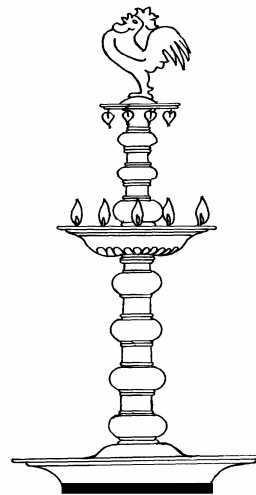


THE CEYLANKAN



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EDITORIAL



7

long years have I happily toiled to bring you *The Ceylankan*. Its time for me to say Good Bye! From its tender beginnings lovingly birthed by my predecessor David Goodrich, - I have enjoyed every minute of guiding it through its youth into maturity. I have received many words of appreciation and encouragement from the members and their friends who chance upon an issue or two. I thank them all. From its inception at an informal meeting at Life Members Hugh & Tulsi Karunanayake's home, the CSA has acquired a formidable membership both in numbers and in terms of intellectual capital that it is now considered to be a unique organisation.

And the flagship of this organisation is *The Ceylankan*. It is the glue that holds a worldwide membership together. The wonderful thing about it is, that all contributions come from its members, bar the odd one. The diversity of subjects presented is indicative of the breadth of knowledge the membership possess. The speakers at our chapter meetings in Sydney, Melbourne and now in Colombo deserve a special mention. They give of their time and share their research material so readily, the only reward being the gratitude of an appreciative audience. Their discourses which appear in these pages under Synopses of Meetings, are nuggets of knowledge. And we are all richer for them.

The Journal occupies respected shelf space and readership in twenty four national and international Libraries. A full list appears on page 31.

I have had, ready, able and willing assistance from various members but particular mention must be made of our doyen—Hugh Karunanayake whose inexhaustible knowledge about anything Sri Lankan and his cheerful willingness to share this has been invaluable to me as Editor. Hugh and Tulsi, I salute you both and thank you for being there to lean on. Many of the Journals would have been lifeless if not for your inputs. To Doug Jones Chris Piachaud, Tony & Srini Peries—all proof readers *par excellence* and grammarians I owe a deep debt of gratitude. If not for them Lynn Truss would be tearing her hair reading this Journal. I do hope, this, my last presentation will be received and enjoyed by all. I wish the new Editor all the best and depart in sure confidence we will see new dynamism in the Journal. Ayubowan!



19th Century Images



Sinhalese Ayah - Ladies' Maid



Caroline Anthony Pillai, circa 1940

Photo: K. Appanraj.



Caroline - September 2008

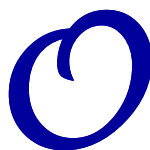
Photo: M.A. Pushpa Kumara.

Pioneer Sri Lankan Socialist celebrates her 100th birthday

Caroline Anthony Pillai

The Lioness of Boralugoda

by Charles Wesley Ervin



n October 8, 2008, Caroline Anthony Pillai,

the last living link to the early socialist movement in Sri Lanka, turned 100. Caroline and her family have much to celebrate. She was a pioneer in many ways. Drawn into politics by her fiery elder brothers, Philip and Robert Gunawardena, she participated in the nascent Ceylonese nationalist movement of the early 'thirties and helped launch the Lanka Sama Samaja Party (LSSP) in 1935.

During the Second World War, Caroline worked in an underground Trotskyist party in India along with her husband S.C.C. Anthony Pillai. In 1947, she led a 100-day textile strike in Madras that became a landmark labour battle in India. After Independence, she and her husband remained in India to help build the left wing of the Socialist movement. With her support, he became a trade-union and parliamentary leader with national stature. When he died in 2000, Caroline finally returned to her native land. She lives with her family in Boralugoda, near the ancestral home where she was born in a different era.

Formative Years

Dona Caroline Rupasinghe Gunawardena was born on October 8, 1908, in rural Boralugoda in the Avissawella District. Her father, Don Jakolis Rupasinghe Gunawardena, was a prosperous land-owner who served the British colonial government as the village *ralahamy* (headman) and *vidane arachchi* (local police officer). The local folk deferentially called him "Boralugoda Ralahamy." He gave all his children English names: Harry, Philip, Benjamin (Robert), Sarah, Agnes, Sophia, Emily Angeline, Alice, and Caroline. Yet he also taught them to be proud of their Sinhalese Buddhist culture. He schooled the children at the Boralugoda Temple and the Siddhartha Vidyalaya in nearby Kaluaggala.

In 1915, commercial rivalry between Sinhalese Buddhist and Muslim merchants flared into communal violence. The British governor imposed martial law and rounded up suspected nationalists,

including Caroline's father, who was accused of giving dynamite to rioters, sentenced to death, and jailed for seven months until he was released for lack of evidence.

The ordeal turned the Gunawardenas into resolute nationalists. Boralugoda Ralahamy pulled his sons out of the Prince of Wales College and put them in Ananda, the Theosophist-Buddhist school for boys. Caroline and her sisters were sent to Musaeus College, the sister school for girls. After passing out of Musaeus, Caroline returned to Boralugoda and started teaching at the Siddhartha Vidyalaya.

Caroline was never one to bow to authority. Her niece, Vivienne Goonewardene (Goonetilleke), recalled how "Aunt Caro" taught her to be brave and defiant: "the young chaperone would induce the little children to run under the bellies of the elephants who had been brought for their daily baths. This too she would insist the children do many times. Every time her mother came to know of this escapade, Caroline would receive a caning for her efforts in teaching the young to be courageous. Caning notwithstanding, the lessons would be repeated." (Pulsara Liyanage, *Vivi: A Biography of Vivienne Goonewardena*, 1998.)

Prelude to the Revolutionary Party

In the late 'twenties Caroline and her brothers, Harry and Robert, became active in nationalist youth groups which were demanding democratic reforms with the ultimate goal of complete independence. When the British announced that a State Council would be convened in 1931, Harry Gunawardena decided to contest the Avissawella constituency. Caroline campaigned for her brother. In his memoirs Robert described how their opponent, a wealthy and powerful man, was incensed by this challenge from upstarts (*Daily Mirror*, 9 November 1971). Though Harry lost, Caroline found her calling. From that point on, she dedicated her life to winning freedom for Ceylon and India and social justice for all.

In late 1932, her brother Philip returned to Ceylon after a ten-year sojourn in the USA and England, where he had been an active member of the British Communist Party until he was expelled for supporting Trotsky against Stalin. Upon his return home, he converted Caroline and Robert to

his revolutionary ideology. This was the nucleus of the revolutionary movement in Ceylon.

Caroline participated in the annual *Suriya Mal* campaigns, which were a form of protest against the official observation of Remembrance Day. Ceylonese soldiers had fought to help the British preserve their Empire in WWI. Yet they didn't get the same benefits as the British veterans. Caroline and her comrades pushed the *Suriya Mal* activists to raise anti-imperialist slogans.

When an epidemic of malaria broke out in 1933-34, the *Suriya Mal* activists fanned out into the stricken villages to dispense food and medicine. Caroline played an important role. The Gunawardenas set up a dispensary in their house in Boralugoda. Caroline worked closely with her classmate from Musaeus, Selina Perera (nee Peiris), who joined the group around the Gunawardenas.

The LSSP

In 1935 the British government announced that elections for the Second State Council would be held in early 1936. The *Suriya Mal* workers decided that the time had come to launch a socialist party and field candidates for the State Council. Philip Gunawardena was the driving force behind the new party. Caroline had the courage to defy convention and join a Red Party that boldly called for an "equal society" (*sama samaja*) cleansed of all racial, caste, class and gender discrimination. The other notable women leaders were her friends, Selina Perera, who later married party leader N.M. Perera, and Susan de Silva, a feisty feminist.

The new party promptly nominated four candidates to stand for the State Council. Philip contested the Avissawella constituency. Caroline trekked village to village, campaigning for Philip. A powerful orator on any platform, he soon became known as "the lion of Boralugoda." He won by a strong majority. N.M. Perera also won in Ruwanwella. The two popular LSSP leaders used the council chambers to broadcast the message of Marxism to the people of the country and fight for reforms on their behalf.

Caroline became a respected party leader in her own right. In 1937, the party selected Caroline to be part of the LSSP delegation to the Faizpur session of the Indian National Congress. Caroline was a role model to the younger women in the party, especially Vivienne Goonetilleke and Kusumasiri Amarasinghe, who later married Leslie Gunawardena and Philip Gunawardena, respectively.

Romance, Marriage, and Strikes

In 1937-38 a number of talented Tamil youth joined the LSSP, including S.C.C. Anthony Pillai, who went by the nickname "Tony." The party leaders felt that he had the potential to become a trade-union leader. However, he couldn't speak Sinhalese, and that was a major handicap. And so Philip Gunawardena suggested that Tony get some instruction in Sinhala from his sister Caroline at Siddhartha Vidyalaya.

In many ways Caroline and Tony were worlds apart. He was cool and calculating, she was impetuous. He was a Tamil, she was Sinhalese. His parents were Christians, her's Buddhist. He was 24-years old, she was 30. Yet the two became close and fell in love. In 1939 Caroline and Tony were married in a simple ceremony.

The LSSP sent the newlyweds to Nawalapitiya, a hill town about 25 miles south of Kandy, surrounded by tea plantations, to organise the Tamil estate workers into an LSSP union. This was difficult and dangerous work. The British planters used their *kanganies* (foremen) and bazaar thugs to keep out agitators. While living in Nawalapitiya, Caroline gave birth to their first son, Mahendran, and then Ranjit Sen. While making speeches and organising meetings, she also had to tend to the needs of her family..

The WWII had just started in Europe. Following the Trotskyist line, the LSSP vociferously opposed the "imperialist war." Unwilling to tolerate the Trotskyist troublemakers any longer, the colonial government arrested four LSSP leaders, including the two State Councillors, seized the party press, and banned party activities. Despite the tightening vice of repression, Tony and Caroline pressed ahead with their work. In 1940-41 they led strikes by bus workers, harbour workers, and granary workers. As her nephew, Vijith Gunawardena, recently told me, Caroline was "tough as nails – even tougher than Philip or Robert."

The Exodus to India

In April 1942, the LSSP underground workers carried out a perfectly planned rescue of their leaders from jail. The jailbreak brought renewed repression. Meanwhile, in India, Gandhi was threatening

to summon a mass movement to force the British to "Quit India." The LSSP had already helped to organise a skeletal Trotskyist organisation there—the Bolshevik Leninist Party of India (BLPI). Unable to do much in Ceylon, the LSSP leaders decided to escape to India and help their BLPI comrades intervene in the impending mass struggle.

In July, 1942 about two dozen Ceylonese Trotskyists secretly crossed over to India in fishing boats. While most headed for Bombay, Tony went to Madurai. An anxious Caroline stayed behind with

the two children. A month later the Quit India revolt erupted. The BLPI, new to the scene, threw its meagre resources into the fight. In Madurai Tony and the handful of local BLPI members printed leaflets in support of the revolt.

After the "Quit India" revolt subsided, Tony sent a message to Caroline asking her to join him in Madras. The family was at last reunited. Yet the situation was trying, to say the least. The police were beating the bushes looking for the Trotskyists.



Caroline and S.C.C. Anthony Pillai, 1974. At the microphone: K. Kamaraj, leader of the Congreso(O). Standing between Caroline and Tony: C.K. Narayanan, former member of the Trotskyist BLPI and Secretary of the Madras Labour

Photo: K. Appanraj.

She ventured out at considerable risk; unable to speak Tamil fluently, she couldn't easily blend in with the locals. Her living arrangements were risky, too. She and Tony shared their flat with several young party comrades. All the comings and goings, and the frequent meetings at all hours of day and night, must have had people talking.

Return to Ceylon

In July 1943, the police raided the BLPI hideout in Bombay where Philip and Kusuma Gunawardena and another half dozen young comrades were staying. The other Ceylonese fugitives in Bombay escaped and fled to Madras, where they took refuge with Caroline and Tony in a large, two-story house in Venus Colony in Teynampet. With the police hot on their trail, Caroline and Tony decided that it was best for her to take the children back to Ceylon.

After Caroline left, Tony moved to new place which he thought would be safer: a modest outhouse behind the famous Ambi's Café, opposite the Nampally Railway Station. Ironically, this move backfired. The neighbourhood was populated by strict vegetarian Brahmins. And so the young comrades who were living with Tony went to another section of town for their non-vegetarian meals. Someone recognized them and informed the police, who trailed them back to their place and arrested everyone. Tony and another Ceylonese comrade were sentenced to two years' rigorous imprisonment at the Alipuram prison for "possessing seditious literature."

The High Point of Her Political Career

After his release from Alipuram, Tony returned home to Ceylon. But he and Caroline had little time to settle back into the political life of their country. The BLPI in Madras sent word that their work in the Buckingham and Carnatic Mills during the war had paid off. The president of the Madras Labour Union, the oldest and largest union in India, representing the mill workers, was willing to pass the mantle of leadership to Tony. That was an offer that couldn't be declined. And so Tony, Caroline and the

children went back to Madras.

On June 6, 1946 Tony was elected president of the Madras Labour Union. The very next day an incident in the mills precipitated a strike. Caroline and her BLPI comrades plunged into strike support activities. After 48 days, the union won its key demands. In early 1947, the situation in the B&C Mills heated up again. The union leaders started collecting strike funds, organised a network of neighbourhood committees, and recruited 1,000 volunteers to form a workers defence guard. Anticipating that Tony would be arrested once the strike began, the union formed a secret strike committee in which Caroline was to play a leading role. The Trotskyists were the brains and backbone of the committee.

