



# The Ceylanikam

The Journal of the  
CEYLON SOCIETY  
of AUSTRALIA



Vale ANTONY PERIES  
15 January 1931 - 8 August 2016

ISSN 1836-8646 Journal 76 Volume XIX Number 4 November 2016 Editor Doug Jones



## The Ceylon Society of Australia

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

**VICE-PRESIDENT**  
Dr Srilal Fernando

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

**TREASURER & PUBLIC OFFICER**  
Deepak Pritamdas  
Mobile 0434 860 188  
PO Box 489 Blacktown NSW 2148  
deepakpsl@yahoo.com

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

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

**EDITOR/LIBRARIAN**  
Doug Jones  
int. + 61 2 8677 9260  
Mobile 0431 616 229  
12/11 Garthowen Crescent, Castle Hill NSW 2154  
dougjay20@gmail.com

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

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

### EX-OFFICIO

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

**MELBOURNE CHAPTER CONVENOR**  
Hemal Gurusinghe  
Mobile 0427 725 740  
hemguru@hotmail.com

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

## The Ceylankan



### CONTENTS

• Our Readers Write .....	4
• Leonard Sydney Woolf (1880 -1969) by Thiru Arumugam .....	6
• Lions born in Sri Lanka in 1958 by Harry de Sayrah & Pamela Ann Ferdinand .....	18

• Ceylankan - A malange of many minds by S. Pathiravitana .....	22
• Meals Ammi Made .....	24
• Synopses of Meetings – Sunimal Fernando (Sydney) – M.D. (Tony) Saldin (Colombo) .....	26
• Appreciation by Hugh Karunanayake .....	30
• R.L.Spittel - the Surgeon of the Veddass by Dr Palitha Ganewatte .....	32



## From the Editor...

**W**e salute the passing of former President of the Ceylon Society of Australia, Tony Peries. Words are inadequate to sum up the contribution Tony made for the betterment of the country of his birth, the country of his adoption, his family, the CSA - everything and everybody who came to know him. He had the uncanny gift of leaving his quiet friendliness and sharing his immense knowledge of worldly affairs with all who knew him. We will miss him. Vale Tony.

Now was Leonard Woolf an anti-imperialist? He played a big role in Ceylon gaining independence than has been given credit for. What was the relevancy of running another article, a good 11 pages long, on the famous author and Colonial administrator in *The Ceylankan* when three had been published previously? There was good reason. As Thiru Arumugam himself points out, he went to England to research this article as Woolf had lived in England for 58 years after leaving Ceylon. Thiru called at Monk's House in the East Sussex village of Rodmell; the house that was owned by Woolf for 50 years and both he and Virginia wrote many of their books while living in this house. They both also died there. That was more than enough reason! This is classic Thiru Arumugam at work – thoroughly researched, written in his own inimitable style, enriching a scholarly publication like the journal.

The article was intended for publication in two parts. However, when preparing this issue for the printer, I discovered that we were short of copy to

fill 36 pages. I had to resort to desperate measures. I take this opportunity to make an urgent plea to all members that the editorial larder is hopelessly depleted and in need of some urgent First Aid. Your literary contributions are needed urgently.

Also making the pages of the journal is a joint effort by Lion Pamela Ann Ferdinand and Lion Harry de Sayrah as they take us through the birth of the Lionist movement in Sri Lanka and traces its growth in the past half century. The movement is certainly entrenched, very active and growing rapidly with 505 clubs in existence and boasts in excess of 13,000 members.

For the benefit of our readers we also reproduce a very favourable review of *Journal 21* by S.Pathiravitana, the then Editor of the *Daily News*. The review was first published in that newspaper on 27 August 2005. Sumane Iyer was Editor of the journal that was reviewed.

Dr Palitha Ganewatta made a talk to Sydney audiences on "Dr R.L.Spittel—the surgeon of the Veddas" at a CSA meeting on 29 May 2016. The text of that talk is very readable as Palitha vicariously travels with Spittel on his regular journeys (as Spittel's daughter (author Christine Wilson who, in fact, used to do regularly) into the wilderness and we reproduce it in journal as a record and for reader reference if necessary.

The usual fare is included like *Meals Amme Made* (we need more lady members to contribute to this segment), *Synopses of Meetings* done by Sunimal Fernando in Sydney and M.D.(Tony) Saldin in Colombo.

Keep those literary contributions coming!

## About the Ceylon Society of Australia

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

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

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

*The Ceylankan*, a publication much-looked forward to by members and others here and worldwide is the flagship of CSA. Articles published are from members and those solicited from outside sources. All opinions expressed are those of the individual writers and do not necessarily reflect those of the the editor or the CSA. Articles may be reproduced elsewhere, but must be appropriately credited to *The Ceylankan* and carry suitable acknowledgement thereof. (A note on submitting articles to the journal is on Page 34).



## Our Readers Write

### *Glorious past*

Thank you [Deepak] for providing your email address details over the phone to me.

I bumped into *The Ceylankan* periodical and was amazed at the professionalism and the information content of this publication of Sri Lanka.

The collection of articles by those who enjoyed that life - gives us a glimpse of that glorious past of this Island Nation.

I would like to subscribe and also wish to purchase copies of the past 10 issues. I shall thank you to provide me the details how to complete this subscription.

PAUL RAJESWARAN

### *Kitulgala wooden bridge*

I'd like to add a snippet of information to the excellent article "A Tale of Two Bridges" (J74 & J75) and the film produced in Ceylon about the bridge over the River Kwai.

My late husband, then Captain Manthi Ranawake of the 1st Field Regiment of the Ceylon Engineers of the Ceylon Army, was called in to supervise the final construction of the Kitulgala wooden bridge and its blowing up as the finale to the film.

I have fond memories of David Lean who prior to his departure from Ceylon, invited us to dinner at the Colombo hotel he was staying in for the duration of the production of the film. I still remember dancing with David Lean after he instructed the band to play the Colonel Bogey March to a beat of a waltz!

At the end of the memorable evening he invited us to visit him in England. But sadly years later when we were there he had already passed away.

SIRI RANAWAKE, Sydney, NSW.

### *Bridge Story 2*

I refer to Part 1 of Thiru Arumugam's article in *The Ceylankan* of May, 2016 on "A Tale of two Bridges". As usual, the article was excellent and well-researched which we have come to expect from the "pen" of Thiru. I found it most interesting, not only for the impressive presentation but also for bringing back some memories of my personal childhood experiences in 1942 during the WWII period in the eastern hemisphere. We were then living in Chenkaladi, a small town 15 kilometres north of Batticaloa, as my father was an Engineer in the Irrigation Department located in this town. I attended the local Primary Methodist Tamil School and was then a kindergarten student. Fearing an air attack by the Japanese after the fall of Singapore, the school conducted regular "drills" in order to mitigate any personal injury in the event of a raid. Although slates were used for written work, the students had to carry a few lead pencils and

cotton wool to school. We were instructed to plug our ears and bite on the wooden part of the pencil and quickly get under the desk on hearing any warning of an air attack. We were also instructed to observe absolute silence. Around the period of the Japanese attack on Trincomalee, we heard an air raid warning and decisive loud noises of bombing not far away from Chenkaladi. The teachers immediately ordered us to escalate the "drill" practices to a live situation. Absolute silence pervaded among the traumatised students waiting under the desks until the noise from the bombing ceased completely. When the Head Master decided that the danger had passed the teachers were instructed to ask us to come out from the earlier most uncomfortable positions. Announcements were made in the old methodology from cars and "tom tom" beaters that it was safe to come out into the streets. Encouraged by the Head Master a number of parents came to the school and took the children away to their homes.

On the very next day after the air raid, announcements were made that the raid took place near Sithandikudy, ( a small hamlet few kilometres north of Chenkaladi) and this had nothing to do with the attack on Trincomalee. It was only a practice exercise by the British Royal Air Force targeting a few coconut plantations. People were allowed to inspect the site of devastation. I recall accompanying my father to one of the affected coconut plantations and seeing the devastation. There were big holes on the ground and coconut trees smashed to the ground. Some residents, including my father were not totally convinced that the air raid was a mere 'practice' one although any contrary opinion cannot be voiced during a period of War, least of all by Government officers. Perhaps this scepticism was correct as the Colonial authorities could deliberately resort to misinformation in order to avoid any panic situation arising within the local populace or for any other reason.

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

REX OLEGASEGAREM (East Ryde, NSW)

### *Bridge story 3*

I was interested to read Thiru Arumugam's very fine article published in the August 2016 edition of *The Ceylankan* titled "A Tale of Two Bridges..." which



was about the bridge over the River Kwai depicted in David Lean's film of the same name.

The film depicts an operation to destroy the bridge being carried out by SOE's Force 136 from its base in Ceylon, although in the film it is incorrectly named as "Force 316."

For some years I have been actively digging out and untangling the vast archives of Force 136 and I have found no evidence on any SOE file that even remotely suggests that Force 136 ever mounted such an operation into Siam so that aspect of the story is pure fiction.

However, the film does contain some elements of truth about Force 136. The Riverdale Bungalow depicted in the film as the "Force 316 Headquarters" was, from late November 1944 to November 1945, the residence of the Commander of Force 136, Colin Mackenzie. The Head of Force 136 Propaganda, Alec Peterson, shared a basha hut built in the gardens of Riverdale with Bickham Sweet-Escott, a senior SOE officer sent out to Kandy in early 1945. Peterson describes Riverdale as "...a beautiful spot, with a steep hill down to the river, where one could watch the elephants bathing in the evening flight of the flying foxes."

Force 136 officers did wear the SEAC insignia as depicted in the film, otherwise the story has nothing to do with Force 136 or SOE, and in fact it creates a misleading impression of the role of Force 136.

The SOE agent Harry Rée who was dropped into France in 1943 said little about his SOE activities in France until fifty years later in 1993 when he gave a moving talk on BBC Radio 4 titled Quietly Resting, and he began his talk by saying:

"...there seems to be an irresistible tendency for listeners, and indeed for authors and producers, to focus their attention [on SOE] almost exclusively on the spectacular incidents • Parachute drops, Lysander landings, sabotage coup or shoot-ups • and this is a mistake."

Any reader of *The Ceylankan* interested to know why Harry Rée said this can find out by listening to his radio talk which is available on the Imperial War Museum's website.

While I personally enjoyed reading the novel and watching the film, it does nurture a false impression of Force 136. The role of Force 136 was far less spectacular. Its primary aim was to build up, arm, and train local resistance groups in Japanese occupied territories, especially with groups who opposed the Japanese occupation of their country. It was not set up to blow up bridges, telephone poles or ammo dumps, although that did occur on a few occasions.

In Burma, Force 136 built up and trained resistance groups with hill tribes (Karens and Kachins and Shans) more than ordinary Burmese who tended

to be passive towards the Japanese occupation of Burma. It built up relations in Siam (now Thailand) with the leader of the Free Siamese Movement, Luang Pradit, whose codename was RUTH. Pradit was secretly exfiltrated out of Siam to Kandy in February 1945 in Operation SEQUENCE for secret meetings with Mountbatten's staff. In Malaya, Force 136 armed and trained members of the Malayan Communist Party as well as KMT Chinese and Malays.

At the end of the War, Force 136 also did valuable work providing much needed food and medicine by air from their storage facilities in Ceylon to POWs in Malaya and Singapore, many of whom were either extremely sick or on the point of starvation. This occurred for example with a large number of Indians held in Japanese POW camps in Sungei Patani. At the time Force 136 was the only organisation that could do this.

DR TONY DONALDSON, Melbourne.

### *Your letters*

*Readers' letters are important to us. Tell us what you think about the journal and its contents. We welcome your thoughts, comments and constructive criticism on the articles that appear on these pages. If through your own research you can shed new light on some subject matter published, please tell us.*

*However, keep letters as brief as possible. The Editor reserves the right to edit your letters for reasons of length, clarity and content. Send your letters to email: dougjay20@gmail.com.*

### **SIVURA - the SAFFRON ROBE**

The vivid saffron robe of the Buddhist monk is far more than a mere attire. It symbolises a monastic life, a life of detachment. To the ordinary layman it is a symbol, which in essence represents a the Buddhist order of the bygone and present times. The sober shades of brown and deep oranges thus inspire obeisance and a sense of humble veneration among people. A Buddhist monk is thus characterised by this symbolic adornment and within its many folds and hems lie preserved a timeless and stringent practice since the times of the Buddha.

(In *Explore Sri Lanka* August 2011).

### *Art is not art*

*Art distils sensation and embodies it with enhanced meaning in memorable form—or else, it is not art (Jacques Barzun - The House of Intellect 1959).*





## Leonard Sidney Woolf (1880-1969): the anti-imperialist

By Thiru Arumugam

### Introduction

*The Ceylankan* has carried three articles about Leonard Woolf. In the May 2004 issue Vama Vamadevan wrote an article titled *Leonard Woolf* which mainly covered Woolf's years in Ceylon (1904-1910). In the November 2004 issue Yasmine Gooneratne wrote an article titled *Lone Woolf* in which she presents a scholarly analysis of Woolf's book *Village in the Jungle* and describes a forthcoming new edition of the book with misprints in the first (1913) edition corrected and excised passages restored. Yasmine's article mentions Leonard's "patient devotion with which he had nursed Virginia Woolf through her spells of mental illness, thereby guaranteeing to the world the emergence of its foremost female literary genius". Finally, in the February 2009 issue Philip Sansoni wrote an article titled *Leonard Woolf – The Lonely Cadet and the Maiden* in which he describes in great detail Woolf's affair in Jaffna with Kitty Leyden. Woolf in the second volume of his autobiography<sup>1</sup> says briefly that it was only a one-night stand where he lost his virginity, which had survived his days at Cambridge. However, in a letter to his good friend Lytton Strachey in England dated 12 November 1905<sup>2</sup> written from Jaffna, Woolf said something more "... what do you think of my new one alone with a burgher concubine in a long whitewashed bungalow overlooking a lagoon, where time is only divided between reading Voltaire on the immense verandah and copulating in the vast and empty rooms ..."

In view of the publication of these three articles, is a fourth one justified? Perhaps, yes, because the writer visited England recently and collected information about Woolf's life in England where he lived for another 58 years after he returned from Ceylon, and visited the National Trust owned literary shrine of Monk's House in the East Sussex village of Rodmell and took many photographs. This house was owned by Woolf for 50 years and both his wife Virginia and Leonard wrote many of their books while living in this house and both also died here.

Leonard Woolf has documented his life in great detail in his autobiography which is in five volumes totalling over 1100 pages. The first volume *Sowing* (1960) covers his childhood and years at

Cambridge. The second volume *Growing* (1961) covers his life in Ceylon as a member of the Ceylon Civil Service from 1904 to 1911. The third volume *Beginning Again* (1964) covers the period 1911 to 1918 including his marriage to Virginia Stephen and his life during the first World War. The fourth volume *Downhill all the way* (1967) covers the inter-war years from 1919 to 1939, the word 'downhill' referring not to his literary reputation or health but the decline of Europe due to the rise in power of Hitler. The final volume *The Journey not the arrival matters* covers the death of Virginia by suicide in 1941 and the rest of his life to 1969. He completed proof reading this book before he died but it was only published two months after he died in 1969. This book mentions his second short visit to Ceylon in 1960. It is significant to note that all five books were written after he was eighty years old. Christopher Ondaatje retraced Woolf's workplaces and travels in Ceylon and interestingly recounted them in his book *Woolf in Ceylon: an Imperial Journey in the shadow of Leonard Woolf 1904-1911* (2005).

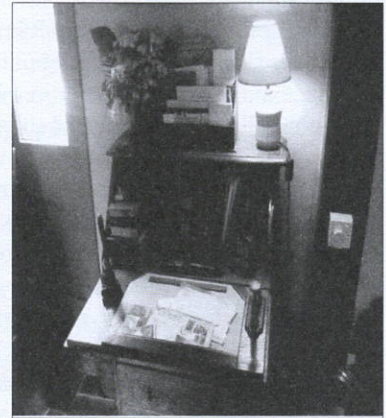
The 326 page book is copiously illustrated with period and modern photographs.

