

1. Type III - Sultanate of Chirchik - 6.5g

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17. Type III - Sultanate of Chirchik - 6.5g

18. Type III - Sultanate of Chirchik - 6.5g

This image shows a circular, heavily textured metal object, possibly a coin or medallion, featuring intricate, raised relief designs. The central figure appears to be a seated deity or royal figure, surrounded by ornate patterns and symbols, including a prominent circular motif at the top. The object has a weathered, aged appearance with a mix of brown and gold tones.



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From the Editor

Dear Readers

A very happy 2024! Hope you all had a great break with your family and friends over December and January. Welcome to the first issue of the year, which is packed full of interesting articles and a new development for the Ceylon Society of Australia!

I am excited to announce that Ceylon Society of Australia (CSA) now has a website that can be accessed by you all. The website address is:

<https://ceylon-society.com/>.

There is a subscriber-only access section where you can browse *The Ceylankan* from its inception in February 1998 to the very latest issue. I am in the process of scanning the old issues and eventually I hope to have a complete listing of all the past issues of the journal on our website. Any assistance in locating the missing issues would be much appreciated! I hope it will become an important archival resource for future generations of researchers, students and readers worldwide who are interested in studying, fostering and promoting interest in the historical and cultural heritage of the island of our birth and origin, Sri Lanka. The Committee hopes that the website will also be a vehicle for encouraging people to join the CSA, especially the younger demographic, who share the CSA's objectives of being non-confrontational, non-political, non-racial and non-sectarian. In future it will be possible to renew your membership online. Currently, the traditional method of membership renewals will still prevail. Please refer to page 34 of this issue for details on how to access the subscriber-only part of the website.

The cover story is by Dr Srilal Fernando on Kahavanu, the ancient gold coins of the Sri Lanka. Srilal gives a fascinating short insight into the world of numismatics (the study of coins) when explain-

ing the images in the coins. In keeping with the theme of ancient Lanka, Asoka de Silva has expertly shown the genius of ancient Sinhalese hydraulic engineers in building the cross-basin canal system in the dry zone two thousand years ago that has withstood the test of time. Thiru Arumugam's article on the UNESCO Heritage listings in Sri Lanka is an important record of what famous sites in Sri Lanka are World Heritage listed and which ones are earmarked for listing in the future. Somasiri Devendra and Ernest MacIntyre remembers the old days of Dramsoc and theatre in Sri Lanka in their respective essays *LILIOM A Farewell to Thurstan Road* and *Western Theatre and Drama in Peradeniya*. Hugh Karunanayake's piece on the 18th century Burgher artist Pieter Cornelius de Bevere has some beautiful drawings of Sri Lankan wildlife and Premila Thurairatnam reports on a talk given by Alan De Niese in Melbourne on his grandfather George De Niese, who was a painter and musician.

Our President Pauline Gunewardene is to be commended once again for organising the AGM & Social held on the 18th of November 2023. It was a successful evening where Past President Harry de Sayrah OAM and past Committee member Srikantha Nadarajah who passed away last year were remembered. The President's speech is reproduced in full and there some photographs taken by Mahal Selvadurai that captures the festive mood of the evening. Also reported are the tributes to our Melbourne Chapter Convenor Hemal Gurusinghe who resigned from the role after years of yeoman service. Hemal was presented with a plaque by Founder President Hugh Karunanayake in recognition of service organising CSA meetings for the Melbourne Chapter. Sumal and Naomi Karunanayake now are the co-convenors of the Melbourne Chapter, and we wish them well in their new roles.

Ceylon Society of Australia

The Ceylon Society of Australia (CSA) is a not-for-profit organisation, incorporated in Australia, with the objectives of studying, fostering and promoting interest in the historical and cultural heritage of Sri Lanka.

It is non-political and non-partisan, steering clear of controversial issues. It is a worldwide society of like-minded people, open to receiving and imparting new ideas. While Sydney is home to the parent body and Committee, looking after the overall affairs of the Society, the Melbourne Chapter looks after the meetings in Victoria, with the Colombo Chapter tending to the membership in Sri Lanka. Quarterly free meetings for Members are held in Sydney, Melbourne and Colombo, with guests welcome to attend. Meetings conclude with a Q&A session and a mini Social.

The annual calendar year subscription covers receipt of the Society's journal, "*The Ceylankan*", published quarterly and distributed to members worldwide. The articles published are authored by members. All opinions expressed are those of the individual writers and do not reflect those of the Editor or the CSA. Articles may be reproduced in other publications, but must be credited to this journal and carry suitable acknowledgment thereof.

The CSA, when meeting in Australia, acknowledges the Traditional Owners of the land in which meetings are held and pays respects to First Nations Elders, past and present, as custodians of a rich cultural heritage.

There are appreciations of Prof Raja Bandaranayake (who spoke at the May 2023 Sydney meeting on Dickens and Ceylon), Jehan Raheem and Namal Wickramanayake KC - CSA members who all passed away in 2023. May they Rest in Peace and the CSA offers our sincere condolences to their families and loved ones. The Editor encourages readers to contribute new articles, memories, family stories, anecdotes and recipes for publication in future issues of the journal.

Happy reading!

ADAM RAFFEL

Our Readers write

Elitism and the *Language Act 1956*

A grateful thanks is more than overdue for the splendid content of the November edition I just received (J 104 Vol 26 No 4, Nov 2023).

What a wonderful surprise to see my young Josephian friend, Avishka Senewiratne bursting out with his 2 well written articles. Going on from the tremendous success of his first book on the history of St Joseph's Colombo, he has really burgeoned in his literary journey.

What was even more interesting to see was the sudden emergence of another young Sri Lankan writer, Kathryn Pereira. Maybe it was her presentation adorned with pictures by our clever editor (– take a bow Adam Raffel!) but this article really hit me on my first perusal of *The Ceylankan*.

Reading this well researched and easily flowing script is very educative to anyone with an interest in Sri Lankan affairs. I was immediately corrected on my own misapprehension (and those of my ilk) that the *Language Act* only was a political ploy of SWRD Bandaranayake in 1956 but instead was started as early as 1944 by an adroit statesman and later the first President J R Jayawardene. Pereira's emphasis on the trend of "Elitism" was a direction I had never thought about earlier, but certainly very appropriate.

Needless to say, we already have a surfeit of great writers, like Hugh Karunanayake, so well described by Michael Roberts at the start of this copy of the journal. However, we certainly need young blood like Avishka and Kathryn, and I congratulate them both on their achievements to date.

I wish them well for their future and encourage all budding young authors to pursue their dreams.

Jeremy De Lima

Summa Navaratnam

In *The Ceylankan* of February 2021 (J 93 Vol 24 No 1), my article *Summa Navaratnam – A living legend* was published. He was a super sportsman dubbed "the fastest human in Asia" in January 1953 after winning the Asian 100 Metres Sprint in India, with an incredible record timing of 10.04 Seconds and concurrently became an outstanding rugby star of CR & FC and Ceylon, later captaining the Ceylon Rugby Team, making Summa a double international. A consummate sportsman, whose record is unlikely to be surpassed or even equalled.

Summa passed away on 19th October 2023 at the age of 98 in Colombo. From the time he stopped competing in Athletics and Rugby, he coached the Rugby teams of Royal College, Colombo (his old Alma Mater) as well as CR& FC and the Ceylon National team.. After reaching the age of 70, he continued coaching the young rugby children by setting up "the Summa Navaratnam Royal Junior Academy". Summa's achievements were not limited to Sports. He had a remarkable career in the commercial field, commencing as a junior executive in Dodwell & Co. in 1948 to becoming the General Manager of Consol-Expo and the General Manager of another well-known Trading Organisation.

In recognition of Summa's achievements and contribution to the development of Sports in Sri Lanka, a special Stand has been erected in his name in one of the better-known sports stadium. This special stand reads-

"Summa Navaratnam Stand
Inspiration Unleashed".

Warm regards

Rex Olegasegarem

“LILIOM”: and a Farewell to Thurstan Road A worm’s eye view of a Charmed Circle

by Somasiri Devendra

In 1952, seventy one years ago, I stepped onto/into to the University of Ceylon at Thurstan Road, Colombo. There I was, one of an amorphous group of “bloody freshers” nervously herded together, looking exactly what we were – fit for nothing but ragging. Puffed up, as we were, by our new identity of “undergrads”, we knew that Thurstan Road was not to be our “home”. It was a mere way station on ‘The Road to Peradeniya’. There we would set the hills alight with academic fire. We enjoyed the pit-stop in Colombo, but put down no roots.

And Thurstan Road paid little heed to these birds of passage, (aka “Us”).

*

But something did happen, that term in Colombo, which made it memorable. The Ceylon University Dramatic Society (“DramSoc”), Lyn Ludowyk (“Ludo”) its eminence grise, internationally acclaimed producer Neumann Jubal, and the venerable “King George Hall” (KG Hall) itself gave me –and a few other freshers – a brief, never-to-be-forgotten episode in our lives. And what happened was “LILIOM”, the play which was to be the DramSoc’s farewell to Colombo and KG Hall.

Let me quote from the programme note to the play (1952):

“‘LILIOM’ is the last of a series of plays presented by the University Dramatic Society, a series which began nearly twenty years ago. Whether we shall return to Colombo with a play or not, we would like to record our satisfaction that this play (as practically all others were) with all the difficulties attendant upon what has been miscalled the “stage” of King George Hall, should have had the distinction of being produced by Jubal”

(- a mite unkindly by the venerable hall that had been the DramSoc’s cradle?)

*

LILIOM was an experience for me, the “worm” in this narrative, so very wet behind my ears, that nobody paid any heed to me at Thurstan Road. But here, within this charmed circle, I was rubbing shoulders with my reverend seniors and well-known actors and personalities from different layers of Colombo society. There were mercantile executives, doctors, lawyers, socialites, professors, headmasters, painters, civil servants, Sinhalese, Tamil, Burgher (all sorts), Eurasian, Chetty, Muslim, Parsi.....the list is endless. A slice of cosmopolitan Colombo.

The cast (in order of appearance) read as follows:

Jeanne Pinto, Sita Jayawardene, Ranjani Ellepola, Sheila van Langenberg, Winston Serasinghe, Ranjani Jayasuriya, Gnani Pelpola, Kamala Tisseverasinghe, Sali Parakrama, Michael Abeyratne, Rowan de Costa, Johan Leembruggen, Neville

Kanakakaratne, Ratnam Swami, Percy Colin Thome, Lyn Ludowyk (himself!), Michael Mack, Bonnie Wijesuriya, Melville Fernando, Gehan Wijewardene, David Paynter, Arthur Sugathapala, Arthur van Langenberg, Bert van Langenberg, Douglas Walatara, Manel Nanayakkara,

And, far down the list, a group of “Others” (no first names, only initials!):

A.Salgado, C.Mahendran, S.Devendra, W.J.D.Ellepola, H.E.P.Abeysinghe, A.Halpe, C.Pietersz, Misses R.Pestonjee, B.Mendis.

To the “worm” of this narrative it meant that he could escape his nonentity in ‘Varsity life for some hours each day within this charmed circle where he was regarded as “one of them”. His/my role was a mere dressed up puppet on stage: no words, no action. So all that remains in memory are a series of unconnected snap shots:

Jubal’s booming “What is?...What is?”.....Sali Parakrama whiling away off-stage time playing “Auto Bridge”.....Jeanne Pinto warbling on the apron stage and us all joining in the chorus.... David Paynter and Arthur Sugathapala (‘Heavenly Policemen’) gravely greeting each other, doffing their boaters.....Being made up by David Paynter and/or Michael Mack (“Old soldier or gay dog, David?” “Gay dog, gay dog”).....Being smothered under grease paint, crepe hair and spirit gum and luxuriously removing all of them with copious daubs of cold crème.... ‘Ludo’ bouncing on stage brandishing a pistol.... Winston Sera’s overwhelming stage presence (“I’ve been forced to make Liliom out of a bear into” said Jubal).....Being first on the stage on opening night, being frozen with stage-fright.....Living it up, after the last curtain call, as Ludo’s guests at the 80 Club (where I had my first Gin-and-lime)....Awaiting the Reviews in the morrow’s ‘Daily News’.

The reviews came, some critical. “R.S” (Reggie Siriwardena?) in the *Ceylon Daily News* of 5th September hailing it as “A Fitting Farewell” but adding “..I could not help wishing (however ungrateful as this may seem) that all this talent had been expended on a more rewarding play.” He continued: “...– let me hasten to add, lest I be suspected of highbrow superciliousness – do I object to the naïve and simple sentiment of the play, except when it degenerates (as it does sometimes) to mawkishness...” and goes on to a more detailed analysis. (Can one expect reviewers like this in Colombo today?)

Perhaps, though, the highlight of my own memories is that of Jeanne Pinto, dressed as a Gypsy singer, serenading the audience between Acts from the apron stage, (followed by a blushing ‘Cop’ Swami), singing the verses that were soon on everybody’s lips.

"Listen all you who hear this song –
Listen all you who.....
Chorus: Labi labi lab-da, Labi dom
....hear this song
I shall not keep you over long –
I shall not keep you.....
Chorus:O-ver-long
In Budapest lived Liliom (Chorus)
You'll see him in his Carousel (Chorus)
He was the guy for whom girls fell (Chorus)

Love is the queerest thing one knows (Chorus)
It makes some men give women blows (Chorus)
Love is a gamble for high stakes (Chorus)
She wins the fortune your heart craves (Chorus)
Yet it will always find a way (Chorus)
So – up with the curtain, on with the play (Chorus)

Farewell, my friends, I end my song (Chorus)
Life is so short and that is so long (Chorus)
And this is the moral of my strain (Chorus)
All things may pass, but Love remains (Chorus)"

The song was not in the script. It was a DramSoc add-on, inspired and written by Edith Ludowyk. *LILIOM* was later taken over by Hollywood and made into a Rodgers & Hammerstein musical (their second), "*CAROUSEL*", which had such hits as "If I loved you", "June is bustin' out all over" and "When the children are asleep we'll sit and dream"

After *LILIOM* it was our turn to go to Peradeniya. There, for reasons I do not yet understand, I kept away from DramSoc – though Jubal didn't, and he made his return to KG Hall with "*The Insect Play*". It was years later, post-Peradeniya, that a group of us produced our own plays, calling ourselves as "*The Argonauts*". But I was always behind the scenes, and never tread the footlights again.

