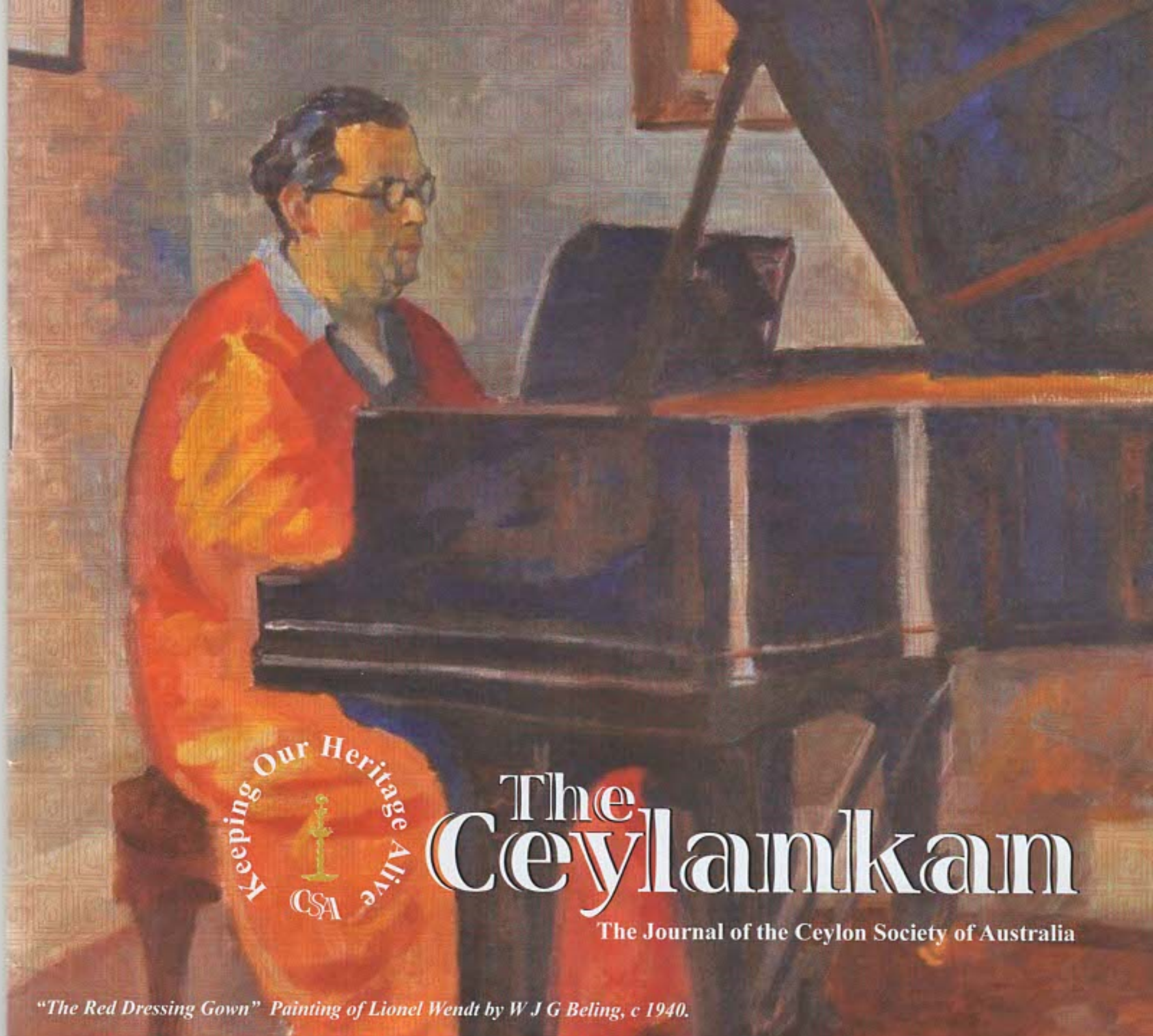


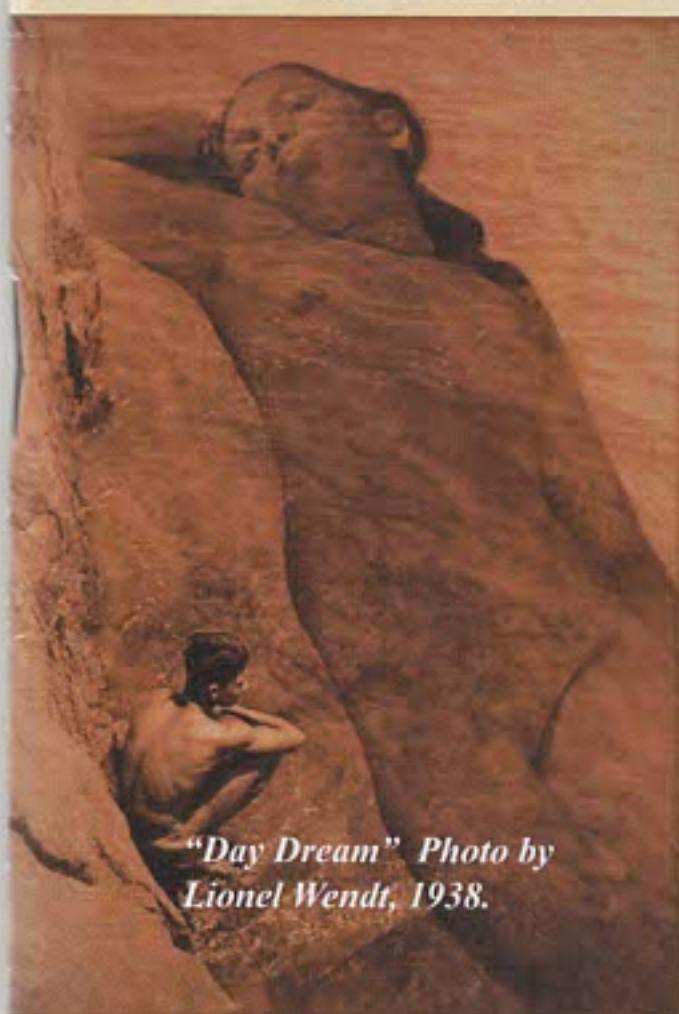


Keeping Our Heritage Alive
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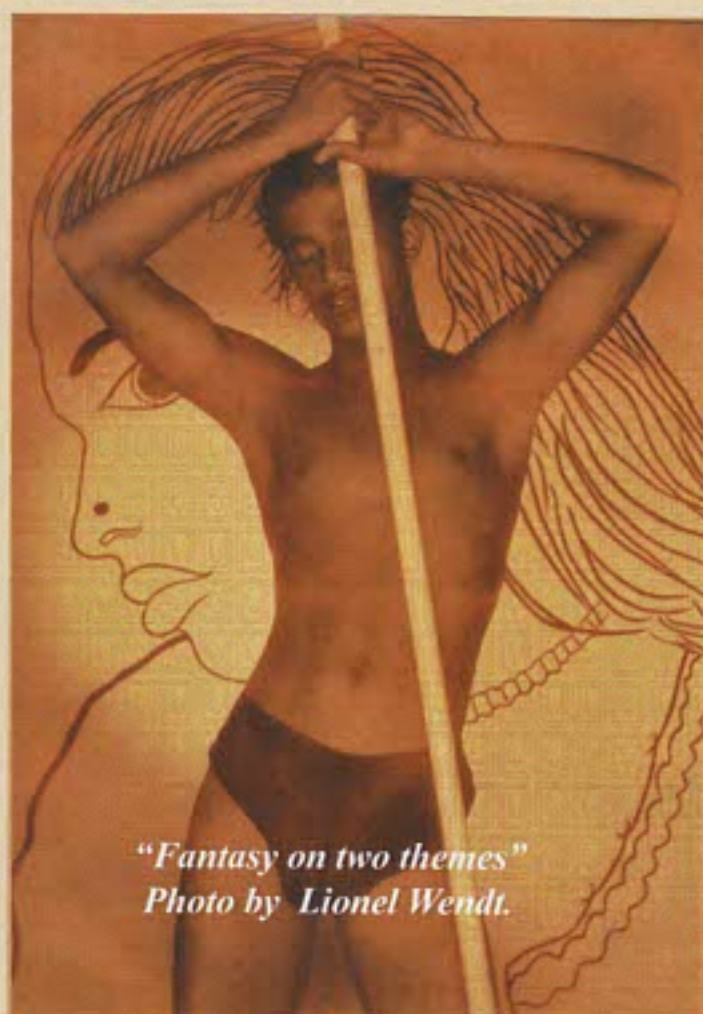
The Ceylanikam

The Journal of the Ceylon Society of Australia

"The Red Dressing Gown" Painting of Lionel Wendt by W J G Beling, c 1940.



*"Day Dream" Photo by
Lionel Wendt, 1938.*



*"Fantasy on two themes"
Photo by Lionel Wendt.*



"Jayana" Photo by Lionel Wendt



The Ceylon Society of Australia

PRESIDENT

Pauline Gunewardene
Mobile 0419 447 665
Int. 61 2 9736 3987
paulineg@ozemail.com.au

VICE-PRESIDENT

Dr Srilal Fernando

SECRETARY

Sunimal Fernando
smfernando@optusnet.com.au
Int. 61 2 9476 6852 Mob. 0404 462 412

TREASURER & PUBLIC OFFICER

Deepak Pritamdas
Mobile 0434 860 188
PO Box 489 Blacktown NSW 2148
deepakpsl@yahoo.com

PUBLIC RELATIONS

Harry de Sayrah, MJF.
Mobile 0415 402 724
harold.166@hotmail.com

PUBLICATIONS

Sunil de Silva
Int. + 61 2 4340 5940
sunil.desilva41@gmail.com

EDITOR/LIBRARIAN

Doug Jones (LIFE MEMBER)
Mobile 0415 378 861
12/11 Garthowen Crescent Castle Hill NSW 2154
dougjay20@gmail.com

SOCIAL CONVENOR

Amal Wahab
Int. + 61 2 411 888 182
awahab15555@gmail.com

LIFE MEMBERS

Hugh & Tulsi Karunanayake
Mobile 0448 998 024 Int. + 61 3 9878 5307
karu@internode.net.au

EX-OFFICIO

Thiru Arumugam Leslie Perera
Int. + 61 2 8850 4798 Mobile: 0418 230 842
thiru.aru@gmail.com lesanvee@bigpond.com

MELBOURNE CHAPTER CONVENOR

Hemal Gurusinghe
Mobile 0427 725 740
hemguru@hotmail.com

COLOMBO CHAPTER Convenor/Local President

M.D.(Tony) Saldin
+9411 2936402 (Off.) +9411 2931315 (Res.)
Fax: 9411 2936377 Mobile: +94 777 363366
email: saldinclan@sltnet.lk

Immediate Past President

Deshamanya Tissa Devendra
+9411 2501 489 email: tisdev@sltnet.lk

Vice-President

Fredrick Medis
+ 0722 256993
email: fredrickmedis@gmail.com

Vice-President & Local Hon. Treasurer

M. Asoka T. de Silva
Int. 011 282 2933 Mob. +94 775097517
email: desilvaasoka@yahoo.com

Local Hon. Secretary

Anandalal Nanayakkara
+077 3272989
email: anandalal10@gmail.com

Committee Members

Srilal Perera
077 5743785 email: srilalp@ymail.com

Daya Wickramatunga

+9411 2786783/0773 174164
email: dashanwick@gmail.com

The Ceylankan

CONTENTS

• From the Editor	3
• Our Readers Write	4
• Singapore Gold - Ceylon's role in the great Gold transfer by Hugh Karunanayake	5
• Summa Navaratnam - A Living Legend by Rex Olegasgarem.....	8
• Colombo Fort in the mid-20th Century by S.Nadaraja	10
• COVER STORY - Commemorating the 120th Birth Anniversary of Lionel Wendt by Thiru Arumugam.....	12

• Events that led to the fall of the Kandyan Kingdom Part 2 by Dr Leonard Pinto	17
• Fifty years ago: The 1971 JVP Revolt by Jayantha Somasundaram	23
• Hidden Story of WW 2 by Logan Thirairatnam	26
Appreciations	29
– Srin Peries by Niri Malalasekera – Dr Brahman Sivaprakasapillai	
• Lankans who volunteered with the RAF during WW II by Charles Ameresekere	31

From the Editor

Once again we have an excellent selection of articles for the enjoyment of our avid readers. Your Editor is amazed, time and again, how his literary larder is totally empty, soon to discover an outpouring of contributions received for publication. In the last few issues we have been gifted with some new, first time writers submitting original, well-written stories and, some of them covering fresh topics that we find enlightening. To these new comers we say welcome and to use a hackneyed phrase; 'may your tribe increase'.

