

The Ceylankam



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The Ceylon Society of Australia

Keeping Our Heritage Alive

PRESIDENT

Harry de Sayrah OAM, JP
Mobile 0415 402 724
Harold.166@hotmail.com

VICE-PRESIDENT

Dr Srilal Fernando

SECRETARY

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

TREASURER & PUBLIC OFFICER

Upali Dharmakirti
Int. + 61 2 9986 0337
3 Viola Avenue Warriewood NSW 2102
upalid@optusnet.com.au

PUBLIC RELATIONS

Sunimal Fernando
Int. +61 2 9476 6852

PUBLICATIONS

Sunil de Silva
Int. + 61 2 8021 2328
sunsil@optusnet.com.au

EDITOR/LIBRARIAN

Doug Jones
Int. + 61 2 8677 9260
Mobile 0415 890 827
109 Oakhill Drive Castle Hill NSW 2154
dougjay20@gmail.com

SOCIAL CONVENOR

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

MELBOURNE CHAPTER CONVENOR

Shelagh Goonewardene
Int. + 61 3 9808 4962
shelaghlou@yahoo.com.au

COLOMBO CHAPTER

Convenor/Local President
Chulie de Silva
077 777 2220 email: chuls201@gmail.com

Local Hon. Secretary

Daya Wickramatunge
2786783 email: dawick@sltnet.com

Local Hon. Treasurer

Somasiri Devendra
Int. +94 (0)11 273 7180
somasiri@edisrilanka.com

EX-OFFICIO

Dr Robert Sourjah
Int. + 61 2 9622 2469
robertsourjah@yahoo.com

Tony Peries
Int. +61 2 9674 7515
srini.p@bigpond.com

Ron Murrell
Int. + 61 2 9484 4070
ron.murrell@gmail.com

LIFE MEMBER
Hugh Karunanayake
Int. + 61 2 9980 2494
hkaru@optusnet.com.au

Srikantha Nadarajah
Int. + 61 2 9980 1701
vsnadarajah@dodo.com.au

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How to become a Member of the CSA

Who can become a member of the CSA? Any person with a common interest relating to the historical heritage of Ceylon/Sri Lanka and wishes to share that interest with like-minded people worldwide is welcome to seek membership. Please contact any of the following for further details:

In **Sydney**: Contact: Treasurer Upali Dharmakirti
3 Viola Avenue, Warriewood NSW 2102 Phone:
9986 0337

Email: upalid@optusnet.com.au

In **Melbourne**: Contact: Convenor Shelagh
Goonewardene Phone: 9808 4962

Email: shelaghlou@yahoo.com.au

In **Colombo**: Until further notice members are requested to deposit subscription money/cheques at a HSBC ATM machine or transfer to the HSBC electronically. The information you require is for ATMs: Account Name: Ceylon Society of Australia CSA Account Number- 008-044109-001 - e Transfer above plus: HSBC Swift Code- HSBCLKLX. Annual subs: LKR3000.00
Contact: Somasiri Devendra (Acting Treasurer)
273 7180 Email: somasiri@edisrilanka.com

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

From the Editor...

Another journal has been mailed to you and we trust you will be happy with what is on offer. We are grateful to all the contributors because without them, there would be no journal. It is good to have new writers submitting their literary work and we welcome our newest, Wendy Sedgwick, writing to us all the way from Scotland, about her re-visit to Monaragala. We encourage more and more members to put down on paper what made Ceylon (Sri Lanka) tick in their lives and share the stories with the like-minded people who make up our world-wide readership.

The Rambler once again shares with us his vast knowledge of people, places and things Sri Lankan, when he recalls the early days of High Street, Wellawatte in the 1950s. As you take a leisurely stroll with him down this well-known thoroughfare in Colombo's littoral, you can come to grips with the results of Somasiri Devendra's penchant for painstaking research, especially in matters nautical. Here he traces the voyage of the

Jaffna cargo ship the Annapooranyamal to Boston (USA). Unfortunately space constraints have confined us to, reluctantly, run this absorbing piece in two instalments.

Journalist and editor E.C.T.Candappa writes engagingly about the editors of his time, initiating, we anticipate, a short series on a distinguished line of editors that graced the profession in the island.

While V.S.Nadarajah pens his views on Banking in Ceylon in British times, Shelagh Goonewardene concludes her appraisal of painter George Keyt. For your pleasure we have lavished the back cover with an album of colour reproductions of Keyt's artistry, photographs of which have been kindly given to us by the author.

The usual features – Synopses of meetings, Meals Ammi Made, Our Readers Write – are all there for you to peruse. The Nature Notes column will reappear in the next issue.

As you know, ours is a generous 36-page publication but the subject matter we cater for calls for lengthy articles and that, unfortunately, leaves no choice but to hold back good contributions for later use. To those whose valuable work has not been published now, they are earmarked for our future journals.

About the Ceylon Society of Australia

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

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

Our Readers Write

Cactus growing

Received the latest journal yesterday [J53] and as always read it at once all the way through. I am amazed at the depth of knowledge of The Rambler on a variety of wide-ranging topics, the latest Cactus. I knew he had a small collection of succulents and he kindly gave a few to my wife Srinu who now has quite a lot. I wonder if he has seen the Cactus garden, maybe just outside L.A. (I am thinking Huntington Hartford Estate, where there is a fine library including some priceless works as well).

TONY PERIES

On their way to Australia

There has been some mention in the British press about children from the UK who were sent out to Australia—some were from Dr. Barnardo's Homes. I played a small part as they made their journey by sea, that was from about 1949 until 1953 when I got on a ship and left Ceylon for England.

As far as I can recall, each batch numbered about 25 were accompanied by two adult females. I think those women returned to England to accompany another group. When the ship anchored at Colombo, officials from the Ceylon Boy Scout Association went on board and accompanied the group ashore, which, in those days, was by launch. From the jetty the Missions to Seamen bus took the children and the chaperones to the Dehiwela Zoo where they spent a few hours. On the way back to the harbour, the bus brought them to the Scout Headquarters in Lower Lake Road, Galle Face, which is where I

and some other scouts served them with cake and fruit juice.

The children were in the nine to 12-year age group, both boys and girls. They seemed quite cheerful and the women in charge of them came across as being kind, but from what we now hear, life for some of those youngsters may not have been as nice as it seemed. After refreshments, if time permitted, the group was taken for a boat ride on the Beira Lake by the Sea Scouts, then back by bus to the jetty. I wonder what became of those children that I helped a little.

MALCOLM ABAYEKOON

Little Bike Lost

Some salient facts in response to E.C.T. Candappa's comments on the St Joseph's College Film Society Production of *Little Bike Lost* (J53).

(Fr) Noel Crusz –Tutorial staff of St Josephs College – was the Master in Charge of the Film Society. I was the President and Lalin Fernando was the Vice President of the society.

The idea of the student production was hatched at a meeting of the Film Society under the Direction of Noel Crusz.

HARRY de SAYRAH

Your views are valuable!

Do you have a point of view to share with our readers? Can you shed some new light on a topic discussed? Is there anything you like or dislike published here and have something constructive to offer about it? Then express your opinion in the Letters column. Please keep them brief, no more than 400 words preferably. Letters may be edited because of length and/or content.

Webmaster wanted

Members may be aware that the CSA has its own website and is looking for a member with the necessary aptitude and know-how to undertake the role of its webmaster. The position will be voluntary and a labour of love. The person we are seeking will need to have his/her own PC, software and internet service. Some knowledge of community-



type websites, familiarity with HTML and an ability to do simple graphics will be appreciated. It is essential to set aside necessary time and be committed to maintain and periodically update the website.

This is an ideal opportunity for the appointee to interact closely with a wide membership of Sri Lankan scholars, intellectuals and others from across the globe.

If you have the dedication and the drive to undertake this important role please email the editor and include a brief resume.



RETURN TO MONARAGALA

Last February 2010 we went to Sri Lanka to attempt the walk up to my grandparent's old tea bungalow above Monaragala.

My grandfather, Lou Gourlay, born in 1890, went out to Ceylon from Carnoustie as an 18-year old, first to Great Western Estate, followed by Udupolla and finally as a rubber and tea planter near Monaragala in Uva Province, run by Gordon Frazers. On his first leave he met Christian Alice Spence coming out of church in Dundee and on return to Colombo, they married at St Andrews Scots Kirk, Kollupitiya on July 11, 1916. Two years later, my mother, Marjorie, was born in the Queens Hotel, Kandy and she spent her first five years up at the bungalow, 2 500 feet above Muppane, near Monaragala.

Her parents then decided she might grow too tall (like the tropical plants!) if she stayed on in Ceylon and so sent her to boarding school at Bridge of Allan near Stirling in Scotland. Can you imagine the contrast for that poor little girl and the agony for her mother letting go of her only child for virtually 12 years? I know she saw her mother every few years when she came over on leave and her father less so, but the dislocation and feeling of being an outsider, always spending holidays with grandparents, aunts and cousins must have taken its toll. Marjorie returned to Ceylon in 1937 to a huge welcome from the Estate and a year later met and became engaged to my father, Tredway Sydenham-Clarke.

In early 1939, Marjorie's parents were due to go on leave and persuaded her to accompany them back to Scotland. Christian was by now very unwell and when they disembarked at Marseilles she was diagnosed with inoperable cancer. I have all the letters written at this time between Mum and Dad planning their marriage for when she returned to Colombo but that summer Christian died at home in Dundee, followed a month later by first one parent and then the other and a week later war was declared. Marjorie was frantic to get back to Ceylon with her widowed father and they had a long wait till berths became available in November. When arrival was due, Tredway anxiously scoured the horizon as there could be no certainty that ships would turn up at the expected time or that they would be hit by mines in the harbour approaches.

by
Wendy Sedgwick

Fortunately all was well and they duly married at St Andrews on January 12, 1940 with a reception at the Galle Face Hotel (we have an ancient film recording the event!) and honeymoon at Mysore in India.

To switch now to my father who was born at Rob Roy tea estate, near Kotagiri in the Nilgiri Hills, South India. His father, Ernest Sydenham-Clarke had originally come from England to Ceylon in 1893 as a trainee tea planter on Fairlawn Estate, Maskeliya District. Later he accepted an offer as Assistant Manager of a



• *Christian Gourlay with Marjorie Gourlay (aged five) before leaving for school in Stirling, Scotland.*

coffee estate in North Coorg, South India and in 1900, volunteered for service in Lumsden's Horse for the Boer War. In 1905, he returned to London on leave, met Phoebe Fell (my grandmother) and married her at Wimbledon. They soon returned together to their remote coffee estate - no doubt a severe culture shock to her having been brought up in London's Edwardian society. In 1912 Ernest and Phoebe became the sole owners of a neglected 500 acre tea estate, Rob Roy, and in 1913, Tredway was born. Six years later in 1920, he too, along with his brother and sister were left to fend for themselves at boarding schools in England while their parents sailed back to India. Fast forward to school at Charterhouse, followed by a degree in Modern Languages at Peterhouse in Cambridge and Dad was ready to start his

career with the Colonial Administrative Service, culminating in the welcomed offer of a job in the Ceylon Civil Service (CCS).

He sailed for Colombo in the autumn of 1936, sharing a cabin with Archie Henderson. They are believed to have been the last two British to be recruited to the CCS in view of the growing prospect of Independence. On arrival, after a few days stay in the Chief-Secretary's beautiful bungalow 'Temple Trees' then occupied by Sir Maxwell Wedderburn, Archie was posted to Kandy and Dad to the Defence Department in the Colombo Secretariat under the immediate guidance of Charles Hartwell. On their first day, they were taken to be measured for at least seven suits, one for each day of the week, which were ready in a day and cost eight rupees each, at 18 rupees to the pound! It did not take long for Archie and Dad to blot their copy-books. A great Ball was held at Governor's house in the Fort. The Governor had two daughters in their early 20s. Archie and Dad danced with them from time



• Christmas 1938 at Monaragala. Back row, from left: Lou Gurlay, Archie Henderson, Marjorie Gurlay. Front row: Christian Gurlay, Phoebe Sydneham-Clarke, Tredway Sydenham-Clarke.

to time, but spent most of the evening having fun with people they had met on the ship. The Chief Secretary made it clear to them later that more attention paid to the Governor's family would not have gone amiss!

Dad wrote "...generally bachelor men, of whom there were many living in Colombo working in commerce or in Government Service, lived in groups of up to six in bungalows within five miles of the Fort with their own cars in what was called a 'chummery'. We had one servant each, an 'appu', and started work early, being

visited most days at 7 am by a prisoner from the local gaol who came with a tutor to practice talking with us in Sinhalese or Tamil for language exams which we had to pass, probably in a year, before being confirmed in our jobs and qualifying for higher salaries. You finished office work at 5 and then usually went to one of two excellent clubs with spectacular gardens, for tennis or squash, or to a good golf or sailing club or for a swim. The standard of golf and tennis was high with a few scratch golfers and some excellent tennis players. Matches were staged against some of the Ceylon outstations as well as some more distant Indian cities...

"One day in February 1938, Alan Marshall and I were invited to dinner and to an excellent fancy dress dance at the Garden Club afterwards. Our hostess kindly cast the bait that her own daughter was sick and would have to miss the party but that her place would be taken by a planter's charming daughter, Marjorie Gurlay, unknown to us, who was in Colombo on a visit from a remote tea estate in a range of hills near Monaragala. She had expected to go home before the dance, but had agreed to stay an extra night and borrow the sick girl's dress for the party. Alan and I condescendingly accepted the invitation on condition that we would be free to prop up the bar all evening and not have to keep dancing with the dinner guests.

"When we arrived for dinner Alan and I were both struck by the new female vision, and, by the end of the evening, were quite smitten so that battle inevitably ensued between us for her affection! Marjorie went back home the next day and we both entered a busy period of letter writing and telephoning. For a week or so neither knew which of us might be preferred but finally the die was cast in my direction. Poor Alan was so put off that he went to the foot of Adam's Peak in the river Kelani, near Ratnapura, and solemnly hauled himself all 7,000 feet to the summit! I became engaged to 'Margo' in June 1938 and Alan in due course went back to his firm in London and later joined the navy and suffered agonies in the North Sea and Norway operations".

