



The Ceylankaam

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The Ceylon Society of Australia

PRESIDENT

Thiru Arumugam
Int. + 61 2 8850 4798
thiru.aru@gmail.com

VICE-PRESIDENT

Dr Srilal Fernando

SECRETARY

Leslie Perera
lesanvee@bigpond.com
Int. 61 2 9498 3497 Mob.0418 230 842

TREASURER & PUBLIC OFFICER

Deepak Pritamdas
Mobile 0434 860 188
PO Box 489 Blacktown NSW 2148
deepakpsl@yahoo.com

PUBLIC RELATIONS
Harry de Sayrah OAM, JP
Mobile 0415 402 724
harold.166@hotmail.com

PUBLICATIONS
Sunil de Silva
Int. + 61 2 4340 5940
sunsil@optusnet.com.au

EDITOR/LIBRARIAN

Doug Jones
int. + 61 2 8677 9260
Mobile 0431 616 229
109 Oakhill Drive Castle Hill NSW 2154
dougjay20@gmail.com

SOCIAL CONVENOR

Chandra Senaratne
Int. + 61 2 9872 6826
charboyd@iprimus.com.au

LIFE MEMBER
Hugh Karunanayake
Int. + 61 2 9402 6342
karu@internode.net.au

EX-OFFICIO

Dr Robert Sourjah
Int.+ 61 2 9622 2469
robertsourjah@yahoo.com
Srikantha Nadarajah
Int.+ 61 2 9980 1701
vsnada@bigpond.com.au
Pauline Gunewardene
Mobile 0419 447 665
Int.+61 2 9736 3987
paulineg@ozemail.com.au
Sunimal Fernando
Int. +61 2 9476 6852

MELBOURNE CHAPTER CONVENOR

Hemal Gurusinghe
Mobile 0427 725 740
hemguru@hotmail.com

COLOMBO CHAPTER

Convenor/Local President
Tissa Devendra
+9411 2501489 email: tisqueve@sltnet.lk
Vice-President
Mohan Rajasingham
+9411 258 6350 / 0722 234644
email: mohanandranee@gmail.com
Local Hon. Secretary
M.D. (Tony) Saldin
+94 777 363366 / 2931315 (Res)
2936402 (Off.)
email: saldinclan@sltnet.lk
Local Hon. Treasurer
M. Asoka T. de Silva
011 282 2933 . +94 775 097517
email: matdes@sltnet.lk
Committee Members
Srilal Perera
077 5743785 email: ssrilalp@ymail.com
Daya Wickramatunga
+9411 278 6783 /0773 174164
email: dashanwick@gmail.com

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From the Editor...

How time flies! January 2016 had come and gone before one could say *THE CEYLANKAN*. February is already upon us and in a month's time, Summer would be officially gone too. Seems like it was only yesterday that you had your November '15 journal with those 'can't miss' stories about Hoppers, bone-setters and The Weed; Kalutara's Rubber planters; Tea planters of South Ceylon; a re-visit to the first Ceylonese family in Australia and several others. And suddenly, the time's come for a new set of 'can't put down' stories by our contributors to get to your mailboxes. We think the stories we have here are great but we'll let you be the judges.

Firstly, we have the privilege of looking at the First years of the University of Ceylon as seen through the eyes of an alumni, Ananda E. Goonesinghe who is a youthful nonagenarian. He generates great interest as he recalls the social and educational conditions of the students 66 years ago and points out distinctive differences between students from schools in Colombo, Kandy and Jaffna and those from the provinces. He recalls, with humour, his times at the Union Society and the Historical Society and other social events, including opportunities made available to students to make pocket money during WWII working part time in the war effort. The son of Ceylon's pioneer Labour leader A.E. Goonesinhe, he too indulged in his fair share of Left politics in his time. Good reading!

Next we feature another 93-year old writer - the oldest living past student of Royal College - Ian

D.T.de Mel who records his Reminiscences of student life at Royal College 80 years ago. He enrolled at Royal in 1932, in the days when Ceylon was a British Colony and the school curriculum was geared to suit the British educational system where students had to pass the Senior Cambridge or the London Matriculation examinations to enter University. In this fascinating story, Ian recalls the teachers, both academic and sporting, the students who were his contemporaries and others and claims he still stays in touch with past pupils who are 10 and 20 years his younger.

In Educational advancement in Jaffna - the contribution made by teachers from Kerala and Tamil Nadu in South India, *Samuel Thevabalan Arnold* traces how English education has advanced during the last 200 years and the legacy of education has become an industry of the people of the small Jaffna peninsula.

Victor Melder and railways are synonymous. His father was an engine driver in the days of steam locomotives in Sri Lanka and Victor, naturally, was enamored with the "coal eating, water guzzling" locomotives from childhood. In Growing up in a railway town, Victor narrates how he grew up in Nawalapitiya from where his father Randolph drove locomotives for 40 years and Victor inevitably came have the railway blood course in his veins. Victor's unpublished story makes absorbing reading.

The railways theme continues with *Shirley J.Somanader* looking at how, before the railways came to Batticaloa in 1928, the east coast town had difficulties of travel and delays encountered using land route from Batticaloa via Badulla.

All the usual features are included as well. So let's read on.

About the Ceylon Society of Australia

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

It is non-political and non-partisan and endeavours to steer clear of controversial issues. CSA is a gathering of like-minded people, open to receiving and imparting new ideas, who greatly enjoy a quarterly meeting in reasonably modest and intimate surroundings. While Sydney is home to the parent body and looks after the needs of the society in all of NSW and the ACT, the Melbourne Chapter covers members and others residing in Victoria; the Colombo Chapter caters to CSA members and others in Sri Lanka.

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

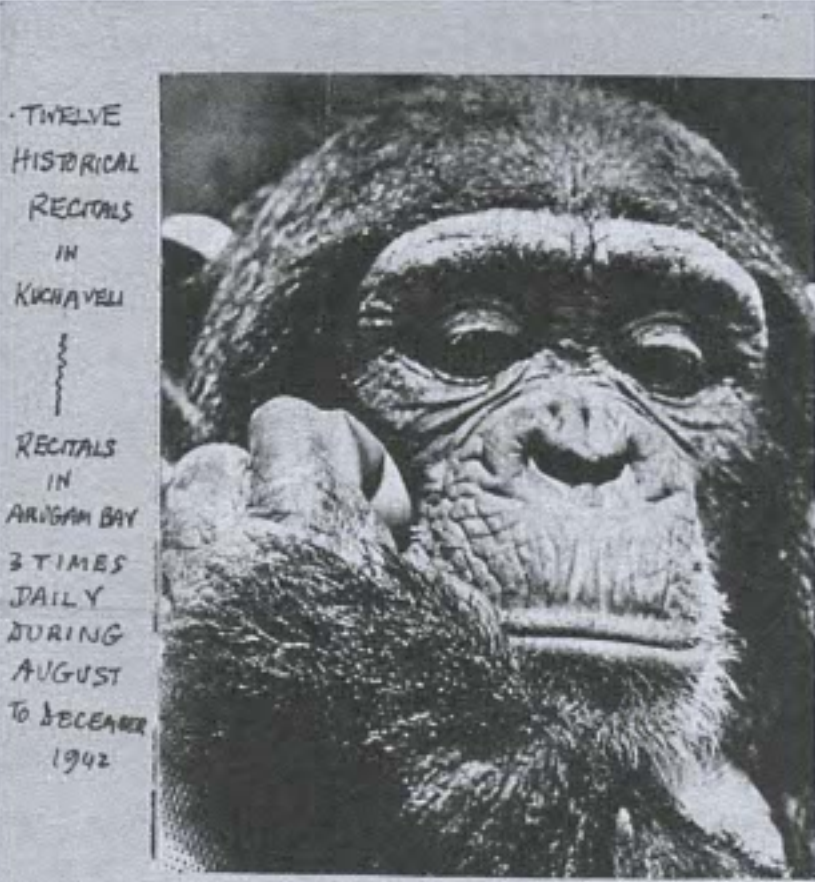
The Ceylankan, a publication much-looked forward to by members and others here and worldwide is the flagship of CSA. Articles published are from members and those solicited from outside sources. All opinions expressed are those of the individual writers and do not necessarily reflect those of the the 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 33).

Our Readers Write

Refreshing memories

I have enjoyed receiving my copy of *The Ceylankan* at each issue. Having been born in Ceylon in 1922 and brought to Victoria for my 6th birthday my contact with Ceylon was brief, but was refreshed by a brief visit in 1982 and through relatives intermittently, so the magazine refreshes my memories of the colonial era and of a beautiful country.

In my contribution to the May 2010 (J50) issue of *The Ceylankan* I touched on Lionel Wendt's whimsical humour and his fondness for sending to my Aunt Gladys Forbes and to other friends, amusing postcards constructed from some of his photos. I still have one original item, which he had made by pasting a press photo on to notepaper and sent to Aunt Gladys, as depicted in the attached photocopy. I have no covering letter or indication of its date, but I guess it was about 1940 – he had performed with Gladys and Brian Easdale in August 1943 (see my articles in J50 and J51 in the 2010 issues). It was rather incompatible with the postcards and other items mentioned in my 2010 articles.



"Yes... I suspect my recitals are rather 'pauvre'... but then... they're also 'pre la guerre'.... (I don't forget the 'pre'... me, in fact, voulez-vous? ... It's difficult to play accurately in les trop"

It is a largish document and may need almost a whole page for its presentation, but only a brief note of explanation with it. My knowledge of French is negligible – you may need a few words of translation

for other Ceylon Society members who may also need explanation.

If this Wendt document is not too off-beat and merits inclusion in your magazine I'd be happy for you to add appropriate text with it, unless you want me to put something together; I won't be upset if you put it in the WPB, but then it might be a Lionel Wendt masterpiece and should be archived somewhere!!
BILL MACKIE Vermont, VIC.

Editor's note: *It would be a travesty of literary justice to relegate the concerns of the letter writer to the desuetude of the WPB and we are indebted to him to ensure the "Lionel Wendt masterpiece" is still archived in a worthwhile place. Our facilities with the French language are hopelessly inadequate to provide a translation of Wendt's notes on the historic postcard to aid our readers. Despite our endeavours, we have not been able to seek help any further in locating the whereabouts of the buried treasure. Maybe one of our intrepid readers can seek better sources to shed light on whether the Wendt passion for saving his dream of aural and visual beauty is still preserved somewhere else for posterity after the demolition of Wendt's home Alborado (perhaps in the Lionel Wendt Memorial Art Centre in Guildford Crescent in Colombo) or has it been stolen and sadly lost for ever? Maybe only time will tell. A doggedly dedicated art lover's enthusiasm will one day focus a bright light on to this mystery.*

Avid and long time reader

I have been an avid and long time reader of *The Ceylankan* which the CSA publishes. I find the articles fascinating and hope to continue my membership. Many thanks for giving up your spare time to this very worthy pursuit of preserving the Sri Lankan history. Your efforts are not matched by anyone else in the world and my praise and immense appreciation.
ASANGA WEERAKOON Austin, Texas, USA.

(Note: Thank you Asanga. Your loyalty is greatly appreciated. The pleasure you derive in reading *The Ceylankan* is shared in our delight in producing it. – Editor).

Your letters

Readers' letters are important to us. Tell us what you think about the journal and its contents. We welcome your thoughts, comments and constructive criticism on the articles that appear on these pages. If through your own research you can shed new light on some subject matter published, please tell us. However, keep letters as brief as possible. The Editor reserves the right to edit your letters for reasons of length, clarity and content. Send your letters to email: dougjay20@gmail.com.

First years of the University of Ceylon

Ananda E. Goonesinghe

The University of Ceylon was established in July 1942. It was a historic event but not entirely unprecedented. Its predecessor was the Ceylon University College (UC), about 20 years extant, affiliated to the University of London. It granted Arts and Science degrees on examinations conducted by the two Departments but the results were jointly assessed by London which confirmed the award of Degrees. The Chancellor of the University of Ceylon (U of C) was *ex-officio* the Governor of Ceylon, and its first Vice-Chancellor was Dr. (later Sir), Ivor Jennings, a fortunate and laudable acquisi-

and Thurstan Road. On the opposite side of Queen's Road which bordered College House was Cruden House, the seat of the newly formed Faculty of Oriental Studies.

On the opposite side of Thurstan Road were sited the Science and Arts Blocks, King George's Hall, the main lecture hall and the cricket grounds. The Medical Faculty was far away in the old Medical College. Away from all these but within easy cycling or even walking distance were the Halls of Residence, Brodie, Ramanathan, Arunachalam, Union and Aquinas, the Roman Catholic hostel, and finally the

piece de resistance the Women's Hostel which was by a strange coincidence in a house in which I had lived as a small boy. Though childhood memories may have made me familiar with its inner layout they were useless as the hostel was ruled by a veritable termagant - the Lady Lecturer in Logic.

It was wartime and the fortunes of the Allies were at a low ebb. It must never be forgotten that the U of C was established and began functioning first, three months after the Japanese air raid on Colombo - an estimable and admirable feat. Colombo could then be compared to Goldsmith's *Deserted Village*. Many houses, large and small were empty, their occupants having evacuated. Those who had nowhere else to go, of course, prided themselves on heeding the British Governor's call to "stay put". There were

hardly any vehicles on the roads other than military transport. Petrol was rationed and desirable food was scarce, though the British N.A.A.F.I. (Navy, Army and Air Force Institutes) were a convenient source of illicit supply of goodies such as Imperial corned beef, liquor and cigarettes.

A lively interest will be generated by recalling the social and educational backgrounds of the student body which flourished 66 years ago. The majority of undergraduates in the U of C had come from schools in Colombo, Kandy and Jaffna. This feature was continued but the UC saw the impressive influx of large numbers of students from provincial schools. These mainly entered the Faculty of Oriental Studies and included a few Buddhist priests. It soon became evident and it was observed in the student cognizance that lines were being drawn. This was unfortunate but painfully natural as there were distinctive differences between sets of students. Royalists, Thomians, Trinicians and students from socially prominent or professional families gravitated toward each other impelled



Back Row - P. Kiribitigala, C. W. Anuraagala, H. A. Pinn, I. D. Smith, S. Raju, A. W. Hettige, W. Fernando.
Second Row - R. S. Rangan, Rev. P. Kingsley, Rev. R. Suddartha, J. C. De, E. F. C. Lakshmi, D. J. T. de Silva, P. C. Sathyanarayana, S. Malaran.
Third Row - P. L. Jayas, K. L. Piyas, J. L. C. Rodrigo, H. B. Das Gupta.
Fourth Row - P. H. V. Gnanabalan, C. P. Mahalingam, K. G. Pill, W. N. Raj, E. Murr, J. A. Dakshin, J. W. Hinton, J. P. C. Chandrasekara, D.K.R. Dutt.

tion indeed. Each faculty had a Dean at the head and professors and lecturers attached to the various departments covering subjects of study. Entrance to the U of C was determined on the results of an examination held by each faculty. I was one of the few hundreds who gained admission in the inaugural year, together with Ronnie de Mel, Nissanka Wijeyeratne, Ranjit de Livera, Dudley Gunasekera and Rajah de Silva among a host of others, affectionately unforgotten.

It is pertinent now to advert to the home of the U of C. There is a strange misconception in the minds of many, even expressed authoritatively by the media, that the U of C was born in Peradeniya. No! No!! Its birth was in the premises of the UC in Colombo. College House on Thurstan Road accommodated the Administration and the Registrar's office. It also housed the Men's and Women's Common Rooms at the back the canteen. In its grounds were two tennis courts between the library and the Union (Students Union) Society hall and the No.1 Tennis Court reserved for seniors between that

by a mysterious magnetism of camaraderie. Almost defensively, provincial students herded exclusively in Cruden Hall. Only the lecture halls and the library permitted a sense of togetherness. We inherited from the UC the Union Society which now became the association of all students of all faculties. There was a president, other office-bearers and a committee of students, but the senior treasurer was a Don (professor) appointed by the Vice-Chancellor who also functioned as a Monitor. There was the Union Society hall used for committee meetings, elections and indoor games. General meetings were held in King George's hall.

There had been a few women students in the U C hailing from better known schools like Ladies, Bishop's, St. Bridget's, Hillwood and Methodist and comprised of Sinhalese, Tamils and Burghers. The U of C welcomed many more, a pleasurable feature being the large number of Tamil girls from schools such as Chundikuli, Vembadi and Uduvil. They were pleasant, refined and polite though reserved. Needless to say men and women had to be very proficient in English as all instruction was imparted in that language. The only exception was the Oriental Studies faculty and this contributed in no small measure to social separation.