A good example is Logan Thiruchelvam's revealing article on Sabapathipillai Rajanayagam, a young Telegraph Engineer in the Ceylon Telegraph Office who was sought after by none other than the then wartime Commander-in-Chief Admiral Sir Geoffrey Layton, who demobilised Rajanayagam from civil duties as his services were deemed more important for the war effort when the Japanese entered the war. The work done by Rajanayagam and his staff was so vital to the war effort that an OBE was awarded to him while the war was still going on. Absorbing reading.

In the November 2020 issue of the journal Logan's wife Premila Thuraiatnam, also a newcomer to the pages of *The Ceylankan* paid glowing tribute to her grandfather Alagu Subramaniam, a prominent figure in London's Bloombury circuit in the 1920s, among other things. Her writing style will be looked forward to by our readers for many years.

Doyen Hugh Karunanayake divulges in *Sigapore Gold* a little known story of the transfer of more than 100 tons of gold from the Bank of England to the Bank of Canada in 1939 as war clouds were gathering and to avoid a possible loss that, till now, remains the biggest transfer of wealth from one country to another.

FROM THE PAST... Journal 14, April 2001.

Bombay Duck out in the dry

Since I wrote my article about curry eating in the UK [The] (Ceylankan, January 2001) there has been a change of mind by the European Commission regarding the suitability of Bombay Duck for human consumption. I can now report that the desiccated fish will be on sale again thanks to the four-year crusade by a businessman named David Delaney who fought Brussels bureaucracy. Before the ban 13 tonnes of the fish was eaten in Britain each year. EU Commissioners had banned the fish, we are now told, not to any known health risk from Bombay Duck, but due to dried squid and shrimp imported from an [Asian country] having been infected with salmonella in 1996. Mr Delaney had the matter raised in the House of Commons, launched a web site and corresponded with EU officials, but he got nowhere until diplomatic intervention ensued. The fish that will be allowed will continue

Sri Lanka's champion sprinter Summa Navaratnam fit and alert at 96 years of age, still takes pride in coaching young rugby hopefuls of the Rugby Academy of Children coached in Colombo. Rightly regarded as a sporting legend, his exploits are related by none other than his mate Rex Olegasegarem. Rex puts that personal touch as he shares the story of his real life cousin.

Next we have S.Nadarajah continue on the theme of Colombo Fort in the mid-20th Century - sharing his memories of this historic area. Who can forget the colossal photographer, musician, critic and promoter of the Arts, Lionel Wendt. His 120th birth anniversary was commemorated by Lionel Wendt Centre for the Arts and Thiru Arumugam has compiled a must-read photographer, musician, critic and promoter of the Arts who was born on 03 December 1900. His anniversary was commemorated by the Lionel Wendt Centre for the Arts, and Thiru Arumugam has compiled a must-read report in this issue.

Dr Leonard Pinto continues his in-depth study of the events that lead to the fall of the Kandyan Kingdom from an unusual and unique perspective.

We also have D.M.Alfreds sketching the life of Mission convert Nathaniel Niles, in the author's words: "based entirely on the *The Missionary Herald* ... using Nathan Niles as a prism to portray the kind of cultural change wrought in Jaffna by the American Missionaries in the 19th Century.

On a sad note this issue carries an Appreciation of the Life of Srim Peries (wife of third President of the CSA, the Late Tony) penned by family friend Niri Malalasekera,

There are the usual items such as Max Gerreyn's Cartoon and others also included for your reading pleasure.

ue to be supplied will have to be processed in factories under supervision of hygiene inspectors who I expect will themselves be supervised by Brussels. Mr Delaney and millions of others, including myself, will once again be able to enjoy what those against bumello call smelly firewood.

A word of thanks

To the Society's ladies, I make a salutation in appreciation of the delicious suppers and the conviviality that always follow our meetings. A special word of thanks to the many distinguished speakers who made presentations at our meetings and thus stimulating our interests even further. Finally a big thank you to all our members for the tremendous cooperation and support extended, which I am confident will extend into the future.

(Note from President at the time Hugh Karunanayake.)

Our Readers write

Colonial hangover still alive?

I found the article on 'Pearl Fisheries in the Gulf of Mannar' by Thiru Arumugam very interesting. Looks like our pearls earned export earnings in the past, like our tea today. Being in the Tea Industry, I found the reference to the pearl fishing season, in the inter monsoonal period of February to April interesting, for it coincides with the season for production of quality tea in Sri Lanka.

Hugh Karunanayake's article "Life in Colombo in the mid-20th Century" makes interesting reading as usual. The "colonial hangover" is still there in Colombo, except we no longer get help from the British in promoting Sri Lankan tea. They are too involved in Kenya. The Brits referred to our tea as the "best in class" orthodox tea in the world. There is no mention of it now.

Tony Saldin's article is also interesting. It is strange that I am hearing for the first time about "Lascaringya batayo". Of course, Tony knew more Sinhala than most of us.

I find reference to my dear friend Dr Cuda Wijeratne, my immediate neighbour. I feel so sad that I couldn't attend his funeral. We were in Australia when his dear wife Manel passed away. We were not able to attend her funeral either. How sad.

The Colombo Chapter of the CSA was formed by Mike Udabage and myself. I still remember visiting our teacher Somasiri Devendra, requesting him to take the post of President. I was the first Secretary and Mike, the first Treasurer. *The Ceylankan* always made excellent reading and our grateful thanks go to Doug Jones.

Daya Wickrematunge, Redhill, ACT 2603

The Pagoda Tea Rooms at Chatham Street .

Sujiv Fonseka's article in the *Ceylankan* of November 2020 brought back nostalgic and pleasant memories of the several visits to the Pagoda Tea Rooms along with work-mates at lunch time for that sumptuous and tasty rice and curry or lamprais meals in the early 1960s to the 1970s during my Corporate life in the Colombo Fort area. It is true that the price of Rice and Curry was around Rs 1.50 in the 1960s, when the value of the Ceylon Rupee held comparatively high.

A feature of the setting inside the restaurant was the tables being covered with well laundered white table cloth and the waiters dressed smartly. While the guests are seated enjoying the meal the friendly tall and handsome Manager, Devaka Rodrigo, would walk around and talk to the guests, ensuring that they were serviced well. Devaka was the brother of the well-known Mahes Rodrigo, the opening bat for Royal College and later for Ceylon. Also, near the entrance the broad-shouldered and smartly dressed Cashier, was seated behind his special desk and would welcome the guests with his charming smile and discharge his duties in an efficient manner. Behind the desk, this smart Cashier with his disarming smile gave very little indication of his childhood

affliction of polio,

While reminiscing happy memories, it is sad to note that this icon will no longer be there. Perhaps, such closures cannot be avoided in an ever changing world.

Requiem for 'Villa Venezia'

I wonder how many are yet around to share my memories of the wonderful library of Villa Venezia that brightened our undergraduate years in the University before it fled Thurstan Road to Peradeniya. It was, probably, Jennings' predecessor Marrs who who picked on the exotic Villa Venezia to house the University Library. I have not yet come across any photograph, or drawing, of this miniature Venetian palazzo built for an imaginative, but long forgotten, Colonial grandee amidst the lush greenery of Cinnamon Gardens.

The Villa was a baroque two storied pink building flanked by elegantly twisted columns and overhung by an ornate balcony that would have enthralled Romeo. A large ground floor room charmed its readers by walls frescoed by scenes from Greek and Roman mythology closely copied from Venetian originals. The top floor housed the library proper and the spacious reading room. This was an era long before the invasion of electronic gadgetry. Reference books were ranged subject wise on wooden shelves to be withdrawn, on request, by helpful, and surprisibgly literate, Library Assistants.

The spacious and airy reading room held long desks and chairs for readers silently poring over reference books. Generally this silence was interrupted only by the scraping of chairs pushed back by departing readers. But there was one time-honoured exception. This was when readers noticed a lovely fresher creeping stealthily along the corridor or a courting couple oblivious to the readers.

These diversions gave rise to 'The Stamp'. This was the spontaneous scraping of shoes by the whole community of readers who, meanwhile kept their heads buried in their books with enthusiasm. Much stamping took place during the Vacation, inspired/provoked by the holiday wear of female undergrads. These young ladies were very properly dressed in sarees during lectures. But when Vacation dawned and no lectures threatened, they embraced casual wear to visit the library at Villa Venezia, bird watching male undergrads now enjoyed admiring the elegant calves of fair batch mates in short dresses – a welcome change from ankle length sarees.

The disappearance of Villa Venezia took pace after I left University. Unimaginative University authorities seem to have missed the opportunity of acquiring this unrecorded architectural gem. It fell to the wreckers' sledge hammers of the philistine who bought the property.

So ended the life and death of Villa Venezia as the first library of our first University, its ornate splendour and marble floors now echo only in the memories of those ancients who loved its ambience many decades ago. May this essay be its Requiem.

Tissa Devendra (1948 - 1952) Colombo, Sri Lanka.

Singapore Gold! Ceylon's role in the Great Singapore Gold Transfer at the end of World War II

by Hugh Karunanayake

Individuals and nations have from time immemorial estimated wealth by rare metals and gems notably gold and diamonds. The advent of the joint stock company brought a new dimension to the measurement of wealth through stocks and shares in addition to immovables like land and property. In 1943 the Bretton Woods conference looked at the formation of a new international financial order by delinking currencies from the gold standard. The accumulation of gold reserves by governments posed serious security issues during times of war. A little known fact relates to the transfer of over 100 tons of gold from the Bank of England to the Bank of Canada during the summer of 1939. With war clouds gathering and a possible loss of its gold reserves, the British Government moved the bulk of its country's wealth and till now remains the biggest transfer of wealth from one country to another. The Japanese who intervened in the war a couple of years after it commenced were faced with a similar dilemma. Tomoyuki Yamashita, General of the Imperial Japanese Army is said to have spearheaded a systematic pillaging of gold, from countries in South East Asia. Initially the war loot is supposed to have been held in Singapore but later taken to the Phillipines where Yamashita was the Commander of the Japanese forces. When allied forces were advancing on the Japanese in the Phillipines, Yamashita had the gold hidden in underground tunnels. Yamashita was tried and convicted for war crimes by the US Army and executed in 1946. There were allegations that President Marcos later got hold of the "Yamashita Gold" which enabled him to make an incredible personal fortune.

While the war was on going many Singaporeans with personal wealth, alarmed at the looting going on in neighbouring countries during the war, entrusted their gold and jewellery to the Singapore Treasury. With the rapidly increasing Japanese influence in South East Asia, and indeed in Singapore, the colonial government of Singapore felt uneasy about the gold preserves it held on behalf of the citizens of Singapore. A decision was taken to transfer the stock of gold and jewels for safekeeping to various "safer" British colonies including Ceylon. In Ceylon, the Singapore gold and jewels were held in the Treasury in Colombo, neatly packed and labelled.

