



# The Ceylanikaum

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## From the Editor...

**T**his is the final issue of the Journal for 2014 and it may well be said that it has been a good year. We have had some articles submitted by our members, unsolicited, and that augurs well from where the editor sits. Need I say we'd be grateful for more submissions of the same, and more often. We have had some quality articles from readers who submit their work on a whim, on the spur of the moment. One does not need to be a professional writer, but one who writes from the heart. After all, we are writing about the heritage of the land of our birth and there is no better subject than our experiences of the Motherland.

We have also had excellent responses from those we have requested contributions from. We need your learned support because you are the backbone and bulwark of the Journal to fall back on when resources are low.

Another vital ingredient for the Journal's growth is the tremendous feedback we receive from our readers. They share views about what we are doing, of how well we are doing it and pointing out, unequivocally, when facts get mixed up. This feedback is most encouraging, indicating that readers peruse the Journal critically, with care and a positive frame of mind. With this as a guide, we can forge ahead enhancing the publication which they have come to expect and look forward to.

Whatever success we have achieved has been made possible due to the continued support and hard work carried out behind the scenes. In this regard our erstwhile Editorial Team is an invaluable asset.

People of the calibre of Hugh Karunanayake, Tony Peries, Thiru Arumugam, and Chris Piachaud come immediately to mind. As far as I am aware, these members have given time and unstinting support to editors of the Journal from the inception. There are others too, who have joined the fold; the likes of Brian Rutnam and, more recently, Les Perera who shares his talents ungrudgingly. All of their editing skills and prompt turn-around time is an immense boost to producing the Journal on time. Without the expertise and know-how they bring to the tedious task of going through copy, issue after issue, the editor will be swamped in a morass of type. Another talent of theirs is that they are prodigious writers ready to oblige the editor on the hunt for copy. To all these good people, and others, who make the editor's life so much easier, I say a sincere 'Thank You' and request that you continue with your literary generosity through the years.

Boxing Day 2014 marks the 10th anniversary of the tsunami that ravaged many parts of Sri Lanka and in this issue, Pamela Ann Ferdinand takes the reader on an evocative journey through the devastation five weeks after it occurred. Gamini de Alwis begins a series of articles on 'Those delightful days at the foothills of Hantana', while Ernest Macintyre, in his own inimitable way, celebrates the 100th birth anniversary of Ediriweera Sarachchandra. Somasiri Devendra traces his link with "A man called Ceylon". Then Vama Vamadevan revisits the JVP insurrection of 1971. And there's a lot more for your reading pleasure in the coming days.

The Editorial Team sends warm greetings to all our readers and friends for the festive season and the New Year.

## About the Ceylon Society of Australia

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

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



## Our Readers Write

### *Chromolithograph or enlivened monochrome?*

My wife, Lakshini (née Serasinghe), and I have been members of the CSA for some years. I always value the opportunities afforded by "The Ceylankan" to learn about my wife's country of birth, which just happens to also be my favourite overseas destination.

On the back cover of the August 2014 (J67) edition you show a bookplate of the Wesleyan Mission House in Colombo from a book published in 1823. What caught my attention was the use, twice, of the term "chromolithograph". I believe this is an error.

Your readers may be interested to know that chromolithography - printing in colour from images on stones, rather than from a metal plate - was a process developed in Europe during the 19th century. Wikipedia states that the earliest patent was awarded to a French printer in July 1837. While it is possible that the process was used earlier and elsewhere, the likelihood of it being used for an English book of the early 1820s is very low.

In my opinion, it is almost certainly the case that the bookplate was printed in black only and hand-tinted. This was a very popular and widespread method of enlivening monochrome bookplates, illustrations from newspapers, and maps. Hand-tinting of picture postcards was still practised in the 1920s.

Chromolithographed picture postcards appeared in Germany from at least the 1890s. They are usually instantly recognisable for the high quality of the illustrations, and almost always quite lovely. One of my Ceylon interests is the postcards of the island. My earliest examples were used for postage in 1898. (Pre-1901 cards from anywhere outside Europe are rare.)

I am attaching a German-produced chromolithographed card inscribed "Gruss aus Kandy" (Greetings from Kandy) that features external and internal views of the famous Queen's Hotel at Kandy. The card was sent to Tasmania (a most unusual destination from Ceylon) in 1903. On the address side is a Queen Victoria 6c with a "security" cachet 'STAMPED/QUEEN'S HOTEL/KANDY' and a faint 'KANDY' postal datestamp. The circumstantial evidence is that the card was stocked and supplied by the hotel, probably to a tourist.

GARY WATSON FRPSV, FBSAP

Director, Prestige Philately, Boronia (Vic).

### *Oxford Professor without a degree*

(From the "Madras Miscellany" in The Hindu)

Two of today's items may have only tenuous connections with Madras, but I'm writing about them as they do have intriguing links with the city. My first tale is about a person whose linguistic bonds

should make him known at least to the world of Tamil Studies, but I wonder how many in that world here recognise the name of Don Martino De Zilva Wickremasinghe (1865-1937). Certainly, despite all my years in Ceylon and my peripheral contact there with education, archaeology and epigraphy — that an all-round journalist and a dabbler in history must have — I had never heard of him till another history hobbyist, Thiru Arumugam, sent me some material the other day from Australia.

After his high school education, Wickremasinghe joined the Colombo Museum Library, was later transferred to the Archaeological Survey of Ceylon, from where he was sent on scholarship to Germany. The focus of his work till then had been Sinhalese, Pali and Prakrit. And it was no doubt for this that the British Museum Library recruited him to do cataloguing of books and manuscripts in these languages. We next find him being appointed in 1899 as the Epigraphist of the Government of Ceylon and working on the *Epigraphia Zeylanica* at the Indian Institute at Oxford University. Which record would not really interest readers of this column. But now comes the twist in the tale.

In 1909 Wickremasinghe was appointed first, Lecturer, then Reader, in Tamil and Telugu at Jesus College, Oxford! He was also an External Examiner for other British Universities in Sinhalese, Pali and Sanskrit. And all this without a university degree! As though there was no degreed native speaker in Tamil or Telugu with expertise in Sanskrit in India! It is, however, stated that he was a fluent speaker in English, German, Sinhalese, Pali and Prakrit — all understandable achievements in the background of what has been said before — but also in Tamil, Telugu and Malayalam. So fluent that he lectured in all of them — and, to emphasise the point, the 'all' included the last three languages listed! Now where did he learn them — and at a level to be so highly rated? That's a mystery that I hope to get an answer to some day.

To set this unique academic record straight, Oxford awarded him an honorary Master's degree. And before you knew it, in 1916 he was being described as 'Lecturer in Tamil and Telugu in the University of Oxford, and in Pali and Prakrit for Jesus College, Oxford'. Later the same year, he was being referred to as the 'Epigraphist Lecturer in South Indian Languages in the London School of Oriental Studies'. And in 1928, he was described as 'Reader in Tamil and Telugu in the University of London, Lecturer in Sinhalese, and Head of the Dravidian Department of the London School of Oriental Studies'. All this with only that belated honorary degree from Oxford University!

During these years, apart from scholarly titles on epigraphy, Wickremasinghe came out with a series of popular books published in London by E. Marlborough & Co: *Tamil Grammar Self-Taught* and



*Tamil Self-Taught* in 1906, and *Sinhalese Self-Taught* and *Malayalam Self-Taught* in 1916. Why he did not do Telugu Self-Taught or why it did not come out if he had indeed done it is another of the mysteries in Wickremasinghe's life.

Perhaps some of the answers to all this would be with an old friend of JNU and Madras University, Prof. Sudharshan Seneviratne, who is the new High Commissioner for Sri Lanka in New Delhi and who had held the only Chair in Archaeology in any university in Ceylon. He had done his Ph.D. at JNU, his thesis being 'Social Base of Early Buddhism in Southeast India (Andhra and Tamil Nadu) and Sri Lanka, 3rd Century B.C. to 3rd Century A.D.' His guides for this work were S. Gopal, R. Champalakshmi and K. Meenakshi, all from Madras, and much of his research was done in the Theosophical Society Library. During his 10 years in India, Hindi, Tamil and Telugu were all languages he could communicate in. When he was in Madras in 2003 to deliver a couple of lectures, at the one at the University of Madras, Prof. Seneviratne invited its Department of Archaeology to forge links with his Department at the University of Peradeniya, Sri Lanka's premier university, and work on digs that had been allotted to it. But nothing came of it. Sadly.

S. MUTHIAH (Chennai, India)  
*Thiru Arumugam's story on epigraphist Don Martino De Silva Wickremasinghe in the August 2014 issue (J67) prompted CSA member S. Muthiah to pen the above in his widely read column "Madras Miscellany" in The Hindu which we reproduce for your reading pleasure. - Ed.*

#### **Still more on Dickman's Road**

I read the letter from Dr. Ranji Wikramanayake in the August 2014 (J67) issue with great interest as I was born in 1931 in Elibank Road, which leads off Dickmans Road. The longest residents of the Havelock town area in all likelihood are the descendants of the de Fonseka/Lindon Jussey de Silva families who owned large extents of land by the end of the 19th century. The eldest daughter of Lindon Jussey, who had six other sisters, married S.R. de Fonseka (Snr). De Fonseka Place and De Fonseka Road are named for this family. Some of the descendants of these families still own land in Havelock Town.

I too remember some of the individuals mentioned by Dr Wikramanayake, especially the "boys" who used to congregate in the evening at the top of Ebert Place. I think the meeting point was outside the gate of the Moonesinghe family home which was on the corner of Dickmans Rd/Ebert Place, one of the sons of the family was part of the group. The Seneviratnes were the children of the Havelock Town Postmaster and were said to total 17 in all.

A Mudaliyar de Fonseka lived in Springfield Waluwa in front of the Post Office and had a gate in each of Elibank & Layard Roads. In Layards Road, F.J. Lucas Fernando had a large extent of land including one block which extended through to Elibank Road. Lucas Fernando (Snr) married another daughter of Lindon Jussey. In Elibank Road, Dr Duncan de Fonseka, who married one of F.J. Lucas's daughters, owned land on both sides of the road and opposite his residence lived Dr. Leo Peries who also married a De Fonseka. Some of his direct descendants still live there.



My grandmother Annie, also a Lindon Jussey daughter, married Emmanuel de Silva and she owned Numbers 7 and 9 Elibank Road. The photograph (above) dating from 1950 is that of Number 7, where I was born. It was built by my father Wilfred around 1928. My mother was born in 1902 at No. 9 and died in 1995 at No. 7. The land was sold out of the family and the current owner rebuilt it in the early 21st century

TONY PERIES (Winston Hills, NSW)

#### **Disce Aut Discede**

I was very interested in Kenneth Abeywickreme's article on the Royal College motto *Disce Aut Discede* in J67 (August 2014) issue of THE CEYLANKAN. May I add some information to it?

*Disce Aut Discede* is the motto of King's School, Rochester, the second oldest school in the world established in 1604 A.C.

The others which have the same motto are Royal College, Colombo; Cornwall College, Montego Bay in Jamaica; the Gosfield Independent School in Essex, England and Middlesbrough High School.

It is on the coat of arms of the University of Manchester Surgical Society. Perhaps some enlightened old boys of King's School, Rochester travelled to



Ceylon and brought this motto to the school, maybe as teachers in the college ?

Any views ?

DR BRENDON GOONERATNE (Colombo, Sri Lanka).

#### *Disce Aut Discede (2)*

It is with great interest that I read Kenneth Abeywickreme's article titled "Disce aut Discede" in the last issue of The Ceylankan (J67 August 2014). He recalled his years at Royal College which he joined in the First Form in 1946.

I too was in that group of about 90 students now referred to as the RC1946 Group. Coincidentally the late Tony White, to whose memory I paid tribute to in the same journal, also belonged to the 1946 group. I hope I will not be breaching any CSA protocols by divulging the names of several of our former classmates who are members of the CSA. Kenneth may be surprised to know that the following members of the RC 1946 Group are also members of the CSA – Alan de Saram, Dr Lakshman de Silva, Fred Kreltszheim, Prof. Lakshman Marasinghe, Dr Gamini Nanayakkara (UK), Deva Ponnuswamy, Anil Gunawardene (UK), and Bryan Wickremeratne. Of those who joined Royal one year after us ie. the 1947 Group and who are members of the CSA are Dr Merle de Silva, Stuart de Silva, Ranjith Jayawardene, Dr Willie Joshua and Dr L.P.Mendis (Sri Lanka.)  
HUGH KARUNANAYAKE (St Ives, NSW)

### Share your views

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

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

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

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

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*It will be 10 years on 26 December 2014 since the tsunami devastated the southern and eastern coastlines of Sri Lanka. What follows is a personal account written by PAMELA ANN FERDINAND about her trip to the Island in January 2004, a mere five weeks after the catastrophic event on Boxing Day of that year.*

## On the Galle Road to Hambantota – images of despair

**D**riving on the Galle Road south before tsunami, one would go through villages bustling with life. In between villages were stretches of green and beach scenes of serenity. Scenes of natural beauty reminding one of the reason why Sri Lanka is known as the “Resplendent Isle”. Amidst the scenery, there would be much traffic during the day with the constant noise of beeping horns and diesel exhaust enough to choke you, emitted from vehicles of every kind: lorries, tuk-tuks, cars and motorcycles. Drive this route often enough and you begin to know the landmarks that help you to recognise where you are on your journey on this route. Wandering village dogs, traffic, coconut palms, toddy tappers, palm trees, shops, people, beaches, free ranging goats and cattle, tourists, catamarans in the water, children, surfers, advertisements, green vegetation, shanties and stilt fishermen. People one would see by the side of the road would flash a smile if you caught their eye and you smiled at them.

It is now five weeks since that December Poya day when the fatal Tsunami rose on the shores of Sri Lanka. Galle Road post-tsunami is now mile after mile of destruction and sadness. The few people one sees still share that smile, but along with the smile, one can see the sadness in their faces. A picture is worth a thousand words. But until you actually see the damage, one does not truly experience the sense of loss and despair that people are feeling.

Driving out of Colombo, it does not seem possible that a tsunami had affected the island. This island is still resplendent. The sea is calm and serene, with occasional small white waves breaking before they reach the shore. The sky is a clear blue with white puffy clouds. And the sea, the colour of emeralds. An idyllic day. But in a short distance, mile after mile of chaos is evident. The beach may be enticing, but few dare to venture onto it now. It is deserted, as are many of the villages along the roadside. The rubble of bricks and concrete and wood still lie where it was tossed by the tsunami violence. Clothes and debris are snagged on trees, so high that one looks and realises that this is the height that the water rose to. Many of these trees were trees of life where some of the lucky ones were able to cling to until they were rescued. The shattered remains of buildings are scarred by watermarks, some close to the roofline. One cannot help but wonder whether there were occupants and whether or not they survived. And this is only the West Coast. One can only imagine

the destruction on the East Coast, where places like Ampara were hit even harder.

In some places, debris has been piled up and the land partially cleared. But a construction vehicle



*“Peraliya Jinaratana Vidyalyaya” in close proximity to where the train was washed away, was the most damaged school in the Galle District.*

showing its strength is a rare site. In fact, only one was seen on the entire stretch between Colombo and Matara. In some places, there are piles of new bricks waiting for someone to create new dreams, but very few of these piles are to be seen. Several weeks after the fatal day of 26 December 2004, along the Galle Road, there has been minimal reconstruction, and then only perhaps a parapet wall. The fresh grey concrete



creates a thick filling for the red brick sandwiches forming the wall.