Soon after Tred met Margo, he was posted to his first outstation Matara where he was the Office Assistant No 2 under the Assistant Government Agent (AGA) Davidson - a most efficient but very severe taskmaster. Much of Tred's work was similar to that of a magistrate

visiting surrounding villages with a view to resolving local issues. When he could get away at weekends or public holidays, he would take his stalwart Ford along the coast past Hambantota and then northwards up the straight, fast deserted road towards the hills above Bandarawela.

At Welawaya rest house he turned eastwards towards the Monaragala range of hills, and at Muppane, would be met by a 'syce' with a couple of horses belonging to Lou Gourlay to ride the steep path up 2 500 feet to the bungalow, beautifully situated among sparse rubber trees with a splendid view south eastwards. Margo's then 40-year old mother, Christian, who had lived all of her married life up there where a huge variety of plants flourished, had created a most attractive garden – like Tred's mother's at Rob Roy.

In 1939 while Margo was on leave in Scotland, Tred was transferred to Kandy but, having a useful knowledge of several European languages, in view of the imminence of war, was earmarked to help in the setting up of the Ceylon Censorship. When war broke out he moved back to Colombo and took charge of Postal Censorship involving the recruiting of a staff of some 80 loyal European linguists, intercepting huge quantities of mail both local and passing through Colombo on ships, laboriously building up a picture of organisations trading with the enemy or indulging in espionage. After their marriage in January 1940, they were allotted a bungalow at 27 Brownrigg Road, Havelock Town, near the Police Headquarters, and Margo was employed in the photographic department of the Naval Office.

Gradually the strategic importance of Ceylon as a base for the British armed services increased and the need to protect them and the population as a whole against local subversion grew correspondingly. Tred was then the Co-ordinating Intelligence Officer and Secretary of a Combined Security Bureau working under the Deputy Inspector General of Police, Criminal Investigation Department (CID). He was sent to learn something of the methods of a number of Central Intelligence Officers in the Indian Police Service and he visited Madras, Bombay, Delhi, Lahore and Karachi and gained greatly from the experience. While there he was allowed a week's leave and managed to indulge one of his great loves by joining a couple of Englishmen who were about to have a few days skiing in the Himalayas using the Sapper Hut at Khillanmarg.

They set off in rusty taxis along the Vale of Kashmir to Tanmarg, where they mounted horses and rode up past Gulmarg to the hut above the treeline at 10 000 feet. They had four days of very energetic skiing with the Nanga Parbat range in the far distance using seal-skins fixed under their skis to gain the necessary height before each run.

Then it was back to Colombo, writing a difficult report recommending sweeping changes



• Helena Hamy was a very good ayah to Wendy, caring for her till she was two.

to Ceylon's CID. The Governor, Sir Andrew Caldecott, instinctively resisted much in the way of change, mainly on account of cost. Tred's attempts to expand the CID continued to fall on deaf ears, but as he wrote himself, he was very junior! One of his more interesting regular tasks was to drive to Trincomalee at a moment's notice when huge British liners, such as the Mauretania or Queen Elizabeth, packed with thousands of Australian and New Zealand troops bound for the Middle East, turned up to refuel and departed unannounced. Tred went on board to discuss security problems with their staff. It was, of course, vital for the details of their passages not to become known to enemy submarines and mercifully, in spite of their vast size, none of them ever had their passages to Suez interrupted.

He wrote "...While the serious threat of a Japanese invasion of Ceylon and India lasted, the consequences of which would obviously be

critical, especially to Lord Mountbatten's South East Asia Command at Peradeniya...those of us who were largely responsible for trying to plan for such a situation were...under intense pressure if not driven almost insane." Just in the nick of time, however, the Japanese fleet was repelled in the Battle of the Coral Sea off Australia and life in Ceylon gradually returned to something like normal. The Government decided to absorb his job into a secret Force, which was training in Ceylon with a view to taking the War to the jungles of Burma. He was transferred to become Secretary of the Ceylon Government Medical Service.

Before long he was transferred again as AGA Colombo North with his work concentrating on Colombo District running northwards along the sea coast towards Puttalam and Kurunegala District to the east. Much of his time was spent as a magistrate in a non air-conditioned courtroom in which the main problem was to stay awake while dealing with numerous minor cases arising out of compulsory acquisition of land to enable the Government to construct what has become its principal airport at Negombo.

He wrote "...by now Margo was heavily pregnant and had to give up her job in the Colombo Naval Office. To our delight our first daughter, Wendy Lou, was born early on 7 July 1943. Our bungalow was near the Fraser Nursing Home but it was a very stormy night so I had a most anxious time wondering what was happening in the gale. Margo must have been even more anxious. In those days husbands did not attend the actual births of their children."

By the end of 1944, he had been in Ceylon for seven years without home leave and all three of us had developed serious amoebic dysentery which, in his case, began to turn into 'tropical sprue'. His doctor said it might prove fatal unless he could get to a temperate climate for some months. Very fortunately a vacancy occurred at the crucial moment in the job of AGA Nuwara Eliya District, to which he was extremely lucky to be appointed. We lived there in the Residency for 18 months and, being the son and daughter of tea planters, they had much in common with the large local European population. He had an interesting District to manage and on one occasion, covered a forgotten circuit in the 'low country' to the north of Nuwara Eliya which no white AGA had tackled

in living memory. In August 1945, Margo and Tred paid a short visit to Tred's old home, Rob Roy tea estate near Kotagiri, hearing that the War had ended at Wellington, a large military base nearby. They returned to Nuwara Eliya and after applying for home leave finally secured a passage in April 1946 on the cargo ship S.S. Glen Strae with a number of fellow passengers from Ceylon travelling about six in a large cabin. The voyage to the Thames lasted four weeks.

Although Ceylon was on the verge of independence, the Colonial Office was optimistic about his future prospects and wanted him to stay put, tempting him with a posting as AGA Trincomalee. But, because the family had been warned to get out of the tropics or face long-term ill health, he finally decided to accept an appointment as UK Trade Commissioner in Natal, South Africa, and we sailed for Cape Town in late 1947 on the Llanstephan Castle to start life in a new country.

We lived there with long leaves back in England and two years from 1956 to 1958 in Woking, Surrey, before returning to Johannesburg with the Colonial Development Corporation until coming back to the UK for good in December 1960. I married in 1967 and we came to live in Inverness in 1969 and are still in the same house on the edge of the Moray Firth. In 1988 Dad asked if I would accompany him to Ceylon with a group organised by Andre Willis (he was a long-time resident of Sri Lanka and head of the firm John Keels) consisting mainly of old planters and their offspring. It was such a revelation to me having last been there aged three that two years, later I persuaded Christopher, my husband, to go on Andre's second Walker Tour of the island. My mother, Margo, then died and Dad asked me to accompany him yet again in 1993. Each time Dad asked the Embassy whether we could drive to Monaragala and was told under no account could we do so as we would endanger our driver, let alone ourselves, due to terrorist activity along the way.

So it was that my nephew persuaded my sister - born six years after me in South Africa - to accompany him on a backpacking journey to find the estate in 2007. Following their success after receiving help from Vasanthan, the owner of the neighbouring estate Raxawa, who offered to lead them up to the bungalow, Christopher and I decided that we had to see it for ourselves. We flew to Colombo in February 2010 and stayed at

Negombo with Lal Jayamaha, our superb Walker Tour guide on each of Andre's expeditions, now married to Ceylon-born Jackie Robinson and living in Durban. We then took the train to Ella for three nights in an adventure park before catching the bus to Monaragala.

The ride was hair-raising with a kamikaze bus driver who braked like crazy every time he had to pick up passengers but never seemed to slow down at all when passing wobbling cyclists or other even less predictable road users! We landed in the town and fell into the Victory Inn, a dark and plastic newly built hostelry. It was good to contact Vasanthan who lives with his sister in their bungalow at Raxawa while his mother lives down at Kandaland which used to be the Youth Hostel in Monaragala. We left our luggage with his dear elderly mother who immediately mentioned Marjorie and Tred Sydenham-Clarke as she had known them and me, aged three, when I left. Christopher wanted to buy some old Arrack at the bottle store and then our *tuk tuk* driver set off up the old drive (now not maintained by the Water Company!) as far as the stream that fords the road. The whole drive way up was five miles and in my mother's day they went up on horseback, walked the horses down as it was too steep to ride. The car and Andrea, the chauffeur, who drove them all over the island were housed at the bottom. The road was appalling and how the *tuk tuk* didn't ruin its chassis I don't know, but the driver seemed to be used to it! We got out of the *tuk tuk* about a third of the way up and climbed to Raxawa bungalow to have delicious lemon drinks and a curry lunch. Vasanthan showed us the rubber process done by five women in his ancient rubber house and one elderly man who remembered Lou Gourlay. Later we saw the Deeds of his property written in the 1860s in Edinburgh because a Scottish widow owned it and sold to Vasanthan's grandfather. All the estates round there seemed to be run by Scottish people.

We set off when it got a bit cooler, sideways across the hillside till we hit the boundary and then more stony paths till eventually we reached the original driveway and started up the last two miles to the bungalow (now called Maragala). Vasanthan hadn't been back since he escorted my sister and nephew there in 2007 and he was quite distressed at the dilapidated state of the place – "next time, it will

have disintegrated beyond repair" he said. The old caretaker came to unpadlock the gate and he kindly gave us a drink before escorting us around so that we could take photos of this and that.

Nothing can take away from the fabulous position with the lawn in front like a shelf overlooking the view to the distant mountain range and I was glad to see the outlines of all the peaks exactly as pictured in the old photos. Since then I have looked through all Mum's collection of photographs ranging from her as a four-month old baby until the age of five standing in front of the bungalow at the cut off point when she went to Stirling to boarding school and I ache for poor



• *Monaragala bungalow - December 1938.*

Christian being left behind for 12 years while her only daughter grew up in a foreign land. Extraordinary what they did!

There was a cow tethered on the lawn hoovering up such threadbare grass as it could reach and Grandpa's ancient swimming pool lay cracked and empty with vegetation growing through the walls. The verandah was my favourite place as the rooms were all gloomy as hell, vast in size and empty of furniture except umpteen bedsteads. Several huge bathrooms with nothing in them except baths full to the brim with water because the tap washers had all perished! The back quarters were extremely primitive but quite adequate, I know, as amazing food came out of such kitchens. We climbed up a large rock behind where we could see in the distance Vasanthan's new project, an Eco Lodge where we were to sleep that night and I wished I could just fly there just then! – instead we had to return the way we came and complete the entire circuit back again to Raxawa to climb up to it, by which time we were dead tired!

I feel a strong sense of completion now having made the journey and seen for myself

where they lived particularly after reaching Dad's bungalow at Rob Roy in South India in the previous year. Vasanthan said that the Scots all chose the most beautiful sites in which to build their houses with an emphasis on the view whereas, now that the Government has taken over the estates, their employees prefer to live in the towns and do their supervising from there. He sincerely wishes that these old bungalows could be restored to their former condition as part of their colonial history and heritage. "The tea bushes here have been allowed to grow into trees" he said. We failed to locate the peak which my parents knew as 'Kowdawa' where M and D got engaged in 1938 because the caretaker only knew it by its local name.

Down we came very pleased to have done it but jolly relieved to get there in one piece and up again to a welcome alfresco shower at the Raxawa Eco Lodge next to the dinky eco loo. We had the place to ourselves and Vasanthan's staff lit the paraffin lamps as well as a lovely fire in the clearing below behind the lodge. We had Old Arrack and cashews with Vasanthan, followed by dinner which had been carried at least a mile through the jungle from the kitchen at Raxawa bungalow served at a little table. The front of the lodge was open to the winds and the back had canvas laced curtains which blew up in the night and swept our clothes away. So we got up and stoked the fire at 2 am, re-assembled our scattered belongings and listened to the jungle sounds. Wild boar were definitely around us because we could hear the wild boar bird following them. We slept brilliantly well on a mattress Vasanthan's staff had carried up that afternoon and in the morning, Reuben came with hot water for morning tea! A magic night in a beautiful place at the end of a long eventful day. Breakfast was waiting for us at the Raxawa bungalow - chickpeas, coconut, jaggery, pancakes and real coffee ground from their own beans. We watched the men roll out the rubber and push it through the wringer into squares to dry on the roof in the sun followed by the smokehouse a day later. We saw all Vasanthan's spices and fruit trees, admired the vegetable garden and wrote in the visitor book before descending the same way back to the *tuk-tuk* for the last third of the way down to the town of Monaragala and our bus to Yala.

Tred and I then met up with Jean Henderson, the wife of Archie, who was the other

CCS cadet that sailed to Colombo with Dad in 1936 and was best man at my parents wedding in 1940. Jean was the daughter of a Scots engineer working in Ceylon and she married Archie in 1944. After the war, he got a job with James Warren in Calcutta where they lived until eventually returning to the U.K. At the age of 89 Jean, now widowed, was offered tickets to the place she had served during the war so she, her son Jeremy and wife Rhona were able to visit her old haunts while we were there. We had a very animated reunion at Yala and then later in the year made a surprise visit for her 90th birthday. She told me Archie had to sell his shotgun to buy her a wedding ring! They lived at that time, 1944, at Hambantota where Archie was in charge of Yala. They had no money but huge fun with people coming down at weekends from Colombo to shoot snipe and crocodiles etc. In 1988 on my first trip back when Archie, Jean, Dad and I went to the kacheri at Hambantota, a peon recognised Archie (A. K. J. Henderson) and rushed out to unfurl the Union Jack by the lily pond in front of the bungalow by climbing up the flag pole! Both Jean and I were in tears as we watched the display of such respect and affection for his old master.

I have always felt so lucky to have been born in Ceylon and my parents certainly were forever grateful for the inspiring place that it was in their time. The link continues through our various trips back to our latest to Australia in February 2011, where we stayed with Tony Peries in Sydney, the person responsible for my writing this story!