### School days

Leonard Woolf was born in London on 25 November 1880, the third surviving child of the nine children of Sidney Woolf and Marie de Jongh, who were both Jews, but at the age of 18

Leonard became an atheist, much to the disappointment of his mother. Sidney was a QC with an excellent practice as a Barrister. When Leonard was eleven years old his father died suddenly after a brief illness and the family were reduced from an upper middle class household with eight servants to near penury.

When his father died Leonard was boarded at Arlington House, a Preparatory School in Brighton. He was able to continue studying there because the Headmaster generously reduced the school fees



• **Figure 5.** Leonard Woolf's desk in Monks House, Rodmell, Sussex, where most of his books were written.



because he was a bright student and was being prepared for admission to St Paul's School in London. St Paul's was, and still is today, among the schools in England with highest number of annual admissions to Oxbridge Universities.

At the age of 13 he won scholarship admission to St Paul's where he studied for the next five years. As a scholarship student the main subjects he studied at St Paul's were Latin and Greek and he was coached for admission to Balliol College in Oxford or Trinity College in Cambridge. In March 1899 his teachers sent him to sit for the scholarship examination at Trinity, this particular examination was mainly meant for first year students already at Trinity and Leonard found that he was the only schoolboy sitting for the examination. Such was his school teachers faith in his ability. When the examination results were announced, he was delighted to learn that he was awarded an Exhibition and admission to Trinity College.<sup>3</sup>

#### **Cambridge University**

Leonard started his undergraduate career in Trinity College, Cambridge in October 1899, where he was to study for the next five years. Among his friends in Cambridge were: Lytton Strachey with whom he corresponded regularly when Leonard was in Ceylon, and became a life-long friend; G H Hardy a brilliant mathematician, later to become Savilian Professor of Mathematics and 'discoverer' of the Indian genius Srinivasa Ramunajam; Thoby Stephen whose sisters were the beautiful and talented Virginia and Vanessa - Leonard's reaction when he first saw them was that *'their beauty literally took one's breath away, for suddenly seeing them one stopped astonished, and everything, including one's breathing for one second, also stopped ...'*<sup>4</sup> their father, Sir Leslie Stephen was the Editor of the *Dictionary of National Biography* and was awarded honorary degrees by Cambridge, Oxford and Harvard; Clive Bell who later married Vanessa Stephen sister of Virginia; E M Forster who later wrote *A Passage to India*; John Maynard Keynes, later to become Britain's most famous 20th century Economist; and G E Moore later to become Professor of Philosophy at Cambridge and whose book *Principia Ethica* had a profound influence on Leonard *'revealing for the first time for us, so it seemed, the nature of truth and reality, of good and evil and character and conduct, substituting for religious and philosophical nightmares, ...'*<sup>5</sup>.

In 1902 Leonard was elected a member of the Cambridge Apostles. This was a semi-secret Society founded in 1820, membership was by invitation. The Apostles met once a week and a member gave a talk which was followed by a discussion. There were no limitations on the topics discussed. Members of the Apostles of that period included Bertrand Russell, G E Moore, J M Keynes, E M Forster, Lytton Strachey and Rupert Brooke. Many of the subsequent Bloomsbury

Group were Apostles. Amartya Sen, the Nobel Prize winning economist and philosopher is believed to be a current member.

Leonard entered Cambridge hoping to become a Barrister like his father, but this had to be abandoned because he would earn very little in the first few years and he had a financial obligation to support his siblings. Instead he decided to apply for a job in the Civil Service. In his third year at Cambridge he got a first class in Part 1 of the Classical Tripos, but in the third division. In his fourth year he got a second class in Part 2 of the Classical Tripos, Greek Philosophy. He spent the fifth year preparing for the Civil Service Examination studying the additional subjects of political economy, political science and logic. He did not do particularly well in the examination and was 69th in order of merit.<sup>6</sup> He did not qualify for a post in the Home Civil Service, so he applied for an Eastern Cadetship and was selected for appointment to the Ceylon Civil Service.<sup>7</sup>

#### **Woolf in Ceylon**

In November 1904 Leonard set sail for Colombo in the P&O Liner *Syria*. His luggage included his personal effects and 70 bound volumes of the 18th century edition of the works of Voltaire (1694-1778), who wrote plays, poems, novels, about 2000 pamphlets and books and about 20,000 letters. The *Complete Works of Voltaire* published by Oxford University runs to about 200 volumes. Leonard also took with him his wire-haired fox-terrier 'Charles'. P&O policy did not allow dogs to be taken on their passenger liners, so Charles travelled separately in a Bibby Liner where the ship's butcher overfed him and he arrived in Colombo fat as a pig.

Leonard was surprised that there was on the ship a 'caste' system among British colonials and the four groups were civil servants, army officers, planters and business men. The latter were called 'shoppies'. Woolf disembarked in Colombo on 16 December 1904 and reported for duty to the Colonial Secretary, A M Ashmore, and was given his first posting as a Cadet in the Jaffna Kachcheri on a salary of 300 Pounds a year. He left for Jaffna on 02 January 1905. At that time the railway operated only up to Anuradhapura and from Elephant Pass to Jaffna, so the 36 hour journey from Anuradhapura



• (Figure 1) Leonard Woolf with 'Charles' in Jaffna. From photo of photo in Monks Wood.



to Elephant Pass was in an unsprung bullock cart, reclining on mail bags.

#### **Life in Jaffna**

Leonard arrived in Jaffna on 05 January 1905 and reported for duty to the Government Agent (GA), J P Lewis, who later wrote the book *List of inscriptions and monuments in Ceylon*. Figure 1 is a photo of Leonard and his dog 'Charles' taken in Jaffna. The European population of Jaffna at that time consisted of about a dozen Government Officers and about ten Missionaries, their wives and children, and Leonard says that '*I could never make up my mind whether Kipling had moulded his characters accurately in the image of Anglo-Indian society or whether we were moulding our characters accurately in the image of a Kipling story*'.<sup>8</sup>



• (Figure 4). Monk's House, Rodmell, East Sussex. Woolf's home for 50 years.

The GA was responsible for all revenue and expenditure in the Province, except for major roads and major irrigation works. He was assisted in this work by the Office Assistant (OA) who in turn was assisted by the Cadet. Leonard's duties initially consisted of signing licences and routine letters. It was not long before Leonard got bored with this routine work and asked the OA to give him more responsibility, to which the latter agreed. He was appointed Assistant Police Magistrate and had to start studying Law.

After he had been a year in Jaffna, the GA asked him whether he would take on the responsibility of assisting in supervising the pearl fishery just south of Mannar. Leonard agreed and set off by boat on 15 February 1906 to the Fishery. Up to thirty thousand people came from all over Asia for the Fishery. To house them many cadjan huts had to be built. The divers included about 4000 Arabs and 4000 South Indians with a total of 473 boats. The divers, with nose clips, would dive and fill large baskets with oysters. At the end of the day's fishing the oysters were brought to the shore and the oysters from each boat were divided into three equal portions. Two of the portions were for the Government and the third portion was for the divers. The Government portions were then sold by auction to the highest bidder. Leonard says that as the

fishery went on '*... the whole camp became full of thousands of putrid and putrescent oysters, a horrible smell hung over it and us night and day and myriads of flies swarmed over everything ...*'.<sup>9</sup> The Fishery ended in April 1906.

Leonard's experience in the Fishery forms the core of a short story which he wrote subsequently titled *Pearls and Swine* which is included in his book of short stories *Stories of the East* (1921). The Daily Mail stated that *Pearls and Swine* '*... will rank with the great stories of the world*'.<sup>10</sup> Leonard describes the death of an Arab diver '*... I heard continually the word Khallas – all is over, finished. I watched the figures outlined against the grey sky – the long lean outline of the corpse with the toes sticking up so straight and stark, the crouching huddled figure of the weeping man and the tall upright sheik standing by his side. They were motionless, sombre, mysterious, part of the grey sea, of the grey sky*'.<sup>11</sup>

When he returned to Jaffna he found that the GA Lewis had been transferred to Kandy and Ferdinando Hamlyn Price had been appointed GA Jaffna. Lewis must have appreciated Leonard's hard work and capability because in August 1907 Leonard received transfer orders after two and a half years in Jaffna, to proceed to Kandy as Office Assistant to GA Lewis.

#### **Woolf in Kandy**

Leonard reported for work in Kandy on 19 August 1907. He found life in Kandy quite different from Jaffna. There were many Europeans here and many planters in the surrounding areas. He was a regular visitor to the Kandy Club in the evenings where his main activities were to have a drink, play bridge, dine and play billiards, in that order. He had already passed the examination in Tamil and he now started learning Sinhala. His tutor was the Buddhist priest Gunaratna who was the Librarian in the Oriental Library in the Maligawa. It was not long before Leonard was able to read, write and speak Sinhala. Also in the Kachcheri he instituted a system whereby, as far as possible, all letters were replied to on the day of receipt.

One day in March 1908 when the GA was out of town, Leonard received a telegram from the Colonial Secretary in Colombo to say that the 81 year old Empress Eugenie de Montijo of France was visiting Kandy the following day as the guest of the Government and was to be properly looked after during her stay in Kandy. She was the wife of Napoleon III, Emperor of France from 1852 to 1870, he died in 1873.

Leonard met the Empress at the Kandy railway station and took her in a carriage to King's Pavilion, the Kandy residence of the Governor of Ceylon, at that time Henry Edward McCallum. The Empress asked Leonard whether there was any possibility of viewing the Buddha's sacred tooth relic.



The relic was kept in a locked inner shrine in the Dalada Maligawa and could be shown only with the consent of both the Diyawadana Nilame and the GA, both of whom had the keys and both had to be present to unlock the shrine. The necessary arrangements were made and Empress Eugenie, Sir Hugh Clifford the Colonial Secretary and Leonard were able to view the sacred relic.

Sir Clifford was so impressed by Leonard's efficient handling of Empress Eugenie's visit that a few months later, after only a year in Kandy, Leonard was transferred as Assistant Government Agent (AGA) Hambantota. This was an extraordinarily rapid promotion after less than four years of service. He was promoted over the heads of many other civil servants and he was the youngest AGA, three years younger than the next youngest AGA.

#### **Woolf in Hambantota**

Leonard started work as AGA Hambantota on 28 August 1908 and worked there for nearly three years until he left on 20 May 1911. At Hambantota he was solely responsible for administering a narrow but long coastal strip with an area of about 1000 square miles and a population of around 110,000 persons. There were only five Europeans in the district but none of them lived in Hambantota and he had no social life. By now he had already decided that the colonial civil service would not be his permanent career '*I did not want to be a successful imperialist, to become a Colonial Secretary or a Governor, His Excellency Sir Leonard Woolf, KCMG*'.<sup>12</sup>

As AGA, Leonard was responsible for carrying out the Census in his District for the fourth National Census on 10 March 1911. He trained the enumerators and organised a system of bicycle relays



• **Figure 2.** A still from the 1980 Lester James Peries' film *Baddegama* which is based on Leonard Woolf's novel "*The Village in the Jungle*".

to get the returns to the Kachcheri. The returns were checked and on 13 March Leonard telegraphed the total figures to the Superintendent of Census in Colombo, who replied to say that his were the first District returns to be received.

Leonard was also responsible for collecting salt from the salterns in the District. This was stored in the Government Salt Stores in Hambantota and Kirinda and then sold to wholesale buyers. Leonard

streamlined the process so that in 1910 the total amount of salt collected was over 11,000 tons, a new record for the District.

In 1909 there was an outbreak of rinderpest and Leonard had to struggle for a year to bring the disease under control. It affects both cattle and buffaloes and is highly infectious and invariably fatal. The only way of controlling the outbreak was to isolate infected animals immediately and tether or impound uninfected animals. Leonard had to personally shoot several infected animals where half their faces had been eaten away by maggots.

One evening in 1910 when Leonard was touring his district trying to control the rinderpest outbreak, he had arranged to meet the Muhandiram of the area to discuss this matter. After dusk they saw Halley's comet (next due in 2061) with the head just above the horizon and the tail extending almost overhead. Leonard asked the Muhandiram what he thought about the comet, planets and stars, and Muhandiram's reply was that '*Our lives and characters, he said, were determined by the position of the constellations at the moment of our birth... He told me that at a female child's birth the horoscope predicted the year, day, and hour at which her menstruation would begin*'.<sup>13</sup>

Leonard was depressed by the reply because of the Muhandiram's belief that '*... the planets in their courses, the spiral nebulae, the infinite galaxies flaming away into space, had been created and kept going through billions and billions of years in order that a grubby little man in the Hambantota bazaar could calculate the exact day and hour at which the Muhandiram's infant daughter would have her first menstrual period*'.<sup>13</sup>

Leonard has, however, added a footnote on the same page of his book that '*Of course, one must admit that he may be right, and that that is the object of the universe*'.<sup>13</sup> Ernest Macintyre has commented on the above quotations in the May 2010 issue of this Journal when reviewing the book *Nineteenth century American Medical Missionaries in Jaffna, Ceylon* where he says '*Now the usual reaction of the Western colonisers of Asia to such beliefs was that the cultures, theirs and the native people's were too far apart for meaningful communication ... it shows the sneering attitude of some 'clever' Westerners and to register how in comparison the medical missionaries in Jaffna showed a respect for and understanding of how other cultures evolved*'. It must be noted that hardly ever in all his writings has Leonard reflected on the ancient civilisation of Ceylon.

#### **The Village in the Jungle**

Henry H Engelbrecht was among the 5126 Boer prisoners-of-war incarcerated in Ceylon around 1900, mainly in Diyatalawa. When the Boer war ended in 1902, the Boers were sent back to South Africa provided they swore an oath of allegiance



to the King of England and his successors. Engelbrecht refused the oath saying that the present King was alright but he cannot vouch for his future successors! He was held in a prison in Hambantota until 1906 when he was released and appointed a Game Ranger at Yala

National Park. He was a good tracker and shikari and Leonard learned a lot about the jungle from him. It was this knowledge that Leonard put to good use in his novel *The Village in the Jungle* which was published in 1913 after Leonard returned to England. The book is about a chena cultivator named Silindu in the fictitious jungle village of Beddagama, and his struggles against poverty, disease, superstition, the jungle, drought, the corrupt Village Headman and the rapacious money lender.

The publisher, Edward Arnold, predicted poor sales for the book, but '*It was in fact translated into Tamil, Sinhalese and several other languages. When the first year sales required not only a reprint but also a second edition, Arnold wrote that he heard "nothing but enthusiastic praise from everyone who read it" and asked when he might expect another book from this talented author*'.<sup>14</sup> The book was unique because unlike other books by European colonials, it was not written from their standpoint but from the view of the world of a native villager. Leonard was able to enter into the mind of the villager because of his fluent knowledge of Sinhala, and he was able to converse directly and empathise with them.

E F C Ludowyk, the first Professor of English in the University of Ceylon wrote in the Introduction in a 1981 reprint of the book '*The lucidity of the prose, the writer's ear for the locutions and rhythms of the villager's speech, the irony and imagery which often sharpens the point of a situation, reflect the controlling intelligence at work behind the story*'.<sup>15</sup>

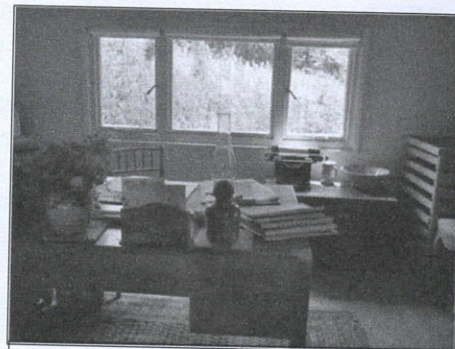
In 1980 Lester James Peries, who is now 97-years old, directed the Sinhala film *Baddegama Adaraneeya Kathawak* which was based on the book *The Village in the Jungle*. The film stars Joe Abeywickrama and Malini Fonseka. Sir Arthur C Clarke plays a minor role as a Magistrate. The film was well received and was awarded a Diploma at the Cannes Film Festival (1981). A still from the film can be seen in Figure 2.