Before dawn on March 10, the police arrested Tony. The secret committee called a mass meeting that evening. At the meeting, according to one eyewitness, "Mrs. Caroline Anthony Pillai's speech at the height of her emotions infused in the workers a new sense of duty and her speech showed them a new path." (K. Appanraj, *Anja Nenjan: Thoyizh Sangha Medai S.C.C. Antoni Pillai Vazhkai Varalaru*, Chennai, 1995). She said there would be no negotiations until Tony and the other leaders were released. The next day not a single one of the more than 14,000 workers entered the B&C Mills. Afraid that the workers would march to the jail where Tony was held, the government transferred him to a remote jail in Andhra, where he was placed in solitary confinement.

On March 28, more than 40,000 strikers and their families turned out for a union rally. Caroline, the main speaker, called for a one-day hartal in Madras in support of the strike. More than 100,000 honoured the hartal. The mood was militant. Workers erected road blocks. The government deployed troops in a massive show of force.

One night, when Caroline and Selina Perera set out for a clandestine meeting of the strike committee in Perambur, they noticed two men following them to the bus stop. Certain that they were CID men, Caroline came up with a plan. When the bus arrived, Caroline told the driver that two men were pursuing them with

evil intentions. Caroline stood at the front door of the bus, Selina at the back. As the two policemen tried to board, they kicked them as hard as they could, and the bus sped away.

The next morning, the Malabar Special Police came to Caroline's place and put her under house arrest. That didn't deter Caroline. She wrote notes, pinned them to the inside of her eldest son's trousers, and sent him to rendezvous with the union leaders in Perambur. When the government banned all rallies and demonstrations, Caroline and her comrades devised other ingenious tactics. On one occasion, about 500 strikers infiltrated into the central railway station in little groups and then closed ranks and marched out in a procession shouting slogans, taking the police by surprise.

On June 9, the government illegalised the union, seized its funds, locked its headquarters, and arrested 49 BLPI members. Night after night, an army of 10,000 Malabar Special Police terrorised the mill districts and arrested thousands of strikers. The Madras Labour Union had no choice but to end the strike. Even then nearly 3,000 workers stayed away from the mills in protest.

Though the strike was defeated, Caroline and Tony had earned the admiration and support of the working class in Madras. In 1947 Tony was elected president of the Madras Port Trust Employees' Union and the following year he and two other Trotskyist officers of the Madras Labour Union were elected to the Madras Municipal Council.

The "Woman Behind the Man"

In 1948, Caroline gave birth to her third son, Nalin Ranjan, and two years later her fourth, Suresh Kumar. As a mother of a large family, she had less and less time and energy for politics. Meanwhile, Tony was becoming more and more consumed by his expanding trade-union responsibilities. He became the General Secretary and Vice President of the powerful All-India Port and Dock Workers Federation and President of the All-India Transport Workers Union. In 1952, he was elected vice president of the Hind Mazdoor Sabha, the Socialist's all-India trade-union federation.

Though she eventually had to take a back seat to his career, Caroline remained very much his political partner. She advised him, supported him financially in the lean years, assisted with his union

work, and sometimes even pushed him to be more militant. She never lost her "Boralugoda fire."

Caroline Anthony Pillai is a living link to a by-gone era in politics. She forsook a comfortable future to fight for the freedom of her country and the uplift of the working classes. She dedicated her life to the revolutionary vanguard. She never flinched in the face of danger and adversity. She inspired and mentored others. She loathed lies and hypocrisy.

Let us honour Caroline Anthony Pillai—the fearless little girl who ran under elephants and became "the lioness of Boralugoda."

Charles Wesley Ervin is the author of *Tomorrow is Ours: The Trotskyist Movement in India and Ceylon, 1935-48*, published by the Social Scientists Association. E-mail: wes_ervin@bellsouth.net

ΩΩΩΩΩΩ

When Insults had Class

Using no four letter words

My English teacher once told me, 'Profanity is just an excuse for a poor vocabulary'. These glorious insults are from an era when cleverness with words was still valued, before a great portion of the English language got boiled down to four letter words, uttered by monosyllabic idiots, not to mention the waving of middle fingers.

Exchange between Churchill & Lady Astor:
She said, 'If you were my husband I'd give you poison' He said, 'If you were my wife, I'd drink! it.

A Member of Parliament to Disraeli:
'Sir, you will either die on the gallows or of some unspeakable disease'.
'That depends, Sir,' said Disraeli, 'on whether I embrace your policies or your mistress'

'I am enclosing two tickets to the first night of my new play; bring a friend, if you have one.'
George Bernard Shaw to Winston Churchill

'Cannot possibly attend first night, will attend second... if there is one.'
Winston Churchill, in response.

Contributed by Hugh Karunanayake

Memories of Bryce Ryan

by Bruce Ryan

It was with much excitement that I greeted the news in 1948 that my father Prof Bryce Ryan was soon to take up an appointment as Head of the University of Ceylon's new Department of Sociology. My excitement was I suspect, not second to that of my father, who I am sure had foreseen many opportunities for research and for some pioneering work in a discipline that was yet to be institutionalised within Ceylon's academia.

We arrived in Colombo in 1948 by freighter from New York and initially stayed at the Galle Face Hotel. The hotel and the Galle Face Green was our home for weeks and as a rather spoilt eight-year old, I was soon mesmerised by the kite flying that took place on the Green in the evenings. I still remember my first kite that I tried to fly on the Green. It tangled with other kites and was soon brought down and that brought tears to my eyes.

Those were care-free happy days in a peaceful Colombo. Ceylon had just achieved dominion status and had almost fully recovered from its involvement as a British colony.

After a few weeks at the Galle Face Hotel we moved to the first floor of a large house in Ward Place near Borella. In the mornings, I attended the British Army Garrison School, and in the afternoons I rode my bicycle to the Colombo Swimming Club. Life in Borella was quaint, with vendors of various fruits and vegetables coming round to our house with their wares. (There were snake charmers too!) Bananas of all kinds, mangoes, mangosteens, rambutans, and other fruits that I

cannot name but can picture and taste in my memory still evoke a sense of nostalgia for the old times in Ceylon. We later moved to 33/12 Kuruppu Road where my fondest memory is of the pounding of the rice mortar on Saturday so that we could have string hoppers on Sunday mornings.

We travelled the country in our Austin A 40 with its warning painted on the back in three languages: *Caution Left Hand Drive!* We had brought it from New York and not from England – hence the left hand drive. Off we went to the hill country, to Galle and Yala, to the Cultural Triangle and to Jaffna but mostly to the villages where my father's students did their fieldwork under his tutelage.

My favourite trips were to lowland villages, possibly Balapitiya or Pelpola. I still recall travelling on a dirt road when we stopped to let Bryce's student offer a coconut at a small shrine. In the villages, we ate the wonderful rice and curry clumsily with fingers or more likely with spoons! While the village

boys bathe their elephants in the tank, we were told about the crocodile that lived on the other side of the water. "Is it dangerous?" I asked. "No, it has not eaten anybody yet", was the calm response! As we left the village, the student knelt down before a seated older woman to be blessed before returning to the city.

At a different village in the east, I took a turn with the pellet bow that the boys used to keep wild animals away from their *chena*. (plot of land cleared for cultivation). When I cut my hand with a pocket knife, the village boy immediately found the medicinal

leaves which were applied to the wound and the bleeding stopped.

In the accompanying photograph, I (extreme right) have placed my hand on the houseboy's shoulder, a gesture I was told later was not proper manners and disrespectful.



As a youngster however, I was not aware of that and of many other aspects of life there. These many years later as I study Buddhism I value having visited the great shrines and temples, heard the drums and chants at *poya*, (full moon day) and seen the monks on their daily rounds in the neighbourhood as well as in the cities – a clearly observed thread in the fabric of that society then and now.

After relinquishing his appointment with the University of Ceylon, my father returned to the USA where he taught Sociology at Cornell University for three years. Together with several colleagues, he did field work studying the organisation of a hacienda in Peru. He thereafter moved to Wayne State University in Detroit for a couple of years and then to a full career at the University of Miami in Florida. For most of his years there, he was Head of the Department. He also served a term as President of the Southern Sociological Society. In the warm Miami climate, he took to growing many varieties of palms and joined the Palm Society for several international trips. I do not know whether his inspiration for growing palms came from his visits to the Botanical Gardens in Peradeniya which had one of the best collection palms in the world. In his retirement, my father was out in the sunny garden for hours every day taking care of his palms and cycads. That did not keep him away from several trips to his favourite Rocky Mountain lakes for fly fishing. Professionally he did devote quite a bit of time to a sequel of his text *Social and Cultural Change* but that was still in typescript format when he died in April 2004 at the age of 93.

Bryce Ryan returned to Sri Lanka several times in later years, visiting the cultural sites and keeping up with friends and former students. I am always impressed when I think of the affection with which he spoke of his students.

My wife and I returned in 2007 for a visit to Sri Lanka and I find it still a wonderful country and still full of wonder for me.

I thank Hugh Karunanayake for encouraging me to write this essay for *The Ceylankan*.

Prof. Bryce Ryan was the founding Professor of Sociology at the University of Ceylon and is greatly respected for his work in establishing the Department of Sociology. His work "Caste in Modern Ceylon- the Sinhalese system in transition" published by Rutgers University Press in 1953 is considered the best ever work on the caste system in Ceylon. His son Bruce, the author of this essay, worked with the US Navy for a period of 11 years and thereafter took to teaching in a public school from which he retired 10 years ago.

ΩΩΩΩΩΩΩΩ

Down to the Ginza to buy "Underpantu"

by Brian Parker

W

hen I was working for Fairfax Newspapers, I was summonsed to the office of the Director of Advertising, one day.

"Parker, we are looking for someone to represent us in Japan and it has come to our notice that you lived for many years in Sri Lanka, you might fill the bill."

"Yes". I said with modesty. "I believe that I could fill the bill with decorum and distinction."

"There is an added bonus, if we send you of course," he said. Wondering which of my many and varied accomplishments he was referring to, I asked: "And what's that?"

"Well, you look like a retired Sumo Wrestler!."

The night before that first trip to Japan for the Financial Review, Ruth and I went out to dinner. As it was late when we returned home, I told her not to bother about my packing, as I would do it in the morning, after I had taken her to work.

While unpacking in the Palace Hotel in Tokyo, I soon realised that I had forgotten to pack enough underpants.

When I arrived at the office of our agents, Nik-kei International, I told the Assistant who had been assigned to look after me, a Mr. Yuji Takeda, that I needed to buy some underwear. He called up one of the junior assistants and barked at him in Japanese, then, because of their innate politeness, he repeated the instructions in English, for my benefit. "Escort Mr. Parker to the shops to buy underpantul!"

"That's very kind of you Mr. Takeda but I can find the way by myself, thank you." He looked at me in a slightly patronising way. "How you can do this? You have never been to Japan or Tokyo before." "Please don't worry. I want to do this on my own. I will be not much more than half an hour."

Takeda looked at me as though I had said that if I jumped from the eighth floor I would be able to fly. He was still shaking his head as I left the office. I decided to make for Matsuzakaya one of the big department stores in the Ginza that I had read about in the tourist literature in the hotel. I could get there and back



easily on the Subway. There was an entrance to Ohtemachi station just around the corner from the office and in no time at all I was walking down the Ginza and found my department store without any difficulty. The Japanese call these stores 'Departs'.

Matsuzakaya 'Depart' is big, glossy and busy like Sydney's David Jones, only much more so. From the food hall in the basement right up to the eighth floor, it is crammed with expensive merchandise, much of it imported. As shoppers enter in through the main doors they are greeted by a number of pretty girls, usually three, dressed in the corporate uniform, who sing out a greeting in a high falsetto voice, typically used in all corporate buildings. They always reminded me of a group of little song birds sitting on a wire.

I approached them and asked were I would find underclothing and was directed to the sixth floor. I found my way to the men's department and was looking at the display of underwear, when one of the Assistants approached me. "I'm looking for some underpants." I said.

The Assistant looked at me as though I was a mental defective. He raised his eyebrows and waved his arm at the surrounding displays. "We have Jockey, Y-Front, X-Front..." he mentioned half a dozen other international brands.

I noticed two things about the display, one was the high cost of everything and there appeared to be nothing larger than a 90cm waistband. "Tell me, where do your sumo wrestlers buy their underpants?" I asked. He motioned for me to wait with the usual words. "Moment..."

He quickly returned with someone else in tow, who wore a badge with 'I speak English' written on it. "Thank you waiting." He began. "How may I help you?"

"I wish to buy some underpants..."

He interrupted me. "We have many varieties here. Jockey, Y-Front, X-Front..." he mentioned three or four of the brands.

"Yes I know. But they are all on the small size. Where do your sumo wrestlers buy their underpants?"

He looked at me quizzically. "Moment....." and they both departed only to reappear very soon, with a third Assistant who wore and even bigger badge bearing the legend **'I speak English.'**

"Thank you for waiting. May I help you?"

"I'm trying to buy some underpants but....."

He interrupted me with a whole list of the various brands carried by the store. "Yes yes," It was my turn to interrupt him. "Very impressive but all these are too small. Where do your sumo wrestlers buy their underpants?"

He looked at me in a very old-fashioned way. "Moment...." then the three of them hurried away. So did I. I could visualise more and more Assistants with bigger and bigger buttons screaming the legend **'I SPEAK ENGLISH!!'**

I hurried up the escalator to the top floor, which was very different from those below. This one seemed to be stocked with Japanese made clothes only, everything from beautiful silk kimonos for a mere \$50-\$90,000 to everyday cotton *yukatas* for men. Then I spotted them in a bin, Japanese "underpantu", some big enough to fit the largest of sumo. Simple cotton jobs with a drawstring.