PUNSTER AT WORK

- Reading while sunbathing makes you well red.
- Time flies like an arrow. Fruit flies like a banana.
- If you don't pay your exorcist, you get re-possessed.
- With her marriage, she got a new name and a dress.
- You feel stuck with your debt if you can't budge it.
- Local Area Network in Australia – the LAN down under.
- Every calendar's days are numbered.
- A boiled egg in the morning is hard to beat.
- Acupuncture is a jab well done.

E.C.T.CANDAPPA *recollects his good fortune of working for the old guard of Sri Lanka's distinguished editors and he watched, as it were, the changing of the guard in the profession, witnessing, at the same time, the mutation of the generic concept of the editor.*

Editors of my time in Sri Lanka

When the editor of THE CEYLAN KAN suggested that I write a series of articles on Sri Lankan editors, I mentally abridged it to "Some Sri Lankan editors for whom I have worked," as obviously there were, in addition, several well known and outstanding editors of whom I have only hearsay knowledge.

I worked at Lake House for 22 years as a full time journalist, from 1952 to 1974, and there, as far as I can recall, I worked for 12 editors. Outside of this experience, as a freelance journalist both before I joined Lake House and afterwards, I worked for 12 editors.

I also came to know eight editors personally on other newspaper groups.

I mention these figures to demonstrate that all 32 individuals I have known do not fall into the generic group of editor, in the dictionary defined sense of the word.

In the classical mode, an editor was a demi-god. His room was the *Sanctum Sanctorum*. He kept the door of his office closed. People knocked before entering. If one was summoned, it was to receive a reprimand or rarely, an accolade.

He wrote editorial and leader page articles, took all the major decisions on content and the format of the paper. He clocked in at nine and took off at five.

He had an almost exclusive ear to the proprietor whose wishes he translated into action. With changing times, styles changed.

I had the good fortune of meeting the old guard and watched the changing of the guard, and witnessed the mutation of the concept of editor.

But before I come to the mainstream editors, among the first editors I came to know did not belong to the mainstream, or were part-time editors.

The first was a Catholic priest, Fr J B Gregory, an assistant at St Lucia's Cathedral, who also functioned as Editor of *The Catholic Messenger*, the English Catholic weekly. There he had a small metal tray fixed on the door of his parish room, into which advertisements and other notices could be dropped.

As a teenage journalistic hopeful, I submitted a short story and eagerly awaited its publication—in vain. It came back with a polite rejection slip, the first in a series of such. (In a few years I was to be accepted as a contributor and later taken on to its staff).

The other editor who burst upon the local literary scene was a dynamic young man called Andrew G. de Silva. He started a magazine called BLOSSOMS and opened a small office right down the street where I, a young teenager, lived. De Silva attracted some outstanding writers and poets to his magazine, even offering payment for contributions, bless him. He was a most prolific writer and churned out articles, short stories and serials, and even books on the craft of writing.

He was too good to last. After a few dozen issues, he faded away, quite literally, for he

was not seen in print anywhere thereafter.

Another journalist, whose main interest was politics, was Anandatissa de Alwis, a dapper young man who edited, on a part time basis, the UNP journal.

I met him shortly after I had left school and offered to do a



• Quintus Dehilkhan

film column for his weekly. He accepted my offer and paid me Rs10 per column. It was my first regular pay as a journalist. De Alwis went on to become a very successful politician, a brilliant orator, and eventually held a Cabinet portfolio and finally became Speaker of the House of Representatives.

An editor I came to know quite well was Quintus Delilkhan, a literary giant, who also lived down my street at one time. By the time I came to know him he had relinquished his post as

(Continued on page 20)

The Rambler remembers...

The people of High Street Wellawatte – in the 1950s

High Street Wellawatte (now known as W.A. Silva Mawatha) was one of two roads in Colombo South that existed from as far back as the 19th century. It connected the western seaboard of Colombo with the semi-rural hinterland that existed eastwards to the outer Colombo areas. High Street linked Galle Road with Havelock Road, which meandered southwards to reach out to Kohuwela, Kesbewa, Horana etc. It also linked up with the High Level Road at Kirillapona through Pamankade Road, reaching out to Nugegoda, Maharagama, Homagama and beyond, to the rubber growing district of Sabaragamuwa.

High Street today is a broad double carriageway thoroughfare lined with modern buildings and apartment blocks; a far cry from the staid, narrow roadway that existed 60 years



• *W.A. Silva*

ago. With its long history as a roadway, High Street was the location for a large middle class population seeking convenient access to the city. Till the late 1940s when the Ebert Silva Bus Company commenced plying a bus service from Kirillapona to Wellawatte, there was no public transport link between the two suburbs; the popular mode of travel being the then ubiquitous rickshaw. Most, however, walked all the way from Kirillapona to Wellawatte and having reached journey's end at Galle Road, after a long walk, often in hot and humid conditions, quenched their thirst at the sherbert boutique (or *saruwath kadai*) a popular thirst-aid station at the end of High Street abutting Galle Road. A glass full of sherbert replete with *kasa kasa* (an exotic seed) cost five cents and a milk sherbert ten cents!

At its Galle Road intersection, High Street Wellawatte formed a focal point for shops that catered to the needs of the local community. Prominent among them was Swastika Stores run by A. John Perera and his sons, Victor, Stephen, Eddie, Lionel and Arkan. This was a large grocery store with imports (during the days of unrestricted imports) of all the groceries that filled the pantries of middle class Wellawatte. Christmas time was a bustling hive of activity within the store which had its own delivery service. On the opposite side of the

road was Arya Sinhala Drapery stores founded by a migrant Davith Singho Kurukulasuriya from Belliatta in the deep south. He arrived in Wellawatte with no money but soon established himself as a key entrepreneur in the area. He opened a popular day/night eatery called Ariya



• *High Street as it is today.*

Sinhala Hotel and from thence onwards had many thriving businesses in the area. He lived in a property off High Street close to Galle Road. At the Galle Road end of High Street were two well patronised South Indian eateries, one called Luxmi Villas. Next door to the *thosai kadais* was a billiard parlour where people met to play a game of billiards or snooker or to have a tipple. Adjoining the billiard parlour were two Tamil-owned jewellery enterprises which subsequently gave way to a small set of apartments built on the site. Possibly the first residential dwelling along High Street on the left hand side as one proceeded from Galle Road was the home of the long resident Wijesinghe family called *Palm Dale*. On the opposite side were three or four

free standing homes after which was the St Lawrence's Orphanage and convent. On the left hand side was the home of S.E Samarasinghe of the Postal Department. Next door lived civil servant Alfred Gogerly Moragoda and the separate home of his in-laws, among whom was Dr Sirimal Wickremesinghe of the MRI.

Abutting the road were two or three small compact homes with no front compound and somewhere there was a small board indicating access to a public bathing well. A footpath from the road led to the bathing well which was surrounded by a dozen or so of bathing troughs which were manually filled.



• *Sri Lankadhara Hall*

These bathing facilities were privately owned and intended mainly for poorer families living in tenement homes without bathrooms.

Bathing at the public well was subject to a charge of five cents. On the opposite side of the road was the Seventh Day Adventist church. Adjoining it was Gregory Place which led to about a dozen homes, mainly occupied by Burgher families among whom were the Rauxs. There was a small cottage on High Street adjoining Gregory Place with a larger property next door owned by the Roche family and which was at one time used as a motor repair garage. Facing it was the house named Manel in which N.W. Atukorale, then the Secretary to the Prime Minister Mr D.S. Senanayake, lived. Next door was Wasala Walawwa, the home of Assistant Postmaster-General A.G. Tillekeratne. The Garnier family lived next door, whose sons attended St Peters College. The Bartholomeusz family, among whom were Carol and Yasmine,

lived in the adjoining property and they, like the Garniers, emigrated to Australia years ago. Opposite this stood a row of about six or eight small tenement houses, all occupied by Burgher families. The property was owned by Dr Charles Fernando, who later demolished the houses and established a nursing home on its grounds. Years later, after the death of Dr Fernando, the nursing home was purchased by P.Ramanathan, a man closely associated with the horse racing industry and who lived about two doors away from the hospital. He re-named it Sri Lanka Hospital. It is now known as Royal Hospital. On the opposite side on a two-acre site donated by philanthropist

Dr W.A.De Silva to the Sri Lankadhara Society which established an orphanage and an elders home on the site. The grounds extended right up to Mallika Lane which connected High Street to Chapel Lane. Opposite Mallika Lane stood a small road named Ramsgate where about three or four

families lived, including the Huberts - Raju and Babu who attended St Peters College.

Next to Ramsgate stood the home of Felix Rasanayagam and his son Godfrey. This house was later occupied by the Seneviratnes including sons Harold, Chandra and Tissa who were well known musicians of the time.

Next to Mallika Lane proceeding eastward on High Street was an old Baptist Missionary Sinhalese School founded in the 19th century. It was a small school catering to not more than 50 children at Primary School level, mostly from the poorer families in the area. Opposite the school was the home of W.A. Kelly, an auctioneer who was married to the daughter of A.W. Jansz, the proprietor of A.W. Jansz, General, Hardware and Liquor Stores, the principal retail establishment in Wellawatte at the time. Facing the entrance to Hampden Lane stood the consulting rooms of Dr S.W.C.Ratnesar. Next door was a cottage named Villa Olivia with its front walls bordering the paved footpath that

ran on the side of High Street. Frank Modder, a journalist at the Times of Ceylon lived there with his family which included sons St John and Wester. This house was demolished in the 1960s for road widening. At this point stood a few boutiques on either side of the road and in between on the right hand side was the home of S.E. Fernando an official of the Ceylon Turf



Club. Next door was the home of the Whites with a large family of about a dozen offspring.

On the opposite side, bordering Peterson Lane lived the Gauder family, including son Ralph attending St Peters College and later to be a tea planter and well-known rugby player. Opposite Peterson Lane was the home of J.C Ferdinands, well known surveyor in the area and his sons Rupert, one time National Tennis Champion, Adrian, a jazz drummer and daughter Rosemarie, who was an acclaimed dancer. Next door was a tea boutique called Hadji Safaya, its name derived from the Sapphire Cinema which stood on the opposite side. The cinema was built in 1951 and at various times run by the Jabir Cader Group, the K.Gunaratnam Group and finally by P. Ramanathan, who ran the Sri Lanka Hospital. The Sapphire was in its later days screening South Indian films and was subject to an arson attack during the 1983 riots which destroyed it completely. Beside the cinema was a licensed stand for six rickshaws. Proceeding further down, on the opposite side, were a set of boutiques and the

local cooperative store established during the war years. Adjoining it was a house named *Silvermere*, the home of Wellawattearachige Abraham Silva, better known as W.A. Silva, the famous Sinhalese novelist who lived there till his death and in whose name High Street was renamed. The other famous Sinhalese novelist Martin Wickremesinghe presided at the public meeting at which the name High Street was erased from the map and W.A. Silva Mawatha

inserted in its place. Pamankade Lane commenced alongside *Silvermere* and beyond it was the home of the Potgers, long residents there. Old Potger was woken up one night by the sound of an intruder who when accosted stabbed him in the throat which fortunately did not prove fatal but a scratchy voice remained with him for the rest of his life to remind him of his bravado! Opposite was a small boutique and an ayurvedic physician's chambers which adjoined a small cul-de-sac where there was a row of about six small attached homes occupied by Burgher

families including the Bermans. A long standing firewood depot and a motorcar repair station were next door. On the opposite side was the home of Surveyor H.W. Perera and that of H.R. Porritt with his family which included his wife's children by her former marriage, Tony, Roseanne and Meropi Lucas. Next door lived the family of Colville de Kretser with a large family of children including Bryce, Brian, Megan *et al.*

On the opposite side was a little cottage with a notice advising passers by that it was the home of a "Registered Midwife" In that day and age a good many births were at home and the midwife was on call – not a gynaecologist! Further away was Ash Tip Road, the site of a Municipal Housing Scheme almost entirely occupied by activists of the Lanka Sama Samaj Party. At election time men and women from the housing scheme in red attire would go in a spectacular procession to cast their votes. From there onwards High Street entered the small town of Pamankade. Almost at the end of High Street on the right hand side was the

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This is the concluding instalment of SHELAGH GOONEWARDENE'S fascinating article where she shares ...

A Personal View of George Keyt

The first exhibition of the 43 Group opened on November 20, 1943 and featured the painters in the group and one sculptor, Ralph Claessen. It was held in a huge corrugated iron warehouse at 525 Darley Road, Maradana, which also housed the Photographic Society of Ceylon. The opening did not feature either any fanfare or speeches, people were simply encouraged to look at the exhibits. The press reaction ranged from the sarcastic and patronising to genuine appreciation. An example of the former was "...there

was the crowd of artists and their 'arty' friends. Hardly a Philistine in sight: but many a proud papa and fond mama basking in the reflected glory of their off-spring's genius."

An example of the latter was Tori de Sousa of the *Times of Ceylon* who gave a very informed opinion. He said: "*There are at least half a dozen works that would do honour to any exhibition anywhere in the world, and more than*



•Keyt at 88 -
"A Life in Art"
by Ian Goonetilleke

three times that number of exhibits that repay the closest study..."

Of Keyt's paintings he said: "*George Keyt continues to fascinate with his geometry and algebra, his tangents and segments and his quadratics equating the human figure with all manner of harmonies, exciting and at all times satisfying rhythms and patterns."*

So despite the banter, there was still a recognition of something entirely original which demanded respect and careful attention.

This was the low-key beginning of what was to change the art history of Sri Lankan painting. The artists who were included in the Group who have not been mentioned up to now were Aubrey Collette, the famous cartoonist, an excellent draughtsman who also painted, Geoffrey Beling, George Claessen, Manjusri, S. R. Kanagasabai and Richard Gabriel, who is happily still with us today, living in Australia and still painting. Not to speak of Neville Weeraratne who holds frequent exhibitions in his home. From now onwards, all these artists were to hold regular exhibitions under the banner of the 43 Group and Keyt had no more problems about how or where to exhibit his increasing output.