• **Figure 3. Scene from the 1994 play Government of Beddagama (Courtesy: the Writer and Director - Ernest Macintyre).**

CSA Member and playwright, Ernest Macintyre effectively captured the essence of *The Village in the Jungle* in a play written by him titled *Government of Beddagama*. He did introduce some minor changes in the story line. He directed the play in performances in Sydney and Canberra and the play was well received in crowded houses. A still from the drama can be seen in Figure 3.

On 24 May 1911, Leonard Woolf set sail from Colombo on the *Staffordshire* for Marseille and England on a well deserved furlough after six and a half years in Ceylon. Figure 4 is Monk's House in the remote little village of Rodmell, East Sussex, which he bought in 1919 and lived in, on and off, until he died in 1969 and Figure 5 is his writing desk.



• **Figure 5. Woolf's writing desk.**

### Virginia Stephen

Virginia and Vanessa were daughters of Sir Leslie Stephen who was the *Editor of the Dictionary of National Biography*. Leslie's son Thoby was a friend of Leonard at Cambridge and Leonard had met Thoby's sisters when they visited Cambridge. Leonard described Virginia as astonishingly beautiful. In all, Leonard met Virginia three times before he left for Ceylon.

Lytton Strachey was a close friend of Leonard at Cambridge. During his stay in Ceylon, Leonard corresponded regularly with Lytton in England. In a letter to Leonard dated about September 1908, Lytton described Virginia and Vanessa as '*The two most beautiful and wittiest women in England*'.<sup>16</sup> In a letter written about December 1908 Lytton suggested to Leonard that he should propose to Virginia. In his reply dated 01 February 1909 Leonard wrote '*Do you think Virginia would have me? Wire to me if she accepts. I'll take the next boat home*'.<sup>17</sup>

It appears from Lytton's reply dated 19 February 1909 that he did not convey the proposal to Virginia but had told her sister Vanessa to pass on the proposal. It is not clear whether Vanessa did so. In his letter to Lytton dated 14 September 1909, Leonard wrote that the one thing to do would be to marry Virginia, but he seemed to be frightened off the thought of marriage and wrote that '*Really if it were not for that and the question of money I actually would telegraph*'.<sup>18</sup> Ultimately, Leonard decided to put off



matters until he returned to England on leave. He was due for a year's leave commencing in December 1910 but due to the Government's difficulty in finding a successor, he sailed for England only on 24 May 1911, arriving in London on 11 June 1911.

### **Courtship and marriage**

Leonard decided to spend the first few months of his 12-month holiday enjoying himself. He travelled widely in England and the Continent, met old friends, dined with them and went to the theatre. He renewed his acquaintance with Virginia and spent a lot of time with her. In late August 1911 he started writing his first novel *A Village in the Jungle*. The Ceylon jungles and the people living in them fascinated and almost obsessed him, and he says about the book that '*It was also, in some curious way, a symbol of the anti-imperialism which had been growing upon me more and more in my last years in Ceylon ... the dreary pomp and circumstance of imperial government, filled me with misgiving and disgust*'.<sup>19</sup> Frederic Spotts says that the book '*had an authenticity that was unequalled even in works by Conrad and Forster. Their focus was on the Westerner; his was on the native villager and peasant and the forces of nature – above all, the jungle – that controlled their lives.*'<sup>20</sup>

In December 1911, Virginia and her brother Adrian obtained a lease of a four storey town house at 38 Brunswick Square, Bloomsbury, London. Since the house was too big for their needs, they sub-let the ground floor to their friend, the economist Maynard Keynes and the top floor was taken by Leonard. Other friends who lived around Bloomsbury included Vanessa and her husband Clive Bell, Lytton Strachey, E M Forster and the painter Roger Fry, they all formed the nucleus of what was called the Bloomsbury Set. The Set were an influential group of intellectuals, mostly ex-Cambridge (Trinity and Kings), who were 'united by an abiding belief in the importance of the arts'. The plaque on a building in Bloomsbury can be seen in Figure 6.

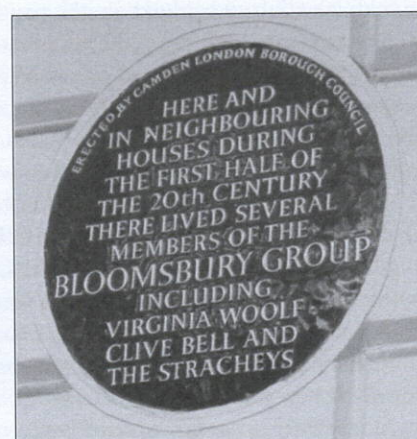
From then, Leonard used to meet Virginia regularly as they often had meals together, and Leonard began to fall completely in love with Virginia. If either of them was out of London they would correspond regularly. Frederic Spotts says that Leonard's letters were '*objectively cataloguing what he found most attractive: her mind and character; her beauty, her wit and candour; and the fact that she was not inferior or submissive*'.<sup>21</sup>

In mid-January 1912 Leonard finally took the plunge and proposed to Virginia. He says that her reply was that '*... she did not know and must have time – indefinite time – to see more of me before she could make up her mind*'.<sup>22</sup> Virginia had many suitors before Leonard whom she had turned down. It is possible that her reluctance to get married was due to her history of mental health problems and that she thought it unfair by the partner to get married. She was also very busy

writing her first novel, *A Voyage Out*. Virginia's request for 'indefinite time' placed Leonard in a quandary. If she accepted his proposal and they got married there was no question of returning to Ceylon because Virginia would never agree to go to Ceylon. Leonard would have to earn a living as

a writer. If she turned him down then he would have to return to Ceylon when his leave ends in May, but would Virginia decide by this date? To play safe on 14 February 1912 Leonard wrote to the Secretary of State for the Colonies asking for an extension of his leave for four months on the grounds of 'private affairs'. He received a prompt reply asking him the nature of private affairs to which he had referred. He replied that he could not state the nature of his private affairs. He was then informed that his application for leave extension could not be granted. Leonard replied that '*as I am unable to assume duties on May 20th I regret that I must resign my post under the Ceylon Government from that date*'.<sup>23</sup> Leonard received an unprecedented reply from the Colonial Office. It was a handwritten letter, written and signed by R E Stubbs, later to become Governor of Ceylon, in which he said that if he did not wish to disclose his private affairs in a letter, he could come and tell him in person and he would consider the application for extension of leave. The letter reflected the esteem in which Leonard was held. Leonard's thoughts on this were '*I did not feel that I could explain to Mr Harcourt [Secretary of State for the Colonies] or Mr Stubbs that I had come to dislike imperialism, that I did not want to become a Governor; that I wanted to marry Virginia Stephen ...*'<sup>24</sup>. Instead, Leonard sent a brief reply to Stubbs stating that his resignation must stand. Thus ended Leonard Woolf's career in the Ceylon Civil Service.

On 29 May 1912 Virginia and Leonard were having lunch together when Virginia suddenly said that she loved Leonard and wished to marry him. Leonard was overcome with joy and informed all his friends about the engagement. Virginia wrote to her close friend and confidant Violet Dickinson that she was going to marry '*a penniless Jew*'<sup>25</sup>. This was correct because with his resignation from the



• (Figure 6) Plaque in front of 51 Godon Square, Bloomsbury, London.



Ceylon post he had no income. His savings amounted to 600 Pounds which he had won from the Calcutta Gymkhana Club sweepstake on the results of the Melbourne Cup horse race (the race that stops a nation), whereas Virginia had inherited assets from her late father of 9000 Pounds. This was a considerable sum of money as at that time as a nice house with garden would have cost about 2000 Pounds.

Arrangements were made for the wedding which was at the St Pancras Register Office on 10 August 1912. On Virginia's insistence, Leonard's mother Marie was not invited for the wedding even though she had virtually brought up Leonard as a single parent. Marie, in a letter to her son Leonard expressed her sadness *'It would have compensated me for the very great hardships I have endured in bringing you all up by myself, if you had expressed the desire that you wished me before anyone else, to be witness to your happiness'*<sup>26</sup>. After the wedding the couple left for a long honeymoon of six weeks in the Continent.

#### ***The Old Vicarage, Grantchester***

During the last English summer, the writer went on a holiday to England. A few days were spent in Cambridge, staying in the suburb of Trumpington. It turned out that the neighbouring village was Grantchester and this immediately evoked schoolboy memories of the poem *The Old Vicarage, Grantchester* by Rupert Brooke. A visit to the Old Vicarage became mandatory. It turned out that the Old Vicarage, where Rupert Brooke had lived, was private property and not open to the public. The present owner is the colourful character Jeffrey Archer, ex-politician and author whose books have sold over 300 million copies. His wife Mary lectured at Cambridge, her field of expertise was solar power.

We then repaired to the adjacent Orchard Tea-Room and the surprising discovery was the plaque on the building, see Figure 7. It would appear that members of the Bloomsbury set, including Virginia, met here as well as in Bloomsbury. This is logical since most of the set were from Trinity or Kings. On the inside walls there were many photos, some over hundred years old. The photos included that of Virginia and no doubt Leonard would be in the group photos as he was a close friend of Rupert Brooke. High Tea was ordered and it included scones, butter, cream, jam and a tablet of honey. Inclusion of the last item was puzzling because it would have added significantly to the cost of the tea. It was also noticed that there was an old non-working clock on the wall with the hands pointing to 02:50. Why display a non-working clock and why serve honey – these two items were puzzling until the penny finally dropped, not with a cling but with a clang, with a recollection of the closing lines of the poem *The Old Vicarage, Grantchester*:

*Deep meadows yet, for to forget*

*The lies, and truths, and pain? ... oh! yet  
Stands the Church clock at ten to three?  
And is there honey still for tea?*

The poem was written by Rupert Brooke in the Café des Westens, Berlin in May 1912 when he was homesick for Grantchester. The 'deep meadows' referred to was probably the orchard outside the Tea-Room in Figure 8. When World War I broke out in 1914 he signed up and was commissioned as an Officer in the Royal Navy. He set sail in February 1915 in the *Grantully Castle* bound for Gallipoli to join up with the ANZAC contingent. During the voyage he developed sepsis from an infected mosquito bite and died

on 23 April 1915. He was buried in the Greek island of Skyros and was only 27-years old. Winston Churchill

wrote in The Times news-

paper on 26 April *'The voice has been swiftly stilled.*

*Only the echoes and the memory remain; but they will linger'*. The echoes certainly linger.

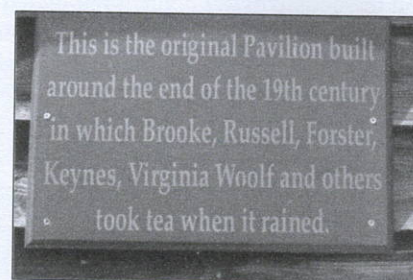
#### ***Virginia's Novels***

Virginia had started writing her first novel *The Voyage Out* before the wedding. The book was a satire of Edwardian life. It was published in 1915 by her half-brother Gerald Duckworth through his firm of Publishers, Duckworth & Co., the firm still exists. Although the book shows her undoubted talent and the reviews were favourable, in the next ten years only 479 copies were sold, yielding royalties to Virginia of 26 Pounds at 15% of the published price.

Her second novel was *Night and Day* which was published in 1919. This novel deals with issues concerning women's suffrage. It was slightly more successful, selling 2238 copies in the first nine years, but still a

loss for the Publisher. Her next novel was *Jacob's Room* (1922) in which Virginia tried out an experimental style, describing

Jacob's character through the views of other characters. The book sold better than the earlier books, selling over 1000 copies in the first year. It was perhaps *Mrs Dalloway* (1925) that firmly



• (Figure 7) Plaque at the Orchard Tea Room, Grantchester.

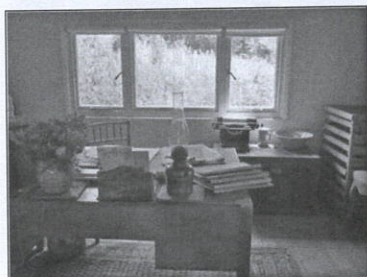


• (Figure 8) The Orchard of the Orchard Tea Room, Grantchester.



established Virginia as a novelist of repute. The story is about a day in the life of a socialite. Virginia had already read the manuscript of James Joyce's *Ulysses* and perhaps adopted the 'stream of consciousness' style from it and it is the most 'highbrow' of her novels. *To the Lighthouse* (1927) was set in St Ives, Cornwall and she continued her stream of consciousness technique. It was a best seller and sold 4000 copies in the first year. Between 1928 and 1964 it sold a quarter of a million copies world-wide. *Orlando* (1928) was based on the family history of her close friend, the novelist Vita Sackville-West. It was the turning point in her career and sold 20,000 copies in the first six months.

In *The Waves* (1931), Virginia tried the experiment of soliloquies by the six main characters and called it a 'playpoem'. This book also sold 20,000 copies in the first six months. Marguerite Yourcenar who translated it into French described Virginia as 'among the four or five great virtuosos of the English language'. *The Years* (1937) traces the history of the Pargiter family from 1880 onwards. It was the best-seller of all her books, particularly in USA, and sold 40,000 copies in the first six months. Her last novel was *Between the Acts* (1941) and describes the setting of a play just before World War II. It was completed by her, but was published just after she died, aged



• *Virginia's desk in Monk's House where she wrote her novels.*

59 years, in 1941. Figure 9 is a picture of Virginia's study where she wrote most of her novels. It is in an out-house in the garden of Monk's House.

She wrote for four hours in the morning and typed

out what she wrote in the evening, averaging 500 words per day.

Leonard's assessment of Virginia's novels was '*Orlando, Flush and The Years were immeasurably more successful than any of Virginia's other novels. The Years, much the most successful of them all, was, in my opinion, the worst book she ever wrote – at any rate, it cannot compare, as a work of art or as a work of genius, with The Waves, To the Lighthouse, or Between the Acts. Orlando is a highly original and amusing book and has some beautiful things in it, and so is Flush, a work of even lighter weight; these two books again cannot be seriously compared with her major novels*'<sup>27</sup>

#### **Hogarth Press**

Virginia often wrote many drafts of her novels until she was satisfied with the final version. She was hypersensitive to criticism and used to get very annoyed when the Publisher's editors sent back her

manuscripts with suggested changes. Leonard decided that the best way of avoiding all this hassle would be to do their own printing and publishing. Also, Virginia was getting stressed out with the hustle and bustle of life in Central London and towards the end of 1914 they looked out for a suitable house in the suburbs and found Hogarth House in Paradise Road, Richmond. It was a large country house with a good sized garden and they moved in early 1915.

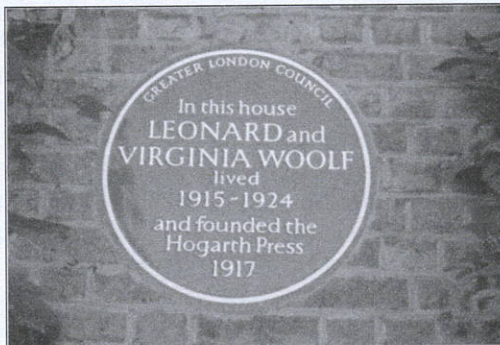
One day in 1917 when walking down Farringdon Street in London they saw a little hand press in the shopwindow of the Excelsior Printing Supply Co. It could print two crown octavo pages at a time. They went inside and the salesman said that it came with a detailed instruction book and no prior experience was required to start printing with it. They purchased the press together with type and accessories for 19 Pounds. They took it home and installed it on the dining table and Hogarth Press was born, see Figure 10 They could have never imagined that Hogarth Press is still in business today, almost 100 years later. It is now an imprint of The Crown Publishing Group, part of Random House Inc.

The first book printed and published by Hogarth Press was, a 32 page booklet with two short stories, one each by Virginia and Leonard. It took them a month to hand print and bind 150 copies and it was sold out in about a month. The second book was Katherine Mansfield's *Prelude*, a 68 page long short story. The print run was 300 copies, and the Press was now well established. Virginia used to assemble the typeface and Leonard operated the hand press and did the trimming, binding and stitching.