Some ghosts are never laid!

~~~~~



## COVER STORY: Gold Coins (KAHAVANU) of Sri Lanka

by Dr Srilal Fernando



Gold coins evoke the memory of the British “Sovereign” in the mind of many a reader. This British traditional coin goes back to 1817. However, the Sri Lankan gold coins go back to antiquity and date around the 9th century during the late Anuradhapura period.

Commonly known as the Kahavanu or Ran Kahavanu, along with its fractional divisions, they were produced at a time of increased international trade in the eastern Indian Ocean in addition to traditional western Indian Ocean trade. The Lambakanna Dynasty ruled from 684 AD to 1017 and was a period of relative stability with kings commanding respect and encouraging international trade. However, their decline heralded the Chola invasion in 1007 AD by Raja Raja Chola. Chola continued to issue a similar coin featuring the name of the reigning king. During the Chola rule the design of the coin remained, but the name of the reigning king was featured in the coin. This tradition was subsequently adopted by the Sinhala kings that followed.

Ancient chronicles, inscriptions, and coin discoveries indicate the use of uncoined gold, and other gold coins just before the introduction of the Kahavanu. The Roman coin the Solidus was prevalent at that time with the weight at 4.5 grams. The Kahavanu was probably modeled on this weight with an average weight of 4.34 grams.

Numerous mentions in the *Mahavamsa*, such as those regarding the King Aggabodhi V (726 to 732 AD), documents his offering of 26,000 Suvarna, which might be a form of uncoined gold.

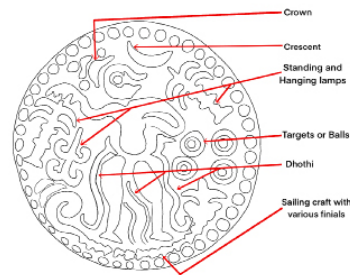
The earliest mention of gold coins by name was in an inscription in Tamil in Anuradhapura dating back to the fifth year of King Siri Sanghabodhi, (866-901 AD) The inscription records the gift of 30 *Iluk Kasi* also known as Kahavanu.

### The design of the coin.

The Kahavanu coins feature distinct patterns in the obverse and reverse.



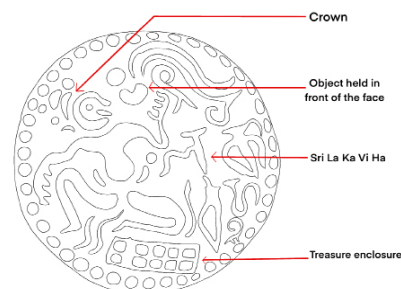
On the obverse is a standing figure with a crowned head facing right. The figure is wearing a *dhoti* (garment), indicated by curved lines on sides and sometimes between the legs. The figure is standing on a sailing craft symbolized by a lotus plant stalk with various



finials. The left arm is resting on the waist or holding an object in front of the face depending on the variety. In a rare variation the left arm rests on the waist. The right arm is extended with the hand placed over a symbol (lamp) consisting of a straight shaft with short cross pieces, each piece ending in four prongs. Below the right elbow is another similar symbol, but upside down with a plain shank. To the right of the figure there are three to four annulets or balls. All this is encircled by a beaded circle.

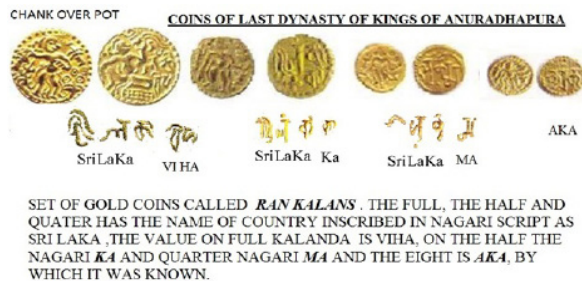


On the reverse side is a seated figure with a crowned head facing right. The figure is depicted in a squatting position upon an *Asna* or treasure enclosure, which is represented by an oblong frame divided lengthwise by a line and crosswise by several lines. The *dhoti* is





represented by one or more lines positioned between the legs, and the ends of the *dhoti* at the waist are shown on either side of the body. The right arm of the seated figure hangs over the right knee, while the left arm is bent and holds an object similar to the one in the obverse. To the right of the figure is a Devanagari legend written in three lines, *Sri Laka Viha*. All this is encircled in a beaded circle.



The identity of the human figure is a subject of controversy. Some believe that the figure is that of Kuvera, or Vaisravana, the king of demons and the god of wealth. Others suggest it is that of Bahirava, who is considered the defender of temples and treasure. Baharava is an associate of Kuvera. Sculptures of this Bahirava figure dating back to the 8th to 10th centuries can be found on either side of the southern gateway of the Abhayagiri Dagoba. The sculptures figure Baharava holding a string of coins in his right hand. The pose of the figure on either side of the coin share elements with the Indian Artistic tradition. Others suggest that the Ceylon Type was influenced by Gupta coinage of the 3rd to 6th century. Kushan coins of the 1st to 4th centuries also feature a standing figure on one side and a seated figure on the other.

The name of the country *Sri La Ka* on the Kahavanu coins is a significant milestone in numismatic history of the country. Having the country name inscribed suggests that they were produced for international trade.

The script used in the Kahavanu coin is Nagari. This script evolved from Brahmi script of ancient India, during the 3rd and 4th century and was in regular use by the 7th century. It was originally used to write in over 120 languages. The use of this script in Sri Lanka is limited to coins, a few inscriptions, and a few clay tablets. Nagari script was used though it was not the principal script in Sri Lanka as it was more suited for international trade in the Indian Ocean. Both the *Mahavamsa* and the *Dipawamsa* repeatedly refer to the country as *Sri La Ka*.

The final two characters on the Kahavanu appear to convey value. For example, the *Viha* signifies 20 (equivalent to twenty *Masaka* or *Mandaji* weight). *Ka* denotes half coin and *Ma* denotes quarter coin. *Aka* or the smallest of Kahavanu indicates one eighth of a Kahavanu. The number of divisions within the *Asna* or treasure enclosure on the coin exhibits several subdivisions and might indicate the gold content.

### Other symbols

Standing and hanging lamps represent enlightenment, prosperity, knowledge and wisdom in ancient Indian

and Sri Lankan culture. The lotus flower, one of the objects held in the left hand of the human figure or on one of the finials of the sailing craft, symbolizes the concept of reincarnation, embodying a new beginning akin to a sunrise, and are synonymous with purity, and optimism.

The Srivasta symbol is an auspicious symbol in Hinduism, Buddhism and Jainism. The trident with the three blades embodies the sacred Hindu Trinity of Brahma, the creator, Vishnu the preserver, and Siva the destroyer. In Buddhism it represents the triple gem the Buddha, Dhamma, and the Sangha. Annulets are circular ornaments on the right of the figure on the obverse. They vary in number between three and four and may be ornamental.

The weight standard of the Pallava dynasty in South India mirrored that of Ceylon. The gold Kahavanu coins weigh 4.3 grams each and close to the weight of the Roman Solidus.

### Chola coins.



Gold coins of this period feature the same design but incorporate the name of the issuer, *RAJA RAJA*. They were minted between 1017 and 1060 CE during the time the Cholas maintained control. However even after the establishment of Sinhala independence in 1070 under Vijayabahu the First, similar coins remained in use. These coins served as the prototype for coins in the years that followed under many different rulers. Codrington classifies the coins into three main types depending on a number of characteristics. A number of subcategories with such symbols as the Sun and Moon, Srivasta, Bo Sapling, Chank, Lotus bud, double lotus, Jasmine and lotus, Ball and annulet keep the enthusiast busy looking for varieties.

The gold coins of Sri Lanka have become a focus of study and interest and are highly sought after in Sri Lanka and overseas.

**This article is an abstract from a forthcoming book by Dr Eranda Adikaram. It was modified to suit the average reader by Dr Srilal Fernando**

SOURCE for Images of Coins: Ancient Sri Lankan Coins (<https://sirimunasiha.wordpress.com/about/this-island-of-ours/>)



# Development of Cross-Basin Canal System was a Unique Innovation in the Hydraulic Civilization

by M. Asoka T. De Silva

Historically the first record of any type of irrigation work is attributed to the construction of several canals, by King Eannadu in Southern Babylonia in 4000 BC. Nevertheless, there is no record of the construction of cross-basin canals during any time in global history. Hence the development of cross basin canals was a unique innovation in ancient Sri Lanka.

Traditions in the development of canals during the Hydraulic Civilization were traced by Brohier (1941) to the period when reservoirs such as Minneriya, Kaudulla Weva, and Topawewa were constructed. These were to be served by their own catchments. Minneriya had a catchment of nearly 92 square miles, formed by filling the intervening gaps between the adjoining hills with massive bunds, of which the largest is said to be about 1/3 of a mile long. As long as fair weather prevailed, these tanks would have very well served the purpose envisioned by the ancient builders. However, it is conjectured that extremes of weather for which provision may not have been made in these early irrigation works, may have led to the idea of constructing flood escape mechanisms as well as cross basin canals, to serve as supplementary sources of water to other schemes.

One of the earliest such efforts of developing canals was reported to be the construction work on the Kalinga-ela Scheme, built by King Mahasen in 275 AD. (De Silva, 2011).

According to Brohier (1941), the advantage of a river-fed channel system was the possibility of ensuring the capture of rainwater of both monsoons. Another consideration was the utility value of a greater supply of nutrients carried down by flood waters, thereby increasing the fertility of the irrigated fields. These assets apparently outweighed the disadvantages resulting from the loss of water in transit, and the larger outlay of labour required for the construction and maintenance of these long and tortuous works. The system had apparently found favour “as the Science of Irrigation Engineering progressed” (Brohier, 1941).

As observed by Brohier (1941), Mahaweli-ganga at a specific point in Kalinga-ela, 4 miles North of Dastota, encounters a small island around which the waters of the Mahaweli swirl with extreme force. Making use of this rocky obstruction, the ancient engineer had built a dam across the river with massive, square-hewn blocks of stone. This dam had diverted the water of the Mahaweli-ganga into two channels, one of which was located on the right bank of the river, and the other on the left bank of the river,

According to village folklore the right bank channel had been 50 miles long, although subsequent field exploration and mapping had revealed only a distance of 21 miles. Nevertheless, the tortuous and

circuitous nature of this channel is evident from the fact that its 21st mile was only 11 miles from the dam site at Kalinga.

This very unusual device at Kalinga, commonly referred to as the Kalinga Ela scheme, where 2 channels take off on both sides of a river at the same spot, is the only one of its kind seen in the ancient irrigation tradition (Brohier, 1941).

In September 2009, while in the process of undertaking scientific investigations in respect of the culture and traditions of ancient Sri Lanka, the present author decided to make personal observations of some of these schemes described by Brohier (1941). However, the effort to visit the unique diversion of Kalinga-Ela, was foiled due to the rough nature of the surrounding terrain.

Yet another unique “feed channel” of similar magnitude and design was the Yoda-ela that took off from the reconstructed dam and anicut built across Amban-ganga at Elahera. It had been constructed at a later period and is speculated to have taken advantage of the experience gained from the Kalinga-Ela Scheme (Figure 3 is a photograph of the present author perched on the reconstructed dam at Elahera, while Figure 4 is a photograph of the new anicut (sluice gate) discharging water to the Yoda-Ela at the reconstructed dam at Elahera.). Though the primary objective of this channel seems to have been to ensure a steady supply of water to the Minneriya-wewa, it was not exclusive, as it served two other tanks, the Kaudulla and Kantale. After serving these 3 tanks, it has been noted that the spillover from the Kantale tank continued to be channeled further east wards irrigating fields at Tanbalagama near Trincomalee, 85 miles from its intake at Elahera.

According to local beliefs, this channel did not start at the Elahera anicut, but beyond it nearly 15 miles further south where a dam had been constructed across the head waters of the Kalu-ganga. This additional support channel referred to as *Yodiye-bendi-ela*, which tapped the Kalu-ganga was believed to have sent the water down a 30-35-mile-long tortuous pathway to Elahera. (De Silva, 2011).

According to Brohier (1941), the topographical survey around this location carried out in 1898, had revealed many remarkable technological features that demonstrate the indomitable perseverance and intellectual capabilities of the ancient engineers. The first section of the Yoda Ela from the Elahera anicut passed through a valley of luxuriant forest, which rested between the Konduruwewa and Sudukanda mountain ranges on the west and east respectively.

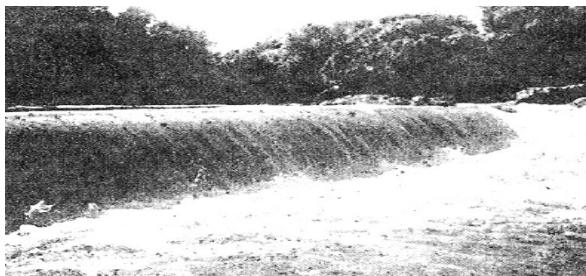
This channel encounters several cross-streams which flow down the slopes of the Konduruwewa range. Consequently, in anticipation of flash-

floods from these streams, the ancient builders had constructed stone foundations and stone pitchings at intervals along the channel embankment, which appear to have resisted the impacts effectively the gush of these hill streams, where they entered the canal.



**Figure 1 Anicut Across Amban-ganga at Elehara as seen in Dry Weather During the First Quarter of the 20th Century (From Brohier, 1941)**

Apart from these precautions, several rock-spills (*galwanas*) had been built into the canal bund at points where there was a possibility of water rising too high. Some of them 50 feet wide, provided with solid wing walls. These permitted the safe over-flow from the canal.



**Figure 2 Amban-ganga Anicut at Elehara as Seen in Wet Season During the First Quarter of the 20th Century (From Brohier, 1941).**

Twenty-five miles from the anicut at Amban Ganga, the waters which came down the Elehara canal passed into the Minneriya tank. The average height of the bund above the bed of the canal had been 15 feet, and near the 12th mile from the anicut it had been found to rise from 30-35 feet. The sluices of the Minneriya Wewa which control the flow of water into the fields below had invariably been square cut stones (Brohier 1934).

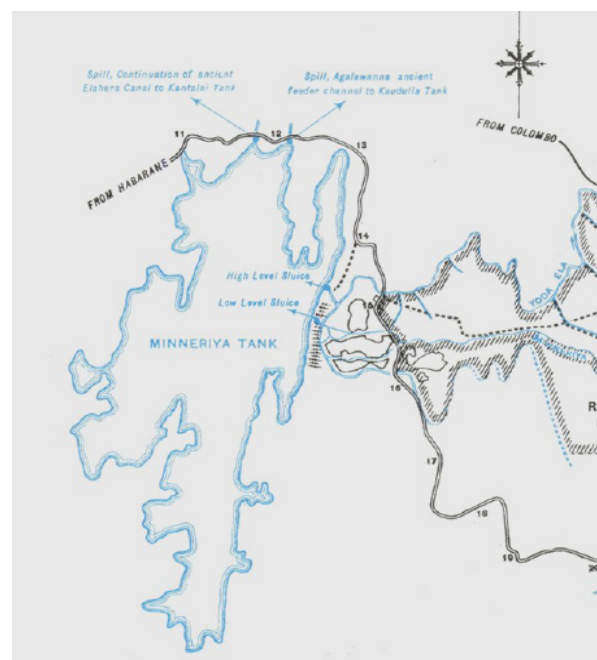


**Figure 3 Shows the author perched on the Restructured Elehara Anicut Across Amban-ganga. (Photo September 2009)**



**Figure 4 The New Sluice Gate at Elehara on the Amban-ganga (Photo September 2009)**

Minneriya, built by King Mahasena, as a rain-fed reservoir, is assumed to be the oldest work constructed and utilized for irrigation in the district (Figure 6). Although the bunds of Minneriya had stood the test of many centuries of abandonment, two of its three sluices lay blocked till the dawn of the 20th Century (Brohier, 1941).



**Figure 6 A map of the Minneriya Tank located on the Habarana - Polonnaruwa Road showing the position of the Sluices. (Reproduced from Brohier, 1941)**

In September 2009, After observing the massive, reconstructed dam at Elehara across the Amban Ganga, the present author decided to make personal observations, of the sluices of Minneriya, which had been constructed to control the flow of water to the fields below. Walking along the bund, one of the blocked sluice gates (also known as the *Bisokotuwa*) and referred to as *Miggolla* was discovered. At the time of the author's visit the water in the tank had receded making it possible to have a close look from the water's edge, the structural features of the stone walls of this sluice (see Figure 5). Moving further onwards, on the bund, the present status of a low-level sluice outlet, which had been renovated and made operational, was also observed. This photo (Figure 7) taken at dusk with a flashlight, shows well-dressed ornate embellishments on the outer wall of the embankment (See Figure 7).





**Figure 5 Present Remains of the High-Level Sluice Inlet (Bisokotuwa) of the Minneriya Tank, Locally Known as the Miggolla Sluice (Photo September 2009).**



**Figure 7 Shows the present status of the Low Level Sluice Outlet of the Minneriya Tank, Renovated and Made Operational (Photo taken late in the evening – September 2009).**

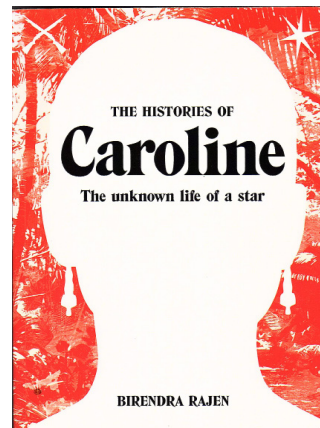
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# Book Review