I took the lift to the ground floor, thus avoiding going anywhere near the army of English speakers, waiting to help me, on the sixth.

Having made my purchase of "underpantu" I set off back to the office, quite pleased with myself, unaware that I had made a serious mistake on my outward journey. Ohtemachi station has something like thirty six entrance/exits, some up to a mile apart and I had not taken any notice nor had I remembered the number of the entrance, by which I entered the system.

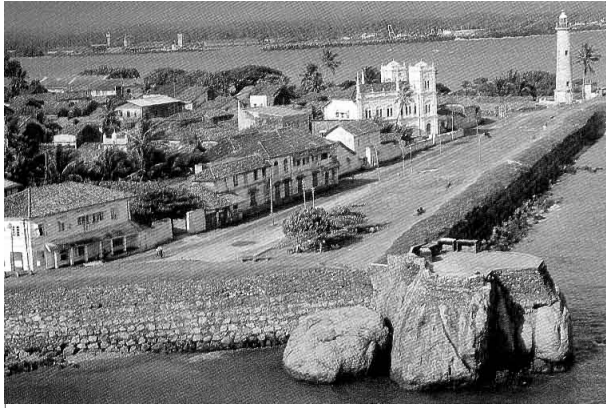
Down below ground all the pedestrian malls looked the same to me. There were many shops and restaurants but I did not recognise any one in particular. As I came to each exit, I would go up to the road above and look around, then not recognising any landmarks I would descend again and try another exit. I must have tried at least two dozen exits and to anyone standing around up there, I must have looked like some prairie dog, popping out of the burrow and then popping back again. I was beginning to get slightly worried that I was experiencing some sort of Groundhog Day but I still did not want to ring the office, admitting defeat.

Then, on one recce above, I saw the Kikkoman Building that I had noticed on my outward journey. I was back in the office in five minutes. As I opened the door, everybody looked up to see who was coming in and I definitely sensed that there was a sense of relief all round.

A few days later Mr. Takeda told me that while I was away there had been a general discussion in the office as to whether I would make it back or not. I am sure that they thought I would end up floating in Tokyo Bay because every time the phone rang, someone would say. "Perhaps that's the police!"

The Japanese believe that foreigners are never really capable of properly understanding Japan or the Japanese, so it was only after I told Mr. Takeda that I had lived in Tokyo in a former life, during the Edo period (1602-1868), that he allowed me to do anything on my own, despite not really believing in reincarnation.

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The Old Dutch Fortress-Galle

by June Colin-Thome

My home was in a fortress
 in long gone days of yore
 Its ramparts and battlements
 are home to me no more.
 Winds of change have moved us
 to another place, another clime
 But a face, a smile can take us on
 nostalgic journeys back in time
 One remembers
 Long bellied, old Dutch houses
 jostling tightly row by row
 Narrow streets where all the neighbours
 every family seemed to know
 Games of tennis in the afternoons
 Passions sipped with ice-
 Evening strolls along the batteries
 where balmy breezes would entice
 Long lingering conversations
 in friendly genial company
 until the sun blazed red and gold
 into the endless churning sea
 The constant crash of restless waves
 beyond the fortress wall
 The sing-song lilt of a vendor his old familiar call
 The hourly chimes of the old clock tower
 when time moved in slower motion
 The light-house winking messages
 to ships out on the ocean
 Twinkling lights of fishing boats
 on the horizon miles away
 A shimmering path of silver moonlight
 across the sheltered bay
 Secluded, sunny bathing places
 one for girls and one for boys
 The taboo to mix and mingle
 overcome by clever ploys
 Music, songs and laughter
 picnics, bands by candlelight
 Singing ancient carols
 along the streets on Christmas night
 These precious fragments from the past
 in our memories cling and stay
 Till even the memories in time
 will slowly fade away

An unusual journey

Extract from a travel diary

by Barbara Misso

My husband, Douglas, always preferred the 'way less-travelled.' So it was not surprising he suggested that we travel to Bandarawela for a holiday break not by the upcountry trail but by the west coast road, going north from Colombo to Anuradhapura and down the east coast to Arugam Bay and finally travelling west to our destination.. Neither of us had travelled this circuitous route.

The first morning burst on us with drenching rain, thunder and lightning, but the weather cleared in time for our start. Colombo and its suburbs seemed endless as we drove along damp streets hurrying to get away from the noise and confusion of traffic. Travelling north along the west coast we reached Negombo, taking in the hanging toddy pot, the fields of vegetables, coconut estates, paddy fields and tobacco plantations as we drove by.

Our first stop, for lunch, was at Chilaw and here our buoyant spirits were dampened. Instead of the curry and rice we had hoped for, we were served canned braised beef and beans in a room overlooking a cheerless beach. A promenade now marked by a row of broken pillars stood at the sea's edge. As we drove off after a quick meal, we saw fisher-folk gathered in the markets, the women conspicuous, in black jacket and cloth.

From Chilaw we took the lagoon-bordered road again. Long stretches of sand accompanied the bitumen road till we approached Puttalam. A wooded arm shut off the lagoon with glimpses of the sea beyond. The rest house at Puttalam smiled in sunshine and comfort. We could have lingered in its shady garden and veranda if we had the time but Anuradhapura was our destination and evening was fast approaching.

The road left the coast, turning inland. Darkness was closing in; our path lay through the jungle. Thorny masses of shrubs, creepers and small-leaved trees leaned over the road as if to gather it back into forest. The shrill whistle of cicadas accompanied us and the road

stretched straight ahead. Only a cart, drawn by a weary bull, appeared and once a black bandicoot strayed onto the road, to scamper off at the sound of the car.

Weary with our first day's travel and the monotony of the landscape, we came at last in sight of some of the oldest remaining ruins of Ceylon's past. In the gloom we reached the town of Anuradhapura and found the house of my aunt Sylvia and her husband Eardley. We spent our first night with them and rose at dawn to walk around the ruins and wonder again at an irrigation system that had sustained its usefulness over centuries.

After breakfast we were off to Trincomalee, back on the same road, rising and dipping into the distance with the same thorny jungle pressing in on us. The occasional patch of lush green broke the monotony. Trees were draped in creepers, undergrowth everywhere, twisting, clinging, concealing the ground and making one wall of green. Out of this jungle, no fearsome thing emerged, to my disappointment. Only one exciting moment enlivened our day when a pair of moose-deer feeding by the road stood transfixed for a moment, then rushed, quivering, across our path and disappeared into the undergrowth.

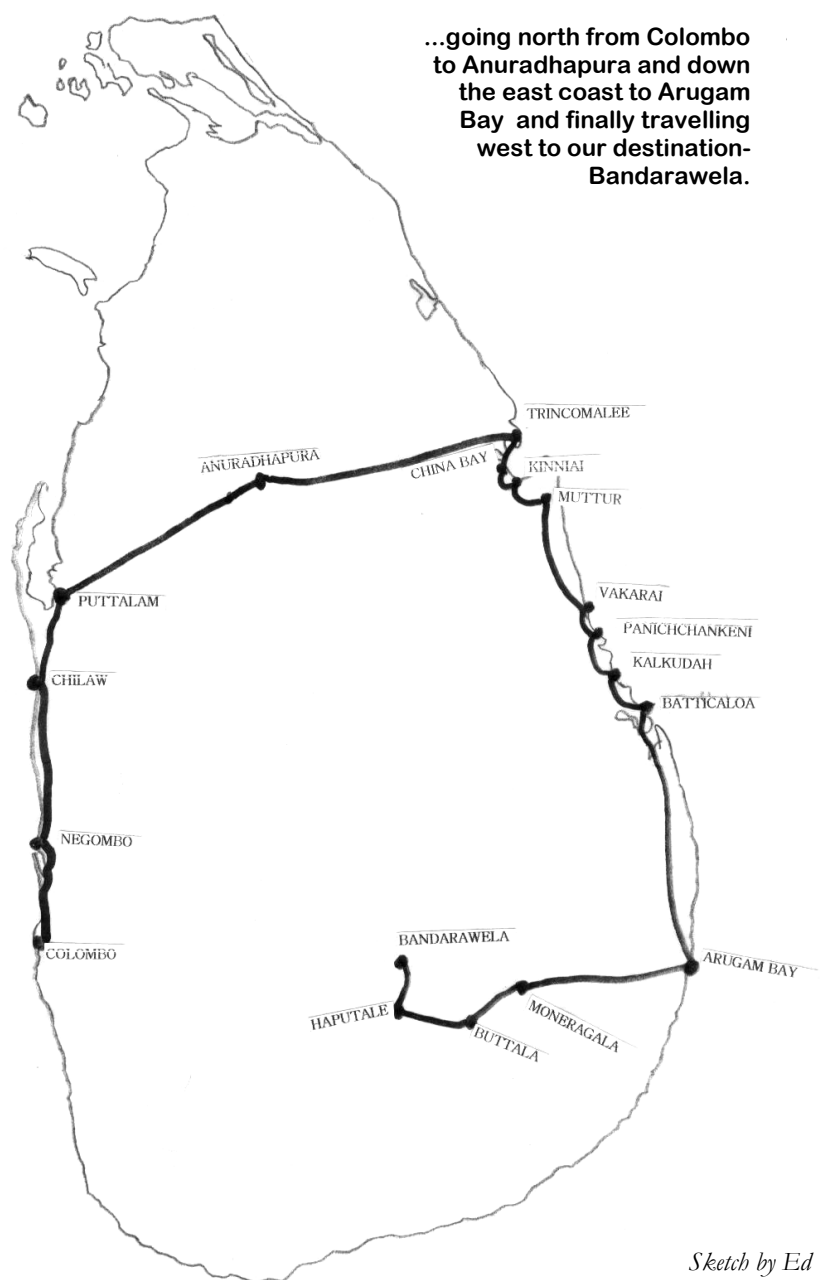
Trinco was blazing under a noon sun, but the old Dutch Fort and the bay made an enchanting scene. The bay glowed a deep turquoise; the stone Fort was draped in green creepers and shaded by trees with red-roofed houses in the foreground. The heat and the shortage of accommodation at the rest house drove us out on the road again.

Our next stop, the town of Kantalai, was named after a tank nearby, much larger than the Tissawewa and the Nuwarawewa. Another straight stretch of road through the jungle, the only difference being that the road was broad, with an unusually good surface. It was built during World War II for troop movements. From time to time we caught glimpses of rusting barbed wire and rusting motor vehicles left behind after war ended.

The entrance to Kantalai rest house was not prepossessing, but once inside the stone building, on its broad balcony overlooking the tank, there was a sense of peace. The reservoir spread

below us, its surface stirred by little waves; beyond, a low line of hills, to the right a wooded finger reached into the water birds were gathering in multitudes seeking shelter for the night ahead.

In May, the rest house was warm inside though the air outside was cool. Its stone walls gave it a Gothic atmosphere, like the background to a horror movie. In that remote spot there was another visitor – an elderly European after game. He came in about seven when the insects were hovering round the lamp. Lake flies, eye flies, beetles of all sizes and small creatures like cockroaches flung themselves against the shade of the petromax lamp hanging above us in the ceiling or lay dead in clusters on the floor. Reading or conversation was impossible as the insects got in our hair, our faces, and our clothes. There was only early dinner, away from the lamps and then a stroll down to the water's edge to watch the

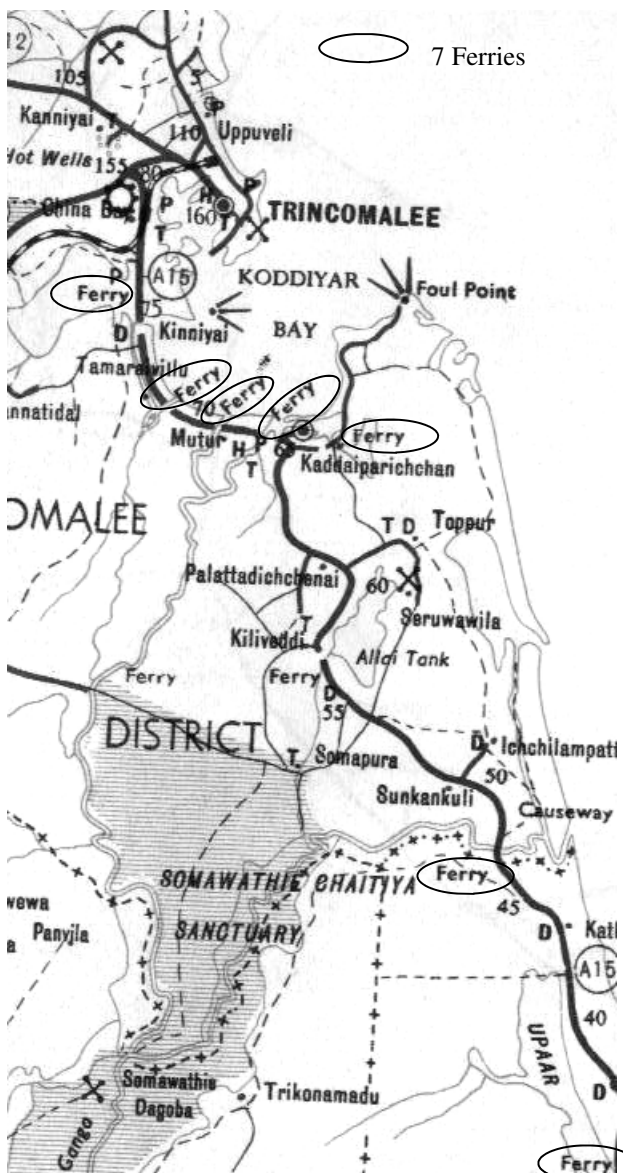


Sketch by Ed

stars reflected in the water as one by one the planets slipped out of sight behind the hills.