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High Street ... (from previous page)

Dharmodaya Pirivena established at the turn of the 20th century. The peace and harmony which existed between the different ethnic groups can be gauged by the fact that the shrine room of the Pirivena was donated by a Hindu Advocate S. Suntharalingam proprietor of Leela Press, and the temple belfry donated by a Burgher, the well-known entrepreneur of the time, Donovan Andree. Adjoining the entry to the Pirivena grounds was Aloysius Stores, a stationary store cum newsagency run by a popular merchant from the Baratha community. Cosmopolitan Wellawatte in the 1950s was part of a broader but clearly stratified society. People in the middle and upper classes wore trousers and those in the working or labouring classes wore sarongs

and some of the latter were barebodied waist upwards. The many boutiques and eateries along High Street were mainly meant for the working class and no trousered person would have ventured into those modest facilities excepting perhaps to buy a cigarette over the counter where the boutique keeper would treat him with utmost reverence. Prominent in the middle class were the Burgher families most of whom lived in rental homes and now have almost completely disappeared from the scene having found greener pastures overseas. High Street once home to a genteel community has over the past two decades been transformed into a busy commercial and retail precinct and these notes will hopefully bring back memories of a much traversed road with an endearing name.



With Ranjit Fernando, representing the Group and showing enormous initiative and enthusiasm, the first international exhibition was held in London at the invitation of the Royal Society of India, Pakistan and Ceylon at the Imperial Institute at South Kensington from November 25 to December 23, 1952. John Berger, art critic of the *New Statesman and Nation* said of Keyt that "he would be surely be recognised as an artist of important genius." He awarded plaudits to Deraniyagala, Ivan Peries and Gabriel but found some aspects of the other artists' work immature. There were other well known critics of the time who took the exhibition seriously and made worthwhile comments. Keyt was already somewhat known in England probably because of the book *George Keyt* written by Martin Russell and published in Bombay by Marg Publications in 1950.

Russell was an Englishman, conversant with painting, who lived in Colombo, had attended the very first exhibition of the 43 Group and bought most of the Keyt paintings on view there. His monograph is now a collector's item and has the most complete collection of reproductions of the painter's work in the first 21-years of his career. Fortunately, I have a photocopy of the 'Biographical Note' in that book.

Keyt and several of the others were now well on their way to fame, fortune and recognition both nationally and internationally. A complete *Descriptive List of Catalogues* of his exhibitions held nationally and internationally between 1947-1988 is available in Ian Goonetilleke's fine tribute published on the occasion of Keyt's 88th birthday on April 17, 1989, sponsored by the George Keyt Foundation.

Among the most important foreign exhibitions, the Group represented Ceylon at the 28th Biennale in Venice in 1956. The paintings shown made a very favourable impression and Deraniyagala won one of the UNESCO awards. An interesting letter written soon after that exhibition by Vittore Querel, an Italian art critic of Rome who was also owner of a private art gallery there, is available. He was obviously impressed by the paintings at this exhibition and he suggests that an exhibition could be held in Rome of these same paintings at his gallery. He particularly says of Keyt; "*The painting of Keyt will be an intelligent propaganda for Ceylon, the art, culture and people.*"

This proposal was not taken up by the Group but it demonstrated how much Keyt's particular style showcased the Sinhalese people and also spoke strongly for Indian and Sri Lankan culture.

Keyt exhibited continuously with the 43 Group upto 1967. He had 25 one man



• *Menike A.M. Private (George Keyt the Man and his Art).*

shows between 1947 and 1988. Of those held abroad, the most notable were those held in India in 1947, 1953 and 1975, and the London exhibitions of 1954, 1974 and 1982. His third alliance with a woman was with Kusum Narayan, an Indian friend of many years. This began in 1973 and led to his living in Colombo and Galle for six years. He went back in 1979 to live in Sirimalwatte for another cycle of solitude in village homes. Menike, of all the three women Keyt associated with, remained the constant star who never moved from her place in his life, remaining steadily in the background when the foreground was occupied by Kusum. I now return to the place where I first began – the deep and lasting connection between George Keyt and Harold Peiris. The evidence is that Keyt began to paint seriously at the age of 26. We know already that his parents were disturbed by his refusal to return to Trinity College in 1918 and when he took up his vocation, they would have been

even more upset. How would he earn a living? Besides in 1930, at the age of 29, he married his first wife Ruth and had two children, Diana and Flavia.

Perhaps initially his parents supported him financially. Lionel Wendt too tried to help him by introducing him to Plate's studio in Ward Street, Kandy where he earned small sums of money retouching positives and adding highlighting and giving depth to portraits by the use of transparent colours through the delicate use of tiny brushes and indelible ink. However, Keyt later rejected this idea that he had taken a part in the processing of Wendt's negatives in Kandy. One can see that Keyt had an enormous ego which was an inevitable part of his greatness as a painter.

When Harold Peiris and Keyt collaborated on publishing an illustrated translation of *The Gita Govinda. The love of Krishna and Radha, from the Sanskrit of Shri Jayadeva* which was published in Kandy in 1940, Harold's name appeared in the first edition but has been deleted in all subsequent editions. The fact was that it was Harold who was conversant with Sanskrit and without him, no translation could have been done.

Harold had studied in Berlin and Gottingen in his youth and knew several languages including Pali, French and German. I have seen him translating a Brecht play

from the original German and a play from its original Latin simply for pure enjoyment. The line drawings in the *Gita Govinda* by Keyt make this a collector's item, but he certainly took more credit for the translated poems than he should have. Another example of the famous ego!

Once Peggy, Keyt's sister, married Harold there was no doubt of the close association between them. Keyt's first trip to India in 1939 was with both of them and they

went to Tamil Nadu and Kerala. Later of course Keyt went many times to India, spending long periods of residence and travelling in Northern India. His many paintings of troupes of North Indian musicians – the Malkosh Raga – were inspired by what he saw there. Keyt visited the West only once and that at the age of 77 with Kusum in 1978. He stayed in London for most of the time, except for two trips to Oxford. He went to the National Gallery and toured many other galleries and museums seeing the originals of European art which he had long been familiar with in reproductions. It must have been a very satisfying and stimulating experience. He had intended to go to France, Germany and Italy as well but these plans did not materialise and he came back to Sri Lanka before the year ended. Perhaps the preoccupation of his genius with Sinhalese and Indian iconographies and cultures was too long established to make him interested in seeing what he already knew, and did not need to revive acquaintance with.

I think, until he gained fame with his exhibitions, it was Harold who provided money when it was needed, paying Keyt for the paintings he acquired which became the large collection which I saw so regularly when I visited the Peiris homes.

To return to Keyt's poetry to which I have referred to before, he started very early in life sending individual poems based on Buddhist stories to the *Buddhist Annual of Ceylon*. The first to be published "The Arahant" was awarded a prize in 1923 from *The Buddhist Annual*. Numerous poems and short stories continued to be published by many journals and also in the press. His mature work "Poems" was published in Kandy in 1936 and the 42 poems, all untitled, were dedicated to Lionel Wendt. "The Darkness Disrobed" also published in Kandy in 1937, consisted of 35 poems with titles, dedicated to his sister, Peggy. A full list of all his writings, is available in Ian Goonetilleke's invaluable book from which I have already quoted several times and there is also a list of 'Writings on George Keyt' from the early years upto about 1987.

The last photograph I have been able to access is George at 88 years old. It is from Ian Goonetilleke's book. Harry Pieris, in the heyday of his fame, did a very evocative pencil drawing of George (see page 27 of J53).

(Continued on page 22)



• A black and white photo taken of the Murals in Gotami Vihara.

Banking in Ceylon during the British period

by V.S. Nadarajah

Early banking in Ceylon can be traced back to money lenders and pawn brokers, who remain to the present day. The Portuguese and Dutch who ruled Ceylon from the 16th to the 18th century introduced a commercial economy with trading and the export of spices. From about 1825 the British government introduced monetary arrangements which evolved into usage of currencies.

Commercial and retail banking started from the mid-19th century with the introduction of the money economy resulting from the onset of local and international trade and commerce and change in the economy from subsistence to plantation agriculture. The early stage of banking was confined to British and Indian banks catering to plantation companies, Pettah traders and affluent retail clients.



• *National & Grindlays Bank, 37 York Street, Colombo 1 - 1970.*

The first commercial bank to be established was the Bank of Ceylon, which opened in Colombo in 1841. However, due to a slump in coffee prices a few years later, the bank faced a financial crisis. It was rescued by the Bank of Western India and changed its name to Oriental Bank in 1851. It was the first commercial bank to be given power of currency note issue. Due to the failure of the coffee industry, several banks which opened in second half of the 18th century, closed down soon after. During the early part of the 20th century, the

major banks were the British and Exchange banks. There was also Thomas Cooks Bankers, four Indian banks and a few local banks, Hatton Bank in Hatton, Bank of Uva and Jaffna Commercial Corporation in the north. British banks had branches in Kandy, Nuwara Eliya and Galle. By 1939 there were ten commercial banks including five Indian and five British banks. They were known as exchange banks as they were mainly interested in foreign trade. The Indian banks financed trade mainly with south India and the British banks serviced the plantation sector of the economy. Such foreign banks largely ignored the local population. The establishment of the State Mortgage Bank in 1931, the Loan Board and Ceylon Savings Bank allowed limited facilities for people to deposit funds and borrow on credit.

While the foreign companies such as plantation businesses and agency houses were provided satisfactory service by foreign banks during colonial times, local businesses had difficulty in negotiating facilities. Loans to Ceylonese business were through intermediaries known as Guarantee Shroffs, who had to guarantee repayment of such loans to the banks. The shroffs received a substantial commission from the borrower for arranging the finance as well as a retainer or salary from the banks which employed them. It was known as the Compradure system. More importantly there was a group of financiers known as Natukottai Chettiars who acted as intermediaries for Ceylonese borrowers. They arranged credit to local agriculturalists and businessmen. They advanced money from their own resources as well as other sources. In doing so they contributed in no small measure to the economic development of the country. They originated from Chetinand in South India and by 1934, had over 550 firms scattered all over the island.

Natukottai Chettiars

The role of Natukottai Chettiars as merchant bankers can be traced back to the Dutch period, although their activities flourished mainly under British rule from about the early 19th century.

They made a major contribution to expansion of internal and external trade during the 19th century, especially the Indo-Ceylon trade. The introduction of commercial banking from the mid-19th century gave them the opportunity to facilitate business with the local community by acting as middlemen for British banks. British bankers were not easily accessible to the local business community. The Chettiars, however, were able to negotiate loans on the basis of their standing with British banks in Madras and provide loans to the Ceylonese community at high rates of interest. The business of Chettiars declined gradually from the second quarter of the 20th century. Major contributory factors for the decline were the "Chetty crisis" of 1925 when bankruptcy of one of them caused banks to withdraw credit and, of course, the other was the economic depression of 1931. Several new government regulations such as the Income Tax Ordinance of 1932, Estate Duty Ordinance of 1938, Pawnbrokers Ordinance of 1942 and Exchange Control Act of 1953 curtailed their activities. Also several new government organisations such as the Bank of Ceylon eroded the business of the Chettiars. The Finance Act of 1963 delivered the death blow to their business by prohibiting repatriation of earnings abroad by such firms or individuals.

Guarantee Shroffs

Until about the early 1960s, commercial banking, mainly in respect of import trading through traders in the Colombo Pettah region, was sponsored by Guarantee Shroffs who were intermediaries between senior management of banks and local clients, especially as bankers until the time of Independence did not have a close relationship with local clients. They also replaced the Natukottai Chettiars whose business had declined.

These Shroffs were closely inter-related and wielded considerable influence in the commercial banking sector for about three decades. Maruthappa at P & O Bank, Wignaraja at Hong Kong Bank, Sabanayagam at National and Grindlays Bank, Sathananthan and Coomaraswamy at Mercantile Bank, Nadesan at Indian Overseas Bank and Murugesan at Bank of Ceylon (not a Guaranteed Shroff) were the pathfinders of Ceylonese banking and laid the foundations for local enterprise at a time of transition from colonial rule to

Independence. They were successful in helping to develop and expand Ceylonese business, especially the lucrative import trade notably with India, following on from the role played by the Natukottai Chettiars. However, there were limitations in the system, which were highlighted in evidence given to the Pokhanvalla Banking Commission set up in 1934, which resulted in its abolition by the early 50s.

Despite progress made by the Nattukottai Chettiars and the Guarantee Shroffs, a large section of the Ceylonese business community was marginalised and their needs were not serviced by banks in the first four decades of the 20th century. To fill this vacuum, the Cheetu bank system came into existence to service the middle and lower class of Ceylonese traders. The Afghan money lenders also came into existence to provide personal loans at exorbitant rates of interest. Their clients were among the poorer and lower middle class sections of society. It reflected the very limited and lop sided nature of banking facilities at the time.

British Banks

British banks had almost complete control of financing the plantation business and export trade in such commodities as tea, rubber and coconut during the colonial period and for about three decades from Independence. They were known as the Exchange Banks and enjoyed the cream of business in the island in the 19th century and a major part of the 20th century. One bank, the National Bank of India, was outstanding in this regard. It made several name changes to become Grindlays Bank Ltd and merged recently with Standard Chartered Bank Ltd. From the latter part of the 19th century to about Independence, it was the banker to the government and the largest largest corporate bank in the country for several decades after independence by virtue of control of plantation companies and tea export trade. As such it was also the most profitable bank, enjoying cream of corporate business. The Main office of the bank at 37 York Street, Colombo 1, was rated as the largest corporate branch of the group in South Asia and East Africa, where Grindlays Bank was the market leader.

The National Bank of India Ltd was one of the earliest British banks to be established in the Indian subcontinent. It subsequently merged with overseas branches of Lloyds

(Continued on page 21)



Meals Ammi Made

Dhal Curry with Green Mango by MALINI

Ingredients:

1 cup yellow split dhal or Masoor dhal
1 raw green mango (sour one is best)
3 green chillies (more if extra spice is favoured)
1 tsp. mustard seeds
½ tsp. turmeric
A sprig of curry leaves
Salt

Oil, spoonful

Preparation:

Wash the dhal well, add 2 cups of water and pressure cook until well done, usually takes about 10 minutes. Mash it up to make into a smooth pulp.