Landmarks have disappeared. Sometimes it is difficult to know where you are. As with many of the roads in Sri Lanka, when driving on this stretch of the Galle Road, each village or town had shops that boast the name of the town, in Sinhala or English or both. Very few remain. Those that do are in areas the tsunami spared. It is odd, that these few villages exist amidst the destruction. Kosgoda, Ahungalle and Ambalangoda were hard hit. But then Balapitya, just before Ambalangoda heading southbound, is one of the villages that was spared. Apparently, the mangrove trees between the village and the sea acted as a buffer and there was little damage to the village. Through the miles of rubble, all of a sudden there is a stretch



• *Queen of the Sea (Samudra Devi) has been put back together on the tracks at Telwatta - a grim reminder of the many who lost their lives.*

of green or a village that is bustling. Eerie to behold, because in less than a mile, the destruction is again evident.

The foundations of houses are exposed one after another, reflecting the shattered lives of their occupants. A Sri Lankan flag is draped over some bricks on the broken wall of one house, showing pride of the owner in the motherland, in spite of the assault of the sea. The shanties that used to line the beach are now just piles of wood mixed with debris like a bonfire ready to be lit.

The fishermen have been hit hard. In many families, fishing had been a family tradition for generations. Boats and nets are the lifeblood of the business. Boats were damaged extensively all along the coast. Boats were tossed onto roads or damaged or sunk, many far from their moorings. The larger vessels saw their refrigeration equipment damaged. People have been scared to eat fish from the sea fearing contamination from death and chemicals. Fish was being sold in spots and there were buyers, so the

market was making a comeback. On one stretch of beach, a catamaran had just come in. A little further down, a group of men and boys were slowly pulling in a huge fishing net hoping for a good catch.

The train known as the "Queen of the Sea" (*Samudra Devi*) has been put back together on the tracks at Telwatta. It stands as a monument to the victims and survivors alike. Approaching from a distance, one cannot help but think that it looks like a toy train, but as one approaches, the fragile state is evident. There are huge dents and broken parts. Over a thousand passengers lost their lives on the southbound train heading for Matara. There has been criticism in the media that people are being allowed to enter the train and see what it looks like. As offensive as this seems, if those people doing this are pondering the horror of what happened and imagining the fear of the people, then perhaps this is not such a negative situation. But whether one enters the train or not, one can still sense the destruction and impact.

Telwatta, where the train derailed, is surrounded at the present time by relief efforts. Relief organisations congregate and coordinate in this area. Foreign Aid workers are everywhere. The Sri Lankan Army was controlling the traffic, as this has become a popular spot to stop for travellers going South. Keep in mind that those on the roads are not mainly tourists. Many of them are from other parts of Sri Lanka and are seeing the devastation for the first time. The nature of this tsunami is that it is a coastal phenomenon. Driving through other parts of Sri Lanka, such as the city of Colombo or through lush green paddy fields in rural areas, one would not comprehend the destruction unless one sees the images of despair with one's own eyes. Pictures only show a still image, the real view is in 3D.

Clusters of tents are housing many of the displaced. Others have been lucky to have friends or relatives to take them in. Landowners are starting to demarcate their boundaries. Tent villages appear along the road every now and then. Tents of all colours and sizes with the markings of relief organisations. Some tents have been pitched on bare foundations. Others are congregated in relief camps or within villages. A sign outside one tent read: "No Money, No Job, No Food, Please Help". And the sign below was in Hambantota, written on the side of the only remaining wall of a house: "No Money, No Worry, No Money, No Job, No Relations, No Jolly."

As I write this, five weeks have passed since tsunami. One cannot help but ask: "Why are people still living in tents?" Reconstruction of housing will take time. Tents should be only a temporary measure. Crowding families into such living conditions is unacceptable. Why are these families and individuals not housed in more permanent structures? At the moment, tourism is down leaving many facilities less than full.



The Government runs rest houses. There are hotels operational in some areas. There are signs showing rooms for rent. In Hambantota, the rest house is about a mile away from the area affected. Driving by, there is little activity. Why isn't relief money being used to provide a more stable, even if temporary, living arrangement? Children should not be living in tents unless there is no alternative. Imagine a family of six living confined to a small tent, under the hot Sri Lankan sun, with toilet facilities, if any, not close by. Now imagine a drenching rain creating mud everywhere. Children only have a play area among the rubble.



• *The destruction at the Galle bus depot.*

(Photo Associated Press. Other photos by the author)

Every once in a while along the Galle Road, there are hung white sheets with writing usually in Sinhala, with an arrow pointing inwards. These are the signs of the relief camps run by various Aid groups. Persons here are housed in tents or if a building is available, the displaced are housed in them. A number of schools no longer function as schools, but as relief camps. Many aid groups had donated water "bow-sers". Huge containers, usually of plastic, that can be refilled with water. Bowsers can be spotted in various locations along the road or in the camps.

Buddhism plays a central role in Sri Lanka with more than 70 per cent of the population being Buddhist. When the tsunami hit, the temples opened their doors as a refuge to people no matter what their religion. Many of the viharas (temples) continue to serve as camps. The viharas are built out of solid material so many of the stupas and shrines to Buddha remained intact after the tsunami waters receded. The temples are being assisted by Buddhist viharas throughout the world.

The Government of Sri Lanka has posted announcements in the affected areas. Blue posters announce that funds are available for those who lost a family member or their source of income. People must register with the local police and then papers are sent on for processing.

The media has brought to light some of the problems inherent in the system such as bribery, bounced government cheques and long delays. There has also been criticism that the amounts are a mere pittance for such a tragedy. A 'one off' payment of 15,000/- rupees is paid for loss of life. This is equivalent to less than US \$150.

Images of Galle were beamed around the world on television screens in the days after the tsunami. Who could forget these images of despair of the young girls holding on for dear life to a concrete structure, and then seconds later being swept away by the current? Buses piled atop each other at the central bus depot. The damaged cricket pitch. The young men clinging to the top of a bus as it was swirled away by the water. The bus filled with people that was tossed about by rough waves. Driving into Galle now shows cleared streets and clearing of the bus depot. The area is bustling again with activity and vehicles. Foreign volunteers are working at the cricket field picking up debris and repairing the facilities.

Schools have also been affected. According to the Sunday Observer, 6th February, "Peraliya Jinaratana Vidyalaya in close proximity to where the train was washed away, was the most damaged school in the Galle District. This school had 640 students on roll and 30 teachers. Tsunami has only left one building in this school. All other buildings have been destroyed. Tsunami also killed 17 students and three teachers of this school. Many students and nine teachers including the Principal have been displaced. Now the students were attending classes in other schools in the area."

The toddy industry has been affected. The Daily News reports that more than 3,000 of the 5,000 toddy tapping coconut trees have been damaged in the Kalutara district, as has equipment used in making toddy.



• *Foreign Aid workers, donated tents and bowsers for water. Worldwide relief efforts are evident everywhere.*



Some of the tourist hotels have been able to recover whilst others struggle to reopen. Hikkaduwa, usually a vibrant spot for surfers and foreign tourists, was like a ghost town. The beach area had been hard hit. Many of the popular hotels are built right on the beach.

Worldwide relief efforts are evident everywhere. Foreign Aid workers, donated tents and



• In Hambantota, some home owners had demarcated their land with string and hung signs indicting their whereabouts.

bowsers for water, all showing evidence of foreign involvement. The government is slow to move, perhaps because of the size of this unprecedented disaster, but internally many Sri Lankans are helping and do not get the publicity that the foreign aid does. One such organisation is SERVE. I visited a small relief camp in Moratuwa run by SERVE. Executive Director, Sanjeeva De Mel, saw the need to set up a camp in this area right after the tsunami. Although Moratuwa was spared the loss of life felt in other areas, there was still a need to shelter the displaced. His organisation sprang into action immediately after the tsunami and converted into a camp one of the houses that is usually used for an after-school child care program. When I visited, 45 individuals were housed in the facility. Crowded – yes, very much so – from a two week old baby to the elderly. But still, this type of facility was much better than being housed in tents. The children had room to play. Cooking facilities were available and SERVE had an on-site supervisor, as well as social workers who were working with the people. All of these displaced persons had homes that had been destroyed. They lived in shanties on the beach. The poorest of the poor.

There are other organisations in Sri Lanka making similar efforts. Sarvodaya, indigenous to Sri Lanka and much larger and well known, is a prime example of an organisation that has not waited for the government, but stepped in immediately to provide relief to the affected people. Other organisations such

as the Rotary and Lions are collaborating with help both from within and outside Sri Lanka. The ultimate goal for long term projects is to build housing or rebuild schools. But there will be immediate short term projects considered such as buying sewing machines for cottage industries suffering the loss of such equipment or buying fishing boats.

The drive south from Colombo to Hambantota is just one area of Sri Lanka affected by tsunami. It is hard to believe that so many lives were lost or affected in Sri Lanka and other affected countries, an event that happened so quickly to the many unsuspecting people and children. The problems on the West Coast are the same as other affected areas, but areas such as Batticaloa and Ampara on the East Coast were affected severely and to a much greater extent. But no matter where the destruction took place, there is still the same sadness in people's faces, and one sees the same images of despair.

Karyawasam, former Ambassador to the Permanent Sri Lankan Mission to the UN in New York, said it well when he addressed a United Nations committee in 2005: "In Sri Lanka's recorded history of 2500 years no reference to such an event is found. This explains why there are no words in our local written languages for such tidal waves and why our people did not possess an awareness or tools either to sense or to cope with such a disaster."

## When the wave struck... in Yala

...All these waves now, charging, churning. Suddenly furious. Suddenly menacing ...

...All at once I saw brown water. No more smoky gray, but billowing brown water, way into the distance, as far as I could see. My head was above the water now. Still I was being swept along at high speed. There was nothing I could hold. I flung about. There are trees swirling around me. What is this about?

... A child was floating towards me. A boy. His head above the water, He was screaming. Daddy, Daddy. He was clinging to something. It looked like the broken seat of a car, there was yellow foam or rubber inside. He was lying on top of it, as if he was body-boarding. From a distance I thought this boy was Malli [my son]. I tried to reach him. The water slammed into my face and pushed me back, but I managed to get nearer the boy. Come to Mummy, I said out loud. Then I saw his face up close. He wasn't Mal. The next instant I was knocked sideways, and the boy was gone.

—Excerpts from *Wave* by Sonali Deraniyagala (2013) Published by Alfred Knopf, New York.





## *Those delightful days at the foothills of Hantana (Part I)*

### **A mishmash of incidents**

by Gamini de Alwis

**O**n my first day at the University, my mother insisted on coming with me to Peradeniya. She was accompanied by one of my brothers. We arrived at the University on a typical Peradeniya day. The grounds and the trees were being lightly sprayed by a continuous drizzle relieved by a sporadic flood of sunshine. On such days mixed with wet and light, the surrounding colours seem much brighter and sharper than on the days dominated by one or the other. We came along the Galaha Road and turned left at the Alwis pond leading to the curved roads which separated symmetrically, much like the antenna of a butterfly. One went round into the Arunachalam Hall and other to Jayathilaka. On the side of Jayathilaka Hall was a natural pond with a Jacaranda tree in full bloom close to it. The bright lilac flowers of the Jacaranda were strewn all over the glossy green of a wet grass. It made a striking picture and seemed a harbinger of a very enjoyable stay in the place.

We were met by the Sub-Warden of the hall. After I was allocated a room, we went to inspect it. When I had unpacked my rather meagre belongings, my family bid me good luck and left me to take in the place and get acquainted with my fellow residents. In our first year, we were not allowed to select the students with whom we would share the room. The Warden of the hall billeted us together into a room largely in an arbitrary manner. The only concession he made was to group us by faculty where this was possible. This often resulted in people from widely different backgrounds being thrown in together. Despite our apprehension at first, it proved to be one of the more beneficial among many such valuable experiences we were exposed to. It made us recognise the homogeneity among us while appreciating the seeming differences. I am sure it helped us in later life to easily adjust to people from various walks of life.

In my first year at Jayathilaka, there were many unusual groups of roommates. One such was a trio of engineering students, two of whom seemed very different to each other. One was a very skinny fellow from the remote south and the other a very rotund chap from the far north. Before long the more creative fellows from the faculty of Arts began calling one of them 'Nobody' and the other 'Everybody', in some way capturing their physical attributes. Except for their closest friends, no one knew their actual names but anyone who was at Jayathilaka Hall at the time will always remember them if they were referred to as 'Nobodia' or 'Everybody'. There was once a minor examination at their faculty but the results, which were expected that morning, were posted late. Most of the students had given up waiting and returned to the halls for their midday meal. While

the meal was in progress, a late straggler sauntered into the dining room with the news that the results had been posted. When pressed for more detail, he solemnly declared in a grave voice that nobody had passed, everybody had failed. After a long incredulous silence even 'Everybody', despite his disappointment that he would need to repeat the examination, could not help but enjoy the moment.



• *Jayathilaka Hall.*

*(All photographs from the author.)*

Looking back on those days, I cannot believe that meals were made into such an issue during our time, particularly when you see the plight of the current students who need to buy their meals or cook them with inadequate facilities. Such a lot of time and energy were wasted at hall meetings arguing on the merits of the common menu. There were a few students who were never happy. Often these students



homes. They were from those in the middle who wanted to impress upon others that they came from a far more affluent background than was the case. The extent and fervour of their expression of discontent was a futile attempt to appear socially superior to their peers. Occasionally, however, there was a justified reason to complain - as on the day when we found our teeth grinding a stone or two with every mouthful of rice we took. Everyone began shouting at the hall steward Kahawita, who was responsible for supplies. "*Kahawita, me batheke gal*", meaning there are stones in the rice. After a while the shouting had subsided and we were quietly resigned to warily sift each mouthful of rice with our tongues to detect and discard



• *The University gymnasium.*

the stones, thereby mitigating any risk to our teeth. In the ensuing silence, a fellow brought the house down when out of the blue he thundered: "*Kahawita me gal eke bath*" meaning there is even rice found among the stones.

There were many unusual characters at the university. They provided much colour to university life. One of them was Lesley Handunge, who was the Director of Physical Education at the time. He must have been a boxer of some ability in his day. On a visit back to the campus after I had left the university, he showed me his scrapbook of paper cuttings. Of particular note were the reports of a bout between him and the English boxer at the London Olympics in 1948. He had narrowly lost on points to the Englishman who had gone on to win the Gold Medal. Even the partisan British press had expressed some doubt as to their boxer's win against Handunge. They thought that he had been hard done by. They had referred to him as 'the brown flash'. It was generally known that Handunge was deaf in one ear. Perhaps it was an unsolicited memento of his boxing days. At a semi-formal dinner, a student, new to the Sports Council, was seated next to him and was warned of this defect. This fellow filled with much empathy for Handunge's disadvantage, directed his small talk at the top of his voice. After bearing this for a while, Handunge turned like the boxer he was in a jerky motion, fixed his eye on the fellow and asked him in annoyance "Why are you shouting? Do you think I am deaf?" The hapless fellow, unbeknown to him, had been seated at the side of his good hearing.