The following morning we woke by 5.30. The lake was like dark silk. Light was beginning to break and by 6.00, the water and the sky were a pale rose. Birds of all kinds flew from the trees bordering the lake in great confusion.

No time to linger. Before us was the prospect of **seven ferry-crossings** before we reached Batticoloa, the nearest town.



We travelled past beautiful China Bay, blue and shimmering in the sun, our last sight of the sea before we plunged into the desolate road at the delta of the river.

At Kinniyai we came to our first ferry and the widest. The villages on the east coast were poor, those by the ferries alone containing a shop or two. Women peeped out at us from behind palisades of dried coconut branches staring till we were out of sight but their children came close and chatted with

solemn faces. Only Douglas could speak with them because they spoke only Tamil.

The Muttur and Uppar ferries were smaller. They spanned outlets of the Mahaveli Ganga; rather narrow channels for our longest river, with the characteristic sandbanks and bars, islands and mangrove swamps. At Verugal, the ferryboat was on the further shore, so we had to wait till it came over. A mother was bathing a bright-eyed chubby baby. She sat the little one on the very edge of the slight embankment and dipped a tin into the water, pouring it over the baby's shoulders while he slapped a piece of coloured cloth on the ground, happily, imitating his mother washing clothes.

This crossing was shorter than the previous ones, but the banks were steeper causing moments of anxiety as the car drove on to the ferry and left it. Villagers stood by and stared, watching our every movement till we were out of sight. The road from Muttur to Panichchankeni with its broken surface was the next problem but happily it improved further down the coast. Vakara rest house dawned on us like an oasis in the desert. It faces the lagoon, shut in by two sandbars from the sea. A refreshing breeze from the sea blew on us as we lazed there till early evening, too drunk with ozone to leave.

Out of the rest house we drove on to a blazing road through barren country to our last and most pleasant ferry ride. On the further bank we saw the first flowers since we had started that morning—the crimson blossoms of the spathodea. [*Spathodea Campanulata* or *Fountain Tree* introduced in 1873. The unexpanded flowers contain a quantity of secreted water, hence the name fountain tree... Ed]

Kalkudah was disappointing. We mistook the rest house keeper's freshly painted house for the rest house that was unique with a thatched roof, but hardly our idea of comfort after a day's driving in the sun. The sea was choppy so we walked down to a bay further along the coast at Passekudah. Here the sea was like glass but shallow and pond-like, not up to Douglas' expectations of a place for a swim.

The following morning we reached Batticoloa and lunched splendidly with friends and with them travelled further down the east coast to the circuit bungalow, a low spreading white-painted house at Arugam Bay.

We found this stretch of the coast better populated than the section we had just travelled through. Here are the largest stretches of paddy fields in the whole of the island. Fresh and green, they extended for miles, the young stalks of rice waving in the breeze. There was activity here, prosperous communities tending small herds of cattle, men fishing or trawling for prawn.



BOOK REVIEWS

Time & Chance: by Siri Ranawake.

Published by Pandanus Books - Research School of Pacific and Asian Studies—The Australian National University.

Variously typecast as “migrant based literature”, historical record and biography, this novel is none of them, but all. In it, the writer – mixing her own experiences with reported information, and pure invention – has created the story of a Woman: Rohini Ramasamy.

The lives of Rohini and the author’s show many parallels: but not enough to make it a Biography. The historical backdrop is also close to Fact; but not enough to make it a History. It is Fiction, seducing you to think that it all happened. Naturally, Reality gets cavalier treatment: Time is stretched or compressed, factual details left out, as the narrative demands. It’s a fiction writer’s prerogative, which the writer carries even to intimate aspects of Rohini’s life. For instance, she spins out the tale of university life for forty-two pages and then, almost in passing, tells us:

“In the midst of all this turmoil, Suren and Rohini graduate from university, marry and begin their lives together.”

No more. In the same matter-of-fact way, she speaks of the birth of a first child:

“Rohini’s uneventful pregnancy advances.....Rohini arrives home.....Menika takes a proprietary interest in Rohini and the baby”

It is the flow of the story that determines emphasis. We readers must go with the flow.

What is this story about (if not history, biography or migration)? It is the story of a girl who felt hemmed in by “the menacing escarpment that brooded over her childhood home”. This looming menace, this fear that the world is trying to impose itself on her, haunts her throughout life: the unwelcome astrologer, the admirers she attracts, the riots that shatter her cozy life and even London to where she escapes, all are “menaces”. She tries to understand her nagging dissatisfaction. Her father and father-in-law she admires, for their intellectual world-view, born of another age, which she has built up into a myth. But she is scornful of her mother’s uncomplaining acceptance of married life – also born of another age – and wary of her mother-in-law. And she is less-than-close to her own husband. She is a Seeker, pursuing a day-dream. Finally, she compromises, gradually sacrificing her vision to Life’s “menacing escarpments”. We follow the writer into the interstices of her mind and stumble upon “black holes”, that neither she, nor we

The stretch of road from Komari to Arugam Bay is a lonely one through sand dune country interspersed with forest. We drove along this road in the gloom with lightning, fiercer than I had ever experienced, tearing the sky in zigzag rents, thunder rolling and rain pattering on the car. There was something menacing about that storm on the lonely coast road to Arugam Bay. We woke early to a lovely morning and walked along the beach ploughing our way through slithering sand to the ruins of an old Buddhist temple – a flattened mass of red bricks covered in sea-sand with only a vague circular shape to mark its identity, a once-celebrated site that kings of Lanka past used to visit in splendour and glory, accompanied by a procession of elephants.

The sea birds were all out, the “did-you-do-its” [Red Wattled Lap Wing] flapping before us, the gulls flying out to sea. There were wild boar tracks leading from the beach to the thickets around us. We attempted a sea-bathe, walking nearly a mile to the curve of the bay. The beach shelved sharply down to the sea and every half-minute or so a great wave ran the length of the bay, swelled and burst on the shore with such ferocity that we could only dip in each receding wave.



About 10.30 a.m. we started for the hills, traveling west towards the centre of the island. This was pleasant driving country through tall forests. Trees and grass were fresh and green after the rain and though we saw no animals, we heard shrill and throaty bird cries, grunts and the barking of deer.

At Liyangolla we climbed on an undulating, curving road through the Moneragala hills and entered higher country. Moneragala town is in the basin of the Kumbukkan Oya. We had to descend for a few miles, cross the river and climb again through citrus plantations, back on to the forest road. Just outside Buttala we stopped in a light drizzle for a picnic lunch. We continued across tributaries of the Menik Ganga and Kirindi Oya, until our road passed below the Diyaluma Falls fed by recent rains and in full splendour. Its 628 feet of waters fell in wisps and strands and over it all a fine spray.

We found a small rest house at Koslande for tea and a wash in chilly water. The air was cool as we took the road again to Bandarawela through misty Haputale. From the Haputale Gap we could see clearly to the south, with the gleam of a tank in the distance, pockets of mist nearer the hills, an odd isolated peak seemingly stuck on the landscape and the wide sweeping plain to the Indian Ocean, unseen, in the far distance.

An hour later we were in Bandarawela, journey’s end at last. It was an interesting experience particularly with Douglas, an enthusiastic travelling companion.

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understand. Rohini, we realise, is “Everywoman”: with dreams suppressed, sacrifices made, and yet discontented.

In the last chapter, the writer describes her, in late middle life, in a series of disjointed phrases:

“These days Rohini looks inwards. Her focus is on the small things, the significant things that lie at the heart of the family....at the home..... The colours in her garden.....”

“[she] reflects on the peaks and troughs of marital life, devoid now of physical intimacy. Somehow, she is content.”

“...For her, reading is still a transcendent experience....Now and then, the spectre of loneliness hovers briefly, but she pushes it aside...”

And she ends:

“Perhaps later she will write her story. Storytelling is important, a healing process. Without stories there is no pattern, no understanding, merely ingrained lifelong habits, events passing before the eyes of disinterested observers, a life lost in the living of it.”

These are the words of a woman, on an unfinished voyage of discovery. Read them.

Somasiri Devendra

Cameos of Ceylon and other glimpses:

S. Pathiravitana; *Godage International Publishers, Colombo, Sri Lanka 2008.*

The author of this 391 page book is no stranger to readers of *The Ceylankan*, having contributed many interesting articles on diverse topics over recent years.

This book comes hot on the heels of his first publication *Through my Asian Eyes* which was well received by reader and critic alike and which apparently spurred him on to this his second presentation. S. Pathiravitana was a senior journalist and Editor of the main newspapers of Sri Lanka in a career spanning over fifty years, this anthology is a selection from his output over the years. Presented mostly as two to three page vignettes, the hundred essays are refreshing insights into life during post colonial Ceylon and gives the reader a good handle on issues and concerns that dominated life in those distant days. Like all good anthologies these writings have both diversity and depth and thus able to hold the reader's curiosity and interest from beginning to end. There is no flamboyance in his style, but it is full of the grace of years of thoughtful writing. The prose used is elegant, the essays rich in variety, and the relaxed style of the author

enables him to distil the essence from historical and sociological tomes often inaccessible to the average reader and present them in simple, easy to comprehend prose. It is difficult to pick any personal favourites from this motley compendium of essays but I must confess that some topics did not arouse my curiosity. There is no central theme running through the essays, as one would expect from such diverse and disparate subjects that form the bulk of the material in this book. It has however been written with a skill that enables the reader to move from one essay to another with a sense of eager anticipation.

This work could be classified as creative non fictional writing and is highly recommended not only to the lazy reader disinclined to research, but also to the discerning ones and those who would like history, social, and environmental issues delivered in a compact and easily digestible form. The essays do give the reader opportunities for reflection but without the hard yard required in researching – already done by the author.

Hugh Karunanayake

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Srini Peries offers a recipe or two, particularly for those with a sweet tooth.

Lemon Curd

6 ozs. (75 grams) caster sugar
Grated zest and juice of 2 average-sized lemons
4 medium- sized eggs
4 oz. salted butter

Method: Place the sugar and grated lemon rind in a bowl, whisk the lemon juice together with the eggs, then pour this over the sugar. Then add the butter cut into little pieces, and place the bowl over a pan of barely simmering water. Stir frequently till thickened, about 20 minutes. Not necessary to keep stirring, from time to time will suffice. If used for a Lemon Meringue Pie, I add a dessertspoonful of corn flour to the mixture. Can be used for tarts, pies or even a sponge cake sandwiched with lemon curd is delicious with a little lemon icing on top.



Lemon Sponge Pie (also called Lemon Delicious)

1 rounded Tablespoon butter	¾ cup sugar
3 Tablespoons lemon juice	1 cup milk
Grated rind of ½ lemon	2 eggs
3 Tablespoons flour	1 rounded teaspoon baking powder

Method: Beat the butter with the sugar to a cream and add the lemon juice and rind. Add the flour alternately with the yolks already mixed before with the milk. Lastly add the stiffly-beaten egg whites. Pour into a greased pie dish and stand this in a bain-marie (baking tin with water). Bake till a golden crust forms, about 50 minutes. You will notice the texture of this will vary according to the crust, the more it is baked, the drier it becomes. Sufficient for 4 medium sized portions.

Leonard Woolf - The Lonely Cadet and the Maiden

by Philip Sansoni

In “Growing”, the second volume of his autobiography, Leonard Woolf tells us how he lost his virginity. According to him, he was riding home down the main street of Jaffna, one evening in 1905, an apprentice representative of the British Empire, when he happened to look into a verandah and saw a burgher girl sitting there. It was a fleeting glance over some blinds but she smiled at him and he smiled at her. A short time later, with a “minute” boy who had chased after his horse acting as intermediary, she had arranged to sleep with him that night and she did. She is subsequently revealed to have been the mistress of a Jaffna lawyer and was convicted of using abusive and indecent language outside the lawyer’s house. As Woolf tells the story, Dutton the Police Magistrate naively took the side of the young woman and paid her fine, to the amusement of the people of Jaffna.

When Woolf’s autobiography was reviewed, one of the reviewers said that Woolf should have said less about the incident or more. This comment was justified. The account which I rely on for the following story answers a lot of the questions that Woolf’s rather brief account raises. It also explains why Dutton who in Woolf’s story is cast as a well meaning simpleton acted as he did. Woolf was, I am sure, as honest as he could be when telling his story but the passage of time and a conscious effort to put the episode behind him had had an effect. In addition, it was one of the few times when a situation threatened to get out of his control and he did not look back on it with fondness.

As for the accuracy of what follows, all I can say is that it holds together, and it gives an alternative and perhaps more satisfying account of what occurred. More than a hundred years after the event in question, we will have to make up our own minds on what really happened.

Leonard Woolf had seen the young girl more than once while returning to his house after tennis. She was a good looking girl and they had progressed from exchanging smiles to wishing each other a good evening. He felt some sympathy for her. She always sat alone and seemed rather bored. In that withdrawn town in which he had been stationed as a Civil Service cadet for only a few



Leonard Woolf in later years

months he could understand why.