Leonard was involved in the running of the press for the next fifty years, and it ran at a profit every year. He defined the policy of Hogarth Press as follows: it was a part time 'hobby' not a commercial enterprise; it was an outlet for unknown and unorthodox authors unacceptable to other Publishers; it sponsored experimental fiction and poetry; it educated the public on politics and history; and it introduced foreign authors to the English language world through original translations. During the period 1917 to 1941 Hogarth published over 400 titles. There was, however, a manuscript they had to turn down. In 1918 the manuscript of *Ulysses* by James Joyce was submitted to Hogarth. Leonard and Virginia both read it and decided that it would be inviting prosecution if they published it. In the event, it was decades before it could be published in UK.

Some of the notable titles published by the Hogarth Press were: the very first edition of T S Eliot's *The Waste Land* (1923) which became famous, Eliot and Leonard became life- long friends and Leonard sponsored his application for British citizenship; many books by Virginia such as *Kew Gardens*, *Monday or Tuesday*, *Jacob's Room*, and *The Waves*; original English translations of Russian authors like Maxim





• (Figure 10) The plaque in front of Hogarth House, Richmond, London.

Gorky, Chekov, Bunin, Tolstoy and Dostoyevsky; and the 24 volume original English translation of *The Standard Edition of the complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud* (1956-1974).

Five of the authors published by Hogarth Press went on to win Nobel Prizes. They were the Russian, Ivan Bunin (1933), T S Eliot (1948), Bertrand Russell (1950), Philip Noel-Baker (1959) and the Frenchman, Jean-Paul Satre (1964). In 1946 The Hogarth Press became a limited liability Company, jointly owned by Leonard and the Publishing Company, Chatto and Windus Ltd. Leonard maintained his connection with The Hogarth Press for a total of 50 years until 1967.

#### **Virginia's mental health problems**

Virginia had hereditary mental health problems and suffered throughout her life. She had nervous disorders at the age of thirteen years when her mother died and then again at the age of twenty-two years when her father died. On the latter occasion she attempted suicide by jumping through an upper floor window. In 1913 soon after they were married she complained of severe headaches, insomnia, hatred of eating and anxiety. Some months later soon after finally completing *The Voyage Out* she became deeply depressed and had to enter a nursing home. As she was hypersensitive to criticism she always had problems when she completed a book because of the worry of what the critics would say. After leaving the nursing home she again attempted suicide by taking an overdose of Veronal.

At that time the medical science of Psychiatry was in its infancy. She was seen by several Harley Street Consultants and they diagnosed her problem as neurasthenia and said that there was no cure and that the treatment was bed rest and to eat well and drink two or three glasses of milk a day. When she had her bouts of depression, Leonard refused to have her committed and said that he would look after at home with the help of day and night nurses, at considerable expense.

In 1915 she had an attack of delusional madness. She became violent, spoke gibberish,

complained of severe headaches, would not eat and said that the birds outside her window were talking to her in Greek. By 1916 she had recovered and for the next twenty-five years she was reasonably well. This was entirely because the moment Leonard spotted the onset of depression he made her stop all her writing, enforced strict bed rest, forced her to eat well and drink plenty of milk. Leonard was of the view that her problem was manic depression and he wrote *'The creative imagination in her novels, her ability to "leave the ground" in conversation, and the voluble delusions of breakdowns all came from the same place in her mind – she "stumbled after her own voice" and followed "the voices that fly ahead". And that in itself was the crux of her life, the tragedy of genius.'*<sup>28</sup>

In early 1941 when she completed her last novel *Between the Acts* she again had an onset of depression. On 28 March 1941, she filled her overcoat pockets with heavy stones and walked into the River Ouse near the bottom end of their Monk's House Garden. Her body was found only 21 days later. She was cremated and the ashes were buried beneath two giant elm trees in her garden. She was 59 years old. Later Leonard's ashes were also buried here. The elm trees no longer exist but their location can be seen in Figure 11. She left behind a farewell note to Leonard



• Figure 11. Site of the elm trees in Monk's House where Leonard's and Virginia's ashes were buried.

which said in part *'I feel certain that I am going mad again ... And I shan't recover this time ... You have given me the greatest possible happiness ... I can't fight any longer ... What I want to say is I owe all the happiness of my life to you ... If anybody could have saved me it would have been you ... I don't think two people could have been happier than we have been'*<sup>29</sup>.

#### **Leonard's career in England**

Leonard was always a glutton for work and the remaining 58 years of his life in England after his return from Ceylon were spent very actively. This included: writing and publishing about 20 books, mainly on political matters plus his five volume autobiography running to over 1100 pages, written when he was over eighty years old; actively participating in political campaigns and being an



adviser to the Labour Party; for fifty years being involved in the running of the Hogarth Press; writing articles and editing many political journals; nurturing and supporting Virginia in her career so that she became one of the leading female novelists of the twentieth century; caring for Virginia during her spells of mental sickness without getting her committed; and finally, not neglecting his hobby of gardening. A few months after he returned from Ceylon he started writing the novel *The Village in the Jungle*. This was published in February 1913 and was a moderate success. His second novel was *The Wise Virgins*. It was published in October 1914 and was a failure because the characters could be easily identified with real people. He then decided in future to write mainly on political matters and leave fiction writing to Virginia, though he did publish in 1921 a book of short stories titled *Stories of the East*. The three stories in the book are about two Brahmins in Jaffna, the love life of a British expatriate in Colombo and an incident in the Mannar Pearl Fishery.

On July 1913 he started writing articles for the *New Statesman*. This Journal was founded a few months earlier by members of the Fabian Society and still exists. Politically it is left of centre. His relationship with this Journal extended for over thirty years including being its editor.

July 1916 saw the publication of his most influential book, *International Government*. The book proposed an international authority to provide the machinery and moral impetus to settle disputes between nations. His book was used extensively by the government committee which produced the British proposals for a League of Nations. In fact, the preface to the British Government proposals stated that '*The facts contained in Part I are taken almost entirely from International Government by L S Woolf (1916)*'<sup>30</sup>. In 1915 there were communal riots in Ceylon.

The Governor, Sir Robert Chalmers over-reacted thinking that the events were directed against the Government, and declared martial law. Courts Martial were set up and many were charged with treason. 83 persons were sentenced to death and 60 sentenced to life imprisonment. Don Baron Jayatilaka, later to become Leader of the House in the State Council, and Advocate E W Perera set off for London carrying a petition drafted by Sir James Peiris, addressed to the Secretary of State for the Colonies, pleading for the establishment of a Royal Commission of Enquiry. The two delegates generated publicity for their cause in the press and asked Leonard to head their delegation to meet the British Government. At the meeting, Leonard made an impassioned plea, stating that the acts of the accused were not seditious, and that no European was molested or their property attacked. The British Government turned down the request for a Royal Commission. Leonard wrote that '*Governments nearly always treat these kinds of deputation irritably and*

*contemptuously, ignoring the evidence, particularly when the Government knows that it is in the wrong*'<sup>31</sup>. However, Governor Sir Robert Chalmers was relieved of his post.

In July 1919, Leonard purchased the house called Monk's House in the quiet little village of Rodmell, population about 500, in East Sussex near the south coast of England. Initially they lived in London and used Monk's House as a weekend and holiday retreat. When World War Two started and their house in London was bombed, they moved permanently to Monk's House. They lived there till they both died and their ashes are buried in the garden. As they had no children, in his will Leonard bequeathed the house to the good friend of his closing years, Trekkie Parsons. She turned it over to Sussex University. It was subsequently acquired by the National Trust who have made it a literary shrine. Leonard was a contributor and/or editor of several left oriented political journals at various times. Apart from *New Statesman* he was involved with *War and Peace*, *International Review* which was financed by the Quaker chocolate kings, Rowntrees, *Contemporary Review* also financed by the Rowntrees, the *Nation and Political Quarterly*. He helped found the latter with Prof W A Robson and it is still being published after 86 years, presently by Wiley Blackwell. Leonard was an active member of the Labour Party. During the inter-war years most of the Labour Party Members of Parliament were rank and file trade unionists and their knowledge of international affairs was necessarily limited. Two Advisory Committees were set up by the Labour Party, one on International Affairs and the other on Imperial Questions. Leonard was Secretary of both Committees for two decades. The function of the Committees was to 'educate' the Labour MPs on these matters by submitting memoranda.

In a memo to Parliamentary Labour Party dated 08 November 1918, advocating self-government for Ceylon, Leonard wrote '*Now the Crown Colony of Ceylon is from the point of view of self-government in almost precisely the same position as India. There is first the same demand for responsible Government ...*'<sup>32</sup>. In 1926 he wrote a memo to the TUC and Labour Party in which he wrote '*The measure of self-government demanded by the inhabitants of these territories e.g. Ceylon, should be granted immediately*'<sup>33</sup>. In November 1938 in a memo to the Labour Party he suggested the Swiss form of Government for Ceylon '*The Swiss federal canton system has proved extra-ordinarily successful under circumstances very similar to those in Ceylon*'<sup>34</sup>. The Labour Party could not, however, consider implementing his suggestions because in the inter-war years they were only briefly in power as a minority government under Ramsay MacDonald in 1924 and 1929-31.



Later in 1948 Clement Attlee's Labour Government granted independence to Ceylon and Leonard's role in achieving this is underestimated.

In the 1920 Parliamentary Elections there were two seats for the Combined English University Constituency i.e. the red brick Universities, other than Oxford and Cambridge. Leonard was nominated as the Labour Party candidate and reluctantly agreed to contest. Item 4 of his election manifesto stated '*It is essential that the promises of self-government made to India and Ceylon, and of independence to Egypt, should be immediately carried out with scrupulous honesty*'<sup>35</sup>. The two seats were won by the Conservative and Liberal Party candidates and he came third.

When Pandit Nehru, then President of the All India Congress Party visited London in 1936 he invited Leonard to come and meet him. They had a one-to-one discussion in Artillery Mansions for one and a half hours on the problems of independence for India and Ceylon. After the meeting, they walked together to the Houses of Parliament.

The American playwright, Edward Albee in 1962 sent Leonard the manuscript of a new play that he had written and asked Leonard's permission to give it the title *Who's afraid of Virginia Woolf?* The story line had nothing to do with Virginia Woolf. Leonard replied that he had no objection and received tickets for the London premiere of the play. The play was selected for the 1963 Pulitzer Prize for Drama but it was not awarded due to objections to the use of profanity in the play. The film of the play, made in 1966, earned a best actress Oscar for Elizabeth Taylor.

In 1966 Leonard received a letter from the Prime Minister, Harold Wilson, stating that he had it in mind '*to submit your name to the Queen with a recommendation that Her Majesty may be graciously pleased to approve that you be appointed a Member of the Order of the Companions of Honour*'<sup>36</sup>. Leonard politely declined the offer stating that he had always been opposed to the giving and receiving of such (imperial) honours.

The last volume of his autobiography describes his return visit to Ceylon in February 1960, when he was eighty years old, nearly fifty years after he left Ceylon. Shelton Fernando, Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Home Affairs invited Leonard, through Prime Minister W Dahanayake, to visit Ceylon. He accepted the invitation and spent three weeks in Ceylon visiting the towns where he had lived. He was cordially received and given a copy of his official diaries written when he was at Hambantota and was told that it would be printed.

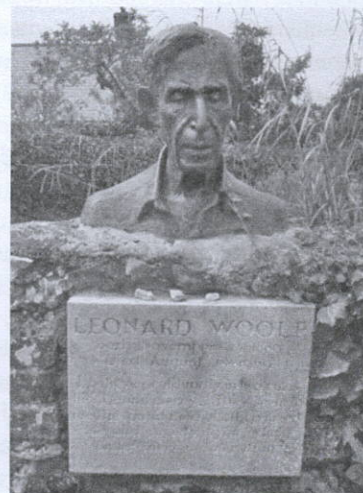
All went well until just before his departure from Galle Face Hotel when he was told that an old man from Hambantota wished to see him. It turned out to be 86 year old Mudaliyar E R Wijesinghe. He reminded him of an incident which occurred during

the rinderpest outbreak. Leonard received information that there was a severely rinderpest infected buffalo wandering about in a village twenty miles away. He rode out and met the Mudaliyar and Village Headman and the buffalo was shot dead. It turned out that the owner of the buffalo was the Village Headman and Leonard promptly fined him ten rupees as Police Magistrate for not destroying an infected buffalo. Then as Assistant Government Agent he fined him another ten rupees as Village Headman for not reporting an infected buffalo.

The Mudaliyar said that the Village Headman paid the first fine but as he did not have any more money, the Mudaliyar paid the second fine. The Mudaliyar asked '*Was it just, I say – was it just, I ask you, Sir?*' and Leonard replied. '*Yes, it was just. He had committed two entirely different offences, one as the owner of the buffalo and one as a village headman, and I punished him for the one as a Police Magistrate and for the other as Assistant Government Agent. Yes, Mudaliyar, it was just*'<sup>37</sup>. On reflection, Leonard thought that one of the reasons for his resignation was that he was not prepared to do justice to people who thought that his justice was injustice. Thinking about his original stay in Ceylon he had realised imperialism was doomed '*The social and economic squalor in which thousands of Sinhalese and Tamil villagers lived horrified me: I saw close at hand the evils of imperialism and foresaw some of the difficulties and dangers which its inevitable liquidation would involve*'<sup>38</sup>. This was borne out by the million or so people who died in the partition of India.

Leonard died peacefully in Monk's House on 14 August 1969 and his ashes were buried in the garden beside Virginia's ashes. Figure 12 ( below) is a bust of Leonard in the garden of Monk's House. The inscription below the statue reads as follows:

LEONARD WOOLF  
Born November 25, 1880





Died August 14, 1969  
 “I believe profoundly in two rules.  
 Justice and mercy – They seem to  
 me the foundation of all civilized  
 life and society, if you include  
 under mercy, toleration.”

*(All photographs illustrating this article are by  
 the author Thiru Arumugam).*

#### End Notes

1. Leonard Woolf, *Growing* (1961) pp 67-68. The second volume of Leonard Woolf's autobiography which covers his life in Ceylon (1904-1910).
2. Edited by Frederic Spotts, *Letters of Leonard Woolf* (1990), pp 106-7.
3. Leonard Woolf, *Sowing* (1960) pp 78-80. The first volume of Leonard Woolf's autobiography covers his George Spater and Ian Parsons, *A Marriage of True Minds* (1977), p 44 childhood and years at Cambridge.
4. *Ibid*, p 158.
5. *Ibid*, p 126.
6. George Spater and Ian Parsons, *A Marriage of True Minds* (1977), p 44.
7. *Sowing*, p 167-9.
8. *Growing*, p 46.
9. *Ibid*, p 90.
10. Leonard Woolf, *Downhill all the way* (1967) p 88. The fourth volume of Leonard Woolf's autobiography which covers the years 1919-1939.
11. Leonard Woolf, *Stories of the East* (1921) p 57, Hogarth Press, Richmond, England.
12. *Growing*, p 180.
13. *Ibid*, p 193-4.
14. *Letters of Leonard Woolf*, p 180.
15. Leonard Woolf, *The Village in the Jungle* (1981) p x-xi, Oxford University Press. The book was first published by Edward Arnold, London, in 1913.
16. Edited by Frederic Spotts, *Letters of Leonard Woolf* (1990), p 139.
17. *Ibid*, p 145.
18. *Ibid*, p 150.
19. Leonard Woolf, *Beginning Again* (1964) pp 47-48. The third volume of Leonard Woolf's autobiography covers the years 1911 to 1918.
20. *Letters of Leonard Woolf*, p 61.
21. *Ibid*, p 156.
22. *Beginning again*, p 53.
23. Leonard Woolf, *Growing* (1961) p 250.
24. *Ibid*, p 251.
25. George Spater and Ian Parsons, *A Marriage of True Minds* (1977), p 66.
26. *Letters of Leonard Woolf*, p 178.
27. Leonard Woolf, *Downhill all the way* (1967) pp 145-6. This is the fourth volume of Leonard Woolf's autobiography and covers the years 1919 to 1939.
28. *Beginning again*, p 80.
29. Leonard Woolf, *The Journey not the arrival matters* (1969) pp 93-94. This is the fifth and final volume of Leonard Woolf's autobiography and covers the years from 1939 to 1969.
30. *Beginning again*, p 189.
31. *Ibid*, p 230-231.
32. *Letters of Leonard Woolf*, p 388.
33. *Ibid*, p 393.
34. *Letters of Leonard Woolf*, p 417.
35. *Downhill all the way*, p 39.
36. *A Marriage of True Minds*, p 187.
37. *The Journey not the arrival matters*, p 207.
38. *Ibid*, p 153

## Tramcars of Old Colombo

What triggered my memory was an old (very) studio photo of my childhood self staring glumly at the camera while my infant sister timidly leaned towards me. Proudly embossed at the photo's bottom was "Terminus Studio". I seem to remember this venerable institution yet standing, till the early 1950s, on the triangular corner where Panchikawatte turned into Skinner's (?) Road towards Technical College. The 'Terminus' of its name meant the end of the line of the very first tramway before it was later extended to Grandpass. The other establishment to honour this now-forgotten mode of public transport was 'Tram View Hotel', A rather dingy tea shop opposite the Punchi Borella Bo tree. The name was probably inspired by the spanking new trams of the late nineteenth century as they first wooshed past the 'hotel' verandah. The 'hotel' retained its name for many years after the last tram clattered to a nameless scrap yard. As the craze for antiques had not yet taken root, not a single tramcar not the hotel nor the hotel signboard remains to recall the trams that dominated Colombo's roads, and carried many thousands of commuters for well over half a century.

