe, Rev Dr S K Bunker, Rev Dr D T Niles, Rev Celestine Fernando and Rev (Sevak) S S Selvaratnam.

Rev. Dr Daniel Thambyrajah Niles (DT)

Family Background – The patriarch of the Niles clan was Velauther Kathiresar who hailed from Tellippalai. He was one of the first converts of the ACM on 22 April 1821. On conversion to Christianity he took up the name Nathaniel Niles. He graduated from the Batticotta Seminary in 1828, being one of the first 16 graduates. He married Fanny, a convert. Nathaniel Niles was a renowned Evangelist, Educationist, powerful Orator, Preacher and Head Master of Uduvil Girls School. He had three sons namely Rev John (Anglican), Rev Samuel (Malaya) and Rev Daniel (Methodist).

DT's paternal grandfather was Rev Daniel Poor Niles who was named after Rev. Dr Daniel Poor

the founder of Batticotta Seminary. Rev D.P. Niles was the Superintendent Minister of the Methodist church in Jaffna, Head Master Jaffna Central College, preacher and orator. He was invited to join the faculty of Oriental Languages in the University of Madras, South India. Rev Dr John Kilner persuaded him to join the Wesleyan Mission in Ceylon. He was ordained as Minister in 1875 and married Mary Joshua.

DT was born on 4 May 1908 in Tellippalai, Jaffna. His father was Wesley Duraiyappah Niles, lawyer and later

District Judge. He was an active lay leader in the Methodist Church, a circuit steward and local preacher. DT's mother died when he was a year old and was brought up by his paternal grandfather Rev. D P Niles and grandmother (Mary Joshua). Rev D P passed away when DT was 8 years old and Mary had a big part to

play in his life until he was old enough to join school. DT in his sermons often referred to God as "God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob; and the God of Nathaniel, Daniel and Wesley Niles."

DT's school education was at Jaffna Central College (Methodist) where he excelled in studies under Principal Rev P T Cash. Young Selvaratnam (later Rev Sevak Selvaratnam) and DT worked together in their Christian work and Church. From the age of five, DT wanted to be an ordained Minister like his grandfather Rev. D P Niles.

DT completed the Intermediate in Science at the Colombo University and needed to decide about his profession. His father married twice, persuaded him to take up Law studies and as a lawyer he could support the nine children (he was the eldest). With much reluctance, he decided to follow his father's advice to join Law School.

Professor C. Suntharalingam (later MP and Cabinet Minister in the Government of Ceylon) was



• Rev. Dr D.T.Niles

DT's Professor of Mathematics and Warden of the residential hostel. On the day of new registration, DT went to Law School to register. The Professor who had heard about DT waited until he returned and took him to his room. DT told him that his father had decided about his law studies. "Now listen" said Prof Suntharalingam, "you must become a Minister of the Church". The Professor was a Hindu and DT had never told him about his becoming an ordained Minister. DT told him what his own wish had been and the reason why his father wished otherwise. "Go and tell your father that I told you that God will look after the family". Later the Professor himself went and met DT's father. Eventually he joined the Theological School.

Decades later, when DT was elected as President of World Council of Churches (WCC), the Colombo Municipal Council under a Muslim Mayor held a public reception. At this reception Prof. Suntharalingam was present. DT in his speech remarked "Closest in affection next to one's father is one's teacher; I am happy that my teacher Prof. Suntharalingam is here".

United Theological College (UTC), Bangalore, South India

After a year of teaching Mathematics at Jaffna Central College, DT joined UTC for his theological education (1929-1933). He studied and trained in a multi-denominational setting by professors drawn from many parts of the world. He became involved in the Ecumenical movement with personages John R Mott and Visser't Hooft. He graduated in 1933 (BD – Bachelor of Divinity) with First Class Honours; his score for the degree has never been bettered to this day.

After graduation he taught at Jaffna Central College, where he studied Philosophy under Principal Rev P T Cash. He obtained a BA (Honours) degree as an external student. While a teacher at Jaffna Central, he served as the Ceylon Secretary of the Student Christian Movement (SCM) of India, Burma and Ceylon.

Early years of Ministry

DT joined the Methodist Church and was ordained as Minister in 1936. He married Dulcie Arularatnam on 27 December 1939 and had a strong life partnership. They had two sons Dr Preman and late Rev Dayalan Niles, both in the service of the church. DT served in different parishes in Point Pedro, Maradana and Jaffna. He was Principal, Jaffna Central College from 1953 to 1961 and Minister of St Peter's, Jaffna from 1953 to 1959. During the period 1968 to 1970, he served as Chairman of the East Asia Christian Conference (EACC), President of the World Council of Churches (WCC) and President of the Methodist Church in Sri Lanka. When Bishop Rt Rev Harold de Soysa congratulated DT on his election as President WCC, he responded that he regarded it as a "sign of God's

Mercy and that He had forgiven my sins". He was diagnosed with cancer of the Sinus in 1970 and died on 17 July 1970 in the Christian Medical College Hospital, Vellore, South India.

The Preacher

DT had many gifts, but the greatest gift was preaching. Whether it was a Sunday congregation or an assembly of the WCC with several thousand people, he had the gift to hold his listeners spell bound. The WCC was formed in 1948 which brought together 147 churches representing major Protestant denominations and several Orthodox churches. At the founding assembly in Amsterdam in August 1948, DT was invited to preach at the crucial opening service. He chose the text "Whom am I that I should go to Pharaoh?" On 4 July 1968, he preached again at the opening service. Dr Martin Luther King (Jr) was invited to speak at this service, but sadly was assassinated on 4 April 1968. DT of Ceylon took the place of Dr King and spoke on "Behold! I make all things new". His sermons were very Biblical, enriched with parables and simple for lay understanding.

Inter Church and Inter-Religious Dialogue

He built strong bonds with the Roman Catholic Church and opened dialogue with other religious groups. DT helped his friend Rev Sevak Selvaratnam to establish the Christa Seva Ashram in Chunnakam (Jaffna) in 1939. The Ashram with its convenient humble facilities attracted people from different parts of Ceylon to attend seminars, workshops, camps, conferences and crusades. DT had good relationship with Dr Ananda Guruge, devout Buddhist and Permanent Secretary to the Ministry of Education and Kalaipulavar K Navaratnam, upright and devout Hindu who often spoke in conferences on Hindu faith.

DT was an effective leader in the Jaffna Christian Union (JCU), National Christian Council (NCC), Student Christian Movement (SCM), Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA), Young Women's Christian Association (YWCA) and Christian Workers Fellowship (CWF). He conducted "Uduvil Conferences" named after Uduvil where they were held. Many ecumenical leaders from the world addressed the assembly.

DT was the main architect who worked hard to inaugurate the "Church of Lanka", union of the Church of Ceylon (Anglican), Methodist, Presbyterian and Church of South India (CSI). The proposal came to near formation and later failed due to legal issues.

DT was the author of 20 books, 15 short booklets and many articles on Theology. It is said, that in the midst of his busy schedule, he would be up at 3 am and work on his writings. Such was this great son of Sri Lanka who contributed to Ecumenism. I was blessed to know him and listen to his speeches in different conferences and especially the Uduvil conference of 1961.

Rev. Sevak S.S.Selvaratnam (PA)

Birth and early education

PA (Peri Annan - Selvaratnam) was born on 19 November 1906, only son of George Stephen Subramaniam and Anna Muthammah. He had three sisters. Mr Subramaniam was from a staunch Hindu family from

Karainagar, who became a Christian.

He was a teacher in the Methodist Mission School and later Catechist in the Anglican Mission (CMS).

PA had his initial education at Vembadi Girls School (Methodist) up to year two. He later joined Jaffna Central



Rev. Sevak S.S. Selvaratnam

College (Methodist) where he had the entire Primary and High School education. While at Central, two important things happened. He met D T Niles, and their friendship lasted throughout their lives. He attended the SCM (Student Christian movement) Triennial Conference in Tambaram, Madras in December 1924. He met Sevak Dr S Jesudasan of the Tirupattur Ashram, the founder of the Christian Ashram Movement in India. He passed the Matriculation examination in 1925 and joined Jaffna College in the London Intermediate in Arts course.

Serampore University

"Serampore" is the short form of "Sri Ramapura", a small city 13 miles from Calcutta. The Serampore University was founded here in 1818 by Rev Dr William Carey, the pioneer British Baptist Missionary to India. The motto of the University was "Expect great things from God; attempt great things for God". Young Selvaratnam (PA) had his theological education in Serampore in 1927 to 1931. His favourite subject of study was Greek. While in the university, he visited Tirupattur Ashram in South India a few times and kept close to Sevak Jesudasan and the ministry there. He graduated in 1931 with the Bachelor of Divinity (BD) degree.