When the war was over the Government decided to restore the treasure to its legitimate own-

ers in Singapore. The man entrusted with the job was Clarence Kreltszheim a trusted Treasury official who on leaving school had joined the Treasury as an official and was Accountant in charge of Finance. He was later to be the first Accountant at the newly formed Central Bank where he was also Deputy Head of the currency division. Kreltszheim left for Singapore emplaning in a York aircraft from the RAF base at Katunayake 1947. The luggage which accompanied him consisted of 23 parcels packed in three large sealed cases. The flight took 8 hours to reach Singapore where he was accommodated in the Raffles Hotel. All of the treasure then known as "Singapore Gold" was estimated as worth a million rupees at the time (73 years ago) and in today's terms would certainly be valued over several billions of rupees. Kreltszheim arrived in Singapore where the Government



• Clarence Kreltszheim and some of his classmates at Royal College (photo circa 1919). He is seen standing with band on his left arm. Ivan Corea is standing at extreme right, while Lakdasa de Mel is seated to the right of the central figure, schoolmaster JG Paulusz.

received him with the customary courtesies and was feted at a banquet where many of the owners of the treasure were present. He ensured that each legitimate owner received his/her deposit, obtained receipts in support, and was back in Colombo after a short stay in Kuala Lumpur. He returned to Ceylon in a Sunderland Flying Boat which landed in the water. He was then on his way to Colombo in a RAF Passenger Coach having accomplished his mission. What a remarkable feat of honesty and integrity when viewed from the perspective of the rampant corruption and pillaging of both private and public property by both government and officialdom in the not too distant past?

Who then was Clarence Kreltszheim, the man in whose honesty and integrity, the Colonial Government of Ceylon had immense faith in? Mind you, this was in British colonial days where all the major positions in the government were held by Britishers. Clarence Kreltszheim was a Ceylonese descended from Dutch ancestry. He was educated at Royal College, where his father was a teacher when the school was under the name The Colombo Academy. On leaving school he joined government service as a Treasury official where he was head of the Currency Department. On the establishment of the Central Bank he was appointed as its Accountant and Deputy Head of the Currency Division. He is seen in the photo here as a student at Royal College most likely in 1919-1920. The building in the background, now the University of Colombo, was then home to Royal College from where the school moved to Racecourse Avenue in 1922-1923. Of those beside Clarence are two that have been identified viz Lakdasa de Mel and Ivan Corea, both later to be ecclesiastics of the future. Lakdasa de Mel was Archbishop and Metropolitan for the Anglican Church in India and Ceylon, and Ivan Corea was Vicar at St Luke's Church Borella, and of St Paul's Milagiriya for many years and father of Vernon the broadcaster and Ernest journalist, and former High Commissioner to Canada. Clarence Kreltszheim (standing) is seen here with a black arm band, Ivan Corea standing on extreme right. Lakdasa de Mel seated second from left and next to central figure schoolmaster J.G. Paulusz.

Clarence Kreltszheim lived in Sagara Road, Bambalpitiya from where four of his five sons Duncan, Frederick, Malcolm, and Michael attended Royal College "the school of our fathers who learnt their way before us". Duncan (deceased) and Frederick were both tea planters and both played rugby football. Fred representing Royal College at Rugby also played First Eleven cricket for the school serving as wicketkeeper. Fred later represented Kandy, Dimbula, and Dickoya at rugby and won his national cap representing Ceylon for some years. Michael qualified as a doctor, and Malcolm as an architect, while Robin worked as an Accountant. All five brothers migrated to Australia nearly 50 years ago. Another unique achievement of Fred cannot pass without mention. As a tea planter he achieved the pinnacle of a planting career when he was in his thirties when appointed as the first Ceylonese Manager of Laxapana Group, Maskeliya where he played a pivotal role in replanting a new division of tea and relocation of the factory and bungalows following the submersion of a part of Laxapana Estate due to the damming of the Maskeliya Oya for hydro electric generation. He also served Indonesia as an expert to the tea industry after leaving Sri Lanka. The saying that "trust begets trust" can find no better example.

(Seen below is a copy of an account of the Kreltszheim visit to Singapore, published in the Singapore newspaper the "Tribune").

Singapore "War" Jewels Return

(Tribune Staff Reporter)

An official of the Ceylon Government Treasury arrived by air in Singapore on Tuesday on an interesting mission—he brought with him about five-hundred-thousand rupees worth of jewellery!

The jewellery belongs to various residents in Singapore, who, when the invasion of Singapore appeared imminent, consigned it to the Singapore Treasury for safekeeping.

The Treasury officials here had already made plans about the valuables entrusted to their care. Arrangements were immediately made to send this jewellery

to various parts of the British Empire—it went in lots to South Africa, India and Australia.

This particular parcel of five-hundred-thousand rupees worth of jewellery was destined for Australia. But fate ordained otherwise—luckily for the owners! Previous parcels of jewellery sent to Australia never reached their destination—they fell to Japanese bombers.

Having arrived in Ceylon, this particular parcel was lodged in

the Ceylon Treasury and remained intact under its seals until two days ago when they were brought back here.

The Ceylon Treasury, when the war was over, asked the owners of the jewellery in Singapore to redeem their property. These owners replied asking the Ceylon Treasury to forward it to Singapore. Here the Ceylon Government met with a snag—no one was prepared to cover the

package with insurance—unless the package was opened. This the Ceylon Treasury refused to do—hence the jewellery had to be brought by a Treasury official, Mr. Clarence Kreltzheim, who arrived here on Tuesday evening and handed over the valuable package, still with its original seals intact, to the Singapore Treasury for distribution to the rightful owners.

SUCCESSFUL SRI LANKANS OF SINGAPORE

Sri Lankans migrating to Singapore on work is quite rare. Those who did venture to Singapore for work would gather experience and, sometimes, move to other countries. Living in Singapore is expensive, space is limited and housing is pricey. Yet, there are plenty of jobs in knowledge and technology-intensive occupations like cyber security, pharmaceuticals, research and development, logistics, and financial services; and Sri Lankan diaspora in Singapore help immigrants from their motherland find a foothold. Sri Lankans are not at ease outside their comfort zones. As a result, migrants sometimes accept jobs at lower levels in the hierarchy than previously employed, leading to financial challenges. Students find it easier to assimilate by embracing local and expat friends, food, and culture. Often, it's their diligence and resilience that make them successful in Singapore that is a hotbed for global talent. These are stories of gritty Sri Lankan achievers who have become successful in system-driven and pragmatic Singapore. Yet, none have abandoned their banyan tree-like roots of Sri Lanka, and plan to retire in their beloved island.

Chandi Jayawickrama

(Communications, Executive Producer Brand, Shell)
Raised in England and having worked in Colombo, Chandi Jayawickrama, [who has lived in Singapore for 20 years] needed the right address to quench her thirst for adventure, yet lead a cosmopolitan lifestyle. Singapore, an Asian country with a western lifestyle, is best suited to balance her British mind and Sri Lankan soul. It has given Chandi many professional opportunities and friends from various countries. She feels alive with the city's restaurants and bars, theatre, film festivals and art galleries. Easy-to-settle Singapore suits diverse lifestyles where one can live as cheaply or as expensively as one wants. Housing is her biggest expenditure; easy internet connections, her delight. Chandi misses adventure and



Chandi Jayawickrama,

rusticity in Singapore, but likes to return to its sedate pace. Her work provides the adventure she craves for.

The most exciting experience in Chandi's adventurous life has been a basic offshore safety training programme where a helicopter was submerged and capsized in water multiple times, simulating a crash.

Chandi, with her brown face and white accent, stole the show for MTV in Colombo in the mid-1990s. She left Colombo for lack of ongoing professional opportunities. There was a significant gap between Sri Lankan and international standards of operation. Singapore bridged the gap. While staying on a tourist visa during the first Asian financial crisis, her perseverance was tested. Chandi's own production company collaborated with National Geographic, Discovery and BBC for documentaries, some of which are still aired globally. Her reputation grew as she learned how to run a company successfully in a competitive market. Chandi's experience and aptitude help her in producing documentaries for Shell, like on malaria, relief work after Typhoon Haiyan and reef conservation in the Philippines. She covers the Asia-Pacific, Middle East and North African regions for Shell, which has exposed her to a Fortune 500 brand's method of operating. Chandi hopes to retire in Sri Lanka for the lifestyle, landscape, and primarily because her heart firmly resides there.

(Courtesy of author Sravasti Ghosh Dastidar of
ECHELON, January 2021)

Summa Navaratnam – A Living Legend

by Rex Olegasegarem

Summa Navaratnam, a super sportsman, dubbed the “fastest human in Asia” in January 1953 after winning the 100 metres sprint in India with an incredible record timing of 10.4 secs. and concurrently became an outstanding rugby star of CR & FC and Ceylon, later captaining the Ceylon Rugby team, making Summa a double international. As mentioned in an article by Ken de Joodt: “Like a comet, a special talent graced the sporting fields more than 60 years ago. That talent, Summa Navaratnam, is a household name, having won international acclaim for his athleticism and rugby skills.”

Sumanthiran Navaratnam born in May 1925 in Araly Chettymadam near Vaddukoddai, Jaffna (Ceylon) was the fifth child of Mr. S.S. Navaratnam (Civil Servant) and my dear elder aunt (*Periamma*) Katie (nee Ratnam) daughter of Dr. C.S. Ratnam, Provincial Surgeon. In 1930, the family moved to Colombo and Summa began his school career at Royal College from Kindergarten until end of high school.

In 1937, Summa represented Royal College in Boxing also a contact sport, was to help in Rugby, another contact game. In 1940, although only 15-years old, he was included in the Royal College senior relay team and won the school Athletics Colours in the same year – a record not beaten by anyone to this date. In 1941, he was the Royal College Under 16 Athletics Champion and in the same year played in the Senior Rugby team (wing three quarter). Royal beat Trinity in Colombo for the first time and Summa initiated the two



• *The duo in 2012.*

winning tries. In 1943 Royal beat Trinity for the first time in Kandy and Summa scored the only try in the match. In the same year (1943), Summa won the Public

School's Athletics championship in 100 and 220 yards events. In 1945 and 1946, Summa won the National championship in 100 metres and 200 metres beating Upali Gooneratne, another champion athlete at the time.

At the first trials for the 1948 London Olympics Summa, one of the hot favourites was surprisingly declared medically unfit by the team's doctor supposedly due to 'Inguinal Hernia'. Subsequently, another doctor cleared Summa as being completely fit and he took part in the second trials despite his training schedule being affected. At the second trials, Summa ran second to R

E Kitto in the 100 meters. Summa won the 200 metres beating Kitto. Although Kitto bowed out, being a Police Officer, which should have paved the way clearly for Summa to be selected for the two sprint events (100 and 200 metres). Summa was again dropped on medical grounds. A very disappointed Summa was badly shaken and gave up athletics, concentrating on his other love-Rugby. However, Summa came back to Athletics in 1949 and was selected for the Auckland Commonwealth Games for the 100 meters.

In 1950, Summa was in the Ceylon Rugby Team, playing in his favourite spot wing three quarter against the fancied British Lions. As quoted in the Ceylon Newspapers, the British Lion's manager said: “Among the Ceylon players playing today, Navaratnam would be the only player from the Ceylon side we would have liked to have in our team”. What a great tribute.



• *Cousins Summa Navaratnam (right) and the author Rex.*

On 23 January 1953, representing the ACE Athletics club at the South Asian games organised by the Madras State Olympic Association in India, Summa, beating the fancied Ivan Jacobs, broke the Asian record in the 100 metres heats clocking 10.4 secs. on a slower grass track and was dubbed “the fastest human in Asia.” This timing of 10.4 secs. by Summa equalled that of Lindy Remigino's winning time at the 1952 Helsinki Olympics.

In 1954, participating in the “All comers” Athletics meet at the Tamil Union Oval, after winning the heats, Summa cycled (on a push bike) to the Race Course to play rugby for Ceylon against the touring Australian Colts. In a fierce tackle Summa was slightly

concussed but continued playing. The next day he returned to the Tamil Union oval to race against the Indian champion sprinter, Lavy Pinto. It was a very close contest (which I vividly recall listening on the radio with other admirers in Jaffna) both running shoulder to



• *Summa Navaratnam in his younger days.*

shoulder and toe to toe clocking the same timing. Pinto was declared the winner. Summa accepted the verdict graciously. When I subsequently questioned the wisdom of his playing the Rugby match the previous day, the consummate super sportsman shot back saying "in sports you take every opportunity for the love of it and the result is only an outcome".