One day when he passed she stood up and came slowly down the steps to the street. While she lacked the elegance of the Tamil women whose beauty had fascinated so many of his countrymen, she walked with an easy grace and sway that contrasted with the stiff deportment of the white women he had met and grown to dislike, but with whom he was forced to associate. Out of the shade of the verandah she seemed older than she had appeared previously, but even in her long loose-fitting dress he could see that she was full-breasted with clearly defined waist and hips. Refreshingly her face seemed full of fun, even mischievous, with her eyes surprisingly light against her dark skin. He stopped, they exchanged a few words and then she offered him a mango she had been holding. He smiled and accepted it, feeling her small hand

brush against his. She continued "My uncle whose house this is always boasts that he has the best mango tree in Jaffna. Would you like me to bring you some more?" He looked at the fruit which was certainly beautiful, golden skinned and ripe. He then looked at the girl, of whom he could have used the same words. "I would like that" he said. "Shall I come around tonight?" she replied, looking at him boldly.

He thought for a second, Southorn, whose house he shared was out of Jaffna and he would be on his own. "At what time?" he asked. "I will come up the metal stairs" she announced, "at eight o'clock". The house was on the Utrecht Bastion of the Jaffna Fort, sited on a broad section of the ramparts. He was rather taken by her assurance. "I'll see you at eight, Kitty" he agreed and rode slowly on. Nobody seemed to be around, but in that land of closed blinds and cadjan fences, you could never be sure.

He decided to eat the mango and it was delicious. For all he knew her uncle may well have been telling the truth. That evening, he told the servants that he wanted to go to bed early and sat out on the verandah under a hanging oil lamp. Another stood on a table by his side and he had enough light to read by if he had wanted to. For some reason he did not feel like going to the 70 volumes of Voltaire that he had brought with him from England. Instead he ran through some papers he had brought from the Kachcheri, stopping occasionally to listen to an occasional noise from the road below outside the fort. He did not look at his watch but when he had finished his work sat back in his chair and enjoyed the stillness of the night. He was wondering whether his visitor was going to arrive when he heard a sound on the metal steps that a thoughtful Public Works engineer had installed as a short cut.

A little later he heard a small voice exclaim "Sir! Sir!". He got up and walked into the garden. There at the gate in the sturdy colonial ox fence that shut in his front garden was a very small boy. "Yes, what is it?" he replied. "Can Miss Kitty come up sir?" "Yes".

The boy turned and scampered down the steps. He heard whispers and then the stairs creaked again. Kitty came up them, stepping lightly, her face clearly visible in the light of a three-quarter moon. He opened the gate and she stepped through. In her hand she held a folded sack which she gave to him. "Your mangoes" she announced simply. She looked at him and it struck him that he could have thanked her for them and said good night, but they both knew that was not the purpose of the visit.

She was totally at ease as she followed him across the rough grass under the giant branches of

the banyan tree that took up most of the front garden. "Ah, the haunted tree" she declared looking up at it. It was indeed reputed to be haunted and was avoided by the local inhabitants but it did not appear to intimidate her. They climbed the verandah steps and she turned around to look back over the ramparts and the way she had come. A little part of the surrounding blackness detached itself and disappeared down the steps. "He will fetch the rickshaw when I am ready" she said, "Please give him 2 cents when I leave". He nodded, turned down the wick of the hanging lamp, picked up the oil lamp off the table and led her into the bedroom, holding the mango sack in the other hand.

In the bedroom another lamp hung from the ceiling casting shadows around the room. She stopped and looked at him. He made some slight comment that he forgot as he said it and went over to hold her in his arms. She looked up at him. She had very light eyes that shone with excitement, and she held him in return. They kissed repeatedly, and his embrace grew more and more urgent. Her lips



...what Kitty would have looked like in 1905

were hot and she held him as tightly as he held her. He muttered more foolishness and finally they found themselves by his bed. She suddenly became pliant and he lay her down. Slowly he reached for and found the buttons of her long dress, undoing them one by one. Inexperience and impatience made him fumble and she had to help him. Soon he had removed the last vestiges of her clothing and she lay wonderfully naked on the bed. Her legs, hips and breasts exposed and so much more than he had ever seen of the female form. As he gazed down on her, he wondered briefly how some of his male friends back in Bloomsbury could be more excited by each other than by the beauty that confronted him. Then she reached out and touched him and he was consumed by passion. They met and entwined, white on brown and brown on white; in the meantime the oil lamp cast their giant shadows on the wall behind them. Woolf was taken aback by the ferocity of his own performance. He attributed much of his success to his unceasing visitation of the various villages in the Jaffna district, but I believe he gave insufficient credit to the skill of his partner. Many years later, she is reputed to have said to a close friend "Once he took off his coat and tie and stiff collar and heavy underwear he was much the same as any other man. I must say that he was fit and quite good looking. Anyway they say that he was Jewish. Perhaps they make love better than the English? Who knows? I did have to help him a little bit but he learned quickly."

When the ecstasy finally ended, the lovers soon lay silent on the bed. At that stage things took a turn for the worse. Leonard had been in a bad mood for weeks in which he hated everyone and everything in Jaffna. His only release had been in the letters he wrote to his friend Lytton Strachey, all of them filled with abuse for the people and things he had to endure. Now, tired and suffering from post-coital letdown, he began to wonder whether he had been wise to give way to temptation. How had he ended up in bed with this foreign and exotic female? He turned to his bedside table to have a drink of water. In doing so, he saw the picture of Virginia Stephen that he had brought with him from England. Located as it was beside the steaming bed, her thoughtful eyes seemed to carry memories of the purer times that they had spent together and her full lips seemed to have a slightly ironic smile lingering on them. Suddenly, he was swamped by guilt. He felt that he had failed her and failed himself. He felt that he had given way when he should not have. His weakness he thought had been exploited by a temptress, a mere harlot. He turned to the girl suddenly and asked if she would mind leaving now, while it was quiet. She

looked at him and asked what was wrong. He said there was nothing wrong but that it would be best if she left now. She looked at the picture and appeared to understand. She said nothing more but shrugged and rose to her feet. "If you want", she said and walked into the bathroom with her clothes. In a while she emerged fully dressed except for her shoes. She was aloof but he could sense her hurt. He felt that there was nothing he could do to ease the situation. He found her footwear in the dark and handed it to her. He had dressed quickly and stood in the doorway gazing out at the garden in the manner of a lookout. She walked up to him and reminded him of the money for the little boy and the rickshaw. He gave her 20 cents and bluntly asked if she wanted any money for the mangos. She looked at him with some distaste, "No need" she replied succinctly. Taking the lamp from the bedroom she walked to the gate and shone the lantern down the steps. Then she turned to him with a look that could not hide an appeal. "Will we meet again?" she asked. "That would not be wise" he replied, looking at her, feeling rather guilty but determined. She straightened her shoulders and looked towards the steps. He stood there as well and at last heard the sound of footsteps. She handed the lamp back to him and opened the gate. "I heard that you were not a nice person, Mr Woolf" she said "and now I see that is true. One day you will be sorry for what you have done." She disappeared into the night leaving him there holding the lamp up to light the first few steps.

The next few weeks were the worst he ever spent in Ceylon. The mangoes she had brought lay uneaten on the dining room table and were eventually thrown away. He wrote to Strachey describing the episode as a bawdy escapade but he could not forget it. The tedium of a life in Jaffna spent among the small European community crushed him ever more heavily. Its restrictions seemed as narrow and artificial as the lines on the tennis courts to which he returned dutifully every evening, and the commonplace chatter of the club members seemed as stimulating as the crows who settled down every night in the branches of the banyan tree and the rattle of the talipot palms in the hot afternoon breeze. In his heart he also had to admit he had behaved badly. If he had been told that a vengeful villager with a long gun or a sharp knife was hunting him it would have caused fewer problems than the thought of a woman wronged and seeking revenge. He knew that involvement with the wrong sort of woman could blight a young man's career and he had no doubt that was what he had

stepped into. The thought of buying her off entered his mind but he was reluctant to attempt to do so because that would have been construed as an admission of guilt, not least by himself.

He saw the small boy from time to time. In fact it seemed that he was waiting for a call or was spying but he decided to ignore him. It was a relief when he was asked to move quarters in order to share with Dutton, the Police Magistrate. Why he was asked to do so was unclear but it meant he no longer had to sleep in that bedroom. He also did not have to travel past Kitty's house, though he had not seen her after that night.

Lewis the Government Agent had said something about it being useful to discuss legal matters, but Dutton did not seem that interested in what went on in his court and was more anxious to discuss philosophy and the purpose of life. Woolf frankly found it boring but was happy to go to bed bored. At times he was certain that if he had been alone he would have summoned Kitty to accompany him. Her body was vividly fixed in his memory and the delicate features of Virginia Stephen at times seemed an inadequate substitute.

Then, one day, it seemed that his worst nightmare was about to be realised and that a public humiliation was on the way. He was playing tennis with the dissolute Jimmy Bowes, Assistant Superintendent of Police, as his partner and was about to serve. Something made him glance up at the adjoining ramparts and he saw Kitty staring down at him. It was an extraordinary stare compounded equally of malevolence and longing and it put him off his serve. He tried again and put the ball into the bottom of the net. "Double fault" cried his opponents triumphantly. Bowes was the only other person who had spotted Kitty and he gave a little smile. "Steady on, old chap" he muttered. Woolf steadied himself and resumed play. None of the spectators, who included Mrs Lewis, had noticed anything. Five minutes later when he happened to look up again Kitty had disappeared.

What happened the next day showed him that he probably had a narrow escape from public disgrace. Dutton came home that evening in a thoughtful mode. "There's a difficult matter coming up tomorrow" he said, "There's a good looking young girl who lives down Main Street. Kitty Leyden is her name. You may have seen her. You would not forget her if you did. Anyway she is up on a charge of abusing a local lawyer. She is alleged to have used abusive and obscene language on him. There are plenty of witnesses and some of them claim that she was his mistress. I think that is quite ridiculous myself and believe that he probably attempted to molest her in some way and provoked her. Anyway that is irrelevant. Lewis has been on to me about the case and he does not put his oar in that

often. He tells me that there may be more to it than meets the eye and he wants me to arrange to pay any fine I may impose on finding her guilty. It's all part of the larger picture apparently, but it confirms that she is not the only one to blame for what happened. She could well be a woman wronged. I understand that she has been walking the streets for days looking quite distracted. Are you off to bed already Woolf? I may have another drink first. Good night."

The next day Woolf was not surprised when he received a note from Lewis asking him to come over to Sir William Twynam's house. Sir William Twynam, KCMG, the previous GA, had worked in Jaffna for over 50 years and was always called on when something out of the ordinary came up. He and his predecessor Dyke administered Jaffna between them for over 75 years and had set high standards for dedication and propriety. Woolf felt nervous and ready for the worst when he mounted his bicycle and set off down Beach Road. Twynam lived in an old Dutch house overlooking the lagoon. Far across the water lay the grey shape of Fort Hammenhiel; along the shore back towards the Fort lay the jetty and the Customs House.

When he arrived Lewis and Twynam were seated outside in the shade of a large mahogany tree. Lower down next to the beach was a long double row of acacias that Twynam had planted many years ago. They provided a shady walk that was always cool when a sea breeze blew as it was doing at present. The two men stood up when he arrived and waited while he rested the bike on its stand and bent down to remove his cycle clips. They made an interesting duo. Twynam was thin and tall, with the sideways look of a bad tempered horse as Woolf later described him. Lewis was short and fat with a good natured face. He was a placid man but when he was upset he tended to rub his hand across his cheek. At the moment he was rubbing at a tremendous rate.

Twynam was the one who spoke. He had a creaky old man's voice but it was clear. "We may take a walk by the beach" he said and they headed down towards the trees. "I suppose you have heard about Kitty Leyden's case", Lewis said. "It's all rather embarrassing and sad. She does appear to have been involved with the lawyer in question. Her uncle is a good man and the family is quite humiliated. I have said that we will help as much as we can. I won't beat about the bush, Woolf, we know that you have had some involvement with her and that has upset her a great deal. It probably led to that outburst of hers. You are not completely to blame, and you have tried to avoid worsening things, but..". "But it is our business to avoid temptation and, if we do give way to it, to do so as tactfully as possible." Sir William had stepped in. "You haven't

done either, Woolf. You should not have done whatever it was you did and when you did it, you should have done your best to smooth things over. I believe that young lady has been treated rather harshly". Lewis nodded but looked sympathetically at Woolf. He need not have worried for Twynam was now following his own train of thought and the attack had ceased. "She comes from a good Ceylon family, a very good one. Fifty years ago you could have married one of its daughters and nobody would have given it a second thought. In fact fifty years ago an Assistant Government Agent did just that. She died very young in one of the more godforsaken outstations on the East Coast". "I believe you have recorded the grave site, Mr Lewis?". Lewis nodded to confirm that was the case. They were both very keen on historical research.

Twynam continued "Anyway, the present situation cannot continue. Mr Lewis and I have discussed the matter and I have spoken to her uncle. We have come up with an idea that will help her reclaim her life. I would urge you Mr Woolf to behave with more decorum and also show some respect to the inhabitants of this country."

In time Leonard learnt what Twynam had planned. Kitty was to be moved away from Jaffna as soon as possible. She had an aunt living in Galle, at the other end of the island. She could not afford to look after the girl but with some financial assistance, which would be administered by her uncle, that problem would be overcome. "If you can help, Mr Woolf, with the expenses, we could have Kitty on the next steamer to Galle. I believe the *Lady Blake* is due next month." The amount required had already been agreed with her uncle and Woolf agreed to provide part of it, with some additional help from Sir William. In another week the arrangements had been concluded and a passage had been booked for her and a chaperone to sail on the next ship leaving Jaffna, three weeks away.