CHURCH MINISTRY AND ASHRAM MOVEMENT

After graduation, PA joined the church ministry in the South India United Church (SIUC) later Church of

South India (CSI). He served as an effective Pastor in Vaddukoddai, Araly, Navaly and Earlalai churches. He was a jovial priest, caring and special outreach among the young whom he guided in life journey. His focus continually was to start an ASHRAM in Jaffna in line with the Ashram in Tirupattur, South India.

"ASHRAM" is derived from the Sanskrit word "Shrama" which means Care – Extreme Care or Effort. In India, in the 1920s there was an awakening in the Christian communities the need to provide "oases" where they find the refreshment of being Christians together. In India, Christians realised that they were regarded as foreigners in their own country; need for indigenisation of worship and life. The awakening led people to attempt the indigenisation of theology, forms and customs spontaneously to the genesis of the Christian Ashram.

FOUNDERS – In 1921, Dr Savarirayan Jesudasan (FRCS) from South India who served as a surgeon in Colombo for 10 years and Dr Earnest Forrester Paton (MD) a Scottish missionary to India started the Christa Kula Ashram, Tirupattur, South India. They built a 40 bed hospital and catered to the Spirit, Mind and Body of the people. They took up the vows of Poverty, Discipline and Chastity and were called SEVAKAS (those who serve). Dr J was called PERIANNAN (older brother) and Dr P as SINANNAN (younger brother). They wore saffron coloured robes, lived a humble life and practiced celibacy. The food served in the Ashram was vegetarian.

SEVAK SELVARATNAM (PA) – Ashram Ministry in Jaffna

True to his divine calling, he left the parish ministry in 1937 to establish the Jaffna Ashram. He followed the footsteps of Dr Jesudason the founder in India. He was supported by his classmate and friend DT Niles. In a four acre plot of land in Maruthanamadam, the Ashram was opened on 21 August 1939. PA and a few others moved into a small shed in surroundings of thorns and stones, infested with poisonous snakes. Some of the early pioneers who supported this project included WD Niles, Canon Somasundaram, Rev RCP Welch, Archdeacon JAR Navaratnam, Rev S Kulandran (later Bishop).

The Ashram campus developed with buildings which included a chapel, library, living quarters and other amenities all designed in traditional style by PA. It was a place of solace and attracted Christians from different denominations and people of other faiths. Sevak Selvaratnam was joined by two other Sevakas, Rev I T Yesusahayam (Sinna Annan) and Rev Sam Alfred (Sam Annan). A second Ashram was started in Kiran in Batticaloa which was a sacred place in that district. PA served for thirty two and half years and touched the hearts of many. The Ashram became a refuge and sanctuary for the young and old. The Sevakas were counsellors and supporters to those who entered the campus.

The University of Ceylon and Lion House

by TISSA DEVENDRA

A magical year for us was 1948. On 4 February, Ceylon gained political Independence and most significantly, on 1 June the “brightest and the best”, as our cohort/ batch – with youthful arrogance – imagined themselves to be, entered the portals of our one and only University on Thurstan Road. Ever since our success at the University Entrance Examination, we dreamt longingly of our entree into this fabled garden of earthly delights – lovely girls, witty companions, legendary professors and other unimaginable pleasures.

And the great day dawned. We clustered round the administration hub of College House, establishing our credentials, getting to know the ‘geography’ from KG (King Georges) Hall to the Baroque splendour of the Library at Villa Venezia and shyly eyeing the young ‘misses’ with whom we were

to spend the next few years. It did not take long for the mundane reality of lectures, library and tuck-shop to govern our lives. But camaraderie and romance were yet around - and so was Lion House.

This June marked the 67th Anniversary of the commencement of our University life. This is a brief preamble to a piece I wrote, some years ago, as a tribute to an institution that had nothing to do with academia, but nevertheless, played an unforgettable role in our undergraduate life. I dedicate it to those veterans around who may glimpse in these words a distant mirror of our long lost youth.

Christian leaders ... (Continued from page 21)

ECUMENICAL LINKS – PA became involved in the World Council of Churches (WCC) and forged close links with Dr John R Mott, Dr Visser’t Hooft, Dr D T Niles and others. Many Sri Lankans and foreigners attended conferences, camps, seminars, conventions and crusades conducted by eminent theologians and social workers in the Ashram. A Centre for the study of Religion and Society was started for Inter Religious-dialogue. PA was invited overseas as Chaplain and Resource person in Conferences. He visited Europe, America and Asia where he was welcome. In April 1966, the Mahanayake Thero of the Malwatte Chapter visited the Ashram and a public reception was held.

LEGACY – PA “Taught that religion can be pleasant; that you can laugh, tell stories, crack jokes and sing funny songs and still pray and hold communion with God.” He would relate anecdotes during his talks and keep the audience in fits of laughter.

His boyhood friend DT passed away on 17 July 1970 in Vellore Hospital. This had a heavy impact on him and he was present at the funeral. PA entered Glory on 29 March 1972 in the Manipay Hospital. The Ashram continues to be a shining light house, a memorial to the life and mission of PA. In the words of Bishop Rt Rev Dr S Kulandran, “The Ashram remains a home for the homeless, a place where those who have lost hope may strive to find it, a place from which those who cannot find a welcome anywhere else will not be turned away. Those who feel themselves spiritually run down and dry will find refreshment and be able to regain a hold on the ideals they have lost.”

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF BOOKS – *Grateful thanks to the following authors for their valued publications:*

- Ampalavanar, Rev D R., *Rev Sevak S S Selvaratnam (in Tamil)*, Jaffna, Sri Lanka, 1990
- Ariarajah, Rev Dr Wesley S., *We live by His gifts – D. T. Niles Preacher, Teacher and Ecumenist*, Colombo, Sri Lanka 2009.
- Kulandran, Sabapathy, Rt Rev Dr., *A life of the Rev Sevak S S Selvaratnam*, Jaffna, Sri Lanka, 1979.

A Requiem for Lion House (from ‘Horseshoe Street’ 2005)

The death knell rang for Lion House when the University abandoned Colombo for Peradeniya in 1952 depriving this once legendary tea-shop of the undergraduate clientele who gave it light, colour and custom. As those of us who remember it, quietly limp into ‘lean and slippered’ old age, it is amusingly appropriate that a shop selling slippers and shoes now occupies that corner at Bambalapitiya Junction where undergrads once chattered endlessly and aimlessly over cold cups of tea.

When my ‘cohort’ our one and only University in 1948, Lion House was already well rooted in undergrad lore. Oral tradition and “Flybynight” Vittachi’s columns had infused it with an aura we looked forward to basking in. We took a few days to get to know each other, the geography and customs of ‘College’ as our seniors, with inverse snobbery, called the University. We sauntered beneath the green arches of Thurstan Road and the pillared corridors leading to KG Hall. Seated at the cigarette scarred tables of the Tuck Shop, with pretended sophistication, we evaluated the shy little clusters of brightly sareed ‘Misses’ tripping along, past tennis courts, towards the Baroque splendour of the Library at Villa Venezia. Simple ‘coming of age rituals’ of a long lost era.

Entree

At last we felt comfortable enough, as undergrads, to visit the Lion House we had heard so much about. Cycling along Queen’s Road, past the forbidding splendour of a Colonial banker’s residence, we were amused by the remains of a wartime poster yet

embedded in the grooved bricks of the surrounding wall. "Looting will be punishable by DEATH" it warned, in English, under the fond assumption that these law breakers could read their ruler's language!

Parking our bikes in the rickety wooden cycle stand in front, we stepped into Lion House at last. At first glance its ambience seemed hardly different from that of the University's 'tuck'. Senior undergrads sat around linoleum topped tables in a haze of cigarette smoke talking University politics or evaluating lecturers and female talent. A few office workers were around for their tea/'bunnis'. Occasionally, bus travellers came along with their shopping 'mallas' to refresh themselves while waiting for the next bus. Little giggles of women undergrads shyly sidled in, generally accompanied by a male – who had already decided on which one was to be his lady love, but hadn't yet persuaded her to slip away from her protective convoy. But it didn't take too long for these groups to evolve into coy twosomes, murmuring with their heads close together, in a more tolerant atmosphere less likely to attract the envious glances and sly barbs than the 'tuck'.