Peel and cut the raw mango into ¼ inch cubes. (Green mangoes are available in

season from most Sri Lankan and East Asian greengrocers, otherwise raid a friend's garden). Heat a large spoonful of oil and when hot, add the mustard seeds and allow this to pop. Add the sliced green chillies, turmeric and the cut mango cubes and a sprig of curry leaves. Saute for few minutes and add this to the pan with the cooked dhal. Bring to boil and continue to cook until the mango is cooked. You may wish to add more water to get it to the required consistency. Finally add salt to taste.

This curry is different from the conventional Sri Lankan dhal curry as it has a certain sour and tarty taste.

Send us your recipes

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

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

EDITORS ...*(Continued from page 11)*
editor of a very influential paper called *The Independent*.

For a couple of decades thereafter he contributed prodigiously to various journals, notably the Catholic Messenger. He wrote in the classical style, and submitted all articles handwritten in excellent calligraphy. He was one of those phenomenal persons who could speak as eloquently and stylishly as they wrote. He was much in demand as a public speaker. He was a gargantuan reader as well as a great collector of books. He kept a small army of itinerant booksellers in business.

(Meet more editors in future issues).

.....
One should as a rule respect public opinion in so far as is necessary to avoid starvation and to keep out of prison, but anything that goes beyond this is voluntary submission to an unnecessary tyranny, and is likely to interfere with happiness in all kinds of ways.

— Bertrand Russell, *Conquest of Happiness* 1930
.....



Congratulations and a Warm Welcome to our New Members

MR EDWARD C. & MARY MUTTIAH,
Burwood, VIC.;

MRS. WENDY SEDGWICK, Inverness,
Scotland;

DR RANGA WICKREMESINGHE, Rajagiriya,
Sri Lanka;

MRS DEVIKA & PRIANGA FONSEKA,
Pymble, NSW.



I always claim the mission workers came out too early to catch any sinners on this part of Broadway. At such an hour the sinners are still in bed resting up from their sinning of the night before, so they will be in good shape for more sinning a little later on.

— Damon Runyon, *The Idyll of Miss Sarah Brown*.

Banking in Ceylon... (from page 19)

Bank and Grindlays Travel Agency in India to form National and Grindlays Bank Ltd in the early years of the 20th century. They also acquired the P & O Bank in Colombo. Subsequently Citibank acquired them in the late 60s due to large losses incurred by the owners with collapse of their merchant-banking arm, William Barndts. Ownership and management of the bank was held by Citibank and the name remained unchanged until subsequently amended to Grindlays Bank Ltd. In the early 80s they were divested by Citibank and bought over by the ANZ Banking group in Australia after a brief period under British management. More recently after the turn of the century, they were acquired by the Standard Chartered group as a result of which they have lost their identity as a commercial bank. The Chartered Bank merged with Standard Bank of South Africa in the early 70s and also acquired the Eastern Bank. The National Bank, Chartered Bank, Mercantile Bank and Hong Kong and Shanghai Bank were the major British international banks operating in Ceylon from the late 19th century.

British banks had a virtual monopoly of corporate business of multinationals, agency houses and British plantation companies, long after Independence. They had several advantages in continuing to control such business. Firstly, ownership and management of such companies were in British hands, which gave confidence to managements on both sectors to negotiate business. Secondly, several companies such as Brooke Bonds, Liptons, Lever Brothers, Harrison & Crossfields and James Finlays had branches in other overseas territories in which such banks operated. As such, managements at head offices of such corporates and banks were able to negotiate terms which were acceptable on a group basis, which included minimum security for credit facilities and favorable terms for borrowings. Such banks were prepared to negotiate on overall group profitability for corporates concerned, which in some cases may not have been profitable or attractive in one country. Such arrangements were not acceptable to banks that were domiciled only in one country.

Banking Commission

Government appointed a Banking Commission under Chairmanship of Sir Sorabji Pockhanwala, a well known Indian banking expert together

with Dr S.C. Paul and Dr L. M D de Silva in 1934 to enquire into workings of the banking system, with special emphasis on problems faced by Ceylonese business people in obtaining banking facilities and to consider feasibility of establishing a State sponsored bank. The Commission found that there was an urgent need to expand banking facilities beyond urban centres such as Colombo, Kandy, Galle and Jaffna. They also noted that Ceylonese businessmen and individuals were being victimised by Indian money lenders and gradually ousted. While there was considerable evidence to support grievances of Ceylonese traders, European business community and Chambers of Commerce were very uncooperative in considering the needs of the local business community or in agreeing to set up a local bank. They also claimed that there were no Ceylonese at that time capable of managing a local bank. The Commission concluded that there was adequate business in the country to justify more than one indigenous bank, especially as banking in the island was solely in the hands of foreigners.

It was noted that both Ceylonese businessmen and individuals had very little access to benefits of banking at the time. The Foreign bank managers were not prepared to accommodate such people for credit facilities, as they did not have personal knowledge of such persons or entities and they were at the mercy of Guarantee Shroffs or Natukotai Chettiars, who obtained substantial commissions for arranging credit. Despite the limitations, it was acknowledged that the Chettiars played an important role in arranging credit for the Ceylonese during this period. Jeganathan Theagarajah of the Monetary Board gave evidence against the Guarantee Shroff system which was abolished in the early fifties. The Commission recommended the establishment of a state-aided bank with substantial capital to be competitive with other banks at the time. They also emphasised the need for the proposed bank to be free from political interference.

Bank of Ceylon

The Commission found that the existing banks were only focused on financing foreign trade in the island; their activities were centered in Colombo, and did not care to facilitate internal trade. Original recommendations of the Commission to set up a state-aided bank

Banking in Ceylon ... (from page 21)
 were accepted by State Council and rejected in London by the British administration, to ensure vested interests of British banks were preserved. It was finally agreed to set up a local bank on a very limited scale in 1938, and Bank of Ceylon was formally established in 1939. The bank made gradual progress under colonial rule until 1948, opening eight branches and increasing deposits and advances to local enterprise despite restrictions imposed. The bank had its head office in Colombo Fort, with a General Manager, a Deputy and Assistant General Managers reporting to a Board of Directors. In the early

years, recognition was given to the Chief Cashier, Mr. Murugesen who generated valuable business for the bank through the Pettah trade and had delegated lending authority. The bank's activities were initially confined to deposit taking and loans and subsequently expanded to foreign exchange a few years later.

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George Keyt... (from page 17)

George died in 1993 at the age of 93. Kusum had been hospitalised just before he fell ill and so Menike came from Sirimalwatte to look after George with a loving nurse's care. She went back to her village and then returned for the funeral with one of her sons. The funeral, organised by the George Keyt Foundation was a massive affair as could be expected. At some point either Ian Goonetilleke or his wife Roslin noticed that Menike and her son were standing at the back of the crowd and asked her to come forward and take her due place before the lights and the cameras, but she declined and went home again after the funeral. These were the details that Ian conveyed to Yasmine Gooneratne, who sent them to me for this paper. I cannot help thinking that it is a real pity that no one ever thought seriously about interviewing Menike about her long association and life with

Keyt. There is an interesting glimpse I came across – apparently George had a bright red Baby Austin and he and Menika would be driven into Colombo by George's driver Appuhamy on occasion to visit Lionel Wendt. Conventional Colombo would have been horrified and George and Lionel, the two who were most unconventional, must have chuckled over the gossip caused. What a story Menike would have told in her old age if interviewed! Or perhaps she would have smiled and kept silent because that was her own private life and she didn't want it commented on and facts misrepresented and bandied about. She was always a wise woman who truly loved Sri Lanka's greatest, most highly individualistic artist, George Keyt, who left an enduring legacy to his country and the world.

(Now concluded... Also see back cover for a selection of colour reproductions of Keyt's paintings).



KELANIYA

Kelaniya, about nine kilometres (in a north easterly direction) of Colombo, has from early times been the traditional centre for Sri Lankan pottery and significantly, the home of the Raja Maha Vihare, the most important Buddhist temple in the Colombo area. Legend has it that it was here that Buddha converted the inhabitants to Buddhism when he visited Ceylon. He gave them the jewelled throne on which he sat as a reminder of his teachings. The king at the time reportedly built a dagoba over it. Buddha is also said to have bathed in the Kelani Ganga nearby.

The entrance to the temple is a white gateway with elephants and dwarfs on the outside with

three main Buddha statues inside, one reclining and two seated. There is also a huge statue of King Maniakkhika Nagaraja, who is said to have invited Buddha to the island.

The Kelani Perahera takes place with great pomp and pageantry in the lunar month of Duruthu (January).



This article first appeared in The Times of Ceylon in 2009. The compiler has continued his research on the subject and since updated the story for readers of this Journal.

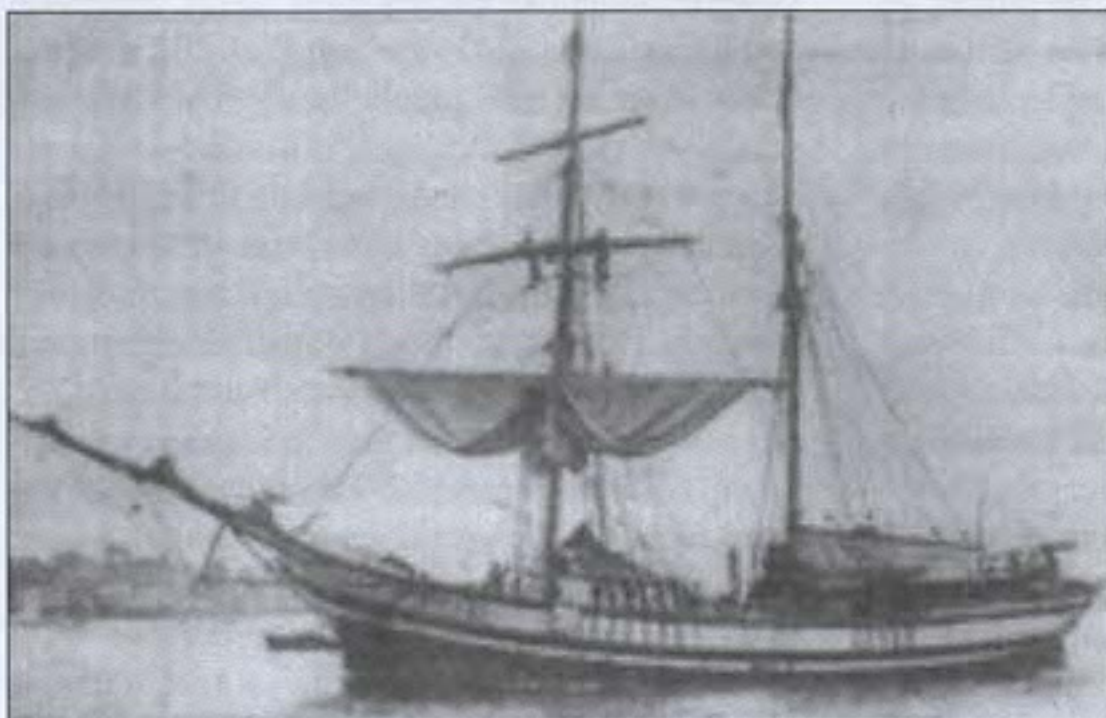
The voyage of the Annapooranyamal to Boston

(Compiled by SOMASIRI DEVENDRA)

Introductory note

This fascinating account flows, alas! not from my pen and I claim no authorship. But let me tell you of how I chanced upon the story.

In the course of my researches into Sri Lankan nautical culture, I came across a hint about a Jaffna *Thoni* (a traditional sea-going cargo ship of Jaffna) which had been sailed to America. I found a copy of an old "Veerakesari" newspaper with a grainy photograph of the ship



• A Jaffna Thoni at anchor. (Source: Hornell).

in the National Archives but none of my Tamil friends could understand the classical Tamil in which it was written; not even the then Editor of the paper who helped me with my research. I only gathered that the ship had been named "Annapoorani" and that the picture was of her in the Suez Canal. The rest of the article was about Velvettithurai with no more references to the ship.

Later, I learnt about the *Thonis* from James Hornell's writings and photographs¹ and I stumbled upon one especially good photograph in the website www.imagesofceylon.com where a *thoni* is shown at the King's Jetty, Colombo (identified by error as Galle Port).

Serendipitously, while trawling the net,

¹ Hornell, J, 1943, 'The Fishing and coastal craft of Ceylon', *The Mariner's Mirror*, 29.1, 40-53 1946, *Water Transport: Origins and early evolution*, Cambridge, 273-74

I came across a site devoted to Velvettithurai, <http://valvainila.com/anna.htm> and there, reproduced without comment, was an account of the voyage, as reported in the "Boston Globe". I contacted the Globe, identifying myself as a Sinhalese maritime historian. (I did not want to sail under false colours - if I had merely signed as "Devendra" I *might* been luckier – but that's conjecture). I asked for more information but none was forthcoming. This was a pity, because

the site had comments from relations of the crew. When I tried to access the site while composing this compilation, the site had disappeared and Google said: "Oops! This link appears broken". But now, with the bit of information now firmly between my teeth, I continued searching and came across a Blog site, LankaNewspapers.com, in which a senior member identified as "jacob99" had not only reproduced, but added to the account. I wrote in as follows: "I

am a maritime historian and ethnographer who has been searching for this story for a long time. I am interested in getting more information from first hand sources. Could you help? I queried -<http://valvainila.com/anna.htm>- but have had no come back. I can give you photographs of the ships of this type, if you are interested...What I am looking for are answers to the following: (1) Is the source for all the material above the Boston Globe of August 2, 1938 or are there any other sources. (2) Is there a second in the series? (3) Has this story been published in any publication with an island-wide readership in Sri Lanka? Can I have it published with due acknowledgement to you in a reputable Journal? (4) Do you have a picture of the ship in the US?