Thereafter, Summa concentrated on Rugby (Union), captaining his beloved CR & FC team, winning the inter-club championship and in 1954-1955 captained the All-Ceylon Rugby team. In the same period, he married the attractive Rosemary Jansz, the daughter of the Principal (and owner) of St. John's College, Panadura and they had two daughters. He has great grandchildren by this union. After divorcing Rosemary, Summa married Romaine Mary de Silva in 1968. They have a son Kendal and daughter Nadin and grandchildren.

Subsequent to active participation, Summa continued his interest with coaching a younger generation of athletes and rugby players. At the age of 95, he still coaches young children and assisted by a few younger coaches, has instituted the "Summa Navaratnam Royal Junior Rugby Academy". This certainly keeps him going.

Summa's achievements were not limited to sports. He had a remarkable career in the commercial field from 1948, commencing as a junior executive in Dodwell & Co (a British firm) to becoming the General Manager of Consol Expo. At Consol Expo, Summa turned the fortunes of this organisation from a loss-making entity to a profitable one.

Hailing from a staunch Christian family, Summa says that his achievements are due to God's eternal grace.

AUTHOR'S NOTE:

I am proud to be Summa's first cousin. Although, not at national level, Summa's inspiration spurred me to do well in Athletics, Tennis and Soccer at the Peradeniya University (1955 /1959) winning colours. I won the University 1500 and 5000 metres track events in 1958 as well as captained the Peradeniya University Tennis Team. I took the Tennis activities at the University to a different level by conceiving the idea and organising the first ever internal tournament, which included the active participation of students and the enthusiastic academic staff. This brought participating students and academic staff to a "level playing field" in a relaxed environment. I was also involved in the University Sports administration as Treasurer and General Secretary of the Sports Council. Sports was in our blood, inherited from parents of sides.



• With his young Rugby academy children coached by Summa standing on right behind the children.

Delight in simple things

Teach us Delight in simple things;
And Mirth that has no bitter springs
Forgiveness free for evil done
And love to all men neath the sun.

Land of our birth

Land of our Birth, we pledge to thee,
our love and toil in the years to be;
When we are grown and take our place,
As men and women with our race.

Colombo Fort in the Mid-20th Century

by S. Nadarajah

I wish to thank Hugh Karunanayake for taking us down memory lane, covering this interesting part of Colombo, which was and remains heart of the major business sector in the country. Permit me to offer some details referred to in his article, starting at about 1964 at the commencement of my working life.

National and Grindlays Bank which became Grindlays Bank and more recently part of Standard Chartered group, was the largest Corporate bank in the country and remained as such for several decades. Originally National Bank of India, it had control over major part of business sectors from colonial times from the late 19th Century, especially plantation and export firms. The Chief Manager at the time was William Thyne, a formidable man who did not take lightly to dissent. It was located at 37 York Street, with a retail branch at 11 York Street, which had acquired the P & O Bank.

Hong Kong & Shanghai Bank, (now HSBC) was the second largest located in Prince Street and Thambiyah was the first Ceylonese Chief Manager. Eastern Bank was next door to Grindlays and the first local Manager was Chandraratne. It later became Commercial Bank, with Edgar Gunatunge as its General Manager. Chartered Bank was located on Queen Street, next to the General Post Office. Mercantile Bank was located next to Chartered Bank. State Bank of India was next to HSBC. The Chief Manager was Eric Da Khuna. Apart from Grindlays Bank and H S B C, all other banks serviced mainly the retail trade in the Pettah. With the exception of State Bank of India, all banks at the time were British owned.

Bank of Ceylon was established in 1939 as the first Ceylonese bank and expanded rapidly after the end of colonial rule in 1948. The first Ceylonese General Manager was Chelliah Loganathan. Sidney Sirimane and M. Mohideen were Deputy General Managers. The Head office was moved from Chatham Street to an expanded location in York Street. C. Loganathan was successful in generating business and facilitating expansion of the Bank. He was supported by Maruthappah Murugesen who was the first Manager of the Pettah branch and subsequently Business Development Manager at Head Office.

Leading Plantation Agency Houses in the area were George Steuarts on Queen Street with Trevor Moy as Managing Director, supported by Scott Direckze, and Carson Cumberbatch with Basil Jesudason as the first Ceylonese Managing Director. The two major plantation brokers were Sommervilles with Arjuna Dias as Managing Director and Forbes and Walker with Wijeysekera as head of the Board. Aitken Spence was a leading firm in travel, tourism and shipping, with Mike

Thornton as Managing Director. Plantation brokers and Aitken Spence were located on Prince Street.

In retail business, Cargills and Millers were the leading department stores in York Street, with Alfred Thambiyaiya as Managing Director, and Mahes Kunaratnam as Manager of Cargills and Somasunderam as Manager of Millers. Colombo Apothecaries was the



** Cargills Department Store*

other major retail store located on Prince Street with Eric LaBrooy as Managing Director.

The two leading legal firms in the country from colonial times were F J and G De Saram with A R Tampoe as Senior partner and Julius & Creasy with Senathirajah as the head of the firm, both located on Prince Street.

The major accounting firms were Turquand Young with Wijeysekera as senior partner located on



• Prince Street, Fort in the 1940s.

Queen Street and Hulugalle & Wickremanayke located on Prince Street.

Cargo Boat Dispatch Company was a shipping firm located on Queens Street, and part of Alfred Thambiyah's group, and managed by his daughter Subodini.

Times Building at the end of Prince Street, was the tallest until overtaken by the Ceylinco building on Queens Street. The two major newspaper publishers

were the Times and Lake House group, the latter is located on the outskirts of Fort on McCullum Road.

Ceylinco Building at the top of Queens Street is the location for the Ceylon Insurance group, which started under Justin Kotelawela who was succeeded by his son Lalith. He was well supported by Daya Senanayake, who also managed the Blue Peacock Diamonds business. The Finance Company which provided finance to retail business, was also a major component of the group and Mrs Katunanayake was Manager, The Finance Company of the Ceylon Insurance Group. There was a tendency for rapid expansion of the group, which had adverse repercussions in later years.

There were two specialist financial firms on Queens Street. Mercantile Credit, a merchant bank which provided finance for retail business, and was owned by N U Jayawardena, previously Governor of Central Bank, Bartleet and Company, an investment bank, headed by Mallory Wijesinghe which supported corporate business.

Chatham Street had some retail shops and restaurants including two sports goods stores, Chands and Dianas whose Manager was Chawla. Pagoda Tea Rooms was managed by Devaka Rodrigo, who had a special table for regular clients known to him.

Two of the oldest government departments, Survey and Public Works were on lower Chatham Street.



• *The Senate Building that housed the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Cabinet Office situated in the Colombo Fort area, It was renamed the Republic Building in 1972, It stood next to the Queens House, now known as the President's House.*

Hemas Building on York Street in front of Cargills was the location for several offices, including Development Finance Corporation and a section of Central Bank.

The newly constructed YMBA building was the location for K V G De Silva's bookshop, Employees Provident Fund section of Central Bank and several apartments for residents. Basement of the building had a good cafeteria.

Gaffoor Building in front of YMBA was the location for the financial and administrative section of Walker Sons, with Furkhan as the Manager. H W Cave & Company was one of the oldest bookshops located in the same building.

The Senate Building on Queens Street was the location for the Ministry of Finance and Immigration Departments. The Inland Revenue



• *Colombo Fort Clock Tower is located at the junction of Chatham Street and Janadhipathi Mawatha (formerly Queens Street) in Colombo Fort.*

Department was located at the back of this building behind Bank of Ceylon.

There was a strong tendency in the corporate sector at the time for the CEO or person in charge to be autocratic in their approach to doing business.

Colombo Fort at the time showed a continuation of British colonial times in all respects, and people were comfortable to let it continue as such for several decades.

Satisfying a Thirst

The most refreshing of local drinks is the thambili, or King Coconut. This bright orange coconut is full of sweet water. It can be taken plain or sweetened with sugar, lime and a pinch of salt.

The local alcoholic favourite is made from the coconut sap known as "toddy". Villagers often consume it in its undistilled form, fermented with yeast. Before fermentation, it is a refreshing non-alcoholic drink called "thelijja". Distilled *arrack* is sold commercially in liquor shops, bars and other outlets.

Local beers are of excellent quality. Mostly brewed in Nuwara Eliya, they were developed under the direction of Europeans during the British colonial period. Foreign liquors are also available in most restaurants.

Water is served with most meals, although tea is, of course, the most popular drink. In combination with ginger or jaggery, it is unique and delicious. Herb teas, including coriander, fenugreek and garlic, are drunk for different illnesses.

(Inside Guides - Sri Lanka)

Commemorating the 120th Birth Anniversary of Lionel Wendt

by THIRU ARUMUGAM

“Nations are made by artists and poets, not by traders and politicians” – Dr Ananda Coomaraswamy.

Lionel Wendt was a photographer, musician, critic and promoter of the Arts who was born on 03 December 1900. His 120th birth anniversary was commemorated by the Lionel Wendt Centre for the Arts, which was built in his memory in Colombo, by creating a digital archive of his photographic works, ephemera and other relevant materials and also completely revamping the Lionel Wendt website.

There have been four previous articles about Lionel Wendt in this Journal. They are two articles by Vama Vamadevan, titled *“Lionel Wendt: artist of the highest calibre”* in the November 2003 and February 2013 issues and two articles by Bill Mackie titled *“Mementoes of Lionel Wendt”* and *“Lookout for Lionel*

Wendt’s buried treasure” in the May and August 2010 issues respectively.

The newly launched Lionel Wendt Digital Archives reproduces three complete articles from *The Ceylankan*. These are the two Bill Mackie articles mentioned above and the Rubin Mantra article titled *“A Notable Colombo Figure: Unsung Hero of*



Lionel Wendt : Self Portrait

the Lionel Wendt Memorial Theatre” which appeared in the August 2008 issue of this Journal. The article is about Harold Peiris, the Executor of the wills of the Wendt brothers and the driving force behind the creation of the Lionel Wendt Centre for the Arts in Guildford Crescent. An article titled *“Basil Wright and the film Song of Ceylon(1934)”* by the writer which appeared in the May 2014 issue of this Journal has also been accepted for uploading into the Lionel Wendt Digital Archives. The article describes the important role played by Lionel Wendt in the making of this film.

Early years

Lionel Wendt was the eldest son of Henricus

Lorenz Wendt who was a Supreme Court Judge. His mother was Amybelle (Amelia) de Saram. He had a brother, Harry who was born four years later in 1904. The two brothers died in their forties in 1944 and 1945 respectively.

Lionel was educated at St Thomas College, then located in Mutwal, which was the school’s home for the first 67 years of its existence. Due to increasing pollution of the school premises by coal dust from the neighbouring coal stockyard and coal fired steamers in Colombo Harbour, a decision was made to shift the school to the more salubrious climate of Mount Lavinia, where a site had been found stretching from Galle Road to the sea. No doubt Lionel would have been involved in his final year in school in the moving of the school to its present home in Mount Lavinia. In 1918 he gave his first public concert, playing the piano for a fund-raising event for his school. Sadly, his father had already passed away in 1911.

In 1919, with World War I out of the way, Lionel left for London to study Law at the Inns of Court and in 1920 he also enrolled in the Royal Academy of Music in London with the intention of qualifying as a concert pianist. He initially studied under Professor Oscar Beringer who was then in his seventies and passed away in early 1922. Lionel also studied under Mark Hambourg, a pianist with several hundred gramophone recordings to his credit. He also studied under Professor Paul Corder who was Professor of Composition and Harmony at the same Academy. Having completed his law studies, Lionel returned to Ceylon in 1924, a qualified lawyer and a virtuoso pianist.