The food at Lion House had a greater variety than the meagre fare at the University. But it was a far, far cry from the *cordon bleu*. As soon as a table was occupied, the waiter, hopefully plunked down a dish of the stand-by menu – buns, plantains (as bananas were yet called in the 'goday' age) 'muss paans', rolls, patties, sponge cakes and 'kimbulas'. In that era, just emerging from wartime austerity, most of us had very little spending money, most of which was spent on tea and cigarettes. However, we did our best not to disappoint our hosts by munching on a few of the proffered items, duly grateful to the tradition of the house that undergrads were allowed to dawdle indefinitely at their tables talking endlessly of matters great and little.

Peering through the mists of uncertain memory, it is hard to recall what exactly we spoke of. I must confess that very few of our conversations ever dealt with matters of great import. I remember some verbal skirmishing between those of Trotskyite persuasion (generally from Royal) and their Stalinist opponents (from Ananda/Nalanda). We savoured the wise cracks and analysed the films seen at the old Majestic across the road, passing judgement on the vital statistics of long-forgotten stars such as Pier Angeli, Moira Shearer and Anouk, to name but a few. But much of our conversation was 'trivia and trash' – the rehashing of University gossip and trading of friendly insults. In retrospect, I believe that what held us together, other than those who fell willing victims to feminine charms, was our post-adolescent (would have recoiled at the word) need for the rituals of male-bonding, moving around in a like-minded group.

Elections

Apart from the all-embracing and dominant Union

Society, the University suffered from a surfeit of Societies, each representing some Faculty or Department thus giving great scope for 'pot-hunters' keen to pad their CVs for the Ceylon Civil Service (CCS) *viva voce*. What a fruit salad it was. The Mela, Curia Historica, English Literary Circle, the Political, Philosophical and Dramatic Societies and the Nomads – much envied for their wide ranging excursions with ample opportunity for bacchanalian revels – and many more. Garnering of votes came, inevitably, at a price. Thus every election ended up with raucous victory celebrations at Lion House, at the victor's expense, of course. Although Lion House served no liquor, it never banned tipsy undergrads from vociferous celebration of election victories there. These were the only days when cash (the winner's!) flowed more freely and voters were treated to dinner – invariably string hoppers, 'fowl' curry with watalappan for dessert.

Dinner was followed by a stampede to the Majestic, across the road, for the late show. The management quailed before the onslaught of this crowd of revellers while staid filmgoers scuttled out surrendering the hall to this horde of singing, hooting barbarians. Before we entered the hall, while the winning candidates struck a deal with the manager to pay for tickets and recompense damage, the crowd performed a frenzied war dance at whose centre was Deka Bodinagoda, in a travesty of Arab costume, belting out his signature song "Boum! Boum! Boum! Abdul Hamid" with the rest joining in full-throated chorus. The film never mattered to this audience which made rude remarks at the action, traded insults, burst into song or dances in the aisles. A tolerant Police were discreetly out of sight.

Later unrepentant revellers limped back to Lion House to fill themselves with egg hoppers and black coffee before cycling their unsteady way back to the University hostels – Union, Brodie, Catholic, the decaying mansion "Emildalene" and even less reputable boarding houses.

The Passing Scene

Across the road was a large vacant lot (now occupied by a petrol shed) which was a popular location for political meetings generally Leftist. Comrade Colvin was a great draw and whenever tea drinkers of Lion House heard him roar, we crossed the road to swell the smallish crowd that gathered there. Those of us in the English Department smirked to ourselves to listen to Comrade Doric fulminating against the UNP government using language very, very different from the unsullied English of Tennyson and Pope on which he lectured to us a few short hours earlier. In retrospect, it is interesting that much of this oratory was in English – and we accepted this as perfectly normal!

Beyond this open lot lay a rather dilapidated building which housed the Twentieth Century

Club, reputed as a chosen venue where the sharpest intellects of the LSSP honed their wits at Bridge. I seem to remember that this building or another quite close by, carried a signboard announcing itself as the "National Institute of Higher Education" or some such high faluting title (a dime a dozen today, but rare then). It was really a cram shop for aspirants to University Education and a University lecturer, who was a shareholder, had inveigled some of his young graduates to teach there. The poor chaps had laboured for months without pay. At last when they confronted their elusive one-time lecturer he soft talked them into accepting share certificates in a maritime salvage company he had floated. It sank not long after!

Lazily watching the passing scene through Lion House's fly-blown windows we vaguely fantasised about what cars we'd own when (there just was no question of 'if') we got our first job. The limited models then available soon made this a pointless exercise and we consoled ourselves with the time-honoured male hobby of bird watching, regretfully aware of the limited talent that thought fit to traipse the pavements of Bambalapitiya yet devoid of classy shops. But whizzing past occasionally was a wonderful apparition daintily balancing herself on Ceylon's first Vespa. This voluptuous near-Gina Lolo brigida was the Italian beauty Lydia Montagna. Here I must confess we never knew her name – till a few years later when I was working in Trincomalee, I met her father, the brilliant engineer of the 'Montana Tunnel' at Kantalai. We also glimpsed a tanned

'suddah' with a Tarzan-like mane of blond hair cycling along with a spear gun slung across his back. This was the German Gerd Von Dinklage, much pursued by gentlemen of a certain inclination.

A shabby old chap called 'Cap(?) Silva' who prowled the pavement was reputed to be a paedophile (then an unknown word – we used something earthier). But I believe he was just a sad and lonely old guy that we in Lion House decided to glamourise with unspeakable vice.

Then there was the Tip Top man, a strange figure in a frosty top hat and tail coat, strangely reminiscent of a well-known statue. He carried a battered suitcase from which he attempted to peddle little jars of Tip Top Tooth Powder. But Lion House's beloved star of the performing arts was 'Kukul Charlie'. As dusk fell he emerged from whatever coop he lived in and went from table to table sounding the most realistic renditions ever of a rooster's cry. He never went unpaid – and he earned most during the victory bashes of University Societies where tipsy undergrads attempted to out-crow him – and inevitably failed.

Finis

To conclude this tribute to a shooting star that briefly sparkled across the firmament of University life may I quote 'Master' Shakespeare:

"Our revels now are ended. These our actors...

Are melted into air, into thin air...

And like this insubstantial pageant faded..."

Send us your literary contributions!

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

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

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

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

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

Noel Crusz: priest, film-maker, teacher, writer, puppeteer

by Alan Gill

Acquaintances are made in a variety of ways, often through simple coincidence. My friendship with Noel Crusz, who died in a Sydney hospital shortly before Christmas on 17 December 2003, offers one such example.

He was at various periods, sometimes concurrently, priest, film maker, schoolteacher, writer and journalist. Add ventriloquist, puppeteer, broadcaster, catechist, and beloved husband of his wife, Tirzah, and you have the measure of the man.

It was a blue air letter which brought us together. The year was 1962 and I was a young journalist on a British hobbies magazine devoted to cinematography. The editor requested a spot of spring cleaning. While thus engaged I found a dusty letter which had fallen, unopened, behind a filing cabinet. The sender identified himself as Noel Crusz, OMI. The contents were, indeed, interesting. They told the story of the formation of a film unit among pupils at a Catholic school in Ceylon (now Sri Lanka) and the use of a 16 mm movie camera to combat minor disciplinary problems and foster what nowadays would be called "personal development".

The editor of "Amateur Cine World" was impressed by the letter and agreed to my suggestion that I contact Noel Crusz and write an article. I did just that, earning a front page story and a by-line. What more could a young reporter want?

Noel Crusz was born in December 1921, into a Burgher (Dutch-Portuguese minority) family in the old Dutch colonial city of Galle. He was the second oldest in a family of six boys and two girls. He was educated at St Peter's College, Colombo, which was run by the Oblates of Mary Immaculate. At 17, he decided that God was calling him to be a priest in that Order. He was ordained in 1948, having completed theological studies, also a BA degree from London University. He returned to his old school, St Peter's, where he taught English, history and religious studies.

A dramatic change occurred in 1952, when Noel was invited to undertake a year-long Diploma of Education course at Fordham University, USA. The emphasis was on communications. Noel was greatly influenced by the New Yorker, Bishop Fulton Sheen, then considered way ahead of his time.

From New York, Noel went to Los Angeles, where he met Bing Crosby (with whom he corresponded for many years), Tyrone Power and Loretta Young.