Unfortunately I have not got the answers I am seeking but I am including three photographs for the benefit of readers.

The account I now reproduce below is basically that which appears in the first site mentioned, but with additional material from the second. My reason for reproducing all this is to open the eyes of Sri Lankans and their friends to a little-known aspect of our technological culture. Let me add that, to me, one and all who live here in Sri Lanka are brothers. In 1999, I tentatively identified a shipwreck site, close off shore at Ambalangoda, as that of a *thoni*. Unfortunately the relevant authorities took no notice and the Fisheries harbour has been built on the site after a most cursory inspection by the Department of Archaeology and thus, another link of our "glorious past" has slipped through our fingers. But that is another story.

Source: <http://valvainila.com/anna.htm>

Annapooranyamal

The brigantine was re-christened as Florence C. Robinson in reference to Robinson and his amour Florence.

Valvettithurai's sea farers 1 Gloucester, Massachusetts USA. August 1, 1938

We have folk stories and mythologies. And then, we have a history most people have either forgotten or are not aware of. This is a real life story about one of the last sailing vessels built in Valvettithurai, making a long journey to the Atlantic Coast of United States. But, closer to home, these vessels made their home ports at Valvettithurai and Parithithurai (Point Pedro). Most of them, while being built and operated by sailors from Valvettithurai, were owned by the wealthy Chetty families from Tamil Nadu. The rest were owned by the Chetty traders who had settled in Valvettithurai since the opening of secure sea lanes in Indian Ocean by the Portuguese (from Arab & Far Eastern pirates). They might have been there since before Cholas time. Building and maintaining large ocean going vessels in those days required a large sum of capital. It can be afforded by only few families who had already well established themselves as reputed traders. These vessels, up to World War II, plied the sea routes the Tamils had used for centuries before. They made ports-of-call in South India, Vizhakapattinam to Cochin (occasionally even Calcutta), Rangoon, Far Eastern destinations, ports in Middle East (such as Aden). In Ceylon itself, they made frequent trips to Galle and ports in between. They carried rice, spices, roof tiles, timber (teak, sandalwood

etc.) palmyra products, dried fish and tobacco products. In 1938, the ship *Annapoorani* was leading other sailing vessels in the annual parade of ships in Valvai Muthumaariamman kovil's *theerthathiruvizha*. This practice continues up to today, now with fishing trawlers, vallams and fiberglass

boats. *Annapoorani* caught the eyes of a visiting wealthy American William A. Robinson. It was a cargo vessel modelled on the popular British frigate-type ship; it was known for its speed and maneuverability. A wealthy young man from Ipswich, Massachusetts, who made his fortune in journalism, he decided that he should have this vessel.

Within the next 2-3 months, his wishes were fulfilled. The owner-family in Tamil Nadu sold it for a handsome price. The vessel sailed to Colombo with its Valvettithurai crew of four under Thundayal (chief of crew) Kanagaratnam Thampipillai. In Colombo, the brigantine was re-christened as Florence C. Robinson in reference to Robinson and his amour - Florence. The brigantine, once insured by Lloyds of London, set sail for Cyprus under Thampipillai's command, where it would come under the command of a captain from Gloucester. Gloucester was one of the busiest sea ports on America's eastern coast; it was where the popular schooner-type of vessel saw its shape take place. During my own research on *Annapoorarini* made through a few trips to Gloucester, about 30 miles north of Boston, I have found old paper articles from the "Gloucester Times" and the "Boston Globe". I am thankful to a friend who helped me out in this venture, the enthusiastic people of Gloucester (particularly a librarian) and the resources of the Boston Public Library. Even though all this took place two summers ago, I have allowed the paper articles and ship port-of-call registration documents to gather dust. Because of other



• *Annapoorani in the Suez Canal* (Source: Veerakesari, date unknown)

obligations, I was not able to follow on my research to ascertain the final status of *Annapoorani*.

These words are those of the unknown writer of this article -SD.

Voyage ended by Brigantine

A Rare Spectacle Provided by arrival from Ceylon, by Nat. A. Barrows

Boston Globe, August 2, 1938

Gloucester, August 1: Like a chapter straight from one of the Malay sea stories of Joseph Conrad, a picturesque crew of square-rigger sailors came reaching into port before a quartering breeze today aboard the 89-foot brigantine *Florence C. Robinson* – the last windship of her kind that, in all probability, will ever cross the Western Ocean under canvass alone. Bringing a tale of storms, doldrums, thirst, short rations and near collision, the trim little brigantine's company of seven – a grizzled old Gloucesterman, five turbaned, be-skirted Ceylonese Hindus and a youthful, bearded American adventurer – tied up alongside a waterfront dock at noon, 50 days out of Gibraltar via Bermuda. The famous old fishing port, which has seen many a colorful arrival in its day, turned out, skippers, dorymen, tourists, for a sight that had not been seen in a hundred years, if then. Coast Guard lookouts flashed the word to town even as the vessel stood in the offing, her Hindus climbing the yards with a bare-footed agility that left the old-timers gasping in admiration.

Boats Greet Arrival

As she worked past Ten-Pound Island and stood up for the inner harbour, a score of boats raced out in greeting. From his home at Ipswich, her owner William Albert Robinson, famed author, explorer and sea rover, hurried down with his wife, in the *Florence Crane*. A steady slant on the inner quarter had sent the brigantine scudding up from Bermuda nearly a week ahead of the expected time. She has been two years reaching here from Ceylon, where she was built eight years ago on the lines of a British brig of war of the 1840 period. Robinson himself took her leisurely through the Indian Ocean and the Red Sea as far as Crete. Six Ceylonese from the seafaring town of Valvettithurai in Northern Ceylon, came out with her and only one has returned home. In March, Captain Donald. A. MacCuish, of 5 Lookout St., one of Gloucester's saltiest and best-known skippers, went over to Crete to bring her across the Atlantic.

Bad storm near Crete

"I've had 42-years at sea, man and boy, but that storm we hit in the Mediterranean, just after we cleared Candia (in Crete) was one of the worst I've ever pulled through," Capt. Dan said today as he took his leisure on the poop deck, amid a salvo of greetings from ashore and harbour. "She's a tidy little vessel, built of honest workmanship and good hardwood, or we'd not be here to tell the tale. There we were, running under bare poles, with the seas breaking white over the bow and the day inky black like night. We were driven 250 miles off our course." With him at that time were the six Ceylonese – "and a fine lot of men, too, if you treated them right and respected their religious beliefs." At Gibraltar, Capt. Dan put in for water and supplies, and there he picked up a Connecticut youth of 20, Alexis Doster Jr. of Litchfield, who had been roaming about Europe and the Near East for two years. At the instigation of the American consul, Capt. Dan signed young Doster [on] as a workaway.

Becalmed at Gibraltar

Doster told of the difficulty in getting away from Gibraltar. "We couldn't get a spot of wind," he related, "and there we were, becalmed. The vessel's kicker was out of order and we had to depend entirely on our sails. The skipper of a big American freighter agreed to give us a tow, but when some of the seamen saw our crew and saw we were flying the Stars and Stripes they shouted down vile remarks about a union crew. We got the tow, all right, but we had not cleared the harbour when the hawser broke suddenly – close to the freighter's after deck. It is my opinion that this hawser was cut. We were four days drifting about the harbour before we could get a slant of wind to carry us out."

Out in the Atlantic, Capt. Dan tried to stay with the trade winds and for a while, made a good passage, although the brigantine never reached the 18-knot speed Robinson found one day in the Red Sea when he was coming out from Ceylon. The wind failed them in mid-ocean and for days on end, they idled about.

(What will Captain Dan do next aboard the brigantine as it idles aimlessly on a windless sea? Find out in the next instalment).

Synopses of Meetings
SYDNEY February 27

The speaker at the well attended meeting was **Dr Tony Donaldson** whose PhD thesis was on *Rituals in the Temple of the Tooth in Kandy*. He spoke on the subject of *The Imperial Russian Visit to Ceylon in 1891*.

The speaker started by mentioning that not many Sri Lankans are aware of this visit in February 1891. The party was led by Tsarevitch Nicholas II, the heir to the Russian throne, that included a miscellany of Grand Dukes, Princes and Naval Officers. Tsarevitch Nicholas II was born in 1868 and was the eldest son of Tsar Alexander III of Russia of the Romanov dynasty. Nicholas II was a first cousin of George V of England and there was a close physical resemblance between the two of them. As part of the training of Nicholas II as a future Emperor of Russia, his father decided to send him on a Grand Tour.

The reasons for the tour included an opportunity for Nicholas II to see the world; to complete his education; to expand Russian interests in Asia and last but not least, to break up Nicholas II's relationship with his 17-year old mistress, the beautiful ballet dancer Mathilde Kschessinska who later became a prima ballerina with the Saint Petersburg Imperial Ballet.

The reasons why this Grand Tour is not well known included the fact that when Lenin came into power it was un-fashionable to talk about Tsarism and with the subsequent end of rule by the Romanov dynasty there was a clear cut message that there was no going back to the days of the Imperial era. This climate of opinion continued until the fall of the Soviet Union in the 1990s.

The Grand Tour started in October 1890 and covered a total distance of more than 51,000 km, including 15,000 km of travel by rail and 22,000 km of sea travel. The journey started by rail from Saint Petersburg, via Vienna, to Trieste in Italy where they boarded the Russian naval cruiser *Memory of Azov*. It was accompanied by two more Russian naval vessels, each with a crew of about 500 officers and men. From Trieste, the convoy sailed to Piraeus in Greece and then on to Port Said in Egypt where they also sailed up the River Nile and on to Aden in Yemen and from there to Bombay, arriving in Bombay in December 1890.

The places visited in India included Bombay, Jaipur, Delhi, Punjab, Lahore, Amritsar, Lucknow, Benares, Calcutta, back to Bombay for his younger brother to return to Russia as he was very ill. From there they visited Hyderabad and finally Madras. The period spent in India was about six weeks and they were wined and dined by Indian Royalty and participated in tiger shoots. They also purchased several exotic works of art which were later transferred to Russian museums.

From Madras the expedition proceeded to Colombo arriving there on February 12, 1891 for a 12-day stay. The arrangements for their Ceylon visit were made by Maha Mudaliyar Sir Solomon Dias Bandaranaike, the highest ranking Ceylonese official. He was the chief native representative, interpreter and adviser to the Government of Ceylon and father of S W R D Bandaranaike. On the first evening of their stay, the Russian delegation was accorded a State dinner by the British Governor, Arthur Havelock. On the following day, they left by train for Kandy where they witnessed the Kandy Perahera and visited the Temple of the Tooth. From Kandy the group proceeded to Hatton and Nuwara Eliya where they called in to several tea estates. Russia was a major importer of Ceylon tea at that time. On February 17, they were hosted by Sir Solomon Dias Bandaranaike and on February 19, they went to Labugama to witness an elephant kraal. It is difficult to imagine that wild elephants were that close to Colombo at the time. A baby elephant that was captured was presented to them, but as they had difficulty loading it on to their ship they left it behind in the garden of the Russian Consul. The Russian group also included four or five artists who made several sketches of Ceylon scenes. Photographs were also taken by a crew member.

During informal discussions in Colombo, Nicholas II voiced several contradictions and criticisms. These included his regard for the British as administrators but he felt that their policies were too aggressive. He had several criticisms of the tea industry. He felt that the British were "unnatural" partners of Ceylon, whereas Russia was a "natural" partner of Ceylon because the latter pair had more in common, including closer geographical proximity.

During their stay in Ceylon they received a message from Singapore to say that there was a major epidemic of cholera in Siam and to re-

consider their visit to Siam. It later turned out that this was a false rumour started by the British who were concerned about the growing influence of Russia in the Far East and was an attempt at dissuading them from travelling to Siam.

From Ceylon the expedition proceeded to Singapore, Java, Batavia, Bandung and from there to Siam where they were guests of King Rama V and received several valuable gifts. From Siam they went on to Saigon, Hong Kong, China and arrived in Japan in April 1891, accompanied by six ships of the Pacific Fleet of the Imperial Russian Navy. When they were in Kyoto, one of

the Japanese escort policemen swung his sabre at Nicholas's face. Nicholas's cousin used his cane to parry a second sabre swipe by the assassin and this probably saved Nicholas's life. He was, however, left with a permanent scar on his forehead.

In May, the expedition departed from Kobe for Vladivostok arriving there four days later. This ended the official part of the Grand Tour and they started their long overland journey across the breadth of Russia to Saint Petersburg. They travelled by land, river boat and the final lap of their journey to Saint Petersburg was by train, construction work on the Trans-Siberian Railway had just started having been inaugurated by Nicholas II. They finally reached Saint Petersburg in August 1891, after being away for nine months.

The speaker concluded his talk by saying that one of the prime objects of the Grand Tour was to expand Russian interests in India and Ceylon, but this was not to be realised until the 1950s.

The President thanked the Speaker for his interesting talk and this was followed by a lively discussion and the usual social.

Postscript: The later life of Nicholas II

In November 1894, Nicholas's father Tsar Alexander III died unexpectedly at the age of 49

and an unprepared Nicholas ascended the throne at the youthful age of 29 years. A few days later he married Alexandra, daughter of Louis IV, Grand Duke of Hesse and grand-daughter of Queen Victoria of England. His formal coronation as the Tsar was in May 1896 and his official title was *Nicholas II, Emperor and Autocrat of All the Russias*.

Nicholas's reign was full of problems. In 1905 Russia lost the Russo-Japanese war, the first defeat by a non-western power. Also in 1905 there was a failed attempt at a revolution when 120,000 workers marched up to the Winter Palace and were fired upon.

World War I was a disaster for Russia. By the summer of 1915, 1.4 million Russian troops had been killed or injured and nearly a million more Russian troops had been taken prisoner. Meanwhile, mounting hardships within Russia led to massive riots and rebellions, finally leading to the Revolution in 1917 and Nicholas was forced to abdicate in February 1917.