Tramcars seem to have been introduced into Colombo, not long after London, by a British Mayor in the late 19th century. This was an age when motor cars were unknown, the European elite sped to work in rickshaws drawn by wiry 'coolies' and 'natives' of standing trundled along in ox-drawn buggy carts. Electric tramcars would have been a sensation for the silent speed with which they moved large numbers of people to the far corners of the then 'Garden City of the East'. Although the steam engines of the C.G.R. carried passengers from town to town, there was no mode of public transport within the city till the advent of tramcars. It is difficult to imagine the sensation they would have caused and the panic they struck in rickshawmen and cart-bulls. A few First Class seats up in front were reserved for Europeans – the Master Race. Henry W. Cave [Book of Ceylon 1908] devotes quite a few pages to tram travel as the best way of seeing the sights of the scenic and exotic Colombo. ... Although I spent the first six years of childhood in Colombo, I cannot recollect travelling by tram at all. So it was in 1946, when I left Ratnapura for a school in Colombo, that I first encountered them with 'goday' wonder. But I soon got reasonably adept in hopping on and off without mishap and forking out the requisite five cents [!] for travel between two halts. ... My loveliest memory, however, was the wonderous sight when the trams travelled at night over roads that had just been tarred and spread with the requisite layer of sand. As the lighted tram scrunched over this sand it sparkled magically with a myriad sparks.

*(From 'Quest for Shangri-La' by Tissa Devendra)*







# Lions born in Sri Lanka in 1958

by Lion Harry de Sayrah & Lion Pamela Ann Ferdinand

**T**he first Lions Club was established in Sri Lanka in 1958, and many clubs have been chartered there since that date. Lions Clubs foster the spirit of the Lions motto "We Serve". Serving through volunteerism, members help to make better the lives of those they help. The hard work behind the many projects of Clubs is often not seen by the public, because service is done quietly without personal gain and publicity. Many times members donate humbly not just their time but their own resources for needed projects.

This is the Spirit of Lionism. Meetings are held in different places, perhaps at a restaurant or hall, but quite often at a member's home. Many long-lasting friendships have developed through the camaraderie of Lions work.

## **Lions Clubs International**

The Lions Organisation (which will turn 100 years old in June 2017) was founded by American businessman Melvin Jones (1879-1961). His goal was to involve business in community projects, and his leadership gave Lions Clubs the prestige needed to attract service-oriented business members. Melvin Jones, a 38-year-old Chicago business leader, put forth his idea as this: "What if these men, who are successful because of their drive, intelligence and ambition, were to put their talents to work improving their communities?" Jones invited delegates from men's clubs to Chicago, Illinois, USA to form such an organisation and Lions Clubs International (LCI) headquarters was established there on 7 June 1917. Headquarters charters and supervises Lions Clubs worldwide. The organisation sets ethical and administrative standards for clubs and members and promotes a mutual understanding among people of the world through community service, friendship, fellowship, good governance and solid citizenship.

The challenge to prevent blindness was inspired by Helen Keller, a woman blind and deaf since the age of 19 months, when she spoke at the 1925 International Lions Convention in Cedar Point, Ohio, USA. Speaking as Ambassador for the American Foundation for the Blind, she urged Lions to be "knights of the blind in this crusade against darkness".

In 1945, Melvin Jones was honoured to represent LCI as a consultant in San Francisco, California, USA at the organisational meeting of the United Nations (UN). International cooperation has continued through the years with Lions appointed to serve as representatives to various UN organisations

and with the annual Lions Day at the UN headquarters in New York City. Lions from around the world celebrate United Nations Day on 24 October. This coincides with World Sight Day also celebrated during October. In 2008, Lions International President Mahendra Amarasinghe sought additional ways for Lions to serve developing countries, and at UN headquarters in New York, he signed a letter of intent representing LCI's commitment to help meet the eight Millennium Development Goals. In the spirit of the UN, young people from 11-13 years of age are encouraged to express their visions of peace through art in the Lions International Peace Poster Contest. Lions Clubs around the world sponsor the contest in local schools and youth groups.

Lions Club International Foundation (LCIF) supplements the fundraising work done by local clubs. To date, grants worth more than US\$941 million have been provided for large scale humanitarian projects. Sources of funding include other foundations, corporations, governments and non-Lions, but the majority of funding is from Lions Clubs and individual members. People in need both locally and globally benefit in four main areas: youth, disaster relief and humanitarian effort grants.<sup>1</sup>

The Melvin Jones Fellowship (MJF) was established in 1973 as a way to raise money for LCIF by recognising individual Lions for outstanding humanitarian service. This award is the highest award in Lions and is awarded to a member who has done outstanding service in their Club.

Clubs submit applications along with donations of US\$1,000. According to LCIF, there are more than 386,804 Melvin Jones Fellows worldwide, and the Fellowship "is the backbone of LCIF, providing 75 per cent of the foundation's revenue".<sup>2</sup>

Life Membership is another prestigious award in Lions Club International for outstanding service. The award of Life Membership is recommended by a Club for those who have served 15 years or more of membership and meet certain criteria. A critically ill member may also be eligible.

## **Lions Club membership**

Today, Lions Clubs comprise the world's largest service organisation. According to LCI as of August 2016, Lions Clubs have grown internationally to 46,000 clubs in 210 countries and geographic areas, with over 1.4 million members.<sup>3</sup> Clubs are unique but all with the same purpose. Without personal financial rewards, Lions volunteer to raise funds for projects to help people with sight, health, disaster, youth,



community and environment. Clubs also do activities in many other areas to raise funds for a variety of projects. Although membership was originally open only to men, membership is now open to both men and women. Many clubs sponsor Leo Clubs as the stepping stone for young people to Lions Club membership, with their focus on mentoring youth to serve their community both in Leo and Lions projects.

Each Lions Club is part of a District, and annually the newly elected District Governor has the opportunity to organize district clubs into zones and (optionally) to organize the zones into regions. After the clubs have been assigned to their zones and the zones to their regions, the next step is to appoint the zone and region chairpersons. Individual membership is transferable both locally and internationally. For example, a member from Sri Lanka who moves to Australia can transfer their membership to a club in Australia.

Members from clubs worldwide gather annually at a different global venue for the International Lions Convention, as well as for conventions at the local level. LCI President and other international officials are elected at the global convention. 2017 marks the Centennial of the founding of the Lions organisation. The annual convention will be held in Chicago USA, the founding city of Lions.

#### ***Lions Clubs in Sri Lanka***

Lions Clubs have been in existence since the 1st of April 1958 when a club extension from the South Indian District of 304 was established in Ceylon. This



• *Lions of Panadura hosted a Pre-School Project in Panadura to provide medical and eye screenings and uniforms.*

“Mother Club”, now known as the Lions Club of Colombo Host (LCCH), still leads the way with many projects and a diverse and caring membership serving Sri Lankan communities in many ways. From this club, the number of clubs in Sri Lanka has now grown to 505 as of August 2016, and the total number of Lions in Sri Lanka as of August is 13,003.

With additional clubs, District 306 was created under the leadership of Sri Lanka’s first District Governor—the late Lion K. Satchithananda. With the growing number of clubs, in 1978 District 306 with 82 Clubs and 2592 Lions was divided into two sub-districts, 306A and 306B. In 1998, District

306C was formed and then in 2005, Multiple Districts 306 A, B and C were further sub-divided as A1, A2, B1, B2, C1 and C2. <sup>4</sup> LCCH belongs to District 306A1 in Sri Lanka.

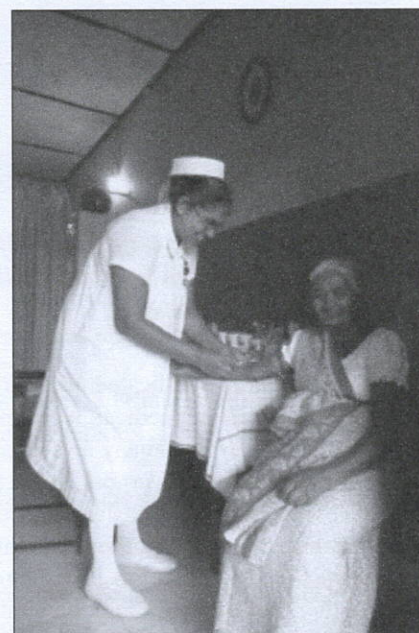
The Multiple District has had four Past International Directors and an International President. Sri Lankan Lions were honoured in the year 2007 when one of their own was voted in as LCI President. Lion Mahendra Amarasuriya, from the Lions Club of Galle, was installed as the 90th President of Lions Clubs International at the International Convention held in Chicago, USA. It was symbolic that this took place in Chicago, the birthplace of Lions Clubs.

The Leo Club program was officially adopted by LCI in 1967. LCI reports as of August 2016 that Leos now constitute an international network of over 6,500 clubs in over 140 countries. <sup>5</sup>

Leos find the transition to Lions Club membership an easier step after serving as a Leo. Leos serve the community, can make lasting friendships, work closely with their own and other Lions and Leo clubs and gain leadership skills. Leo Clubs are supported by many Lions Clubs in SL and the Ratmalana club uniquely supports a Leo Club for the visually handicapped. Leo Multiple District 306 Council is the governing body of 6 Leo Districts in Sri Lanka. It was founded in 1969. LCCH actively hosts their own Leo Club and members take part in their own initiatives as well as in joint activities with Lions Club members.

#### ***Lions Club of Colombo Host (LCCH)***

Since 1958, the Lions Club of Colombo Host (LCCH), District 306A1, Region 1 - Zone 1, the pioneering Lions Club in Sri Lanka, has conducted thousands of projects, to the benefit of many people. The Club continues to be a beacon of service to the community



• *On 14 November 2011, Polonnaruwa North Central Lions hosted an Awareness & Screening Program on World Diabetic Day in Hingurakgoda.*





• *The annual beach clean up project of the Leo Club of Mahanama College, District 306C2 held on 26th April 2015 at Mattakuliya Crow Island.*

and has a diverse and dedicated membership, from professions such as the medical, legal and business fields. The Club has won many awards and produced several Lions District Governors, while the Leo Club of LCCH won the 'Most Outstanding Leo Club in the World' award, presented by the Lions International 'Challenge to Change' awards Programme in June 2008, at the 91st Annual Lions Clubs International Convention in Bangkok, Thailand (Daily Mirror, Sri Lanka, 21<sup>st</sup> November 2015). LCCH was proud of their first woman president when Lion Nirupa Mohan became President for the 2014-2015 Lionistic year.

#### **LCCH good works**

Over the decades, work of LCCH has included awareness campaigns, projects and fundraisers. Early projects include: *White Cane Day* is celebrated annually on 15th October when Sri Lanka joins clubs around the world in an awareness campaign for sighted persons to recognize that the user of a white cane is visually impaired. In Sri Lanka, "The first project successfully completed by this pioneering club [LCCH] was the introduction of the White Cane to assist the Blind with 500 White Canes being distributed to the sight-impaired. More importantly, the club successfully lobbied for the enactment of legislation to make it an offence for motor traffic not to permit the safe passage of any person using a White Cane. The legislation was finally enacted on 13 February 1959 as part of the Motor Traffic Act No. 14 of 1951. The first *Eye Bank* in Sri Lanka was gifted to the National Eye Hospital in 1962. It was later supplemented by the Eye Bank of the Eye Donation Society organised by the late Lion Dr. Hudson Silva and developed into an internationally renowned Cornea Resource. Other early projects were the inauguration of a weekly *Medical Clinic* staffed by the doctor members of the Club, assisted by lay members. Another project mentioned is the Lions "*Gift of Sight Hospital*" Golden Anniversary project which was our flagship project in which we completed 300+ Free Cataract Eye Surgeries complete with intra-ocular lens implants on patients representing the poorest of the

poor. The target for the project is 1000 cataract surgeries valued nationally at Rs.40,000,000 compared at the current private sector rates. The surgeries are performed mainly at the state-of-the-art, dedicated Lions Eye Surgery Hospital in Panadura, which is managed and maintained by the Lions".

More recent projects include: *Camilla School*. This school, located on 11 acres in Mattegoda south of Colombo, is for mentally and physically challenged children and is a project of Lions Districts 306 A1/A2. It is managed by a legally constituted Trust consisting of Lions and Lion Ladies. Since 1983, the facility has provided a home-like environment for those with special needs.

Three residents live in one of 14 chalets, each with a 24 hour caregiver. Both a resident nurse and visiting matron are available at the facility. There is a gymnasium and playground for recreation and therapy. Regular medical and dental check-ups as well as eye-care are provided with visits to specialists when needed. Teachers provide educational and vocational Training.

#### **Health Camps**

Health Camps are held annually at different venues to provide much needed services to people who often only see a doctor at these camps. Besides vision screenings and eye glass distribution, blood pressure and blood sugar testing are done under the supervision of qualified doctors. Prescription drugs may also be distributed by pharmacists. Dental Services are also provided too. Services provided free, with incidental costs borne by the Club. Health camps are provided in Colombo and in rural areas, often in collaboration with other Lions Clubs, in such locations as Kuliyapitiya, Pannila, Aluthgama and St. Benedict's School in Colombo.

#### **Disaster Assistance**

Lions are known worldwide to assist when disaster strikes. Lions in Sri Lanka sprang into action to assist



• *Lions Club of Minuwangoda Circle donated a house for a needy family.*



people in areas devastated by the Tsunami of 26 December 2004, triggered by an earthquake under the Indian Ocean near the west coast of Sumatra in Indonesia. Along with many other aid organisations, LCCH and other District 306 Lions Clubs in Sri Lanka launched a massive campaign to supply rations and clothing, provide shelter, build houses, facilitate healthcare and whatever else was needed to the many displaced. LCCH assisted with recent floods in May 2016 spurring the collection of clothes, cleaning supplies, water, dry rations, tinned food and condiments - curry, chillie & pepper powder, turmeric, salt etc. Supplies were taken to help families in Biyagama and Kolonnawa.

#### **Car Boot Sale**

Lion Ladies of the LCCH organise an annual fund raiser. The most recent was 'The Great Colombo Car Boot Sale' to benefit Lions Gift of Sight Programme to eradicate blindness. The event was held at the Women's International Club, Colombo 07 (next to the Lionel Wendt Theatre). Tables were rented to selling at bargain prices a wide range of items from clothes and jewellery to plants. Also, there was a raffle, fun games, prizes and surprises!

#### **Sewing**

LCCH supports the Lions Sewing School, which has provided free vocational education for girls in sewing skills for 28 years.

#### **Outside donors**

These examples are not only typical of the work done by LCCH, they also reflect similar work done by other Lions Clubs in Sri Lanka. Clubs and donors outside of Sri Lanka also often contribute to projects in Sri Lanka, such as in 2015 when LCCH provided drinking water to Pannila Arachchigoda funded by a foreign donor. Another example is Rs. 1 million donated by the Lions of Bankstown, District 201N5 Australia to build an 8 bed ward at the Eye Surgery Hospital in Panadura at the request of Past International President Lion Mahendran Amarasuriya. One of the authors of this article, Lion Harry de Sayrah had the pleasure to declare the ward open.