The quadrangular green in the Science Faculty is surrounded on all four sides by a two storey

structure. The Chemistry and Physics laboratories and lecture theatres occupied the longer sides and the Mathematics department and store area on the shorter sides. Many from the upper floor were watching the spectacle of an unusual cricket match for the freshers taking place on the green. There was no ball being used. Instead a few plump participants were nominated to be the balls. Three skinny fellows formed the wicket. The rest were batsmen, bowlers or fielders. There were about four umpires, all seniors. One of them gave a ball by ball commentary, which was not the description of play as it happened but as it should have happened. The bowler, when he came into bowl, ran in with one of the plump fellows nominated as the ball, let's call him the ball-guy. At delivery, the ball-guy ran to the batsman. If the commentator predicted that a boundary was scored, the ball-guy had to run away to the boundary pursued by one or more fielders. If the batsman was bowled, the ball-guy ran into the three skinny fellows who were the wickets and they all fell down together. If the ball was caught, the ball-guy was overtaken and embraced by a fielder close by. The ball-guys were changed frequently because they were quickly running out of puff. Even the freshers, who were being ragged, were themselves out of breath. A lecturer in the Chemistry department had taken upon himself to put an end to the rag. He came out and did just that much to the disappointment of the organisers who had taken great pains over managing the match. These seniors were severely warned that on the next such occasion they will be reported to the authorities. While he walked back to the department, he saw a group of seniors congregated and making a hullabaloo. He approached the group and found that a fellow surrounded by seniors was jumping up and down. He was annoyed that no one had heeded his warning.

"Tell me who is ragging you?" asked the lecturer after laying a protective hand on victim's arm. "I am not being ragged. I am actually a second year student" replied the student, looking very innocent. "Then why are you jumping up and down" enquired the lecturer a bit irritated. "I enjoy jumping up and down. I frequently do so," declared the student to the amusement of the supposed culprits. At this stage the lecturer realised that it was a setup and that he had been had. He quickly withdrew from the scene with a vastly subdued appetite for stamping out the rag.

Most of us are now convinced that the rag for the newcomers at the university should never be allowed. There were many instances when the rag was enjoyed, both by the persons ragging and those being ragged. All too frequently, however, it degenerated into bullying. There were instances when some took sadistic enjoyment. I remember in my final year when I walked into the shared toilets, a fresher appealed to me, in desperation, that the senior next to him was forcing him to wash his face from the water in the



toilet bowl. I sternly told him that he does not have to do it and to get back into his room. The senior fellow was not too happy with my interference but he did not want to have an argument with me. Even if I say so, I am sure I did not appear to be a fellow he could take on. It is also possible that on being



• The open air theatre fondly known as the 'Wala'.

challenged, he became ashamed of the rag he was engaging in.

We were quite lucky at the time that there were so many lecturers at Peradeniya who fostered the Arts in the campus and none more so than Professor Ediriweera Sarathchandra. He was in the Sinhala department and was an established pioneer in the revival of the Sinhala theatre. When we joined the university, he had already staged *Maname* and *Sinhabahu* to critical acclaim. Due to the presence of such people, many leading producers did not need much inducement to bring their work to the university for its annual drama festival. It was held at the open air amphitheatre, fondly known as the *wala*. The festival ran for about one week with a different play on each night. After dinner we would line up to pay 50 cents and get into the *wala*. Often the girls would get in earlier and reserve places for us. Some brought with them mats or plastic sheets as the weather in Peradeniya was not always predictable. There was a carnival atmosphere and great anticipation until the appointed hour when the play began.

The student audience could be very appreciative. I remember when Chitrasena staged *Nurthanjali*, he and the cast were given a standing ovation. He had to front the stage with Vajira and other dancers many times to take a number of curtain calls. The applause did not cease for a very long time. He was so moved by this show of appreciation that he later wrote a lovely piece about it in the Sunday papers. In it he disclosed that he had been rejuvenated by the appreciation he had received at Peradeniya. At the same time the audience can be very cruel as well. There was never a polite acceptance of a mediocre play. Many a playwright or an actor has been reduced

to tears by incessant jeering. On one such occasion, the play could not continue because of the jeering and remarks being shouted around. At this point, Professor Ashley Halpe, himself a patron of the Arts, got on to the stage in his capacity as the Proctor of the university who was responsible for discipline, and appealed to the crowds.

"If you do not want to watch the play kindly leave the arena. I have asked them to return the entrance money to you. This troupe of artistes has come all the way from Colombo. If any of you want to stay back you should be quiet and allow them to continue the play without interruption." There was complete silence in which you could hear the proverbial pin drop. With order restored, the play was about to begin when an appreciative voice from behind broke the silence "*Podi part aka unath, Halpe karaya wade niyamata keruwa*", in translation "though it was only a very small part, Halpe gave a brilliant performance".

I am indebted to our contemporary Jayalath Manorathne who recalled this incident in his own inimitable style at a recent gathering in Melbourne.

There is nothing to say that the life or the humour at the Peradeniya campus during our time was any more extraordinary than elsewhere or at any other time. They were just happier times when we were full of youthful exuberance and more completely attuned to the music of life. In recalling these events, some of us may be transported to a time when all seemed well with us and the world around us.



## Cool mountain valley

The cool green mountain valley of Nuwra Eliya was silvery in the light morning rain, typically Anglo-Indian with its corrugated tin roofs and its extravagantly extensive tennis courts and golf links. The Sinhalese were delousing themselves in front of their huts or sitting shivering, wrapped in woollen shawls, the landscape, resembling the Black Forest, lay lifeless and shrouded. Except for a few birds I saw no signs of life until, in a garden hedge, I came upon a fat, poison-green chameleon whose malevolent movements in snatching insects I observed for sometime.

The path began to climb upward through a little revine, straggling roofs disappeared, a swift brook roared below me. Narrow and steep, the way led steadily upward for a good hour, through dry underbush and tormenting swarms of gnats; only rarely did a turn in the road afford a view and this always presented a pretty, rather boring valley together with the sea and the hotel roofs. The rain gradually stopped, the cool wind subsided, and now and again the sun came out for minutes at a time.

—Hermann Hesse, *Images of Paradise* (1911)



# That memorable night of April 5th –the 1971 insurrection

**S**ome aspects of the night of the insurrection of 1971 have gone unrecorded and the public are entitled to know all the facts of the behind-the-scenes activities that went on to avert what would have been much worse than what actually happened.

On the night of the 4th/5th of April 1971, the Wellawaya Police Station had been mistakenly attacked by the local JVP (Jathika Vimukthi Peramuna) leader and was repulsed with some casualties. The fact that the entire country's Police Stations were to be attacked on a particular date was not known at that time. The attack on Wellawaya Police Station was thought to be an isolated incident, but intelligence sleuths were busy taking stock of the situation. One such body investigating that was under ASP (Assistant Superintendent of Police) K.S. de Silva of the Criminal Investigation Department (CID) Special Branch, operating from the Borella Police Station.

I was attached to Police Headquarters as supernumerary, having just returned from the UK and Europe after six-month study tour. This included a three-month course at the Police College, UK, attachments at Scotland Yard, Netherlands Police, German Police and the Gendarmes in France. I was sharing an office room with late Cyril Herath, a colleague of mine at the University of Ceylon, Peradeniya and a later batch mate as Police



• DIG Vama Vamadevan

Probationary ASP trainees. Subsequently, he was appointed IGP (Inspector-General of Police). Chief Inspector Clement Alles was the other officer sharing the room with us.

Headquarters was abuzz with the Wellawaya incident and the IGP at the time, Stanley Senanayake was shuttling between his office and Temple Trees for conferences assessing the situation. At the end of the day, Cyril and I decided, on our own volition, to stay back in the IG's office and monitor the messages coming to Headquarters. Both of us were contemporaries earlier under Ana Seneviratne DIG, CID at that time, and we had a good understanding of the developments and could sense that things were dicey and the situation, island-wide, needed to be carefully monitored.

By 10 PM things were looking hazardous. Borella Police reported that hand bombs and other contraptions had turned up in the course of searches

**Vama Vamadevan**  
DIG(Retired) was on the frontline & recalls events of the night.

at Wanathamulla. Their information was that these were part of the preparations to attack Welikade jail. Cyril and I started giving messages to Police Stations to step up their defences. I also took a call to R.Sundaralingam who was SP Jaffna at the time and found he was on duty at a public meeting. I told the officer answering the phone of the developments and to ask his SP to ring me immediately. Within a matter of minutes Sunda called and I told him of the plan to attack Welikade Jail and an attempt to attack the Jaffna Jail could be anticipated since Rohan Wijeweera, the JVP leader, was detained in Jaffna. Incidentally, as it turned out, that was the last call they had as the lines went dead after that.



• IGP at the time  
*Stanley Senanayake.*

Just then Stanley Senanayake returned from Temple Trees and was glad to see that Cyril and I had set up an operation room of sorts on our own and were monitoring developments and taking action to alert all Police Stations.

While this was going on, one Dayananda (not his real name) burst into the IG's room followed by the late ASP K.S.de Silva. Dayananda's apparent intention was to fall at the IG's feet, but I mistook it as attempt at the IG's life and rushed to intercept him. No action was necessary as Dayananda began to wail that all Police Stations were going to be attacked simultaneously at 11 PM that night. He was debriefed and Stanley Senanayake decided to take him to Temple Trees. We asked the IG just before he left, whether we had his permission to organise messages as coming from him, to take whatever action we thought was essential. He readily said: "Go ahead and hold the fort till I come back."

Cyril and I decided that it would be a good idea to enforce an unofficial curfew in Colombo. I rang Inspector Sivapatham, who was in-charge that night at Police Emergency, to send out all radio cars and enforce an unofficial curfew in Colombo.



To enforce an emergency, only the Governor-General can do so by an announcement in the Government Gazette. But we took upon ourselves to do what was best irrespective of consequences. This decision prevented a big calamity, as it turned out. On this message all radio cars fanned out and announced by loud hailer that a curfew was in force and ordered all people to return to their homes and remain indoors. Inspector Joe David, who was working at Borella Police Station went to the Eros cinema and told the manager there to stop the movie and asked all patrons



• *Cyril Herath who later became IGP.*

to vacate the cinema and return to their homes.

We now come to the more sensational parts of the events. In the cinema was a group of JVPers, armed with bombs, *gal kattas* (a term used in the underworld for hand grenades) and Molotov cocktails with instructions at "D" hour to proceed to Rosmead Place and take the Prime Minister, Mrs Sirimavo Bandaranaike

alive as hostage, and if that was not possible, to kill her. This unforeseen development of the raid by Inspector David, took the insurgents by complete surprise and caused them to panic, abandon their mission and return to their homes, leaving behind a number of hand bombs. Police who searched the cinema subsequently found the bombs and their enquiries revealed the plan which was to proceed to the Prime Minister's residence, capture her alive or failing that, to kill her.

The scene now shifts to Jaffna. Sunda, SP Jaffna, who was in charge of the whole of the Northern Province, on being alerted to the situation, rang alarm bells summoning all his men on duty, armed them all and had all vulnerable points guarded. Sunda is well known to many in the Police Force with his 16-years of service which made him the longest serving officer in the history of Interpol. He had a contingency plan which he put into effect at this time. He also alerted Vavuniya, Mulaitivu and Mannar, the Army Camp at Pallai and the Naval Base at Karainagar. His men took up positions, among others, at the entrance to the Jaffna Fort, where Wijeweera was held. Barely had he done this when two buses arrived outside the Fort Jail with cadres armed with crude hand bombs, shot guns and pistols, ready to break into the jail with the intent of rescuing Wijeweera. The Police, who were ready by then, had a shoot out and saved the day by taking 80 insurgents into custody.

At Elephant Pass on the next night (6 April) a group of renegade Naval ratings planned to join the JVPers and destroy the electric power station at

Chunnakam and then proceed to Temple Trees which was guarded by the Navy. The Police led by Chandra Mendis killed four Navy ratings, including Able Seaman Tilakaratne (a renegade Navy rating who turned on his own officers) in an ensuing shoot out and thus thwarted their plan and saved the situation.

It was the initial alerts sent to all Police Stations that helped many of the stations to hold out and thwart the JVP attempts to take over the stations. The stations that were unprepared for the JVP onslaught were those stations that did not, for one reason or another, get the messages despatched by Cyril and myself. Rajangane was one such station. In those days, Police Stations were not all on radio communication and Cyril and I had to make trunk calls to each of the remote stations individually. Considerable loss of life and destruction to public property was averted by these messages.

If the Prime Minister had been taken hostage or killed and rebel leader Wijeweera rescued, as planned, the contemporary history of the country would have been considerably different.



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*A tremendous story of how a grandfather's schoolboyish whimsy may have influenced the chosen career and future of one of his progeny, twice removed, to achieve greatness.*

## A man called 'Ceylon' – my tenuous link to the First World War

by  
Somasiri Devendra

*"On all these ships he sailed on he was the only man from Ceylon and so he was called "Ceylon" by his shipmates on every one."*

One day, around noon, two schoolboys were walking home from school. It must have been about 1883 and the boys were from St Thomas' College at Mutwal. Kotahena and Mutwal were, then, the home of upper-middle-class people, many of them Burghers.

The two friends were Burgher boys and like all their clan, they were adventurous and independent. School did not, probably, hold much attraction for them. They lived very close to the busy port of Colombo, though Galle was yet the country's main port. With the coming of steamships, the port of Galle was proving to be a risky haven. In fact, soon after this fateful day, Colombo was chosen as our main port and Galle became a peaceful backwater.

The two schoolboys ambling back home after school knew nothing of this, nor would they have cared. Ships, though, fascinated them, as they have fascinated boys throughout history. Ships of many countries; seamen of many colours speaking queer languages; majestic sailing ships, tall-funnelled paddle-wheelers, some still carrying sails for an

then). So the two boys were probably exchanging tall tales about shipboard life on board in exotic countries they sailed to. By-and-by, they came up to the entrance to

the port and hung around it, drinking in all the strange smells and sounds.

Suddenly they saw, pasted on a window in an office, a large notice:

"CABIN BOY WANTED".

One, the more adventurous of the two, made a quick decision and walked boldly in. Boldness was his friend: soon he was back with a beaming smile - he had got the job! Now came the ticklish question of

telling the family, who were sure to sabotage the adventure. Flushed with success, he made another quick decision. He persuaded his friend to take his books home, two days later, and tell them that the vagabond "had run away to sea". By the time this was done the ship and the new (and probably seasick) cabin boy had sailed away.

That boy was my mother's father, Lloyd Oswald Felsianes, and his story gives me a link to the "Great War" that was meant to save civilisation a hundred years ago (and didn't) but only began a race for domination which goes on even today. It is the story of a peaceful man caught up in a war he had no interest in. So let me say something about my "Dehiwela Grandpa".



• *My grandpa was always dressed in white singlet, white slacks and white deck shoes, he chewed sticky stumps of "baccy" (chewing tobacco).*



• *Lloyd Oswald Felsianes' services were recognised as these medals are testimony.*

emergency; flags of many nations, the smell of coal and gritty black smoke, bullock carts trundling over cobblestone roads carrying cargo from the warehouses, *nattamis* pushing their hand-carts and loudly cursing all who crossed their way - all the hustle and bustle of a busy port open to the sea (there was no breakwater



My earliest memories are of him in his late seventies or early eighties, a wiry man of average height, about 5 foot 5 or so, with close-cropped white hair, white moustache, and a large, pitted, pink nose. Always dressed in white singlet, white slacks and white deck shoes, he chewed sticky stumps of "baccy" (chewing tobacco). A very faded, sepia picture (since restored) shows him in his 'thirties, on shore leave in Singapore. It shows him in a dark three-piece suit and he sports a watch-chain.