Nicholas and his family were imprisoned in the Governor's Mansion in the Urals and in April 1918, they were transferred to another house in Yekaterinburg. In the early hours of July 17, 1918, Nicholas, his wife Alexandra, four daughters and his son and heir Alexei aged 13, were asked to proceed to the basement of the house where they were executed one by one. Thus ended three centuries of rule of Russia by the Romanov dynasty.

In 1979, the remains of Nicholas, his wife Alexandra, three of his four daughters and four non-family members executed with them were found by an amateur archaeologist. DNA analysis confirmed their identity and the remains were finally interred in the Saint Peter and Paul Cathedral in Saint Petersburg on July 17, 1998, exactly 80 years after they were executed. On August 14, 2000, Nicholas II and his family were canonised by the Synod of the Russian Orthodox Church, not as martyrs, since their deaths did not result immediately from their Christian faith, but as "Passion Bearers" - persons who faced their death in a Christ-like manner. In July 2007, an amateur history group discovered the bones of a boy and a girl whose ages corresponded to the ages of Nicholas's children, 13-year old Alexei and 19-year old Maria, whose remains had not previously been found. DNA analysis was carried out and the Russian Government confirmed that the remains



• *Nicholas II, Emperor and Autocrat of All the Russias*

of the entire family had now been identified. On October 1, 2008, Russia's Supreme Court ruled that Nicholas II and his family were victims of political repression and that they should be rehabilitated.

- Thiru Arumugam



• Ceylonese lady



• Colonial bungalow



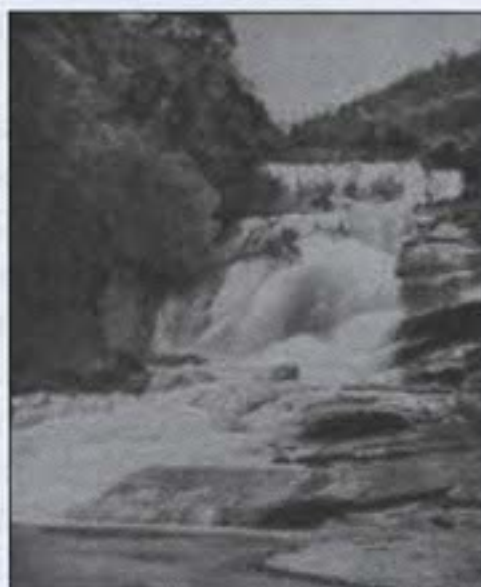
• Colombo



• Veddah



• Tea packing



• Waterfall in Ceylon

These images were produced by artists who were part of the Tsarevitch Nicholas II's Russian Imperial Mission to Ceylon in 1891 and are reproduced courtesy of Dr Tony Donaldson.

Melbourne February 20, 2011

Mr. Hemal Gurusinghe presented a brief outline on how the Sri Lankan Parliament evolved over the years. Hemal introduced Mr. Nihal Seneviratne who spoke on **Glimpses into some interesting episodes in the Sri Lankan Parliament in the last 25 years.**

Nihal, a Sri Lankan Civil Servant, was the former Secretary General of Parliament (1981-1994) and parliamentary affairs adviser to the Prime Minister. Educated at Royal College, Colombo and a LLB graduate of University of Ceylon, Peradeniya, Nihal joined the office of the clerk of the House of Representatives



• Nihal Seneviratne

and went on to become the Secretary General of Parliament. Mr. Seneviratne thanked Srilal Fernando and Hugh Karunanayake and acknowledged many friends and colleagues in the audience.

Donoughmore Commission arrived in Ceylon led by Lord Donoughmore and recommended a State Council for the first time. World War II ended in 1945. The Soulbury Commission was established and Ceylon was to become an independent nation. A House of Representatives and a Senate were thus introduced. In 1948, with the arrival of The Duke of Gloucester, Ceylon was proclaimed an Independent State.

The United National Party led by Mr D.S.Senanayake and with the support of a coalition of Independents and Appointed Members formed Government in the new Parliament).

The 1948 Constitution continued until 1972. The Soulbury Constitution (Clause 29.2) says: no legislation of any kind inimical to any ethnic community, creed, cast or race. This safeguarded Sinhalese and the minorities. Regrettably, in 1972 a new Constitution came

in to effect. Mrs. Bandaranaike was elected as the world's first woman Prime Minister. At this time, with the help of Dr. Colvin R. De Silva, The House of Representatives or Constituent Assembly was established. The first Republican Constitution was set up in 1972 and National State Assembly came in to rule. The Clause 29.2 and Public Service Commission were abolished. In 1978, J. R. Jayawerdene came in to power and introduced the new Presidential System. The 1978 Constitution was promulgated and has continued until today. Proportional Representation was selected by J.R. Jayawerdene. After 1972 Sri Lanka was divided into 23 electoral districts with 225 members in the Parliament. After 1972, the name Ceylon was replaced with Sri Lanka. The current President Mr. Mahinda Rajapakse was preceded by Chandrika Kumaranatunga and Ranasinghe Premadasa respectively. Presently, there is a shift towards Westminster System. Now a Unicameral Legislature is in action. A Speaker, Deputy Speaker and a Chairman of Committees are elected in the House. The Chief Executive Officer of the House is the Secretary General of the Parliament, who controls the administration of the House. The Secretary General of the Parliament, Commissioner of Elections and the Auditor General are answerable only to Parliament and cannot be removed by anyone. This was designed to ensure our independence, our total apolitical attitude which worked very well during past. Only a vote in parliament can be used to dismiss them. The speaker treated government and the opposition equally.

Later Mr. Seneviratne presented humorous anecdotes relating to his time at the parliament. During early 60s, when the new parliament was elected, a person was questioned by Mr. Seneviratne as to which constituency he was from. He said that he was from MulKirigala which was not true. Later he answered he was from Angoda. Speaker of the parliament said: "You will rightly go to where you will rightly belong".

In 1977, Mr. J.R. Jayawerdene asked for undated letters of resignation, which caused a MP's ministerial positions to be invalid. In this instance Mr. Seneviratne had to act according to the constitution and issued an independent decision

In 1964, a crucial incident occurred during The Throne Speech Debate. Mr. W.

Dahanayake was told to move an amendment to the Throne Speech. Mr C.P. De Silva crossed the floor with 17 members and a vote was put to the house. Mr. Seneviratne counted the votes, 73 votes said 'Yes' while 74 voted 'No'. Mr. Maithripala Senanayake said: "You have made a mistake". So Mr. Seneviratne counted the names again. Then the Government got another chance of voting. The results were the same. During this incident, Dr. Colvin R. De Silva noted that a member was absent during voting. Later when asked, the member said one of his car tyres lost air to which Mr. De Silva replied "You lost air in just one tyre, our whole government had lost its air". Thus the Bandaranaike government was defeated in 1964, and a U.N.P. government formed in 1965.

In 1992, J.R. Jayawerdene signed The Indo-Ceylon Pact with Rajiv Gandhi at the height of the terrorist conflict. A bomb blasted in the parliament during this time, however, Mr. Premadasa, and Mr. Jayawerdene escaped death. Later it was discovered that a person named Ajith Kumara infiltrated by J.V.P. had thrown a hand grenade. Ajith Kumara was an employee under Mr. Seneviratne. A case was filed against him. The Crown bungled the case and Kumara walked away free.

A lively question and answer session followed. The raffle was drawn by Mr. Seneviratne and was won by Mr. Errol Fernando.

— *Dilhani Kumbukkage*

Colombo Chapter March 16, 2011

The Colombo Chapter's first meeting for the year 2011, at the OPA Auditorium was a Memorial Oration to Mike Udabage, its founder. The President, Chulie de Silva, in her opening address welcomed Desamanya Bradman Weerakoon, and all members and friends who had gathered to pay respect to Mike Udabage.

The President drew a portrait of the multi-faceted personality of Mike Udabage – a friend, advisor, a mentor to many, quoting Mike from one of his e-mails where he had said "*You know, I too have already written a note on my funeral. Cheapest box, cremate same day, unless a close family member is on the way, ashes down the toilet, or some water way—no flowers, no monks, unless they are my friends, no religious ceremony—inform all my friends and relatives after the event – have a party to celebrate that I was there.*"

Somasiri Devendra remembered Mike as a young student at Ananda College just returned from the States after winning the all-island New York Herald Tribune essay competition. Tracing Mike's school days as Head Prefect and captain of the School's debating team, he also spoke about the role Mike played in setting up the Colombo Chapter of the CSA. Mr Devendra highlighted Mike's love, commitment and support for the Ananda College Rowing Club.

Introducing Desamanya Bradman Weerakoon, the President said that the CSA Colombo Chapter was indeed honoured to have a distinguished Sri Lankan to give the memorial oration for Mike Udabage. As such the presentation by Mr Weerakoon on "*Discovering a Country - Journeys in Space and Time in the district of Kalutara*," is one that Mike would have relished.

Mr. Weerakoon dedicated his presentation to the memory of Mike Udabage and said he had been impressed and moved by what he had heard about Mike on that day and in the obituaries by Hugh Karunanayake and Ransiri Menike de Silva.

Mr Weerakoon's very informative presentation was based on his book "Kalutara: an Odyssey." Mr. Weerakoon joined the then Ceylon Civil Service in 1954 and had based his book on manuals for each district that the British Government agents had compiled. The rationale for his study Mr. Weerakoon said is the composition of Kalutara - a multicultural, multi-ethnic population. He pointed out that this was an industrious, hardworking and resourceful population, who, while living in peace and harmony, is gearing up to meet the challenges of globalisation.

The discovery journey through Kalutara took the audience back to colonial times, when the wide estuary of Kalu Ganga would have served as a convenient anchorage for the ships of the Portuguese who arrived in 1505. From an illustration of early Portuguese Caravelles of the 16th century, the view moved to an early print of the Dutch Fort on the Banks of the Kalu Ganga in the 17th century and gave the audience a "peep at the colonial society of 1900s." The citizens from the past - Padikara Mudaliyar - Don Silva Wijesinghe Siriwardene, his wife and his Richmond Castle; Wilmot Perera who established Sri Palee in Horana to Dr. G.P Malalasekera, Cyril Jansz and his writer

daughter Rosemary Rogers, were brought to life through descriptive portraits.

Next, Mr Weerakoon looked briefly at the canal system that the Dutch established and the colonial technology and its impact on ethnic diversity. The Portuguese who came in caravelles could carry only around 14 men - five sailors and nine soldados (soldiers), had no space for women. The official Portuguese policy was to encourage inter-marriage and was common in the Maritime Provinces. Local women were given in marriage to 'cassados', until the Dutch took over in 1656.

In Dutch times the ships were larger and some women came as well with the men and inter-marriage with the locals was not officially encouraged by the Dutch. Illustrating his presentation with a drawing of a gentle lady of the district, Mr Weerakoon showed how the upper garment (the kaba kuruththu) was influenced by the dress worn by Portuguese females. The children of marriages between the cassados and local women were called mestizos. This was also when many Portuguese and Dutch words entered the Sinhala language.

Looking at religious diversity, he examined population data showing how in 1814, Kalutara's Buddhist population of 12,018 was less than the Protestants at 28,662. (Then there were 6950 Roman Catholics, and 6304 Muslims too). However by 1981, there were 840,000 Buddhists; 76,000 Muslims, 45,000 and 30,000 Christians. This naturally led to looking at key Buddhist, Christian, Hindu and Muslim places of worship and figures like Sir Cyril de Zoysa of the Kalutara Bodhi Trust, Ven. Gunananda Thero of the Panadura Debate fame. In his travels interestingly Mr. Weerakoon had come across a portrait of Queen Victoria, on a mural wall -painting (late 19th century) in the Viharage of the Ramanya Nikaya mula Maha Vihare, Payagala. Queen Victoria might not have been "amused" as she is portrayed very much as a local lady.

Then it was a quick look at Beruwela and Alutgama, the Kechamlai Mosque and the persistence of caste identity. Here he looked at the Panadura Rodrigo clan's Friend in Need Society and the *demala gattara* caste, the 'tunnelling experts'.

The next phase was a look at a more recent tragedy of the tsunami, then the rivers and

(Continued on page 32)

Domestic Occurences in Ceylon for the year 1838

Births

January 10 – At Colombo, the lady of the Honble W.O.Carr Esqr Kings Advocate of a son.
15th At Colombo, Mrs Multhy of a son.
April 3 At Kandy the lady of E.R.Power Esqr, of a son.
May 17 The Lady of Dr Kelly of a daughter.
May 20 The Lady of Lieut Gompertz, M.N. Infantry of a son.
July 13 At Ratnapoora Mrs Marcus of a son.
July 23 At Jaffna The Lady of Robert Atherton Esqr of a son.
August 10 The Lady of Lieut Reddy, Ceylon Rifles of a son.
October 9 The Lady of Capt Parke of a son.
October 31 The wife of Mr Adolphus Keuneman of a daughter.
December 10 Mrs Elisa Dias, wife of Mr S.G. Dias of a daughter.

Marriages

May 15 At Galle Mr F.G. Speldewinde to Miss Smith

Deaths

January 6 At Calpenty, Salome de Rosairo wife of Mr John Casie Chetty aged 22 years.
January 9 At Mutwal Anne, daughter of A.Walker Esqr aged 8 months.
March 3 At Kandy Jane Anne Carr second daughter of Dr Murray aged 3 years.
March 6 At Chilaw Mr F.L.Schokman aged 26 years.
March 22 Samuel Steuart Curgenvan Esq aged 46 years.
April 9 At Colombo Mr W. Gerlach aged 52 years.
May 19 At Putlam, Theresa Emelia, the daughter of Mrs Koertze aged 8 years.
May 30 At St Sebastian Helen Mc Gregor 2nd daughter of Mr James Campbell aged 8 years.
June 30 Ellen Ingham daughter of Serjt Major Watson, 78th Regt aged 18 months and 10 days.
July 14 L.R. Douglas Ceylon Rifle Regt aged 48 years.
July 23 At Negombo Mr G. Jansz aged 22 years.
July 31 At Kandy, the infant son of John Heyliger, Ceylon Rifle Regt.
August 4 At Madampe John Robert the infant son of Don Abraham Wijesinha Jayewardene Modliar.
August 7 At Calpenty Mr Frederick Paulus Evertsz aged 60 years.