In London, he was coached by Father Agnellus Andrew OFM, Head of Catholic religious

broadcasting, and was the first Asian to be interviewed on the BBC's "In Town Tonight".

In Italy he met Sophia Loren, read the news on Vatican Radio and in an encounter he particularly valued, met and interviewed Allesandro Serenelli, the contrite murderer of St Maria Goretti. He also met the saint's mother, and was touched when she kissed his crucifix.

He later produced a documentary film based on these meetings.

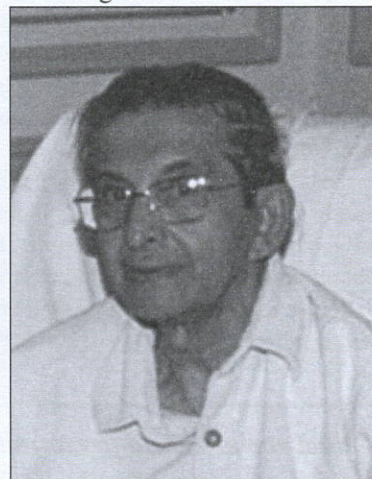
Back in Ceylon, Noel produced a weekly Catholic Hour for the Government's radio network and also wrote scripts for a cinema newsreel. In 1955 he was sent as a teacher to St Joseph's College, Colombo, where he began more direct involvement behind a camera.

It was to be his success and according to another point of view his undoing. There had been minor pilfering at the school, which Noel tackled by making a film with a moral: a remake of Vittorio De Sica's "Bicycle Thieves". Children and teenagers clamoured for roles in the film, also assisting with production, sound recording and editing. The film achieved fame throughout the island.

The Prime Minister, Solomon Bandaranaike, his wife and future PM, Sirimavo Bandaranaike, and their children including the present President of Sri Lanka, Chandrika Bandaranaike, attended the opening gala performance.

With his precious Bolex 16mm camera as the instrument, Noel made numerous other films, and was invited to film surgical operations. He claimed blood didn't worry him, but the sound of the "sawing of bones" did.

His growing fame displeased his superiors, who considered his activities unpriestly. As "punishment" he was sent to remote or unattractive parishes, including a centre for young offenders, some of whom had committed murder. Instead of being angry, Noel enjoyed the challenges, gaining fresh support.



• Noel Crusz
(Photo courtesy Fremantle Press)

The Archbishop of Colombo, Cardinal Cooray, found his patience sorely tested. He carpeted Noel, suggesting that he leave the Oblates (of which Cooray was himself a member) and seek laicisation which was then becoming available from Pope Paul VI.

Noel resisted the request, and for a while things continued as before. He was by this time receiving fan mail, from young admirers. A newspaper with a taste for sensation claimed to be in possession of a letter, couched in affectionate terms, from a beauty queen. The writer said it was merely a "thank you" letter for a pastoral visit.

The Archbishop, to his credit, ignored the incident. But on due reflection Noel decided that the advice he had received was right. He quit the Order, obtaining employment with the parent company of the newspaper which had so distressed him a short while earlier.

"Noel scripted and personally broadcast several programs for Radio National. Topics included the Cocos mutiny, the Titanic sinking (he was a true "Titanic buff") and the true story of the Bridge on the River Kwai. Almost any topic interested him from great men and women of history to recycling and the problem of plastic bags."

Noel then began a second career as a journalist, becoming lobby correspondent and later deputy editor of two newspapers. In May 1967 having awaited lawful laicisation Noel married a distant relative, Tirzah Crusz. A highly placed cleric prophesied, on their wedding day, that the marriage would not last a year. In fact, the union lasted 36 years.

In 1973, having fallen foul of the Government in some way, the newspapers on which he worked were closed down by Government decree, and the building surrounded by troops. Noel and Tirzah Crusz applied successfully to emigrate to Australia. They arrived in Sydney in July 1974. I was their sponsor.

After a brief spell as a journalist, including holiday relief on the "Sydney Morning Herald", Noel reverted to his first love of teaching, obtaining a post, similar to his duties in Colombo, at the Patrician Brothers College, Blacktown. He was to stay there 17 years, his unique approach to teaching, which included drama and puppetry, gaining great popularity. He also became active in the affairs of St. Mary's parish, Concord, a Sydney suburb. In 1976 he ran a puppet show next door to the church, to help raise money for new buildings for the primary school.

Noel continued with these and other interests in a very active retirement. He taught religious education in state schools. In the early days of video cameras he was much in demand filming weddings. He became Australian correspondent for various Sri Lankan newspapers, some of whose editors had been trained by Noel himself. A gifted historian, he spent much of the last decade writing a well-received book "The Cocos Islands Mutiny" (Fremantle Arts Centre Press, 2001), which told the story of the only executions for treason involving British Commonwealth troops in World War II.

A few years ago, when the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith (formerly the Holy Office) laid charges against an elderly Sri Lankan priest, Tissa Balasuriya, Noel was active in the campaign which resulted in Father Tissa's excommunication being lifted.

Noel scripted and personally broadcast several programs for Radio National. Topics included the Cocos Mutiny, the Titanic sinking (he was a true "Titanic buff") and the true story of the Bridge on the River Kwai. Almost any topic interested him, from great men and women of history, to recycling and the problem of plastic bags. A tendency to gabble when aroused by a favoured topic of conversation was miraculously muted whenever a microphone was placed in front of him.

On a lighter note, stories abound of his delighting, and sometimes upsetting, people at street markets when, using his powers as a ventriloquist, teddy bears and other animals started talking. In the past five or six years of his life Noel faced acute stress and discomfort when an allergy to the dye injected into his body during an angiogram affected his kidneys, forcing him to spend long hours in a hospital dialysis machine every week.

He undertook the treatment without complaining, writing letters to his friends (using the hand that was not wired up), inspiring other patients and taking part in "Escape Line" holidays, in one of which dialysis machines were placed on a cruise liner. Though no longer in the active priesthood, his personal faith remained strong. He rose at an unearthly hour, and said his Breviary daily.

Though we had corresponded for nearly 10 years, I met Noel Crusz for the first time on 13 February 1971, a date engraved in my mind for ever. It was the day I emigrated from England to Australia; also the day the British Government adopted decimal currency. I pride myself on having left the country without using any of the new "funny money". In those days one could break a journey without incurring extra cost. I decided to stop over for a week in Ceylon, in order to meet my friend. There was a postal strike in Britain at the time, and I had no means of knowing if my various messages to him had arrived. On arrival at Colombo I was much relieved

when a charmingly accented female voice asked: "Will Mr Alan Gill please go to the information desk?"

My aircraft had been delayed several hours. I discovered that a dinner party had been arranged for me at the house of a senior Air Force officer. It was held, as planned, even though it was now around midnight. On our way to the house we passed what appeared to be an exorcism ceremony. There was chanting in the street and a group of men appeared to be in a trance. Noel told me how lucky I was to see it. It was a hot, steamy night. I was in the back of a small car, still wearing my English winter clothes. I pinched myself to check that it was real.

With the party in full swing, I struggled to stay awake. When it was over we returned to Noel's home in Mt Lavinia. I collapsed on the bed to be faced with an unfamiliar object a mosquito net. In films they were shown spread out across all four corners of the bed. This one resembled a coil. I untwisted it but it still hung down in distorted fashion. Perhaps, I thought to myself, you put your face in it, so that your head is protected, but not your body. I tried that, but it was like drinking through a straw. Every time I breathed in I also sucked in part of the mesh.

I had decided to give up in disgust when I walked Tirzah, having knocked politely at the door. She saw my fate, burst out laughing and explained how to position the net properly. I lay down and within seconds was out like a light. Next thing I remember was a hand shaking my shoulder. "Wake up, wake up." It was seven o'clock, barely five hours later. Noel had arranged an excursion I think to Kandy. And Noel being Noel, precision timing was necessary.

It was the start of an exciting week. When the time was up I reluctantly boarded a jet for the second leg of my journey this time from Colombo to Sydney. I was delighted to find several passengers on the plane who volunteered the information that they were friends of Noel Crusz. Two had starred in "Little Bike Lost".

I befriended a young man of about 21 in the seat beside me. He told me he was recently married and was about to undertake a university course, I think in Sydney, Wollongong or Newcastle. When dinner was served he asked for Asian food. I told him, in rather poor taste, that for the next two years he would be eating fish and chips. I'm not sure if he realised I was joking. He looked at me sadly and said: "Life is not a bed of roses".