The morning of the young girl's departure was a busy day for the port of Jaffna. Two *dhonies* bound for Travancore were loading their cargo of cured tobacco leaf. *Lady Blake* was anchored in the lagoon, smoke rising from her funnel. Two lighters were being loaded with the cargo that would be carried out to her before she left. As required by Lewis, Leonard was present supervising the activities of traders and Customs searchers. On board the *Lady Blake*, the captain, first officer and engineer were giving a party to some of their friends, Europeans whose jobs involved the maintenance and operation of various mills and mechanical rigs around Jaffna. Their private lives, according to a missionary of the time, did not bear close inspection but their coarse laughter from time to time carried across the water.

When Kitty arrived in a hackery with her luggage and a worried looking chaperone who looked as if the whole episode would destroy her reputation rather than Kitty's, their arrival almost passed unnoticed. With their cases unloaded the two women stood apart from the other passengers but Sir William soon strolled down from his house, surveying his former domain as he was accustomed to do. He walked across to where they stood and greeted them.

Turning he caught Leonard's eye and nodded. Leonard had no option but to walk across to speak to him, watched surreptitiously by the motley crowd. "Miss Leyden is leaving for Galle" Twynam announced. Leonard acknowledged the news with a bow "Jaffna will miss Miss Leyden" he commented gallantly, "But will Miss Leyden miss Jaffna?" replied Twynam equally gallantly. Kitty smiled at him "I will miss some people" she acknowledged, gazing at the lapping water behind Leonard who felt that he had participated for long enough in this charade.

"Have a safe trip, Miss Leyden" he said, "and I hope you find things are satisfactory in Galle." Twynam added "I look forward to receiving news of you from your uncle and give my regards to my brother's grandson". He was referring to the current Collector of Customs at Galle Thomas Twynam. Leonard excused himself and returned to work; Sir William stayed on for a while before saying goodbye and moving along the beach. Leonard had a feeling that he had been engaged in discharging obligations that went beyond what was strictly necessary but it was no longer of concern to him. In a short time, he spotted the two women as they and other passengers boarded a launch to the small coastal steamer. He saw that the chaperone seated under a parasol had lost her reserve and was talking excitedly to Kitty. Kitty kept her eyes on the way to the open sea. Following Sir William's farewell, Woolf felt that their arrival in Galle would be more a triumph than a retreat. As more evidence of this, he saw their arrival at the steamer and the rush of the party goes to help Kitty on board.

And so it happened at Galle. The beautiful Kitty Leyden disembarked one morning, helped ashore by the first officer, causing great excitement among the young men and society in general. The Collector of Customs was at the jetty and greeted them personally. Some nasty rumours trickled down from Jaffna but she behaved with great discretion and applied herself to establishing a reputation for model behaviour. She was to be seen at church at least once every week, seated modestly with her protective aunt and other relatives. To counter the unpleasant rumours, the story soon spread of a sad love affair with a young Civil Servant that had been cut short by the prejudices of the time. In a few months,

long before the Woolf fund had run out, a rich lawyer and land owner, recently widowed, proposed to her and was accepted. Kitty's problems appeared to be over.

Back in Jaffna, any talk of scandal involving Leonard soon died down, though ASP Bowes regarded Leonard rather more amiably than he had been accustomed to. When Leonard called on him shortly after Kitty's departure, he was surprised to find Kitty's young messenger was now part of the household staff. "A bright young fellow that", said Bowes, slurring his words slightly, as the boy in question went away to fix him another drink. "He keeps me informed of everything that goes on in the bazaar, which is very useful in nailing evil doers, and he also fixes a good whisky and soda and is very discreet when carrying messages." Here he glanced across at his companion and chuckled. Leonard remained impassive. If Bowes thought that he had found someone to share his life style he was mistaken. "Well if he helps keep crime down" said Woolf, "he must be justifying his existence. I hope Superintendent Dowbiggin approves." Jimmy Bowes was unabashed. He sipped his new drink and continued "Sir William appears to be taking leave of his senses. It doesn't do any good to leave someone in charge of a place for as long as he ran Jaffna. He obviously believes he owns the place. In fact the whole Twynam family has been in Ceylon for far too long, their relationships with some of the local families go beyond what is acceptable. For instance take the Leydens, their best days are far behind them, but old Sir William persists in acknowledging them. Let's hope that in a few years time we will be able to govern this place on proper Civil Service principles". He had some trouble pronouncing the sibilants. "You mean like the remote arrogant buggers we are?" asked Leonard, and from that moment on did his best to act as he had suggested. Bowes continued "I must say that I'm going to miss seeing young Kitty around" he said "And I am sure that you will, you lucky devil". Leonard made him understand that he was not about to discuss the matter and certainly was not going to divulge any details of what had happened on the night in question.

In a while Lewis departed for Kandy and before long he sent for Leonard to be his Office Assistant. He knew Leonard liked to work and gave him everything he could handle. By then there had been another incident involving a member of the Jaffna Bar, which Woolf relates in his autobiography. He was accused of having threatened to strike a Mr Sandrasagara. The charge was the result of a misunderstanding and was withdrawn, but he was glad to leave that part of the island, where his name was soon forgotten.

From that time on he treated every young woman to whom he was introduced with extreme caution. Living a monkish existence, he made his reputation in the dry south-east of the island not far from Galle. After a few years he left the island on leave and then resigned when Virginia accepted his marriage proposal. He said that if he had been refused, he would have returned to his isolated district and married a Sinhalese. He had grown to love the remote area that he administered, perhaps seeing in it something that suited his temperament. He never saw Kitty again. His behaviour on that moonlit night was pushed to the back of his mind as an aberration.

In the early sixties he returned to Ceylon researching his autobiography. When he visited Hambantota and Tangalla where he had been stationed, he made the New Oriental Hotel at Galle his headquarters. The owner Nesta Brohier was there at the time and was a friend of Kitty's who had been widowed for some years. She visited the old lady and mentioned Woolf's visit to her. The two of them were sitting in the drawing room with Kitty's two grand daughters, in their teens, both with Kitty's looks and almost as lively. Nesta mentioned her famous guest. "He's holding court at the Hotel" she announced, "surrounded by retired headmen, footmen, aratchies and anything else you can imagine. I left instructions to give them all tea and something to eat and came here to enjoy some peace".

She then looked at the two girls with her alert eyes "Your grandmother and he had a famous love affair" she announced "She may even have ended up as Mrs Woolf". "Oh, don't be ridiculous, Nesta! Anyway he was in love with that famous writer in England, Virginia, who was much more his type. She was also very good looking". "How do you know, Granny?", asked the girls, "Well, he did have her photograph on his bedside table". "Oh, Granny!" they screamed, and Nesta pretended to look shocked. With a smile, Kitty put her finger to her lips. "I will tell you the whole story some time" she said "But don't mention a word to your father".

"Do you want to come into town to see him again?" asked Nesta, "It would make a change for him from all those old men". "An old woman is not much of a change from old men, take the girls instead". They went and came back to say that he looked much older than Kitty did. At last "Growing" came out, and the girls were indignant when they read what Woolf had said about their grandmother. The old lady was sad but not too upset. She realised that colonial society and its scandals were ancient history. "It was probably my fault that it happened" she said when alone with her

friend, “I was not a very good girl in Jaffna but it was all so dull and hopeless, more than I could bear. Then, when I could not imagine how to get away, what happened between us gave me my chance. For that I have to be grateful.”

She went on. “It was all very simple, Nesta. I only spoke to him because he looked so lonely, about as lonely as I felt. It seemed as if we were the only young people in town. I did not realise what it all meant or that he would resent it so much. Why did he think that his position was so much more important than meeting someone else who wanted to be more than half alive?” “What else would you expect in Jaffna or Galle in 1905?” Nesta replied, “Today perhaps it may be different, in 2005 it probably would be, but sixty years ago....”.

Note: It is interesting to read 2 letters from Woolf to Strachey which refer to this episode. In the first written in October 1905 he is less than flattering in his description of Kitty and portrays the episode in squalid terms. In the second in November he is still unpleasant but obviously would not object to repeating the episode. To place it all in context, in most of his letters the language he uses is extremely unflattering about the people he meets. In one which he wrote earlier in 1905 he says “the society of this place is absolutely inconceivable; it exists only upon the tennis-court and in the GA’s house; the women are all whores or bags or missionaries or all three; and the men are, as I told you, sunk”. I believe it all represents a pose struck to impress his friend Lytton Strachey rather than an accurate portrayal of events or his true feelings.

ΩΩΩΩΩΩΩΩ

...and from Virginia Woolf

Trivial personalities decomposing in the eternity of print.
The Common Reader (1925)

Women have served all these centuries as looking glasses possessing the magic and delicious power of reflecting the figure of a man at twice its natural size.
A Room of One’s Own (1929)

The scratching of pimples on the body of the boot boy at Claridges - of James Joyce’s Ulysses
In a letter to Lytton Strachey, April 1922

I read the book of Job last night. I don’t think God comes well out of it.
In a letter to Lady Robert Cecil, November 1922

SYNOPSSES OF MEETINGS

Melbourne: 26 October 2008

The chairman Dr. Srilal Fernando, introduced the speaker Mr. Stefan D’ Silva author of the publication “Alluring Sri Lanka; Sri Lanka’s Wild Life” (2008). He is passionate about his land of birth and photographed the island’s natural beauty as an ardent amateur photographer. The subject of his talk was “*The Exotic Wild Diversity of Sri Lanka*”. Underlying his presentation was a plea for the preservation of wild life and promotion of positive aspects of Sri Lanka. His talk was amply illustrated with his own delightful photos.



Stefan D’ Silva

Sri Lanka, although a small island, has an amazing diversity of wild life. Stefan’s presentation covered his many visits to Wilpattu, Horton Plains, Uda Walewe & Yala National Parks, Bundala and Anaivilundawa Bird Sanctuaries.

He said that in Sri Lanka many things needed to be improved, but emphasised it should not detract those who seek a journey of serendipity. The speaker recalled the gardens of Colombo, were once rich habitats for wild life, now fast disappearing because of real estate development. The lost habitats are an immense threat to wild life. People should be encouraged to preserve and provide habitat that entice the wide variety of wild life. Birds are receptive to trees that are a source of food and shelter. The ambience it creates is unparalleled. In Colombo gardens, Paradise Fly Catcher, White Rumped Munias, Pied Cuckoo, Magpie Robin, Sun Birds, Grey Langur Monkeys and the Brown Headed Barbets once create a familiar ambience are conspicuous among the dwindling foliage.

At Anaivilundawa Bird Sanctuary in the North Western Coast, the lagoons attract migrating birds and present a marvelous atmosphere. The Karakupana beach near Chilaw is a fishing village where swamp hen and purple heron can be observed. Bundala Sanctuary in the South Coast has been upgraded to a national park with facilities for bird watching. Kites and White Bellied Fish Eagle are seen at Bundala. Uda Walewe National Park in the South provides habitat for Grey Headed Fish Eagle and Pied King Fishers in a reserve where elephants predominate within a serene local country side.

Yala National Park in the South Coast celebrates its 110th year in 2008. The notice at the entrance to the Park, says it all:

(Continued on page 23)

(Continued from page 22)

"Through these gates you enter a protected area.

The animals, birds, the water, trees, the breeze on your face and every grain of sand, are gifts that nature has passed on to you through your ancestors so that you may survive.

These gifts are sacred and should be respected.

Whisper a silent prayer as you pass through for the protection of the wilderness around you and ensure that what you see and feel is passed onto the unborn generations to come."

This park is renowned for leopard viewing and among the elephant population here, there are 8 revered tuskers. The formidable Sloth Bear dreaded by the locals, Mugger Crocodiles, Wild Boars, Herons, Darters, Malabar Pied Hornbills, Bee Eaters including the Jungle Fowl inhabit Yala. Toque Monkeys and rare Black Necked Stork are present at Yala which also hosts the Changeable Hawk Eagle and Crested Serpent Eagle associated with the legend of 'Devil Bird'. There are folk tales which are linked to jackal and the White Breasted Water Hen. Surrounded by amazing vegetation at Horton Plains near the hill country Sambhurs take the easy way and depend upon tourists for food.

At Kuda Oya near Uda Walawe, the 'Lodge' gave the opportunity for the speaker and his team to photograph and enjoy the exotic wild life. It has expansive space and boasts an open hearth and is a great place for stress relief. Debarara Wewa near Balangoda Haputale range and Kuda Oya is a large expanse of water that attracts elephant herds. Close to Yala, the spiritual Nimalawa Hermitage a retreat where monks meditate is also a bird paradise: a place that must be respected for both reasons.

The feeding habits of Cattle Egret who feeds on insects in ploughed rice fields can be outlined as an example of human - animal interdependence. In some parts of Sri Lanka elephants destroy crops and they are classified as a threat to the farmers. Human - animal conflict erupts as a result.

A Personal Photo Journal by Mr. Stefan D'Silva titled ***Alluring Sri Lanka; Sri Lanka's Wild Life*** was launched at the meeting. The book comprises excellent photos of exotic wild life and beauty of the island.

The end of the year meeting was celebrated with a sumptuous dinner comprising traditional hoppers enjoyed by over one hundred guests and members. Mr. Hemal Gurusinghe was the recipient of a special award for his services to the Society. Meeting ended with Stefan signing copies of his book purchased by enthusiastic buyers.

Mrs. Tulsi Karunanayake drew the raffle and the winner was Mr. Lucien De Zilwa.

BOOKSHOP AND WEB RESOURCES

BOOKS/MAPS/COLLECTIBLES

This column is a regular feature for the benefit of members who publish works, and others who wish the Society to sell material on their behalf. No charges apply to members but donations will be gratefully received. Others pay a handling charge. Please e-mail the editor if you wish to take up this offer.