August 23 At Kandy Johanna the wife of Lt C.H.Reddy, Ceylon Rifle Regt 29 years.
September 1 At Calpenty Henrietta Van Gunster wife of Mr Jacob Evertsz aged 22 years.
September 11 At Colombo Mrs the widow of J.J. Christoffelsz aged 72 years.
October 9 At Colombo Martha Jessie infant daughter of Mr James Campbell
October 19 At Colombo Mrs Anne Devan
November 4 Bliss Robert eldest son of Capt Parke aged 1 year.
November 8 At Colombo on the Grand Pass on the evening of 8th instant J.R. Sansoni Esqr aged 32 years.

Source: *The Ceylon Almanac and Compendium of useful information for the year mdcccxxxviii.*
P.M. Elders Govt Press Colombo.

(Please note spelling of all names, titles and place names are as appearing in the original.)

– Compiled by Hugh Karunanayake

CORRECTION

Monkeys of Ceylon

In our February 2011 issue (J53) two photographs in the Nature Notes column had their captions interposed giving wrong names to the pretty faces. The errant photographs are reproduced here with their correct captions. Apologies for any inconvenience caused.



• *Purple Face Leaf
Monkey (Kalu
Wandura) yawning*



• *The Grey Langur
(Wandura).*

FOUR STAGES OF MAN

The four stages of man are infancy, childhood, adolescence and obsolescence.

– Art Linklater in
A Child's Garden of Misinformation 1965

BOOKSHOP & WEB RESOURCES

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

RARE CEYLON BOOKS for SALE

An Account of the Interior of Ceylon By John Davy Tisara Prakasayo Edition (1969) A\$50.00
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Banking and Business in Sri Lanka by V.S.Nadarajah Foreword by Rienzie Wijetilleke, Chairman, Hatton National Bank.



Published by Kandy Books (2010)
 This book gives a non-technical and non-political perspective on economic and social background to developments, especially since independence.

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Foreword by Yasmine Gooneratne

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Synopsis...

(from page 30)

mountain ranges. Kalutara at work, covered the thriving toddy industry, the farmers, fishermen (both in catamarans and new age multi-day boats); rubber, tourism and plumbago mining among other livelihoods in the district.

Next was a look at transport, highways and byways illustrated by early photos of a bullock cart, the Royal Mail coach, the ferry terminal at Panadura (from an early print) and a Swarnapalli bus.

Winding up Mr. Weerakoon showed how he had gathered data and gave a list of places to visit which included Bevis Bawa's 'Brief'; Vidiye Bandara's 'hide out' at Pelende; Kukuleganga Holiday resort (base camp for Sinharaja); Fa Hsien's Pahiyangala; twin toilets at Raigam Bandara's Palace, Bandaragama; Che Guevara's Yahalakele and the 'kepu ela' trail to Bolgoda.

An interesting question time was followed by fellowship where the animated discussions continued.

— Chulie de Silva

A Ceylonese on The First Fleet?

The First Fleet of 11 ships left England for Australia in May 1787 and arrived in Van Diemen's Land in January 1788. Altogether 1487 people were on board. This included 715 officers, Royal Navy seamen, marine seamen and their families among them. According to Mr Al Grassby, former Labor Party Minister for Immigration and later Community Relations Commissioner, there was a Ceylonese among them. In his book *The Tyranny of Prejudice*, Mr Grassby says that this person was the first Asian to be connected with the founding of Australia.

APPRECIATIONS

David Francis Parker

David Parker, who was a Member of the CSA, died in Melbourne, late last year.

He was a decent man, in fact Tony Peries said that he was the quintessential decent man. He had a large number of friends and acquaintances all around the world, who would have been sorry to hear of his death.



• *Parker brothers, (from left) Robin, David and Brian.*

David, Robin and I were all born five years apart and for a considerable period in our younger years, we were brought up as three single children. We tended to go to a school just after the older one had left.

During the war, because both our parents were doing war service, Robin was parked out with our uncle Harry Hurst, on New Peacock, Pussalawa.

David went to the Hill School, Nuwara Eliya, shortly after it evolved from Haddon Hill and then on to Bedford School-Bedford where he excelled at rugby and swimming.

His first planting appointment was as SD [*Sinna dorai*] on Talawakelle in February 1950. He played rugger for Dimbulla and it was not long before he was picked for Up-Country and then All-Ceylon. Though a gentleman in every respect, he was a fearsome sight to those of us who had to mark him, coming through the lineout, ball in hand, knees high, all arms and elbows. He played for Ceylon on a number of occasions in the All-India Tournament and against visiting teams from Australia and New Zealand.

In 1954 David married Gilly Savoury, stepdaughter of Bruce Gibbon, a marriage that was to last 10 years.

His first Acting Manager's appointment on Talawakelle in 1955 was followed by further 'acts' in Dimbulla, Dickoya, Uva and Deniyaya until he took over Queensberry, Kotmale, in 1961. In 1964 he took over on Delta, Pussalawa, where our father, Barney Parker had been Senior SD and later Acting Manager in 1939.

David left Ceylon in 1965 to go planting in Papua New Guinea (PNG).

That year, he married Annis Rhodes, who had been at the Hatton Nursing Home and they had two fine sons, Andrew and Michael. After

PNG and a short period in Brisbane, they moved to Christchurch, New Zealand. Their marriage ended in 1995.

David and his partner Norma retired to Melbourne in 2000.

Younger brother Robin died in 1996 and I am willing to bet that David and he would soon have met, at some Old Front Row Forwards Convention because... Old Front Row Forwards never die ... they just Shove Off.

Vale David, the decent man.

— *Brian Parker*

Vale Decima Perera

Members, and those in Melbourne particularly who knew Decima Perera, will be sorry to hear she passed away there on March 14, 2011, after a short stay in hospital- at the age of ninety-two. She was a member almost to the end of her life.



Decima was a remarkable woman who self-published a book, "Collections and Recollections" in 2003. It contains some of her poems but is mainly autobiographical and I was fortunate enough to make her acquaintance when

I reviewed it for "The Ceylankan". She married Dr. Kingsley Perera when she was only 20-years old and raised seven children. Her account of growing up and schooling pre World War 2 is absorbing and was the subject of an article she wrote for "The Ceylankan".

Widowed relatively young, she absorbed herself in a host of activities some foreign to her and emigrated to Melbourne in the 1980's, where some of her family were living but, displaying the sturdy independence, which was so much of a hallmark of her character lived in a hostel. There too she tried a variety of crafts and proved to be quite a gifted painter. Decima had a large party for her 90th birthday and despite subsequent ill-health lived to the limit of her capacity, drawing comfort from her devout Roman Catholicism.

We extend our sympathies to her family and particularly to her daughter and son-in-law Swinitha and Maurice Ferdinando who were closest to her in her declining years.

— *Tony Peries*



NEXT SYDNEY MEETING

Sunday May 29 at 5.30 pm

**at The Thornleigh Community Centre,
Corner Phyllis & Central Avenues (off
Pennant Hills Road) Thornleigh.**

SPEAKERS

• **Srikantha Nadarajah** will be the first speaker launching his book on *Banking and Business in Sri Lanka*.

• **Dr. Tom Silva** will speak next. His Topic is:
**"GOVERNOR WILLIAM MANNING
(1918 - 1925) AND SEEDS OF COMMUNAL
DISCORD IN CEYLON - a Layman's
Impression"**

Dr Silva will show that there was some harmony between two sections of the community in the Legislative Council in the first two decades of the 20th century, whereby all sections had equal representation and there was no animosity. Manning introduced the principle of communal representation from 1921 with a seat for Tamils in Colombo, resulting in break up of the Ceylon National Congress. It was followed by the Manning Constitution of 1923 which was a major departure from the past. This led to continuing dissension in politics between majority and minority until independence. It was a precursor to subsequent developments in post independence period.

There will be a brief question time/discussion after the talks, followed by the usual social.

All are welcome, especially interested young people. Admission is free. Tea/coffee & soft drinks provided. However, guests are requested to bring a plate of savoury finger food (no sweets please). To defray costs, a monetary contribution is suggested in the alternative. Please contact Thiru on (02) 8850 4798 for further information.

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Another Eden

It is still wild country. But it might not last this way.

There lies a land of peace, solitude and freedom. Don't miss it! Drink of its beauty, before man takes his "Civilisation" there, invading this nature's paradise: before black fumes from diesel engines audaciously mingle with milky mists that drift over valleys adorned with trout streams or pools and hilltops dressed with jungle.

This tract of uplands is the Horton Plains.

On the 28th March, 1834, two energetic young officers, Lieut. Watson - 58th Regt. and Lieut. Fisher - 78th Regt. took compass bearings from Pidurutalagala and set out with ten coolies and six stout fellows, equipped with bill hooks and large chopping knives to hack their way through swamps, *nelu* and matted jungle. The first extensive plain they came to, they named it "Elk Plain" from the numerous traces of sambhur. After three days and two nights they came upon the plain of Maha Ellia, which they thought themselves privileged to call "Horton Plain" in honour of Governor Wilmot R. Horton. It appears that Watson and Fisher were the first Europeans to have set foot on the plains.

-Lala Adithiya; *Ceylon Vagabond* 1969.

YOUR LITERARY CONTRIBUTIONS

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

While every effort is made to print material that is relevant and correct, we do not take the responsibility for errors. The editor would appreciate if any inaccuracies are brought to his attention.

Original, previously unpublished, material is sought, preferably of an anecdotal, historical nature, but any material will be considered provided they contribute to the CSA's ideals of being non-racial, non-political, non-religious and non-controversial.

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

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Reprints and some back issues of the Journal are available in limited quantities. The cost to members is \$7.50 per copy. Non-members pay \$10.00 per issue. This does not include postage and handling. P&H within Australia is \$5.00; Asia/Pacific \$10.00; rest of the world \$15.00 per package up to 5 issues.

Contact Hugh Karunanayake Int. + 61 2 9980 2494 or hkaru@optusnet.com.au

WE NEED SPEAKERS

The Society welcomes knowledgeable and academic persons to speak at our meetings in Sydney, Melbourne & Colombo. You may have potential candidates for speakers in your families, among friends or relatives who live in or visit Australia or Sri Lanka. Our meetings are held quarterly in February, May, August & November of each year. Dates can be arranged to suit the availability of speakers. Overhead projection and PA facilities are also available.

If you would like to share your knowledge and expertise among a group of like-minded people, please contact our President Harry de Sayrah on (Mob) 0415 402 724 or Shelagh Goonewardene (03) 9808 4962 (Melbourne) or Somasiri Devendra (Colombo) 2737180.

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We seek your cooperation in updating your subscriptions promptly and that subscriptions FOR 2008, 2009 & 2010 are overdue and those for 2011 are now due. Send a cheque or MO in favour of the Ceylon Society of Australia to the Treasurer, 3 Viola Avenue, Warriewood NSW 2102 or pay direct to the CSA bank account at the Commonwealth Bank: **BSB: 062308 Account Number: 10038725.**

If you do pay by bank transfer, please ensure that your name is mentioned in the bank advice. We have received payments in the past where the bank had no record of the payees' names and we were unable to allocate the payment correctly. If you have made such a transfer in the past without providing your name, please contact Upali with full details of the transfer you made.

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Dame Rebecca West - New York Herald Tribune, 22 April, 1956

The paintings of George Keyt

Appreciate the unmistakable genius of Keyt, arguably Ceylon's greatest painter, known for his sensuous form, line and colour, in this brief encounter with reproductions of some of his better known work.



▲ • *Raga Malkosh - Shelagh Goonewardene collection*



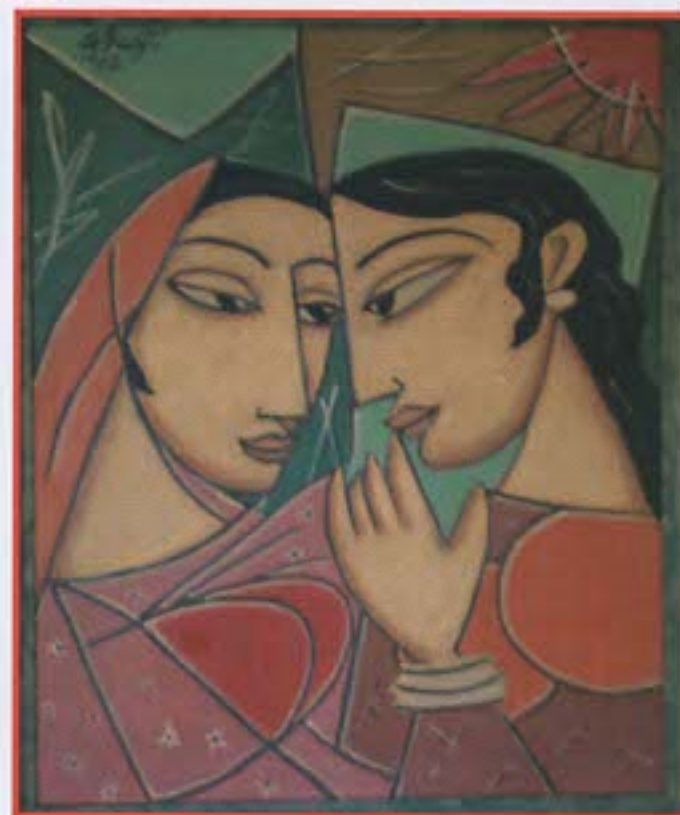
▲ • *Divine Union - George Keyt The Man and his Art*



▲ • *Murals from Gotami Vihare - George Keyt The Man and his Art*



▲ • *Lovers - George Keyt The Man and his Art*



▲ • *Radha and friend - Dr Srilal Fernando collection*

▲ • *Nayika - George Keyt The Man and his Art*



(Photographs courtesy Shelagh Goonewardene).