Curia Historica

Apart from the Union Society, there was the Historical Society (*Curia Historica*), Economic Society and *mirabile dictu* the Dramatic Society. There were "Socials", get-togethers organised either by a society or a group of enterprising students. These were occasions for fraternisation and small talk but sadly the lines that had been drawn came into evidence. There were also opportunities for amorous dalliance. At one of these an imaginative Fernando organised a "Treasure Hunt." I chose as my partner a girl from Ladies who was also the sister of a fellow prefect at Royal College who had asked me to keep a brotherly eye on her. Unfortunately, a senior, an old Thomian and a noted athlete, though not especially known for his command of English, whose school nickname was Godaya, had fixed his eye on her. Although the game was for a man and woman partnership, he insisted on following us everywhere. Finally losing patience, I told him "apart from the rules, two's company, three's none." He tersely replied "Then you go." Needless to say, I never knew what the treasure was as the girl fled to join her friends.

In this our first year, we were fresh, eager and keen to succeed. I remember being ragged in the company of other freshers by the Union Society President Vicky Thuraisingham and his aides Stanley Senanayake, Buddhi de Zoysa, Andrew Joseph and a few others. The ragging was an order to sing, dance, leap-frog and empty our pockets. Any collection was used for the finale – booze, feed and cinema, though not necessarily in that order.

World War II affected our lives to a great extent but one carried on. To undergraduates the Civil Defence Commissioner offered opportunities of earning handsome pocket money. Some seniors, Sam Wijesinha, C. Mylvaganam among them, became Food Distribution Inspectors and Price Control Inspectors, part-time, of course, cleverly weaving the job requirements into their lecture patterns. In the Varsity itself, the Auxiliary Fire Service (AFS) made its appearance. Many joined and stalked about in their uniforms of white shirt, blue trousers tucked into high boots and blue peaked caps. Among our firefighters were Lesly Jayatilleke, Hanan Ismail and very curiously, M.C.C. Fernando from Cruden. M.C.C. had first appeared in national dress and had earned the sobriquet "Red-dha." When his short roly-poly figure was first seen in AFS uniform it was difficult not to hoot with laughter because the contrast was so comical.

We were all awed by the Dons as the Professors were called, and also the Lecturers. Without exception they all had not only high qualifications but also demeanour, refinement and accessibility. The History Professor Dr. H.C. Ray was an import from Calcutta University and the author of the "Dynastic History of India". Dr. G. C. Mendis, senior History lecturer, author of the "History of Ceylon" was short and soft spoken but also erudite. Dr. E. F. C. Ludowyke, Professor of English, was scholarly and cultured and was also the doyen of the Dramatic Society. He schooled its members, encouraged, trimmed and at times, necessarily tongue-lashed them.

Doric de Souza, lecturer in English, was the well-known Trotskyist and the recognised theoretician of the LSSP. F.R. Jayasuriya, lecturer in Economics, was noted for his 'Sinhala Chauvinism' and A. B. Perera from the London School of Economics was, for a time, lecturer until he became Principal of Ananda College. Dr. G. P. Malalasekera was the Dean of Oriental Studies and Dr. M. D. Ratnasuriya, its professor. Unforgettably, J.L.C. Rodrigo was professor of Classics and benign.

Some of my immediate seniors had been my classmates at Royal College, the reason being that I had not yet reached 17-years of age to sit for the Entrance in 1941, when they entered the U of C. Among them were Walter (now Mendis Special) Mendis and E.C. Gunasekera, later Vice-Principal of Royal. I now made friends with senior Thomians and Trinitians. Among them S. K. Goonewardene, younger brother of Cholomondley, an exhibition winner, Lionel Fernando, the Trinity hockey star and later Principal of his old school and Andrew Joseph whose declared intention was to enter the Civil Service, which he did. Lionel tried hard to get a hockey team together but failed pathetically. There was no sports activity due to lack of sports equipment, although sports were very much to the fore in clubs, even though it was wartime. The presence of British servicemen gave a tremendous

boost to Rugby. We had to be content with table tennis, chess and carrom for the nonce.

On we went to read for our degrees. Ronnie de Mel, Nissanka Wijeyeratne, Adrian Wijemanne (all later C.C.S.) Jabez Manickavasagar (later Bishop) and I (later?) chose History Special. Apart from the professors and lecturers we now had the good fortune to come under the wing of Rev. Lucian Jansz of the Milagiriya Church, who lectured in Dutch (we had a language paper – Dutch or Portuguese) and Father Ignatius Pinto, O.M.I. our lecturer in Political Theory who was also the Rector of Aquinas Hall (more of him anon.) The frenzy of studying for the entrance and the first examination was now dispelled and we had only to attend lectures and take notes. I had time on my hands. I did not smoke and only had an occasional glass of Guinness Stout and Wincarnis wine sneaked from my convalescent mother's cabinet but never spirits. My father being an anti-smoker and teetotaler, this seemed to be in order. But alas, I was inveigled into a trip to an estate bungalow upcountry where I was persuasively introduced to arrack. I took to hard liquor like a duck to water, probably due to the enzymes content in my body inherited from my paternal grandfather who, I heard tell, drank a bottle of Scotch a day. In the Varsity we formed a coterie of drinkers. Money was somehow found. The only pure coconut arrack cost Rs. 6/- a bottle, while whisky, brandy and gin could be had from friends in the NAAFI at services prices which were only three times as much, Beer was scorned as being too weak and needing the imbibing of larger quantities to produce the desired effect.

Youth must prevail, and there was now time for girls. The war had brought about a degree of young female emancipation. Apart from girls working in Air Raid Precautions, as Aides in the Women's Royal Naval Services (called WRENS by the British) and other temporary government departments, sets of three or four girls were habitually seen at matinee shows or cinemas at 3.30 pm when they were entitled to half-rates.

A friend and I decided to patronise one. I was late and the hall was absolutely full except for one seat only which he had kept for me with my ticket at the counter. When I sat down it was next to the love of my life who was flanked by three cousins. I have been and am a voracious and catholic reader but I have yet to see a fictional account of fate determining such a blissfully fortuitous juxtaposition

To the amusement and even derision of my varsity friends, I thought nothing much of cycling eight miles down and eight miles back to and from Mount Lavinia, almost every evening.

The word came along the grapevine to the Ladies and Bishops old girls I knew, having met them at parties or known their brothers at Royal. Their haughty reaction was "why not one of us?" But they later found that the girl had several first cousins who

had been at Ladies and this was sufficient to appease them as all of them knew me.

Homer Vanniasinham graduated from U of C with a second class Honours degree from London. He was habitually seen strolling through the corridors of College House and sitting in the canteen in a pair of shorts. I learned later that the objective of this seemingly aimless exercise was to discover likely recruits for the now proscribed and illegal L.S.S.P. whose leaders were in jail. Homer button-holed me soon after and told me that he had overheard my criticism of Shan and that he was wholly in agreement and said: "There is someone I would like you to meet." We met the following morning in the tea boutique at the corner of Alfred Place and Thurstan Road and there I met Bernard Soysa for the first time. He was soft-spoken but forceful, impressive but not patronising and I listened to him for over an hour. He later introduced me to Engel's "Scientific Socialism", Lenin's "What is to be done" and my greatest find Trotsky's "The Revolution Betrayed". Bernard, thereafter, exerted a powerful influence on me. He and Homer took me to No.9, 33rd Lane off Bagatelle Road which was their illegal and secret headquarters. Its custodian was Henry Peiris (later M.P. for Panadura) who lived there with his family in dire circumstances which he endured stoically.

I became an intellectually convinced Marxist - Leninist-Trotskyist. From being a mere sympathiser, I was now classed as a candidate-member. Bernard and Homer took me to a secret meeting of the LSSP held in Edmund Samarakkody's house in Siripala Road, Mount Lavinia. Despite all the secrecy and covert movement, there were about 200 people present. During the meeting, there was much criticism by workers of illegal activities mainly on the approach that their scope was not being sufficiently expounded. After it was over, Bernard told me that I must now become an activist.

He said that the party was publishing papers in English, Sinhalese and Tamil and I must immediately turn out the English paper - the "Fight". The Sinhalese paper was called "Satana." How this was to be done was made very clear. I had to collect a Gestetner machine from No.9 and set it up in my room at home and I would be provided with the necessary paper, ink and articles for publication. I had a good friend, a co-entrant, Lindon Rajaratnam. He was never called anything else but "Singapore" because he had escaped from that city just before it fell to the Japanese. Just before midnight one day he and I put the Gestetner into a rickshaw and accompanied it on our cycles to my home in Flower Road. Fortunately there was a side path leading to my attached bathroom and thence to my room and we carried it there. Singapore was never political - he only wished to help. I turned out the "Fight" choosing times which were conducive to discretion. Fortunately the noise was slight and the concrete slab separating my room from my father's

room above seemed to deaden it. Homer, now a frequent visitor, Singapore and I wrapped the finished product in brown paper like any other periodical and went along distributing them not to individuals but placing them in the public library, on bank counters, in offices, the university lecture halls and common rooms and other likely places. I also posted them to cell-leaders in the outstations and I remember Battu in Ratnapura and Patchemuttu in an up-country estate. Incidentally, I met Patch at Bernard's 80th birthday felicitation and he patted my arm, smiling broadly. Eventually after about three months the strain of secret printing became too much to bear, and on my appeal to Bernard other arrangements were made. I often wondered and still do, what horror and turmoil would have resulted and what the awful consequences would have been had it been discovered that the LSSP was conducting an anti-British and illegal activity in A.E. Goonesinghe's house and that his son, still a minor, was an active participant. I believe there were other illegal cells in the varsity but they were unaware of each other's membership. My cell comprised Homer, a medical student Dissanayake, the Union society peon Gabriel and myself. We were given classes occasionally in Marxist-Leninism and Trotskyism by Esmond Wickremesinghe. Incidentally, we were all invited to his wedding where I saw the girl who was Esmond's first cousin but I couldn't talk to her. I had always been musical having learnt Udekki Kandyan dancing from Gunaya in my boyhood and played the violin till I was sixteen, but ballroom dancing was really something else. It was then that Andrew Joseph, already an accomplished dancer, told me that I must learn ballroom dancing. He introduced me to a Burgher (naturally) dancing teacher in Bambalapitiya and I became proficient in a couple of months. Andrew and I went to various public dances and to "house" dances in Wellawatte Burgher homes where you had to bring your own liquor and snacks and dodge pillars and furniture while dancing. Of course, I couldn't take my girl – she couldn't dance and was never allowed out after dark, but I had no trouble getting partners. I had passed my first examination in English, Latin, History and Economics and now, in my final year, I went onward to the finale of my varsity career. It was 1945 and the war was nearing its end. It had not affected our undergrad lives much except that we ate country rice and kurakkan.

The Union society was continuously active. Apart from the general meetings held after the election of new office bearers, prominent outside personalities were invited to address special meetings held in King George's hall. The current President, Manickavasagar Underwood (I believe he later reversed the names) invited ex-Professor C. Suntheralingam. Those were the days of the Soulbury Commission and G. G. Ponnambalam's 50-50. Sun, the individualist, had his own brand of Tamil militancy. Needless to say, hardly any

Tamil undergrad failed to attend. Sun's diatribe and humorous invective were greeted with vociferous applause and table thumping by A. Amirthalingam, M. Sivasithamparan and their followers. We were at the back listening apathetically. Underwood's term of office expired and the presidency of the union society was wide open. It was then that Bernard Soysa told me that I should contest it. Bernard was then around 30 years of age having forgone a university career for active full time politics.

To revert to our Presidency, I announced my candidature. My opponent was I. D. S. Weerawardena (later a Professor at Peradeniya). My supporters were all old Royalists, Thomians, Trinitians and old boys of other leading schools. In the forefront were all of my History Special colleagues, D.K. Suppramaniam who had been my classmate but entered the varsity from Trinity and was a committee member for sports, Earle Wanigasekera whose girl cousins were my dancing partners, S.P Wickremasinha and Bunty de Zoysa who had been banished for juvenile delinquency by his elder brother, Sidney de Zoysa of Police fame, to St. Patrick's College, Jaffna and entered the varsity from there a year after us. There were Bobby Ratnaik, D. S. Ratnadurai, Rajah de Silva, Sunderasivam unexpectedly from Union Hostel, Lakshman Saravanamuttu of the famous Saravanamuttus whose cousin, Baski, was a final year medical student, Dalton Wijeratne, Upali Godamune, R. R. Nalliah and Basil Mendis, younger brother of Walter (who later became a Jesuit priest). My supporters of the fair sex were naturally old girls of Ladies', Bishops', St. Bridgets and Holy Family. My opponent's supporters were sadly, to begin with, almost the entire women's hostel. There also arose a strange bedfellowship. All of Cruden were joined by the Tamils of Arunachalam and Ramanathan halls and Union Hostel; but Brodie Hostel was solidly behind me as was Aquinas. The election was held and I won by a majority of only 13 votes, by no means convincing, but just enough. Basil Mendis was elected Editor. The victory celebrations were held in the style to which we were accustomed. I was only somewhat prepared but my friends who were more confident really laid it on. The venue was Lion House, Bambalapitiya, which had been our rendezvous for quite some time. Liquor was plentiful and the manager was only too delighted to provide whatever food was requested. At long last came the cycle procession wending its way over the environs of the varsity and stopping at the women's hostel. Here the continuous hooting and derisive shouts referring to some women by name was deafening. Strangely and untrue to her character, Miss Mathiaparamam, the Warden, made no complaint thereafter though we must have been easily identified under the lampposts, possibly because no objectionable language was used.

I had enviously watched Doric de Souza on his auticycle, a petrol driven two-wheeler, gearless

and with only a clutch and pedals for an emergency. I persuaded my father to buy me one on the grounds that my presidential duties required visits to all the various hostels. The real reason was that it offered a tremendous relief in my regular visits to the Girl. It could then of an evening be parked outside the Mt.Lavinia hotel porch while I dallied with her by the beach parapet or the garden below, overlooking the sea, in the company, of course, of her cousins. It was also very useful in our drinking sessions to pillion-carry a friend who had no energy to ride his cycle.

Acting on Bernard Soysa's suggestion, I invited Dr. N. M. Perera, Dr. Colvin R. de Silva and Phillip Gunawardena to address the Union Society on topics of their choice. They were very well received and listened to in rapt silence and questions were answered with the expected flair. There was much speculation as to why my father's son had invited his sworn political enemies but it was believed to be due to the tremendous interest undergrads had in these highly respected personalities. The news was received by my father with a silence that was deafening but spoke louder than words. Waiting for the results was an enervating time. The Girl and I had been unofficially engaged for some time and I was now meeting her regularly, but still at the Mount Lavinia Hotel grounds, and she was still accompanied by her cousins. One night returning home on my autocycle after a drinking bout, I fell dizzy and realised that I could not ride further. Fortunately this happened near Aquinas where Earle Wanigasekera had a room.

I left the bike hidden behind a bush and wakened Earle in his room where I begged for rest, he sternly reminded me that this was strictly against the rules. Anyway my obvious condition caused him to relent and I settled down on his floor. Very early in the morning I was stealthily descending the stairs when Father Pinto entered after his dawn constitutional walk. When he asked me what I was doing in Aquinas at this hour I had no alternative but to confess the whole truth. He asked me to come up to his room and he offered me a glass of wine saying: "This will help you till you get home but you are not welcome here for three months." Poor Earle was kicked out of his room to share one with the others, but got it back after three months.

Sports had re-started the war being over at long last and Ronnie de Mel and I were exhilarated with the tennis courts which were laid, prepared with hard court, good nets and line tapes. We had to bring our own rackets and balls. Three months more for the Degree final and I was playing tennis with a junior when during a lull a friend walked up and said "I say you are playing tennis but Adrian Wijemanne is studying in the library." This brought me down to earth with a thud. I stopped tennis and liquor and grew a beard. I regretfully told the Girl that I would not be seeing her until after the Final which she took with good grace. A

week before the examinations Ronnie's appendix burst and he was hors de combat. He could have requested and positively been granted an aegrotat – a degree awarded to a student unable to present himself for the final owing to illness but he refused to do so. As it turned out it was an eminently wise decision because when he sat the following year he obtained the first First Class Honours degree in History Special and I believe the only one in all faculties.

I now resigned from the Presidency and asked Ronnie de Mel to contest it, which he did. His opponent was A. Amirthalingam, supported by M. Sivasithamparam (shape of things to come). The division was as before – the "Establishment" versus the opposition comprising the strange bedfellows – Cruden and the Tamils. Ronnie won, but the opposition was not deterred. They introduced a no-confidence motion against Ronnie on the grounds that he had extracted money from freshers. I organised the defence but did not speak in the debate. The motion was defeated, much to the chagrin of the opposition whose members had to pass by looking at the celebrations of the soup club. One afternoon I was sitting in the canteen enjoying a bottle of Tanqueray gin with a few soup clubmen when a Cruden sympathiser walked up to us and said "Somebody has sneaked to Malalasekera and he is coming down to check on you." Dr. Malalasekera was acting Vice-Chancellor in the absence of Dr. Jennings who was on leave at Home. In a flash the bottle of Gin was thrown out of the window onto the grass outside and the glasses washed and filled with lime juice cordial and water. The acting V-C stalked up and drew himself up to all of his 5ft 4 ins (approx). He took one of our glasses and sniffed. He said "Hmm gin" and stared at us accusingly. We had all stood up when he arrived and I said very politely "Sir I never knew you could recognise the smell of liquor but if you taste it you will find it is only lime juice." He took down our names and stalked off wordlessly. There was no time –wasting charge sheets or inquiry. We were reported to Jennings who suspended us for two weeks. This meant nothing to me but to those in the final year it was a minor set back in respect of lectures and tutorials.