Lionel Wendt the Musician

Lionel started practising as a lawyer in Colombo but his heart was not in it and within a few years he abandoned it to devote his full time to the fine arts. He had a Steinway grand piano in his house and he took on piano pupils, prominent among whom were Ithalie Mack and Hilda Naidoo (nee Weerasuriya), who went on to give many recitals in Colombo.

His first concert for piano and voice was in 1925 in which he introduced the Colombo audience to 20th century composers like the Spanish Composer Manuel de Falla; the French Composer Joseph Ravel, immortalised by his composition *“Bolero”*; and the French Composer and pianist Francis Poulenc.

He introduced the concept to Colombo of the ‘two-piano’ concert and went on to give many ‘two-

piano' concerts with Gladys Forbes, who was born in Australia (daughter-in-law of the founder of Forbes and Walker, the firm of Colombo Tea Brokers established in 1881 and which still exists). Lionel Wendt and Gladys Forbes gave joint piano recitals from 1931 to 1943.

On 23 August 1943 the Ceylon Music Society presented a musical evening at 90 Macarthy Road which included world premier performances of compositions by the well-known British Composer Brian Easdale who has composed music for operas and films. He was on military service in Ceylon. The program included piano solos, two-piano recitals, and piano and voice. The artistes were Lionel Wendt, Gladys Forbes, and Brian Easdale. The vocal soloist was Surya Sena who sang three Shakespeare Sonnets. A few years later, in 1948, Brian Easdale became the first British Composer to win an Academy Award for Best Original Music Score. The score was for the film *"Red Shoes"* starring the renowned ballet dancer Moira Shearer.

Lionel Wendt, along with Harold Peiris and George Keyt helped to establish a School of Kandyan Dancing by the Kandyan Drummer Suramba in Gunnepanne, Kandy. The *"Gajaga Vannama"* played by Suramba was included in the award winning documentary film *"Song of Ceylon"*.

In the short space of two decades, Lionel Wendt changed the course of western classical music in Ceylon.

Lionel Wendt the Photographer

Lionel Wendt's father was very much interested in photography and in 1906 he co-founded the Amateur Photographic Society of Ceylon. There is no doubt that it was he who inculcated an interest in photography in Lionel.

The first camera that Lionel used for serious photography was a Rolleiflex. This was a state of the art German camera meant for professional photographers. It was a twin lens reflex camera which did not have a view finder but showed a full size image of the scene to be photographed on a ground glass screen. The camera lens was f/2.8 with a focal length of 75 mm made by Zeiss. It used 120 film on which 12 square pictures could be taken.

Later on, Lionel moved on to using a Leica camera. Ernest Leitz I founded a microscope manufacturing Company in Germany in 1869. In 1925 his son Ernst Leitz II, now the head of the Company, started manufacturing cameras also. The name of the camera 'Leica' was formed by taking the first three letters of his name 'Leitz' followed by the first two letters of the word 'camera'. It was a state of the art camera, but unlike the Rolleiflex it used 35 mm cinema film, but with a frame size of 24 mm by 36 mm. This meant that it could take 36 exposures on a standard film, unlike the Rolleiflex which took 12 exposures on its film and required more frequent film reloading. The Leica pictures had a rectangular format (landscape or portrait) unlike the Rolleiflex which took square pictures. The Leica used a view finder and a focal plane shutter which gave a wider range of shutter speeds. Leitz was not satisfied with the quality of lenses which were available and the

Company developed its own line of high quality camera lenses. In 1930 Leica introduced a thread mount for the lens which made possible interchangeable lenses (the zoom lens had not been invented). Options available were the 50 mm normal lens, a 35 mm wide angle lens and a 135 mm telephoto lens. Lionel found the Leica camera very much to his liking because he was able to take 36 exposures without reloading the film. Imagine how happy Lionel would have been with the present day digital cameras which can take a virtually unlimited number of shots.

In 1934 there was an inaugural exhibition of his photographs and in 1935 he started the Photographic Society of Ceylon. Lionel Wendt kept aware of trends in photography in the West by reading international



"A. Mamujee Esqr." Photo by Lionel Wendt.

photography publications. His photography was influenced by Surrealism which sought to release the creative potential of the unconscious mind by the merging of images. He developed and printed his photos in his own darkroom. In his inventive darkroom he mastered the solarisation process where the image recorded on the negative is wholly or partially reversed in tone. He used the solarisation process together with other techniques like montage which involved the superimposition of images. His images have been compared with the work of great photographers in the western world. Basil Wright, the Director of the award winning film *"Song of Ceylon"* described Lionel Wendt as one of the greatest still photographers in the world at that time.

Lionel's fame as a still photographer spread and in 1938 he was invited by the Camera Club to hold an exhibition of his prints in London. The exhibition

was organised by Ernst Leitz II, the head of the Leica Company and was a singular honour by the leading camera manufacturer.

In 1938 he was asked by Lake House Newspapers to set up Chitrafoto, a photo studio in their premises, Lake House. He was also at that time the Editor of *The Ceylon Observer Pictorial*, an annual publication with many photographs. In 1940 he held an exhibition of his photographs at the Art Gallery in Colombo. In 1946 the Photographic Society of Ceylon held an Exhibition of 175 of Lionel Wendt's photographs.

In 1943 he inaugurated the '43 Group with the inaugural meeting held in his house. It was a group of artists who had left the Ceylon Society of Arts. Nine painters were the key members including George Keyt and Aubrey Colette. The main feature of this Group was that they transplanted progressive Western modernism into fresh Ceylonese modernist art.

Lionel's fame spread world-wide and his prints are exhibited in leading Art Galleries all over the world. The National Gallery of Australia, located in Canberra, in 2006 purchased one of Lionel's large size still life prints. The largest collection of his photographs, over 400 in number, are held by the Lionel Wendt Centre for the Arts where examples of his work can be seen.

Unfortunately, when Lionel Wendt passed away, due to a misunderstanding the Executor of his Will destroyed all his film negatives.

Lionel Wendt and the film "Song of Ceylon"

In 1933 the Ceylon Tea Propaganda Board decided to have a short film made about Ceylon and have it shown in UK Cinemas to popularise Ceylon tea. John Grierson was the head of the Empire Marketing Board Film Unit in London and he was assigned the task of making the film on a budget of 2500 Pounds. John Grierson was considered to be the 'father' of British documentary films and in fact it was he who coined the phrase 'documentary film' which he defined as 'creative treatment of actuality'.

Grierson designated the task of directing the film to Basil Wright who proceeded to Ceylon with his assistant, John Taylor. When they arrived in Colombo the Tea Propaganda Board assigned Lionel Wendt to be their 'link-man' to co-ordinate with the Ceylonese extras and to show Basil Wright suitable locations for filming.

Acting on Lionel's suggestions, Basil Wright filmed scenes in a tea plantation, fishermen in Negombo, village life, Colombo harbour, Gal Vihara in Polannaruwa, Adams Peak and scenes of Kandyan dancing.

Basil Wright wanted to include on the sound track the musical accompaniment to the Kandyan dancing scenes, but at that time magnetic recording had not been invented. Therefore, the only way to do it was for the Kandyan dancer Ukkuwa and the drummer Suramba to accompany Basil Wright to London and record the music directly on to the edited film. Lionel Wendt was invited to accompany them as chaperone and translator.

Basil Wright also decided that the narration

of the film would be avant-garde and not a conventional running commentary. The narration would be contrapuntal to the visual image, with the two forming a pleasing montage. His original idea was to ask his friend, from their University days, the well-known poet W H Auden (who later went on to win the Pulitzer Prize for Poetry), to write poetry for the narration, but this did not materialise.

One day Basil Wright was walking down Tottenham Court Road in London which used to have many bookshops, when he saw a book about Ceylon in a



"Still Life with mask and statue". Photo by Lionel Wendt, 1942. Courtesy National Gallery of Australia.

shop window. He went in and purchased the book which was a reprint of Robert Knox's *An Historical Relation of the Island Ceylon*, which was first published in 1681. He went home and read the book and decided that the narration of the film would consist of excerpts from this book. He started auditioning Englishmen for the narration but could not find a person with the appropriate voice. It suddenly struck him that the person with the appropriate voice was right beside him and Lionel Wendt became the narrator for the film.

'*Song of Ceylon*' premiered in late 1934 as the minor film at the Curzon Cinema in London's West End. The major feature film was '*The Dark Angel*' starring Merle Oberon whose mother was of Ceylonese origin. '*Song of Ceylon*' received rave reviews. Graham Greene, the prolific author and screenplay writer said "it is an example to all directors of perfect construction and the loveliest visual metaphors I have ever seen on a screen". Roger Manvell in his popular Pelican book 'Film' said that "Song of Ceylon is possibly the greatest British produced film in any category up to 1935".

At that time in 1935 there was no category for Documentary Films in the Hollywood Oscars. 'Song of Ceylon' was therefore entered in the Documentary Film category at the International Film Festival in Brussels. At the awards night, 'Song of Ceylon' won the award for Best Documentary Film. The Best Feature Film award went to the legendary Hollywood Director John Ford's 'The Informer'. The final award was for the Best Film in any Category and this was expected to go to one of the

Garston Estate
Lunuwila

The eight Day of July 1928

Tomorrow, 9th July 1928 between 10 and 10.42 am, I, Lionel Wendt, living today in the house called Wentworth in Guildford Crescent, Colombo, Ceylon, shall place in among the concrete of the foundations of the house that I am building and hope soon to occupy, the copper Kandyan work casket that will contain this writing, for a symbol of my loves and desires that are bound up in the house that will with good fortune rise above these foundations.

For a symbol, then, of my loves and my desires, there is first, a photograph of my father, Henry Lorenz Wendt, but for whose love and foresight there had been never a thought of building a house. There are also placed a drawing by Charles Winzer an Englishman, a drawing by George Keyt, A Dutch Burgher of this island, a drawing by Gupta, an Indian, the printed notes of an Etude of Frederic Chopin, and the programme of a piano recital of my own.

And, that material things be not neglected, there are a gold and diamond ring that I had of my mother, a silver rupee, an English penny-piece, a turquoise set in gold, a moonstone, and - material things having in their very essence the element of doubt - a cut stone I know not the value of, nor whether it be gem or glass. May this house prosper. May all honest endeavour in the service of Beauty flourish therein, and win its reward of inward content and the Peace that is only in ceaseless effort !

• *Figure 1: Text of Scroll buried in the foundation of the house that Lionel Wendt built in Guildford Crescent. (Courtesy: Bill Mackie)*

Hollywood block-busters, but to everybody's surprise the Judges gave the award to 'Song of Ceylon' made on a shoestring budget of 2500 Pounds.

Winning this award had a tremendous impact on the documentary film movement in UK and for the next decade UK led the world in documentary film production. John Grierson, the 'father' of documentary films, said that "Wright is now, I believe, the greatest lyrical documentary director in the country".

Basil Wright, however, described the part played by Lionel Wendt in the making of the film and said

simply that without Lionel Wendt there would have been no 'Song of Ceylon'.

The Lionel Wendt Centre for the Arts

The family home of the Wendts was 'Wentworth' in Guildford Crescent, Colombo 7. In 1928, Lionel decided to build his own house, to be located at 18 Guildford Crescent and named it 'Alborado' (which means 'dawn' in Spanish). On 09 July 1928 he buried in the concrete foundations of the house, a casket containing a scroll and various other items. Lionel later passed on the text of the scroll and some mementoes to

his co-pianist Gladys Forbes. She passed away in 1978 and these were inherited by her nephew, the Victorian CSA Member, Bill Mackie, with whose kind permission the text of the scroll is reproduced here as **Figure 1**.

In his Will, Lionel wanted his house to be used as a Centre for the Arts. When he died in his sleep on 19 December 1944 at the age of forty-four years, his younger brother Harry started this project but did not go very far before he also died a year later on 08 December 1945, aged forty-one years.

It was, therefore, left to the Executor of their wills Harold Peiris to carry out their wishes. Harold was the only child of Charles Peiris and a cousin of Richard Peiris, founder of the Company which bears his name. Harold studied Law at Cambridge and was conversant in nine languages. Being an only child he inherited considerable wealth. He was a close friend of the Wendts for many years.