## AN ODYSSEY THROUGH TIME: THROUGH CONTINENTS

***The Histories of Caroline: The unknown life of a star* by Birendra Rajen (Inspiring Publishers: Canberra, 2015) 408pp**



“If I often feel adrift in the twenty-first century it’s because I really almost think of her and myself as contemporaries, and she was born in 1889.”

The first half of this book tells a most intriguing story. It is the experiences of Caroline on a tropical island in the 1970s. Thinly disguised, the location is Sri Lanka. What gives

it context however is Caroline’s involvement in a youth uprising which disrupted the otherwise unremarkable history of what was then known as Ceylon.

The Sri Lanka segment is fascinating for the breadth and depth of the novel’s treatment of the Island’s geography, history, politics and social relations. Birendra Rajen is the pen name through which the novelist treats us to this tour de force. The Sydney-based Birendra’s encyclopaedic knowledge of the people, events and idiosyncrasies of over a century of Ceylonese life is brilliantly captured in the first two hundred pages.

In this part the lens of the meticulous social scientist almost eclipses that of the artist. But the novelist comes through — painting a plethora of characters with a Jane Austen attention to detail. The players are brought to life through meticulous pen sketches, and the drama is credibly presented and can be accepted as plausible events.

If the first half of the book is rich in the sociology of a distant island, the second half is rich in the culture of a distant era — pre-revolutionary Russia! Caroline’s grandmother Nina lived through a tumultuous age and catastrophic events. Born in 1889 in the dying years of Tsarist Russia, her early life was a nineteenth century saga in an emerging twentieth century world. She grew up in genteel poverty with an irrepressible determination to become a ballerina.

Once again Birendra expertly and beautifully captures Russian and European life in the days before the Great War. The glamorous clothes, the stately receptions and the haunting classical orchestras. The Galleries, the Theatres and the Salons that breathed beauty and grandeur. It betrays the nostalgia of a dilettante for a world that history has swallowed up.

***Reviewed by Jayantha Somasundaram***



# The Dutch Governor and the Burgher Artist

by Hugh Karunanayake

The following item appeared in a catalogue entitled *Bibliotheca Neerlandica Indica*, issued sometime in 1883 by Martinus Neyhoff a well-known bookseller at The Hague:

**Item: 2299-Fauna of the Indian Archipelago and of the island of Ceylon – a collection of drawings in colour representing birds, mammifers, insects etc of the Indian Archipelago and Ceylon. 144 folio sheets in two-part folios – f300**



*Water Colour by De Bevere from The Loten Collection at The Natural History Museum London*

The collection was bought at the auction by PJ van Houten, Chairman of the Council and Committee of the Colonial Museum at Haarlem. In 1905 Van Houten published a memoir on John Gideon Loten and his Ceylonese artist, Pieter Cornelius de Bevere. Van Houten having bought the De Bevere collection in 1883 described several water colours by the artist and also added biographical information on the artist based on written notes by Loten himself.



John Gideon Loten (pictured) was the 36th Dutch Governor of Ceylon, was. popularly referred to as the “Naturalist Governor of Ceylon”. Loten, a virtuoso in his own right, was fascinated by the diversity and natural beauty of Ceylon and he made it his duty to reveal his observations through the myriad contacts he had in the academic and artistic worlds of the eighteenth century. He held office as Governor of Ceylon for five years between 1752 and 1757. Although one may say that it took 36 successive Dutch administrations to discover the natural beauty of Ceylon, a country whose biodiversity, I may be bold to state, is unmatched by any other country in the world, we are duty bound to acknowledge the pioneering role of Governor Loten in bringing out to the world his fascinating discoveries in Ceylon.

Governor Loten was easily the most cerebral colonial Governor of Ceylon, and his intellectual pursuits during his governorship in Ceylon, and thereafter in England and elsewhere is the subject of many a published work, the latest of which is a 829 page tome entitled “*The Life of Governor Joan Gideon Loten (1710 \_ 1789)- a personal history of a Dutch virtuoso*” by Alexander JP Raaf, Hilversum, Verlorem, 2010. The front cover of the book features an illustration by artist Pieter Cornelius de Bevere from his work “*Collection of birds from Ceylon*” circa 1774. Much of the information presented here is from the book under reference.

The world is indebted to the artist De Bevere for so skilfully reproducing images of Ceylon including not only the diverse flora and fauna of the island, but also of the country’s scenery featuring 18th century buildings and constructions which featured in its landscape. The value of De Bevere’s work would be more appreciated when we realise that the art of photography was yet to be invented, and contemporary 18th century imagery would otherwise be totally unavailable to today’s aficionados of our heritage.

## Who was De Bevere then, and what was his connection with the Dutch virtuoso Governor Loten?

In a letter to Thomas Pennant author of the two volume “*A Vew of Hindoostan*” (1798), Loten described De Bevere thus:

“The young man who drew most part of the birds, plants, fishes and quadrupeds for me was a native of Colombo. His surname was De Bevere, his father was a bastard of Major de Bevere (a gentleman descended from a very honourable family) with an Indian woman, the young man was belonging to the Surveyor’s office at Colombo, and hath some notions of geometry and drawing, which I cultivated by giving him some good prints of landscapes and the prints of Mr Geo Edwards & Catesby &c to serve him for patterns of natural history. I guessed him in 1755 to have been 23 or 24 years of age”.

De Bevere’s sketchbook was bought in 1799 by JC Hollebeek a resident of Galle. Among the Loten papers in the Dutch National archives in Loten’s handwriting on a loose sheet was the following:

“The artist De Bevere has abandoned himself at last to a debauched life, and also died because of that, his mother who was married to one Gabriel Hefland Bookkeeper of the Stockhouse is now a widow for the second time and still lives sound and well.”

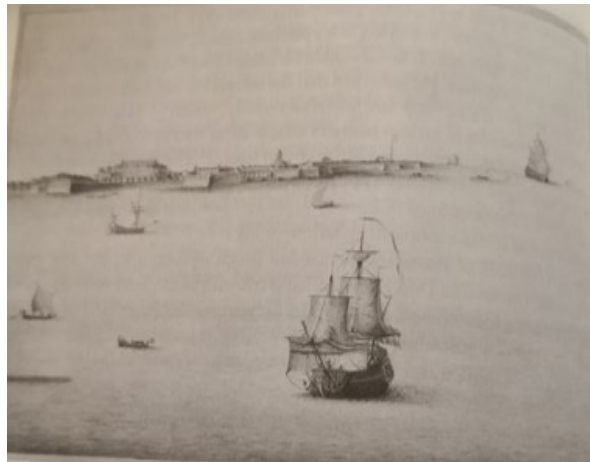
Another note in Loten’s handwriting stated:

“De Bevere, the untaught Christian Cingalese- his father whom I have known was a natural son of the Major De Bevere (of the most noble and ancient family of De Bevere) by a Cingalese or black Portuguese woman- the son was married at Colombo with a similar brownish woman of whom this artist was a son.”

The artist De Bevere has left Sri Lanka and the world a lasting legacy of rare imagery of the country as it existed in the eighteenth century. Photography and mass media was yet to envelope the world. De Bevere's work is therefore significantly of greater impact than the work of his patron the Governor.

The eighteenth century has been described variously as the "Age of Reason" or the "Age of Enlightenment". Those terms seem incongruous in a setting where a child who was the product of an illegal liaison is deemed to be the guilty party lacking in moral turpitude rather than the parents, as overtly suggested by Governor Loten. Time, and the evolution of more rational social and moral values seem to have done us better and we hope that contemporary society will not view the circumstances of the artist's entry into the world, with jaundiced eyes.

On another note, it must also be said that the late Mr Donald Ferguson, and the late Mr RG Anthonisz had made efforts through the Royal Asiatic Society (Ceylon Branch) to procure some of the invaluable work of De Bevere but had not met with success during British colonial days. The time may now be opportune for a Sri Lanka Government to pursue the re-acquisition of art and artifacts taken away from the country during the days of colonial rule and it is also time that the 'bastard' De Bevere returned to his true home!



*Colombo Harbour in 1768 by De Bevere*

Source for the prints above: Mary Evans Picture Library - Pieter Cornelius De Bevere Collection. (<https://www.prints-online.com/galleries/pieter-cornelius-de-bevere>)

# UNESCO World Heritage Sites in Sri Lanka: Present and Proposed

by Thiru Arumugam

A World Heritage Site is a Site with legal protection by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO). World Heritage Sites (WHS) are designated as such by UNESCO if they contain cultural and natural heritage and are considered to be of outstanding value to humanity. There are at present 1199 WHS in the world spread out over 168 countries. Typical Sites are Taj Mahal (India), Stonehenge (England), Pyramids (Egypt), the Colosseum (Rome) and the Great Wall of China.

The Convention guiding the work of the World Heritage Committee was developed by UNESCO and called the “*Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage*”. It was adopted by the General Conference of UNESCO in 1972 and came into force on 17 December 1975. It has since been ratified by 195 States. Sri Lanka ratified the Convention on 06 June 1980.

To be considered for inclusion as a World Heritage Site, a Site must be nominated by a UN Member country and be under some form of protection or conservation. Sites are selected by a Committee appointed by the UN General Assembly. Sites are designated as Protected Zones. Being listed as a site gives the site international recognition and legal protection and funds can be obtained from the World Heritage Fund to facilitate its conservation. Increased tourism to the site has also been noted when a site has been designated as a WHS.

Sites can be of cultural or natural interest and heritage. A Site has to meet at least one of the ten criteria laid down by UNESCO. Among the criteria to be met by a cultural site is that it is a masterpiece of human creative genius, or exhibit features of monumental art or bear testimony to a civilization which has since disappeared. Among the criteria to be met by a natural site are exceptional natural beauty or an example representing a major stage in the earth's history or contain significant natural habitats of biological diversity, particularly threatened species of universal value.

## World Heritage Sites in Australia

Australia has 20 listed World Heritage Sites. Of these, four are Cultural Sites, 12 are Natural Sites and the balance four are mixed Cultural and Natural Sites. Typical Australian Sites (with the year of selection in brackets after the site name) include Kakadu National Park (1981) where Aborigines have lived for over 50,000 years and left behind rock carvings, cave paintings and the Park contains a wide variety of ecosystems including woodlands, open forest, mangroves, mudflats and wetlands; Great Barrier Reef (1981) which extends over 2000 km and is the world's most extensive coral system with 400 types of coral; Greater Blue Mountains Area (2000) a sandstone plateau with eucalyptus forests and the home of the very

rare Wollemi Pine discovered in 1994 which is legally protected as a critically endangered species with only about 60 adult trees in the wild; and the Sydney Opera House (2007) designed by Jorn Utzon and completed in 1973, consisting of three groups of interlocking shell structures covering two performance halls.

## UNESCO World Heritage Sites in Sri Lanka

At present Sri Lanka has eight UNESCO World Heritage Sites at present. The names of the Sites (with the year of selection in brackets after the site name) are as follows:

### Sacred City of Anuradhapura (1982)

Anuradhapura was the capital of Sri Lanka from the 4th century BC to the end of the 10th century AD. Historic monuments that still exist there today include Abhayagiri Dagaba (Fig. 1) and Vihara founded by King Valagamba (89-77 BC). It was fully restored and renovated over 15 years as a UNESCO project and unveiled in 2015.



Figure 1

Another ancient monument in Anuradhapura is the Ruwanweli Maha Seya built by Dutugemunu about 140 BC. It is one of the world's tallest ancient monuments, rising to 103 m. It has been restored and renovated over the last century and the crowning of the stupa took place on 26 November 2019.

Anuradhapura is also the home of the Jaya Sri Maha Bodhi, a historical Bo tree believed to have been grown from a cutting of the Bo tree under which Buddha attained Enlightenment. It is more than 2300 years old and is the oldest living human planted tree in the world with a known planting date.

### Ancient City of Polonnaruwa (1982)

Polonnaruwa became the capital of Sri Lanka in the 11th century. It reached its zenith in the 12th century during the reign of Parakrama Bahu I. It had its terminal decline in the 13th century. The city has numerous ancient monuments and temples, a typical example of which is the Vatadage (Fig. 2). As the name implies, it is a circular structure, built of brick and stone for the protection of a small stupa. There is a belief that one time it held the Buddha's Tooth Relic.





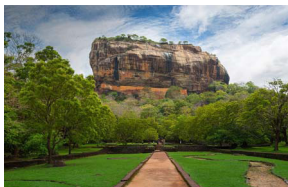
**Figure 2**

Gal Vihara in Polonnaruwa is a rock temple with four rock relief statues of Buddha carved into the face of a large rock. The images are of a large seated figure (4.6 m tall), a small seated figure, a standing figure (6.9 m tall), and a large reclining figure (14.1 m long) and the latter is one of the largest stone sculptures in South-East Asia.

There are also ruins of numerous Hindu temples in Polonnaruwa of which the 1000 year old Siva Devale No. 2 is in an almost perfect state of preservation and was used as a place of worship a few decades ago.

### **Ancient City of Sigiriya (1982)**

The ancient city of Sigiriya is built on and around Sigiriya Rock, a 180 m high granite rock with difficult access (Fig. 3). A series of galleries and staircases emerging from the mouth of a gigantic lion, constructed from bricks and plaster, provide access to the top of the rock.



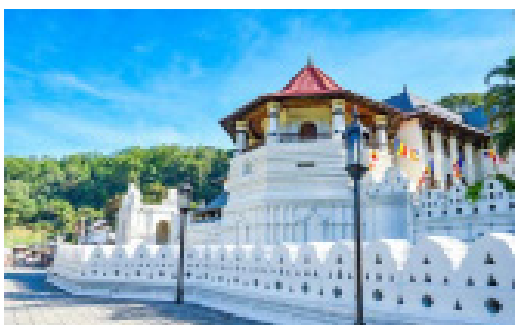
**Figure 3**

Kashyapa, in 477 AD killed his father and made Sigiriya the capital and ruled from there until 495 AD when he was killed and the site was returned

to Buddhist monks who had lived there previously. Only the foundations of many buildings and the elaborately laid out gardens remain today.

Along the way to the top there is a short staircase which leads to a sheltered alcove pocket in the rock, where about 20 beautiful 1500 year old frescoes can be seen. The frescoes are in rich colour and are of female damsels accompanied by their attendants and only the top parts of their bodies are shown. The frescoes have been compared in quality with the Ajantha frescoes in India.

### **Sacred city of Kandy (1988)**



**Figure 4**

Kandy was founded in the 14th century and was the capital of the Kandyan Kingdom from 1592 to 1815 when the British took over. Following the tradition of storing the relic of the tooth of the Buddha in the capital, the relic was stored here in the Temple of the Tooth Relic (Fig. 4). Kandy is a World Heritage Site mainly due to the Temple of the Tooth and the Tooth Relic. The current structure of this Temple dates from the mid-18th century.

Other ancient monuments in Kandy include the Royal Palace and several temples. The original Royal Palace at this site was first built by Vikramabahu III of Gampola, who reigned from 1356 to 1374.

### **Sinharaja Forest Reserve (1988)**

The Sinharaja Forest Reserve is located in south-west Ceylon and is the country's last viable area of relatively undisturbed tropical rainforest. It consists of 6092 ha of Forest Reserve and 2772 ha of Proposed Forest Reserve. The area is home to numerous endemic species of birds, mammals, butterflies and amphibians. The flora is a relic of the ancient Gondwanaland supercontinent and is important for the study of biological evolution and continental drift. More than 60 % of the trees are endemic and many are rare. A number of threatened, endangered and rare species occur within the reserve.

In 2013 the Government started to construct a road through the Reserve to the village of Lankagama. Environmentalists complained to UNESCO about this destruction of a World Heritage Site and work was stopped. In 2020 work was re-started on the construction of the road. Protests were made to UNESCO by environmentalists who feared deforestation, soil erosion and loss of biodiversity. UNESCO issued an open letter to the Government asking them whether Environmental Impact Assessments had been made and reminding them of their obligations as signatories to the Convention on World Heritage Sites. The UNESCO letter concludes as follows:

“In view of the significant potential threats caused by road developments, the World Heritage Centre is confident that the Sri Lankan authorities remain fully committed to the implementation of the World Heritage Convention and will ensure that the protection of the Sinharaja Forest Reserve's Outstanding Universal Value remains at the core of decision-making processes for the inscribed area. In accordance with our mandate to protect and safeguard the rich common heritage of humanity, UNESCO is ready and determined to take all necessary measures in this regard.”

### **Old Town of Galle and its Fortifications (1988)**



**Figure 5**

The Old Town of Galle and its Fortifications were first built by the Portuguese at the end of the 16th century. A unique system installed in the 17th century was a flush toilet arrangement which used seawater pumped up from the sea by a windmill pump. The Dutch took over in 1640 and constructed a bastioned stone wall which forms the basis of the present layout (Fig. 5). Galle reached the height of its development in the 18th century when it housed 500 families. The British took over in 1796. It is considered to be the best example of a fortified city built by Europeans in South and South-East Asia, showing the interaction between European architectural style and South Asian traditions between the 16th and 19th centuries.

Adjacent to the Galle Fort is the colourful Galle Cricket ground. During the 2004 tsunami, the buildings on the grounds were damaged. During the post-tsunami reconstruction, it was found that one of the new buildings blocked the view of the adjacent Fort and that may result in UNESCO withdrawing heritage status for the Fort. Fortunately, the issue was satisfactorily resolved.

### Rangiri Dambulla Cave Temple (1991)



The Rangiri Dambulla Cave Temple (Fig. 6) is the largest and best preserved cave temple complex in the country and consists

of a cave monastery with five sanctuaries. It has been inhabited by monks since the 3rd century BC. The Buddhist mural paintings cover an area of 2100 square metres and there are also a total of 157 statues. Its present form dates from the 18th century. The complex includes polychrome statuary either moulded with stucco or clay or carved out of the living rock within the cave shrines, mural paintings and interior layout. The physical fabric is in good condition and is well preserved.

### Central Highlands of Sri Lanka (2010)



The Central Highlands of Sri Lanka World Heritage Site (Fig. 7) consists of three parts: Peak Wilderness

Protected Area (including Adams Peak); Horton Plains National Park; and Knuckles Conservation Forest. These forests provide a habitat for an exceptional number of endemic species of fauna and flora.

More than half of Ceylon's endemic vertebrates, half of the endemic flowering plants and a third of the endemic trees, shrubs and herbs are restricted to these forests. All three forests provide a habitat to the Sri Lankan leopard (*Panthera pardus kotiya*), native to Sri Lanka. The purple faced langur of Sri Lanka (*Semnopithecus vetulus*) is a resident of these forests. The three forests feature an exceptionally high number of threatened species.

The nature and magnitude of threats to the three forests vary. In the case of the Peak Wilderness Protected Area, the major human use is the two million pilgrims who annually climb Adams Peak, contributing to forest and environmental degradation along pilgrim trails. Other threats to these forests are from illicit gem mining, forest die-back, fires and the pressure for cultivation of cardamom.

### Proposed World Heritage Sites in Sri Lanka

#### Nomination Process

When a country is planning to apply to the UNESCO for the inclusion of a site in the World Heritage List, it has to submit a Tentative List of such sites which are considered to be of cultural or natural heritage. States are encouraged to re-examine and re-submit their Tentative List at least once in every ten years. After the site has been in the Tentative List for at least one year a formal nomination application can be made to include it as a World Heritage Site. The information required in the nomination is quite exhaustive and UNESCO offers assistance in the preparation of applications.

Once the nomination file is received by UNESCO, it is independently evaluated by two Advisory Bodies, the International Council on Monuments and Sites and the International Union for Conservation of Nature. Once the evaluations are complete it is passed on to the World Heritage Committee for a final decision on the inscription of the site.

Nominations of sites must be received by UNESCO by 01 February to be considered for inscription in the following year, as the World Heritage Committee meets only once a year. To be included in the World Heritage List a site must be of outstanding universal value and meet at least one of ten selection criteria mentioned earlier in this article. The World Heritage Committee can accept the nomination, reject the nomination, or defer its decision and request further information about the proposed site. Usually about 30 new Sites are accepted by UNESCO every year for World Heritage Status.

At present Ceylon has three World Heritage Site applications in the Tentative List and they are as follows with the year of application in brackets. Since all three have been on the Tentative List for more than a year, they can be nominated as World Heritage Sites at any time.



### **Seruwila Mangala Raja Maha Vihara (2006)**

This is the site of an ancient temple which is among the 16 holiest Buddhist shrines in the country. It is near Allai in the Eastern Province. It had its origin in the 2nd century BC during the reign of Kavantissa. The list of monuments and ruins here include a Stupa which was restored in the 1920s, entrances, Bo tree shrine, image house and remains of monasteries. It is believed that the sacred forehead bone of Buddha is enshrined here.

### **Seruwila to Sri Pada – Ancient Pilgrim Route (2010)**

This is the ancient pilgrim route from Seruwila (near Trincomalee) along the banks of the Mahaweli Ganga all the way to the top of Adams Peak. The route follows the banks of the Mahaweli Ganga and passes sites with important Buddhist and Hindu shrines including Somawathie, Polonnaruwa, Mahiyangana, Kandy, Gampola and ending at Adams Peak. It is believed that the latter site is the only one in the world sacred to four religions: Buddhists, Hindus, Christians and Muslims. The existence of the route led to the erection of shrines and ambalamas along the route. It is believed that about 200 such structures existed.

### **Ancient Ariyakara Viharaya (2020)**

Ancient Ariyakara Viharaya is a Forest Monastery on Rajagala mountain in the Rajagala Archaeological Reserve in the Ampara District. It is believed monks have resided here from 116 BC. About 593 monastic remains have been identified here and up to about 500 monks could have resided here at any one time.

The archaeological remains found here include stairways, walkways, stupas, a tank, ponds, buildings, residential caves and meditation cells. About 70 stone inscriptions have been found in the area. The most important of these states that the relics of Arahath Mahinda are enshrined in a stupa in the premises.

This Viharaya can be considered as the only monastery in the world that has been established with the mixture of Pabbatha Vihara Type and Vanavasa Type Multiple Residential Unit Monasteries converting the natural landscape into a Meditation Monastery, and is therefore unique. It was abandoned in about the 11th century.

### **Other Proposed World Heritage Sites in Sri Lanka**

There are two media reports which list the Sites that the Government proposes to nominate for World Heritage Status. Although both reports quote the same source of information i.e. the Director General of the Central Cultural Fund, the lists of proposed sites are different. Neither of them specifically mentions the three Sites which are already in UNESCO's Tentative List. The first report is in the "*Daily News*" newspaper of 8 August 2023 which mentions that work has already started on preparing applications for the following four Sites for World Heritage Status:

1. Nine Arch Bridge (A Railway Bridge near Ella).
2. Ritigala (A Forest Rock Monastery, 43 km from Anuradhapura, dating from the 1st century BC).

3. Arankele (A Forest Hermitage Monastery near Kurunegala, dating from the 6th century AD).
4. Manalkanda.

The second report is in the "*Sunday Island*" newspaper of 29 October 2023 which states that the Government has decided to apply for World Heritage Status for the following ten Sri Lankan sites:

1. Buddhist Meditation Monasteries of ancient Sri Lanka.
2. Mihintale.
3. Ancient Irrigation Systems.
4. Ancient Maritime Centres.
5. The Tea Landscape.
6. The Architecture of Tropical Modernism.
7. Oratorian Churches.
8. Mahayanist influenced Monastic Complexes.
9. Prehistoric Cave Habitation Sites.
10. Buddhist Mural Sites of the late 19th century.

We have to wait and see what Sites are submitted to UNESCO for inclusion in the Tentative List of World Heritage Sites.

(Picture credits: Figs. 1,3,4,5,and 6 – Ministry of Bud-dhasasana, Religious and Cultural Affairs; Fig. 2 – Wikime-dia; Fig. 7 – UNESCO)



**Seruwila Mangala Raja Maha Viharaya (Source: Wikipedia)**



**Ariyakara Viharaya. Source: Copyright © 2000-2024 Dreamstime.**





## CSA 26th Annual General Meeting and Social Saturday 18th November 2023 at the Pennant Hills Community Centre Ramsay Road, Pennant Hills NSW

### ADDRESS BY PRESIDENT PAULINE GUNewardENE



Well, here we are again, with another year having disappeared into the past at lightning speed!

A very good evening to you guests and members of the Ceylon Society of Australia. It gives me great pleasure to welcome you to the Annual General Meeting and Social in the 27th year of our existence!

Before I go on with this Report to the membership, it is my sad duty to remember the passing away on the 11th of September of our former President Harry de Sayrah, as well as a former Committee member of long standing, Srikantha Nadarajah on the 19th of August. The current November journal carries Appreciations for them both by good friends Doug Jones and Rex Olegasegarem respectively, so I will not go into details here. Harry was President from 2011 to 2013 and on the Committee as Public Relations Officer from 2005 to 2010 and again from 2014 until he passed away. Nada, as he was known to all, was Treasurer from 2005 to 2009 and a Committee Member from 2011 to 2019. Their service to CSA has been invaluable with their totally committed dedication to our Society. So we need to honour their long contribution to where the CSA is at today, and I would ask you please to stand while we observe a minute's silence in their memory.

#### *SILENCE OF ONE MINUTE*

To recap the activities of the Sydney parent body over the past year, we held the scheduled three General Meetings in Sydney in February, May and August.

#### **February 2023**

The first talk for the year was by Adjunct Professor Maithri Panagoda, lawyer, poet and humanist, in the 'Stories of Success' series which I am hoping to do. Maithri is an outstanding lawyer and has risen to the heights in his profession, achieving high recognition in this his adopted country not only for his legal work, but also for his ground breaking work for the First People of Australia. It was an illuminating talk on what exactly "success" means in all its varied aspects.

#### **May 2023**

Dr. Raja Bandaranayake was the speaker on the most interesting topic of "Charles Dickens on Ceylon" – did he or did he not visit the country and have personal

knowledge to do his writing? The answer from his research would seem that Dickens did not visit after all! It was a 'detective in action' by Dr Bandaranayake and the Q&A session was lively.

### August 2023

This was the highlight of the year with the speaker being the new High Commissioner for Sri Lanka to Australia, Her Excellency Chitrangenee Wagiswara, a career diplomat, speaking on "Sri Lanka: Road to Recovery – Challenges and Opportunities". We were very privileged to be able to get the HC making a special visit to Sydney to present for us on this topic of keen interest to all Sri Lankans after the economic crisis of 2022. We had a record attendance of over 100 and the feedback was that her presentation was interesting and thought provoking, with a grounded attitude focusing on facts and the realities. The talk was followed by a High Tea where attendees had the opportunity to interact with the High Commissioner.

I am very glad to report that the Melbourne and Colombo Chapters have been very active. Both Chapters have been holding regular meetings, increasing the profile and awareness of the CSA. The Colombo Chapter has been particularly revitalised with the appointment of their new young Secretary, Avishka Senewiratne, who has been organising meetings and recruiting many new members to almost double their membership base – congratulations to Avishka!

Here in Sydney, our parent body General Meetings take place on the last Sunday evenings of February, May and August, with the AGM and Social on the one before last Saturday in November. It is just three meetings for the year, and I urge members to make every effort to attend. Your ongoing interest and enthusiasm is what gives us Committee Members the stimulus and encouragement to give of our services to keep running the Society.

### Membership

Our overall membership now stands at 315, including 16 Complimentaries sent to institutions. We have 251 in Australia – up from 248 – and Sri Lanka has done really well to go up to 40 from 28, with 24 in other overseas countries. The 16 Complimentaries of our highly regarded journal are being sent out for the libraries of various prestigious institutions such as the Royal Asiatic Society UK, Royal Asiatic Society Ceylon, the National Library of Australia, the State Libraries of NSW, Victoria and Queensland, to name but a few. You will agree, I am sure, that we are certainly punching above our weight!

Which takes me to my usual plug for CSA to increase membership, particularly with the recruitment of younger age group members if we are to keep the continuity going of this valuable association. Realistically and hopefully, this would be members from the 60s age group at least, and it would be great if you could all invite a friend as a guest to one of our meetings to incentivise joining. Sri Lanka has a 2,500 year

old history and culture that evokes much interest in the world and we could play our part in our stated mission of "studying, fostering and promoting interest" with our membership drive.

### Accounts

The Accounts for the year ended 30 June 2023 have been audited by Rienzie Fonseka. Our thanks to Rienzie for helping us with this over the last eight years.

Copies of the audited Accounts have been emailed by the Secretary to Members for information, and a few explanations would be appropriate, while noting that we use the Australian taxation year of 1 July-30 June although subscriptions are based on a calendar year.

1. The receipts show a balance of \$1,000 approx over 2022 partly due to this Social providing the much needed boost to our finances as always, and also due to the sale to members this year of the books from the CSA Library, which the Committee decided we should give up since it was not being made use of by the membership. The books not sold were donated to Victor Melder in Melbourne for his community library.
2. We had a small profit of \$400 from the August Meeting featuring the High Commissioner.
3. The cost of postage for Australia and Overseas has gone up and keeps rising. Printpost being used for Australian journals has gone up by approx 10% from \$800 to \$900, and International postage has also gone up by approx 10% from \$220 to \$240.
4. Printing costs have been reduced by moving the printing to KwikKopy Five Dock at a very competitive quote of approx \$900 per run, saving us \$200. The Colombo Chapter journals are being printed by MD Gunasena over the past year at a very competitive cost of around Rs.10,000 per run at half the cost of other printers there. I am glad to have been able to negotiate these prices as we do need to keep our outgoings down.