"Those were the days my friends, we thought they'd never end. We thought they would last forever and a day."

A few are still here and many are in the hereafter but to all of them I say *Are at vale*, "Hail and Farewell."

(Note by editor: The following article is an abridged version of the original which had been previously published in a Sri Lankan newspaper a few years ago. The writer is the son of pioneer Sri Lankan Labour leader A.E. Goonesinghe and lives in Colombo, now past a ripe but youthful 90th year.)



Reminiscences of student life at Royal College 80 years ago

I would like to walk back along the corridors of Time, spanning eight decades, till we reach 1932, the year when I was admitted to Royal College (our Alma Mater) after passing a competitive entrance examination. The day I walked through the portals of our prestigious school with its imposing buildings has been etched in my memory for over eight decades, as I am now over 93 years of age and probably the oldest 'Old Royalist' residing in Sri Lanka.

In January 1932, I entered our school building with some trepidation as I was only nine-years old and I walked up the stairs to my class and reported to my form teacher Miss Ludowyke. Just before the assembly bell was rung, she shepherded her 30 new students in single file, close to the banister of the staircase and we took our seats in the last two rows of the school hall. On the other side of the centre aisle, the 30 new students of Miss Vansanden's class occupied the last two rows. The students in the higher forms sat in front, with about eight prefects sitting close to the stage platform facing us. The Principal, Mr H.L. Reid, made a short address and we returned to our class after all the older students had left. Mr Reid was succeeded by Mr. L.H.W. Sampson as Principal in April 1932.

At that time, having an elder brother in the school was a plus point for admission, which was very competitive. There were many sets of brothers, such as the Gunasekeras, de Soysas, Kadirgamars, Jillas and the de Zoysas. The 1932 group was the lowest form in the school for three consecutive years from 1932 to 1934 as Royal Primary School was formed in buildings adjacent to Royal College in the premises of the Training College for Teachers. From 1935 onwards, there were three parallel classes for each form of 30 students.

In the 1930s, Ceylon was a British Colony and our curriculum was oriented towards the British system and students had to obtain a pass at the Senior Cambridge Level or the London Matriculation Level



• Ian de Mel at 22 years of age when he was serving in the Auxiliary Fire Service as a Company Fire Officer, organised during World War II by the British Commander-in-Chief.

by IAN D. T. DE MEL

to proceed with our higher studies and to enter University. English was our first language and Latin our second. It was mandatory to obtain passes in the three compulsory subjects English, Latin and Mathematics at the same sitting along with three other subjects Physics, Chemistry, Botany or Advanced Mathematics. Getting distinctions was an additional qualification to get a Grade 1 Pass. We had fairly good teachers in the lower forms for all subjects, except Latin. As a result, we learnt very little Latin and were so exasperated that we sang a little ditty:

*"Latin is a dead language,
As dead as dead can be,
Once it killed the Romans
And now it's killing me."*

I remember one student being asked to translate the saying: 'Barking dogs do not bite.' He got up and with a straight face said 'Burana ballo non hapakabunt,' a hybrid form of Sinhala and Latin. Fortunately in the upper forms we had very good Latin teachers and we gradually acquired a good knowledge of Latin grammar and Literature and we faced the Latin paper at the Cambridge Senior Examination in 1939 with confidence. Many of us obtained distinctions in Latin. We also had good masters in the science subjects as well as in English Language and Literature throughout our school career. Thus, many students obtained distinctions in these subjects, some getting distinctions in all six subjects when we did our examinations in 1939. When the results of this Cambridge Senior Examination were published in the Daily News in February 1940, Royal College topped the list in order of merit with nine students. All of them obtained distinctions in all the subjects they sat for.

There were only a few masters from the Burgher community but there was a fair percentage of students of the Burgher community in each class whose surnames were Loos, de Kretser, Van Cuylenburg, Spittel, Drieberg, Toussaint, Maclean, Kelly, Henricus, Sansoni, Kelaart, Porrit and Jansz. There were also a few students of British nationality who stayed only for a few years, but an exception was Pat McCarthy who was an excellent cricketer and stayed on to be in the First Eleven and play in the Royal-Thomian encounter. He also captained Royal in 1938.

Let me digress a little into the field of cricket. The Royal-Thomian match, which was a two-day match at that time, was played at the former S.S.C. Grounds, adjoining the Colombo Museum and at the N.C.C. Grounds. Later, it was played at the P. Sara Stadium in Borella. F.W.E. Porrit captained Royal in 1934. He was a fine all-rounder and could bowl with either arm. At the Royal-Thomian Match that year, towards the middle of the Thomian innings, he changed from right-arm to left-arm bowling after informing the umpire and got a wicket in the first over after the change.

In 1935, our Centenary year, the Principal, Mr L.H.W. Sampson, took the bold step of taking the cricket team for a tour of Australia to play against some Australian schools in Perth, Adelaide and Melbourne. The Head Master of the Melbourne High School, Mr. W. M. Woodfull, umpired the match against his school. He was also the Test Captain of Australia. Keith Miller who later became Australia's finest all-rounder played for his team at Melbourne against the Royal College team, which also included Pat McCarthy. I am indebted to Mr. D.L. Seneviratne for this information of the Australian tour which is included in his book 'Royal College - School of our Fathers' - a brief history and the essence of its spirit, published in 2006. This book is very readable and contains valuable information about our beloved Alma Mater. It is still available for sale at the Royal College Union Office at Royal College. I feel every Old Royalist should buy a copy to show our loyalty and gratitude to our *Alma Mater*.

Apart from cricket, rugger was another sport played with other schools. In the early thirties, only Royal College, Trinity College, Zahira College and St. Peter's College played rugger, but it was the Royal-Trinity encounter which drew the most spectators. When Mr. E.L. Bradby assumed duties as Principal in 1939, he donated a shield for this encounter and this match is played at both Colombo and Kandy every year in June. It is called the Bradby Shield which is now telecast worldwide via the Internet for rugger fans, mostly in Australia, the U.S.A., Canada and the U.K. Mr Bradby retired as Principal in 1945 but re-visited Sri Lanka in 1982. A reception for students during his stewardship as Principal was held at the residence of the late Dr. Tony Gabriel, Senior Surgeon of the Cancer Hospital. There were about 60 of Mr Bradby's old students present and we were divided into seven groups (1939 to 1945). He spoke individually to each of us and inquired about careers after leaving school. He was both pleased and proud to learn of so many of his students reaching the pinnacles of their careers.

On the human side of our student life, I would like to recall some incidents. School was from 9 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. with a short interval at 10:30 a.m. and lunch interval from noon to 1 p.m. During the

short morning break, many of the younger students would rush outside through the front gates to buy Ice Palam at 5 cents, a Dolca chocolate at 5 cents, small packets of boiled or spiced gram from 1 to 3 cents and masala vadai at 4 cents from the vendors outside. There was also a vendor who came with a fairly big suitcase containing trinkets such as pencils, pens, Cobra files, small magnifying glasses, small pop-pop boats for sale at very low prices. He was commonly



• Ian (in tie) and his brother Lance de Mel at 16 years of age. Lance attended Trinity College, Kandy and played for two years (1937 and 1938) in the Bradby Shield Rugby encounters.

known as 'Cobra' and the gram seller as 'kadalai.' Kadalai was a vociferous supporter of Royal College at our cricket and rugby matches, even though he was not an Old Royalist. The Tuck Shop was open only at lunch time and after 3:30 p.m. and located behind the old cricket pavilion and had only a limited number of short eats - cutlets, patties, meat and fish bread rolls as well as ice cream and soft drinks. Chinese rolls were available after about 1935.

As students of the lower forms, we wore a shirt and shorts but when we were about 16 years of age and decided to wear long trousers, it was mandatory to wear a full suit including coat and tie. This was so even when we entered the University for Higher Studies but was changed about 1942 due to shortage of imported textiles resulting from World War II and students were allowed to wear a shirt and long trousers without a tie.

The New Olympia Theatre in Maradana was owned by the Cader family and since the two younger Cader brothers were still at Royal, the Management of the Theatre gave a generous discount for the 3 p.m. show on Saturdays by only charging 25 cents from the Royalists and allowed them to sit in the last three rows of the Balcony. The normal charge for a balcony seat was three rupees. Most of the films were in black and white since Technicolor films came in the late thirties.

During our school days in the 1930s, strict discipline was maintained by the school authorities, both during school hours and even at school matches. The school motto, *Disce Aut Discede*, was strictly enforced and the students had to maintain good marks in all subjects. We truly learned of books and men and learnt to play the game. In later life, one comes across fellow Royalists and instantly a rapport is reached. Since I am now over 93 years of age, most of my friends are now no more, but the Royal spirit lives on and I am in touch with Royalists 10 to 20 years younger than I am. I was a Life Member of the over 70 group of Old Royalists since its inception and regularly attended our yearly get-together till about

eight years ago as I am now physically weak, though mentally alert. This prompted me to reminisce about student life over 80 years ago, an era now long forgotten.

I recall the saying "The mighty oak tree doth from a little acorn grow" and so it has been with our school. The student roll which was only about 550 during my time in the 1930s has now grown to over 7500 students, with a large number of new buildings being erected. It is our duty to always remember the words of "The Loyalty Pledge" inaugurated in 2002 and live up to it. May the spirit of our beloved Alma Mater live on – *ad multos annos*.

Editor's note: The author Ian D.T. de Mel, B.Sc (Lond.) D.I.C. (Lond.) M.Sc (Lond.) is Retired Director/Head of the Department of Meteorology and former Regional President of the World Meteorological Organisation, Geneva in 1982. The oldest Old Royalist yet around, Ian is a regular reader of THE CEYLANKAN and sent this article through his friend Tissa Devendra as he believes many Old Royalists are members of the CSA.



A most enjoyable evening...



Photo by Chandra de Silva

My wife Hyacinth and I were entertained to a wonderful evening at the Mount Lavinia hotel by members of the Executive Committee of the Colombo Chapter on our visit to Sri Lanka in December last. It was a tremendous pleasure to meet these distinguished people. Such delightful company.

Thanks to Tony Saldin, Secretary of the Colombo Chapter, who made it possible for us to meet these most warm and friendly members of the CSA for coffee. The picture shows (from right to left) Dayadari Devendra (wife of Somasiri), Chandra and Asoka de Silva (partly obscured), Doug, Somasiri, Tissa Devendra (President of the Colombo Chapter), Tony Saldin, Srilal Perera and Hyacinth.

Although I met all these people physically for the first time, strange as it may sound, I felt I had come to know them previously, maybe in a vicarious sort of way. I had been dealing with most of them via

the Internet. On meeting them, I recognised most of the faces from photographs illustrating their articles and other news items published in the journal through the years. And happily, I can now put a face to each of those whom I knew only by name.

The noble Colombo breakwater

"As we enter the [Colombo] harbour we glance for a moment at the noble breakwater which the genius of Sir John Coode fixed so firmly in the ocean bed that year after year it withstands the fury of monsoons which hurl their terrific mountains of sea against its ever resisting concrete mass. The construction of the breakwater was begun in the year of the Prince of Wales' visit to Ceylon, 1875, and his Royal Highness laid the foundation stone. It is 4,000 feet long and shelters a water area of 500 acres. Although it forms but part of the complete scheme of a harbour and graving dock, it has been of immense value to the colony, not only in protecting from the fury of the elements the ships that bring our foreign supplies and carry away our produce; but in attracting the shipping of the Eastern world, and of the colonies, by the convenience it offers as a coaling station and entrepôt for exchange of passengers. The northern arm and graving dock, both of which are now in the course of construction [at time of writing in November 1900], will perfect the accommodation, and give to Colombo one of the largest and safest artificial harbours in the world."

(From *Golden Tips* by Henry W. Cave; publisher Sampson Low, Marston & Co. Ltd. 1901).

This article is limited to the small Jaffna peninsula in the north where English education has advanced during the last 200 years. The writer takes an inward look at education in Jaffna, with special reference to the BATTICOTTA SEMINARY, later JAFFNA COLLEGE, where his forefathers, family members and he studied. The legacy of education, which is indeed an industry of the Jaffna people, has been carried down to generations.

Educational advancement in Jaffna

The contribution made by teachers from Kerala and Tamil Nadu in South India

By Samuel Thevabalan Arnold

We Sri Lankans are proud of our educational heritage with more than 90 percent of the people literate. Many, inclusive of a large number of Tamils, especially from Jaffna, hold professional positions in different parts of the globe. The question asked by people in foreign countries is, how can such a small nation contribute vast human resources overseas in varied fields?

Sri Lanka was under Portuguese rule from 1505 to 1658. In 1505, the Portuguese captured Jaffna and later the coastal areas. During their government, Rev Fr Francis Xavier and other Roman Catholic priests brought the Roman Catholic faith. Many in Jaffna and Mannar were converted and Roman Catholicism flourished. The Jesuit, Dominican and Franciscan priests and nuns set up schools for the education of their flock.

In 1658, the Dutch captured Sri Lanka from the Portuguese and ruled until 1796. They took over the churches left by the Portuguese, spread their Protestant Christian faith and brought missionaries from Holland. Rev Baldaeus was a reputed Dutch evangelist in Jaffna. The Dutch set up schools around churches. Their educational system was noteworthy and far excelled that of the Portuguese. The Dutch trained teachers and priests in the Seminary in Jaffna. Students who excelled were sent to Holland for further studies in various fields. Some of the Tamils who were trained in Holland were Don Philip and Ontashi who served in reputed positions in the government.

The British ruled Sri Lanka from 1796 to 1948. The British troops first landed in Point Pedro and captured the Jaffna Fort and later the coastal areas. The British gave freedom of religion to the people. They followed the way of the Dutch and set up schools in the country. In 1801, there were 170 schools, out of which 47 were in Jaffna.

Dawn of the 19th century saw the arrival of missionaries from England and America. In 1804, the London Missionary Society (LMS) sent a team of six missionaries to serve in India and Sri Lanka. Out of the three missionaries who came to Sri Lanka, one went to Galle, the other to Matara and the third to Tellippalai in Jaffna.

In order to set up schools in Jaffna, the British recruited Mr Christian David (later Rev) from Tanjore, South India in 1801. He became the

first Tamil Anglican priest and the British Colonial chaplain. He set up an English School in Chundikuli, Jaffna.

The Presbyterian Church, the church of the Dutch, continued to function in Colombo and a few other places. The Baptist Missionary Society (BMS)



• Rev. Dr. Daniel Poor - Founder and first Principal of Batticotta Seminary - 1823 to 1835.

established in Vaddukoddai, the Batticotta Seminary in 1823 by Rev. Dr Daniel Poor.

The Church Missionary Society (CMS) which is the missionary wing of the Church of England (Anglican) sent a few missionaries in 1818. Among them was Rev. Joseph Knight who settled in Nallur, Jaffna and started work there.

Jaffna was blessed with great schools. The Anglicans (CMS) founded in Chundikuli, Jaffna, the St. John's College for boys (1823) and Chundikuli Girls College for girls (1896). The Methodist Mission established Jaffna Central College for boys (1817) and Vembadi Girls College for girls (1834) in Jaffna. In Pt Pedro, the Methodists started Hartley College for boys (1838) and the Methodist Girls High School for girls. The students who learned in village schools joined the

reputed High schools, with boarding facilities, for the quality English education imparted there.

The work of the American Ceylon Mission (ACM) in the obscure region of Jaffna peninsula is unique. The missionaries who were Congregationalists from Boston, Massachusetts (USA) arrived in Colombo in March 1816. They were encouraged by the British Governor Sir Robert Browning and the Government Chaplain to go over to Jaffna and start work there. When the missionaries came to Jaffna there were no Christian schools except in Jaffna town. There were anti-missionary feelings and the fear of not knowing their motive for being there. There were no proper roads and hardly any carts used for transport. The British gave permission to the missionaries to use the abandoned churches and parsonages of the Dutch for their work. They first planted the mission in Tellippalai and Vaddukoddai. Day and boarding schools were established in the different villages since there was a thirst for education. The students in the boarding schools received instruction in English and Tamil inclusive of Scripture, Arithmetic, Grammar and Geography.