Cameos of Ceylon and other glimpses:

S. Pathiravitana; 391 pp, soft cover
Godage International Publishers, Colombo, Sri Lanka
2008. Contact— sumane@pacific.net.au

The Diversity of Sri Lankan Wild Life:

Jayantha Jayawardene, 2008. For inquiries please contact Ralph Amerasinghe (02) 98718742- Mo 0414630848

Time & Chance: by Siri Ranawake

Pandanus Books, 287 pp soft cover, available at Dymocks \$29.95 and in Sri Lanka at Barefoot.

Poems to the Creator: Shelagh Goonewardene. A

collection of 35 poems, accompanied by 20 colour photographs by Devinda Theo Goonewardene. Cover on Matt Art, text 95 pages on satin art paper. ISBN: 978-0-9805491-0-2. Published in September 2008. Aus.\$15.00 + \$1.85 pp to all states. Email : shelaghlou@yahoo.com.au

Alluring Sri Lanka: Sri Lanka's Wildlife a personal photo journey by Stefan D'Silva

Available direct from Stefan. Contact Stefan@alluringsrilanka.com or P O Box 180 Sutherland NSW 1499. A\$30 + P&H. For a preview visit www.alluringsrilanka.com

Cricket at the High Table: Mahinda Wijesinghe, 140pp coffee table presentation.

Price in SL—Rs 2,750 + Rs 250 P&H. Others visit web site www.mahindawijesinghe.com

The Sri Lankans - A Portrait of a Developing

Nation: Martin Pieris. 304pp A mosaic of portraits and interviews of a cross section of Sri Lankans. \$ 60 + P&H. Contact Martin—pieris@ozemail.com.au

Web Sites worth a visit

www.alluringsrilanka.com
www.walkthetalk.com
www.sellipi.com/srilanka
www.lankalibrary.com

Colombo: 29 November 2008

The President introduced Mr M.D. “Tony” Saldin, the speaker for the evening, a freelance researcher on aspects of Malay Culture and History, whose family had been associated with Dutch and British colonial military service for over 200 years.

The speaker intended to add a new chapter to a study first featured in *The Ceylankan* in 2002, in which Mrs. Glennys Ferguson had traced the Australian family of O’Deane back to a Malay Drum Major who had been sentenced for treason, by court martial, to life imprisonment in the NSW penal colony. His own talk would be from the Sri Lankan side, tracing the circumstances which led to the Drum Major’s eventual deportation.

The story begins with British proclaiming the maritime provinces of Ceylon a Crown Colony in 1802, having captured it from the Dutch in 1796. Anxious to acquire the Kandyan Kingdom, Governor Frederick North soon found an excuse for invasion, with the help of *Adigar* Pilimatalave.

North had ordered General Macdowall to march on the hill capital, on 31 January, with one thousand nine hundred soldiers, comprising European infantrymen, Bengal Artillery, the Malay Regiment and Lascarens of Ceylon. Another force, under the command of Colonel Barbut, of seven hundred men - mostly Malays, Madras Sepoys and Moorish gunners - set out from Trincomalee.

Macdowall advanced through Negombo across the Maha Oya through, the mountain passes of Galagedera and Girahagama. Hearing gunfire he found that Colonel Barbut’s column had arrived and firing their cannon across the Mahaveli at Watapuluwa. British regulars overcame Kandyan resistance.

The Kandyan forces comprised the King’s levies (*levaayo*) or militia who performed compulsory military service (*rajakariya*) when summoned by the *Dissawas* (provincial governors). Regular troops comprised of Javanese and Malay mercenaries (the “*Padikara Peruma*”), hereditary swordsmen’s guilds such as the *Atapattuma* and the *Maduma*, light artillery under *Kodituvakku nilames*, musketeers deployed by the *Tuvakku kara* and *Wedikkara lekams*, archers mobilized by the *Dunukara lekams*, and the *Madige lekams* who provided the baggage train.

The King’s personal bodyguard, of foreign mercenaries, comprised Malays, Javanese, Malabar and Caffres (Africans of Mozambique origin). The *Appuhamis*, a cadet corps of the sons of the nobility formed an outer ring.

The British forded the Mahaveli, and found the capital on fire and that the King and the Tooth Relic missing. Enthroning Muttuswamy, Sri Wickrama’s ineffective half-brother in Kandy, and believing Pilimatalave’s letter that the King was at Hangu-

ranketa, Macdowall sent two columns of infantrymen, who reached the palace too late.

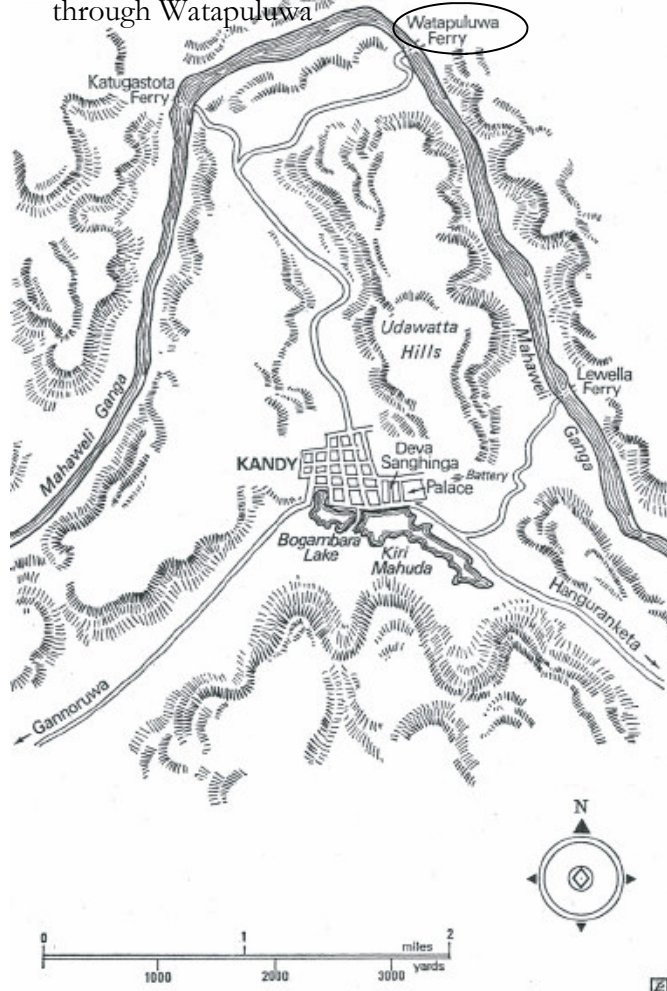
The monsoon rains were now fast approaching and fever gradually decimated the troops. Macdowall withdrew to Colombo leaving Major Adam Davie to continue negotiations with *Adigars* for the capture of the King.

The rains, fever and “beri beri” ruled out offensive operations. Supplies were in short supply: particularly of arrack, opium and tobacco which was a staple for British troops. Kandyan hit-and-run tactics also took their toll. Garrisons fell, and desertions increased. The Kandyans tightened a net and on 24th June 1803 a party of Kandyan Malays lead by Sangunglo, their Captain, attacked the City garrison. In close quarter combat, Sangunglo stabbed Quartermaster Brown with his *Kris*, but, in the melee, he was bayoneted by Ensign Barry and his death blow was delivered by Major Davie with his sword. The first attack had been repulsed.

The Kandyans regrouped and kept up a harrying fire. After a short resistance, Major Davie surrendered on negotiated terms for withdrawal to Colombo, aban-

The Country around Kandy

and the escape route of Major Davie through Watapuluwa



doning the sick and wounded, spiking their cannon and jettisoning powder and shot. Thirty Europeans, three hundred Malays, two Bengali gun lascars and thirty Indian pioneers, struck their colours and marched to Trincomalee together with Prince Muttuswamy, but they were trapped by the flooded Mahaveli river at the Watapuluwa ferry near the village of Mawilmada,. All attempts to cross it failed.

Now the surrender of Muttuswamy was demanded by the Kandyan forces and Davie had no choice but to comply. Muttuswamy, and three of his relations, were tried by the King and beheaded.

Major Davie tried to return to Kandy, but was surrounded by the Kandyan militia. Desertions increased. He ordered all troops to down their arms. All were taken prisoner. Asians were separated from Europeans, and officers from men, and all were asked to choose between serving the Kandyan king and death. Those who refused were immediately beheaded. Some European officers shot themselves. Gazetted Malay Officers, Captain Noordin Goah and his brother Captain Karaeng Sapinine, repeatedly refused and were hanged.

Non-commissioned officer, Drum Major O'Deane, however joined the King's service. British officers, including Major Davie, and Adjutant Captain Rumley were to be beheaded, but the King decided to keep them as state prisoners.

The first Kandyan war, of 1803, had proved a disaster to the British. But, in 1815, with the support of Kandyan nobles, they marched in virtually unopposed, took the King prisoner and, on 5th March 1815, proclaimed King George III of Great Britain King of Ceylon.

The story now focuses on Drum Major O'Deane, a Malay non-commissioned officer of the 1st Ceylon Regiment, who deserted to the Kandyan in 1803. Whilst in the service of the Kandyan Monarch he took a Sinhalese girl as his wife. For over ten years he lived there contentedly and had three children. When the British invaded Kandy again, O'Deane and his family were captured. Charged for deserting to the enemy, he was court-martialed, and sentenced to be shot. However, Governor Brownrigg was impressed with the 'uniform good conduct' of the 1st Ceylon (Malay) Regiment, and the wealth of information that O'Deane gave of Major Davie, and O'Dean's sentence was subsequently commuted to "transportation to the Penal settlement of New South Wales in Australia". And so, O'Dean and family sailed away from Ceylon. A chapter in his life ended and a new one began.

On 17 February, 1816, the *Sydney Gazette* reported the arrival of the O'Deane family. For the first time we get a glimpse of the family:

"The man, who appears to be intelligent...He is dark complexioned, approaching to a black, and is about 5 feet 10 inches

in height. His wife who is a Singhalese, being a true descendant of the aboriginal inhabitants of the island, is of a small stature, handsomely formed, of a dark olive complexion, and agreeable features, as are also her three children, of whom the two youngest are boys"

In December 1818, O'Deane, who had taken the first name of William, was assigned as Watchman in HM Dockyards in Sydney and in 1825, was promoted as Constable of the Govt. Domain. In May 1827, William O'Dean received a job which he was more familiar with; that of Malay Interpreter for the Australian government.

(The speaker then gave an account of O'Deane's life and death in Australia. Since this is part of the Australian O'Deane saga, it is not repeated here, beyond the fact that Eve-the only name by which O'Deane's wife is known, died at the age of 50 in 1839, after giving birth to three more children, and William followed in 1860, aged 87.)

Many questions still remain unanswered in Sri Lanka regarding O'Deane and his wife who was known as Eve, the Kandyan lass whose name must really have been something else? Going by Australian records, she must have been born in 1789 and been 14 years old in 1803. William must have been born in 1773, 30 when he deserted and 42 when he was sentenced. There is one reference to an Indian origin. We know nothing else about this couple, separated in age by 16 years. In Ceylon, we know only why they were deported. It is only in Australia that they emerge as individuals with a family history.

ΩΩΩΩΩΩ

True Piety is this:

***to believe in God and the Last Day
the angels, the Book, and the Prophets,
to give of one's substance, however cherished,
to kinsmen and orphans,
the needy, the traveller, beggars,
and to ransom the slave,
to perform prayer, to pay alms.***

**Sura 2
The Koran**

Storks in Sri Lanka

by Stefan D' Silva

Sri Lanka has a remarkable resident variety of storks. Images below illustrate the three main varieties of storks and one very rare type of stork, namely the Black-necked Stork. Over the years every time I have glimpsed the Black-necked Stork in Yala it was pointed out to me that the species was endangered. Then the final bit of bad news was given to me in early 2008; the photograph below is believed to be the last Black-necked Stork living in Yala. A tall and striking stork that is quite shy. I was extremely glad to get an opportunity to capture a reasonable photograph of this magnificent bird.

The Open bill Stork gets its name from the obvious formation of its bill which is quite noticeable to the naked eye. It is the smallest type of Stork in the country and is quite common in open fields and marshy areas. The Painted Stork can perhaps lay claim to being the prettiest stork in the land with its orange bill and pink feathers. However, this is not the case for the juvenile Painted Storks as they are quite dull in colour and most unattractive.

The Woolly-necked Stork gets its name from the white fluffy feathering on its neck. They are often seen in paddy fields and around water tanks. These Storks and the Painted storks wade in shallow water raking the bottom with their feet and 'slashing' the water with their bills to snap up a morsel. One characteristic any observer will notice in storks is that these birds do not have any melodious calls or whistles. Their calls are limited to 'snorts' or 'grunts'.

Two great books for the enthusiast to invest in and which have been great sources of information to me are; *Birds of Sri Lanka* by De Silva Wijeratne, G, De Zylva, T.S.U and Warakagoda. G.

A Field Guide to Birds of Sri Lanka by Harrison.J.



Black Necked Stork



Open Bill Stork



Painted Stork

Woolly Necked Stork



When the Archives were in Nuwara Eliya

by S Pathiravitana

The office of the Government Archivist is not, as the vision conjures up, some dusty corner full of old records and files. Although this is the very stuff that keeps the Archivist's office humming; a visit to the place is in fact a pleasant evening's encounter with History, our own history, itself.

For here in this very English looking building, encased in glass or decorating the walls are little bits and scraps of very original evidence on which the historians have woven their tales of our more recent past, the period in particular that begins with the coming of the Europeans.

It was one of these, the Dutch, who began the institution of the Archives. These commercial-minded men kept careful and meticulous company records including expenses involved in running the administration. The details are a pretty tedious lot and include such things as salaries, ecclesiastical matters, registers of certificates, passports and licences.