In the current climate of escalating costs, maintaining subscriptions at the level we are doing now is a very difficult balancing act, although we are striving to do so by identifying savings wherever possible. We do hope members will understand the need to increase subscriptions if we are forced to do so to enable us to avoid running at a loss.

### New Initiative

I would like to give the membership advance information that the Committee has approved the proposal by Editor Adam to set up a CSA website to take us forward into the future of technology. Adam will be registering a domain site and doing the setting up required, including the purchase of Licence and Software. He will be responsible for the website operation and maintenance. It will be a platform for growth and further development, and we will send members more detailed information later. We envisage keeping the



hard copy of the journal in production for sending out to members, with the website carrying copies but restricted to paid subscription members who wish to use it.

### Committee Members Contributions

I would like to acknowledge here for you the contributions of the various Committee members, who give of their services voluntarily with the commitment to do the best possible for the CSAs overall functioning. I know you will agree that Editor Adam is doing an excellent job of maintaining the iconic status of the journal and getting it out in time to deadline despite the pressures of his paid editing job. Presenji has taken over successfully from Sunimal to keep the secretarial function going, Deepak is maintaining the requirements of the Treasurer role, and Amal makes sure the journals get sent out when ready with the printer. Earlson and Kumar have been very helpful in the arrangements for meetings. Hugh and Thiru are great mainstays of regular well researched interesting contributions to the journal, and Srilal helps to keep the Melbourne Chapter going.

At this stage I should mention that Hemal Gurusinghe, the Melbourne Chapter Convenor for many years, has decided to step down. He has the CSA's grateful thanks for all his efforts, with his wife Ratna helping, to run the activities in Melbourne. There will be a presentation in Melbourne in December, organised by Srilal, to show our appreciation. A small group will be set up to take over the functions of the Melbourne Convenor.

In conclusion, I would like to thank you most sincerely for your presence here tonight, for making the effort to attend the AGM and giving us the pleasure of your company at the Social to make the Committee's organising efforts worthwhile. We hope you will enjoy the evening of socialising and have a happy time. Please participate with gusto in the Singalong of old favourites and carols, and hype up into dancing the night away when we move into that stage.

Catering this year again is by the well known Flavour of Ceylon, and I would like to thank Aquinas for his helping us with this function despite his many commitments at this time of year. Enjoy the menu!

Let's have fun together in a pre-Christmas celebration! Let's live in the moment and make it joyous – tomorrow is another day!

Thank you.

Pauline Gunewardene  
President, Ceylon Society of Australia

Saturday, 18 November 2023

Some photos of the evening.  
Thanks to Mahal Selvadurai



*Mahal Selvadurai and  
June Aranwella*



*Avinder Paul*



*Devika de Fonseka and  
Pauline Gunewardene*



*Deanna Saathananthan and  
Srikanthi Wijetunga*





*Tale of Two Presidents! Pauline (current) and Thiru (immediate past) announcing winner of the Trivia contest*



*Amal and Rosani Wahab*



*Kanthi Perera and Chandra Senaratne*



*Aubrey Joachim, Hyacinth Jones and Adam Raffel*



*Nelleke and Kumar Rasiah*



*Thiru and Malini Arumugam with Dr Krishna Sellathurai*



*Nargis and Presenji Jayawickrama*



*Kantha Abeysinghe and Hyacinth Jones*



*Lucien and Srikanthi Wijetunga*



*CSA Choir in full voice!*



*Ably accompanied by Roger Menezes (left) and Shiranthi Rodrigo (on the piano)  
Priyanga and Devika de Fonseka leading the Baila! (below)*



*Upali and June Aranwella*



*Rex Olegasegarem and Earl Forbes*



*Gunasmin and Esme Lye*



*Indrakumar and Roshani Jayewardene*



*Earlson Forbes with June and Upali Aranwella*



*Chandra Senaratne, Shiranthi Rodrigo and Pauline Gunewardene*

# CSA Melbourne Chapter Report of Meeting on 9 December 2023 at the home of Srilal and Savitri Fernando, Camberwell, VIC

compiled by Chandani Lokuge

## AGENDA:

- Formation of a support group in running the Melbourne Chapter of the Society
- Tribute and presentation to outgoing Convenor, Hemal Gurusinghe
- Hand-over to new Convenors, Sumal and Naomi Karunanayake
- The way ahead – planning activities for meetings
- Conclusion

## ATTENDEES (in alphabetical order):

Srilal Fernando  
Savitri Fernando  
Hemal Gurusinghe  
Rathna Gurusinghe  
Hugh Karunanayake  
Sumal Karunanayake  
Naomi Karunanayake  
Chandani Lokuge  
Nilantha Perera  
Logan Thurairatnam  
Premila Thurairatnam

It was noted at the outset that Ceylon Society, Melbourne Chapter would henceforth organise its activities in collaboration with the group of members attending this meeting.

The meeting commenced with a tribute from Pauline Gunawardene, President Ceylon Society, Australia, to the outgoing Convenor, Hemal Gurusinghe in recognition of his long service to the Melbourne Chapter of the Society. The tribute was read by Srilal to the group who interjected with many appreciative comments and applause. Pauline commended Hemal's unfailing commitment and dedication to Ceylon Society through his 10-year long tenure as Convenor and thanked him for his invaluable contribution. For his services, an elegant plaque was presented to Hemal by Hugh Karunanayake on behalf of the Society.

The next item on the agenda was for Hemal to hand over the convenorship to Sumal and Naomi Karunanayake. It was reiterated that they would convene in collaboration with the attending group. A discussion ensued around pros and cons on organising the Society's meetings, their frequency in a calendar year, how to select and invite speakers, appropriate subjects for their talks, etc. Finally, Hemal handed over to Sumal and Naomi, the archives that he had meticulously collected and recorded over 10 years.

The meeting concluded on an enthusiastic note with a photograph of the new Convenors and the collaborative group. Everyone stayed back to chat and see Srilal's art collection and enjoy the cake, eats and tea provided by Savithri.



Standing from left to right: **Sumal and Naomi Karunanayake, Hemal Gurusinghe, Logan Thurairatnam Srilal and Savitri Fernando, Nilantha Perera.**  
Seated front row from left to right: **Chandani Lokuge, Hugh Karunanayake, Rathna Gurusinghe, Premila Thurairatnam.**



**PRESENTATION TO HEMAL GURUSINGHE ON RESIGNATION  
AS MELBOURNE CHAPTER CONVENOR  
ON SUNDAY 10 DECEMBER 2023**

Address by CSA President Pauline Gunewardene

Dear Hemal,

I am writing on behalf of the Committee of the Ceylon Society of Australia and its membership, particularly those in the Melbourne Chapter, to acknowledge your significant contribution to the CSA as you resign now from the post of Melbourne Chapter Convenor.

This presentation is being held to acknowledge your dedicated service over the past 14 years, when you took over the role of organising the Chapter meetings and later chairing them to assist Srilal.

There has been a great deal of work put in by you, in liaising with the speakers, managing the Hall bookings and picking up the keys, collecting the books from Victor Melder for display and sale, as well as organising for the food at the meetings - even to the extent of paying for it yourself.

We have been so very fortunate not only to have your tireless service for the CSA, but also to have your wife Rathna working alongside you to assist with managing the meetings. Rathna has been an integral part of the CSA team at these occasions, liaising with new members, selling raffle tickets, and attending to the service of food and tea/coffee, together with Srilal's wife Savitri. Thank you very much Rathna.

As a collector and lover of ephemera connected with Sri Lanka, you have had a personal passion and enthusiasm for keeping the CSA going in Melbourne - and you certainly have done that. The number of meetings you have organised on a regular basis have served to stimulate interest in the CSA, and we are most grateful for your support and contribution over the years.

I am very glad to know from you that it is not farewell, but that you will continue to be involved with the group being put in place to handle the role of Melbourne Chapter Convenor, which you have been managing single handedly with the assistance of Rathna.

It is time you have decided to hang up the boots and have more leisure hours for your own pursuits and your family, and our very best wishes are with you for the future.

In recognition of your long and outstanding service, we have much pleasure in presenting this plaque to you as a memento of our appreciation and gratitude.

Thank you Hemal.

**Pauline Gunewardene**  
**President, Ceylon Society of Australia**

10 December 2023.



*Hemal Gurusinghe (left)  
receiving plaque from Hugh  
Karunanayake*



## Legacy of an Artist and Musician

by Premila Thurairatnam

Review of a presentation by Alan de Niese at the meeting of CSA (Melbourne Chapter) held on Sunday 12th Nov 2023

Melburnians gathered at Ashwood Hall on a beautiful spring day to listen to 3MBS presenter of 'Wednesday Night at the Opera' Alan de Niese. In his natural, engaging, manner he related his ancestors' history, in particular, of George de Niese who was a well-known painter and musician in Ceylon. Alan's Dutch ancestry dates back to 1730 when Benjamin de Niese was born. He was a soldier with the Dutch East India Company and a Scriba of the Land Court of Jaffna. George de Niese (1884 – 1954) was his great-great-great grandson making him the sixth generation to be born and living in Jaffna. His father James was a recognised artist in Jaffna. He was also a jack-of-all-trades who was known to be a good tailor and cobbler.

George and his siblings attended St Patrick's College and St John's College in Chundikuli, Jaffna and George was a drawing master at St John's from 1907-1911. During this period as a private Art and Music teacher is when he met and fell in love with Catherine Puvirajasinghe of the Singhe dynasty, direct descendants of the Aryan kings, AD1400, who ruled Jaffna up to the time of the Portuguese. Naturally, her parents opposed her marriage to the 'foreign' Dutchman, so they eloped. They were married at the Jaffna Cathedral and fled to Kandy to escape her family's wrath. Eventually, they reconciled, and George painted portraits of his parents-in-law which can be found in The Singhe Dynasty of Jaffnapattam by Chevalier Dr St John Puvirajasinghe (Catherine's brother). George was a regular prize winner at the annual Ceylon Society of Arts Exhibitions, winning a gold medal in 1921. His self-portrait, an oil painting in 1921, is on permanent display at the National Art Gallery on Green Path in Colombo. His portrait of Catherine titled *My Wife* won a prize as one of the best paintings at the Contemporary Art Exhibition in New Delhi in 1927. George was hired by the Buddhist monasteries to paint statues of Lord Buddha. He did so in secret as Christians,



generally, didn't step into Buddhist temples. Alan then showed some stunning family portraits by George including that of Catherine reading to their eldest son Paul. (shown here)

George was commissioned to paint portraits of bishops and college rectors which still hang in the respective school halls. Distinguished families like the Covingtons (their great-grandson Rex Olegasegarem wrote an article about them in *The Ceylankan* in May this year) were also his patrons. George has depicted, with exquisite accuracy, a Tamil way of wearing the saree on Mrs Covington (nee Tambimuttu) and jewellery on portraits of young ladies who could possibly be her daughters (see below portrait).



He also painted some still life paintings and seascapes which are now in private collections and some in the National Museum in Colombo. His gargantuan (6 x 3 ft) oil painting of The Last Supper (see below) is in a private collection in Sydney.



Two of Ceylon's foremost artists, George Keyt and David Paynter and others, were students at Trinity College, Kandy when George was the Art teacher and were influenced by him.

George and Catherine moved to Colombo with their growing family and George joined the teaching staff of St Joseph's College and later St Peter's College. At St Peter's he designed the college crest, and the college flag and wrote the music for the college anthem (here Alan sang out the first few verses of the anthem in his baritone voice, delighting the audience). Although George was affectionately known by the students as 'Pappa de Niese', he carried a cane up his sleeve to discipline boys who sang out of tune! George gets a mention in the first of Carl Muller's trilogy *The Jam Fruit Tree* — "Old de Niese banged away at the Hammond organ at St Mary's". He also played the organ at silent movies.

The artistic and musical genes continued through the generations, starting with George's sons Terry and Douglas, only daughter Imsy, grandsons John, Peter, Alan and George and great-granddaughter Danielle who is an opera singer on the international stage. Alan then showed paintings by Terry which included variations of the flamboyant tree and wildlife and by Imsy of the mesmerising Haputale range (she lived there as the wife of a planter) and his own of Mount Lavinia, Christ Jesus and some portraits. Alan and his father, Douglas, were cantors at St Francis' Church and at other churches in Melbourne. The de Niese Family Choir has sung at numerous weddings and funerals in Melbourne, too. One rarely sees such continuity of both art and music genes in one family. Tony Hopman, grandnephew of George is Sri Lanka's leading portrait and landscape artist today, and we saw some of his paintings which included that of President Chandrika Bandaranaike Kumaratunga.

Alan concluded his talk by thanking his wife Ramona for the numerous hours she had spent putting the presentation together. School staff photographs at St John's and St Peter's which included George shown on slides and the book *The Singhe Dynasty of Jaffna-pattam* published by *Times of Ceylon* in 1968 which was displayed, added authenticity to the presentation. Alan and Ramona have spent many years hunting and collecting records of George and his descendants' paintings. This included trips to Colombo in 2005 and to Jaffna in 2012. The speaker paid tribute to Ramona with a song that thrilled the already enthralled audience who reciprocated with exultant cheers, enthusiastic claps and loud "bravos". The hall was filled with some of the paintings shown on the slides thus enhancing the experience. Thank You Alan and Ramona for your hard work and agreeing to tell the story of your notable family.

I'd like to take this opportunity to thank Hemal and his wife Rathna for their dedication and generosity of their time in organising these talks for the past decade or more.

## Jokers of Peradeniya

by Ernest MacIntyre

The word "Joker" was applied to some undergraduates chose to be (or were naturally) "blank" to recognized ways of behaviour and thought. Its origin with "Blank", not necessarily known to Peradeniya of the time, was in 1894 when American manufacturers of playing cards included a blank card at the top of the pack, and some thrifty person suggested that the card should not be wasted. A comic looking Joker was printed on this formerly blank card, to indicate that it did not belong to the usual pack. A joker of Peradeniya was laughed at by others, but his antics enjoyed, and his utterances sometimes noted. They were spread evenly in the men's halls.

Ibrahim, called Ibra for short, first acquired that appellation at a public meeting called by a university society for an official of the government, to talk about the proposed changes in the design of the National flag.