The first meeting of the Lionel Wendt Memorial Fund (LWMF) was held on 01 October 1945, and had the objective of perpetuating the legacy of Lionel Wendt. Harold Peiris was a Life-time Trustee of the Fund, a not-for-profit charitable Trust formed for the promotion of the Arts, and he was the driving force behind the creation of the Centre for the Arts. He also used some of his own funds for the purpose.

In 1950 the Trustees decided to demolish the house 'Alborado' which Lionel had completed in 1929, and on this site they decided to build a purpose built Centre for the Arts with a Theatre and Art Gallery. It was also decided to sell Wendt's house and premises 'Wentworth' and use the funds to build the Centre for the Arts.

What was the fate of the casket that Lionel had buried in the concrete foundation of 'Alborado' when the building was demolished? The Lionel Wendt website says that *"There is no record of the casket in which the scroll was buried ever being found and it probably still lies beneath the Centre where the service of Beauty continues to flourish therein"*.

The Lionel Wendt Theatre opened on 12 December 1953. It was the first purpose built auditorium in Colombo. It could seat an audience of 700 persons. It was a proscenium theatre with an apron stage. It had high quality lighting and sound systems. The first performance was Maxim Gorky's play *"Lower Depths"*. The Director of the play was the Hungarian Jew, Neumann Jubal who followed Stanislavski's acting practice. He was attached to the University of Ceylon and directed many plays for the Dramatic Society in Peradeniya and Colombo including Henrik Ibsen's *"An Enemy of the People"*. Since then, over the years about 2000 performances have been held in the Arts Centre in English, Sinhala and occasionally in Tamil. Plays written by Sydneysider and CSA Member Ernest Macintyre have been on the boards at this Theatre. An example is *"Dark Dinkum Aussies"* presented by Stage and Set in 1982.

The Lionel Wendt Art Gallery on the ground floor of the Arts Centre was opened in 1959. This has glass louvres at the top of the walls which lets in

daylight. The daytime lighting of the Gallery is a mixture of natural and artificial light. Many Art Exhibitions have been held in this Gallery. The Gallery has sufficient space for about one hundred visitors at a time.

The Harold Peiris Art Gallery was opened on 03 December 2000 to commemorate the 100th birth anniversary of Lionel Wendt. It was so named to perpetuate the memory of the person who worked so hard to make the Lionel Wendt Centre for the Arts a reality. It is on the first floor and has sufficient space for about one hundred visitors at a time.

The Arts Centre also proposes to build a "Black Box Theatre". This will be a smaller venue with a seating capacity of up to 200 persons. It will be suitable for low budget productions.

The Lionel Wendt Centre for the Arts is the only multi-purpose cultural centre in Colombo.

NOTE: The photographs associated with this article are reproduced from the Digital Archives of the Lionel Wendt Centre for the Arts. Permission granted by the Trustees of the Lionel Wendt Memorial Fund to reproduce the photographs is gratefully acknowledged. The use of information from the Lionel Wendt Centre for the Arts website is also acknowledged.

Remember this Lady from our Back Cover?

As part of the article about Lionel Wendt, a photograph taken by him about 1940 titled "Portrait of Miss Sri Pathmanathan" is reproduced on the back cover. Lionel Wendt's Studio was in Guildford Crescent and it is possible that this lady also lived in Colombo 7. Perhaps one of our readers may be able to identify her.



Fanciful, dreamy days

"One morning I would wake and just smell the things for the whole day, it was so rich I had to select senses. And still everything moved slowly with the assured fateful speed of a coconut alling on someone's head, like the Jaffna train, like the fan at slow speed, like the unnecessary sleep in the afternoon with dreams blinded by toddy."

— Michael Ondaatje's *Monsoon Notebook*, 1982

Events that led to the Fall of the Kandyan Kingdom Part 2

Part 1 of this series of articles ended with the re-establishment of the Kandyan Kingdom by Vimaladharmasuriya I.

In 1582, Rajasinghe I of Sitawaka had attacked Kandy and King Karalliyadde Bandara fled to the Portuguese territory with his queen Denavaka Kusumasena Devi S. (Gallegama Adasin), one-year old princess Kusumasena Devi J. (Dona Catarina) and nephew Yamasinha Bandara. Rajasinghe I appointed Virasundara Bandara of Peradeniya to administer Kandy, and returned to Sitawaka. As Virasundara Bandara did not comply with the Hinduism-oriented policies of Rajasinghe I, Virasundara Bandara was executed, and his son Konnappu Bandara escaped to the Portuguese in Colombo and was baptised Don John of Austria (Dom João de Austria) in Goa, where he was trained in warfare. After he returned to Sri Lanka, he fought several battles on the side of the Portuguese. When the victorious commander Don John of Austria of the Portuguese army took over Kandy from Rajasinghe I in 1592, Portuguese enthroned Yamasinha Bandara (Don Filipe), the lawful heir to the throne as the king of Kandy, and gave Don John the command of troops from the newly constructed fort at Gannoruwa, to protect the king and the kingdom of Kandy. With the military training in Goa, the support of the Sinhalese people and chiefs of Kandy and his own Sinhalese soldiers in the Portuguese army, Don John had the capability to decimate the Portuguese army. Yamasinha died within a year, allegedly poisoned by Don John or of old age. Portuguese proclaimed Yamasinha's 12-year son, Dom João as the king of Kandy, but Don John overthrew him, dispersed the Portuguese and was declared as king Vimaladharmasuriya I of Kandy. In 1594 Portuguese brought Dona Catarina from Mannar to place her on the Kandyan throne. Vimaladharmasuriya's forces fought the Portuguese briefly at Balana, retreated to Wellassa, but returned and defeated them at the battle of Danture on 9 October 1594, killing General Pedro Lopez Sousa. Vimaladharmasuriya I took Dona Catarina as his queen, securing the royal link to the throne. Dom João became a Franciscan Friar in Portugal, received aristocratic treatment from the king of Portugal as a prince (known as "Black Prince" by people), and there he built the church of 'Our Lady of the Gate of Heaven', which exists to date, near Telheiras Railway Station in Portugal.

In the Kotte Kingdom, following the demise of Don Juan Dharmapala in 1597, Captain General Don Jeronimo de Azevedo became the local ruler of Kotte, as childless Dharmapala had bequeathed the kingdom to the king of Portugal in his will. Azevedo erected fortifications in Menikkadawara, Ruwanwella and Galle, which turned into fortresses. Queyroz, the Jesuit historian says that Azevedo's leadership was marred by atrocities in wars with Kandy and brutality in suppressing revolts, and

Dr Leonard Pinto



was later imprisoned and tried in Lisbon for his methods and failure to retain the trade monopoly.

Rajasinghe I of Sitawaka came to attack Kandy once again, but was defeated by Vimaladharmasuriya I at Balana and on his way back, died of blood poisoning from a bamboo splinter in 1593. Sitawaka kingdom disintegrated as Jayaweera Banda, the treasurer became the king, had his double dealings with the Kandyans and the Portuguese discovered by the Portuguese and was executed. Royal princes of Sitawaka were captured by the Portuguese, and Manamperi, the favourite general joined the Portuguese.

Vimaladharmasuriya I of Kandy realised that a navy with battleships was needed to defeat the Portuguese, because of the mobility of cannons on battleships and the ability to deliver provisions from ships, when forts were under siege. It was at this time the two Dutch ships of Admiral Joris van Spilbergen, Lam and Schaap dropped anchors at Batticaloa harbour on 31 May 1602, and the third ship Ram arrived on 2 July. Spilbergen met Vimaladharmasuriya I on July 6 and made lavish promises in military assistance to expel the Portuguese in return for trade monopoly. Spilbergen's ships left on 3 September. As agreed, Vice Admiral Sebald de Weert arrived in Batticaloa on 28 November 1602 to implement the negotiations made by Spilbergen. Sebald was taken to Kandy on elephants in procession as Spilbergen, to meet the king. After a plan was drawn with the king, Sebald left for Aceh in Indonesia with a Kandyan ambassador to bring more ships to attack the Portuguese. On their way back from Aceh with 6 ships, they captured 4 Portuguese ships and brought them to Batticaloa on 26 April 1603. As a condition of the surrender of the Portuguese sailors was to spare their lives, Sebald released the Portuguese sailors and allowed them to sail back in 2 of their ships. Vimaladharmasuriya was infuriated on hearing this, and the advice he received from his ambassador to Aceh, who felt that the Dutch should not be trusted, as they appear to have a deal with the Portuguese, and even treated him lower than the captured Portuguese during his voyage to Aceh. The king refused the invitation of Sebald to come on board or see the captured two Portuguese ships. However, a meeting was held between the king and his men with Sebald and his officers on the shores of Batticaloa, to discuss battle plans to attack Galle. During the dinner, Sebald was frustrated with King's refusals, and inebriated with drinks, insulted him. The angry king shouted *bandapan mé balla* (bind this dog). In the mayhem, Sebald and 47 Dutch officers were killed. The king ordered the killing of about 300 sailors who had come ashore from the ships at king's request. Only those who could swim,

escaped into their ships. Thus ended the life of a young explorer, the discoverer of Falkland Island (formerly Sebald Island) at the age of 35 in Batticaloa, in the hands of the Sinhalese guards on 1 June 1603, as depicted by the Dutch priest Philippus Baldaeus, who resided in Jaffna (Figure 1).



Figure 1. Killing of Sebald de Weert by King Vimaladharmasuriya's men.

(Source: Rev. Philippus Baldaeus)

His death dealt a blow to Sinhalese-Dutch relationships. The king did not take responsibility for the incident, but eventually apologised. Dutch sent a merchant Jacob Cornelisz to negotiate with the king, but he had little success. Vimaladharmasuriya died in 1604 and his brother or a cousin, Senarath Adahasin, an ex-monk became the king of Kandy. As he had no royal lineage, he married Dona

Catarina, the widow of Vimaladharmasuriya I, and later even married her own two step-daughters, apparently to retain the royal line. Dona Catarina was unhappy, depressed and left Kandy to live in Kegalle, where she died. Kuruvita Rala (Antonio Barreto) and Dutch ambassador Boschouwer were at her death bed. Dona Catarina, a pivotal queen and

mother of three Sinhalese kings of the Kandyan Kingdom has been erased, the perpetually lit lamp and the mausoleum built by Kuruvita Rala for her have been destroyed and a housing complex built on the 7-acre archaeological site at Welimantota Kegalle, dedicated to her by C.P. Bell, the archaeological commissioner. Senarath too attempted to get the Dutch to evict the Portuguese, as his predecessor and successor son, Rajasinghe II (Table 1). In 1612, the Dutch envoy in Kandy Marcellus de Boschouwer concluded a treaty with Senarath. The king

granted extensive commercial concessions and a harbour in return to expel the Portuguese. Having failed to get assistance from Dutch in Indonesia, Boschouwer left for the Netherlands in 1615. As his proposal was rejected in Netherlands, he went to Denmark in 1617. In the same year Senarath signed a treaty with the Portuguese to grant ruling the upcountry to Senarath and low country to the Portuguese. King Christian of Denmark sent a fleet under the command of Ove Giedde. Boschouwer died on the way in the sea. On arrival in Sri Lanka, the Danes were surprised to find that the appointment of Boschouwer as the Kandyan plenipotentiary was a forgery. A new treaty was signed by Senarath with the Danes in 1620, whereby Trincomalee was ceded to Denmark and permission was granted to build a fort. Danes could not get a footing in Sri Lanka, as the Portuguese expelled the newcomer. Fighting broke out between the Portuguese and Senarath, but another treaty was signed in 1634. Senarath died in 1635 and his son, Rajasinghe II became the king. He too signed a treaty with the Dutch Admiral Adam Westerwolt in 1638 to expel the Portuguese, take the trading monopoly and transfer the Portuguese forts to the king, once he had settled battle expenses. In 1639 the Dutch captured Trincomalee and Batticaloa forts and handed them over to the king, but the forts in Galle and Negombo were not handed over to the king, as he had not settled the battle expenses. The confusion arose as the clause, 'the payments at the discretion of the king' in the Sinhala version of the treaty was not found in the Dutch version. The Dutch did not trust Rajasinghe II and kept his forces out of Colombo, as the fleet of Gerard Pietersz Hulft arrived in Negombo in September 1655. He took Kalutara Fort

Table 1. Kings of the Kandyan Kingdom

King of Kandy	Reign	Period
Vimaladharmasuriya I	1592 - 1604	Portuguese
Senerath	1604 - 1635	Portuguese
Rajasinghe II	1635 - 1687	Portuguese/Dutch
Vimaladharmasuriya II	1687 - 1707	Dutch
Sri Vira Parakrama Narendra Singha	1707 - 1739	Dutch
Sri Vijaya Rajasinha	1739 - 1747	Dutch
Kirthi Sri Rajasinha	1747 - 1782	Dutch
Rajadhi Rajasingha	1782 - 1798	Dutch/British
Sri Wickrema Rajasingha	1798 - 1815	British

by surprise and laid siege on Colombo. The Portuguese surrendered to Dutch in May 1656, but Hulft died in the battle. Hultsdorf in Colombo is named after him. Portuguese were still holding on to the north when Admiral Rijckloff van Goens arrived with a large fleet and defeated the Portuguese in Mannar and Jaffna, expelling them from Sri Lanka in 1658. Dutch approach the king, sometimes as a friend and other times as a foe. As the Sinhala idiom goes, the arrival of Dutch was, Inguru deela miris gaththa wagei (Like exchange ginger for chili).