The need for higher education was fulfilled with the establishment of the Batticotta Seminary in the village of Vaddukoddai on 22 June 1823 by Rev. Dr Daniel Poor. The seminary became the very first institution of western learning to be established in India and Sri Lanka. The only other institution at University level that had been established was Serampore College in Calcutta, India (Serampore University) founded by Rev. William Carey, the Baptist missionary in 1818.

The Seminary produced outstanding scholars which included C.W.Thamotharampillai (High Court Judge in India) and Caroll Visvanathapillai. J.R.Arnold (Arnold Sathasivampillai) was an eminent Tamil scholar, prolific writer, editor and author of stories and other books in Tamil. Many seminary graduates were obtained District Judges, Interpreter Mudaliyars, Sub-collectors of Customs, Medical Officers, Educationists and Lawyers. The missions in India and Sri Lanka had pastors who graduated from the seminary.

The educational essence from the seminary permeated into different regions. Many came from different parts of Sri Lanka and India to join this institution. Sir Emerson Tenant, the scholarly Colonial Secretary, Puisne Justice Sir Richard Ottely and Sir Anthony Oliphant were impressed with the education imparted in the Batticotta Seminary and gave large donations to the seminary.

Such a great institution was closed down by the American Mission Board in 1855. Many leading people of Jaffna, graduates of the Batticotta Seminary, resolved to help establish a worthy successor to the seminary. Jaffna College was formally opened on 3 July 1872 and quality education continued. The

last Principal of the Seminary Rev Dr E H Hastings became the first Principal of Jaffna College. Rev Hastings was the brother-in-law of twice U.S. President Grover Cleveland. This outstanding college was affiliated firstly to Calcutta University (1891-1893) to the Madras University (1907-1911) and later to the London University. Some even received Masters Degrees from Calcutta and Madras.

The last Missionary Principal of Jaffna College was Rev. Dr S K Bunker (1937-1947). He later became the President of the Undergraduate Department (1947-1966). Mr K A Selliah was the first National Principal (1947-1964). Dr W Luther Jeyasingham was the first National President from 1966. The college continues to be an outstanding institution run by nationals.

Uduvil Girls College was founded in 1824, in fulfilment of the need for higher education of women in Uduvil. This was the first boarding school in Asia with Mrs Harriet Winslow as Principal. She was the well-known great-grand mother of John Foster Dulles, the US Secretary of State of the Eisenhower Presidency. The girls at Uduvil received quality education in Tamil/English. The last missionary Principal was Miss Lulu Bookwalter (1911-1941). The first national Principal was Miss A Hudson Paramasamy (1941-1970), a charismatic educationist. This school continues to be an outstanding institution for girls.

Two of the first group of American missionaries to Jaffna in 1816 were Rev. Richard Warren and Mr James Richards, who had some knowledge of medicine and treated the sick. In the second group of missionaries in 1820, was the first medical missionary in the world, Dr John Scudder (MD) and his wife Harriet. He set up medical work in villages and served until 1836. He trained local students in medicine. In 1836, the American Mission started the Madras Mission in South India and the Scudder family moved there and to Vellore in 1841. Dr John and Harriet Scudder's nine children were missionaries in India. Their grand-daughter, Dr Ida Scudder, was the famous founder of the Christian Medical College and Hospital in Vellore, South India.

Dr Samuel F Green (MD) was a famous missionary doctor who came to Jaffna in 1847. He was the founder of the hospital and medical school at Manipay in 1848, later named Green Memorial Hospital. Many locals were trained as Medical graduates who served in the country and overseas. He practiced western medicine with excellence. He learned Tamil and translated medical books into Tamil. Some of the famed nationals trained included, Drs. Thilliyampalam William Paul, C T Mills and S Curtis. Mr Dyke, the British Government Administrator in the North praised the services of Dr Green and gave him immense support. He was the founder of the present Jaffna General Hospital.

In 1873, when Dr Green finally returned home, the famed Dr C T Mills (Ethirnayagam) was the first national who took over the hospital and medical school to continue the good work for the next 20 years. Nursing Education was imparted and graduates worked in Manipay and other parts.

The missionary sisters Mary and Margaret Leitch (1880-1886) raised funds to develop Green Memorial Hospital and the reputed **McLeod Hospital in Inuvil**, established during their time. This hospital specialised in midwifery, women and children's diseases. Dr (Miss) Isabella Curr worked at Inuvil for 20 years from 1896. The other missionaries included Dr (Mrs) Mary Scott, Dr (Mrs) Mary Irwin Rutnam and Dr (Miss) Annie Young.

There have been reputed local and Indian doctors who served in Manipay and Inuvil hospitals including Dr E T & Mrs (Dr) Kanagam Buell, Drs. M O Chacko, Matthews, J V Thambar and C T Chelliah, to mention a few. Dr (Mrs) Chandra Ambalavanar continued to work in the hospitals facing many challenges and hardship. There have been a number of local medical graduates of Christian Medical College, Vellore who worked in the two hospitals at different times. The challenge is for the present generation in Jaffna to continue the work in these hospitals.

South India is made up of the states of Tamil Nadu (formerly Madras), Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka (formerly Mysore) and Kerala (Malayalam). The people of southern India are Dravidians with similar culture, customs, manners and language. The people of Tamil Nadu speak Tamil, Andhra-Telugu, Karnataka-Karnadam and Kerala-Malayalam. The temples with magnificent architecture were built by ancient Sera, Chola and Pandyan kings who ruled the lands. One wonders at the engineering skills of the ancient rulers and the ruled.

The American Missionaries founded the Batticotta Seminary in Jaffna in 1823. In the 1830s, five American missionaries and three native students (Francis Ashbury, Chittambalam Strong and Tappan) from Jaffna proceeded to Madurai in Tamil Nadu and established the American Madurai Mission. Later in 1835, Principal Daniel Poor along with other students including J R Arnold (later Professor at Jaffna College) founded the reputed American College, Madurai. Rev Daniel Poor became the first principal of American College.

The Protestant and Catholic missionaries opened schools and hospitals in South India, Tamil Nadu and Kerala which benefitted mainly because there was a thirst for education of children. The evangelistic outreach by the missions and conversion to the Christian faith attracted them to mission schools.

The University of Madras was founded in 1855. Calcutta and other universities were started in the second half of the 19th century leading the way for Tertiary education. Colleges run by missions,

philanthropists and independent boards were started in key towns in South India and affiliated to Madras and other universities.

Sri Lankan students excelled. R N Setukavalar (later Rev.), Methodist Minister and Head Master of Batticaloa Methodist Central College was the first Sri Lankan Minister to earn a Master's degree in Theology from the Calcutta University in 1874. S M Thevathasan (later Rev.) obtained an M A degree from the Madras University in 1910. Dr Morgan Covington graduated from the Calcutta Medical College (*circa* 1870), winning many gold medals. He was the first Sri Lankan to be appointed to the position of Provincial Surgeon.

In the early part of the 20th century, churches of the American Ceylon Mission (ACM) in Jaffna formed a council. This council was affiliated with the churches in South India in a federal union of congregational churches called South India United Church (SIUC). On 27 September 1947, the Church of South India (CSI) was inaugurated which was a union of SIUC, the Anglicans and Methodists in South India. The Jaffna Diocese of the CSI was formed with Rt Rev. Dr S Kulandran, as the first Bishop. The churches and colleges in Jaffna and the institutions in South India continued to have strong fraternal ties. Jaffna students were able to go over to India for tertiary education and qualified men and women served in the churches, schools, colleges and hospitals.

Both these states in South India are adjoining, with close proximity to Northern Sri Lanka with Jaffna the capital.

Tamil Nadu is the South-east Indian state famed for its Dravidian style Hindu temples with a land area of 130,058 sq kms, and the capital Chennai (formerly Madras) on the south coast. The other prominent cities include Madurai, Trichinopoly and Coimbatore, with Kanyakumai (Cape Comarin) at the southern tip. The people speak Tamil and the state is advanced in education, commerce and technology. Seats of higher learning are situated in all cities with Chennai at the top. Many outstanding colleges and autonomous universities continue to be run by Christian, Roman Catholic and independent boards.

Kerala is a state on the tropical Malabar Coast (south-west) with palmed beaches and back waters. The land area is 38,863 sq kms with Thiruvananthapuram (Trivandram) the capital city. The famous sea port is Kochin city.

A third of the population in Kerala is Christian with the early church called Mar Thoma (Syrian Christians). This church was founded by St Thomas (Didymus – "Doubting Thomas") the disciple of Jesus Christ in AD 52. St Thomas died in Mylapore, Chennai on 21 December AD 72. In Chennai, there is a church in St Thomas Mount, where St Thomas is buried. A large number of Keralites have surnames Thomas, John, Matthew, Koshy, Mathai etc.

The state is advanced in Education, commerce and technology. Large number of graduates from the colleges and universities serve both in the state and overseas. Kottayam city (little Rome) is reputed for huge cathedrals and seats of learning.

There was thirst for secondary education in Jaffna leading to the Senior School Certificate (S.S.C) and Higher School Certificate (H.S.C) courses. Since there was a demand for quality teaching in Science, Mathematics, English and Arts, the schools looked up to Kerala and Tamil Nadu. Qualified and dedicated teachers were recruited especially from Kerala during the early 1940s. Almost every school in Jaffna had a number of expatriate teachers from South India. Some of the reputed schools, inclusive of Jaffna College, St John's, St Patrick's, Chudikuli Girls, Uduvil Girls, Hartley, Jaffna Hindu, Union, Vembadi Girls, Jaffna Central and Driberg's employed them. The students excelled and gained entry for higher education.

Indian teachers were employed in schools in Colombo, Batticaloa and other regions too. Some of the teachers who were appointed as Principals were Mr P T Mathai of St John's, Miss Sara Mathai of Chundikuli Girls, Mr K T John of Udupiddy American Mission and Miss Annammah Padman of Batticaloa Vincent Girls.

Jaffna College stood tall in the field of education in Jaffna and in Sri Lanka. This great seat of learning had the Primary, Secondary and Collegiate sections in the same campus in Vaddukodai. The collegiate section prepared students for B.A and B.Sc degrees of the University of London. Students inclusive of Sinhalese, Tamils, Muslims and Burghers from different parts of Sri Lanka studied here. Large numbers of students excelled in the H.S.C and London Matriculation examinations and entered the University of Ceylon in Colombo and Peradeniya. The number of students entering the faculties of Medicine, Engineering, Science and Arts from Jaffna College was high; so too the other schools in Jaffna. Some students had their entire education from Primary to Degree level at Jaffna College. Many alumni from Jaffna College became Principals of colleges in Jaffna and other places in the country. The writer was a student at Jaffna College during the 1950s and limits his observation to that period. The college was administered by Rev. Dr S K Bunker as President, Mr E C Lockwood as Vice President and Mr A M K Cumarasamy as Registrar. Dr W R Holmes and Rev. Wm Susbach were missionary lecturers. The Secondary school had Mr K A Selliah as the first National Principal. The Vice Principals were Messrs. D S Sanders, Lyman S Kulathungam and K C Thurairatnam. The Chaplain was Mr Ben Bavinck.

The national teachers were graduates from Universities of Ceylon, London, Madras, Annamalai, USA and Calcutta. The great teachers included K E Mathiapparanam, S T Jeevaratnam, K C Chelvarajan,

L S Williams, B K Somasundaram, Dr Luther Jeyasingham, T Visuvanathan, A Rajasingham, Rajan Kadirgamar, S V Balasingham, J H Ariaratnam, Luther Selvarajah, Rajes Jesudasan and Eva Gulasingham.

They were 'gurus' who settled well in the Jaffna College community. Most of them came from the Kottayam district of Kerala, famous for educationists. They were strong Christians from Syrian (Mar Thoma) and Church of South India (CSI) background. The nine Kerala teachers included



• *Mr K A Selliah – First National Principal JAFFNA COLLEGE – 1947 TO 1964.*

V Koshy (Economics), P T John (Physics), K P Abraham (Chemistry), Prof. George (Mathematics), T J Koshy (Botany), K A George (Botany and Art), K C Jacob (Physics), C O Elias (History) and Mary Elias (Sanskrit). S P Appasamy (English), M D Balasubramaniam (Tamil and Sanskrit) and S J D Isaac (Zoology) were outstanding teachers from Chennai. Many of the Medical graduates in Sri Lanka are grateful to Mr Isaac who prepared them for the H S C in Zoology.

K A George had four children who excelled in sport and academics. Two brothers, Major V G George and Capt Mathew George served in the Ceylon Army. The third was a Medical Doctor; the other an Engineer.

Around mid-1950s, the government of Sri Lanka stopped issuing visas to new graduates from India. Those who were already here, their visas gradually stopped. This policy was to encourage nationals to eventually take over the teaching in Jaffna schools. Those who became citizens stayed on,

while others looked for teaching positions in Africa – Zambia, Nigeria, Ethiopia, Botswana. The senior teachers retired and settled in Kerala. The writer along with other delegates from Jaffna to the CSI Synod conference in Kottayam in early 1960s, met up with the retirees at a reception. They cherished fond memories of life and work in Jaffna.

The young and emerging population of Tamils in Jaffna and other parts of Sri Lanka were looking for Tertiary education overseas. Due to the quality school education in Jaffna in Science and Arts, many qualified students could not join the University of Ceylon in Colombo and Peradeniya due to limited places. India was just across the Palk Strait accessible by a three-hour ferry service connecting Thalai Mannar on the North West shore of Sri Lanka to Dhanuskodi on the South East tip of India. From Dhanuskodi, the South Indian Railway network connected all the regional cities in Tamil Nadu (formerly Madras state). Young men and women joined colleges in Madurai, Madras, Trichinopalli and other places affiliated to the Madras University (founded in 1855). Madras Christian College, Women's Christian College (Madras), St Joseph's College and Holy Cross College (Trichy), Loyola College (Madras), American College and Lady Doak College (Madurai), Scot Christian College (Nagercoil), St John's College (Palayamkottai), YMCA College of Physical Education (Madras) were some of the many institutions where Sri Lankans excelled and returned home as professionals. Many students were educated at far away Serampore University (founded in 1818) and Scottish Churches College in Calcutta. The cost of education in India was affordable for the modest Sri Lankan parent. Many colleges in India were conducted by Christian missions. Reference and recommendations given to students by Jaffna Principals for admission to India was welcome.

In 1944, the government of Sri Lanka introduced the "Free Education Act". Under this revolutionary scheme, every student in the country had the right to education without cost from kindergarten to the university. The government set up "Central Schools" in every district with all facilities including boarding. The Jaffna students who were graduates from Indian Universities were readily employed in Government, Mission and Private schools both in Jaffna and other places in the country. Some became Principals and Education officers. The schools continued to have quality education and large number of students gained entry to Universities in Colombo and Peradeniya. Due to lack of places, many Jaffna students continued to go over to Universities in India.

The sad and dark period of communal strife since 1956, brought the Sri Lankan and Indian army occupation of Jaffna. Many schools and infrastructure

were damaged, destroyed and Tamil youths were arrested and even killed. The Tamil Nadu government gave places in the universities to youth for study. Many youths went to UK, Canada, Australia and other places as refugees and settled there.

The second landmark in the educational system in Sri Lanka was the take-over of



• *Rev. Dr S K Bunker, last Missionary Principal and First President of Jaffna College.*

denominational schools in 1960 by Act of Parliament. By this legislation all secondary schools and training colleges were vested in the government. In Jaffna, all schools run by missions and private boards became state schools under government control. Jaffna College, Uduvil

Girls, St Patrick's, St John's and Chundikuli remained private without any state aid. The Private schools continued to impart quality education facing many challenges. Jaffna teachers and principals in state schools were transferred to Tamil and Muslim schools in the other provinces. The reason was that Jaffna schools had surplus Science, Arts and Mathematics teachers. Jaffna had surplus of qualified teachers, while schools in the other provinces lacked such teachers. There was chaos in schools with politicians interfering in education!

During the last two centuries, education in Jaffna has undergone changes. Beginning with seeds of English education sown by missionaries, revolutionary changes down the track, state has taken over education. Quality education is imparted in all schools inclusive of Private and International schools. The government continues to provide aid to schools all over the country to erect massive buildings and equipment.

In the field of Tertiary education, universities have been opened in the provinces. The students in Jaffna and Batticaloa have access to the universities of North and East with varied faculties. Many quality students are able to do post-graduate studies and to go overseas for further studies on scholarships awarded by foreign nations. There is a thirst for English teaching and many tutoring institutes are found all over the country.

Qualified professionals from Sri Lanka are welcome in Canada, UK, USA, Australia and other nations.



Growing up in a Railway town

by VICTOR MELDER

My father Randolph (Rando) Melder, was employed as an Engine Driver on the Ceylon Government Railway (CGR) for a period of 40 years. During his tenure of service, he was stationed at many upcountry stations – Kandy, Matale, Nanu Oya, Kadugannawa, Nawalapitiya and Bandarawela.