At question time Ibra rose, with a copy of the proposed national flag in his hand. He unfurled it and began, "Sir, and friends present, you will see that in the proposed flag a powerful lion occupies the main part of the flag. That is as conceived by the government from some mythical story. You will also see two stripes on the left side edge of the flag. The first stripe, nearest the lion is orange in colour and represents the Tamil minority. The second stripe, behind the Tamils is a green one for the Ceylon Moors. Now, as a Ceylon Moor, I am thankful that the Tamils are in front of us, as a buffer, for on this flag, as you can't miss, the lion is designed, standing, sword in hand, threateningly facing the Tamils and Moors. As a Moor, I feel nervous. My only selfish comfort is that the Tamils in front of me will get it first. So, my idea is that the lion be turned around the other way, having the Tamils and Moors, behind, at the tail or backside of the lion, which is the factual case anyway. And this arrangement will signify that the only harm to the minorities can be an occasional unpleasant aroma carried in the wind." The laughter in the large Arts Theatre, was uncontrollable. When it eventually subsided, Ibra said, "I was not joking."

Too late, that was the day Ibra became a Peradeniya Joker.

*Original*



*1952 Proposal*



# Western Theatre and Drama in Peradeniya

by Ernest MacIntyre

EDITOR'S NOTE: This short story is Chapter 5 of a 12-chapter memoir *A Bend in the Mahaweli* about Ernest MacIntyre's time at the University of Ceylon – Peradeniya. It is important to note that each chapter in Ernest's book can be read as an episode in itself. There is no need to remember what happened in previous chapters as there is no plot in the conventional sense, just a collection of short stories. The characters are drawn from Ernest's play *Rasanayagam's Last Riot*, written and performed in 1996.

Ernest MacIntyre, *Rasanayagam's Last Riot*, (Colombo: Vijitha Yapa, 1996)

Rasa, Philip and Sita, the fictional characters in this story, are the same as the 1996 play. The characters Philip and Sita are loosely based on Ernest and Nalini MacIntyre, both CSA members.

***“The word ‘theatre’ is so rich in different meanings, some complementary, some contradictory, that we never know what we mean when we talk about theatre.”*** -Augusto Boal.

In a lively and closely packed residential university there was, naturally, much actual life drama, both comedy and tragedy.

Peradeniya also generated remarkable fictional drama, as already written about *Maname*. Before *Maname*, drama in the English language more suitably termed Western Drama, had enriched life and academic studies, beginning in 1922 in the old University Collage in Colombo, initiated by Professor of English, Leigh Smith. It had its rich heyday when Professor Lyn Ludowyk took charge in 1934, reaching out of university to include the country's Western drama talent, to the benefit of both university and society outside. The Dramsoc, as it was called under Ludowyk, Professor of English moved into Peradeniya in 1953 continuing its work.

This narrative began with the purposeful observation that Peradeniya had actual life drama, which occurred alongside fictional Western drama of the Dramsoc and Sinhala and Tamil drama Societies. The purpose of this reference to real life drama is to make some relevant comments about the theory of theatre in which the relationship between actual life in the world and what we call “fictional” life on the stage has occupied the thoughts of theorists and practitioners of theatre from ancient times, in India with its *Natyashastra* writings of the relationship between Loka and Natya and China an ancient fable, dating from ten thousand years before Christ, tells the story of Xua-Xua the pre-human woman who made the extraordinary discovery of theatre from actual life. In modern times Constantin Stanislavsky of Russia made the most notable contribution to the connection between real life and theatre. The relevance of this ambiguous relationship between the world and the stage, could be that all of Peradeniya could have been a stage, like in Shakespeare's sonnet which begins, “All the world's a stage...” Plays of the Dramsoc and Sinhala drama groups of Peradeniya like *Sinhabahu*, *Liliom*, *The Lower Depths*, *Maname*, *Antigone* and *Riders to The Sea* have conveyed this intriguing relationship between the real world and drama. Comedy and Tragedy in Peradeniya have moved the feelings and thoughts both in actual life and theatre.

A comedy drama from actual life was the “*Dhobi Comedy*” of 1956.

“In those days of a fully residential university, laundry facilities were an essential service, and it was contracted out by the university to an entrepreneur who, as far the students were concerned, was the *dhobi*”.

The laundry was located in one of the old military buildings near the faculty club. About once a week or so, a cart load of laundered student clothing would wind its way, powered by two oxen, to each hall of residence. Generally, a smooth operation, this service of course could sometimes get delayed, and once in early 1956, the delay was prolonged, and clean clothing was getting short in supply. This was by no means a crisis because in all likelihood every student owned enough clothing to tide over any minor slow-down of delivery. But the students saw in the *dhobi*'s delay an opportunity for a protest, and embarked on plans to “strike” i.e., to stay away from classes, on the false grounds that they had no clothing. In an unusual counter move, the dean of the arts faculty, Professor J. L. C. Rodrigo, announced that students would be allowed to attend classes in sarongs. This the students took as an opportunity to extend the “strike” in another direction, and made it into fancy dress party, arriving at the arts buildings wearing not only sarongs, but all manner of innovations, including tucking the sarong up into an *amude*.

This sartorially liminal period lasted several days during which meetings were held and speeches made condemning “*the dhoby*”, including performances by an American student, Peter La Sha who internationalised the comedy. This was helped by Peter's extraordinary cultural adaptability. He participated keenly in student activities. In the march to the laundry that culminated the “*dhobi strike*” Peter was a conspicuous participant shouting the slogan “*dhobi bhangaveva*” (down with the *dhobi*) in an exotic accent.

This real-life comedy could easily be moved to the stage with all the advantage and freedom given by “fiction”.

So could a tragic display, long after these happy times? Human heads, all around the shallow pond, which was intended to give a peaceful surround and grace to the D'Alwis memorial at the first roundabout on Galaha Road. It had to do with the



two-phase civil unrest amongst the Sinhalese. Marxist youth called the Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna and the Government. Ludowyk wrote a long letter, on the history of some years ago at the request Shelagh Goonewardene.

As indicated earlier the most fruitful years of the Western Drama Dramsoc were before the beginnings of the university move to Peradeniya in 1953. Ludowyk would have been thinking of his retirement in 1956.

When Winston Serasinghe died on 13 December 1999, four days after his ninetieth birthday, Philip wrote in a Lankan newspaper:

Winston Serasinghe became a crucial teacher of theatre, effortlessly, by unselfconsciously demonstrating amongst the young. The Peradeniya graduates of my generation who had tasted theatre on the campus came into Colombo and dispersed into various suburbs. We searched for another point of congregation and soon found that it would be around the figure of Winston Serasinghe, about twenty-five years ahead in the mystery of theatre. He held "missions" on many evenings at the Art Centre Club, Guildford Crescent, just above the auditorium of the Lionel Wendt Theatre. Karan Breckenridge, Shelagh Goonewardene, Chula Unamboowa, Sidat Sri Nandalochana, Sriantha Senaratne, Nalini Mather, Haig Karunaratne, Marie Philips, Norman Jinadasa, Brian Rutnam, Maureen and Jayantha Dhanapala, Philip Cooray, Neville de Silva, Lucky Wickramanayake, were some of those, possibly with an yet incomplete feeling that theatre was more than a passing undergraduate diversion. We found that Sera at the Art Centre Club confirmed our "suspicion". None of us had formal training in theatre. It was Sera's transmission in ceaseless waves of great performances from the repertory of world theatre that transfigured my initial attraction to things merely theatrical into what Sarachchandra called "a substitute for religion". Most of the names in the extract above, listed as gathering around Winston, as much for his personality as for his transmission of what theatre is, had their first engagement with this ancient art, after tasting it at school, in the University Dramatic Society of Peradeniya moulded by the great creativity and scholarship of E.F.C. Ludowyk. His position at the university was Professor of English, which does not necessarily imply inseparable welding with using the English language in theatre. Drama and theatre began independent of language, with the exception that some scholars consider the novel dramatic in content, in a narrative form. Though there is a possibility that Ludowyk recognized the connection his interest in Sarachchandra's Sinhala theatre supports the view that he regarded theatre as a related art, but with its ritualistic origins saw language as a later, inevitable entry. He may have regarded the time of Shakespeare as when language or literature best fused with original theatre. It is an enigmatic, doubtful, proposition that a Shakespeare play can be taught as literature only. Ludowyk was a specialist in Shakespeare. He won the most prestigious prize for Shakespeare studies at Cambridge University and his work, "*Understanding Shakespeare*" is greatly valued in Lanka and Britain. It is unlikely that Ludowyk would not have taken into consideration the inseparability of theatre and literature in conveying the works of The Bard to students. And this leads to conjecture that it was his specialty in Shakespeare that underpinned

his great drive in theatre. One is reminded that in the Greek tradition in its theatre art the tragic event is movingly reported on stage by a "third party", such as how Antigone came to her death. In significant contrast, Julius Caesar is killed in full view of the audience and Hamlet dies with others in the shape of the Globe theatre as it was constructed, virtually in the midst of the "underlings" in the pit. Sometimes I have wondered whether Shakespeare departed from the equally effective Greek tradition of telling the story afterwards, because his audience was of our times, democratically constituted in the pit of the "underlings". At the same time, he didn't abandon the Greek tradition.

*"O, pardon me, thou bleeding piece of earth,  
That I am meek and gentle with these butchers!  
Thou art the ruins of the noblest man  
That ever lived in the tide of times.  
Woe to the hand that shed this costly blood!....."*

There was a change also in the undergraduate population. A growing number of rural undergraduates were arriving, who were very enthusiastic about Sinhala theatre. The *Rangha Sabha* was renamed *Sinhala Natya Mandalaya* with P.E. Fernando, senior lecturer in Sinhala, as patron and W. Arthur Silva as president. The rest of the staff of the Sinhala Department, such as Ananda Kulasuriya, Siri Gunasinghe and D.E. Hettiarachchi also showed interest.

It is now time to take a look at Ludowyk's contribution to Sinhala drama. No less an authority than Professor Ediriweera Sarachchandra has written of Ludowyk's connection with the Sinhala theatre. In his essay *Ludowyk and the Sinhala Theatre*, Sarachchandra is of the opinion '... in the annals of Sinhala theatre, his[Ludowyk's] is a name that cannot be left out'. Noting that Ludowyk's involvement with Sinhala theatre was brief but significant, Sarachchandra goes on to tell us:

'One reason that people tend to forget (or just overlook) Ludowyk's contribution to the Sinhala theatre is that his reputation in the English theatre overshadowed everything else. It was difficult for people to accommodate themselves to the belief that a professor of the English language, a Dutch Burgher by descent, could produce a play in Sinhala. But it was not widely known that Ludowyk assiduously studied classical Sinhala for a time, and that he belonged to the Burghers of Galle who were more Sinhalese than the Sinhalese themselves (at least the westernized class). Ludowyk not only understood spoken Sinhala, but had a feel for its nuances, and, being a linguist, enjoyed the new opportunities he got, in the course of play-production, of enlarging his knowledge of it.'

We also learn from Professor Sarachchandra that an estrangement between Professor Ludowyk and the dramatic society of the University had resulted in Ludowyk not producing a play in 1945 as he had done consistently in previous years. Seeking to transform the University Dramatic Society's misfortune to their good fortune, Dr. D.J. Wijayaratna, Mr. A.P. Gunaratna and Sarachchandra himself, decided to invite Professor Ludowyk to produce a play in Sinhala, an invitation that, with characteristic modesty, Ludowyk had declined on the grounds that his knowledge of Sinhala was not up to the task. After a degree of persuasion and an assurance that whatever help he would

need where Sinhala was concerned would be provided, Wijayarathna, Gunaratna and Sarachchandra secured Ludowyk's consent. And thus was born, the *Ranga Sabha* consisting of the four of them and Mrs Edith Ludowyk.

It was the conviction of the founders of the *Ranga Sabha*, that there was no serious indigenous dramatic tradition although there existed a worthy tradition in Sinhala poetry and narrative prose going as far back as the 6th century A.D. They were also convinced that the existing Tower Hall musical as well as the Jayamanne play (so named after the producer B.A.W. Jayamanne and its leading actor, his brother, Eddie Jayamanne) were inadequate and indeed likely to prove unhelpful in the fostering of a tangible, indigenous Sinhala dramatic tradition. In the circumstances, they believed that one way of seeking to accomplish their larger goal, that is the creation of a serious Sinhala dramatic tradition, was to provide local audiences in the interim with, as an alternative to the poor fare that passed for indigenous drama at the time, adaptations or translations in Sinhala of the best plays of the world repertory of theatre.

Accordingly, Ludowyk recommended that Gogol's *Marriage* be translated and adapted to suit local audiences, would be an ideal play to begin with. The Sinhala adaptation of this Russian play was titled *Kapuva Kapothi*, which translated loosely means 'a match for the matchmaker', and the main roles in it, were played by those who had earlier appeared in English plays produced and directed by Ludowyk. Chief among these players were E. C.B. Wijeyesinghe, Richard Thenabadu, W.J. Fernando, I.D.S. Weerawardene, Eileen Sarachchandra and Damayanthi Dunuwille. *Kapuva Kapothi* first went on the boards on 25 April, 1945, at King George's Hall, on Thurstan Road, Colombo. This is believed to be the first occasion when leading producers, directors, actors and actresses of the Sinhala and English theatre collaborated on a common production which reminds us of a similar fruitful collaboration between the Sinhala and English theatre personalities that occurred in the 1960s which began with the memorable Stage & Set production of Arthur Miller's *Death of a Salesman* directed by Ernest MacIntyre in 1966. That the leading lights of Stage & Set had cut their theatrical teeth with Lyn Ludowyk in the University Dramsoc, should come as no surprise to us. Henry Jayasena wrote a review of Arthur Miller's play and as Shelagh Goonewardene has written, the influence of *Salesman* on Jayasena's own writing is clearly evident in the final scene of his *Apata Puthey Magak Nathey*. And this coming together of English and Sinhala personalities in the production of *Salesman* was followed by a period of collaboration and interaction between the two groups. Jayasena was joined by other well-known artists like Chitrasena and Dhamma Jagoda.

Let me get back to Sarachchandra on Ludowyk now. After *Kapuva Kapothi*, Professors Ludowyk and Sarachchandra combined their resources and those of the *Ranga Sabha* to adapt Moliere's *The Imaginary Invalid* but it was not so successful as *Kapuva Kapothi*. Having enjoyed a ringside seat during the produc-

tion of *Kapuva Kapothi* and learned much during it, Sarachchandra recalled:

"To watch Ludowyk produce a play was to me an unforgettable and most enjoyable experience. I did not realize at the time that it was providing me with the basic education I needed in an area of artistic activity that was to become, later, practically my lifework."