#### **Samples of other Lions Clubs projects in Sri Lanka**

- The annual beach clean up project of the Leo Club of Mahanama College, District 306C2 held on 26 April 2015 at Mattakuliya Crow Island. Lions of Panadura hosted a Pre-School Project in Panadura to provide medical and eye screenings and uniforms.
- On 14 November 2011, Polonnaruwa North Central Lions hosted an Awareness & Screening Programme on World Diabetic Day in Hingurakgoda. Lions club of Minuwangoda Circle donated a house for a needy family.
- Batticaloa Ladies Lions Club Cancer Awareness Programme 2014
- Lions Club of Aluvihare, District 306C1, Mattress donation to Matala

- Hospital 2015
- Lions Club of Galle has a unique project. Each poya day, gifts are made for babies born during that particular month. Baby clothes are distributed at local hospitals to those in need. They collect powdered milk, diapers, and other nursery items for poya day visits with mothers and their newborns.

End Notes:

<http://www.lcif.org/EN/apply-for-a-grant/index.php>

<http://www.lcif.org/EN/support-our-work/melvin-jones-fellowship.php>

<http://www.lionsclubs.org/EN/index.php>

<http://lionsmd306.org/100/index.php/2016-07-28-09-28-31/lionism-in-sri-lanka>

<http://members.lionsclubs.org/EN/leos/about-leos.php>

[https://www.facebook.com/colombohostlions/about/?entry\\_point=page\\_nav\\_about\\_item&tab=page\\_info](https://www.facebook.com/colombohostlions/about/?entry_point=page_nav_about_item&tab=page_info)

#### **ABOUT THE AUTHORS**

##### **Lion Harry de Sayrah OAM J.P**

*Melvin Jones Fellow/Life Member Lions Clubs International Charter President Lions Club of Kollupitiya District 306A Sri Lanka  
39th President Lions Club of Bankstown District 201 N5 Australia - The Club is 60 years old; Past Secretary Colombo Lions Club (Now called Lions Club of Colombo Host).*

##### **Lion Pamela Ann Ferdinand, BA MBA**

*Melvin Jones Fellow, Lions Club International Regular Member and Past Secretary of Eatontown Lions Club, NJ USA  
Associate Member Lions Club of Colombo Host, Sri Lanka*



#### **Some trivialities**

1. What covers most of Finland?
2. What did William and Catherine Booth found?
3. The fingertips represent which five letters in sign language?
4. How many hearts does an octopus have?
5. How many pairs of ribs does a human have?
6. Which animal has the longest pregnancy?

ANSWERS

(a) Trees (b) The Salvation Army (c) Vowels (d) Three (e) 12 (f) Elephants are pregnant for 2 years.



# Ceylankan - a melange of many minds

by S. Pathiravitana

**F**or an expatriate publication The Ceylankan, which comes all the way from Sydney, has many surprises.

For one thing I was under the impression that expatriates are people who are busy making money all the time and as a result, they have no time left to 'waste' on such cultural enterprises like producing entertaining, informative and valuable journals like *The Ceylankan* that is hard to put away once you start on it.

For instance, I picked up one at random from a lot I have been receiving quarterly over the years and found myself so absorbed in it that I forgot the purpose why I picked it up for, which was to thank the Editor for sending them to me.

Just to give a sample of what this periodical serves let me lay before you the range of its interests by opening the pages of just one journal. Tucked away in a corner almost like an afterthought is a recipe telling you how to prepare a dish of couscous, a Moroccan dish somewhat like buriyani.

One of its high points being the use of ten strands of saffron - not to be confused with turmeric, the Indian saffron, which we use in Lanka but have to be satisfied with it as the real za'faran as the Arabs called it when they brought it to Spain in the Middle Ages is the most expensive kitchen ingredient going. I suppose only expatriates can afford to use it. In contrast to this gourmet stuff we have an intellectual feast prepared by a Sri Lankan physician, Dr Lakshman Ranasinghe, on the health facilities available to us in the past both in the East and in the West.

I was glad to find confirmation here that when it comes to civilised living we in the East have set an example to the rest of the world.

Contrary to the picture given by a writer by the name of W.H.S. Jones who said that the heathens, meaning those of us who were non-Christians, took the view that 'compassion for suffering was a virtue,' while the Christians considered it a duty.

## **Historically false**

Dr. Ranasinghe points out that this was not only derogatory but historically false. He goes on to say that 'the first infirmaries and hospitals in the world were Buddhistic, and, they were conceived and established out of commitment to both duty and virtue.'

He also refers to the achievements of Sri Lanka in this field as deserving separate discussion because 'coverage involves impressive details of builders, locations, categories (with plans, drawings and photographs of structures)' [see reprint of 1986 annual Presidential address in 16 page booklet]

It's a pity that some photographs reproduced to illustrate the article do not show details too clearly. For even the sun and rain pouring on these ruins for hundreds of years and still lying around Anuradhapura and Polonnaruwa have not succeeded in obliterating the sculptor's artistic stone carvings on even urinals and squatting plates.

Such has been the compassion displayed by the kings in the past, some of whom were ayurvedic physicians themselves, that hospitals have been put up not only for pregnant mothers and the old and sick but also hospitals for animals.

To look at other areas in this particular issue you may come across the achievement of a Ceylonese (or is it Sri Lankan?) astronomer who was able to predict the time of arrival and departure of Halley's comet.

He was Prof. Allen Abraham born in 1865 in Pairikoodal in Karaitivu as Subramaniam Ampalavanar. Halley's 1910 comet, a wonder of the heavens, which was quite visible in our skies to even naked eyes, because it spread like a giant, luminous ekel broom (idala) from the horizon to the middle of the sky, a description given to me by my mother.

## **Orbit of Venus**

Not only did he predict the time of its entry to be visible to the naked eye when other astronomers gave a much later date, he also went on to say that the comet would enter the orbit of Venus and that this would retard its movement.

For this Prof Abraham was rewarded by being made a Fellow of the Royal Society of Astronomers in Britain in 1912.

As a child he lost his parents early and his schooling was done in what is known as a 'Thinnai School' - a school conducted in a verandah. Yet the Thinnai School helped to produce an astronomer! This issue also carries the ninth instalment of a very interesting series on the lesser-known ethnic communities of Sri Lanka. This one is about the Chinese.

They are almost an invisible community today, but throughout history we have had many dealings with them. Vama Vamadevan, who is now in retirement in Australia after his service with the Ceylon Police, is a frequent writer to the Ceylankan. He is very much aware of both the historical contacts and relations with the Chinese and also of contemporary Chinese events.

I was not aware that the colonial government in its early days not only toyed with the idea of getting down Chinese workers but actually got down this labour for agricultural and other work. Governor North had pursued the idea of securing



foreign labour and had got down Malayalees, Madrasis, Malays and even Kaffirs as recruits for the armed services.

Similarly he thought of filling the agricultural ranks by getting down Chinese. Initially he got down 47 Chinese and planted them in Galle and Trincomalee.

Maitland, too, followed the same thinking and got down 100 Chinese to reconstruct the Hamilton Canal. Both ventures seem to have been failures. Vamadevan suggests that the name Ja Ela is a memento from this period when the common man mistook the Chinese from Penang to be Malays. And China Garden in Galle is where the Chinese were settled.

#### **Chinese peddlers**

Septuagenarians and octogenarians among us may remember how in the Thirties Chinese peddlers either walked around or pedalled around in the city and the suburbs on bicycles carrying huge bundles of Chinese silks and cloths.

Little kids were scared of them and were told to be of good behaviour or else they would be taken away in those bundles. But the older ones were not scared. They even used to taunt them saying cheena booku booku chinaray/kolombata yannay koi paray. What I have said so far should give an idea of the range of interests covered by the Ceylankan. One more item for those Sri Lankan lovers of the wild who drop in on us from time to time from all over the globe to see Yala or Wagomuwa or Uda Walawe. Rodney St. John recalls an unusual elephantine encounter he has had just a 'hoo shout' away from the bungalow he was putting up at the last mentioned sanctuary.

For some reason or other he had stayed back instead of joining the others on their morning round looking for elephants when right next to the bungalow almost, a group of adolescent-looking elephants were feeding quietly totally oblivious to where they were. After about half an hour of feeding they started throwing dust and dirt on themselves and then began rubbing against each other. They seemed to be in a very frolicsome mood.

There is a picture in the magazine of one of them resting from his exhaustions as it were by lying down on his side, which the writer says is not the normal way elephants rest. Standing usually does resting, but this picture of jumbo lying down is proof that this is no traveller's story. Anyway, this seems to have been a rare instance of a group of frolicsome elephants, taking it rather easy.

I must say that the Ceylankan provides a good deal of interesting reading, which I think is more than of topical interest. Where else can I get a picture of what the 'Garden city of Colombo' looked like except by reading an article like People and Homes

on Thurstan and Cambridge Place fifty years ago.

#### **Bagatalle Road**

Did you know that the area around Bagatalle Road was once a 125 acre coconut cum cinnamon estate? Occupied at first by a Civil Servant, Charles Edward Layard, it later came into the possession of that philanthropist Charles Henry de Soysa who built on this ground a 100-roomed house. Those indeed were the days!

Later he held a spectacular and historic dinner in these premises for the benefit of the Duke of Edinburgh and sought his permission to name it the Alfred House.

You may have noticed around Alfred House Gardens three other commodious residences, the gifts to some of the children of C.H. de Soysa.

One is today the residence of the High Commissioner for India, the second is College House, an architectural curiosity, where the Registrar's office and the library of the University College used to be and the third, I think, was named *Villa Venezia*, a grand looking villa, adjoining Reid Avenue on one side and what used to be Thurstan Road on the other. Not only these great houses but also the streets that led to them were lined with a canopy of trees, adding to the beauty of our roads and helping to popularise the reputation of Colombo as a garden city. Thanks to *The Ceylankan* we have now a record of how well we once lived.

*The Ceylankan* is produced by the Ceylon Society of Australia originally incepted in Sydney now has a Melbourne chapter, and membership spread over six countries (mainly to receive the Journal). Total around 350.

Australian groups meet quarterly in Public Session and hold addresses by eminent academics, scientists, economists, lawyers and doctors to name a few. The Journal is also published quarterly. The editor is Sumane Iyer.

**Editor's Note:** This article originally appeared in the *Daily News* of 27 August 2005. The author who passed away in 2011 was formerly Editor of the *Daily News*. On winning a literary competition held by the Sunday Observer in 1951, author Sugathadasa Pathiravithana was invited to join the newspaper. He rose to become the Features Editor of the evening Observer after some years doing a stint as re-write editor of the *Jane* magazine. He returned to Lake House in 1974 as an Assistant Editor, and then eventually as Editor of the *Ceylon Daily News*.

(The issue of *The Ceylankan* referred to in the article is that of February 2003 (J 21).

A President's hardest task is not to do what is right, but to know what is right.

(Lyndon Baines Johnson (*Public Papers of the President* 1965).





## Meals Ammi Made

### Kokis

(Sweet meat served during Sinhala  
and Hindu New Year Festival)

by Chandra de Silva (Dehiwela, Sri Lanka)

#### Ingredients:

2 Cups Rice Flour  
2 eggs  
Saffron, salt  
1 scraped coconut  
3-4 tbsps. Sugar  
Oil for frying.

#### Method:

- 1) Squeeze and get 2 extracts of coconut milk.
- 2) Mix rice flour, add 2 eggs beaten. Make a thick batter with coconut milk.
- 3) Add salt, saffron & sugar.
- 4) Dip the traditional Kokis moulds in the batter and deep fry.

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

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

Please contact any of the following for further details: In **Sydney**: Contact: Treasurer Deepak Pritamdas P.O. Box 489, Blacktown NSW 2148 Phone: 0434 860 188 Email: deepakpsl@yahoo.com In **Melbourne**: Contact: Convenor Hemal Gurusinhe Phone: 0427 725 740 Email: hemguru@hotmail.com. In **Colombo**: Until further notice members are requested to deposit subscription money/cheques at a HSBC ATM machine or transfer to the HSBC electronically. The information you require is for ATMs: Account Name: Ceylon Society of Australia, CSA Account Number- 008-044109-001 - e Transfer above plus: HSBC Swift Code- HSBCLKLX Annual subs: LKR3000.00 Contact: Treasurer M.Asoka T.de Silva Phone 2822933 (Mob.) 775097517 Email: matdes@sltnet.lk

## Send us your recipes

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

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

## Congratulations & a Warm Welcome to our New Members

PAUL NAVARATNAM & VETHA RAJES-  
WARAN, Chadstone, 3148 VIC.  
SAMI PASUPATI.

## Subscriptions – staying up-to-date

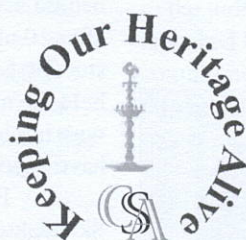
A treasurer's job can be a thankless task at the best of times. Nothing can cause more trepidation to the person managing our money as reminding us members our fees are now due or, worse still, overdue.

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

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

If you were born in September, it is pretty safe to assume your parents started out the New Year with a BANG!





# **Ceylon Society of Australia**

## **Annual Dinner & Sing-along**

**on Saturday  
26th November 2016  
Commencing at 7.00 PM  
For 8.00 PM Dinner  
At the Pennant Hills  
Community Centre  
Cnr Ramsey & Yarrara Roads,  
Pennant Hills.**

**with Hyacinth Jones  
at the piano**

Members & their guests are welcome.  
Cost \$35 per person includes Dinner.

Refreshments BYO

BOOKINGS are ESSENTIAL

Contact: Deepak Pritamdas  
on 0434 860 188



## SYNOPSIS OF MEETINGS

Sydney 28 August 2016

### Growing Up in Ceylon – Talk by S. Skandakumar

Somasunderam  
Skandakumar,  
Sri Lanka's High  
Commissioner to  
Australia spoke at a  
Sydney gathering of  
the Ceylon Society  
of Australia on  
the evening of 28  
August 2016 on the  
subject of 'Growing  
up in Ceylon'.

Born on 21 January  
1948, the momentous  
year of Independence

for Ceylon, Mr Skandakumar first touched on the providence of a homeland blessed by nature "holding the promise of becoming the Switzerland of South Asia". During his childhood a series of political events contributed to the inequity and deprivation that resulted in the riots of 1958 and 1977 and led to the gradual deterioration of that promise. As his talk unravelled, it became clear that despite the numerous challenging circumstances that the young man would invariably have faced, he had both confidence in himself as well as his fellow countrymen to not only achieve but also to contribute much.

As one of a family of eight – four boys and four girls – Skandakumar had been a timid child, being once told that he should 'join Ladies College rather than Royal'. Acutely aware of a need to turn things around, the transformation happened when he had decided to face a dreaded injection (with an enormous syringe of that time!) without flinching – a new boy left the clinic. Playing cricket at Royal College was another major influence in his development, additionally providing many insights and memories. A sharp memory he recalled was a match against St. Johns College in 1965. The Royal College team – ethnically mixed - had travelled to Jaffna by the 'Yal Devi' in the usual spirit of anticipation, excitement and camaraderie. Royal lost the match. What is remembered though is the kindness and hospitality extended to the team, and the tears in departing Jaffna. It is notable that several of his acquaintances from school and sporting life had married across the ethnic divide, something perhaps seen less often now. An amusing school incident: the elderly Applied Maths master had a habit of giving the boys an exercise and then quietly dozing off for precisely 20 minutes. However on that particular day, unbeknown to the student who was intently perusing something



• *H.E. Somasundaram  
Skandakumar.*

behind his raised desk flap, the master had revived after 10 minutes and quietly made his way behind the student. Suddenly the master had reached over and held the magazine aloft – containing images of ladies with minimal attire – pronouncing "young man, you have become rotten before you are ripe!"

