

The Ceylon Society of Australia (CSA) Annual General Meeting and Social on 19 December 2021 at the Pennant Hills Community Centre was a fitting finale to a very challenging year of lockdowns. The AGM re-elected the Committee with three new members for another year. Pauline Gunewardene, the President of the CSA, is to be commended for her tireless hard work in organising this event with the help from Committee members. Her address is reproduced here for the benefit of our members worldwide.

CSA's AGM and Social - 'a memorable event'



Pauline Gunewardene addressing the AGM with Thiru Arumugam (stand-in Secretary in the absence of Sunimal Fernando) on her right.

Good evening, guests and members of the Ceylon Society of Australia, and welcome to our 2021 Annual General Meeting and Social.

We've now notched up 24 years! - that is indeed an achievement of significance, and is due to the Committees who have gone before and to all of you Members without whose interest, of course, there would be no Society. I look forward to your continuing attendance and active participation in our Meetings, and to contributions to our journal.

Over the past year we have managed to hold at least the two General Meetings in Sydney in February and May, but the August Meeting had to be cancelled due to lockdown.

February 2021

The speaker was Prianga de Fonseka, a well known architect who has worked for high profile companies in Sydney and then in Qatar. Prianga had his creative talents honed during the time he worked in Sri Lanka with the famous Geoffrey Bawa and his interesting talk on "The History and Development of Architecture in Sri Lanka" spanned the ancient to modern.

May 2021

Martin Pieris was the speaker in May, an academic who is a lecturer at a couple of universities. He gave us an interesting talk on "The Evolution of Art in Sri Lanka", and took us through old temple art to the significant '43 Group, as well as touching on current trends.

The AGM and Social for 2020 had to be postponed from the scheduled November date due to the Covid19 lockdowns and we ended up holding it on

Sunday 28 February 2021 as a precursor to the February General Meeting. It was sadly the same day when Sunil de Silva passed away, one of our former Presidents and a long time Committee Member holding the post of Publications Officer. So there was a pall on the evening.

This past year also saw the sadness of our Founder President and Life Member, Hugh Karunanyake, losing his beloved wife Tulsi, who was a strong source of assistance in helping with so much of the social activities of the CSA over very many years. Tulsi was an integral part of the Sydney meetings, with her ever cheerful, helpful and pleasing personality. The November *Ceylankan* was dedicated to her memory.

The most critical and important change that had to be dealt with over the year was our Editor, Doug Jones, having to give up his 12 years of running the journal due to health issues. He had been battling to keep going from mid 2020, but finally had to give in to the inevitable. His dedication and commitment over the years to keep the journal coming out on schedule, with a consistently high standard, made this a great loss to the CSA. We will be marking his retirement at the end of the AGM with a presentation.

Editors do not grow on trees, of course, and finding a replacement became a tortuous exercise. However, we were so very fortunate to be able to persuade Adam Raffel to come on board as our new Editor from July. Being a working editor, he had all the knowledge and skills necessary to bring to bear on this important role in the CSA and has taken to it with great aplomb and success.

Special thanks are due tonight to Les Perera, who gave in his resignation as an Ex Officio Committee Member in August. Les was a long time Committee Member who has served as Secretary as well. He has been a valued member of the CSA Committee and his service will be missed. Our thanks and best wishes go to Les.

The past year has necessitated factoring in Covid19 lockdowns, as in 2020. However, the Committee Members have worked hard to keep your Society going, with having to engage in email exchanges and Zoom in lieu of face to face meetings, which were not possible due to the restrictions.

A special mention is due this year to our Treasurer Deepak, who has been working assiduously in identifying possible cost saving measures to cope with the difficulty in maintaining a breakeven financial



CSA Committee (from left) Amal Wahab (Social Convenor), Harry de Sayrah OAM JP (Public Relations), Pauline Gunewardene (President), Doug Jones (Life Member), Adam Raffel (Editor), Thiru Arumugam (Ex Officio). Absent: Deepak Pritamdas (Treasurer / Public Officer) and Sunimal Fernando (Secretary). Dr Srilal Fernando (Vice President), and Hugh Karunanayake (Life Member) are located in Melbourne.



Earlson Forbes (Publications) Kumar Rasiah (Ex Officio)

Photography by Mahal Selvadurai

status, despite the ever increasing substantial costs of postage to send out the journal and its printing. As a result, the printing and despatch of the journal for Colombo Chapter members is now being done in Sri Lanka from the copy sent by Editor Adam Raffel to the printer there. Our appreciation and thanks are due to Tony Saldin, the Local Convenor/President of the Colombo Chapter, who gave Deepak every cooperation and assistance – an exercise in collaboration which has saved the CSA approximately \$500.