~~~~~

EFC Ludowyk



Ediriweera Sarachchandra



Ashley Halpe



Gamini Haththettuwegamuwa



Karan Breckenridge



Appreciations

PROF RAJA C BANDARANAYAKE

(4 April 1935 - 18 Jan 2024)



Three months ago, I received an email from Dr Raja Bandaranayake, stating that he was just diagnosed with MND or motor neurone disease. That was shocking news to me but typified his honesty and open attitude to life. Professor Raja Bandaranayake the

internationally renowned medical educator passed away on 18 January just a few months short of his 89th birthday.

Born in Kandy, Raja had his secondary education at St Thomas College, Mount Lavinia, from where he entered the Faculty of Medicine in Colombo. On passing his medical degree, he was appointed demonstrator at the Colombo University followed by a spell of about five years as lecturer in the University of Ceylon in Peradeniya. He migrated to Australia in the early 1960s and worked in medical education in the University of New South Wales initially as a lecturer, and later as an Associate Professor. Since 1992 he worked as Professor of Anatomy in the University of Bahrain, and from 1997 as Consultant to the World Health Organization (WHO). He was also appointed a Consultant to the World Bank and for a period of eight years was on the Australian Medical Council.

Prof Bandaranayake served as an examiner for five years for the Royal Australian College of Surgeons. He served as President of the Australian and New Zealand Association for Medical Education for three years and was awarded the Fred Katz Memorial Medal for Medical Education.

All these superlative achievements sat lightly on Raja, a modest and unassuming family man with an extraordinary intellect.

On my own migration to Australia forty years ago, I reconnected with an old school mate living in the adjoining suburb, Dr Medduma Kappagoda an ophthalmologist and we lost no time in renewing our old friendships. It is in the Kappagoda home in Pymble that I met Raja for the first time in around 1985. His simplicity was very evident at our first meeting, and a new friendship was founded.

Our relationships were further reinforced by the mutual interest we had in collecting antiquarian books. In fact he had heard of me from antiquarian book dealers in Sydney, who, when he responded to their periodical listings found that a certain Mr Karunanayake had already purchased the book. He was curious to meet this Mr K possibly making known of his intentions through gritted teeth! That was however the beginning of a beautiful friendship.

When Raja was working as Professor of Anatomy in Bahrain University, his travels to and from Bahrain involved stops in Mauritius. A man of keen intellect and extremely superior intellectual curiosity he soon found himself digging into the lives in exile of Adigar Ehelepola and other Kandyan chieftains who lived in forced exile in Mauritius over 200 years ago. The 360 page monograph entitled "*Betwixt Isles*" that he published in 2006 is a supreme example of a scientific mind analysing a piece of history. It was my privilege to read the manuscript and to write the foreword to the book. A Sinhalese translation was made as a response to popular demand, and the book is being used in the teaching of Sri Lankan History in schools.

When the Ceylon Society of Australia was formed



25 years ago, Raja was one of the early members, and has made very interesting presentations at meetings in Sydney and in Melbourne. It was only last year that he presented a well-researched exposition on Charles Dickens and his connection with Sri Lanka.

Raja was a man who knew how to make the best of his environment.

Apart from his fascination with the old world through his extensive collection of antiquarian books and ephemera, he enjoyed a game of tennis, and was also a keen snooker player. With the demise of Raja Bandaranayake, the medical world has lost a great anatomist, and a highly regarded teacher. Australia has lost a very valuable intellectual resource.

Raja's passing is a merciful release from the dreaded tentacles of MND. He is survived by his wife Chandrani, son Rohan, and daughters Roshini and Ruveni.

May Dr Raja Bandaranayake find eternal rest.

Hugh Karunanayake

JEHAN RAHEEM (19 June 1935 – 25 October 2023)



Jehan Raheem, my classmate through Royal Prep School and thereafter in Royal College, and an outstanding intellect, passed away in his home in New York, yesterday. His demise was mistakenly announced a week ago, but the end was near, and he finally succumbed to the ravages of cancer in the morning of 25 October. A man given to a wry sense of humour, would have been thinking on the lines of Mark Twain on the unintended falsity, by exclaiming that “rumours of my death are vastly exaggerated”! Born in Hulftsdorp where his father enjoyed a lucrative practice as a lawyer, Jehan was the eldest of nine children, all high achievers, with Jehan the eldest showing the way to his younger siblings. Of portly build, he was a friendly and genial person very popular with his peers. The Raheem home first at 254, Hulftsdorp and later at Clifford Road, Kollupitiya was a popular meeting spot for Jehan’s classmates. I recall the lovely biriyani meals we enjoyed at Ramazan when the Raheems ran open house to all and sundry, during their early days in Hulftsdorp, and later to continue at Kollupitiya.



Jehan and Eleanor Raheem

The Raheem family was a cerebral lot, the pater familias giving primacy to education and ensuring that all nine children were well endowed academically. Jehan, who passed out with an Honours Degree in Economics/Accounting from Peradeniya, continued his studies

to qualify as a Chartered Accountant at Ford Rhodes and Thornton. At Peradeniya he was much involved in drama productions associated with Prof Lyn Ludowyk and Jubal of the Drama Society. He thereafter worked at Pfizer International as Chief Accountant. Soon he was on a Fullbright Scholarship with the University of Pittsburgh, after which he served a few more years with the Fullbright Foundation. He joined the UNDP in the early 70s where Jehan rose to be Director of the Policy Division of the UNDP until his retirement in the early 1990s. On retirement from the UNDP he took up a Professorship in Brandeis University, New York.

Iqbal, the next in line of his siblings was a medical doctor and worked in England where he passed away. Among the boys the next was Azad who practised as a lawyer in Colombo and later in Melbourne where he passed away a few years ago. The next was Ismeth the well-known Architect and antiquarian, followed by Omar the Engineer, and the youngest of the boys Gazhali also working for the United Nations. All six boys were educated at Royal College. The three Raheem girls Gulna, Rhyana, and Yasmin were all educated at Ladies College and are all renowned academics.

Jehan enrolled at Royal College in 1946 having joined from Royal Preparatory School with another approximately 100 boys including me. Our batch of students is known as the 1946 Group. We celebrated 60 years of companionship in 2006 with a dinner at the Colombo Hilton attended by 41 members of the group and their wives. Twenty of those who attended travelled from overseas including Jehan who resided in New York over the past several decades. The celebration was repeated five years later in 2011, but due to “natural attrition” “taking its toll, no formal gatherings took place since then. The handful who remain continue the earthly struggle but revel however, in any opportunity to meet, greet, and reminisce over old times, now sadly fleeting away from us.

My contact with Jehan after leaving school was sporadic, he is residing in USA having worked for the United Nations for most of his post University life. I recall meeting him when he visited the Marga Institute where I worked, in 1974, and remember the two of us sitting in the Marga Canteen drinking plain tea with a piece of jaggery in days of austerity. The last time I met him was when he visited Melbourne a few years ago to bid farewell to his younger brother Azad who was terminally ill. That brief visit was marked by a lunch which was attended by Jehan and Eleanor, Fred Kreltszheim, Bryan and Mahal Wickremaratne and my late wife Tulsi and me. Jehan, Fred, and Bryan have an added dimension to their friendship having played in the Royal College rugby teams of the mid-1950s. Jehan with his burly physique would have, I imagine, been a good prop forward.

About 10 years ago he joined the Ceylon Society of Australia as an overseas member. Many were the transcontinental phone conversations we had on a number of subjects, and my life has been considerably diminished by his sad departure.

“May Allah rest his soul in eternal peace and grant him the highest place in Jannah”.

Hugh Karunanayake



Jehan and Eleanor with friends in Melbourne (From left: Jehan, Hugh, Bryan, Fred, Eleanor, Mahal, and Tushi)

Last Letter to a friend, Jehan Raheem, which was read to him by his wife a few days before he passed away on October 25, 2023

Dear Jehan,

Your message sent through your dear wife Eleanor, that you were in “a closing out mode”, was received with much sadness, but wanting to send your friends a composed message even at such a time, has also warmth and evocations of where that warmth had its origin and growth.

We entered Peradeniya University in the same batch of 1955 and met by chance sitting opposite each other at the first meal in the large location of the dining room of Ramanathan Hall. Amongst other things we ate together, thrice a day, for four years.

We soon were active in the university dramatic society where both found theatre growing in us. Later I did some at the Lionel Wendt and you I remember, when you, in the seventies, were the United Nations Resident Representative in Nepal directed Shakespeare’s *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*, performed in the open air by the light of a bright moon. Our friendship grew over about 70 years. We migrated to opposite parts of the earth, sometime after university, you to north America to join the United Nations and marry Eleanor, and I just to join Australia, but our friendship grew over the long decades, with visits and stays at each other’s homes across the world. Our life partners Eleanor, whom I got to know and Nalini who you knew well from undergraduate days became part of the friendship.

There are different categories of people in reacting to a troubled world. Vast millions will not even know of the current terrors between Israel and the Palestine. Another category will be totally submerged in despair at the nature of humans, yet another will know all about it, read all about it, yet “mind their own business”, both in the commercial and metaphorical sense, in not getting emotionally involved or in thoughts about it. You belonged to another category.

You showed concern and were troubled by the world at large yet found alleviating comfort and meaning in the society of friends you have grown up with, and your family. You have a large family. Three sisters and five brothers, all Islamic without offering the public external evidence.

Our lives are really a “short time” as many scientists and philosophers see it, and I now, at my age, recognize. Yet many are the memories. One that remains a strong and meaningful image is a semicircular veranda at the back of your home with an attractive rose garden, on Clifford Road, Kollupitiya. There were many chairs in that meeting place verandah, and it was packed whenever there was a gathering, which was eagerly frequent in the mid-fifties and sixties of the last century. The originals were your boyhood friends from Royal College. There was C.V. (Puggie) Gooneratne, later to be a cabinet minister, Mahalingam ending up in Peradeniya a professor, the Ponnusamy brothers Deva and Sure, “Gumbo” Nanayakkara, “Bambare” Samarasinghe, Bihan “dhiga” Perera, “Kalua” Mendis, Geevaka De Soyza and wife Jane, “Kalu” Goonda, Jeremy and Rhona Marjen, some that memory still has room for. And many others, post Royal, gathered in the binding social verandah, with you harmonising and yourself being conditioned to some meaning in life to friends and family despite being very conscious of a sometimes-meaningless larger world.

Your last composed message to your friends that you are in “a closing out mode”, has the warmth of that verandah, of long ago. It also reminds with equanimity, those of my age and condition that you have stepped forward a little ahead.

May you be blessed, Jehan.
Love, Mac

Ernest MacIntyre

I first met Jehan in 1955 in our first year at university in Peradeniya and we met at lectures as we had two subjects in common.

It didn’t take long to get chatting and find out that I knew his sister Gulnar in school and our respective schools Royal College and Ladies’ College were virtually a stone’s throw from each other.

At that time Jehan liked to present himself as ‘an unorthodox Muslim’. He would say slightly shocking things to anyone going home for the weekend to bring him some bacon though he had no intention of eating it. He had a quirky sense of humour and made everything into a quip.

After we graduated, we kept in touch because my husband Ernest was a close friend of Jehan. We met often and when he went to USA and married El we visited them in Pelham and they visited us in Sydney, each couple staying in the other’s house.

We continued the association via email and the visits of our respective children to see a new country. Jehan and El always sent an account of the current year with their Xmas card.

Jehan was unique and one of a kind, there was no one else quite like him and he will be missed by all who knew him.

Nalini MacIntyre

PRASANNA NIMAL WIKRAMANAYAKE. KC (11 August 1933 - 20 December 2023)



Nimal Wikramanayake, KC, eminent lawyer and the only Asian born Kings Counsel in Australia, passed away on 20 December at a private nursing home where he was recuperating following surgery. He celebrated his 90th birthday just a few months ago.