We exchanged names and contact addresses, but I lost the slip of paper. I have often wondered what became of that fellow. Perhaps he is now a leading citizen of Sri Lanka. Maybe he will read this.

Note: Alan Gill retired recently after nearly 30 years as a reporter, feature writer and religious affairs editor of the Sydney Morning Herald.)

(First published in the Sunday Observer, 4 January 2004)



Meals
Ammi
Made

Devilled Bean Curd

by Chandra de Silva (Dehiwela, Sri Lanka)

Ingredients:

500 g. slabs of Bean Curd
100 g. Onion
100 g. Tomatoes
100 g. Capsicum / Peppers
2 tsps. Red chilli pieces
4 tbsps. Tomato sauce
Salt and Pepper
Ginger and garlic paste
Oil for deep frying.

Method

- 1) Cut bean curd into thin slices or cubes
- 2) Mix with salt & saffron & deep fry
- 3) Dice onion, tomato, capsicum
- 4) Heat fat and temper curry leaves, ginger paste, garlic paste and onion.
- 5) Add capsicum, chilli pieces, tomato and sauce
- 6) Add salt, pepper and fried bean curd and stir fry for a few minutes.

Send us your recipes

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

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



Congratulations & a Warm Welcome to our New Members

SUJAN DIAS, Colombo, Sri Lanka; CAMPION & RANEE FERNANDO, Castle Hill NSW 2154; SATYAMURTHY & SHANTHINI THETCHNAMURTHY, Wellawatte, Colombo, Sri Lanka; TERRY & GILLIAN JENSEN, Glen Waverley, VIC 3150



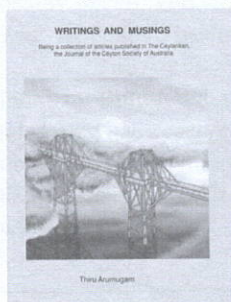


Writings and Musings
by Thiru Arumugam *
Publisher: Ohm Books UK.

Reviewed by
Siva Sivapragasam

A collection of articles published in The Ceylankan, the Journal of the Ceylon Society of Australia.

"Writings and Musings" authored by Thiru Arumugam of Sydney Australia is a collection of articles based on the cultural heritage of Sri Lanka covering a string of subjects from religion to customs in Sri Lanka.



These articles appeared in The Ceylankan, the quarterly journal of the Ceylon Society of Australia. The society was founded in 1997 and its main objectives were to study, foster

and promote interest in the cultural heritage of Sri Lanka, especially in the post-medieval period when the country was exposed to globalisation.

The first article about Medieval Hindu Temples and Bronze Sculptures of Polonnaruwa was published during the Editorship of Sumane Iyer and the subsequent articles published under the continuing editorship of Doug Jones.

Among the articles in the book are The American Ceylon Mission, Midwifery and childbirth customs in Jaffna 150 years ago, American medical missionaries in Jaffna, A River for Jaffna, Life and work of Ananda Coomaraswamy, the first Ceylonese family in Australia-revisited and the story of the two bridges (one of these bridges is the famous Bridge on the River Kwai later filmed by Steven Spielberg).

The author of the book Thiru Arumugam is a chartered engineer in Sydney who spends time researching and writing articles of interest on subjects he finds interesting.

The book offers some interesting episodes intertwined with anecdotes relating to the subjects in the articles. It is certainly a good read for all those who wish to get an inside view into some old stories relating to the cultural heritage of Sri Lanka, (*From the "Monsoon Journal", Toronto, Canada, Vol. 11, Issue 1, June 2016, p. 27*).

* Recipient of Amazon Books Five Star Rating.

OUR LIBRARY

NEW ADDITION:

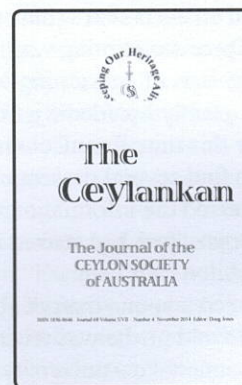
Writings and Musings by Thiru Arumugam
Publisher: Ohm Books UK.

BOOKS & OTHER PUBLICATIONS FOR SALE

This is a regular column for the benefit of members (and others interested) 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.

"Writings and Musings: Being a collection of articles published in The Ceylankan, the Journal of the Ceylon Society of Australia" – **by Thiru Arumugam**. This 156 page paperback is a collection of 22 articles by the author written for The Ceylankan. The book is published by Ohm Books, UK and is in a clear, easy to read font. It is profusely illustrated. It is available through Amazon.com and Amazon.co.uk and also from the author 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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SYNOPSIS OF MEETING

Melbourne Chapter 3 April 2016

At the meeting Rex Ian De Silva presented a talk on “**Introduction to Sharks of Sri Lanka**”. Rex is a Sri Lankan scientist active in Biological Field Research and Observational Astronomy. He is a pioneer Sri Lankan diver, underwater and Astro Photographer, Martial Arts Sensei and writer. Rex has researched considerably and is a recognised authority on sharks, marine life and seabirds. De Silva is the author of *The Sharks of Sri Lanka* and is currently writing *An Illustrated History of Diving in Sri Lanka*.

In 2013 Rex was declared an “International Legend of Diving” the first and only individual from the Indian Ocean region to be so honoured. The speaker thanked his mentors Langston Pereira, Rodney Jonklaas and Vicky Athukorala as great pioneers of Sri Lankan diving and marine science. Rex also acknowledged the various persons who supplied images for the presentation.

Up to 60 different shark species have been identified in the waters around Sri Lanka and most sharks are crepuscular and nocturnal. At the commencement of the talk slides on anatomy of a shark and criteria to consider when identifying sharks were displayed. Pictures of shark snouts and teeth, egg cases as well as a photograph of a set of reconstructed megalodon jaws were displayed.

Sharks keep growing throughout their lives but the growth rate declines after maturity. Respiration is identified as *Ram Ventilation and Buccal Pumping*. Smell, taste, sight, hearing, lateral line system and electro receptor systems are considered as shark senses. A slide illustrated the number of shark species recognised in the country. Recently documented species include the Prickly Shark, Mega Mouth, and Bull Shark. A Provisional Checklist of Sri Lankan Sharks of May 2015; Parts 1, 2 and 3 were explained to the audience. Silly sharks, Oceanic Whitetip, Hammerhead, Blue shark, Shortfin Mako were among the most commonly caught shark species. Shark mating habits including oviparity, viviparity, placental viviparity, uterine cannibalism were described in introducing shark reproduction. A large number of slides on Order, Family and Species of sharks were also shown. Two species in the *Hexanchiformes Order* and *Hexanchidae Family* and six species belonging to four Families in the *Orectolobiformes Order* are found in Sri Lanka. Twenty-five species of sharks belonging to the *Carcharhinidae* family are also common to Sri Lanka.

Presenting a large number of photographs and other pictures, the Blacktail Reef, Gulper, the Pondicherry shark at Menik Ganga, Grey Bamboo shark, Zebra, Tawny Nurse, Pigeye, Tiger, Graceful shark, Sickletfin lemon shark and others were presented. The pioneer shark photographer Mr. Mike Wilson's photos of 1950's were also shown.

Rex also mentioned that the three most dangerous sharks are the Great White shark, Tiger shark and Bull shark. Shark attacks are a subject of great fascination to lay persons but it is less significant to shark biologists. For reasons unknown, few shark attacks on humans occur in Sri Lanka and fatalities are naturally rare.

Rex offered special thanks to Prof. Sarath Kotagama, Dr. Leonard J.V. Compagno, David Ebert, Jayantha Jinasena, Marie Levine, The Field Ornithology Group of Sri Lanka, The Department Of Zoology, University of Colombo and the audience for their presence.

More information on sharks can be found in Rex's book *The Sharks of Sri Lanka* and on www.rexdesilva.org

– Dilhani Kumbukage

How to become a Member of the CSA...

Who can become a member of the CSA? Any person with a common interest relating to the historical heritage of Ceylon/Sri Lanka and wishes to share that interest with like-minded people worldwide is welcome to seek membership. Younger members of the community are specially welcome. **Annual subscription is A\$30 (Pensioners & Students in Australia A\$20).**

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**: Account Name: Ceylon Society of Australia, Account Number: 043010149792 Hatton National Bank, Kirulapone Branch, 22 Edmonton Road, New Baseline Road, Colombo 06. Annual subs: LKR3000.00 Contact: Treasurer M.Asoka T.de Silva Phone 2822933 (Mob.) 775097517 Email: matdes@sltnet.lk

Worth a quote?