He had tattoos on his forearms, one of a mermaid – he assured us that he had seen them! He told us he had sailed the seven seas, on many ships and right round the world. What ship did he sign on? We don't know but, somewhere along the line the cabin boy became involved with the Engine Room and became – as my Mother remembered – an "Engineer".

And so, after sailing the seven seas, the prodigal returned home in the late 1890s, married and settled down in Dehiwela with his family, working on the cargo-cum-passenger "Lady" ships ("Lady Blake", "Lady McCallum" and "Lady Havelock") which the Ceylon Steamship Co. Ltd. operated around the island. (I remember the High Priest of Seruwavila temple telling me "Api may ratata aaway naven - We came to this country by ship": that "country" being

Trincomalee!).

One of them would leave Colombo on a voyage round the Island on every other Wednesday. She would sail round the southern coast, stopping at Galle, Hambantota, Batticaloa, Trincomalee, Point Pedro, Jaffna, and end up at Pamben.

She would make the return trip to Colombo

every other Friday. The round trip took eight days. The ships are no more: the "Lady Havelock" came to grief in Batticaloa in the cyclone of 1907 and her boiler, which Grandpa must have tended, was said to be yet at rest in a garden opposite the Rest House—at least, till the tsunami came.

Somewhere during this period, he came to know a POW in somebody else's war: the Boer War. We don't know anything about this except for a gift

the POW had given him. It was a pipe for smoking, carved out of the root of a tea bush. Along the stem he had carved "Boer Camp, Diyatalawa" and, on the bowl, the coat-of-arms of the Orange Free State.

But the "Ceylon Steamship Company" wound up in about 1908 and he had to fend for his wife and three small girls. Having divorced and remarried by this time, a berth on a merchant vessel was no longer an option and so he joined the Colombo Port Commission as a Tug Driver. My mother remembered two; he worked on "Samson" and "Goliath" perhaps because of their Biblical names, but there may have been others too. It was a quiet life in a port that was becoming increasingly busy. Ships were not berthed alongside the quays then, but were anchored in the stream, with bows facing the prevailing monsoon wind. When the monsoon changed, the berthed ships were swung round to face the wind again. So the tugs were always tuned to wind and wave and it was a most routine job.

But all that changed, a hundred years ago this month [August], when the Great War caught up with him. Colombo was an important port for the British Empire, because of sea-borne trade and travel. The Indian Ocean became a happy hunting ground for German submarines and raiders. The greatest fear was of the "Emden" which was cruising, preying on merchant shipping: ships were sunk, cargo taken over and also the ships' crews and passengers who were treated humanely and sent home by various ships that were spared from a watery grave to serve this humanitarian purpose. But, although she entered the popular Sinhalese vocabulary, the "Emden" never did sight Ceylon, though sailing past her. Not so another raider, the "Wolf" which was a raider and mine-layer. The "Wolf" laid mines in the approaches to Colombo



• More medals of recognition.



• My earliest memories from a very faded, sepia picture (since restored) shows him in his 'thirties, on shore leave in Singapore. It shows him in a dark three-piece suit and he sports a watch-chain.



Port which accounted for the British freighters "Worcestershire" (7175 tons) and "Perseus" (6728 tons) even as late as 1917. Clearly, Colombo had to secure the approaches by sweeping and clearing mines laid.

But Fleet Minesweepers could not be spared. The Port Commission had to fend for itself and "make do". The tugs "Samson" and "Goliath" were refitted with minesweeping equipment and they worked as minesweepers to keep the entrance channel to the harbour clear of mines. Much later, in the early years of the next World War, they were called upon to do the same duty for training the fledgling Ceylon Naval Volunteer Force. So we know what they must have looked like as Minesweepers: "Samson", for example, was fitted out with Mk.V Oropesa minesweeping gear and Lewis guns and had two Officers, an Engineer and a crew of 37.

And what of my grandfather? He must have carried on, as usual. Minesweeping was a defensive task and the tugs were not called upon to fight. There were no aerial attacks to fear and danger lay beyond the harbour entrance. He remained a merchant mariner; he was not mobilised: he was just doing his job for the Port. Yet, his work was - as the war work of other merchant mariners - was appreciated.

When the fighting stopped and medals were being handed out, he was not forgotten. He was awarded the War Medal and the Victory Medal both of which were inscribed "DRI. L.O.FELSIANUS. MINE SW." I still have them, though I had to get the ribbons replaced.

But I was too small to remember much more: he had retired by the time I remember him. He died in 1946, as the second innings of the "Great War" was nearing its end. I must have been about his age when he "ran away to sea".

He was my first link with ships and wars and seamen: and maybe, just maybe, that's where my fascination with things maritime began.

*(Previously published in Sunday Island on 29 August 2014)*



**Passekudah Beach**, one of the finest beaches to the north of Valachchenai, has an off-shore reef sheltering this sandy beach keeping it shallow, clear, and calm. This picturesque resort brings out *oohs* and *ahhas* from visitors and is the delight of water skiers, wind-surfers and other water enthusiasts.

One of the early attractions to visitors on their morning beach stroll is the hauling of the *maha-dela* fishing net, that usually brings in a big haul of fish. There's always the eager buyer waiting out back for a bargain.



*Hauling in the maha-dela  
in Passekudah*

(Photo by Doug Jones)

1

Advertisements.

**NOTICE.**

MANUFACTURED AT THE LUNATIC ASYLUM,  
BORELLA.

The following can be obtained on application to the  
Undersigned, at Colombo:—

COIR MATTING for Coffee Estates, @ 6d. 3/4 square yard,  
Do. Do. with coloured stripes, in various patterns—do. 8d. 3/4  
@ 9d. 3/4 yard.

COIR TWILLED MATTING for floors, plain and coloured @ 1s. 3d.  
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COIR MAT BAGS FOR COPPERAS.

COIR FIBRE.

DOOR MATS, plain and coloured.

GENUINE MAPANTA ARROW-ROOT @ 1s. 6d. per lb.

TAPICCA, CASSAVA FLOUR,

HORSE-KEEPERS' CLOTHING,  
do., do., do.

[N. B.—AT THE AGRI-HORTICULTURAL EXHIBITION IN COLOMBO IN  
1889, THE ARROW-ROOT AND TAPICCA FROM THE BORELLA ASYLUM WON  
THE PRIZE.]

W. G. VANDORT, M.D.,  
Superintending Physician.

## It's their handiwork —for Sale

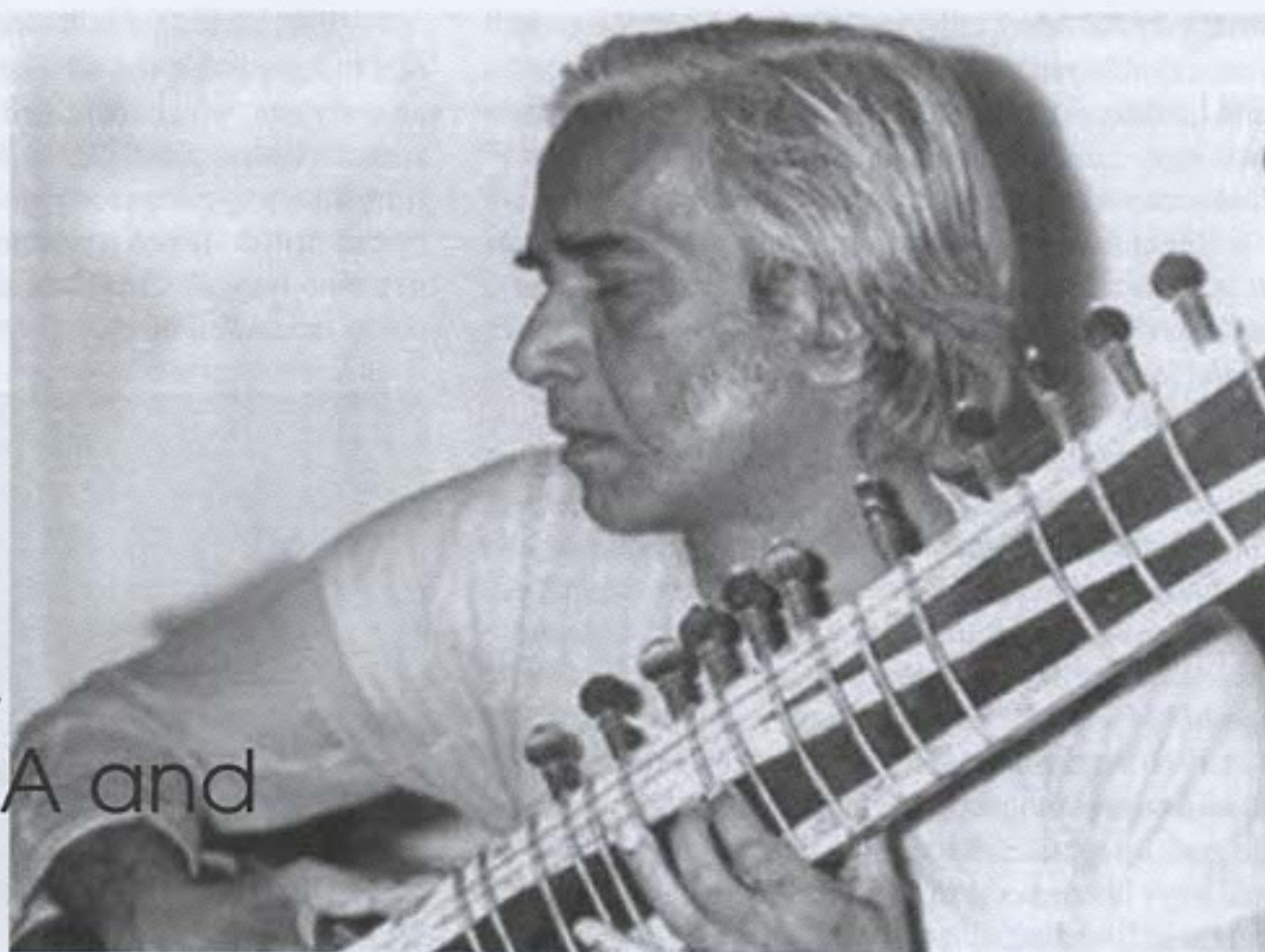
The above is an advertisement which appeared in the Ceylon Directory: Calendar and Compendium of Useful Information for 1871/72 published by AM Ferguson then Proprietor and Editor of the Ceylon Observer.

The Lunatic Asylum in Borella was Ceylon's first mental hospital built in 1847 in the area now known as Torrington Square. It was an era when mental patients were described as "lunatics". The building itself ceased to be used as a mental hospital in 1889 and was thereafter used as government offices, and very recently was in the news emerging as a plush new luxury shopping precinct. While the building stood the test of time its original residents were moved to a building in Jawatte and thereafter, in 1911, to Angoda. Terminology used to describe these institutions have also moved on from Asylum to Hospital and the term lunatic is no longer used to describe someone who is mentally ill. Prior to the construction of the Borella Asylum the mentally ill were housed in the Leper Asylum in Hendala!

The treatment and care of the mentally ill has certainly come a long way since those days.



## CEYLON, SRI LANKA and INDIA...



# The Ediriweera Sarachchandra Encounter *by ERNEST MACINTYRE*

**I**t was an encounter that gives hope – the hope of a significant bilingual class which would transmit the world to Sri Lanka and Sri Lanka to the world.

The cultural life of the Sinhalese, and to a lesser extent, of the Tamils of Lanka, in literature, drama, music and dance had declined because of the European occupations, and by being cut off from the related Indian culture during that long period. Why, to a lesser extent, in the case of the Tamils may be understood from a statement by Professor H.L.Seneviratne. When the Sinhalese and Tamils began to revive their cultures, it *"placed the Sinhala ethnic group in the position of having to look inwards for inspiration, to the only indigenous culture it possessed, the folk culture, whereas the Tamils could look up to a larger and more complex, religion-based artistic tradition beyond the shores of Sri Lanka."*(1)

The higher Indian culture in Lanka during the long pre-European period of occupation would have been confined to Sinhala royal court society and its extensions. All this was no more. Only the authentic folk culture remained. It is clear from the way he deployed his energies, that of all the arts, Ediriweera Sarachchandra identified a drama that used as conveyance, dance, music, and poetic chant and song as having the greatest potential for a broad based national cultural revival. This was the folk Nadagama which had its origins in South India and which was authenti-

cally Sinhala by the early twentieth century. Unlike in the case of the Sinhalese, even during the European occupations, the Lankan Tamils had a cultural highway of contemporary language to the arts and life of another part of the world, South India. From here the Koothu folk drama had come to Jaffna and Batticaloa and had been used by the Catholic Church for their religious plays. The Church then took it to their Ceylon west coast Sinhala communities, and the Sinhala Nadagama came into being. This Nadagama was only the promising foundation on which Sarachchandra set out to *"rebuild a culture which, while being rooted in a tradition, is yet progressive and adapted to survival in the modern world."* (2) To achieve this Sarachchandra standing confidently on his own soil looked at the world, the world of Europe, classical, medieval and modern, the world of India, companion from ancient times, and the world of Japan which had established a unique cultural identity derived from Indian Mahayana Buddhism.

English language and literature, his Ceylon inheritance, gave Sarachchandra his way to European civilisation, his mastery of Pali and Sanskrit confirmed his Indian sub-continental fellowship. Later, he became familiar with Japanese culture. While he was on a mission to revive Sinhala culture, with a world view, he had contemporaries on the same mission without access to the modern world. This was the exclusively Sinhala-educated sector, about whose



insularity Sarachchandra revealed regret, at the same time rejoicing in their passion for Sinhala language and literature. He identified that very largely, culture was rooted in language and that the Sinhala language had survived the colonial period. *"Although the Sinhalese lost almost everything in the demoralisation that set in from repeated foreign conquests, they had at least their language to go back to. And going back to the language is almost going back to the roots of the culture."* (3).

Of the exclusively Sinhala-educated, like Piya-dasa Sirisena, he said, *"...the attitudes of this entirely Sinhala educated middle class, whether it be in respect of literature and the arts, or in matters relating to life, have been ... the natural result of a lack of acquaintance with the development of thought in the modern world."* (4)

Yet this statement by Sarachchandra is a well thought out prologue, not a closed off dismissal, for he goes on to acknowledge the debt to these people and pays his respects to them for being the passionate carers of Sinhala. *"...it was this class that preserved anything at all of the native tradition, and it is necessary to find a footing in some sort of tradition to take a step forward. ..."* (5)

Most of Sarachchandra's specialisation, had languages functioning as complex kinds of conduits, the vehicle and the substance being conveyed, inseparable in dynamic inter-related performance. Greek and Latin he learnt at school. English was not only learnt, it was the colonial environment he grew up in. There may not be an explicit acknowledgement of his entry to world culture through English, only statements, generally, such as about the class that Piya-dasa Sirisena represented quoted above. *"This lack of explicit acknowledgement is perhaps rooted in his imbibing these as part of his socialisation, from early childhood to mature scholar, which made these his own, thereby making any acknowledgement uncalled for,"* says Professor H.L.Seneviratne. (6)

After schooling in English-educating Christian institutions, Richmond College, Galle, St. Aloysius College, Galle, St. John's College, Panadura, St. Thomas' College, Mt. Lavinia, he matriculated with English, Latin and Greek. After obtaining an MA in Eastern Philosophy, through English, from the University of London, in 1947, resident at the same university, he qualified for the MA in Western Philosophy. In 1949 Sarachchandra earned his Ph.D. from London University with the thesis, *"The Buddhist Psychology of Perception"*, about which Professor K.N.O. Dharmadasa very relevantly observes, *"He then returned to the Buddhist tradition, but with a Western outlook."* (7)

If his understanding and imbibing of Western culture was a part of his Ceylon inheritance it seems equally true that his rootedness in Sinhala and Eastern culture was also a result of the Ceylon period, by way of rebellion against his colonised Ceylon nurturing.