Also among these are documents that interest the laymen, like registers of land grants and *thombus* relating to the maritime provinces which can be of use in tracing one's own lineal past or establishing some claim to land. These, however, remain a forbidden book to all except those with a knowledge of Dutch, for only an infinitesimal part of this Dutch collection of records has been translated to date.

There is not much pleasure to be gained by looking at these voluminous records so carefully maintained, except perhaps to heave a sigh at the evidence once more of the transience of power. The eye is attracted more by a colourful portrayal in oils of a historic scene, the meeting of the Sinhala King's ambassadors with the Dutch Governor Falck.

Falck is probably the most interesting of the Dutch governors. He sought in various ways to get a better understanding of the people whom history had placed in his charge. One

valuable record of his attempt is his discourse with a Buddhist priest a record of which is found in the appendix to Paul E. Pieris' *Tri Sinhala and The Patriots*, in which through a series of questions much valuable information about the laws and practices of Sinhala Government is obtained.

At the Archivist's Office the painting is further testimony to Falck's public relations technique. The meeting of the ambassadors had been held in Colombo in 1772. The picture shows a large interior of a Dutch drawing room in which there are signs of a banquet having taken place. The majority of the people seated round the table are Dutch, but it is the Sinhala ambassadors, big burly and bearded who catch the eye. There are some paintings hung on the walls of this banqueting room but surprisingly the scenes do not carry any signs of nostalgia for home.

Sinhala servants, dressed in low country style, flit in and out of the hall while a couple

As a precautionary measure the Archives were transferred to Nuwara Eliya at the time of the second world war. This article recalls a visit to it in the 'sixties when many facilities were available to the public.

or two of *mudliars* or *mubandirams* hang around the place. But the thing in that picture which strikes the eye most is a large spittoon or *padik-kama* placed somewhere close to the middle of the table.

Did the Dutch governors chew betel and spit into it, or has it been placed there in recognition of the customs and manners of the people with whom the Dutch were dealing? If so, why is the spittoon placed so close to the Dutch officers? Or, is this some painter's device to record the presence of a spittoon that was hidden, rather like what Picasso does with the hidden profile?

We do not know the answers to these questions, but can only make the observation how largely the spittoon once figured in state affairs while today when the natives have come into their own, the spittoons have ceased to be functional and are, if present at all, merely ornamental.

Among the other interesting objects on exhibit are historic documents, but among these are those of human interest like a signed receipt given by Ehelepola in 1829, and the original

petition of mercy written by whom the British called the pretender to the throne in the Matale rebellion, Gongalegoda Banda.

The petition is not the work of a man of letters, but is interesting nevertheless for what seems sometimes the originality of language. It is written in spoken but not colloquial Sinhala. *Mage* meaning mine, appears there as *maye* which is how it is in the spoken language. Gongalegoda Banda seems to have had some difficulty in the use of the palatal and the guttural 'S' like some of today's semi-literate Sinhala literati.

Also among these exhibits are documents that show the Dutch recognition of the national language. The Dutch, like the good businessmen they were, issued proclamations in both Sinhala and Tamil. There are also specimens of various handwriting as also the sign manual of King Kirti Sri Rajasingha of Kandy.

Among some rare books are found the first edition of Knox as well as several other editions of Knox including a version in Dutch, which is interesting for the illustrations. They are in most instances similar to the original drawings in the English version except for the backgrounds, which have been filled in with clearly European architecture and dress.

There is also a copy of one of the world's oldest books, which has a reference to Ceylon. This has been printed in 1506 a year after the Portuguese landed here. And most interesting to us, is a copy of the first book printed in Sinhala in Ceylon in 1737—a bible.

Also on exhibit in this section are the first copies of Newspapers printed in Ceylon in Sinhala and English. There would probably have been a government paper today had not one of the early British governors discouraged the publication of such a newspaper which was started in 1802 called the Government Gazette. The Lakminipahana the first Sinhala newspaper, is also on exhibit and reading the prices of things on its first page gives you a startling picture of how the economy was exactly a hundred years ago in Ceylon.

Transport, which was by carts and costly even then, was the princely sum of £4 to Nuwara Eliya. The coinage shows how very much a colony we were then. And meat was not priced in terms of weight but by the quarter of a pig or goat and eggs, which were priced by the dozen were fantastically cheap.

Those who like to delve into the past from the comfort of their own homes can do so, and this is precisely where the Archivist's

office comes in as a useful servant of the public. For attached to the archivist's office is a photography section which functions mainly for this purpose of taking copies of records needed by the department or the public.

If it is only the frontispiece of a book or the copy of some pages of some valuable document or historical work, the Archivist is prepared to procure these and only at cost. But today you can get an entire document or a report on CD. At the time of my visit a request had come from the British Council for a copy of an editorial written during the time of the famous Panadura controversy. A copy of this editorial was being sought by somebody in Japan.

One advantage of this photocopying method is that hand writing which is sometimes indecipherable on being too faded is made readable by the use of ultra violet lighting whilst being photographed.

The Archivist's office is also equipped with micro-filming apparatus in both 16 and 32 mm films and this by far is the cheapest method of photo-copying, provided of course one has a Recordak machine to read them.

Even more interesting is an aspect of the Archives as a hospital for books. In this section, books in various stages of decrepitude or senescence are miraculously being brought back to life by a kind of Voronoff gland transplanting method. We were shown how a volume of the Literary Register, an old and venerable journal of the 19th century, which was sent to this place in a state of virtual disintegration, being miraculously brought back into circulation.

This particular volume had some pages, bits of which had irreparably decayed. Some were on the point of disintegrating at a mere touch. But once the treatment was given the pages acquire an amazing resilience. Such books can once more be put on the lending section of any library without fear of it being damaged in handling.

The restoration of books is only one of the services available to the public at cost price. Old leaf books are similarly restored to health. In this connection must be mentioned the work of the Historical Manuscripts Commission which is also attached to the Government Archivists' office.

This commission, which was appointed in 1931, has as its main object the collection and edition of manuscripts in the possession of individuals and institutions. The ultimate aim is the preservation of all valuable documents that may, for lack of care or ignorance of their value, perish.

The public who are in possession of any valuable old documents may in their own interest as well as in the interest of the country send such documents to the Government Archivist who will then make Photostat copies. One copy will be preserved in the Archives and the other would be presented to the owner of the old documents along with the original sent for copying absolutely free of charge. This is a valuable service, which the Archivist's office is doing and should be availed of by all those who are in possession of such documents.

The Archivist also functions as the Registrar of books and one of his duties is to send a copy of books sent for registration to the British Museum. Why only the British Museum and not the Louvre? This is one more instance of how Ceylon has unthinkingly taken over certain colonial practices from the British regime.

Note: The services provided to the public then, mentioned above are now restricted. The Archives are now located in Colombo at the old race course premises

ΩΩΩΩΩΩ

Letters to Editor

Dear Sumane,

It seems the last *Ceylankan* for the year has arrived with so much news. And while the whole is filled with interest I was particularly happy to see yet another contribution by Neville Jayaweera and saddened to learn that this would be the last of a series. Then again marooned as I am in faraway Canada I was happy to have news of Pauline Swan-Hensman who was a few classes ahead of me at Bishops College. A gentle, fragile soul who went on to win several school prizes so her accomplished life was no surprise. Her older sister Roseen, more robust both physically and in character, was a few classes higher while their brother Edward, was in my class until he had to leave when boys reached a certain age.

In thinking back to those school years I feel our Principal Sister Mary Kathleen whose great endeavour was to make something of her girls educationally and morally would have been so proud of Pauline.

I hope that you and Rohini are well and increasing in grandparenthood. With very special thanks to you and your staff in making *The Ceylankan* something wonderful to look forward to.

The very best for Christmas and 2009.

Geraldine [de Saram-Jansz]

Dear Sumane,

Thanks for sending the latest issue of *The Ceylankan*. My congrats to you for your editorial and the interesting articles. It was our pleasure to read the article by Mr Neville Jayaweera. Mr N J was a respected GA and later he was involved in the "Marga institute". I have heard him speak in different assemblies. Is he in SL and if so can I have his address, so that I could send him a copy of my book?

Samuel Arnold

OK Neville, here is the start of your fan club. So, I think you need to get the quill out. Sumane

President's Report 2008

The CSA steps into a new decade.

One full of hope and expectation. Like the seasons ushering in new growth on the heels of the fallen greens, a global financial crisis has seen a new awakening of governmental responsibility for the wellness of its citizens.

We hope this augurs well for 2009.

Janus like, we look back at the last year, proud of our achievements and learning from our mistakes to look forward to the new year.

"Quot homines tot sententiae" melding in an environment of respecting another point of view epitomises the workings of our energetic committee.

I am sad to hear that Sumane wishes to lay down his quill but happy that our invaluable journal will be in safe and capable hands.

We are thankful that our guide, friend and philosopher Hugh Karunanayake continues to watch over the CSA like a guardian angel.

I make no special mention of a particular member as they each have put their shoulder to the wheel to make it not turn but spin!

I thank all the members who attend our meetings in numbers and assist in no small measure to make each meeting memorable.

Wishing you all a happy and prosperous 2009.

A CORDIAL WELCOME TO NEW MEMBERS



Graham & Susan Masefield

Quakers Hill NSW

...who have joined since publication of Journal # 44

*...and Gift Subscription recipients of four issues of
The Ceylankan awarded by members:*

Dr David van der Straaten

Epping NSW

Peter van Reyk

Tallebudgera QLD

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REMINDER! MEMBERSHIP DUES

2008 calendar year subscriptions are now overdue and 2009 are due. Australian members may send personal cheque/MO in favour of the Ceylon Society of Australia to Srikantha Nadarajah, 50A -The Esplanade - Thornleigh NSW 2120, or arrange direct payment to the Society's account BSB 062-308 Acc# 1003 8725 at Commonwealth Bank. A standing order on your bank to debit your account on a given date will ensure your subs are never in arrears. Overseas members are kindly reminded to send their remittances by Bank Draft in Australian currency or pay by using SWIFT Code CTBAU2S. Personal cheques in foreign currency cannot be accepted. Those making direct payment to Bank are requested to inform the Treasurer by email where possible. Sri Lankan resident members have the option of paying in Rupees to local Treasurer. Please see contact details in adjacent panel.

Annual subscriptions are:

All Members AU\$ 30.00

Pensioners AU\$ 20.00

Sri Lankan resident members SL Rs 3,000

**If in doubt of your subscription status please
contact Nada on**

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E-mail: vsnadarajah@bigpond.com



NEXT SYDNEY MEETING

Sunday 22nd February at 6.30 p.m.

Ramya Panagoda nearly became a casualty of the 2004 Boxing Day tsunami whilst holidaying in Sri Lanka. She has turned her near-death experience into a positive attribute. She will narrate her life-changing experience and what it has enabled her to achieve during the past four years in her talk

Things are never the same after experiencing the Boxing Day Tsunami

Venue: Thornleigh Community Centre
Corner Phyllis & Central Avenues
(off Pennant Hills Road) Thornleigh

Info: Doug 02 9894 7449—Chandra 9872 6826

NEXT MELBOURNE MEETING

Sunday 22nd February at 5.30 p.m.

Mahinda Wijesinghe

Will speak on

The History of Sri Lanka Cricket Since Achieving Test Status

Venue: Holy Redeemer Church Hall Cnr of York Street and
Mont Albert Road Surrey Hills VIC 3127
(Melways Ref: 46 H10)

Info: Shelagh -03 9808 4962 Or Srilal -03 9809 1004

NEXT COLOMBO MEETING

Saturday, 21st February at 5.30 pm

Capt Elmo Jayawardena

Will speak and lead a discussion on

The Last Kingdom of Sinhalay

Venue:

Organisation of Professional Associations (OPA),
Stanley Wijesundara Mawatha, Colombo 7

Info: Somasiri - 2737180 - Mike - 0775412420
Daya - 2786783

Libraries in which *The Ceylankan* is now available

1. Dept of National archives, Colombo
2. Dept of National Museums, Colombo
3. Sri Lanka National Library, Colombo
4. Society of Australian Genealogists, Sydney
5. Wildlife Heritage Trust of Sri Lanka, Colombo.
6. Friends of Sri Lanka Association, Tunbridge Wells, England.
7. National Library of Australia, Canberra.
8. State Library of NSW
9. State Library of Queensland
10. Families in British India Society, Essex, England.
11. Federation of Family History Societies, West Sussex, England,
12. International Foundation of Sri Lankans, St Albans, England.
13. Royal Asiatic Society, England.
14. State Library of Victoria
15. Stichtung Netherlands-Sri Lanka, Netherlands
16. South Asian Studies Association, Armidale.
17. The British Library, England
18. Centre for South Asia Studies, U of C, Berkeley, USA
19. Society of Genealogists, England
20. Ceylon Study Circle, England
21. Royal Asiatic Society Sri Lanka, Colombo
22. British Empire & Commonwealth Museum, England
23. Wildlife & Nature Protection Society, Colombo.
24. British Association for Cemeteries in South Asia.

"THE CEYLANKAN is published quarterly. Every effort is made to print material that is relevant and correct, but we do not take responsibility for errors. The editorial committee would appreciate if inaccuracies are brought to its attention. Original material is sought, preferably of an anecdotal, historical nature, but any material will be considered provided it contributes to the Society's ideals of being non racial, non-political, non-religious, and non-controversial.

Where applicable, contributors are requested to annotate bibliographical references to facilitate further research & study by interested members.

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Veddas—Aborigines of Ceylon circa 1890