I don't feel old. I don't feel anything until noon. Then it's time for my nap.

- Bob Hope



Don't worry about avoiding temptation. As you grow older, it will avoid you.

- Winston Churchill



Maybe it's true that life begins at fifty. But everything else starts to wear out, fall out, or spread out.

- Phyllis Diller

Now history ain't BORING!

There is an old Hotel/Pub in Marble Arch, London, which used to have a gallows adjacent to it. Prisoners were taken to the gallows (after a fair trial, of course) to be hanged. The horse-drawn dray, carting the prisoner, was accompanied by an armed guard, who would stop the dray outside the pub and ask the prisoner if he would like "ONE LAST DRINK".

If he said YES, it was referred to as ONE FOR THE ROAD. If he declined, that prisoner was ON THE WAGON.

Going low

They used to use urine to tan animal skins, so families used to all pass urine in a pot and then once a day, it was taken and sold to the tannery. If you had to do this to survive you were "piss poor", but worse than that were the really poor folk, who couldn't even afford to buy a pot. They "Didn't have a pot to piss in" and were the lowest of the low.

Throwing the Baby

The next time you are washing your hands and complain because the water temperature isn't just how you like it, think about how things used to be.

Here are some facts about the 1500s. Most people got married in June, because they took their yearly bath in May and they still smelt pretty good by June.

However, since they were starting to smell, brides carried a bouquet of flowers to hide the body odour. Hence the custom today of carrying a bouquet when getting married.

Baths consisted of a big tub filled with hot water. The man of the house had the privilege of the nice clean water, then all the other sons and men, then the women and finally the children. Last of all the babies. By then the water was so dirty you could actually lose someone in it.

Hence the saying, "Don't throw the baby out with the bath water!"

Cats and dogs

Houses had thatched roofs, thick straw piled high, with no wood underneath. It was the only place for animals to get warm, so all the cats and other small animals (mice, bugs) lived in the roof. When it rained it became slippery and sometimes the animals would slip and fall off the roof. Hence the saying "It's raining cats and dogs."

Canopy bed

There was nothing to stop things from falling into the house. This posed a real problem in the

bedroom, where bugs and other droppings could mess up your nice clean bed. Hence, a bed with big posts and a sheet hung over the top afforded some protection.

That's how canopy beds came into existence.

Dirt poor

The floor was dirt. Only the wealthy had something other than dirt. Hence the saying, "dirt poor."

Thresh hold

The wealthy had slate floors that would get slippery in the winter when wet, so they spread thresh (straw) on the floor to help keep their footing. As the winter wore on they added more thresh until, when you opened the door, it would all start slipping outside. A piece of wood was placed in the entrance. Hence: a thresh hold.

Peas and porridge

In those old days, they cooked in the kitchen with a big kettle that always hung over the fire. Every day they lit the fire and added things to the pot. They ate mostly vegetables and did not get much meat. They would eat the stew for dinner, leaving leftovers in the pot to get cold overnight, then start over the next day. Sometimes stew had food in it that had been there for quite a while. Hence the rhyme: 'Peas porridge hot, peas porridge cold, peas porridge in the pot, nine days old'.

Chewing the fat

Sometimes they could obtain pork, which made them feel quite special. When visitors came over they would hang up their bacon, to show off. It was a sign of wealth that a man could, "Bring home the bacon." They would cut off a little to share with guests and would all sit around talking and "chew the fat".

Poison tomatoes

Those with money had plates made of pewter. Food with high acid content caused some of the lead to leach onto the food, causing lead poisoning and death. This happened most often with tomatoes, so for the next 400 years or so, tomatoes were considered poisonous.

Upper crust

Bread was divided according to status. Workers got the burnt bottom of the loaf, the family got the middle, and guests got the top, or "The Upper Crust".

(Continued on page 31).

Interest earned to be awarded annually for the best research paper on Diabetes by a
Generous donation to the Ceylon College of Physicians from
Founder Member Dr. P. R. Wickramanayake

Sometime last year CSA member Dr P.R. Wickramanayake, better known as “Ranji Wickramanayake”, a Founder member of the Ceylon College of Physicians, now resident in Australia, informed the College of his decision to make a donation of Rupees Five Million to the College, the interest from which was to be awarded, annually, for the best research paper on Diabetes.

The ceremonial presentation of the donation to the Ceylon College of Physicians was to take place in January this year and Dr Wickramanayake and his wife Amara were on their way to Colombo by air when, during a brief stop-over in Singapore, Amara was taken ill, necessitating their return to Australia; hence Dr Ranji’s Power-of-Attorney in Sri Lanka, his close friend Mr Tilak De Zoysa, deputised for him at the ceremony which was held as scheduled in Colombo on 19 January 2016.

The President, the Council and all members of the College of Physicians collectively expressed their deep gratitude to Ranji for his exceptional generosity. This gift will remain a permanent reminder that, although physically resident in Australia, both Ranji and his wife, are always here with us ‘in spirit.’

Mr Tilak De Zoysa, on behalf of Dr Ranji, formally handed over the donation to Dr Lalith Wijeratne, the immediate past-President of the Ceylon College of Physicians.

Dr Ranji Wickramanayake is the son of the late Mr E.G. Wickramanayake QC and Girlie Wickramanayake. His wife Amara, a B.Sc. (Chemistry Honours) of the Science Faculty, Colombo, is the daughter of the late Dr S.E. Weerasuriya and Mrs Weerasuriya. She was Head Girl of Visaka Vidyalaya, captained the netball team at the Colombo University and also won colours in Tennis and Netball.

Opposites attract, as the saying goes, and it was no different in the case of Ranji and Amara. Ranji was quiet by nature, something that couldn’t be said of Amara (with a straight face, that is!)

If memory serves [me right] our rowdy crowd of medical students were fond of calling Ranji ‘Arrow Mahathya’ for his fondness for that particular brand of imported shirts. Doubtless expensive at the time, but its price then is also a measure of the unimaginable inflation since: it cost only Rs.12.00 way back in the 1950s!

On his return from UK with the MRCP (London), Ranji was posted as Consultant Physician, O.P.D., which involved overlooking the diabetic clinic as well. He soon got himself into researching Diabetes with foreign participation and

has been involved in the subject ever since. He read a paper in the Plenary Scientific Sessions of the Ceylon College of Physicians way back in 1994 on “Diabetic dyslipidaemia and its management”.

He went on a Nuffield Fellowship to UK and moved to Australia where he was appointed Diabetologist at Prince Edward Hospital for two years. He was then appointed as General Physician with his own junior staff over the next 10 years.

Dr Ranji Wickramanayake then shifted to Concord Hospital as Diabetologist and was appointed Consultant Physician for the next seven years and remained at the Diabetic Clinic. Today it is a well established Endocrine Unit.

His last appointment was at the Canterbury District General Hospital where he was Chairman of the Medical Board for several years.

The President and the Council of the College of Physicians wish Dr Wickramanayake and his wife Amara every blessing in the future.

Dr Selvie Perera, Past President (1994) Ceylon College of Physicians

History boring... from page 30

The wake

Lead cups were used to drink ale or whisky. The combination would sometimes knock the imbibers out for a couple of days. Someone walking along the road would take them for dead and prepare them for burial. They were laid out on the kitchen table for a couple of days and the family would gather around and eat and drink and wait and see if they would wake up. Hence the custom of “Holding a Wake”.

Saved by the bell

England is old and small and the local folks started running out of places to bury people, so they would dig up coffins and would take the bones to a bone-house and reuse the grave. When reopening these coffins, 1 out of 25 coffins were found to have scratch marks on the inside and they realised they had been burying people alive. So they would tie a string on the wrist of the corpse, thread it through the coffin and up through the ground and tie it to a bell. Someone would have to sit out in the graveyard all night (the graveyard shift) to listen for the bell; thus someone could be, “Saved by the Bell” or was considered a “Dead Ringer”

And that’s the truth. Now, whoever said history was boring!

(Contributed by Rex Olegesearam)



SYDNEY 28 August 2016

The Third General Meeting of the Ceylon Society of Australia for 2016 will take place on Sunday, 28th August commencing at 6.30 pm at the Pennant Hills Community Centre, Ramsay Road, Pennant Hills, NSW 2120. Ramsay Road is off Yarrara Road and the Community Centre is opposite the Pennant Hills Railway Station. The entrance to the building is from the car park at the back of the building.

Guest speaker is His Excellency Mr Somasundaram Skandakumar, High Commissioner for Sri Lanka in Australia and his talk will be on "Growing up in Ceylon".