At that time in history, it would have been rare to have had a son who developed a world view, at an early age, which identified the nourishing soil his ancestors were planted in as being the rooted position from which to assess the new big world introduced by the British. It was a reaction against what was seen as a one-way Western track determined by British colonisation. Sarachchandra, when he was about



• The family in Colonial Ceylon, (from left) younger sister Padma, father Francis de Silva, Vedithantirige Eustace Reginold Silva (later Sarachchandra), mother Lydia Pinto Moragoda and younger sister Stella.

twenty five was at the cross influences of colonialism, nationalism and Buddhist revivalism. He grew up as a Christian, his mother being a devout Christian, coming from a family of devout Christians, two of whom were priests. As a boy he played the organ at church. His father, a Buddhist, was converted to Christianity at marriage, some would imagine under the duress of "Ceylon". His name was Eustace Reginold de Silva, and all other members of the family and clan had similar Western names.

Then, under the influence of Indian cultural nationalism of the time, he relinquished his Western name and renamed himself after the legendary Bengali novelist Sarat Chandra Chatterjee (Chattopadhyay). His stay in Shantiniketan re-emphasised the cultural nationalism within him, and the opportunity to experience Shantiniketan life under Tagore would have been particularly inspiring.

Thus, his entry into and development in Western culture together with his simultaneous firming of roots in Sinhala and Eastern culture, resulting from rebellion probably incited by oppressive Christianising within his family, provided the creative tensions from the pulls of East and West, to produce what was unique in Sarachchandra. He stands out separately as an intellectual, scholar and creative artist who, regardless of colonising circumstances recognised in Western culture, substances which could "manure" his Sinhala roots with no distortions of identity. These



were carefully and discriminatingly infused to produce his contribution to the revival of post-Ceylon Sinhala culture.

If the period of Ceylon introduced Western culture, the same period saw the breaking up of the continuity of the many thousands of years of cultural interactions between India and the Sinhalese. *"The distinction between Sinhalese art and Indian art certainly did not exist in the twenty centuries preceding independence, and such a long period of time cannot be discounted in considering a tradition"* writes Sarachchandra (8). And *"...the tendency for Ceylon to isolate itself from the cultural context of Greater India, which began with British times and continues today, may act as a hindrance."*(9) There was evidence that the upper class English-educated, who received on their held out palms the platter of Independence, confused post British legal political sovereignty with cultural independence from India as well, especially as this initial political leadership class, *"in every possible way tried not to identify themselves with the people of the country"*, says Sarachchandra.(10)

Ediriweera Sarachchandra was a leader amongst a group of men and women who, like Thejawardane Gunawardane, Ananda Samarakoon, Sunil Shantha and W.D. Amaradeva, to mention a few, understood that for revival, cultural sustenance needed to be drawn from India. There was evidence of Indian connections in painting, sculpture and architecture, and in literature too, but not in dance, drama and music which were Sarachchandra's personality interests and for which he resorted to India.

There was an apparently important qualification though, about the sustenance from India. *"Although the culture of the Sinhalese stems from that of India, Theravada Buddhism has given it a stamp of its own which makes it distinguishable from the Hindu culture of India"* (11) This statement of Sarachchandra coupled with his belief that *"The national culture could be restored only on the basis of Buddhism and the language of the country, namely Sinhala"* (12) when viewed against his passion for the theatre arts presented him with a need for an imaginative approach. While he cherished the belief that Theravada in Lanka preserves the religion in its most authentic form he found that it had to adjust, imaginatively, to modernisation of a Buddhist society. Particularly in the arts of dance, music and drama which were his personality interests, the strictures of Theravada came in his way. He recalls with a deep sigh that the Theravada texts cite with approval the example of a monk who lived for more than thirty years in a rock cave, but because he was engaged in meditation, did not notice the paintings on the wall.(13). So, I discern from his writings that, he was also attracted to Zen Buddhism of Japan in which the contemplation of the beauty and harmony in nature, as well as the beauty and harmony created by man leads to a calming of

the passions and to a stilling of the mind, which are necessary preparations for the realisation of Nirvana, while serving the worldly needs of man as well. (14) Maname and Sinhabahu are art forms that engage the passions during their progressions and so are not encouraged by Theravada. But when considering the compassion and pity from the endings of these great plays, one senses an accommodation of the Zen position with Theravada values in modern times.

These then were Ediriweera Sarachchandra's encounters. In his encounters I make no special mention of the Tamil culture of Lanka because Sarachchandra was unselfconscious about his identifying the derivations of Nadagama music and dance (the roots of his theatre) from Tamil sources. He considered the Tamil culture as a sibling one using a different language and having another religion with old connections. He refers to *"the close connection that seems to have existed even from early times between the Sinhala folk culture and the folk culture of the Tamils."*(15)

Out of these encounters came the scholar, the novelist, the literary critic, and most enduring, the dramatist. Mention of his scholarly work in philosophy and psychology has been made earlier in this piece. Time, inevitably washes over scholarship depositing new material in waves of research. The one work of his scholarship that, I think, will remain unaltered, is *"The Folk Drama of Ceylon"* (1952, revised 1956) because the living, raw, folk material of his research is hardly found now. For scholars and imaginative readers, it is a work that does not confine itself to Ceylon, for as *The Times of London Literary Supplement* notes, *"it is so wide in scope that it must surely interest all who wish to trace the development of dramatic forms"* (16)

He was a novelist of note both in Sinhala and English, *Malagiya Attho* (The Dead, 1959) being considered his best in Sinhala and *Curfew and A Full Moon and With A Begging Bowl* in English.

The British introduced novel was new to Sinhala literature and Sarachchandra produced a new literary criticism based on both Sanskrit poetics and the then established English literary criticism. (17)

About his plays, knowledge and appreciation are widespread. So, I will confine myself to what I think Sarachchandra did, in effect, for drama in Sri Lanka, which has not yet been correctly identified. Here was a country with no developed dramatic theatre, only rudimentary folk performances. When he conceived creating such developed drama using the folk forms as the ground soil on which he would transplant European, Indian and Japanese classical growths, his colleague, Professor of English, E.F.C. Ludowyk recommended instead a twentieth century start up from scratch, with contemporary prose drama. Sarachchandra gradually moved away from this idea. He decided, in effect, to ignore linear time, and create



a classical verse, dance, song drama, which would then, in effect, be “timeless”, not marked as 1956 or 1961. In theatrical form it was classical and pre-prose. Sarachchandra later said that he was mistaken in thinking that Maname and Sinhabahu would provide the form for a national drama, and which partly vindicates Ludowyk’s position. Where Sarachchandra was right, though, in effect, was that great drama in the classical genre, would lead to new dramatists, yet to come, creating contemporary prose drama as great. He was well aware that Ibsen and Chekhov, the great masters of modern prose drama had behind them the impetus of the classical drama of Greece, and Shakespeare. They didn’t start from scratch.

In this perspective Sarachchandra will continue to influence dramatic theatre in Sri Lanka, like the tree, no more of the living, in Anton Chekhov’s play *Three Sisters*, “... See, that tree is dead, but it waves in the wind with the others. And so it seems to me that if I die I’ll still be part of life, one way or another. Good-bye”

#### Notes:

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3. Ibid, P.30
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6. Personal communication from Professor H.L. Seneviratne 11/9/2014
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17. Sinhala Writers and The New Critics, by Ranjini Obeyesekere: Colombo M.D. Gunasena 1974, pp.39-53



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### Ceylon at the 1948 Summer Olympics



• Ceylon Olympic Team at the Olympic camp in Richmond Park, London ~ 13 June 1948  
(Left to right): Edward Gray, Albert Perera, Duncan White, John De Saram, Mr. W.H.D. Perera (Team Manager), George Peiris, Leslie Handunge and Alex Obeyesekere.



## Jaffna re-revisted

by Jayantha Jayewardene

I have gone to Jaffna three times. My first visit to Jaffna was in 1956 when my parents took my brother and myself to Jaffna. The second visit was when the late Gamini Dissanayake took a team of Mahaweli agronomists, for a week, to study the agricultural practices in the Jaffna peninsula. The third visit was at the beginning of June this year, when we went to carry out a schools awareness program.

On my first visit we drove to Jaffna from Kandy. I was 12-years old. I don't remember much of that visit but do remember the Casuarina Beach, vast stretches of cultivations of vegetables, the unique method of drawing water for agriculture from a well, and little else. However, one thing stands out in my mind. When we got to the Chavakachcheri Resthouse, where we were to stay the night, the resthouse keeper asked whether we would like chicken curry for dinner. On getting the yes from my father, the resthouse keeper proceeded to take a gun, went out to a thicket not far from the resthouse and shot a jungle fowl which was there. He cooked it as a curry for dinner.

### Routes

There are two routes to Jaffna from Anuradhapura that one can use. One is from Anuradhapura via Medawachchiya-Vavunia-Kilinochchi- Elephant Pass to Jaffna. The alternate route is through Mannar. There are three routes along which you could approach Mannar. One is from Medawachchiya- Neeriyankulam and then Mannar. The second is from Nochchiyagama-Tantrimale, onto the Mannar-Medawachchiya Road and on to Mannar. The third is from Puttalam-Eluwankulam, through the Wilpattu National Park, Silavathurai-Murunkan and Mannar. The shortest route to Mannar from Colombo is through Wilpattu. From Mannar you take the new road to Pooneryn and across the newly constructed causeway direct to Jaffna. This road has been reconstructed recently though there are about two or three kilometers yet to be completed.

The road to Pooneryn runs, for about two or three kilometers, through the Madhu Road sanctuary and has a preponderance of Palu (Manilkara hexandra) or Ironwood trees. The road is lined with these Palu trees and when I passed last week the Palu was in fruit. The villagers had cut some of the large branches and were offering the fruit for sale. The small yellow fruit is quite tasty, somewhat like the taste of Sapodilla (Manilkara zapota). Once plucked the fruit can be kept only for two days. When you eat this fruit, which is also a favourite of the sloth bear, your lips become sticky.



• A white line diagonally across road signs indicates that you are leaving a town or village – a new feature seen on the Jaffna - Pooneryn Road.

A new feature seen on the Jaffna - Pooneryn Road are sign boards that show that you are leaving a particular town or village. The board has the name of the place in all three languages but has a white line diagonally across the board as shown in the picture.

### Schools

We carried out a schools awareness programme in



• Nilavarai Deep Well where the locals believe the first 40 feet of the well is fresh water and further down, it turns saline.

eight schools in the peninsula. The schools were Jaffna Hindu College, St John's College, Jaffna Central College, Jaffna Hindu Ladies, Mahajana College and Union College (both in Tellippalai), Hartley College and Nelliady Central College (both in Nelliady). Our programme was designed to create an awareness on Sri Lanka's biodiversity, the natural environment, pollution, wildlife, evolution etc. among the children. I was impressed by the dedication shown by the Principals and teachers of these schools, to keep to their task of giving their students an all round education in a conducive environment. Their enthusiasm to learn and the discipline of the students were exemplary. Most of these schools, especially those started by the Christian



missionaries, have had strong traditions which the schools are striving to maintain.

#### ***Nilavarai deep well***

The Nilavarai well located at Nawathkiri, on the Kankasanturai Road, is a very deep well where the actual depth has not been ascertained, despite many attempts to do so. The local information is that the first 40 feet of the well is fresh water and further down, it turns saline. It is reputed that there is an underground tunnel which leads to the sea. Tourist brochures describe the well as 'a beautiful natural well with an astonishing aquamarine colour. What is there now is a dirty water hole, which is polluted and of no use to even bathe. However, the mystery of its depth and source of water continues. Some think that this well is connected to the ponds at Keerimalai.

#### ***Jaffna Fort***

The Jaffna Fort was built by the Portuguese in 1618, when they captured Jaffna. It was subsequently captured by the Dutch in 1658 after a three-month siege. The Dutch demolished the damaged and out of date square fort of the Portuguese and in its place built their ideal fortress. The Dutch added to the fort and made it bigger.

This is the only large military fort in the country. The Jaffna Fort, the second largest Dutch Fort in Sri Lanka, is located immediately south of Jaffna town, with the southern side bounded by the shallow waters of Jaffna lagoon, the inlet of the Indian Ocean that carves out the Jaffna Peninsula. There are five outlets to the sea from the Jaffna lagoon, the biggest being the one between Karainagar and Kayts.

The Dutch first built the inner pentagon, and the main gate here bears the date of 1680 and then in the following century enclosed it in a wider fortification of the same shape. This shape is not as obvious as three of the branches are not built because of the vicinity of the sea on these sides. The fort's black coral-lined walls, ramparts and battlements stand high on the grass covered mound and are surrounded by a moat. The fort covers an area of 22 hectares, a beautiful setting and rightfully qualified as a Citadel (i.e. a large, independent, garrisoned, administrative and military centre without civil inhabitants).

The gate in the outer fortification bears the date of completion, 1792. On the 28 September 1795, only three years after its completion, the fort surrendered to the British without firing a single shot. The strength of this fort was then never actually tested by an attack until recently when the power of modern day weapons used in the civil war, proved its undoing. The fort remained with the British till 1948 when independence was declared.

#### ***Fort Hammenheil***

This small fort stands, off Karainagar, on a rocky island at the entrance to Jaffna lagoon. The fort was constructed by the Portuguese in 1618 and takes up all the limited land of the island. The Portuguese named it

*Fortaleza Do Caes*. The walls are made of large chunks of coral and bound by a mixture that also seemed to include burnt coral. This fort was in the north and the Mannar fort in the south and the two served to guard the passage, by water, to the Castle Fort at Jaffna.

This fort is built in an unusual circular design and has two internal levels. The fort stands on a small



• ***Fort Hammenheil.***

sand bank between the small islands of Karaitivu and Velanai (Kayts) and the sole navigation channel from the sea to the lagoon on which Jaffna stands. This island fort was captured by the Dutch in March 1658. They changed its name to Hammenhiel. (heel of the ham). The shape of Sri Lanka reminded the Dutch of a leg of ham. When the Dutch occupied this water-fort, they found that the sand bank on which it was built had been undermined by the storms of the North-East monsoon. They remedied this erosion by piling up a breakwater of stones.

A low vaulted gateway, not more than seven feet in height, is the only entrance to this fort. The living quarters consist of three or four rooms in the courtyard. The vaults under the ramparts were doubtless used as store rooms. The Dutch maintained a garrison of thirty men under the charge of a Lieutenant or Ensign on this spot, and the early Dutch Governors make very special mention in their memoirs that Hammenhiel must be carefully guarded "none but Dutch being stationed there".