After King Rajasinghe II, his son Vimaladharmasuriya II became the king of Kandy. He was sympathetic towards the Catholics in coastal areas under the Dutch, and allowed them to settle in his kingdom. The Dutch persecuted the Catholics, because of Protestant-Catholic conflict in Europe. He also provided refuge to Fr Joseph Vaz, who arrived from India in 1687 disguised as a coolie, and was hiding from the Dutch authorities. Vimaladharmasuriya II was followed by his son Sri Vira Parakrama Narendra Sinha, also known as Sellam Rajjuruwo, the playful king or Prince of Kundasale, as he entertained foreigners, such as Fr Vaz, and made a Frenchman, Pierre de Gascogne (Pedro Dascon) the Maha Adikaram of Kandyan Court. However, Dascon was executed by the king over a love affair he had with his favourite queen/concubine, which was exposed when Dascon inadvertently mentioned the location of a birthmark of the queen/concubine. Narendra Sinha was also the last Sinhalese king of Sri Lanka. His mother and grandmother were Indians, and he too had an Indian queen. As he had no sons, his brother-in-law, Sri Vijaya Rajasingha a South Indian Nayakkar became the next king. As he too had no male children, he was followed by his brother-in-law, Kirthi Sri Rajasingha. Although Indian queens seem to have undergone fertility problems, king's secondary queens/concubines have been fertile.

After an assassination attempt on King Kirthi Sri Rajasingha's life in 1760 for his leaning towards Hinduism, he took extra interest in Buddhism under the guidance of Weliwita Saranankara Thero. With the help of Dutch, he brought Thai monks to revive high ordination (upasampada), built the Rajamaha Vihare in Kandy, upgraded the Temple of the Tooth Relic, renovated temples and initiated the continuing of Mahavamsa from the Dambadeniya period. For his contributions to Buddhism his statues are found in a number of Buddhist temples (Figure 2, above)).

However, King Kirthi Sri Rajasingha was weary of the Dutch monopoly of trade, as the ports in Kalpitiya and Puttalam, controlled by the Dutch were closed to upcountry Indian traders. These ports were important for the Indian royals and businessmen in Kandy to travel to and from India. There were conflicts between the Dutch



Figure 2 (below): Statue of King Kirthi Sri Rajasingha's in the Cave Temple of Dambulla.

and the king, and in 1762, Kirthi Sri Rajasingha sent a Dissawa to the British governor in Madras, George Pigot, asking his help to evict the Dutch from Sri Lanka and take over the coastal land that they occupied. In response to King Kirthi Sri Rajasingha's request, five British ships under the command of Admiral Cornish arrived in Trincomalee on 1 May 1762 and requested permission from the Dutch to enter the Inner Bay, pretending that some ships needed repairs. Secretly, they dropped off John Pybus, the British negotiator at Muttur, not far from where Robert Knox and his father Captain Knox were captured by a Dissawa of king Rajasinghe II in 1660. Pybus was taken to Kandy by a Dissawa and given a ceremonial welcome by the king on 24 May 1762. After meetings with the king, Dissawas and Adikarams accompanied by lavish celebrations, John Pybus left Kandy on 21 June, with many gifts from the king, but with no agreement, promising only to place king's request before the governor in Madras. This was another invitation to a new western coloniser by a Sri Lankan king. However, these invitations need to be considered in the context of rise and fall of global powers. Our history in local chronicles (e.g. Mahavamsa) has been written from the perspective of meritorious acts of kings in protecting and propagating Buddhism at a time, when the national identity was threatened. Hence, there is limited reference in these texts to the involvement of kings in the economy, geopolitics and geography of the country in a global context. In contrast, the Buddhist Siam (Thailand) was able to retain its kingdom to date, in spite of past colonial threats from the British on the west (Burma) and south (Malaya) and from the French on the east (Indo-China), and even the Japanese, during World War II. However, the Thais seem to have now found the kings and kingdoms to be outdated institutions.

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The Commuter

Commuter - one who spends his life
In riding to and from his wife;
A man who shaves and takes a train,
And then rides back to shave again.

Sketch of a Mission Convert: Nathaniel Niles (1806-1882)

by DM Alfreds

This sketch is based entirely on The Missionary Herald, a publication of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions (ABCFM). I have drawn on these reports, using Nathaniel Niles as a prism, to portray the kind of cultural change wrought in Jaffna by American missionaries in 19th century.

As with most studies of colonial times, this is biased in favour of western missionary and colonial perspectives. Even though some of the reports were written by Niles himself, they were written for a mission audience and purpose. Unfortunately, I have found little information in The Missionary Herald on the last decades of Niles's life. There may well be more information from non-mission Tamil sources, but I don't have access to such material.

When the American Ceylon Mission (ACM), established by the ABCFM, began its operations in Jaffna in 1816, the government school in Jaffnapattam was already giving Christian names to its students. Schoolboys were known to Europeans by their Christian names and to locals by their Tamil names.

The ACM adopted this practice for the boarders it took on. The three missionaries then at Tellipalai (James Richards, Daniel Poor and Benjamin Meigs) believed the people were 'much pleased with their new names ... since they consider them as tokens of our approbation and pledge that we regard them in some sense as our children. And let it not be thought the subject of naming children is void of interest to us. What can be better, what in our minds can be so good a substitute for the beloved brethren, sisters and friends, whom we have left behind, as the presence of a circle of young men and women bearing their names, snatched from the ignorance and misery of idolatry through their instrumentality...' (Missionary Herald (MH), Volume XVI, p280)

In October 1818, Katherasen, a 12 year old Vellalar boy was brought to the Tellippalai mission. The only son of a Hindu poet, he boarded and studied with a Hindu teacher at Copay in 1816-1818. Some twenty years later, the adult Katherasan explained to Daniel Poor (MH XXXVI, p293) the circumstances of his recruitment to the mission. His mother had heard of the education offered at the Tellippalai mission from her brother, who was a friend of a mission worker. Without the knowledge of her husband, other relatives or the Hindu poet, she had her brother enroll her son in the mission.

The mission named Katherasen Nathaniel Niles. He was one of 48 boys and 9 girls then boarding at the Tellippalai and Vaddukodai missions. A further 700 children studied at 15 day-schools run by non-Christian local teachers employed by the ACM. Religion was taught in Tamil, using tracts from the Methodist mission in Jaffna and from the Bible Societies in Colombo and Tranquebar (now Tharangambadi in Tamil Nadu, India).

At this stage, the mission accommodated itself to local conditions: boarders were permitted separate cooks, wells and accommodation according to caste. 'We consider it to be our duty' Poor wrote in 1819, 'to yield so far to the prejudices of this people as is necessary in order to make known, in the most favourable circumstances, the Gospel of Christ, - provided our concessions do not imply anything which is morally wrong.' (MH

XIV, p279)

In the rainy season (October-December) of 1820, a Tamil mission worker, Nicholas Permander, told Niles that his mother had died of cholera. Much later, the adult Nathaniel Niles wrote 'While I was mourning for my mother, intelligence came that my father and grandfather were taken with cholera and had died also. As the cholera was raging Mr Poor did not allow me to go home. But after the cholera ceased, some of my friends came to me and said that I must take permission from Mr Poor and leave the school and come and live with my sister, and that they would take care of us and our property. But by this time Mr and Mrs Poor having become as my kind father and mother, I was quite unwilling to leave the school.' (MH XVI, p325)

The family and village made several unsuccessful attempts to retrieve the boy. Weeks later, Rev Poor went with Niles to his former home, spoke with his relatives and suggested he stay a few days before returning to the mission. Niles refused, afraid his relatives would prevent his return. Months later, Niles again refused his relatives' urgings to return to perform antyesti, funeral rights for his parents. Antyesti is usually performed by the eldest son at cremation about 24 hours after death. It is not clear if this was an attempt by his relatives to trick him back or simply an unreliable memory of the adult Niles.

In any case, Niles writes that he no longer believed in Hindu rites. 'At this time my attention was awakened to religious things and I prayed often to God.' (MH XVI, p325). In April 1821, he, along with another boarder Jordan Lodge, were baptised and received into the church.

In October 1822, Rev Poor wrote of Niles 'in terms of unqualified approbation. He has made more progress in Tamul studies than any other boy in the school ... he has more use of the (English) language for use in daily conversation, than the others. He renders more important assistance at the station, than any other boy; and he has been particularly useful in teaching the girls at the boarding school ... As a reward of merit, he receives monthly a sum equal to about fifteen cents, a sixth part of which he contributes to the Tamil Bible Association. His conduct is uniformly good, and he gives marked evidence of being influenced by love to God and benevolence to man.' (MH XIX, p279)

Niles also visited people in Tellippalai to read

and explain religious tracts to them. He kept a journal reporting the number of people he spoke with, issues raised etc. Every Friday, he would read the journal to Mr Poor and they would discuss the issues raised. These visits to homes to evangelise and hold prayer meetings were to continue all his life. He also accompanied Poor and Nicholas Permander when they toured villages to preach.

In July 1823, Niles was among 46 founding students at the Batticotta Central School, established at Vaddukoddai to 'give native youth of good promise a thorough knowledge of the English language ... (so) that it will open unto them the treasures of European science and literature and bring fully before the mind the evidences of Christianity. (MH XXI, p129)

The boarders were woken at 5.30 am and assembled at the church for prayer at sunrise, after which they were engaged in recitation until 7.30 am, when they broke for breakfast. At 9am, they reassembled in three classes under three Tamil 'monitors' for study and recitation until noon. Lunch at 1pm was followed by lessons until 5pm, when they assembled in the church for a service led by Nicholas Permander, now a licensed preacher. A further one and half hours were spent on evening study.

English was the main language of the school, Tamil comprising one-third of the school day in 1826. The school considered the Bible as 'our text book ... the fountain of light and knowledge, and regard science and literature as the handmaids of piety and religion.' (MH XXI, p167-168) Daily school recitations also included arithmetic, geography and astronomy.

Geography and astronomy were introduced to the syllabus in March 1825, apparently because the mission found that 'the system of astronomy and religion are inseparably connected' in Hinduism. The school study of these subjects was based on 'small treatises or abridgements' in English, based on larger works. Articles in English and American periodicals were also studied and often translated by the students into Tamil.

Niles' board and education was funded by annual contributions from a number of individuals in Salem Massachusetts from 1817 until 1828, when he finished schooling at Batticotta. It is not clear how his name was chosen, but he may have been named after an American lawyer, preacher and politician who lived in New England in 1741-1828 (Wikipedia). Their total contribution was \$140 (MH XXXIV, p127). No doubt they would have been satisfied with their investment.