Mr Skandakumar was educated at Royal College, Colombo and entered the University of Ceylon, Colombo in 1967 where he studied for a Science Degree and graduated in 1970. He played cricket for the University and in 1969-1970, the University Cricket Team for which he played was the league champions in the P Saravanamuttu Trophy Tournament.



After graduating he joined the old established Agency firm of George Steuarts in Colombo where he worked for the next 34 years ending up as Managing Director and Group Chairman for eight years. He retired in 2008 and then did voluntary work for Registered Charities.

He was Secretary of the Sri Lanka Board of Control for Cricket for two spells. He also captained the Tamil Union cricket team.

He has been the High Commissioner for Sri Lanka in Australia since August 2015.

Social: After a brief discussion period, the usual Social will be the next item on the Agenda. Those who are able to, please bring a plate of finger food. Kindly avoid cakes with icing as the general preferences are for plain cakes, sandwiches and savoury pastries. Those unable to bring a plate are requested to make a donation to the CSA to help defray meeting costs.

Farewell to Hugh and Tulsi Karunanayake

As noted elsewhere, the Karunanayakes are leaving Sydney shortly to live permanently with family in Melbourne. The much-endearred couple will be farewelled by the CSA during the monthly meeting announced above. All members are urged to be present for this important occasion.

COLOMBO CHAPTER
19 August 2016

Stefan D'Silva will speak on

"The Kurullangala Rock Paintings and other rarely seen Cave Paintings in Sri Lanka"

Starting at 5.30 PM

***QUESTIONS AND DISCUSSION
WILL FOLLOW***

***Venue: National Library & Documentation Services
Board Auditorium
14 Independence Avenue (next to Dept of National
Archives and opposite 80 Club)***

CONTACT: Tissa Devendra, (President)

e-mail: tisdev@sltnet.lk 011 250 1489

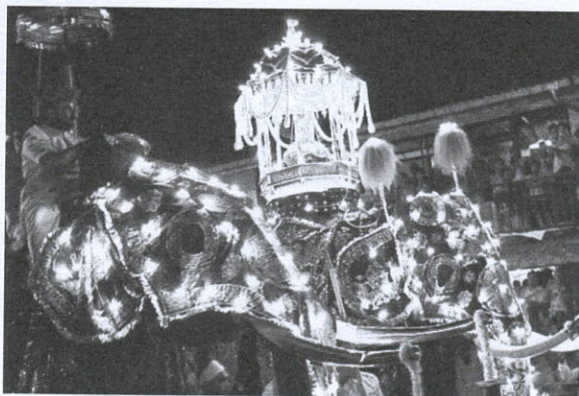
M.D. (Tony) Saldin (Hony. Secretary) e-mail: saldinlan@sltnet.lk +94 777 363366/2931315 (res) 2936402 (O); Asoka de Silva (Hony Treasurer) email: matdes@sltnet.lk 0011 2822933 / +94 775 097517.

Ceylon Society AGM & Annual Dinner, Sydney

Our Annual General Meeting and Dinner with the customary Sing-along will take place on Saturday, 26 November 2016. All details will be published in the November 2016 issue (J76) of the Journal. Please keep this date free.

More of the Irish!

- Mrs. Feeney shouted from the kitchen, "Is that you I hear spittin' in the vase on the mantle piece?"
"No," said Mr. Feeney, "but I'm getting closer all the time."
- Slaney phoned the maternity ward at the hospital. "Quick!" he said. "Send an ambulance, my wife is goin' to have a baby!"
"Tell me, is this her first baby?" the intern asked.
"No, this is her husband, Kevin, speakin'."
- "O'Ryan," asked the druggist, "did that mudpack I gave you improve your wife's appearance?"
"It did surely," replied O'Ryan, "but it keeps fallin' off!"



Kandy Perahera

The great festival of the Kandy Perahera is unequalled in Sri Lanka for its pageantry and splendour. The festival takes place annually over nearly two weeks in late July or early August during the lunar month of Easla. Processions of elephants, musicians and dancers from the Temple of the Tooth and four *devales*, houses of the Gods, move through the streets before thousands of joyful spectators. The novelist D.H. Lawrence described his impressions of the festival: "At last the *perahera* procession, flambeaux aloft in the tropic night, of blazing coconut ... And the huge frontal of these great elephants stepping forth to the tom-toms in the torch light, slowly sailing in gorgeous apparel through the flame light".

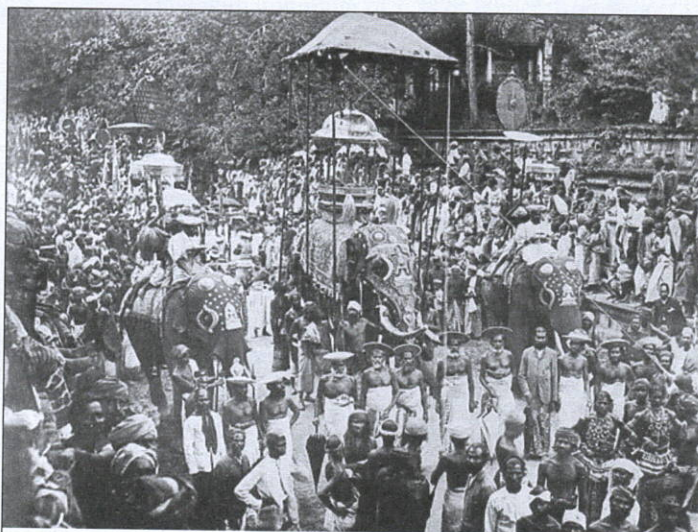
In the days of the Anuradhapura Kingdom, the Tooth Relic was carried in grand procession round the city. Some claim that the practice was started as far back as the second century AD, but by the time of the Kandyan Kingdom the Tooth Relic processions had long ceased to be held.

In Kandy, in the 18th century, the great annual celebrations were held in honour of the Hindu gods of the principal *devales*. The Buddhist institutions in the country at that time were in decline after long periods of instability and war. To restore them King Kirti Siri Rajasinha invited a mission of Thai monks to the island. Amongst other things, they commented that the honour given to Hindu gods of the *devales* was out of place in a Buddhist capital. So the King revived the procession of the Tooth Relic, also the symbol of his sovereignty. The procession from the Temple of the Tooth became the most important, symbolising the ascendancy of Buddhism, and the *devale* processions were part of the general homage to the Buddha.

As the climax of the festival approaches, the processions are longer and more elaborate. They take place at night, but during the day too the town is full of pilgrims and visitors and there is an exciting

holiday atmosphere. Before the *perahera* begins you can watch the elephants being caparisoned with brocade ear covers, body and trunk cloths and shiny pieces of brass. Apart from the fully grown animals there are adolescents and a few more that look no more than babies, draped in colourful materials. Officials of the temples can be seen walking around in their splendid embroidered jackets and tri-cornered hats.

The *perahera* is led by columns from the Natha, Vishnu, Kataragama and Pattini *devales*. Last comes the impressive procession from the Temple of the Tooth. There are drummers in red and white head-dresses beating a furious tattoo. Kandyan dancers with strings of shells over their chests, devil dancers, men cracking whips, flame dancers, attendants bearing smoking incense holders, and the elephants. The greatest of all is the tusker of the Temple of the Tooth, which walks down a white cotton carpet rolled out before it so that the feet are not sullied by contact with the earth. Behind the ears are fixed two yak-tail flywhisks, and on its back it carries the golden Kanaduwa, a replica of the dagoba-shaped casket containing the Tooth Relic. The Kanaduwa is garlanded with small, white flowers in a pavilion-like howdah with golden pillars. The real tooth relic is no



• *Esala Perahera festival in 1885.*

longer carried in the procession for reasons of security. Some believe that it would also be inauspicious. However, spectators still revere the tusker and the casket it bears.

The first six nights of the processions are known as the Kumbal *Perahera* and from the seventh night the Randoli *Perahera* begins. A *randoli* is a palanquin and the golden palanquins of the consorts of the gods join the *Devale* processions at this point of the festival. Each night of the Randoli *perahera* the processions become more splendid until on the

fifth night over a hundred elephants participate. At the end of this procession the Kananduwa [sic] is lowered from the back of the tusker and kept for the night in the Asgiriya Vihare. The custom was begun by King Kirti Sri Rajasingha as a gesture of respect to his mother, who was cremated in the royal cremation grounds there.