One of the cells where the foreign invaders kept their prisoners was also used by our security forces, during the 1971 JVP insurrection to keep leader Wijeweera locked up after his arrest.

The Sri Lanka Navy has now converted this fort to an up market hotel. The living quarters of the Portuguese and Dutch soldiers, four rooms in all, have now been converted to hotel rooms. The food and other facilities are on the mainland. The fort surrendered without resistance to the British in 1795 and in 1948 became the property of the independent Government of Sri Lanka.

Kantharodai, described as Kadurugoda Temple in the Sinhalese chronicals, is a 3rd century BC





•Miniature dagobas at Kantharodai.

Buddhist site located about 10 km north of the city of Jaffna and closer to Chunnakam. Kantharodai consist of a cluster of 20 miniature dagobas, ranging in height from one to three meters. It is believed that each of the miniature dagobas has remains of the Buddhist monks enshrined therein. These dagobas are somewhat akin to the stupas at the Borabadhur temple in Indonesia.

Sir Paul Pieris, who discovered the site in 1916, wrote in "Kantharodai appears to me to be a

miniature Anuradhapura buried in the Tamil country". Some suggest that Kantharodai, marks the spot where Buddha landed on his second visit to the island.

The finials of the stupas are made of limestone. A sacred footprint stone was also found on the site. This has been identified as the Kadurugoda Temple as mentioned in the Sinhala Chronicals, its history dating back to the 3rd century BC. This site does not seem to be getting the attention from the Department of Archaeology that it deserves.

#### Point Pedro

The light house at the coastal village of Point Pedro marks the northern most point of Sri Lanka and faces the Bay of Bengal. The name of the place is derived from the Portuguese Punta das Pedras which means Stony or Rocky Point. The distance across Sri Lanka from Dondra Head in the south to Point Pedro is 435 kilometers. The breadth of Sri Lanka is 224 kilometers, this distance being calculated from Colombo to Sangaman Kanda in Komari, which is north of Pottuvil.

West of Point Pedro is the infamous coastal village of Velvettiturai, which for decades, had been a stronghold of the petty local smugglers and the landing point of illegal immigrants or 'Kallathoni's from South India.



#### Some notable events in Sri Lanka – under Colonial rule

4 March 1519	First Englishman Ralph Fitch landed in Ceylon.
11 December 1655	Portuguese Governor of Jaffna taken prisoner by the Dutch
13 May 1656	Colombo taken by the Dutch from the Portuguese
15 September 1795	Jaffna taken from the Dutch by the British
15 February 1796	Surrender of Colombo to the British by the Dutch
28 March 1802	Ceylon incorporated with British possessions
19 February 1815	Kandyan King taken prisoner in Doombera
2 March 1815	All Ceylon subject to the British Crown.
23 January 1816	Ex-King of Kandy and family sent to Madras
22 May 1834	First Meeting of the Legislative Council held in Colombo.
5 June 1834	Moors and Tamils allowed to own property in the Fort and Pettah.
1 February 1838	Kandy mail coach from Colombo commenced.
2 July 1838	First Mail coach from Colombo to Galle.

24 June 1856	Photography introduced to Ceylon by Mr Parting
12 January 1866	First Election Colombo Municipal Council.
13 February 1867	First Election Galle Municipality.
1 August 1867	Opening of Colombo Kandy railway for traffic.

#### The Falklands War

I am not allowed to say how many planes joined the raid [on Port Stanley in the Falkland Islands but I counted them all out and i counted them all back.

– Brian Hanrahan - Report broadcast by the BBC; 1 May 1982, in the Battle for the Falklands (1982).

#### We will finish the job!

Here is the answer which I will give to Presiden Roosevelt... We shall not fail or falter; we shall not weaken or tire. Neither the sudden shock of battle nor the long drawn trials of vigilance and exertion will wear us down. Give us the tools and we will finish the job.

– Winston Churchill Speech on radio 9 February 1941

[Clement Atlee is] a modest man who has a good deal to be modest about.

– Winston Churchill, 27 June 1954





## Meals Ammi Made

### Gulab Jamoos

By Kanta Abeyasinghe

#### INGREDIENTS

250 grams full cream milk powder

500 grams Sugar

4 tablespoons full plain flour

150 grams melted butter

1 teaspoon level bicarb soda

Full Cream milk to knead

5-6 cardomons finely crushed

Rose Essence

#### METHOD

Boil sugar with water (about 1 bottle). Leave to cool. Then add 1 teaspoon rose essence. Add butter (melted) into milk powder, flour, bicarb soda and cardomon powder and knead together with half of the milk. Leave aside for 20-30 minutes. Knead again till smooth adding rest of milk. Make small balls with no creases. Then deep fry on low heat till golden brown. When cool, add the balls into syrup. Let it remain in syrup for 30 minutes before serving. *ENJOY!*

### 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

Ananda Dias-Jayasinha, Mattegoda 10240  
Sri Lanka.

Patrick Holmes, Chipping Norton, NSW 2170.

Ian Hepponstall, Gold Coast, QLD 4213

GIFT SUBSCRIPTION from Dr Hamilton  
Koelmeyer to Hermes Koelmeyer, Cherrybrook, NSW  
2126.



Delving into your mental archives...  
can you look this up for us?

Pictured above are two images of a Gold Medal awarded to Champion Athlete GH Karunatileke at the Ceylon Amateur Athletic Association Meeting held in August 1922.

Karunatileke won the 100 yards and the 200 yard sprint events and was awarded the medal as the Champion Athlete of the year. It is 94 years since the medal (measuring 2 cm in diameter) was awarded

and it has been in the possession of a CSA member for more than 20 years. He would like to contact Karunatileke's family – either a family member or someone who knew the athlete, as it would then add a human element to the story of the medal which now is just an inanimate object!

So would any of our readers who have any recollections of this champion athlete's family, or his relatives or any other connections, we would be delighted to hear from you. Please contact the editor if you can in any way shed some light on this story.

### 'Tis human ...

Remember that you are a human being with a soul and the divine gift of articulate speech: that your native language is the language of Shakespeare and Milton and The Bible; and don't sit there crooning like a bilious pigeon.

—George Bernard Shaw *Pygmalion* (1916)

Work is love made visible. And if you cannot work with love but only with distaste, it is better that you should leave your work and sit at the gate of the temple and take alms of those of those who work with joy.

Khalil Gibran, *Prophet* (1923) 'On Children'.



**Synopses of Meetings**  
**Melbourne 31 August 2014**

Tina Faulk's presentation titled "**A Colonial Childhood in Ceylon**" was based on her biographical book *"The Island of Singing Fish"*. Tina is a contributing journalist writing for *The Spectator Australia*, and was previously the North Asia correspondent for *The Bulletin* based in Tokyo. She was the correspondent for *The South China Morning Post* and *The Far Eastern Economic Review* based in Hong Kong as well. In *The Island of Singing Fish* Tina attempts to recreate her colonial childhood memories for the benefit of her Australian born grandchildren. With the arrival of a young Dutch trader, Roelof Dirksz to Ceylon and married into a trading family in Galle Fort provided origins into Tina's Dutch-Sri Lankan ancestry over 500 years ago. Five centuries later, Tina's family emigrated to Australia due to two official government rulings and the post-independence Sinhala only language policy. Tina's book is woven around the research and investigations on ancient genealogical records.

Tina grew up in Puttalam, North of Sri Lanka and was an outstation child. Tina spoke Sinhala and her mother was able to speak Tamil as they were northerners. At present the author's cousins live in Nugegoda but no relatives are in the North. Tina aimed to write about relatives and family contacts in the book and the title resonates very well with the Sri Lankans (the legend of the singing fish under the bridge of Batticaloa Bay). During the research the author investigated Dutch-Burgher Union, school records and the records of VOC and gained a thorough insight into the lives of people who arrived into the island. These people formed families and were settled in the island. Three successive great European powers conquered Ceylon and we are the descendents of that history.

The story relates to the happy times Tina spent at her grandfather's house in Puttalam although the conflicts of last years of the British Raj remained. Tina's family migrated to Australia when she was very young and she was sent to London to pursue her education. Tina later embarked upon a journalism career after a cadetship with the Courier Mail. Tina mentioned that during emigrating that so much energy and belief is required to adapt to the new country and very little energy is left to think about the country which is left behind.

Tina presented vignettes from *The Island of Singing Fish* during the talk to give a flavour of her book to the audience.

"Over time it was known by many names to the Arabs it was Taprobane and Serendip, Ceilao to the Portuguese, Zeilan to the Dutch and Ceylon to the British, after the independence the island's name changed again to Sri Lanka. Now I was returning to where it all began five hundred years ago.... As

I walk through the Customs hall of Bandaranaike International Airport, the older of the two customs officers, immaculate in well-laundered white uniforms, speaking the fluent English of his generation, smiles as he stamps my Aussie passport... "Welcome home madam". "How did you know?" I ask. He smiles again, that easy Lankan smile, both at me and his junior officer. "You're Burgher, easy to tell. Burghers are coming back, some for holiday, some stay..." "The minority community – Burghers – descendents of Dutch, Portuguese and English traders voted with their feet and exited the island for the U.K. U.S. Australia and Canada... The Australian cities like Perth and Melbourne now have vast Lankan communities... including David de Kretser, former Governor of Victoria".

"Ruby, born Ruby Koch (pronounced locally as 'cock') whose mother was a Miss Swan (that was a family joke—all those avian jokes—Koch married Swan etc.) was a pleasant old lady to a visiting five-year old. She seemed to do little except sit in her cane-backed wooden arm chair on her verendah, watching over her lush and very highly scented garden of iris, frangipani and white Chinese jasmine...when I went to visit her, my grandmother would serve the same delicious fragrant saffron rice and chicken curry on fine white china plates... and there were sliced mangoes and Australian tinned cream for dessert".

As a historian Tina is fascinated by the history of the Burghers. The period of Burghers commenced with the Dutch descendency during Napoleonic war. Galle is a key location where Dutch handed over the Galle Fort to the British in 1796 without fighting. Lachlan Macquarie, who was later to make a name here in Australia, was the British Commander who took surrender from Dutch Commander of the Fort of Galle.

Lachlan Macquarie's letter on the handover of Fort of Point de Galle, as it was then known, is held at Macquarie University in Sydney, says:

*"I have now the honour to report to you that I took possession and received charge of the Town and Fortress of Galle from Mr. Fretz the Dutch Commandeur this morning at nine O'clock, having previously made the necessary arrangements with him for disarming the Dutch Garrison and receiving the British Troops in to the Fort; which was done according in all due form at the hour I have already mentioned. In justice to Mr. Fretz I must beg leave to say..... that the place was delivered up as surrendered to us in the most orderly regular and polite manner possible"...*

The Fort's Dutch inhabitants realised that the British, a seafaring nation of shopkeepers, would be in control of the island and a dominant power of Asia. Fort of Galle endured 200 years of European powers and its stone bastions stood fast.



Copies of *The Island of Singing Fish* were available for sale for \$20.00 each and proceeds from the book sale will be donated to AUSMAT (Australia Sri Lanka Medical Aid Team).

-Dilhani Kumbukkage

Colombo 4 July 2014

**"Some important early firearms of native manufacture in Sri Lankan and foreign museum collections" by Anandalal Nanayakkara**

Tissa Devendra the President of the CSA CC welcomed the members and invitees present at the 2nd quarterly meeting of the Colombo Chapter. The President also warmly welcomed our special guest Mr. Thiru Arumugam, President of the Ceylon Society of Australia, based in Sydney.

Devendra introduced the Chief Guest Anandalal Nanayakkara as an Attorney-at-law and a Consultant in law. He was a Hubert H. Humphrey Fellow at the University of Washington, Seattle, Washington USA during the years 1997-1998 and a USAEP Fellow at the World Resources Institute and Biodiversity Support Program; Washington DC, USA in the year 1995. He is also a Life Member of the Royal Asiatic Society of Sri Lanka. His publications include a paper titled *A 16th – 17th Century Ritual Sword* from Kandy published in the book *"Ancient Swords, Daggers, and Knives in Sri Lankan Museums"* by P H D H de Silva and S Wickramasinghe - a Sri Lanka National Museums Publication (2007) and a book titled *Public Nuisance Law and Procedure in Sri Lanka* which was published by Mihikatha (1998). Mr. Nanayakkara has previously addressed the Ceylon Society of Australia, Colombo Chapter on the subject of the *Kastane Sword* and the Royal Asiatic Society of Sri Lanka on *Early Artillery of the Sinhalese*.

Mr. Nanayakkara prefaced his presentation with an explanation of the topic. Most of the firearms used by the locals in their battles with the Portuguese, the Dutch and the British were locally produced using the ingenuity and resourcefulness of the local craftsmen. However, in view of the fact that most of these firearms repose in foreign museum collections and have been studied by foreign scholars, there is limited awareness of this aspect of Sri Lanka's contribution to firearms development. The speaker gave a brief history of gunpowder and firearms. The earliest known formula for Gunpowder is believed to be contained in a Chinese work probably from 800 A.D. Sculptural evidence from China indicates that true firearms may have been in existence from around the 12th century. The oldest excavated firearm in the form of a small cannon from China is dated to the 13th century. In Europe one of the earliest illustrations of a cannon can be found in the 14th century manuscript *De Nobilitatibus Sapientii Et Prudentiis Regum*; conveniently called the Milemete manuscript.

The *Dambadeni Asne*, an Ola Leaf manuscript referring to the exploits of Prakramabahu the Second (1236-70) recounts an attempted invasion in 1247 of Lanka by Chandrabhanu of Tambralinga. The manuscript refers to the thunderous roar of *Wala Vedi*, *Maha Vedi*, *Dum Vedi*, *Sara Vedi*, *Yathuru Vedi*, *Gal Vedi*, *Gini Vedi*, *Sabdha Vedi* and *Veli Vedi* as the army of Parakramabahu the Second arrays itself for battle. Matters are confused by the fact that 'Vedi' could mean a gunpowder explosion of any sort as well as the discharge of a firearm. Further along the *Dambadeni Asne* makes another more pointed reference to the simultaneous discharge of four hundred *Vedi* followed by the combined twang caused by bow strings from bows of 21 types as the battle commences. Though yet again a veiled reference, taken in context, this suggests strongly that some sort of gunpowder weapon as well as bows were used to disable the enemy at a distance prior to close quarter battle.

That the native literature during the following centuries is not replete with references to firearms can be explained by the fact that these early firearms were of extremely limited effectiveness and certainly were not sufficient to turn the tide in battle on their own. Thus we find that bows and arrows continue to be used well into the firearms period. This is so for Sri Lanka and elsewhere in the firearms world. Thus *Queyros* referring to the early 16th century states that a stockade was erected and furnished by the locals against the Portuguese "with the artillery which was already provided, and trenches on the shore. From it and from them in the morning they began firing at the fleet large and small shot with clouds of arrows." The artillery of these Sinhalese included "muskets on supports, some of the caliber of *bercos*"<sup>1</sup> with which the Sinhalese threw "wooden shafts, 10 palms in length with feathers of wild boar's hide. The Sinhalese also used mounted artillery and other ordnance and their artillery was "well wrought of iron and metal". Unfortunately these firearms have not survived or are yet to be discovered during excavations. By the late 16th and 17th centuries firearms from Ceylon had evolved enough to be identified and appreciated. Thus Linschoten a Dutchman was prompted in 1592 to comment that they make the fairest gun barrels found in any place and the barrels shine like silver. Faria-Y-souza a Spaniard writing in 1666 stated that Sinhala smiths made the best fire locks of the East while Pyrard a Frenchman wrote in 1679 that the Sinhalese make all sorts of arms, such as arquebuses, which are the best and most valued in the Indies.