Born in Colombo as the second son to EG (Guy) Wikramanayake, a leading counsel in Colombo

in his day, Nimal schooled at St Thomas College, Mount Lavinia. On leaving school, unlike his elder brother Ranji a well known endocrinologist in Sydney, Nimal chose to follow in the footsteps of his forefathers. His paternal grandfather Edward Beauchamp was a lawyer himself, but it was Edward Beauchamp's two sons Eric Bird, and Emil Guy, who created legal history by being granted silk, the only instance in Sri Lanka of two brothers being appointed Kings Counsel. Nimal's father, Emil Guy better known as EG Wikramanayake was reputed to be the best cross examiner in Sri Lanka. A career in law was to be the pre destined vocation for young Nimal when he left school in the early nineteen fifties. He enrolled as a student in law at Trinity Hall Cambridge, a hallowed institution, and the seat of legal learning for a privileged few. It was as a law student in Cambridge that he met Anna Maria, who he wooed and married, and returned to Ceylon to kick start his career as a lawyer. With prospects for a good legal practice in Ceylon, yet not visible to him despite the domineering influence of his father, Nimal chose to try his luck in Australia.

It was in Australia that Nimal made his mark. Having migrated in 1971, he went through the usual period of worry and uncertainty in a strange country, where the legal system was already well established with hoary traditions and practices that would not permit those other than those of the stereotype 'white Anglo Saxon' background to get a foothold in the legal profession. A man of steely determination, an undeterred Nimal took up the challenges that success in the law posed, and came out with flying colours. The story of his battles at the bar, was recounted in his brilliantly authored memoir "*A Life in the Law*" published in 2022. Eminent former judge and jurist the Hon Michael Kirby in his foreword to the book stated "often it is a tale of hurt. But it is when people in minorities stand against the tide that they may help to change the world."

One of the highpoints in his career as a lawyer was his appointment and annointment to revise the legendary jurist, Louis Voumard, 's book "*The Sale of Land*". Voumard was the leader in the field of property law in Australia, and the opportunity to be associated

with his work was a distinctive hallmark in Nimal's legal career thereafter. There was no looking back and Nimal was on a trajectory to take him to the top of the profession in Victoria. He was awarded silk in 2014, thus creating a record with his father EG Wikramanayake as the only father and son to be granted silk in two different countries. More accolades were to come his way culminating with the unveiling of Nimal's portrait by the Victorian Bar Association, yet another unique achievement in his profession.

My association with Nimal dates back to about a decade or so, and our friendship grew in strength after my move to Melbourne from Sydney in 2015. A man who was no shrinking violet when it comes to speaking out his mind, I have observed that his uncompromising beliefs and his penchant for speaking out his thoughts had often negatively impacted on him, but certainly did not bother him. His sincerity as a friend was never in doubt, however, and if I be permitted to relate a small incident, it would illustrate the impact he made on people. A few months ago I was travelling in a taxi with Nimal and Anna Maria, when suddenly he felt a craving to eat the South Indian delicacy "*dosa*". I told Nimal that I did not know of any "*dosa*" joint anywhere nearby, to which the taxi driver interrupted with "I know of a good place, and I can take you there right now". I did not join them for the feed but was surprised several months later when the taxi driver appeared at the nursing home where Nimal spent his last few days on earth. He had heard on the 'grapevine' about Nimal's illness and come there to pay his respects. He kneeled himself before Nimal and worshipped him and left. Nimal was an enigmatic character, but always honourable and straightforward in his dealings. Personally, I have enjoyed his company, and the many meals we shared together with Anna Maria, where their fondness for French cuisine and French wine and the delights of "*escargot*" (not my preferred dish though!) were quite evident.

Nimal is survived by his dear wife and companion of 65 years Anna Maria, Brothers Dr Ranji and Prenitha and families, sister Dileeni and family and his devoted nieces Shemara and Roshana.

Farewell my friend. "We had joys we had fun, we had seasons in the sun". Sleep well Nimal, it may not be long when we can join together for some fun.

Hugh Karunanayake

Obituary notices published in *The Ceylankan*

All Obituary notices and Appreciations of Life recorded on these pages are restricted to deceased CSA members only. In keeping with that policy all notices are accompanied with a note indicating such membership status.



CSA Meetings 2024 (Sydney)

Venue: Pennant Hills Community Centre Main Hall, Level 1, Ramsay Road, Pennant Hills (cnr Yarrara Rd, enter via Ramsay Rd for parking).

Please note: Events that go ahead will be held strictly in compliance with safety regulations as required. The CSA Committee warmly welcomes Members and Guests to the General Meetings. A donation to defray catering expenses for the Social following on from the talk would be appreciated. Bringing a plate of food would also be welcomed!

Sunday 25 February - 6.30-8.30 pm - General Meeting & Social

Sunday 26 May - 6.30-8.30 pm - General Meeting & Social

Sunday 25 August - 6.30-8.30 pm - General Meeting & Social

Saturday 23 November - 6.00 pm AGM for Members and 6.30-11.00 pm Social for Members and Guests

CEYLON SOCIETY OF AUSTRALIA General Meeting at 6.30 pm on Sunday 25 February 2024 at Pennant Hills Community Centre, Main Hall on Level 1



The speaker for the meeting will be Engineer Palitha Manchanayake, who will talk on the subject of “Ancient Irrigation Systems of Sri Lanka and Modern Developments”. Palitha has in depth knowledge on both the old and the new, having worked in this area as both an irrigation and construction engineer.

Bio Data

Engineer Palitha Manchanayake had his education at Royal College, Colombo. He entered the Faculty of Engineering of the University of Ceylon, Peradeniya, and graduated with Honours in Civil Engineering in 1972. He then joined the Irrigation Department as an Irrigation Engineer. Palitha served as a construction engineer at the Wahalkadawewa Reservoir Project in Anuradhapura District in restoring the abandoned Tank. In 1976, he got his professional qualifications M.I.C.E (London), C.Eng. In 1981 Palitha obtained his M.Eng.Sc. Degree in Hydrology from the University of New South Wales, Australia.

From 1983 to 1987, Palitha served as Assistant Director at the Water Management Secretariat of the Mahaweli Authority of Sri Lanka, and was a Visiting Lecturer in Hydrology at the University of

Moratuwa from 1981 to 1987. He served as a Consultant and Unit Author in Hydrology and Irrigation Engineering at the Open University, Nawala. Also, Palitha worked as a National Consultant in Water and Environmental Engineering for the ILO / UNDP from 1985 to 1987 in the formation and the setting up of the Technical Training Institute (TTI) at Katunayake.

He won the Ceylon Development Engineering (CDE) Award for the Best Paper published in ‘*Engineer*’, the Journal of the Institution of Engineers, Sri Lanka, during 1984-85. He is a Fellow of the Institution of Engineers (F.I.E), Sri Lanka.

After migrating to Australia in 1987, he served as a Hydrologist at the Flood Forecasting Centre of the Commonwealth Bureau of Meteorology, Sydney, until retirement.

Synopsis of Talk

With Prince Vijaya’s arrival at Thammenna Beach on the North-West of Sri Lanka, and the subsequent establishment of his kingdom in that area, the earliest irrigation work had centred around the Malwathu Oya Basin. As the Malwathu Oya flows past the City of Anuradhapura, most of the ancient kings opted to retain the Kingdom at Anuradhapura, and a lot of reservoir development took place in and around the area from about 500 BC to 700 AD. From there onwards, it got shifted to Polonnaruwa and continued until about 1200 AD.

The development of *Biso Kotuwa* (Sluice Tower) and the *Keta Sorowwa* took place around 400-300 BC, and they are considered as engineering marvels invented by the Sri Lankans at that time. The world famous Kalawewa Yodha Ela constructed by King Dhathusena during 459-477 AD and its intricacies would be elaborated on.

The demolition of irrigation reservoirs and village tanks in Uva-Wellassa during the 1818 Kandyan Rebellion and their recent restorations will be discussed. The safety issues involved with the Parakrama Samudra Dam during the 1978 Flood Event would be revealed. The Mahaweli System of Reservoirs and its complex management will be discussed. It covers the operation of 28 reservoirs in all where the Mahaweli waters run. A major portion of it is for irrigation and the rest is for hydro-power development. The Kelani Ganga System, which is essentially used for hydro-power generation, is also incorporated into this operation.

CSA Website <https://ceylon-society.com/>

Procedure for current CSA members who are accessing the website for the first time

1. In the **The Ceylankan - Subscribers Only** drop down click on: **Not a member? Join Us**. The purpose of this is so that the computer understands that you have joined the group and are eligible for a Username and Password to access the journal.
 2. It will take you to this page: Click on link to join: <https://ceylon-society.com/about-2/>
 3. That will take you to the **Join us** page where you must fill in the CSA Membership Application Form. Please fill in the required fields - including the Membership Category drop down. If you are a Life Member, click on that button. Then fill in the **Member Since?** field – that is the date you **first joined** the CSA.
 4. Once you press '**Submit**' you will receive an email confirming your membership of the CSA and your Username and a **temporary password**. Please note that **it is essential that you have a valid email address**. Usually, your Username **is** your email address.
 5. Go back to the **The Ceylankan - Subscribers Only** access menu and click on **Please Log In. Change your temporary password immediately** by clicking on the **Forgot Password?** link. It will prompt you to **reset your password to one chosen by you** and known only to you. Then go back and login using your new password to access current and previous issues of *The Ceylankan* for a year. If you have not renewed your annual membership, you may not be able to access the journal online until you have done so. After renewal, you can log in with your username and password. Life Members will have access to the journal in perpetuity.
- PLEASE NOTE: You **cannot renew your membership online from this website at the moment**. That will be available in the near future. **Payment methods will remain as they were**. The usual procedure for membership renewals will apply until further notice.

Procedure for New CSA members

The same as above. Except in step 3 in the **Join us** page you must fill in the CSA Membership Application Form. Please fill in the required fields - including the Membership Category drop down – and the other fields as well, including your research interests.

As Pauline informed in her President's Address at the AGM, **Members can be reassured that we will still be mailing out hard copies of the journal**. Once the website is in full operation, there will be an option for Members to indicate if they wish to use the website only to read the journal and do not wish to receive hard copies any longer. Please be aware that this website is an ongoing process with new links to past issues of the journal being added steadily. There are bound to be 'teething problems' in getting this up and running smoothly. If you encounter any problems with accessing the website and the past issues of the journal please contact me (Web Administrator) and I shall try my best to help you resolve them. Alternately, if there are any technically minded readers who have knowledge and some expertise in web design, your input would be most welcome! Thank you in advance for your patience.

Web Administrator: Adam Raffel
email:adamraf2@tpg.com.au

MEMBERSHIP RATES

- **General Subscriptions for Australia:** \$35 per calendar year;
- **Pensioners' subscriptions:** \$25 per calendar year;
- **Sri Lanka:** Rs.3000 per calendar year;
- **Overseas members from USA/UK/Canada/Israel/Thailand and other countries:** \$50 per calendar year. If payment is not possible in Aust Dollars, please pay by Bank Draft or Bank Transfer in US Dollars or Pounds Sterling and add Aust \$10 to the Aust \$50 for bank charges due here for converting a foreign currency payment to Aust Dollars.

Payment Methods

1. Pay by cheque in favour of the Ceylon Society of Australia and post to Deepak Pritamdas, Treasurer, PO Box 489, Blacktown, NSW 2148, Australia.

2. Pay by Bank Transfer to:

Account Name: Ceylon Society of Australia
Bank Name: Commonwealth Bank of Australia
Bank BSB: 062 308
Account No: 10038725
Swift Code for overseas remittances: CTBAU2S
Reference: Payee Name

Note: Please email all payment details in confirmation to deepakpsl1@gmail.com

(Please Note: In Deepak's email address:- it is lower case L followed by the number 1)

WANTED...YOUR LITERARY CONTRIBUTIONS

The Ceylankan is published quarterly and the Editor is on the look-out for your literary contributions. Be assured that your work will be given careful consideration with a view to publication at all times.

Original, previously unpublished, articles relating to the history, culture and heritage of Sri Lanka are sought, while any material of an anecdotal nature will also be considered provided they conform to the CSA's ideals of being non-racial, non-political, non-religious and non-controversial.

While every effort is made to print material that is relevant and correct, we do not take the responsibility for errors. The Editor would appreciate any inaccuracies being brought to his notice without delay.

To facilitate the design/layout of the publication, we request that your word processing / typing be unformatted. Where applicable, contributors are also requested to annotate bibliographical references for copyright reasons and to help further research and study by interested members.

Notice to Members - Contact Details

Could we please request all members to advise Treasurer Deepak Pritamdas - deepakpsl1@gmail.com - and Secretary Presenji Jayawickrema - presenji@tpg.com.au - of any changes to contact details for phone, email address and home address. We need to make certain our records are correct for mailing *The Ceylankan* as well as for getting in touch with members, and would appreciate your assistance. Thank you.

WE NEED SPEAKERS

The CSA welcomes professionals and others interested in speaking at our General Meetings. Meetings are held in Sydney, Melbourne and Colombo, quarterly in February, May and August.

If you know of anyone, please contact as relevant:

- CSA President Pauline Gunewardene

Mobile: +61 419 447 665

Email: paulineg@ozemail.com.au

- Melbourne Chapter Convenors: Sumal and Naomi Karunanayake

Mobile: +61 415 772 888 (Naomi); +61 416 583 888 (Sumal)

Email:

- Colombo Chapter Secretary Avishka Mario Senewiratne

Mobile: +94 7661 22345

Email: avishkamario@gmail.com

ADVERTISING IN *The Ceylankan*

For some time, CSA members and others have indicated an interest in advertising to promote their goods and services in the Journal. However, we have been maintaining the ideal of the founders of the CSA, that the Journal must not be made a means for commercial profit, but only as a vehicle for research, study and promotion of the rich heritage and culture of Ceylon/Sri Lanka.

However, due to the rising costs of delivery of the Journal to members worldwide, there has been a need to look for additional sources of revenue. The decision was therefore taken by the Committee to accommodate advertising and promotional material in the form of separate loose-leaf flyers to be inserted in copies of the Journal being sent out.

Suitable material, in keeping with the non-political, non-partisan aims and ideals of the CSA, will be considered. All such copy is to be submitted to the Editor for consideration.

Once accepted, the advertiser will need to supply the printed flyers in sufficient numbers for inclusion in that particular issue of the Journal.

The cost of inserting such flyers is \$500 per issue of the Journal, paid in advance.

Make a valuable
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**For just \$35, or \$50 if the nominee is resident
outside Australia**

Your nominee will have four quarterly issues
mailed to his/her home. Please contact the
Treasurer, Deepak Pritamdas
on 0434 860 188