Nawalapitiya was the railway town where my father was stationed at on two occasions, 1945-1951 and again 1956-1960, a total of 12 years. Considering it was just few months after my ninth birthday that we



• *A misty signboard Nawalapitiya Railway Station.*

first moved to Nawalapitiya and spent the next seven years there – my formative years - any wonder then, the place left a deep impression on me.

It was an important rail stop on the journey from Colombo to Badulla. It was here that train crews changed over, while continuing the train journey to and from Colombo. Nawalapitiya was 1,913 feet above mean sea level and 87 miles from Colombo.

Nawalapitiya was a quaint town situated between a row of hills on one side and the Mahaweli River which skirted the outskirts of the town, on the other. At the time it was home to some 100 railway families, consisting of Drivers, Guards, Station and Locomotive Running Shed staff, Way & Works and Building staff and the Transportation Superintendent's office staff.

There were Departmental residences (termed railway bungalows) for some 60 of the staff occupying them as lodgers, with three or four to a residence, while the others lived in private residences or had their families live away in their home towns.

The main streets which ran through the town contained the major shopping area, which was used by the railway staff and also the diaspora from the many outlying tea plantations. A large retail outlet, named

the "Fletcher Market", housed the town's fish and meat suppliers, also the fruit and vegetables stalls.

Two hotels – "Central Hotel" and "Hotel De Luxe" served as a watering point for tipplers and had residential areas for short term visitors to the town. There was a District Hospital, Police Outpost and Magistrate's Court to serve the public.

It also had its share of other Government officials in town – District Medical Officer (DMO), Medical Officer of Health Services (MOH), Health & Sanitary Inspector, Power Station Manager. In later years, the town also had the services of a Labor Department official.

Three cinemas, a Convent, four Colleges and several private medical practitioners were also in the town. Each form of religious persuasion had its centre of worship in the town – Catholic and Anglican churches, Buddhist temple, Hindu temple and Mosque.

The entertainment and leisure needs of the railway populous was catered for by the Railway Institute, which boasted of a billiard and snooker table, table tennis table, carom board and a well-stocked bar, looked after by a regular bar attendant. The piano was popular spot for many an impromptu sing-along at short notice. Two tennis courts were also situated alongside.

The members of the Institute organised occasional musical evenings and card nights. The Easter and Christmas Dances were very popular and were looked forward to for months ahead. They were gala occasions with many from Colombo, Kandy and Kadugannawa attending. Members of the neighbouring planting fraternity too graced the occasion.

The well-known characters of the town were the afghan money lenders, who looked after the 'financial needs' of the railway and plantation fraternities. A large feral goat had free reign of the town and would wonder about the town daily. It, of course, instilled fear to children and the elderly.

Being at a high elevation, the town had its fair share of rain, monsoonal or otherwise; at the other times the sun would beat down mercilessly. The climate as very conducive to gardening and many homes boasted beautiful flower gardens, one of which was our own residence as Dad had a green thumb.

The hills were dotted with the railway residences and many of the tradesmen who called had to walk up hill and down. I felt particularly sorry for the baker who would travel daily from 'Sproules' bakery in Kandy by train and then back again at the end of the day.

His box was a treasure trove of delicious cakes, buns, rolls and bread, all of which this thin wiry man had to carry in his box, on his head, in spite of the vagaries of the weather and also watch his step as he treads warily from house to house. The postman was another welcome sight as he delivered the mail twice each day, again having to traverse the uphill tracks, with his load of mail.

The tradesmen who called regularly were the shoemaker, tinker, electrician, knife sharpener and the odd-job man. Six men were employed by the department to go to the railway quarters; weeding, clearing any overgrowth and landscaping the gardens. By the time they had completed the 60 homes, it was time to re-start the process all over again.

to the ladies and trying to accommodate changes or listening to what patterns and designs they needed.

He would then draw the pattern out, once both parties were satisfied, he would either visit the town and get the material or the ladies would get them and as he carried his trusty sewing machine with him, would begin his task, after a 'fit on' (to ensure it was what was needed and fitted) the finished product was ready in a short time. He would be able to complete dress making requirements for about four homes a day.

A retinue of beggars called regularly too, many of them were blind, deaf or dumb. Some had a number of children with them. They were a part of life one experienced in many towns or cities. My mother

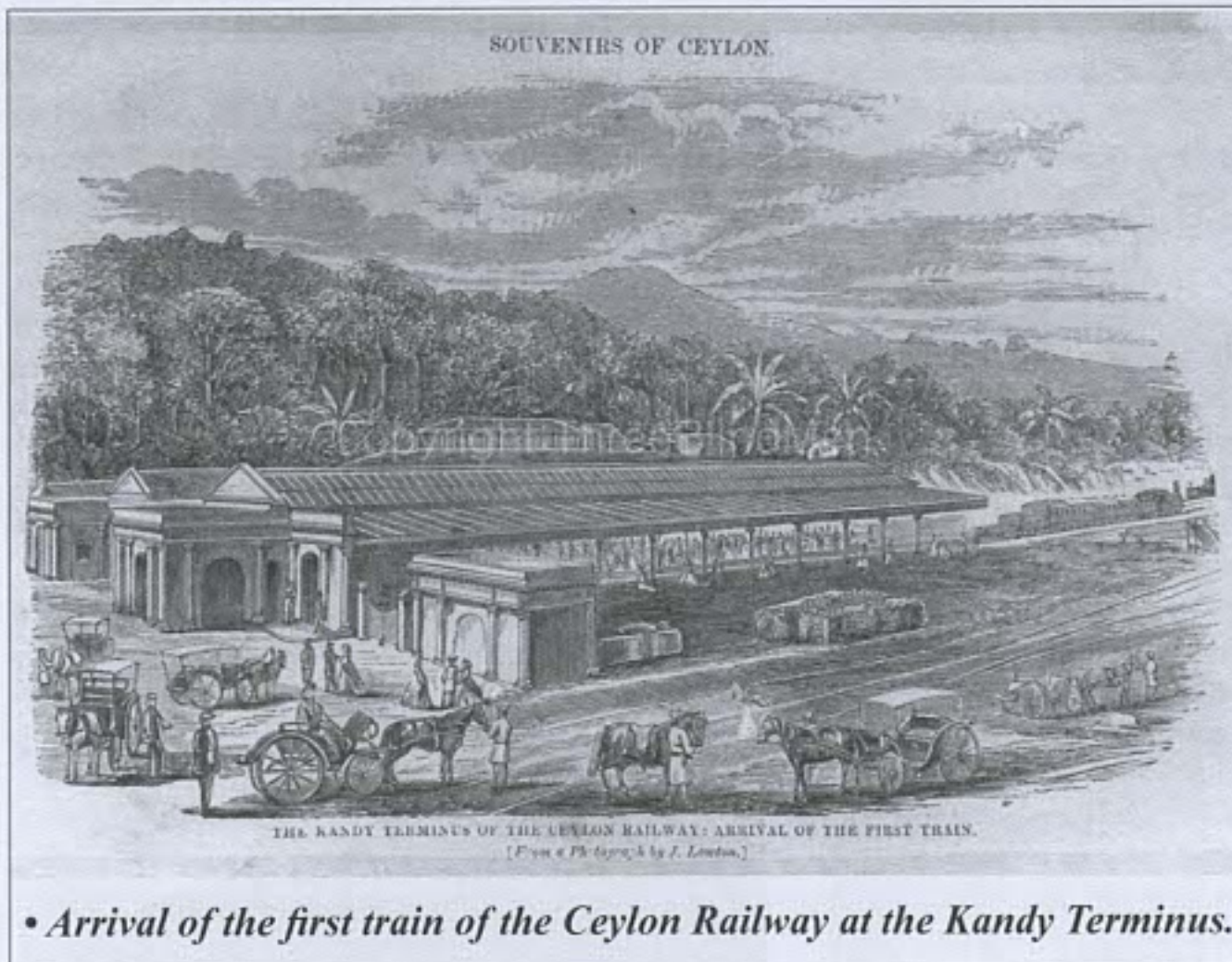
occasionally got us boys to go to town and bring in a group of beggars to whom she gave a meal. It was fascinating waiting on them, as they sat on the floor eating their meal and then departing with a packet of food to take away too.

Every home had a pot belly stove where all the cooking was done and also where a copious supply of boiling water was on hand. The stoves used wood for fuel and every railway man had access to old and perished rail sleepers which were sold by

the department for a nominal fee. This was when the boys in each family had an opportunity of flexing their muscles in chopping up the old rail sleepers for fuel wood.

At any given time the boys of the railway families outnumbered the girls. As such there were enough members to form cricket or soccer teams to compete among themselves or against others. Frequent forays were made down to the river where many happy hours were spent swimming or sky larking. A small group of us were interested in hiking and visiting lesser known villages, hamlets or tea plantations in the locality.

The Railway Institute was the gathering point each evening for the young boys and girls. The two cinemas in town were also frequented by the youngsters. We had great fun even though there was no television, restaurants or fast food outlets then.



• *Arrival of the first train of the Ceylon Railway at the Kandy Terminus.*

A band of traders also wended their way among the residences selling their ware. They called often with their jaggery, eggs, honey, haberdashery while a draper called with bales of cloth and so on. Others who called infrequently were the rattaner, who went from home to home fixing and restringing any sagging or broken rattan work on chairs, loungers etc.

A member of the Ephraums family who was blind from birth, but an accomplished piano tuner visited homes that owned pianos, tuning them meticulously and mellifluously. He was led around by a young lad. He was a pleasant man and a delight to talk to.

Another man, a very efficient and capable ladies tailor would come down from Colombo every now and then, visiting each home. He carried with him a variety of dress patterns and designs. He would sit on the floor of each household, explaining his designs

During the holiday season, many families organised picnics and spent a pleasant day enjoying themselves in the company of their friends, at the many scenic areas in and around the town. I was the eldest of a family of eleven (seven boys and four girls) and we had great fun among ourselves, as the boys were the elder lot. Cricket was, more often than not, the order of the day.

For many of the families, the church was a focal point in their lives, they would gather there as a family on Sundays. The great feast of Christmas was always a spiritual high light in their lives, after which came the partying, carol singing, visiting, entertaining and being entertained, where food and drink was at a premium.

The many families in town, especially the railway families, formed a certain fraternity, rarely seen elsewhere. They were a source of strength, solace and comfort for each other in time of need. Race, colour or creed never mattered.

First Colombo-Kandy train

Henry Jacobs who was covenanted from England to work on the Ceylon Government Railway, drove the first train from Colombo to Kandy on 1 August 1867 on the newly completed line. The time taken to travel, the 74 and a half miles was 4 hours 30 minutes, with seven stops in between. At the time he was classified Engine Driver, First Class on an Annual Income of £240 sterling. He was later promoted Driving Inspector and stationed in Colombo.

Nawalapitiya became a railway town when the railway arrived on 1 December, 1874 with the opening of the Gampola-Nawalapitiya section to rail traffic. The rail terminus at this time consisted of an engine shed for two engines, a turn-table and a water tank. In June 1884, the railway extension to Hatton opened, followed by the extension to Talawakelle on 20 November with the extension to Nanu Oya opening to traffic on 20 May, 1885. Nawalapitiya was now growing to become a strategic railway town as train crews and other allied staff began to be stationed there.

By 1910 Nawalapitiya had grown by leaps and bounds and was the largest railway township outside Colombo. With an extensive train service operating between Colombo and Bandarawela, including a "Up" and "Down" night mail service, the number of transport staff and other allied services increased dramatically. On 16 September 1912 a girls' school for children of drivers and guards opened at Nawalapitiya.

The original train service to Nawalapitiya was provided by ML Class Locos 4-4-0 wheel arrangements with inside cylinders. At times freight trains were worked by three locomotives (front, centre and back of the train). These were replaced by more powerful F Class Locos, 0-6-0, which enabled trains to be worked by two locos.

With the extension of the main line to Nanu Oya, a grueling climb from Nawalapitiya, a new class of more powerful locomotives were needed. These were 4-6-0s and were named after rail termini and were termed NOA class and these locos were more effective to the task.

The expansion of the upcountry rail finally ended when the line to Badulla was completed on 5 February, 1924 and the need for more rail services grew. The Nawalapitiya railway town kept growing by leaps and bounds. The locomotive shed was moved out to a more suitable location from the station and remained there until its closure due to dieselisation in 1973-74

More and more locomotives were added to the fleet at Nawalapitiya as most trains plying up-country needed two locomotives due to the increase in freight and passenger traffic. With the reclassification of steam locomotives, the NOA Class locomotives were classified as B2 Class. There were considerable variations to these locomotives with some having side tanks (saddle tanks) to carry water in addition to that in the tender.

An effective high elevation 'coal stage' had to be built where the coal wagons from the Colombo Coal Yard were stabled and the coal then fed to the tender of the locomotives which were stable on a line below the coal stage. Three high capacity coal wagons were required daily to service the locomotive at Nawalapitiya.



• *Garratt locomotives at Nawalapitiya running shed being fired in preparation in going into service. All photos by Les Nixon.*

Enter the Dragon 1 in 1946 and eight Beyer Peacock Garratt locomotives were added to the fleet at Nawalapitiya.. These 2-6-2+2-6-2T monsters, Classed C1A (the only other Garratt stationed at Kadugannawa was a Class C1, circa 1928). The Garratt was able to haul trains with ease and did not need piloting (unless heavy loads demanded it).

The Garret consumed copious amounts of coal and needed two firemen on duty, the head fireman stoked the fires, while the under-fireman (among other duties) had to ensure that enough coal was at hand for

firing. For quick ignition purposes, all coal fired had to be no bigger than a 'closed fist' and the larger lumps had to be broken by the underfireman. With the arrival of the Garratt, the daily coal wagon requirement from Colombo was increased to four High Capacity Coal wagons.

The Running Shed was a hive of activity each day and night, with locos being fueled, watered and serviced in preparation for their next trip out. Minor repairs were also carried out by shed staff. A loco foreman was on duty on rotating eight hour shifts, with a chief loco foreman on duty too, by day. An oil fueling point was also in operation for fueling the oil burning Garratt locos.

From 1935 until complete diesalisation in 1973/1974, the Nawalapitiya railway town was at its peak, with staff and train services. There was a large number of staff stationed and they comprised: Engine Drivers, Guards, Station Master and Staff, Locomotive Foremen, Building Foremen, Foreman Plate Layer, Assistant Transportation Superintendent (later classified District Superintendent) and staff, Good Shed OIC etc. These numbered around a 100 personnel and their families.

The minor staff comprised about 150 personnel and their families and were Running Shed staff – Head Firemen, Under Firemen, Fitters, Labourers, etc. Building Foreman staff – Carpenters, Masons, Electricians and Labourers. Station staff – Shunters, Cabinmen, Pointsmen, Running Bungalow staff, Porters, Checkers, Way & Works staff etc.

It is quite possible then that each of the 'major staff' families spent Rs 10.00 per day in the town, purchasing daily necessities, amounting to a total of Rs 1,000 per day (Rs 365,00.00 per year). The 'minor staff' would have spent Rs 5.00 per day, amounting to a total of Rs 750.00 per day (Rs 2,737.50 per year), a total of Rs 638,750 (approximately) spent by the railway staff. It can be argued that the railway staff kept the town in business.

Between 1950 and 1954, the Garratt locomotives were converted to oil burners (crude oil), while it did not improve their overall performance, it certainly saved the department much, in comparison to them being coal fired. The daily requirement of High Capacity Coal wagons dropped to three daily.

The railway station and yard were a constant hive of activity both day and night, as there was always 'movement at the station'. Trains would be coming in from upcountry and Colombo or Kandy or leaving for these stations. Light engines would be leaving for Gampola to pilot up trains and those that worked upcountry would be returning to base.

The shunting engine was constantly in service, 24 hours each day, forming and reforming trains that were passing through, placing goods wagons on the goods shed siding for loading of tea and unloading of perishable foodstuff arriving. The High Capacity Coal wagons had to be shunted to the

running shed daily and empties brought back to return to Colombo, oil wagons had to be placed and replaced at the oil siding. Wagons of ash from the running shed siding (which were cleaned out of the steam loco ash pans daily) had to be brought to the station siding daily in preparation for ballast trains that worked on Sunday, strengthening the tracks.

As the Mahaweli Ganga flowed below the running shed a pump house was situated on the river bank, this pump was in action twenty four per day, pumping water to the reservoirs that held water and supplied it to the water columns at the station and running shed for use by the locomotives. Water played an intrinsic part in steam locomotive operations and constant supplies were needed to be on hand.

Steaming into Nawalapitiya from the Colombo end, the railway station was on the right and had only one platform. With the increase in the number of trains and passenger traffic, there was need for more platforms and better access to the station, as it was on a hillside away from the town and passengers had to cross the tracks on the level to reach the station building.

Plans began, to shift the station to the left, which would give it easy pedestrian and motorable access to the town. Coming into Nawalapitiya from the Hatton end a steep gradient had to be negotiated, with a level crossing at the summit. As part of the re-vamp of the station, the rail track was dropped some 20 feet and the track continued below the road, which continued as before, but now over the track.