Contemporary writers have similarly recognised the unique nature of Sri Lankan firearms. Thus the *Encyclopedia of Firearms* (1964) states with reference to native flintlocks that the "island of Ceylon, off the southern tip of India, represents a small but entirely individual area in regard to firearms design. Its guns were usually finely made, and boasted miquelet lock with a dog-catch mounted on the left hand side of the arm



instead of on the right as is usual. These were the only flint arms made east of Persia, all other areas preferring the matchlock. The stocks terminated in a scrolled butt, often inlaid with elaborately carved ivory or tortoiseshell traceries. They were unusual among Asiatic firearms in normally having trigger guards."

In his *Sinhala Weapons and Armor* (1942) Deraniyagala refers to the '*Vaddana tuvakku*' or easily portable arms as being comprised of matchlocks or '*gini tuvakkuva*', flint locks or '*Bondi kula*' or '*gal tuvakkuva*', ordnance or '*kodi tuvakku*' of two sizes, and pistols or '*ath thuvakku*'.

Some of the characteristics of the native long guns were that the butt was generally bifurcated with the upper or the lower lobe being suppressed, the lock was generally placed to the left of the barrel while the Barrel, Stock or Lock of the more elaborate guns incorporated traditional designs.

Two of the most iconic firearms from Sri Lanka that has been studied by gun aficionados are the gun from the Keith Neal collection and the one at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York. Both are flintlock long guns. Keith Neal was a prolific collector of firearms and an internationally recognized expert. As a young photographer's apprentice he had access to great gun collections of stately homes often receiving gifts of firearms from aristocratic clients moved by his enthusiasm for their gun cabinets. He amassed an extensive collection of unique firearms from all parts of the world.

Howard Blackmore (former Deputy Master of the Armouries - H. M. Tower of London) punctuates the illustration of the Keith Neal gun in Blackmore's classic work *Guns and Rifles of the World* (1965) by the description that "[i]n India, the few flintlocks made by the native gunmakers were also close copies of the European type. One often finds a typical Indian stock and barrel equipped with a good quality London-made lock. In the island of Ceylon, however, a most unusual form of flintlock was developed-a version of the Arab toe-lock, with a hook safety-catch usually fitted to the left-hand side of the stock. The unique scroll-shaped Ceylon form of butt carries the most profuse kind of ornament."

The firearm at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York is even more elaborate. This is also a gun with a bifurcate butt with pierced ivory side panels set in a silver frame, and a lock placed to the left of the barrel. Blackmore states that this gun is believed to have been made for the last great warrior King of Ceylon, Raja Sinha, who died in 1687. Knox (1681) states that this King will try his guns which are excellent and true and are inlaid with silver, gold and ivory. He says that the smiths that make them dare not present them to his hands, not having sufficiently proved them. Major Forbes of the 78th Highlanders states that the King at the battle of Gannoroowe exposed himself too much and was fired upon by an enemy soldier who only succeeded in sending a bullet through the King's headgear. The King returned

fire with effect killing the offender. According to Major Forbes, the gun used by the King was in the late King's armoury and carried an inscription referring to the said incident.

Several firearms in the Rijks Museum collection were presented thereafter; some coming from the Visser Collection and some believed to have been captured by the Dutch during Van Eck's expedition to Kandy.

A beautifully fashioned firearm described in the book *Royal Guns of Windsor* was next presented. This gun while being of magnificent construction is also an enigmatic one. The Stock of this gun which is believed to have been made for an European patron illustrates two figures one of which is identified as St. Augustine holding a flaming heart pierced by an arrow. The identity of the other is uncertain. It could be that of St. Andrew or of St. Thomas with the builders' rule. St. Thomas is in fact believed to have landed on the Malabar coast near Cranganore in A.D. 52. Mr. Fred Medis expressed his opinion that it was most probably that of St. Thomas. Thereafter Mr. Nanayakkara presented several pistols associated with the Portuguese and the Dutch which have stocks made of ivory the carvings of which are associated with Sinhalese carving of the period. He also showed an image of a painting of Sir Michael Livesey (1611-63) considered a 'regicide' for having signed the death warrant of King Charles I which painting sports two unusual flintlock pistols the butt of each one in carved ivory in the form of a monster holding a sejant lion in it's jaws. These are recognised as closely aligned to the type of ivory carving prevalent in Sri Lanka at the time. Mr. Nanayakkara concluded his lecture by presenting to the audience details of the cannon known as Lewuke's cannon presently in the Rijks Museum which is one of few pieces of such ordnance from Sri Lanka. The inscription on this cannon has been translated by Dom Martino de Silva Wickremasinghe (1894) as:

*This is the cannon which Lewuke, the minister holding [the office of] Disawa over the Four Korales, has had made and presented [to the Dutch] in the year named Krodha, the 1667th of the Saka era [which is] in the last vinsati (period of twenty years) of the cycle under the regency of Isvara (Jupiter Cyclus).*

Several views have been expressed by scholars as to whether this is a cannon captured by the Dutch during the aforementioned Van Eck's expedition to Kandy or whether it is a cannon gifted to the Dutch by Lewuke himself.

Due to the natural process of selection and elimination, the majority of the surviving examples of early Sinhalese firearms have been preserved more from an aesthetic standpoint than technological. Nevertheless, the surviving examples in museum and private collections as well as illustrations of firearms in temple paintings are but snapshots of the past that need to be carefully documented and analysed in order to piece



together the development of gunpowder and firearm use in Sri Lanka.

**Note:**

Berco is a One Pounder – Vogt, John (1977) Saint Barbara's Legion: Portuguese Artillery in the Struggle for Morocco 1415 – 1578. Military Affairs Vol 41

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– Tony Saldin

## **Books & other publications FOR SALE**

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

### **Not Our War by Dr Sanjiva Wijesinha**

The paperback edition of this new book, published by Vijitha Yapa in December 2013, is now available at \$14.95 in Melbourne bookshops (Dymocks, Readings etc) and on amazon.com Read the review at <http://www.sundaytimes.lk/131229/plus/a-piece-of-authentic-fiction-77759.html>.

A few copies are available at \$14.95 each (postage free) directly from the author. Contact Sanjiva on: [sanjiva.wijesinghe@med.monash.edu.au](mailto:sanjiva.wijesinghe@med.monash.edu.au)

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

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

## **FORTHCOMING RELEASE**

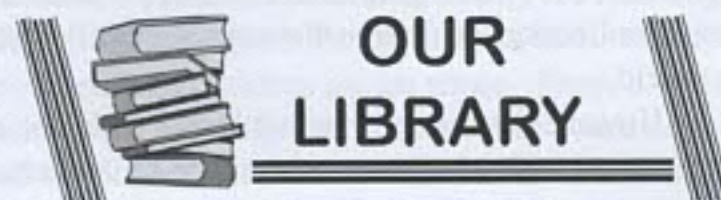
### **Rare pictorial impressions of Sri Lanka of the 17th, 18th and 19th Centuries**

**A set of six prestigious volumes as Collector's items.**

Dr Rajpal de Silva in association with the Central Cultural Fund Press in Sri Lanka is currently engaged in compiling a set of six volumes focussing on art before the photographic era in Ceylon. They will be ready for sale from September 2014.

The volumes are: 1. People and their dress – Rajpal de Silva 2. People's customs and Occupations - Rajpal de Silva and Kumari Jayawardene 3. Cities and Antiquities - Rajpal de Silva and Nilan Cooray 4. Religions and Rituals- Rajpal de Silva and Albert Dharmasiri 5. Travel – Rajpal de Silva and Ranjan Gooneratne 6. Fauna and Flora – Rajpal de Silva and Kumari Abeyagunawardena

The six volumes are expected to be of the same very high standard of production which (as CSA members are well aware) marked Dr de Silva's previous books such as Early Prints of Ceylon, Dutch Views of Ceylon etc. Collectors are advised to make early reservations upon release of these volumes which we will endeavour to bring to the notice of CSA members through The Ceylankan as and when we receive information from the author.



Listed below are the latest additions to the CSA library. Some of the books in the library have been donated by members and friends out of their goodwill and kindness, while many are donations from authors who have held book launches to promote their books at CSA general meetings.

While we will publish a full list from time to time, only new additions will be listed here.

- Hundred Hindu Temples of Sri Lanka - Ancient, Medieval and Modern by Sanmugam Arumugam. (See review on page 31).

- Nationalism in Sri Lanka; Origins- Growth - Impact Challenges for democracy in a multi ethnic society by Srikantha Nadarajah.

## **Days**

What are days for?  
Days are where we live.  
They come, they wake us  
Time and time over.  
They are to be happy in;  
Where can we live but days.

Philip Larkin: 'Days' The Whitsun Weddings (1964)





Hundred Hindu Temples of Sri Lanka, ancient, medieval and modern  
by Sanmugam Arumugam Edited  
by Thirumugam Arumugam Ohm  
Books UK 2014. \$20 plus postage.

**REVIEWED by Hugh Karunanayake**

This book is a merger of the contents of two books published by the author in 1980 and 1991 both



relating to ancient Hindu temples in Sri Lanka. The instant publication was edited by the author Sanmugam Arumugam's son Thirumugam Arumugam and contains details of more than 100 Hindu Temples around the island. The author Sanmugam Arumugam a Chartered Civil Engineer retired as Deputy Director of

Irrigation, and was Director of the Water Resources Board in Sri Lanka for many years.

Hinduism being a religion almost exclusively practiced by the Tamil community it is axiomatic that most ancient Hindu temples in Sri Lanka be located in the North and East of the country where the vast majority of Tamils have lived for centuries. However it must be noted that the practice of Buddhism in Sri Lanka has incorporated, over the ages, within its traditions, the worship of gods of the Hindu pantheon such as Vishnu, Ganesha, Murugar, Pattini etc. Consequently, most Buddhist temples around the country have structured separate devales devoted to the worship of gods of the Hindu pantheon. This book, however, concentrates on the "stand alone" Hindu temples around the country of which there are many but with little or scanty information on their existence in books written in the English Language. Sanmugam Arumugam's book is therefore a very significant contribution to the available literature in English, on the practice of Hinduism in Sri Lanka as manifested in the hallowed temples devoted to Hindu deities.

The original books which were merged to form the present publication were entitled "Ancient Hindu Temples of Sri Lanka" (First published 1980, revised 1982) and "More Hindu Temples of Sri Lanka" (Published 1991). The present publication consists of six sections into which the various temples have been categorised according to the deity venerated in each category viz Vinayakar, Sivan, Murugan, Vishnu, Sakthi, and other lesser known deities. Each temple is described with much detail

and description relating to the origin of the temple, its inscriptions, architecture, as well as associated legend and lore. Descriptions have been supplemented with photographs. The temples discussed date back to ancient times, mostly, however, from the medieval era through to the Chola period (980 to 1070) and the modern era. Many Hindu temples were destroyed by foreign invasions during the 16th to 19th centuries and their cultural significance lost forever. It could be surmised that many of the temples discussed in this book have also suffered a similar fate during the ethnic conflict that enveloped the north and east of the country in the late 20th century and shortly thereafter, a fact that makes this work all the more significant, if not poignant. The book is encyclopaedic in character and replete with a glossary which is of invaluable assistance to the reader unfamiliar with the many religio-specific terms used in it. This addition to the study of the Hindu religion in Sri Lanka will be invaluable to the student, researcher, and general reader. Thirumugam Arumugam deserves our warm approbation for reproducing this work. He has not only exercised his filial obligations but also contributed to a better understanding and appreciation of the Hindu religion as evident in the work of its votaries in Sri Lanka.

## How to become a Member of the CSA...

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

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

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

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

Annual subscription is A\$30  
(Pensioners & Students in Australia A\$20).



# Two great Queen's Counsel: Father-son duo in rare feat

by Ranjan Gooneratne

Several years ago, I read an article about two great father and son lawyers — the Tiruchelvams. I had intended to write an article about another father and son combination — Guy Wikramanayake and his son, Nimal, but could not get round to writing it. It was only recently when I learnt that Nimal had been appointed a Queen's Counsel in Victoria, and accordingly, throughout Australia, that I decided to write a few words about these two great lawyers.



• Guy  
Wickramanayake

Guy Wikramanayake was one of the greatest trial lawyers in Ceylon (as it was then known). He was called to the Bar in September 1929 and was appointed a King's Counsel in October 1950. In 1941, he was retained as Junior Counsel to R.L. Pereira KC in the celebrated case of *Alles v Alles*. Stanley

Alles was at that time a Crown Counsel who was sent on circuit to Galle and returned, I believe, about six weeks later to discover that his wife was pregnant. Stanley Alles retained R.L. Pereira and Guy to appear for him. Pitted against them was one of the leading Silks, Amerasekera KC. When the case came on for hearing R.L. Pereira decided to go to India to watch his horse running in the King Emperor's Cup. Stanley decided to continue on with Guy although he was only 12 years at the Bar. Mrs. Alles, Stanley's wife, got down a leading gynecologist from England to prove that her son was born during the period of gestation when Stanley was living at home with her. Guy cross-examined this expert and his evidence was rejected by District Judge R.F. Dias, the father of Felix Dias Bandaranaike. I believe that Guy's cross-examination had been, for many years, in the archives of the Colombo Law Library and probably still is there. Many law students will remember the epic battles between Guy and Thiagalingam KC in the 1950s. Guy's first question was always electrifying.

A classic example of this first question took place in the Phillip Goonewardene defamation case. Phillip Goonewardene was a minister in the Government of Prime Minister S.W.R.D. Bandaranaike. He fell out with Mrs. Bandaranaike in 1964 and was a member of the Opposition.

Criminal Defamation proceedings were brought against him for defaming a senior public officer, Sidney de Zoysa. Sidney de Zoysa has never been bested before this date, in a Court of Law. When it was his turn to cross-examine Sidney, Guy got up, looked Sidney in the eye and said "Isn't it a fact that you were given a public caning and sacked from St Thomas' College?"

There was pandemonium in the Court. Attorney General A.C.M. Ameer was screaming with rage "How dare he insult the witness". The District Judge was equally incensed. Guy looked at the judge and said calmly — "Your Honour my client is charged with defaming the witness by saying he is a hooligan. The purpose of this question is to lead evidence that the witness was born a hooligan, he will live a hooligan, and will die a hooligan. Philip Goonewardena was acquitted of the charge of criminal defamation, although Guy had not done a criminal case for over thirty years.

In the Bentara — Elpitiya election petition case, he appeared for the respondent. The case was heard day to day before Justice Srisakanda Rajah.

Guy invariably walked into Court, only after the judge took his seat on the bench. One day he happened to be in Court when the judge walked in. He got up from his seat the judge bowed to Court and took his seat on the bench. Then he remarked, "Mr. Wikramanayake, I am glad you bowed and paid some respect to Court".

"I never bow to Court" replied Mr. Wikramanayake and continued "I was merely looking for my spectacle case."