Excelling in cricket at Royal College, Mr Skandakumar's involvement in the sport continued at Colombo University where he graduated in 1970 with a degree in science. Further successes followed when he joined the Tamil Union and was selected to represent the Sri Lanka Cricket Board team in its annual Gopalan trophy encounter against Madras CA in 1970. In his professional life, he joined the prestigious George Steuart & Company in 1974 after 3 years at Whittall Estates and Agencies Ltd. However shortly afterwards in 1976, his rising trajectory in cricket was severely interrupted by a debilitating illness. Condemned to "no physical activity or alcohol", he turned his concentration to career.

Following recovery four years later Skandakumar did return to first class cricket, captaining Tamil Union from 1982-1986 and transitioning to cricket administration progressively, to become the Secretary of the Sri Lanka Cricket Board in 1989. Firstly at the Tamil Union and then in the national context, he was instrumental in seeking out and fostering the hitherto untapped potential of 'outstation' cricketers – boys from humble, less privileged backgrounds.

Realising that there was a stagnation of sorts and that the relatively privileged Colombo/Kandy boys "were not hungry enough", Mr Skandakumar was active in providing opportunity for promising but neglected young rural cricketers to participate in Colombo, in helping them to overcome the initial 'culture shock', in encouraging the Colombo lads to help the newcomers in communicating and settling in. The consequences of these initiatives have not only served as a broad social leveller as outstation players came into national and international prominence, but also reaped rich dividends for Sri Lankan cricket as a whole. The current Sri Lanka team boasts of several players who have come in from Tamil Union ranks – Rangana Herath, Dhananjaya De Silva, Suranga Lakmal and Shaminda Eranga.

Steuart House where Mr Skandakumar worked is directly across the Central Bank building and on the morning of 31 January 1991, the LTTE caused terrible devastation by crashing an explosive-laden truck into the property. Of the 91 people killed by the blast, six people were from George Steuarts. Recalling the horror experienced that day, when he suffered a fractured nose and a gash on his head, Mr Skandakumar went on to look at the origins of conflict in a country that has the words '*...eka mawakage daru kala bawina*' (...as children of one mother) in its national anthem. The widening ethnic and social



divide opened up by SWRD Bandaranaike's Sinhala Only policy as a political manoeuvre to gain power earlier denied to him in 1952 couldn't be retracted even after he subsequently realised the danger ahead and the country plunged into the inevitable chaos, loss of life and dispersion that the people are only now struggling to overcome.

Mr Skandakumar had progressed to head George Steuarts as Chairman from 2000 to 2008, a period described as being one of its most successful, which he graciously credited to the joint effort of his associates and fellow employees. Upon retirement in 2008, Sri Lankan cricket had benefited twice from his terms as Secretary of the Board of Cricket in 1988-89 and 1999-2000. He turned down the expected offers of cricket administration and opted instead to relocate to the quiet seclusion of Haputale, with its pristine climate, beautiful scenery but rather raggedy town – in a disadvantaged lower middle class locality. George Steuarts already had a close association with Haputale, in that a prominent former chairman Sir Thomas Villiers had his country house, the stately 'Adisham' with its expansive grounds there. A "modest house" and property located more centrally, near the Haputale Railway Station and formerly owned by the Company was purchased and settled in.

His engagement in social work and education of disadvantaged children in particular commenced at this time among estate workers and other underprivileged families – children unable to afford proper clothing, undernourished, lacking basic facilities taken for granted elsewhere and trapped into an early working life without educational opportunity. Mr Skandakumar spoke of successes achieved through a trust fund set up in this area which has seen three girls from the estate sector graduating from university and now serving as teachers. He also related a heart-wrenching story about three small children, shoeless and poorly clad he'd helped, the gratitude expressed by the mother and their subsequent sudden destitution by the accidental death of both parents, a spark of hope seen in them thereafter through a trust fund enabling their grandmother, uncle and aunt to support them. 'Oru Paanai' (one pot) is a UK based charity, engaged in providing food to children, which he became associated with in 2015 taking on the Sri Lankan branch chairmanship – now supporting some 400 schools and almost 40,000 children.

In February 2015 Mr Skandakumar was approached by the Foreign Minister with an offer to serve as the High Commissioner for Sri Lanka in Australia – an offer he accepted in light of a changing political landscape compared to the period of 2009 to 2014, where opportunities to heal a fractured society were lost. The experience of the strong non-partisan social framework introduced by Lee Kuan Yew and its impact on Singapore was mentioned. He sees hope of achieving reconciliation, of restoring independence

to the judiciary and administration in the initiatives launched by the new government. The President's commitment to constitutional reform including a diminishing removal of presidential powers, the recent introduction of legislation relating to Right of Information and an Office of Missing Persons were seen as positive indicators. He called for patience in the introduction of these transformative reforms stating that the new government had only been 17 months in office. The shared spirit of inclusion in Kevin Rudd's Apology and the singing of the Sri Lankan national anthem in Sinhala and Tamil were referred to. In conclusion, Mr Skandakumar stated the need for a new language of Compassion to be adopted – enabling sight and hearing to those who may be blind or deaf to the needs and aspirations of those around them.

– *Sunimal Fernando*

## Colombo Chapter 11 December 2015 ARE WE A MARITIME NATION?

By **Commodore YN Jayarathna,**

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

Sri Lanka as an Island at a strategic location of the Indian Ocean had always enjoyed the reputation of a maritime hub. Seafarers in their quest from East to West, and *vice versa*, could not ignore this vital stop-over on a cross-ocean passage. The Arabs (present day Yemenis and Omanis), made their way from west as well as traders even coming from as far west as Rome. From the East came Chinese and Sri Vijayans and the two roadsteads of Manthota and Gokanna were noted stopovers during those long passages. Sailing vessels also used estuaries and engaged in trade with locals, where there were no formal harbours or ports at that time.

The sprawling Sinhala Kingdoms bear testimony to the essential maritime link: Manthota served Anuradhapura whilst Gokanna (Koddiyar Bay) served Polonnaruwa. When our Kings decided to seek refuge in the hinterland, we lost our maritime link and maritime affinity. It took the effort of three successive Kings (Gajabahu 1131-1153, Parakramabahu 1153-1186 and Nissankamalla 1187-1196 AD) to develop the naval prowess of the Island Nation. It is of further interest that whenever we had naval capability, the Kings had always enjoyed stability and prosperous governance.

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



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

Sri Lanka today enjoys an Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) of about seven times its land mass, where sovereign rights for living and non-living resources of the water column, sub soil and sea bed remain uncompromised. This 200 nautical mile wide sea area holds the untapped resources of the ocean which surely must be explored for economic benefits in forthcoming years. Hence the sea area needs to be policed and scientifically researched to ensure sustainable exploitation. Furthermore, the Search & Rescue Region (SRR) assigned to us is about 27 times our landmass, passing through the world's busiest Sea Lane of Communication (SLOC) connecting far East and far West, and places on us a tremendous obligation as per international conventions. Through this 'Global Interstate', the world's topmost economies communicate and carry on their business. This reinforces the role this island nation plays in securing the seas for all, at a vital stretch of ocean that policy makers need to pay attention to in formulating strategies for the country.

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

The Claim for the "Continental Margin" under the provisions available under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) is to secure the resource-rich sea bed for our future generations. This would be our final frontier. As technology develops we will be in a position to extract the resources for economic benefit even from these greater depths. However, this expanse of ocean needs to be secured - both in legal and physical terms - against

poachers, exploiters, etc., and preserved for future generations. Thus, the Navy of tomorrow needs to be built up today, just as the three successive kings did from 1131 to 1196 AD. Since we once lost our affinity with our maritime frontier, this time we cannot let it happen. Closing our eyes any longer to our maritime potential would jeopardise our very survival and existence and thus, all of us - from policy makers to the man-in-the-street - need to upgrade their understanding on our maritime heritage and affinity to the sea..

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

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

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

– M.D.(Tony) Saldin



Colombo Chapter  
11 November 2016

**M.D. (Tony) Saldin**

**will speak on**

### ***"The Keris – the mystic fighting weapon of the Javanese and Malays"***

(The Keris is believed to have the power to jump out of its sheath and engage the enemy in battle on its own. It is also able to warn the owner of impending danger by rattling in its sheath. Keris which are tied to the main beams of traditional Malay houses as a talisman, are known to fly on its own and kill the enemy.

The Sinhala words *Kirichchiya* and *Kinissa* are probably derived from the Malay word *Keris*).

Questions and discussions will follow.



On Friday 11<sup>th</sup> November 2016

at 5.30pm

Venue: Organisation of Professional Associations (OPA) Professor Stanley Wijesundera Mawatha, Off Bauddhaloka Mawatha, Colombo 7

The speaker M.D. (Tony) Saldin, former Country General Manager for Nichimen Corporation/Sojitz Corporation, Past Asst. Secretary General Sri Lanka Malay Confederation, Past President,

Mabole Malay Association and the Sri Lanka-Indonesia Friendship Association (SLIFA), Hony Secretary, Ceylon Society of Australia, Colombo Chapter and freelance writer on the Sri Lankan Malays and the colonial military history of the Dutch and British periods of Sri Lanka.

Material for this lecture was co-researched by Melathi Saldin, B.A (Hons), M.Phil (Kelaniya), and former Senior Lecturer, Dept of Archaeology, University of Kelaniya and currently reading for her Ph.D At Deakin University, Melbourne, Australia.

**CONTACT: Tissa Devendra, (President)**

e-mail: [tisdev@sltnet.lk](mailto:tisdev@sltnet.lk) 011 250 1489

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

**Melbourne Chapter**

**Sunday 6 November 2016**

The Guest speaker  
at our next meeting will be

***Chandra Wickramagamage***

Professor Emeritus University of Sri  
Jayawardhanapura, Sri Lanka  
He will present an illustrated talk on

## **“The Significance of the New Edition of Five Volumes of the Mahavamsa”**

The major corrections in this new edition of Mahavamsa include; • Correction of the wrong titles • Correction of the wrong chapter numbers • Use of Moggallana's edition of Mahanama's Magadhi translation of Mahavamsa as volume I • Inclusion of the economic, political and religions history of Portuguese and Dutch invaders in Sri Lanka into the relevant chapters of Mahavamsa volume II • Addition of corrected chronology of kings of Sri Lanka.

PROF. CHANDRA WIKRAMAGAMAGE has worked at various universities in Sri Lanka and was the Archaeological Director, working for the UNESCO – Sri Lanka Cultural Triangle Project. He is the author of many books on Sri Lankan history and archeology in English and Sinhala.

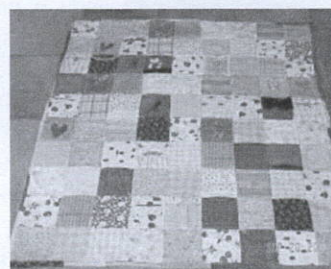
**Date: Sunday 6 November 2016 Time: 2:30 p.m.**

**Please note new venue:**

**Alvie Hall 314 High Street Road, Mount  
Waverley (Melway 61 D11)**

**Contact Hemal 0427 725 740 for all enquiries.**

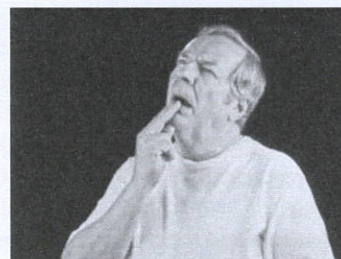
## ***Age of Wisdom***



Good friends are like quilts—they age with you, yet never lose their warmth.



I will walk the beach, in a swim suit that is stretched over a bulging body, and will dive into the waves, with abandon, if I choose to, despite the pitying glances from the jet set. They, too, will get old.



I know I am sometimes forgetful. But there again, some of life is just as well forgotten. And, eventually, I will remember the important things.

*(Wise thoughts shared for our enjoyment by Allan Henricus and Hugh Karunanayake). For more Wisdom see page 35.*



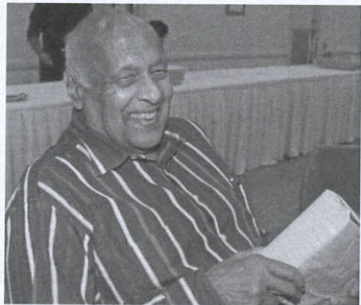
## Appreciation

### Antony Peries

15 January 1931 - 08 August 2016

*(Following is a text of the tribute paid to the late Tony Peries by Hugh Karunanayake, at the public meeting held on 28 August 2016).*

Tony Peries, who guided the destiny of the Ceylon Society of Australia as its President for three years, passed away on August 8. Our guest speaker Mr Skandakumar would need no introduction to Tony



who preceded him as Chairman of George Steuart and Co. nearly 50 years ago. It is fitting indeed that Mr Skandakumar be present here today to recall some interesting aspects of his own

life as we pay tribute to Tony Peries who straddled the corporate world of Sri Lanka like a colossus nearly half a century ago. It was just a few weeks ago that he sadly reached the end of a very eventful life of more than 85 years. This tribute to the late Tony Peries is based on the eulogy which I delivered at his funeral on August 17.

Born in Colombo on 15 January 1931 into a family who were pioneer settlers in the salubrious suburb of Havelock Town, Tony received his education first at St Peters College and later at St Josephs College, Colombo. His father Wilfred Peries was already in the top echelons of Colombo's corporate world of the 1950s when Tony decided to cut his teeth also in the commercial sector. He joined George Steuart and Co. as an apprentice tea taster at a time when it was the leading company in the island. He excelled in his chosen occupation and soon acquired a reputation as an outstanding tea taster. Stories about his skills were legendary in Sri Lanka's tea industry. Endowed with a sharp intellect and an intellectual curiosity that knew no bounds, he was moving up the corporate ladder at great speed. It was no surprise when he was appointed to the Board of George Steuarts when he was in his early thirties. In 1968, when he was 37 years of age, he was appointed Chairman and Managing Director of the Company. An incredible feat indeed which shook the Board Rooms of Colombo's leading companies, especially at a time when commerce in Colombo was dominated by British interests and when all the other members on the Board of Directors of George Steuarts were all expatriate Britishers.

His most engaging personal memoir "George Steuart and Co" published in 2001 is ample testimony

both to his extraordinary memory and his capacity for observation and analysis, as indeed to the lucidity of his written word.

The persona that was Tony Peries, however, had many other facets to it. There was hardly anything in life that did not interest him. A classic gourmand who enjoyed his food and wine, he was also a reliable authority on scotch whisky which he once described as the "nectar that comes from Scotland". Talk to him about cameras or guns and he would provide encyclopaedic information. An early photographic enthusiast armed with a Kodak 116 and later, with a Rollei Automat, he has recorded some of his visits around Sri Lanka for posterity. These include some ringside shots taken at the Independence Day Celebrations of 1948.

As a young man he served as a Volunteer Officer in the Ceylon Army and if that was not enough, he learnt to fly and obtained a fully fledged pilot's licence. A talented water polo player who was a familiar figure at the Otters Pool in Colombo, he took to swimming like a duck to water. Many of you here would be aware of his daily one hour swim that was part of his daily morning ritual, religiously performed right through his adult life until his recent illness denied him the pleasure. The essence of the man was also in his abiding interest in travel to exotic destinations and in the lives of people. Conversation with him was a delightful experience as he either knew or knew of everybody that mattered. A voracious reader up to the very end, his reading interests were extraordinarily wide and included both creative writing and non fictional work.

Tony left Sri Lanka at 42 years of age seeking fresh pastures and lived in Australia ever since. He retired after a very successful career in Melbourne and in Sydney. That was Tony the exemplary business executive. The wind beneath his wings was of course his wife Srini whom he married nearly 60 years ago and has been the perfect foil to Tony's outstanding career. They were then a dashing young couple with Tony at the wheel of his red MG convertible with Srini, the lass born with the proverbial silver spoon in her mouth, beside him. The two of them have enjoyed a happy wedded life spending much time travelling to countries near and far but always keeping themselves well informed of events taking place around the globe.