Early the next morning a small procession makes its way down to the banks of the river Mahaweli in the suburb of Gatambe carrying the sword of the god Kataragama. In the water cutting ceremony which follows, the sword is swept through the water in a circle and four clay pots are filled with water from within the circle. One pot is taken back to each *devale* and it is considered an ill omen if the water in any one of them dries up before the next year's *perahera*. After this ceremony there is a final

daytime procession which lacks the magic of the previous night.

Once the festival is over, prayers are said in all the *devales* and alms are distributed. At the Maha Vishnu *Devale* a special ritual is performed for seven days to seek divine forgiveness for any lapses in the *perahera*, and to give thanks for its successful conclusion.

• (From *Illustrated Guide to Shri Lanka* by Gillian Wright (1994) pp152-154).

• *Photography Wikipedia*.

• *Perahera Notes 2016: 1st Kumbal Perahera 8 August to 5th Kumbal Perahera on 12 August. 1st Randoli Perahera 13 August to 5th Randoli Perahera on 17 August. Day Perahera ("Diya Kepeema" Water Cutting Ceremony) 18 August.*

What a Good doctor!

Q: Doctor, I've heard that cardiovascular exercise can prolong life. Is this true?

A: Heart only good for so many beats and that's it... Don't waste on exercise. Everything wear out eventually. Speeding up heart not make you live longer; it like saying you extend life of car by driving faster. Want to live longer? Take nap.

Q: Should I reduce my alcohol intake?

A: Oh no. Wine made from fruit. Brandy distilled wine, that mean they take water out of fruity bit so you get even more of goodness that way. Beer also made of grain. Bottom up!

Q: How can I calculate my body fat ratio?

A: Well, if you have body and you have fat, your ratio one to one. If you have two body, your ratio two to one.

Q: What are some of the advantages of participating in a regular exercise program?

A: Can't think of single one, sorry. My philosophy: No pain...good!

Q: Aren't fried foods bad for you?

A: YOU NOT LISTENING! Food fried in vegetable oil. How getting more vegetable be bad?

Q: Will sit-ups help prevent me from getting a little soft around the middle?

A: Oh no! When you exercise muscle, it get bigger. You should only be doing sit-up if you want bigger stomach.

Q: Is chocolate bad for me?

A: You crazy?!? HEL-LO-O!! Cocoa bean! Another vegetable! It best feel-

good food around!

Q: Is swimming good for your figure?

A: If swimming good for figure, explain whale to me.

Q: Is getting in shape important for my lifestyle?

A: Hey! 'Round' is shape!

Well... I hope this has cleared up any misconceptions you may have had about food and diets. And remember: Life should NOT be a journey to the grave with the intention of arriving safely in an attractive and well-preserved body, but rather to skid in sideways - Chardonnay in one hand - chocolate in the other - body thoroughly used up, totally worn out and screaming "WOO-HOO, what a ride!!" AND.....

for those of you who watch what you eat, here's the final word on nutrition and health. It's a relief to know the truth after all those conflicting nutritional studies:

1. The Japanese eat very little fat and suffer fewer heart attacks than Americans.
2. The Mexicans eat a lot of fat and suffer fewer heart attacks than Americans.
3. The Chinese drink very little red wine and suffer fewer heart attacks than Americans.
4. The Italians drink a lot of red wine and suffer fewer heart attacks than Americans...
5. The Germans drink a lot of beer and eat lots of sausages and fats and suffer fewer heart attacks than Americans.

...Conclusion, eat and drink what you like. Speaking English is apparently what kills you.

Story of the National Mutual Building in Colombo Fort

The National Mutual Building (featured on our backcover) standing cheek by jowl with the Clock Tower in Chatham Street is now known as the Central Point Building. This stately building renowned for the quality of its construction with almost the entirety of its interior, including the colonnade in the foyer replete with Corinthian emblature, made of the finest Italian marble is a fine example of Edwardian colonial architecture. The foundation stone for this magnificent building was laid in 1911 and the building completed three years later to become the tallest structure within the Fort at the time.

This building at the corner of Chatham and Queen Streets was the property of the National Mutual Life Association of Australasia Ltd whose Head Office was in Perth. By a strange coincidence (or by design?) the Head Office in Perth as well as its Branch Office in Brisbane were then located in streets called Queen Street!

More than 175 years ago, in 1850, much of Chatham Street in the Fort consisted of attached single storied cottages built by the Dutch during the time of their occupation of the Fort during the previous century. Premises No 12 Queen Street had a Chatham Street frontage as well when it was purchased in 1850 by George Wall and Co. then the dominant coffee merchants of Ceylon for its Head office. Its founder George Wall was a member of the Legislative Council who owned vast acreages of land planted with coffee. Wall purchased the property four years after his arrival in Ceylon in 1846. Leaf disease which decimated coffee plantations in the 1870, saw the virtual bankruptcy of Wall and by the 1880s Bosanquet and Company took over what was left of Wall and Co. including the building at Queen Street. In 1907 Delmege Forsyth and Co. were appointed Agents for The National Mutual Life Assurance Company of Australasia Ltd. The Insurance Co. purchased the building then owned by Bosanquet and Co. and plans were made for the construction of a modern building on the site. When the building was completed in 1914 it was one of the finest buildings in the Fort. Delmege Forsyth had its Head Office on the first floor. The new building was taller than the clock tower and soon acquired a worldwide reputation for its elegant architecture. Easily the most magnificent building on Chatham Street, the National Mutual Building, as it was popularly known, was, in addition to the Head Offices of Delmege Forsyth and National Mutual, also the home of Leechman and Co. and part of its ground floor overlooking Queens Street was for many years the premises of the motor showrooms of Brown & Co.

With the nationalisation of insurance companies in 1972, National Mutual ceased its operations and the ownership of the building changed hands. In January 1996 the terrorist attack on the neighbouring Central Bank building caused structural damage to the building and the future of this historic edifice in the Fort was in limbo. In 2011 the Central Bank of Sri Lanka acquired the building which was in a dilapidated state and embarked on a programme of restoration to house a planned Museum on Sri Lanka's Economic History. It was to be part of a major urban redevelopment programme launched by then Defence Minister Gotabaya Rajapakse. The building has since been renovated and refurbished and is now called the "Central Point Building." the home of Sri Lanka Museum of Economic History.

– **Hugh Karunanayake**

A great deal for members PAST COPIES OF THE JOURNAL

Many of you may need to replenish your collection of THE CEYLAN by getting past numbers to make it up-to-date. Now there is a great opportunity arisen for you to do just that with minimum of fuss or bother. And, more importantly, with little (only postage) or no cost to you.

Hugh Karunanayake has a whole lot of past numbers which he wants to dispose of and would like to hear from any of our members interested in getting any of them. Simply contact Hugh on (02) 9402 6342 or karu @internode.net.au for further details.

Founder members of the CSA

- Dr Christopher Puttock; • Hugh Karunanayake;
- Vama Vamadevan; • David Goodrich (Editor);
- Mike Udabage; • Michael Sourjah;
- Dr M.B.Kappagoda.

(From the first issue of the journal (Volume 1 Number 1, February 1998).

CHANGED YOUR ADDRESS LATELY?

Have you recently changed your contact details – home address, email, telephone number and so on? If so, Treasurer Deepak Pritamdas would like to hear from you so he can update his mailing list and other records. This will help ensure you receive the Journal without interruption.

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

Story of the National Mutual Building in Chatham Street

Photographs by ASOKA DE SILVA



...why that even today, in the midst of many modern sky scrapers and new generation buildings, this building stands as a monument that is the international character of Sri Lanka's economy, from those past eras.

This picturesque building was designed by Walker and Adams, Architects, and construction was done by the Ralph McDonald Company. The foundation for this building was laid in 1911 and after completion, it was opened in 1914, as the branch office of the National Mutual Life Association of Australasia Limited, an Insurance company based in Australia.

The construction was mostly with stone blocks, and carried significant features in artistic as well as architectural view points. It is also worth note that this building was considered the tallest building in Colombo in 1914, and in the decade following. Today, it would undoubtedly be a construction that many historians would find of immense interest and value.

In 1973, the Cooperative Wholesale Establishment of Sri Lanka (CWE) acquired this building from the National Mutual Life Association of Australasia Limited. The interior was very badly damaged as a result of the fire.



- **Top right: Chatham Street National Mutual Insurance Building.**
 - **Top left: The pillars.**
 - **Bottom left: Inscription on slab.**
 - **Bottom right: Inside light fittings.**
- (See page 35 for further details).