Nimal read law at Trinity Hall Cambridge and was called to the Bar in February 1959. Unfortunately a new rule has been introduced into the Ceylon Bar to the effect that any English Barrister under three years call had to sit for two papers in Property Law and two papers in Civil Procedure. By 1971, he was one of the leaders of the Junior Bar in the District Court of Colombo. Sadly he left for Australia in 1971. He worked as a solicitor for one year and then decided to go to the Victoria Bar, despite



• Nimal  
Wickramanayake



all advice to the contrary from a number of Ceylonese solicitors that Australian Solicitors would not brief not only a foreigner, but a foreign coloured man. The first ten years of his practise was extremely hard, but his perseverance finally paid off. He was fortunate when he went to the Bar, to be befriended by the late Louis Vourmard QC, who was at that time the leading expert on Property Law in Australia. Vourmard has also written a classic work, 'Vourmard's - The sale of Land in Victoria' which was referred to as the Bible. Vourmard suddenly died on the 6th of May 1974 and Nimal took over the writing of his classic work. He has been writing this work for the last forty years.

So in 2008, Justice Peter Young, the Chief Judge in Equity in New South Wales (retired recently as a Justice on the Court of Appeal in New South Wales) called a survey to be made of the 20 best legal works written in Australia and Nimal's work was included in this list. This is indeed a superlative achievement.

In 2000, the Labour government was in power in Victoria, The Attorney-General decided to abolish the Office of Queen's Counsel and replace it with the office of Senior Counsel. Nimal was appointed a Senior Counsel in 2002. Fortunately this year the Liberal Attorney General, Robert Clarke, decided to reintroduce the office of Queen's Counsel into the State of Victoria and Senior Counsel were permitted to elect to become Queen's Counsel. Nimal was invited to apply to be appointed Queen's Counsel which he duly did and was appointed a Queen's Counsel in April this year. This appointment is not only prestigious but has considerable significance by reason of the fact that Guy and Nimal are the only two father-and-son Queen's Counsel in two different Commonwealth countries, a record I believe will never be broken. Last year on June 30, Nimal decided to retire at the ripe old age of 80. He continues to write his work, Vourmard, The Sale of Land, a copy of which he gave his cousin, the late Edward Deranivagala PC in 1998. It was given to the Colombo Law Library. This copy has mysteriously disappeared from the Colombo Law Library. At the moment Nimal's work is a loose-leaf work and he intends to bring out a comprehensive single volume of his work next year. When this work is completed he intends to donate a copy of this work to the Colombo Law Library.

Nimal's achievements are extraordinary when one takes into account the fact that he is the only Queen's Counsel from the Indian sub-continent. Two other eminent Sri Lankan lawyers tried their hand at the Victorian Bar. They were the former Sri Lankan Puisne Judge Vincent Thamotheram and President's Counsel S. Sivarasa. I am sorry to say this but both of them failed.

(Sunday Times, August 24, 2014)



## 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 2936402 (Colombo) and they will be delighted to forward you with details about forthcoming meetings envisaged and any other information you may require.

## 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 \$5.00; Asia/Pacific \$10.00; rest of the world \$15.00 per package of up to 5 issues. Contact Hugh Karunanayake Int. + 61 2 9402 6342 or hkaru@internode.net.au

## Unkind questions... unkinder answers

Q. Who is the best Sri Lankan batsman on the current tour? A. Muttiah Muralitharan

Q. What is the height of optimism? A. A Sri Lankan batsman putting on sunscreen.

Q. What is the main function of the Sri Lankan coach? A. To transport the team from the hotel to the ground.

Q. What's the Sri Lankan version of a hat-trick? A. Three runs in three balls.

Q. Why don't Sri Lankan fielders need pre-tour travel injections? A. Because they never catch anything.

Q. What's the Sri Lankan version of LBW? A. Lost, Beaten, Walloped.

- Google (posted by Janaka Wijayanayake (1999).



## OBITUARY

### STANLEY SPARKES

16 May 1922 (Ceylon) - 26 June 2014 (Australia)

#### A dedication of my family tree to my beloved Uncle

I only came to 'know' this highly regarded professional as my beloved Uncle, two years ago, on returning home to England, immediately *after* my visit to Australia.

While researching my father's side of the family tree, serendipitously, a last ditch search on the web brought me electronically in touch with Victor Melder who sent me the Sparkes' email address. I am grateful to Victor.

Very shortly after I pressed 'send', I had a reply from Uncle! From the tone and content of his response, I felt loved and cherished. He was my late father's first cousin. Uncle couldn't do enough to help me. He sent me copious emails with lots of details and I learnt not only about the Hanks – and Sparkes – families but also about colonial Ceylon; fascinating facts about the British Empire that were never taught at school. And by the way, also that I may have descended from an Englishman and not an American as I had always believed! Note to self; go visit the cemetery in Surrey.

During the two years of electronic communication, I came to love, admire and respect Uncle and his energy, intellect, wit, knowledge, generosity and unfailing kindness.

So with profound gratitude, I dedicate my Hanks family tree to dearest Uncle Stanley Sparkes, for it is only due to his unfailing help that I shall be able to compile the branch of the Hanks family tree of my late father, William (Bill) Hanks, Ceylon Tea Planter from the 1940s to the 1970s.

My sisters Linda and Rosie from Canada were fortunate to have met Uncle and Aunt Wendy earlier in 2014 while visiting Australia; my sister Yvonne and I living in England, were not so fortunate.

How I wish that I had picked up the telephone once or twice during the two years that I communicated with Uncle, when instead, I resorted to the impersonal and rapid exchange of emails! How I wish that I had begun my search earlier than I did and found Victor, and through him Uncle Stanley. Had I done so, I would have been able to meet Uncle during my first visit to Australia in February 2012.

During his last days, I managed to speak with Uncle in hospital a couple of times and he was as sharp witted as in the image I had formed of him, over the two years.

May his soul rest in peace and may Aunt Wendy find comfort in the knowledge that he was loved and respected by so many, throughout all of his life. The many tributes paid to Uncle Stanley are evidence of the high regard in which he was held.

I am proud that Stanley Sparkes was my Uncle and we Hanks girls thank God that we came to 'know' him, albeit for a short time.

– Tina Hanks, Suffolk, England 2014

#### Members recently deceased

With deep regret we record that the following CSA members passed away in recent months and offer heartfelt condolences to their families.

- Brian Edwards of Durham, UK;
  - Chandra Sandrasagara of Paddington, NSW;
  - Dr David Van Der Straaten, Epping, NSW.
- May they Rest in Peace.

#### Like father, like son

What odds are there that a father and his biological son will be Catholic priests in their lifetime? Highly unlikely? Well not in the case of Sri Lankan-born Father Donald Lourensz and his son Father Duncan.

This came to light, as this unique photograph shows, when dad Father Donald (centre) was feted for his 90th birthday at St Peter Apostle Church, Hoppers Crossing in Victoria. Fr Donald concelebrated Mass with son Fr Duncan Lourensz (left) from Deal, Kent, UK, and Fr Thang Vu of St Peter's. Also present on the occasion was his daughter Donaldine and grand daughter Ziska.

Sadly, on 8 October, Fr Donald passed away at the age of 94 in the 27th year of his priestly life and funeral took place in Hoppers Crossing.

Donald was born on 25 September 1920. His father was an Anglican and his mother belonged to the Dutch Reformed Church. He lost both parents in a drowning accident when he was a child and, with his two brothers, he was brought up by relatives.

On leaving high school, he went to Ceylon University and graduated in medicine in 1946. He became a Catholic at 21 and married Beta in 1946. She died in 1952, leaving him with two young children to bring up. In 1953, he migrated with the children to England where he became an Ear, Nose and Throat Specialist at St Andrews Hospital in London.

On retirement in 1981, with his children now grown up, he decided to join the priesthood. He was ordained in Bermuda in 1987 and two years later, he came to Australia where he served in the Sacred Heart parish in Wodonga in the Sandhurst diocese. On his retirement from the active ministry he lived with relatives in Hoppers Crossing until his death.







Sydney  
29 November  
2014



## Ceylon Society of Australia

The Annual General Meeting of the CSA will be held on Saturday 29 November 2014 starting at 7.00 pm at the Pennant Hills Community Centre, Ramsay Road, Pennant Hills, NSW 2120. It is opposite the Pennant Hills Railway Station.

Ample parking is available in the vicinity and the entrance is at the back of the building from the car park. The Hall is on the upper floor.

Nominations for Office Bearers and Resolutions are to be forwarded to the Secretary, CSA by email to [lesanvee@bigpond.com](mailto:lesanvee@bigpond.com) or by post to Les Perera, 4/9-23 Bruce Avenue, Killara, NSW 2071 no later than 14 November 2014.

Followed by our  
traditional  
Christmas

**Dinner & Carols**  
for Members and Guests.

**Tickets only \$ 35 per person**  
**BYO Wines & Spirits**

Raffle, Door Prizes, Quiz, Sing-along to music on the piano by Hyacinth Jones and many other surprises.

Dinner is catered for by "Sweet and Spicy" Catering Services. Those with special dietary requirements or allergies please contact Chandra Senaratne on (02) 9872 6826. Email: [charboyd@iprimus.com.au](mailto:charboyd@iprimus.com.au)

**Advance Reservation for Dinner is essential, not later than 15 November.**

For your tickets please contact

Deepak Pritamdas on phone number 0434 860 188 or email: [deepakpsl@yahoo.com](mailto:deepakpsl@yahoo.com). Payment cheques to be made out to "Ceylon Society of Australia" and posted to Deepak Pritamdas, Treasurer CSA, P O Box 489, Blacktown, NSW 2148.

**Colombo Chapter**  
**Friday 12 December 2014 at 5.30 PM**

**Prof J.B.Dissanayake,**

(Former Sri Lankan Ambassador to Thailand)  
will talk on ROYAL RITUALS in THAILAND and SRI LANKA

Venue Organisation of Professional Associations (OPA) 275/75 Prof. Stanley Wijesundera Mawatha (off Baudhaloka Mawatha), Colombo 7.

**DIRECTIONS:** The OPA is situated midway down Prof. Stanley Wijesundera Mawatha, one end of which joins Baudhaloka Mawatha, near the Army Check-point leading to General's House and the other end opposite the Colombo University grounds on Reid Avenue, between the newly refurbished Racecourse complex and the University of Colombo Arts/Law Faculty buildings).

Contact: Tissa Devendra (President) email: [tdevendra@eureka.lk](mailto:tdevendra@eureka.lk) 011 250 1489; M.D.(Tony) Saldin (Hony Secretary) email: [saldin@sltnet.lk](mailto:saldin@sltnet.lk) +94 777 363366 (Res.) 2936402 (O); Asoka de Silva (Hony Treasurer) email: [matdes@sltnet.lk](mailto:matdes@sltnet.lk) 011 2822933 +94 775 097517.

## CHANGED YOUR ADDRESS ?

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](mailto:deepakpsl@yahoo.com)

## Soldiers return

Next year we are to bring the soldiers home  
For lack of money, and it is all right.  
Places they guarded, or kept orderly,  
Must guard themselves, and keep themselves orderly.

*Philip Larkin - High Windows (1974) 'Homage to a Government'.*

## Men

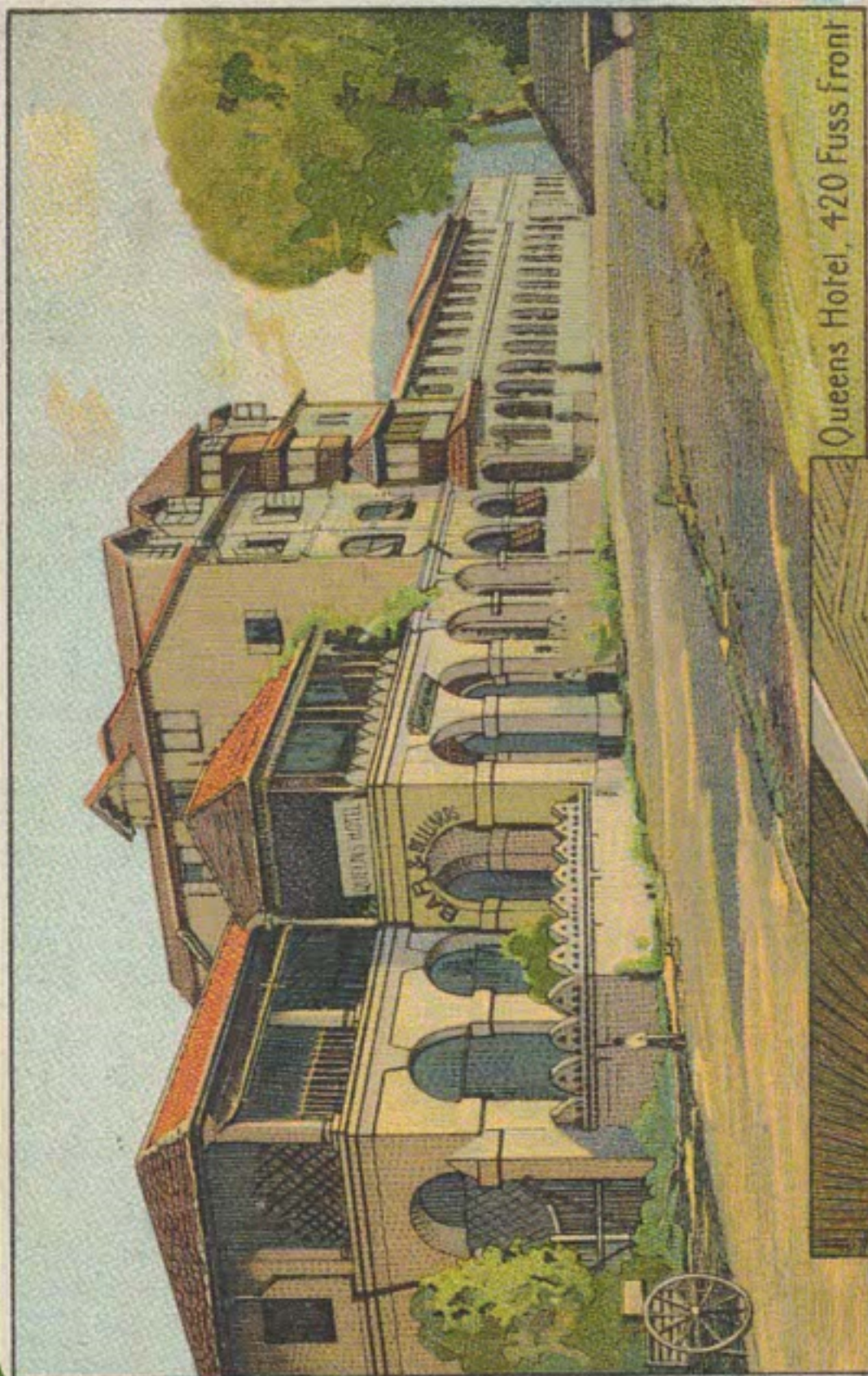
Men! The only animal in the world to fear.  
*D.H.Lawrence - Birds, Beasts and Flowers (1923) 'Mountain Lion'*

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# Gruss Kandy aus



Queens Hotel, 420 Fuss front



Veranda der ersten Etage  
mit Aussicht auf den See



Der Kandy See

Edler & Krische, Hannover.