The gradual shift of the station began in 1965 and was completed in 1967, with the yard being fully



• *This early 1957 photograph of the author on his first-year of apprenticeship working on the shunting locomotive at Maligawatte passenger yard. With him (on left) is locomotive driver Noel Pinder.*

remodeled and the station completely rebuilt on the town side of the tracks. The station now also had an island platform (with two extra platforms) and an over head bridge conveyed passengers to the new platforms.

By 1973 diesalisation had taken over and no more did the steam locos call the shots and they were all gradually taken out of service and brought from places such as Kandy and Kadugannawa to be stored at the sprawling running shed at Nawalapitiya, which soon looked like a locomotive cemetery. Over the next year



• *Garratt locomotive at Nawalapitiya station in readiness to work a train out.*

or so, they were all moved down to Colombo for final disposal. In 1973 there were only two steam locos and a garret loco in operation at Nawalapitiya, and they too were pulled out of service by the end of that year.

The running shed was in disrepair, as it was no longer needed, the rail tracks to the shed were dismantled and nature soon took over. Today it is scrub jungle with traces of the old shed, turntable, water column still visible. Squatters have made their homes on the land leading down to main rail track from the running shed.

With the drastic reduction in railway staff, with diesels and crew now going through without changing over, the railway bungalows were left vacant and several are now in a state of disrepair. The station

seems neglected and over grown with weeds. What was once a vibrant and dynamic railway town looks drear and desolate. This is also reflected in the business in town who have lost their railway patronage.

While progress is necessary, it can also lead to neglect. My memories of this town where I spent 13 years of my early life, will always be etched in my memory and the great times will still live on.

By the time my father was stationed at Nawalapitiya a second time, I had joined the railway and was serving my apprenticeship at Colombo. This was the first occasion that I had to leave home and live in Colombo, every minute of which I despised, as it was hot, dusty and cheerless.

Any wonder then, every time I found myself with a few hours to spare, I would take the first available train home to Nawalapitiya. As soon as the train began its ascent up the Kadugannawa incline a new breath of life entered me, the cool winds revived and refreshed me and I felt alive again.

Nawalapitiya will always be home to me. It is a town where I explored every nook and cranny, a town with the clearest night sky, a town that accepted you for what you were. With the passing of the steam era and dieselisation taking its place, the number of railway families dwindled, the charm and charisma of the town evaporated. However, it will still be home to me.



Fishing with an ambassador

by M.D. (Tony) Saldin

Success, while fishing or hunting is based on skill and patience, and also on luck. Anglers and hunters, before venturing out on their hobby, never usually know whether they are in the right place at the wrong time or the wrong place at the right time.

The month of May 2010, saw fine weather, as the days usually broke out bright and breezy. I felt lucky and believed there was a good chance of a catch of fish during the day in the Indian Ocean. Indonesians and Malays generally have a fondness in particular for fishing, which runs in their blood.

Being members of the Sri Lanka-Indonesia Friendship Association (SLIFA), I personally knew the ambassador for Indonesia in Sri Lanka, His Excellency Djafar Husein. Hence, it prompted me to make an informal request over the phone to His Excellency, on whether he would care to join me and three other friends on a fishing expedition at sea. He readily agreed. In fact he proposed the day as well - Saturday the 9th - and wished to meet everyone at 8am. He also generously volunteered to bring us lunch.

I immediately rang my friend Major (retired) Chandana de Zoysa, a fellow Exco member of SLIFA, who is also the chief security manager at the Ceylon Fishery Harbours Corporation (CFHC) with the pro-



• *Preparing for an ambassadorial cast!*

posal. He assured me in making all prior arrangements. We planned to fish by boat off the seas at Panadura and Kalutara.

However, the day broke dull and grey with skies overcast. With an optimistic mindset, Chandana and I met with the ambassador, his brother-in-law Dasumi, who was on a visit to the island, and an embassy



• The eager fishermen (from left) McArthur Gooneratne, Chandana de Zoysa, Errol Arnold, H.E. Djafar Husein, Tony Saldin, Dasumi and Andy Mardianto.

staffer, Andy Mardianto at "Wisma Duta" the Indonesian Ambassador's official residence in Colombo. As we set off towards Panadura, we noticed the sea was rough and the waves were breaking heavily, but kept our spirits high.

Since the security staff in Panadura had been alerted by Chandana in advance, our vehicles were allowed to move through the gates. On arrival, we were greeted by Chandana's two buddies, Captain Errol Arnolda and ex-Air Force Flight Lieutenant McArthur Gooneratne. Both were armed with all the contraptions for sea fishing - rods, reels, lures and allied equipment.

Captain Arnolda, a veteran angler and former planter, was a seasoned military officer of the Sri Lanka Rifle Corps (SLRC) in his heyday. During the height of the Eelam civil war, Arnolda, then a lieutenant, and Chandana, then a young second lieutenant, were part of a team actively involved in the security of the Central province of Sri Lanka covering Kandy, Nawalapitiya, Gampola, Peradeniya and their environs.

I was pleasantly surprised to see Major Chandana de Zoysa coming to attention and saluting Captain Arnolda as soon as he alighted from the vehicle and addressing him as "Sir." Arnolda had once met with an accident on a hunting trip, and sustained gunshot injuries to his right hand which left him with a partial disability. As such he was compelled to return the salute with his left hand.

Later, I casually inquired from Chandana, who was a major in rank and a senior officer, why he

saluted a Captain, who was one rank below him. Chandana reminded me that at one time, he was the junior officer while Arnolda was the senior one. Hence, as an officer and a gentleman, it was in the army tradition to customarily salute your onetime senior officer notwithstanding his currently junior rank.

Reverting to our fishing trip, Much to our disappointment, Captain Arnolda informed us that it was not possible to go fishing in the ocean in view of the sea being rough over strong winds. However, there was an option - to troll in the Bolgoda Lake which shed its waters into the sea via the Panadura fishery harbour which idea we all accepted.

There were seven of us, and we felt lucky. We boarded an 18-foot *Neilmarine* fiberglass boat powered by a powerful *Yamaha* OBM, and then proceeded to troll the Bolgoda Lake with all rods and lures out.

The Bolgoda lake is well known among anglers for *Barramundi* or *Sea Bass*, *Modha* (in Sinhala), *Koduwa* (in Tamil) and the *Mangrove Jack* or *Thambalaya* (in Sinhala) and *Velamin* (Tamil). Both are excellent eating and the Thambalaya in particular gives a good fight. As the name suggests the "Thambalaya" is a copper colored fish belonging to the bass family (*Gal malu*). While trolling I suggested to the ambassador in jest: "Excellency, we must fly the Indonesian flag on this vessel," to which he heartily laughed, replying, "Why not Saldin, why not."

We spent over three hours trolling the lake, hoping to make a great catch. We changed our plastic lures several times, but with no luck. Patience also plays a great part in angling. I was reminded of the extended fishing episode of patience in Nobel laureate Hemingway's *The Old Man and the Sea*. The only thing we "caught" was the occasional polythene bag or a broken branch, which got entangled with our lures.

Finally, tired and almost exhausted, we called it a day at about 2.00 pm with nothing to show for our efforts. We returned to shore feeling a tad ashamed for having no catch.

We bade goodbye to the ambassador and his staff and embarked into our vehicles and drove out. The ambassador, with Andy and Dasumi in tow, then made a beeline to the Panadura fish market and bought some large fish, since they did not wish to return home empty handed.

On his return home, the ambassador proudly but silently handed over the fish to his wife Madame Yelimiaty, who was impressed. It was only later that Madame learned through the ambassador's driver of His Excellency's amusing ploy!

Cricket jokes

Q. Why are Sri Lankan cricketers cleverer than Houdini?

A. Because they can get out without even trying.



Meals Ammi Made

CHOCOLATE BISCUIT PUDDING

by Chandra de Silva (Dehiwela, Sri Lanka)

Ingredients

6 ozs. butter,
3 ozs. sugar, 3 ozs. icing sugar, 2 eggs, 3 tbsps. cocoa powder, 2 tps. vanilla, 3 tbsps. milk to mix cocoa to make a chocolate mixture, 500 grms. Marie biscuits, 1/2 cup milk to soak biscuits, 1/4 bot. jam, some cadjunuts.

Preparation

Dissolve cocoa in milk to a thick chocolate consistency. Cream together butter, sugar and icing sugar. Add egg yolks and cocoa (Chocolate). Beat egg whites and fold in. Add vanilla. Soak biscuits one at a time in milk for 1 second. Spread Jam on the soaked biscuits. Arrange in a dish chocolate and biscuits alternately (to fill up to 3/4 of the dish). Garnish with roasted cadju. Cover with lid and leave in fridge to set.

How to become a Member of the CSA...

Who can become a member of the CSA? Any person with an interest in the history and heritage of Ceylon/Sri Lanka and wishes to share that interest with like-minded people worldwide is welcome to seek membership. Younger members of the community are specially welcome. **Annual subscription is 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**: Until further notice members are requested to deposit subscription money/cheques at a HSBC ATM machine or transfer to the HSBC electronically. The information you require is for ATMs: Account Name: Ceylon Society of Australia, CSA Account Number- 008-044109-001 - e Transfer above plus: HSBC Swift Code- HSBCLKLX Annual subs: LKR3000.00 Contact: Treasurer M.Asoka T.de Silva Phone 2822933 (Mob.) 775097517 Email: matdes@sltnet.lk

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

Ms CLAUDETTE TAYLOR, Kambah,
ACT 2902.

GIFT SUBSCRIPTIONS

Dr Brahman Sivaprakasapillai, Florida 33767-
2962 USA. (from Hugh Karunanayake,
Turramurra, NSW 2074).



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 at anytime.

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

A page from the history of Batticaloa – how the railways came to the East Coast town

BY SHIRLEY J. SOMANADER

A measure of the efficiency of communication between a place and the outside world is the ease of accessibility to the Capital city. In terms of this measure, the isolation of the Batticaloa district, as late as the first quarter of the 20th century, is expressed, by a person who had lived through the better part of those times, thus: "A journey to Batticaloa was something of an adventure. It was long and tiresome and often risky. Before the introduction of the train service in 1928, there were only two means of communication with the outside world. One by sea, at first by sailing vessels, replaced later on by coasting steamers, which called once a week, either from the south or north. The other by land across rocks and precipices of the Uva Province. The journey was done on horseback or bullock carts."

The following story illustrates the hazards and delays encountered on the land route to Batticaloa via Badulla. The first Anglican Bishop of Colombo was James Chapman. He was appointed in 1845. In writing to his brother-in-law, the Rev. E. Coleridge, he said that his first duty would be to his Diocese. True to his word, he travelled to every part of Sri Lanka frequently, encouraging his church in every nook and corner of the island. He did so in spite of the great hazards and difficulties of travel in his day.

In February 1850, Bishop Chapman left by road to Badulla. From there, on the 28th, he travelled to Batticaloa on horseback with a guide, an extra pony and some luggage carriers who preceded him on foot. He spent the first night at Teldeniya in an open shed. Rising at 5.00 am the next morning, he was on his way before dawn. His stopping places are mentioned as Bibile, Paddycoombera and Alliagoda. On March 1st, he tells of his accosting three wild elephants. Fortunately, they crashed through the jungle and only crossed the traveller's path! But this incident caused the party to break up, separating him from the baggage carriers. When he arrived at Batticaloa, he was met by Mr. Atherton, the Government Agent (GA) and two catechists and was rowed three miles up the lagoon in the GA's canoe.

The way by sea was the more ancient route. In 1873, the Government Agent at Batticaloa was J. W. W. Birch. He describes how he travelled to attend a conference of Government Agents at Kandy by order of the Governor. On 28 May, he left aboard the *ss Serendib* to Colombo. From there he left by train to Kandy. After the conference he returned to Colombo and took the steamer back to Batticaloa and arrived on 19 June. The GA was away from the station for nearly a month to attend a Conference of GAs. He says he paid Rs 190 for the steamer both ways and the train fare to Colombo and back Rs 12.

Batticaloa during this time had two ports for steamers and coasters. The summer port was the Dutch Bar, about two kilometers from the town.

This port was called so because on 29 May 1603, the Dutch Admiral Spilbergen anchored at this point at Batticaloa. He was the first Hollander to visit Ceylon and hence the name. The other port was Kalkudah Bay about 20 kilometers away, which was used during the winter months. The landing jetty at Kalkudah was built in 1903. Since GA Birch was travelling to Colombo in May, he is likely to have embarked from the Dutch Bar. The Prince of Wales visited Batticaloa in 1875 using the sea route.

Social changes do not happen without sufficient motivation. A need is often the catalyst for



• A portrait of progress juxtaposed. Early transportation and modern railways of Batticaloa.

change. The rail road to Kandy happened because of the demand of coffee and tea planters to transport their products easily to Colombo. Similarly, we witness a need arising for a **faster mode of transport in the East** too.

In ancient times, Batticaloa, with its numerous tanks and network of irrigation channels, was an exporter of rice, but the British abolished the practice of Rajakariya, the beginning of their rule. This had an adverse effect on paddy cultivation. Though this act was done with good intention, paddy production decreased dramatically due to the lack of proper maintenance of the irrigation system. Paddy fell to the status of a subsistence crop. Government Agent R. Atherton (1839–1854) was the first to identify this problem, but it was left to his successors like J. W. W. Birch (1860–1869) and others to take the

necessary measures to rectify the problem and restore Batticaloa to its earlier position as the 'granary of the east' and exporter of rice. Paddy was transported by a train of bullock carts via Badulla to be sold in the local markets. Many of the owners of these carts were Sinhalese. They brought down products like vegetables to Batticaloa and took back bags of rice. These carts were halted and the animals rested in the western part of Batticaloa town. And this part to this day is called 'Sihalawadi' although there are no Sinhalese there now. Paddy was also exported to South India by ocean-going sailing ships.

The other export crops from Batticaloa were coconuts and copra. Between 1846 and 1924 hundreds of acres on the east coast between Vakarai in the north and Pottuvil in the south were opened by British planters as flourishing coconut estates. Estates with names such as Easter Seaton, Hyderabad, Springfield, O'Grady and Rockwood Estates were landmarks in the east. Cargills, Athertons, O'Grady and Sortain were well known owners of them. The commercial importance of the coconut industry at this time could be gauged from the GA's Administrative Report for 1907. On 10 March 1907, Batticaloa was hit by a severe cyclone. The GA reported that 371,005 coconut trees valued at Rs. 3,440,070 were destroyed. The products of these estates were transported by coasters to Colombo and from there shipped to England or they were carried by a procession of bullock carts by land via Badulla to cater to inland markets.

The third important reason for the introduction of faster communication between Colombo and Batticaloa was Tappal (mail) delivery. The perilous and pathetic state of this link is illustrated by an inquiry held by the GA Batticaloa in July 1969 on delays in the mail service via Badulla. The Tappal service was provided by contractors who employed a relay of 'runners' to deliver the mail. The accusation was that the contractor took an inordinate time to deliver letters. The defence the contractor put up makes interesting reading. He said that runners took the following times to convey letters: from Badulla to Lunugala, a distance of 26.52 miles – 13.5 hours; Lunugala to Bibile (10 miles) – 6.5 hours; Bibile to Moneragala (18 miles) – 16 hours; Moneragala to Batticaloa (38 miles) – 23 hours. He pleaded that he could not dismiss the present set of 'coolies' or employ new ones because he had not been able to pay them during the last six months.

In the light of these facts, it is not surprising to read the mention in the GA's Administration Report for 1869 that the Batticaloa Planters had suggested the following steps to improve transport. Either cut a channel from the sea into Batticaloa lagoon at the point of the Dutch Bar or, alternatively, connect Batticaloa by train service to transport their goods. The subject was again brought up in 1903, when during his visit to Batticaloa, Governor Sir West Ridgeway proposed the extension of the railways to Batticaloa.

*The first plan: For well-nigh 50 years the idea to bring the railways to the east had been just a proposal but now, near about 1920, serious plans began to evolve. There were two distinct possibilities.

Both had its advantages and disadvantages. The earlier and first plan was to extend the railways through Badulla to Batticaloa, because the first rail line had been laid from Colombo to Ambepussa in 1854 and the rail road was moving gradually in stages across the central hills towards the Uva Province. It had come up to Bandarawela by 1894 and the next station would be Badulla. So, many in Batticaloa believed the railways would come to Batticaloa via Badulla. The likely route would be Badulla – Passara- Lunugala- Bibile – parts of Moneragala and then to the western shore of the Batticaloa lagoon. Hence we read of speculators on land in the Batticaloa town buying acres of land at cheap rates on the western shore or 'Padduavankarai' in the hope that land prices will escalate soon. The advantage in this first plan was there were no fords or rivers to be crossed; hence there was no necessity to build rail bridges. Besides, the distance was short and there were only 92 miles of rail line to be laid. The disadvantages were: the route was through rocks and precipices. Though the distance to travel was short, the route was winding with sharp curves over rocks and precipices. The travelling time to Colombo would be nearly 24 hours, taking a whole day and a night. Whereas at this time, even with chugging steam engines in little Sri Lanka, a destination was reachable within 12 hours.