As an acknowledgment of his abiding interest in the land of his birth, Tony was elected President of the Ceylon Society of Australia in 2003 and provided capable leadership to the Society during a three year stint. His wise counsel helped the Society through some of the many issues it faced over the years. The Ceylankan, the journal of the CSA, has through the years, carried many excellent contributions from him - all classy outpourings from an erudite and alert mind. On a personal note let me say that it has been a great



pleasure to have known and enjoyed Tony's company through the years, spending much time chatting, sharing meals, visiting each other's homes, tasting the fare in various restaurants and exchanging emails on a variety of topics.

I will miss his delightful company immensely. In the words of the song:

*"We had joy, we had fun, we had seasons in the sun  
But the hills that we climbed were just seasons out of time"*

A most unforgettable man has gone to his Maker. May he rest in eternal peace.

— HUGH KARUNANAYAKE



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

#### NEW ADDITION

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

### BOOKS & OTHER PUBLICATIONS FOR SALE

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

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

### South Coast of Sri Lanka



The 238 kilometres (148 miles) of coastline from Colombo to the town of Hambantota has some of the most glorious beaches in the island. This is especially true of the stretch from Colombo to the ancient city of Galle, which has become very popular with visitors and has seen maximum development. There is plenty of scope for swimming, diving and surfing along the palm-fringed shores. Besides sea and sun, you can find peaceful Buddhist temples, and spectacular masks used in low country dances. If you follow minor roads slightly inland, some of the lushest green landscapes greet you with hills rising above emerald paddy fields. (*Words: Odyssey Illustrated Guide to Sri Lanka; Photo: Yahoo).*

### WE NEED SPEAKERS

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

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

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

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

Cowerdice, as distinguished from panic, is always simply a lack of ability to suspend the functioning of the imagination.

— Ernest Hemingway; *Men at war 1942*





## Dr R L Spittel – the surgeon of the Veddas

by  
Dr Palitha Ganewatta

**W**hen I was a 14-year old high school student, I read a Sinhala translation of an English book titled *Where the White Sambhur Roams*. I was so absorbed by this book and could not put it down until I finished reading it. I started looking for more books written by the same author and found another. It was the Sinhala translation of the book titled *White Wild Boy*. These two books have opened a new world in my imagination of the jungle life of Ceylon. I was so keen in finding more books written by the same author and read two more books, namely: *Vanished Trails* and *Savage Sanctuary*.

These readings inspired me to find out more about the author himself, Dr. R. L. Spittel.

Veddas are unique to Sri Lanka, they are indigenous people of Ceylon and have been regarded as one of the most primitive of existing human races.

The very first person who researched the lifestyle and culture of Veddas was German academic Professor C. G. Seligmann, who published a book titled *The Veddas* in 1911, based on his extensive research on Veddas.

Dr R. L. Spittel first read about Veddas from Seligmann's book, but there is a significant difference between the ways those two researchers approached their subject. Seligmann carried out Ceylon Government-sponsored research on the Indigenous People of Ceylon, whereas Dr. Spittel helped the tribe in various ways; treated them, fed them, spent enormous time with them by taking perilous journeys to jungles and soon became Surgeon of the Veddas. He was popularly known as 'Sudu Hura' among Ceylon's aboriginal tribe.

### Early years

Richard Lionel Spittel or R. L. Spittel as he was popularly known, was born in Tangalle on 9 December 1881. His father was a Provincial Surgeon, who was an ardent lover of nature. It was he who was largely responsible for RL Spittel's love for the jungles and their inhabitants.

Later in 1924 when Dr Spittel wrote his first book, *Wild Ceylon*, he dedicated it to his late father with the note: "To the memory of my father, who taught me to love the jungle".

R.L. Spittel received his education at Royal College, Colombo and the Ceylon Medical College, where he passed his LMS (Licentiate of Medicine and Surgery) in 1905. Thereafter, he joined the Government Medical Service and was sent to England in 1906 to complete his higher medical education.

There he completed the conjoint diploma in 1908 and obtained his FRCS (Fellow of the Royal College of Surgeons) degree in 1909.

Returning to Ceylon in 1910, he was appointed Third Surgeon at the General Hospital, Colombo and later became a lecturer at the Ceylon Medical College. On retirement in 1935, he continued working as a consultant surgeon and was bestowed with Royal honours as Commander of the Order of the British Empire in 1942 and Companion of the Order of St Michael and St George in 1950 for his services to medicine and surgery. A lifelong member of the British Medical Association, he was the President of its Ceylon Branch from 1940 to 1946. He served as President of Dutch Burgher Union of Ceylon from 1936 to 1938.

Dr Spittel married a fellow medical student Claribel Frances, daughter of one of Ceylon's most distinguished physicians and a member of the Legislative Council of Ceylon, Dr William Gregory Van Dort, on 28 December 1911 at St Michael and All Angels' Church, Colombo. They had two daughters, Christine and Yvonne.

Dr Spittel passed away on 3 September 1969, at the age of 87.

### Surgeon of the wilderness

Dr Spittel's eldest daughter, Christine Wilson, who accompanied her father on most of his jungle trips, was the author of his biography "Surgeon of the Wilderness" in 1975. She wrote that she had the privilege of accompanying her father on many jungle trips, including the most arduous one, on the quest of the Veddha murderer and outlaw, Tissahamy.

The story of Spittel's early life and the facts of which only he knew the details, were dictated shortly before his death to then matron of his small nursing home in Colombo (Vera del Tufo) with the inscription, 'For Christine to make what use she will of it.'

His very first encounter with the Veddas happened in the 1880s, when he stood in a jungle clearing watching his surgeon-father perform an autopsy. From the undergrowth a member of the aboriginal people suddenly appeared. Their eyes



• Dr R L Spittel on one of trips to the jungle.



met for one brief moment before the shy Vedda hastily withdrew. It was Richard Lionel Spittel's first experience of a Vedda - an encounter that profoundly affected his life.

In later life when he was a busy surgeon in a Colombo hospital, he had remembered, as if in a dream, that first encounter. He consequently read the anthropological study of the race by Professor C. G. Seligmann, published in 1911. One passage struck him forcefully. Professor Seligmann wrote that there are at least four families living the life as their forefathers had lived for generations, without perceptible change.

His quest of finding these people involved a voyage of exploration few had ever attempted - a journey up the Mahaweli Ganga by canoe. Spittel's objective was 'Gunner's Quoin', a huge rock rising out of dense forest at Dimbulagala, where he hoped to find the Veddas.

His quarry was at first elusive. Then, one day, three men approached him wearing brief span cloths, with an axe carried over the shoulder. Though the time when they had worn tree-bark was gone, they were close examples of traditional Veddas. Spittel visited their dwellings and observed the prevalence of malnutrition and malaria, realising there was much work for him to do.

He made several trips to jungle, first sailing along the Mahaweli River on canoe and from Maha Oya he started walking miles and miles with the help of the village headman and villagers, who carried his medical equipment, tents, food items, and gifts for the Veddas.

Indeed his greatest works of healing were in the jungle, earning him the tag "Surgeon of the Wilderness". Often he performed emergency procedures under the most difficult of conditions. But his efforts almost completely cured the people of the Vanni region of venereal disease and malaria. In rural Ceylon, Dr Spittel quickly became well-known for helping the Veddas and remote village communities. He enjoyed spending time in jungle. Away from busy city life rejuvenated him. He liked to spend as much time in solitude. While doing so, he recorded everything on a daily basis - what he saw, whom he treated, discussions he had with the Veddas, specific words of their language, pondering about their origins. The Veddas are not a pure race. They are the fusion of Australoid and Negrito and later, an admixture of Dravidian and Sinhalese blood. They are a small made, sturdy, wavy haired folk. The average stature of the men is just over five feet and the women about four and half feet. Taller Veddas suggest an admixture with Sinhalese and Tamils. Their limbs are long, muscular and strong.

Every Vedda's name tells his 'varige' or clan (Uruvarige Tissahamy, Monaravarige Kaira and so on).

In former times each Vedda group had its own boundaries. They were defined by natural features, like streams, rocks or prominent trees marked with a bow-mark. These boundaries were strictly adhered to and seldom transgressed. Their dwellings were caves. In later periods, they built very primitive houses using tree bark and branches when they started Chena cultivation; a result of their admixture with the Sinhalese race.

Their main occupation is food gathering. The methods of food gathering are hunting and honey collecting. The hunting is done with dogs. Their main food items are honey, flesh of monkeys, monitor lizards and yams and wild fruits.

They use a device called Habaka, used for trapping animals. They used gourds as bee hives to deceive honey bees; their beetle pouches made of monkey skins and deerskin vessels have been for collecting honey. Their caves are embellished with crude drawings of men and animals, done by a finger dipped in moistened ash or powdered charcoal. They believe in spirits that haunt natural features like rocks, trees and streams. They have more definite faith in the spirits of the dead. They called them Nae yakku, who live unseen around their homes.

They propitiate them with ceremonial dances. Their dances are simple. They accompany their dances with rhythmically clapping hands or slapping them on the abdomen.

One of the popular ceremonial dance is called 'Kirikoraha', literally translated as 'Milk Bowl'. Only two Veddas participate in this ceremonial dance, they make a tripod called 'mukkaliya' by binding three sticks together in an open ground and then they put an earthen pot (Kirikoraha) on it and the ceremonial arrow is laid upon it.

This dance is performed in the spirit of Kande Wanniya and his brother Bilindi, who died together. 'Yakku' means spirit in Vedda dialect. This Kirikoraha ceremony is to invoke blessings to Kande yaka and Bilindi yaka.

Before any ceremonial dance begins, a ceremony called 'adukku denava' which means offering of food, is performed. This offering is made before every dance, not only before this Kirikoraha. Their songs are invocations and lullabies.

Dr Spittel understood that, anthropologically, they are an important link in the chain of man's beginnings. They are happy living in their jungles and Dr. Spittel's instinct told him, they should be left so. But as a doctor, he knew that civilization must come to them or rather they go to civilisation. They will die unless they are helped. Dr Spittel decided to talk to Mr D.S. Senanayake, then Minister of Agriculture, who was to become Ceylon's first Prime Minister. But he deeply felt that it will be the beginning of the death of this ancient race. Government indeed came to their help and much happened in their lives, both good and



(Dr R.L.Spittel ,,, Continued from page 33)

bad. As a result of the contact with outer world, they lost their traditional way of living.

Dr Spittel was proficient with his pen as he was with his scalpel. In his jungle visits he communed with nature and was inspired to write poetry. But most of the books he wrote was about his lifelong love of the least advantaged people of Ceylon, the Veddas. The first book he published *Wild Ceylon* in 1924 had a great historical and ethnological value. This book, in his own words, describes, in particular, the lives of present day Veddas.

'Vanished trails', first published in 1950 is, I believe, anthropologically most informative book written by Dr. Spittle. It has been written as one continuous story depicting the lives of three generations of Veddas, from the troglodyte, food gathering stage to the beginning of hut-dweller and food producer.

Savage Sanctuary, published in 1941, is the story of the Vedda outlaw Tissahami and was the most popular and widely read of Dr Spittel's books.

Dr Spittel was responsible for several landmarks making up Sri Lanka's medical history, including the first skin graft, first blood transfusion by using his own blood and for medical publications *A Basis of Surgical Ward Work* (1915), *A Preliminary Course of Surgery* (1918), *Framboesia Tropica* (1923) and *Essentials of Surgery*.

He was commemorated on his 45th death anniversary on 3 September 2014. The philatelic

bureau of the Postal department of Sri Lanka issued a commemorative stamp and the first day cover.

Today we remember Dr. Spittel not only as a brilliant surgeon, a gifted writer and internationally recognised social anthropologist and wild life conservationist.

The service he rendered to preserve the culture and lifestyle of fast vanishing tribe of Ceylonese Veddas is unparalleled.

(From a talk delivered by the author at CSA meeting in Sydney on 29 May 2016).

### *It ain't cricket*

If the bowler thinks he bowls,  
Or if the batsman thinks he's bowled,  
They know not, poor misguided souls,  
They too shall perish unconsold.

I am the batsman and the bat,  
I am the bowler and the ball,  
The umpire, the pavilion cat,  
The roller, pitch, and stumps, and all.

(Andrew Lang - *Political Works* 1923)

It is stupid of modern civilisation to have given up believing in the devil, when he is the only explanation of it.

(Monsignor Ronald Knox in 'Let Dons Delight'. 1939).

The most persistent sound which reverberates through man's history is the beating of war drums.  
(Arthur Koestler, *Janus* 1978 prologue).

### Important information to our contributors!

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

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

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

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

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



*... a magazine  
that many member readers  
worldwide say they read every issue  
from cover to cover.*

## The Ceylankan...

The ideal Christmas & New Year  
Gift for Family & Friends.



## The Ceylankan

The Journal of the  
CEYLON SOCIETY  
of AUSTRALIA

ISSN 1836-8646 Journa 77 Volume XIX Number 4 November 2016 Editor: Doug Jones

A publication of  
the Ceylon Society of Australia that  
keeps alive the culture, heritage  
and history of Ceylon/Sri Lanka for  
any one who is interested.

**Just \$30.**

Your nominee will have four  
issues mailed to his/her home.

Please contact the Treasurer Deepak  
on 0434 860 188 or  
email: [deepakpsl@yahoo.com](mailto:deepakpsl@yahoo.com)  
PO Box 489 Blacktown NSW 2148.

The aged endure... so here's more from the ...

## ... Age of Wisdom



Sure, over the years, my heart has been broken. How can your heart not break, when you lose a loved one, or when a child suffers, or even when somebody's beloved pet gets hit by a car? But broken hearts are what give us strength, and understanding, and compassion. A heart never broken, is pristine, and sterile, and will never know the joy of being imperfect.



I am so blessed to have lived long enough to have my hair turn gray, and to have my youthful laughs be forever etched into deep grooves on my face. So many have never laughed, and so many have died before their hair could turn silver.

## CHANGED YOUR ADDRESS LATELY?

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

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



## *National War Heroes Memorial – Sri Jayawardenepura, Kotte*

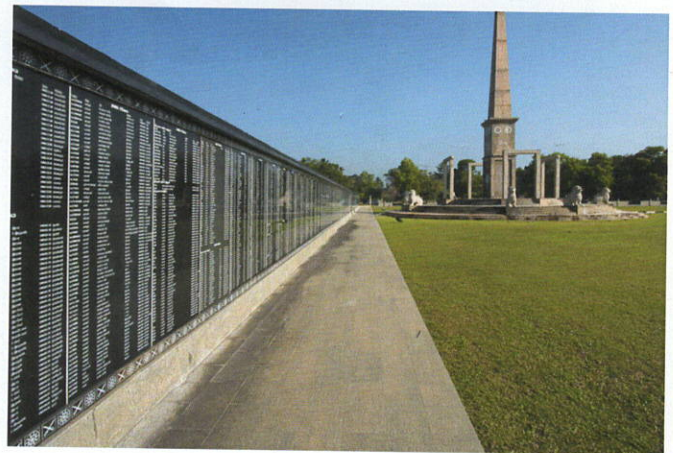


National War Heroes Memorial in Sri Jayawardenepura, Kotte (above) commemorates all military personnel killed in the service of the Nation since World War 1, including all police personnel due to terrorist activities. According to some records most of the fallen lost their lives between 2008 -2009. The memorial was opened on 7 June 2008.

The memorial centrepiece is an 80- foot pillar rising from a tranquil pond. The pillar is said to symbolise the commitment of those who are remembered and the pond is said to symbolise the virtue/nobleness of those who paid the ultimate sacrifice.



The four structures around the 80 foot pillar represent the four uniformed codes namely, the Army, Navy, Air Force and Sri Lanka Police. Eight lion statues 'guard' the memorial and depict the Nation. The curve at the base of the steps represents the different views of all Sri Lankans. Carvings of ancient war weaponry, such as the bow & arrow and four axes adorn the pillar. Carvings of the sun and the moon depict 'victory is forever'. Boomerangs carved between the sun and the moon are said to depict the resilience or ability of the uniformed codes to repeatedly return in attack of an enemy. The conch shells at the base depict the efforts of the fallen and their efforts in battle to unite the country.



(Above) 27,642 names are listed on the polished, granite memorial walls, which includes personnel listed as "Missing In Action" in the last conflict ending in May 2009.

(Right) close-up of carving adorning the pillar.



Photography by STEFAN D'SILVA