Our overall membership now stands at 289 - 234 in Australia, 22 in Sri Lanka, 24 in other overseas countries, 2 Life Members and 7 gift subscriptions, with 20 Complimentaries of the journal being sent out to various institutions. Meetings by the Melbourne and Colombo Chapters were at a standstill due to the Covid19 situation. Our parent body Sydney General Meetings take place on the last Sunday evenings of February, May and August, with the AGM and Social date for next year to be confirmed. Please diarise the dates and I look forward to your attendance.

My plea as always to you all is to please try to introduce at least one new member to CSA from among your circle of friends and colleagues – that would work wonders for our member base! In particular, new younger age group members would ensure the Ceylon Society of Australia continues to flourish and evokes more interest in the wonderful historical and cultural heritage of Sri Lanka.

The Accounts for the year ended 30 June 2021 have been audited by Rienzie Fonseka. Our thanks to Rienzie for helping us with this over the last six years.

Copies of the audited Accounts have been emailed to Members for information. The cost of postage for Australia and Overseas has gone up astronomically from November. So Deepak has now got the journal registered for Printpost for Australian subs

which will help CSA by around \$200.

For Overseas Members other than Sri Lanka, we will regrettably have to consider increasing the Subscription from 2022 by \$5 to \$50 to meet the cost of mailing the journal – that is just the straight cost and has no extra factored in, so we do hope Overseas Members will understand. All other Subscriptions will stay unchanged.

Lastly, I would like to thank you most sincerely and particularly for your presence here tonight despite the pressures Covid has brought to bear on us all. It is a time of stress and trying to adapt to what has been called the “new normal” with observing recommended precautions. So we hope you will enjoy the evening of fellowship and socialising and the traditional Singalong – which will move into dancing as well as singing at halfway point. Catering this year is by the well known Flavour of Ceylon, and I hope you will enjoy the dinner.

Tonight has been difficult to organise with working around the up and down restrictions and problems, but with luck 2022 will be a more normal year. The CSA turns 25 next year and we are hoping to celebrate on a somewhat bigger scale if at all possible. Please stay tuned and make sure you join us! Meanwhile, let's make the most of this evening and have fun together in a pre Christmas celebration!

Thank you.

Pauline Gunewardene

President, Ceylon Society of Australia
Sunday 19 December 2021

A selection of photographs of the evening taken by Mahal Selvadurai of Mahals Photography

Doug Jones receiving his award from Pauline Gunewardene, CSA President, in appreciation of his service as Editor of *The Ceylankan*



If music be the food of life, play on Roger Menezes!



CSA Choir: (from top down) Daya Gonsalkorale, Lucien Wijetunga, Aubrey Joachim, Melanie Rankine, Rosani Wahab and Hyacinth Jones



Food glorious food!



Harry and Imelda de Sayrah



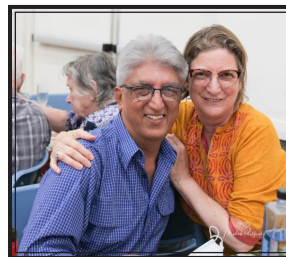
Doug and Hyacinth Jones



Amal and Rosani Wahab



Dr Malini Arumugam



Martin and Sue Pieris



Kanthi Perera



Srikantha Nadarajah and Earl Forbes



Daya Gonsalkorale collecting his trivia prize from Pauline Gunewardene for his perfect score! Thiru Arumugam was very pleased.



Shirani Rodrigo: the pianist who accompanied CSA Choir and Singalong



Octavia Perera and Prema (not pictured) sponsored the Entry Door Prize



Senanie de Silva donor of liquor for Raffle prizes



Avinder and Nirupa Paul sponsors of the Event



Rex Olegasekeram



and Lucien Wijetunga lucky recipients!



Gunasmin and Esme Lye



Shantha and Rienzie Fonseka



Singalong



Aubrey and Nelum Joachim



Prianga and Devika de Fonseka



Hyacinth Jones and Kantha Abeysinghe



Pauline and Shantha Fonseka



Earl Forbes and Rex Olegasekeram



Pauline and Octavia Perera drawing the Entry Door Prize



Nelleke van Essen, Leela Rasiah and Kumar Rasiah



Suzette Wright, Roderick de Sylva and Pauline



Kantha Abeysinghe (centre) dancing Baila with Amira and George Cooke and Elaine Tissera