However, there was a second plan in the offing. This was to extend the rail line from Maho eastwards to Polonnaruwa and then southwards to Batticaloa and Trincomalee. This plan became a distinct possibility after the Northern line was opened via Maho in 1905. The main disadvantages of the route via Maho were: First, two wide rivers had to be crossed and hence the need for long steel bridges, one at Manampitiya and the other at Oddamavadi. Further, at Manampitiya, there was not only a need for one large bridge but a network of small rail bridges on raised reinforced bunds because at this place when the Mahaweli was in spate it overflowed its banks and created a wide outlet for itself before it reached the sea at the coast village of Verugal. The bridge at Oddamavadi would be over the Vandeloos Bay. Also the heavy wrought iron parts of the bridges had to be fabricated to specification in factories in England and transported by sea. Another disadvantage was the greater distance along which rail lines had to be laid – a distance of nearly 160 miles, almost double the length required for the Badulla line. There were, however, many advantages in laying lines to Batticaloa from Maho. The line would run all through undulating plains, avoiding mountains. Hence, though the distance was longer, the journey would be quicker. Extension of the line up to Gal-Oya junction would enable another line to be laid to Trincomalee with its important harbour. It would also help connect Jaffna and Anuradhapura to the east. Besides, the route would connect other paddy growing regions such as Polonnaruwa.

These latter advantages probably outweighed all other rationale in reaching the final decision to lay the rail line to Batticaloa via Maho. But it was not without the urging of two prominent Tamil politicians of the day. The prime mover was the

Hon K. Balasingham member for the North in the State Council in the 1920s. Besides, his word had greater weight because he was also a Minister in the Executive Council. In some of his speeches in the States Council Mr. Balasingham mentions his indebtedness to Mr. J.A. Setukavalar, Proctor of the Supreme Court, in this venture. Mr. Setukavalar was at this time an elected member of the Urban Development Council of Batticaloa. Hon. K. Balasingham said that it was Mr. Setukavalar who motivated and supported him with maps, facts, figures and cogent arguments to bring forward his proposal to bring the Railways to Batticaloa via Maho. The six-span Kalladi Bridge over the Batticaloa Lagoon, a rail cum road way, was built primarily to extend the railways south from Batticaloa to Kalmunai and beyond to Pottuvil. It was constructed in 1928. The details on the logistics of assembling such huge bridges with enormously heavy wrought iron parts, some pieces weighing as much as 4.5 tons, at a time when there were hardly any facilities either

for manufacturing or moving these parts, is a tale of human ingenuity. The parts of the Kalladi Bridge were manufactured at the workshop of the West Midlands bridge builders firm of Patent Shaft and Axletree and transported by ship from England. The parts were then rail loaded to the point of the site. At this time only the trains could have carried these heavy railway pieces. And it would have been another engineering wonder to lower these parts over rushing waters of rivers and lagoons in order to establish the bridges. If the Kalladi Bridge was built in 1928, it would have at least another five or six prior when the longest rail bridge in Sri Lanka was constructed at Manampitiya over the mighty Mahaweli River at its widest expanse: followed by another bridge over Vandeloos Bay at Oddamavadi. So was enabled the first train to arrive at Batticaloa in 1924 amidst great rejoicing of the people.

(The Island, 6 September 2014)

SYNOPSIS OF MEETING

**Colombo Chapter 11 Dec 2015
ARE WE A MARITIME NATION?**

By Commodore YN Jayarathna,

(Commodore of the Sri Lanka Navy with almost 30 years of distinguished service and is the Commandant of the Naval and Maritime Academy, Trincomalee.)

Sri Lanka as an Island at a strategic location of the Indian Ocean had always enjoyed the reputation of a maritime hub. Seafarers in their quest from East to West, and *vice versa*, could not ignore this vital stop-over on a cross-ocean passage. The Arabs (present day Yemenis and Omanis), made their way from west as well as traders even coming from as far west as Rome.

From the East came Chinese and Sri Vijayans and the two roadsteads of Manthota and Gokanna were noted stopovers during those long passages. Sailing vessels also used estuaries and engaged in trade with locals, where there were no formal harbours or ports at that time.

The sprawling Sinhala Kingdoms bear testimony to the essential maritime link: Manthota served Anuradhapura whilst Gokanna (Koddiyar Bay)



• *Commodore YN Jayarathna.*

served Polonnaruwa. When our Kings decided to seek refuge in the hinterland, we lost our maritime link and maritime affinity. It took the effort of three successive Kings (Gajabahu 1131-1153, Parakramabahu 1153-1186 and Nissankamalla 1187-1196 AD) to develop the naval prowess of the Island Nation. It is of further interest that whenever we had naval capability, the Kings had always enjoyed stability and prosperous governance.

However, it appears that except these three kings (and queens), though interested in levying taxes from maritime exchanges, failed to develop coastal - let alone a Naval - defence for safeguarding the Island Nation from external aggression. Thus, by seeking refuge in the hinterland, what we lost, among other things, was our maritime heritage.

Coming from this retrospective, today our geographical location has become even more significant, given the complex geo-politics of economy-driven national aspirations of competing states. While the present day geo-political context presents us more opportunities, along come some challenges too and the necessity of understanding contemporary maritime matters never has been as crucial for our existence and survival as a sovereign nation.

Sri Lanka today enjoys an Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) of about seven times its land mass, where sovereign rights for living and non-living resources of the water column, sub soil and sea bed remain uncompromised. This 200 nautical mile wide sea area holds the untapped resources of the ocean which surely must be explored for economic benefits in forthcoming years. Hence the sea area needs to be policed and scientifically researched to ensure sustainable exploitation. Furthermore, the Search & Rescue Region (SRR) assigned to us is about 27 times our landmass, passing through the world's busiest Sea Lane of Communication (SLOC) connecting far East

and far West, and places on us a tremendous obligation as per international conventions. Through this 'Global Interstate', the world's topmost economies communicate and carry on their business. This reinforces the role this island nation plays in securing the seas for all, at a vital stretch of ocean that policy makers need to pay attention to in formulating strategies for the country.

With a nation with the second largest population in the world in the neighbourhood, and with the world's sixth and eighth largest populations within reach, the region around us is highly populated and that means they need to be fed and served with a tremendous amount of consumables carried across the seas. In transporting these consumables through the seas, the Deep Sea Ports of this Island Nation hold a potential that only our imagination can restrict. The current container-borne trade based on "Triple E" class carriers demand round-the-clock port access, short turn-around time in ports and proximity to Sea Lanes of Communication (SLOC). Our ports have all these qualities and we can be proud that the Port of Colombo is among the top 30 ports of the world. Thus, the development of 16m- deep Hambantota and 21m-deep Colombo South Extensions are truly strategic which have changed and will continue to affect regional dynamics, with even geo-political effects.

The Claim for the "Continental Margin" under the provisions available under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) is to secure the resource-rich sea bed for our future generations. This would be our final frontier. As technology develops we will be in a position to extract the resources for economic benefit even from these greater depths. However, this expanse of ocean needs to be secured - both in legal and physical terms - against poachers, exploiters, etc., and preserved for future generations. Thus, the Navy of tomorrow needs to be built up today, just as the three successive kings did from 1131 to 1196 AD. Since we once lost our affinity with our maritime frontier, this time we cannot let it happen. Closing our eyes any longer to our maritime potential would jeopardise our very survival and existence and thus, all of us - from policy makers to the man-in-the-street - need to upgrade their understanding on our maritime heritage and affinity to the sea..

Forums like the Ceylon Society of Australia can facilitate such understanding. It is only through awareness that maritime matters need to be studied in the context of geo-politics, as matters maritime do not work in isolation.

At a time when an era of global warming and environmental concerns is already upon us, our understanding of the maritime space must be focused.

Finally, let me reiterate that the boundary of what we can do with this maritime environment is only limited by our imagination.

– M.D.(Tony) Saldin



SYDNEY
28 February 2016

The first CSA general meeting for 2016 will take place on Sunday 28 February at the Pennant Hills Community Centre, Ramsay Road, Pennant Hills NSW 2120. Please note the venue: Ramsay Road is off Yarrara Road and the Community Centre is opposite the Pennant Hills Railway Station. The entrance to the building is from the car park at the back of the building. Members and guests are welcome.

The guest speaker of the evening is

Thiru Arumugam

(President of the CSA).

who will speak about

A Tale of two Bridges: the Bridge over the River Kwai in Thailand and the Bridge over the Kelani Ganga for the film The Bridge on the River Kwai.



During World War II, by 1942 Malaya, Singapore and Burma had fallen to the Japanese. Thailand was neutral but was occupied by the Japanese. Japan next planned an invasion of India and they had to move large numbers of troops to Burma via Thailand. There was no road link between Thailand and Burma; therefore the Japanese decided to build a 415 km long railway line by manual labour through rugged mountainous rain forest. For labour they used about 50,000 Allied Prisoners-of-War and conscripted about 200,000 Asians as labourers. Of these, about 100,000 died of disease and starvation, including about 3,000 Australian POWs and about 50,000 Indian Tamil rubber plantation labourers from Malaya. The railway line included a major bridge over the River Kwai. In 1957 Columbia Pictures decided to make a film of the book *The Bridge on the River Kwai*. The book is fiction, but it is based on the building of the bridge and railway line described above. Columbia decided to shoot the film in Ceylon and they built a wooden bridge across the upper reaches of the Kelani Ganga at

Kitulgala. The bridge had to be strong enough to carry a steam engine driven train, which was blown up with the bridge in the climax of the film. The engine and train were formerly used on the Kelani Valley narrow gauge railway. The film was a resounding world-wide success and won seven Academy Awards – a record for a British film.

The talk will describe the building of the two bridges and end with the mention of an interesting new development.

The usual discussion and question time will be followed by a social.

COLOMBO CHAPTER

4 March 2016

A fascinating evening with

Mr Pradeep Jayatunge
who will speak on

Nittaewo

“Nittaewo” were a tribe of dwarf, hairy, tree-dwelling humans who disappeared about 3-4 centuries ago after the Veddahs, with whom they competed, killed them off. There is no evidence except legends and many scholars have tried to clear up the mystery.

Now can our speaker shed some light into the dark corners of a few centuries back?

Come along and find out!

Commencing at 5.30 PM

Questions and discussions will follow

Venue: Organization of Professional Associations (OPA)

275/75, Prof. Stanley Wijesundera
Mawatha,

off Baudhaloka Mw, Colombo 7

Contact:

Tissa Devendra (President) email: tisdev@sltnet.lk
011 250 1489.

M.D.(Tony) Saldin (Hony. Secretary) email:
saldin@sltnet.lk +94 777 363366/2931315 (Res),
2936402 (O).

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

Happened at Melbourne

“I was at the airport, checking in at the gate when an airport employee asked, ‘Has anyone put anything in your baggage without your knowledge?’”

To which I replied, “If it was without my knowledge, how would I know?”

He smiled knowingly and nodded. “That’s why we ask.”

OBITUARIES

Brian Eustace Elias

09.10.1936 – 12.11.2015

A tribute to my uncle

I send this message with deep sadness at the passing of my uncle, Brian Elias.

He was a rare and honourable man; full of love, compassion and warmth. He overcame great hardship and challenges with the loss of his beloved father at a very young age. He was a self-made man, a success in every sense of the word and a role model for all of us, his kith and kin.



He was a man with a warm heart and a passion for helping others. Many of you present here today would have known and experienced that generosity and love in many ways. No one’s problems were too big or too small for him, making him the ‘go to’ man for so many. He took both the ups and downs in life as they came and nothing could dampen his spirit. Perseverance and an immeasurable capacity for hard work saw him rise up to greater heights every time he was challenged.

Living in his house for some time, I witnessed the never ending matters he would involve himself with and the number of persons he would help and assist. He would be in and out the door in a minute, attending to this or that for someone else and it was never a bother.

His love for Aunty Marina, Michael and Michelle was an example of total devotion and love amidst all the caring he provided to those around him. He was involved in multiple social activities and was a personal support to many people.

On a personal level, I am very grateful and indebted to Uncle Brian for his unconditional love to me and my family. Some of his most important lessons to me were, “to try to see the good in everyone and ignore the rest”, to “not burn your bridges before you cross them”, and above all “to learn to paddle your own canoe”. Uncle Brian lived these examples throughout his life.

Even though I was a boarder away from home, he was at my cricket and hockey matches and was proud as punch to be at my Prize Day speech as college Head Prefect and many, many other events. His house was always open to us and we never required permission or invitations to drop in.

I am very happy and relieved that I was able to see him, hold him in my arms and feel his warmth not so long ago.

He was a Giant of a man in every sense of the word. May he rest in eternal peace.

– Neil Harvie

The passing away of Brian Eustace Elias on 12 November 2015 was a loss felt by many persons as he was actively involved in various areas prior to his illness. He had been a very good friend of mine for well over 65 years. Our friendship started in our kindergarten days at Kingswood College, Kandy. He was one year senior to me and was with my elder brother in the same class and later on, boys such as Chandra Karunaratne, Patck Chinniah, Lionel Perea, Mohamed Nizzar, etc. joined their class.

From the Upper Kindergarten to Fourth Standard, I was in the college hostel where Brian was also a hosteller as he was from Badulla at that time. This was the beginning of our long-standing friendship as we were living together under the same roof for a number of years. But with the acquisition of Ferens [hostel] on Augusta Hill, Brian and my elder brother were transferred to Ferens, while I remained in Randle's Hill hostel. However, our friendship continued.

Brian was one of the most loyal old boys of Kingswood and he would never miss the opportunity to be present at any functions related to our alma mater. His love for the college was such that he, along with Shelton Perera and Elvin Fernando, were instrumental in reviving the Colombo branch of the Old Boys' Union which had been dysfunctional for a long time. It is as a result of this effort that the Branch is now functioning and is more vibrant than the parent union. He functioned as a committee member of the branch almost up to the time of his demise.

Brian was a genuine motor sports enthusiast and was a member of most of the associations connected to motor vehicles.

On his return to Sri Lanka after a stint in Bahrain, he started the supplement in *The Island* titled "Road and Track" which was the only such supplement for a long time. A few years ago a function was organised at the Taj Samudra to celebrate the tenth anniversary of the existence of this supplement.

Brian's demise, no doubt, is an irreplaceable loss to many organisations connected to motor vehicles, Colombo branch of the Kingswood Union and his friends. More so, to his wife and the rest of his family members.

I extend my heartfelt condolences to his devoted wife Marina, son Michael and daughter Michelle and their families.

– H. M. Nissanka Warakaulle

The entire motor racing fraternity in Sri Lanka was saddened when they heard that one of the most senior sports journalist in the country, who had extended yeoman service to the well-being of sport, had passed away. The Motoring Editor of *The Island*, Brian Elias

ended his race of life at the age of 79 on 12 November and the loss is almost unbearable.

Brian was a true lover of motor sport and there was no event on Lankan soil which he wasn't interested in. He was the Guru for many racers, giving them tips whenever possible. Brian is the person who brought many local stars to the peak of popularity and he is the reason why most of them are known by the motor sport loving public.

He always maintained an excellent rapport with his co-workers assisting them whenever needed, regardless of their age gaps and seniority. This prominent journalist always extended his services to anyone who was in need, going beyond his limits thereby involved in promoting motorsports in the country in every way he could.

He was like a father figure to almost all of the fellow journalists, racing drivers and riders.

This ardent supporter of motor sport leaves behind his dearly beloved wife Marina, son and daughter Michael and Michelle, in-laws Leisel and Rahal as well as his dear grand children Joel, Nicole, Liam, Saveeta and Andrika.

Not only them, he leaves behind the whole racing fraternity of Sri Lanka and will be missed by many.

– Ajantha Thanthulage

Note: Brian became a member of the CSA (Colombo Chapter) on 14 June 2006.

Justin Fredrick Schokman Driberg 23 December 1925 - 3 August 2015

The death of Justin Driberg, just four months short of his 90th birthday, ended the life of an outstanding Sri Lankan-born American. This remarkable person was born and spent his early years in Wellawatte in an era when the predominant community in Colombo South, encompassing most of Wellawatte, Bambalapitiya and Havelock Town, was the Burghers who contributed immensely to the cosmopolitan culture of Colombo. Justin may have spent only his early years in Sri Lanka, but the land of his birth and the friendships made in his growing years seem to have had an everlasting impact on him. His intellectual curiosity which knew no bounds even as an octogenarian, made him seek others of a similar



outlook and he made it his duty to keep in contact with friends, relatives and others who touched his life, to relive the joyous days of life not only in Sri Lanka but in other parts of the world as well. A man who saw the world as a magical place occupied by interesting people, he brought an air of sincerity and openness in his dealings with people, little wonder then that he was afforded a full and wholesome life with a family that he loved and was well loved in return.

Born in Wellawatte, Colombo, Ceylon (Sri Lanka) in 1925, the second son of Denzil Clifford Drieberg and Ada Phoebe Estelle (Schokman) Drieberg, he came from a long line of military men, beginning with Johannes Gerardus Drieberg of Rotterdam (Cadet Bombardier) who came to Ceylon with the armed forces of the VOC (Dutch East India Company) during the height of the spice trade in the 17th century.

Having received his early education at St Lawrence School, and Arethusa College, Wellawatte he was determined to follow in the footsteps of his forebears. Enlisting at the age of 15 (after giving a false age) with the Ceylon Engineers, a unit serving with the Allied Forces he was commissioned as 2nd Lieutenant by the age of 18, an early indication of his tenacity of purpose.

While he was stationed in India, he met and married an army nurse, Ivy Nicholas, and decided to stay on in India after the end of the war. After working for the Indian Railways, he found work with a fledgling airline, Air India, in 1946, and worked his way up to an executive-level position, which enabled him to travel worldwide. On migrating to Canada in 1961 he worked for the Seventh Day Adventist Church in the publishing field. In 1971, the family moved to California where Justin first served as an Assistant Publishing Secretary, and then as a pastor for several SDA churches in the South Eastern California Conference.

Justin Drieberg joined CSA in 2000 and was a member for over 15 years at the time of his death. He contributed an interesting article in the Feb 2001 issue of *The Ceylankan* in which he recollected his personal experience as a soldier at the time of the Japanese air raid on Ceylon in April 1942. Always engrossed in matters historical and antiquarian, his interests were complemented by a remarkable memory that he was endowed with. My acquaintance with him began with a phone call he made from USA



some years ago, introducing himself and alluding to the fact that he lived in Colombo in a house next door to my parental home before we came to reside there. This was followed by an exchange of emails which provided me with an insight into his most endearing personality.

His daughter Aloma described him thus: "My father was strong in body, in spirit, and in commitment; he never let another man down; he was self made and self reliant; he was proud to be a Ceylon Engineer; he relished the good things in life including Bible study, reading, art and music, travel and photography, food, friends and family. He never made an enemy; he was loyal and unafraid. Much more can be said of this genial, friendly, and unusually gifted man, suffice to say that "An unforgettable man has gone to his Maker."

Justin is survived by Ivy, his wife of 70 years, daughters Loretta and Aloma, sons Keith and Denver, and their families.

– Hugh Karunanayake

JOURNAL REPRINTS

Wish to bring your collection of *THE CEYLANKAN* up-to-date? Yes you can! Reprints and some back issues of the Journal are available in limited quantities. The cost to members is \$7.50 per copy. Non-members pay \$10.00 per issue. This does not include postage and handling. P&H within Australia is \$10.00; Asia/Pacific \$30.00; rest of the world \$40.00 per package of up to 5 issues. Contact Hugh Karunanayake Int. + 61 2 9402 6342 or hkaru@internode.net.au

Are you over 21?

A guy walked into a little corner store in Cairns with a shotgun and demanded all of the cash from the till. After the cashier put the cash in a bag, the robber saw a bottle of Scotch that was on the shelf behind the counter. He told the cashier to put the bottle in the bag as well, but the cashier refused and said, 'Because I don't believe you are over 21.'

The robber said he was, but the clerk still refused to give it to him because she didn't believe him. At this point, the robber took his driver's licence out of his wallet and gave it to the clerk. The clerk looked it over and agreed that the man was, in fact, over 21 and she put the Scotch in the bag. The robber then ran from the store with his loot. The cashier promptly called the police and gave the name and address of the robber that she got off the licence.

They arrested the robber two hours later.



Flavoursome KAN-KUN

...where did it come from?

I always believed that the leafy green 'kan-kung', growing wild along canal banks and cultivated in soggy market gardens to be sold in green 'bouquets' in polas and by loud voiced 'keera-karayas' was truly indigenous to Sri Lanka. The imagination with which Sinhala cuisine transforms it into many dishes, rich and strange, bolstered my belief. My insular assumption was punctured when my wife and I sat down to our first meal at a Chinese restaurant in Bangkok – where the menu positively bristled with dishes boasting 'kan-kun' as an ingredient. I asked our host as to how the Chinese had learnt to cook a 'Sinhalese vegetable' and also retain its name. He looked at me pityingly and said "Don't you realise that, from the very sound, kan-kun just has to be Chinese? We Sinhalese must have got it from them. As to how and when – I just don't know." Chastened and disappointed though we were that Sri Lanka had not made it into Chinese cuisine, we had to admit that "Kankun a la Chine" was extraordinarily delectable.

It is intriguing to work out when 'kan-kun' came to Sri Lanka. Was it brought by the Chinese artisans who worked on the magnificent stone 'Peking lions' lining the stairways to the Dalada Maligawa in Yapahuva?^[sic] Or was it brought by Ching Ho's (Zeng He, as he is now called) army as they marched inland from Galle and took away our king and left 'kan-kun' behind as fair exchange. I wonder whether our archivists will ever be able to research ancient cookery olas to discover when 'kan-kun' entered our kitchens.

Another dimension has now emerged with some scholars claiming that [it was] Admiral Ching Ho/Zeng who made landfall in America's Pacific coast before Columbus. Who has not heard of the city of Cancun in Mexico? Did Ching Ho take kan-kun there – or did he get can-cun from the Mayas or Aztecs?

Extract reproduced with kind permission from author TISSA DEVENDRA of Quest for Shangri-La (Stories and Diversions) - Vijitha Yapa Publications 2011.

Loyal husbands will get to heaven after they die.
Disloyal husbands will get to heaven while they are alive. The choice is yours!

Colombo Municipal Council notches 150 years

In December 2015 the Colombo Municipal Council celebrated its sesquicentenary, thus becoming one of the oldest Councils even taken in the context of Asia. Famed for its harbour, Colombo city is today regarded as the foremost economic hub of the nation.

The largest city in the country, Colombo is the financial and commercial capital of Sri Lanka, that has been ruled by the Portuguese, Dutch and British until the country attained independence in 1948.



The landmark Colombo
Municipal Council building

Colombo is derived from "Kolomba" a Sinhalese word meaning harbour, port, ferry, haven. It was originally a small port of call for Chinese, Arabic, Moorish and Persian traders.

When the Portuguese occupied the island, Colombo became the centre as with the Dutch rulers and after the British occupied Colombo in 1796 and won control of the Kandyan kingdom in 1815, it became the capital of the entire country.

After centuries of colonial rule, the Ordinance of 1865 which halted the decline of local administration and constituted the Colombo Municipal Council that same year. The Council held its inaugural meeting on 16 January 1866. This is commonly regarded as the most important move by the rulers to give the Ceylonese nation their first feeling that Colombo was their capital and paramount city.

The first Mayor of the Council was Charles Peter Layard (1866 to 1877) to the present incumbent M.J.M.Muzzammil, the 49th Mayor. Among them have been some distinguished names including N.M.Perera, J.R.Jayawardene, R. Premadasa, A.E.Goonasinghe, George R.De Silva, C.T.Grero, V.A.Sugathadasa, M.Vincent Perera, Jabir A.Cader. The first Sri Lankan Mayor was Sir R. Saravanamuttu.

To mark the Colombo Municipal Council's anniversary, a Rs. 500 sterling silver commemorative coin was issued by the Central Bank of Sri Lanka on 14 December 2015.



LATEST ADDITIONS

This is a list of the newest additions to the CSA library. These publications have been kindly donated by CSA member Anthony van der Wall of Cheltenham, NSW, who took the trouble to personally deliver them to the librarian. Thank you, Anthony, for your kind generosity.

- Ceylon Almanac; 1833, 1837, 1852, 1858, 1861, 1862.
- Royal Asiatic Society - Ceylon Branch; 1849–1879, 1883 –1884, 1883 – 1884, 1889–1890 1908, 1909 – 1913, 1915 – 1916, 1917.
- Selections from the Dutch Records of the Ceylon Government: Memoirs of Joan Gideon Loten.
- Jubilee Memorials of the Wesleyan Mission 1814 – 1864
- From Adams Peak to Elephanta, Edward Carpenter 1892.
- The Rifles and Hounds in Ceylon, Sir Samuel W. Baker 1874
- In Old Ceylon, Reginald Farrer 1908.
- Historical Tombstones of Malacca.
- Golden Tips (History of the tea industry) Henry W Cave 1901.

While books have been donated by members and friends out of their goodwill, some are donations from authors who have held book launches to promote

and sell their books at CSA general meetings. While a complete list will be published for the information of members from time to time, please note that only new additions will be listed on a regular basis at most times, as and when books are received.

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

Aiyo, these robbers... can't even rob properly no!

A pair of robbers entered a record shop on Galle Road in Colombo and were nervously waving two revolvers. The first robber started shouting, 'Nobody move! or I'll shoot.'

When his partner took a step forward, the startled first thief turned around and shot him.

Important information to our contributors!

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

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

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

To facilitate the design/layout, leave your articles with as **little formatting as possible** – **no indents or double spacing of lines; only single space after fullstops, percent or per cent, not %**. Mere trifles, but adhering to them can save hours of an Editor's time. Where applicable, contributors are also requested to annotate bibliographical references, both for copyright purposes and to help further research and study by interested members.

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



• Hugh, Malini and Tulsi.



• Dr Gerard Thevarayan, Allan Henricus and Dr Robert Sourjah.



• Tony and Srini Peries.



• Ashra and Deva Ponnusamy.



• Les and Virasmi Perera.



• Dr Lucian and Srikanthi Wijetunge

Fun filled evening of fellowship and camaraderie at the CSA annual dinner

by HUGH KARUNANAYAKE

It was truly a fun filled evening of fellowship when the CSA held its 19th AGM and a sumptuous dinner took place at the Thornleigh Community Centre. Most of the 154 members and guests attending knew each other, which added to the geniality of the evening.

A humorous skit titled "Harima Magulak" presented by Sydney's "Kolam Maduwa" featuring Sunil de Silva and Devika de Fonseka had the audience in stitches. This was followed by a quiz compiled by President Thiru based on material from the Society's journal *The Ceylankan*. Dr Robert Sourjah emerged the winner of the keenly contested test of knowledge and also the ability to retain it.

A mouth watering buffet dinner gave taste buds a good workout and created the appetite for more sensorial delights in the form of an after dinner sing-a-long session with Shirani Rodrigo at the piano assisted by a lead choir of chosen vocalists. Audience participation was the key here with everyone joining in to sing old favourites, Christmas carols and popular bailas as well.



• L-R Malini Arumugam, Devika de Fonseka and Virasmi Perara.



• Maya and Sanath Nanayakkara.



• Nalin de Silva and Presenji Jayewickreme.



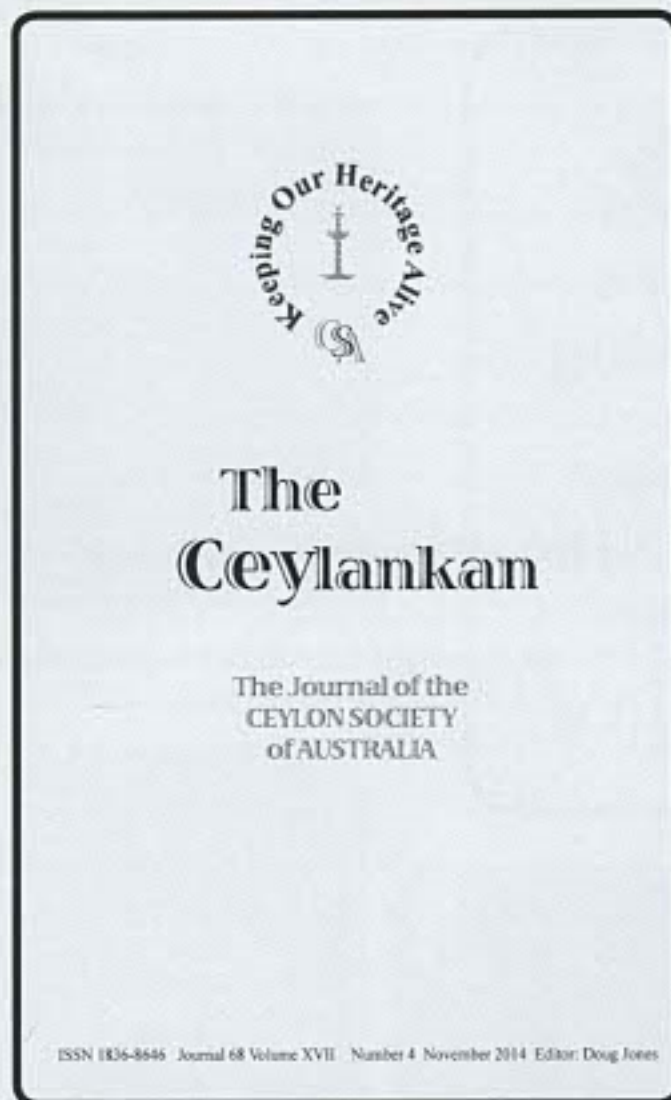
• Dr Robert and Inez Sourjah.



• Sunimal and Chrysanthie Fernando with other guests enjoying the night.

The Ceylankam...

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that many member readers
say they read every issue
from cover to cover.
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Some Golden Words...

1. If you want to change the world, do it when you are a bachelor. Because after marriage, you can't even change a TV channel.

2. Listening to your wife is like reading a terms and conditions of a website. You understand nothing, but still you agree.

3. Chess is the only game in the world that reflects the status of a husband. The poor King can take only one step at a time... while the mighty Queen can do whatever she likes.

4. All men are brave. Horror movies don't scare them... But five missed phone calls from your wife ... you're as good as DEAD!

Logic vs Intent

A wife asks her husband: 'Could you please go shopping for me; buy me one carton of milk, and if they have eggs, get six.'

A short time later, the husband comes back with six cartons of milk.

The wife asks him: 'Why did you bring six cartons of milk?'

He replied: 'They **had** eggs.'

[Facebook.com/wifehusbandjokes](https://www.facebook.com/wifehusbandjokes)

WE NEED SPEAKERS

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

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

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

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

One more cricket joke

What's the most proficient form of footwork displayed by Sri Lankan batsmen?

A. The walk back to the pavilion.



• President Thiru Arumugam with Devika de Fonseka.



• The choristers (from left) Shirani Rodrigo (piano), Daya Gonsalkorale, Ashra Ponnusamy, Melanie Rankine, Virasmi Perera and Pauline Gunewardene.



• (From left:) Hugh Karunanayake, Leslie Perera and Sunil de Silva.

**CSA
Annual
Dinner &
Sing-along**

**Photography:
SENANIE
de
SILVA**



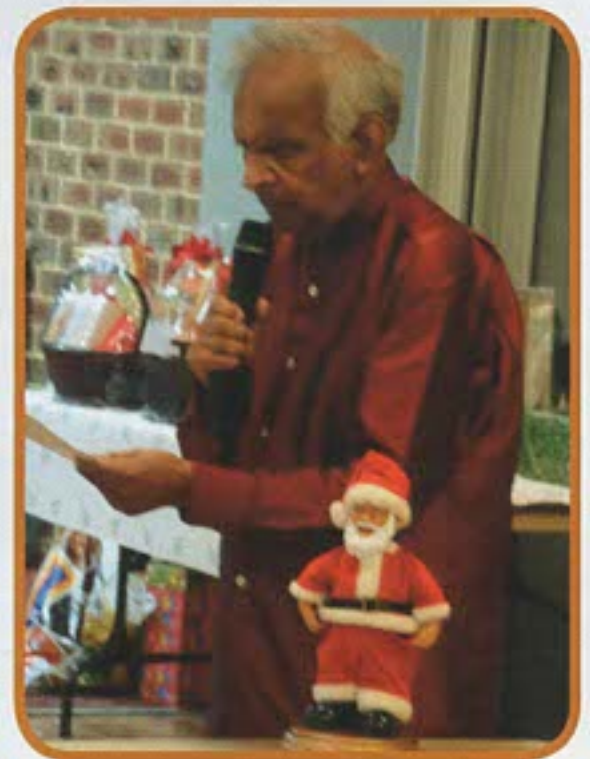
• Cynthia Piachaud and Pauline Gunewardene.



• Varini and Anton Massillamany.



• Deepak Pritamdas and Earlson Forbes.



• Chandra Senaratne reading the riot act to Santa Claus. It's OK Mr Claus, he's just talking about the night's program.



• Devika de Fonseka and Sunil de Silva in "Harima Magulak".



• Shirani and Ranjan Rodrigo.

See more photographs
and story by
Hugh Karunanayake
on page 34.