'The members of the school are becoming a very useful medium of communication between the missionaries and the most learned and influential of the heathen' and would 'lay a broad foundation for propagating correct principles of science and religion.' (MH XXIII, p334-337) In 'this manner progress is made towards undermining their (Hindu) systems of science and religion, weakening the confidence of the people in both, and bringing learned men into disrepute.' (MH XXVI, p37) Niles was one of the keys to this process of evangelisation/propagation at school and thereafter.

Niles completed his studies at Batticotta in September 1828. He then moved to Uduvil and studied

theology under missionary Miron Winslow and taught the children of missionaries. In January 1831, he was licensed a native preacher. His journal for March 1832 describes his activities as follows:

- identified a number of candidates for admission to communion, of whom 10 were examined by the missionaries and accepted;
- led a day of fasting and prayer in preparation for communion that Sunday, drawing from Isaiah chapter 58 on fasts to 'loose the bands of wickedness, to undo the heavy burdens, and to let the oppressed go free, and that ye free every yoke';
- visited a sick relative in Copay and gave religious tracts to relatives and others in the district;
- discussed the school and mission activities (including astronomy) with the Tamil poet/teacher he left when he was 12 years old;
- spoke in a bazaar against idolatry;
- joined missionaries at Tellippalai for part of a four-day mission conference;
- went house-to-house in Moolai inviting people, including leaders and brahmins to an evening prayer meeting.

The value of outreach activities by converts like Nathaniel Niles was they reported back to missionaries frank responses of Tamils, such as a Brahmin saying he had no problem hearing what the missionaries had to say but wondered why they did not come to hear what brahmin priests had to say. A Vellalar from a prominent family like Niles was especially useful in this cross-cultural dialogue. His outreach to Hindus was often successful: in July 1832, the mission reported that a Brahmin from Chankanai had applied to teach Sanskrit at the seminary and three others had asked to be instructed in trigonometry.

Niles was inaugural president of the evangelical society formed by Tamil church members in May 1832. Within six months of its formation, the evangelical society had posted catechists to Madurai, India (Francis Ashbury) and, in Jaffna, to Velanai (Jordan Lodge) and Karadive (Alexander Lovell).

In May 1833, Niles (then 27) was married to 16 year old Fanny Coit, a graduate of the Uduvil Girls School. A major object of the girls' school was to 'afford the most certain means of providing suitable partners for the young men of the mission, who would else be almost certain under the necessity of marrying heathen.'

The importance of the Uduvil Girls' School to religious/cultural transformation was strongly affirmed by Sir Richard Otley, Chief Justice of Ceylon, on a visit to Jaffna in 1828: 'When we consider how much the notions and principles of early youth are likely to be influenced by the characters and conduct of mothers; how essentially the happiness and respectability of families depends on the behaviour of wives towards their husbands and of mothers towards their children; ...and when we further add to this account the consideration, peculiar to the district of Jaffna, that the landed property is principally vested in females ... (it is clearly important) to enlighten their minds and lead them to the knowledge

of the true religion.' (MH XXVI, p310)

To this end, the mission urged American sponsors of the girls to include a provision for 'a dowry to facilitate their forming suitable connections in marriage ... every year's experience shows us more forcibly the importance of some provision for dowries, as almost indispensable.' Already in 1829, nine graduates of Uduvil had 'been married to Christian husbands, and settled with tolerably fair prospects.' These Christian graduates of the seminary, like Nathaniel Niles, were employed by the mission or by the government. (MH XXVI, p38) There were few opportunities for employment because, as Niles wrote, 'learned men and brahmins are not pleased with us.' Besides their years boarding at the seminary had removed them from the predominantly agricultural economy.

In 1833, Benjamin Meigs wrote: 'I feel every day more and more convinced of the great importance of a well-educated, pious native ministry for the conversion of Ceylon and India. European and American missionaries must be the pioneers of this great work; but without such a native ministry as above mentioned, the work will never be accomplished.' (MH XXX, p165)

By 1835, Niles is listed as Native Preacher and Principal Assistant at the Vaddukodai mission. In January 1837, Niles was moved from Vaddukkudai to Uduvil 'to take charge of the female boarding school there, as the principal teacher' and superintendent.

When Poor, after several years absence in India, visited Uduvil in July 1839, he wrote: 'Niles is one of very few natives with whom I can have a free interchange of thought and feeling.' Poor's high regard of Niles contrasted with his disappointment in others. 'A large proportion of those to whom I began to deliver the gospel message in 1816, have gone down to the grave, and it is to be feared that but comparatively few were benefitted by the offers of eternal life.' (MH XXXVI, p290-295)

He turned his hopes to the children of the first converts like Niles; children who studied at mission schools and went to church with their parents: 'Our eyes must be directed to this second generation for the fairest fruits of the system of instruction we have pursued.'

I have found only scraps of information on Niles in The Missionary Herald from around the mid-century, but it is clear he remained a leading member of the church in Jaffna. In 1846 Niles preached at Uduvil church three times a month, with a missionary able to preach there only once a month. In May 1849, Niles son Daniel was one of five Seminary boys received into the church and took first communion.

After 1855, the ACM was retrenched severely as missionaries left Jaffna and schools shut down or drastically curtailed. In this process, Niles lost his position as principal at Uduvil School and was moved to Vaddukodai as a licensed preacher. In 1864, Niles wrote in Tamil "A Brief History of Missions in Jaffna", available at <https://www.babel.hathitrust.org>. He died in 1882.

Niles was probably one of the first Jaffna Tamils to undergo so complete a cultural transformation from

Tamil-speaking Hindu to English-speaking Christian. His written English, as reflected in The Missionary Herald, is of a very high standard. The ACM's program of cultural change may have had less success with many of Niles's contemporaries. Nevertheless, the education, religious and broader cultural change the ACM brought to Jaffna is apparent even today, in and beyond Jaffna.

THE TOMBSTONE OF JOHN DRIEBERG



The tombstone above is that of John Driberg, Proctor, Colombo who died on 14 April 1861 and was interred at the Galle Face Burial Ground. The Galle Face Burial Grounds were set up in 1803 due to the large number of casualties in the 1803 unsuccessful mission to capture the King of Kandy.

The burials and head stones from the GF Burial Grounds were many years later transferred to the Pettah Burial Grounds(also no more existent) which was the burial ground for the Wolvendahl Church.

This image of the Driberg Tombstone was drawn by the artist JLK Van Dort and engraved by Richard Henricus for the book Lapidarium Zeylanicum published by Leopold Ludovici in 1877 from which it was copied.

H.K.

Order of things

It well within the order of things
That a man should listen when his mate sings;
But the true male never yet walked
Who liked to listen when his mate talked.

- The Contemplative Quarry - Anna Wickham
(1884 - 1947)

Fifty years ago: The 1971 JVP Revolt

by JAYANTHA SOMASUNDARAM

Introduction

The fiftieth anniversary of the insurrection in Sri Lanka by the Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna (JVP) or Peoples' Liberation Front falls on 5 April 2021. The 1971 rebellion was the first armed uprising against the state in over one and a half centuries.

The JVP was the brainchild of Rohana Wijeweera. Born in 1943 at Kottegoda in the Matara District, his father was a supporter of the Communist Party of Ceylon (CPC). However, while studying medicine in Moscow, Wijeweera became critical of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) and on his return to Ceylon joined the Ceylon Communist Party (CCP) which was Maoist. Not long after in 1966, Wijeweera along with his supporters broke with the CCP to form the JVP.

The JVP was critical of the mainstream left parties, the Lanka Sama Samaja Party (LSSP) and the CPC, which had entered into an alliance with the Sri Lanka Freedom Party (SLFP) and would-be constituents of the United Front (UF) Government which took office in May 1970. It was, however, in those very areas that had been worked on by the mainstream left parties for three decades, that the JVP took root.

The JVP leaders, however, were from backgrounds and experiences quite different from that of the mainstream left parties. They did not come from Colombo's public schools, few of them had been to the British-styled residential University at Peradeniya, and none had been to Western Universities. Many were teachers and students of small-town Central Schools and the Pirivena (Buddhist monastic) Universities.

The rank and file of the JVP consisted of militant Sinhala-educated young men and women. They were underprivileged rural youth with meagre job opportunities, constituting a potential army of frustrated school leavers. Overwhelmingly Buddhist Sinhalese, they were drawn from marginalised castes. Elpitiya in the south west had its Wahumpura villages give the JVP strong support, while in Kegalle the Batgam were won over by the JVP. "The JVP appealed to the Buddhist Karawe, Durawe, Batgam, Wahumpura...both from the Southern Province and the Kegalle District, anti-Govigama feeling was a motive behind mass recruitment to the JVP in certain villages." (Jupp: 289)

Ideology

The JVP evolved its own Marxist ideology which was a hybrid. It drew on Trotsky's criticism of Stalinism and the 'popular front.' From Mao it asserted the primacy of the peasantry as the backbone of the revolution.

And from Castro it learned armed insurrection. JVP training for their cadres emphasised neo-colonialism, attacked parliamentarianism and rejected the mainstream left parties.

In its economic teaching the JVP differed little from the LSSP or CPC. However, they did not only point out the neo-colonial dependence of Sri Lanka's economy, but also identified the UF as part of this neo-colonial system. They called for a halt to the expansion of the tea plantations while advocating the intense cultivation of food crops and the collectivisation of land to overcome landlessness.

The JVP recruited cadres who would attend clandestine political training delivered through five lectures. These covered the economic crisis, neo-colonialism, Indian expansionism, the left movement and the Sri Lanka Revolution. It was in tactics that the JVP differed radically from the other left parties which had been concerned with trade unions, strikes, rallies and elections. The JVP held that the socialist revolution in Sri Lanka would have to be a sudden armed insurrection launched simultaneously across the country. This is the most advanced and complex form of revolutionary combat.

Their '24-Hour Revolution' was premised on the assumption that the police and the armed forces had insufficient ammunition to survive a simultaneous uprising throughout the country. However, they also wrestled with a critical strategic dilemma: "How to attack the government, moving carefully enough not to outpace the disillusion of the masses, yet fast enough to hit before the government struck at it." (Halliday:192)

US Embassy attack

The JVP came into the open in 1969 through public meetings the first of which was held at Vidyodaya University and climaxing in August 1970 with an open-air rally at Colombo's Hyde Park. This public profile brought a large number of new recruits whom the leadership claim reached about 23,000 committed members. But it also resulted in the police responding with widespread arrests amounting to about a thousand JVP cadres. Fearing all out repression, the movement established protected villages in remote rural areas as logistical bases. A faction within the JVP led by G.I.D. 'Castro' Dharmasekera wanted the movement to remain secret and prepare for guerrilla warfare. But the majority disagreed and Dharmasekera and his supporters were expelled. In response on 6 March 1971, calling themselves the Maoist Youth Front, they held a provocative demonstration outside the US Embassy in Colombo during which a police officer was killed. Although the JVP denounced Dharmasekera, Wijeweera and hundreds of his supporters were arrested, the JVP claimed that 4,000 cadres were now behind bars.

Dharmasekera's provocation led to an announcement on the 16th by the government of a State of Emergency, dusk to dawn curfew and the uncovering of a JVP plot to take state power. In response the Army

deployed two platoons of the 1st Battalion, Ceylon Light Infantry (1CLI) to the Kegalle District which would soon become the centre of fierce fighting. This was followed by a further two platoons being sent to Kandy. April 1971

Events now rapidly escalated. The JVP believed that the government was going to use the Army to launch an all out offensive against them. And on 2nd April the nine remaining members of the JVP Political Bureau met and took a decision to attack commencing 5th April. The initial targets were rural police stations both in order to further arm themselves and because the JVP viewed the police as the only representative of the state in the countryside. Moreover, they believed that the police and the forces were low on ammunition and they discounted the government's ability to counter attack once the JVP had gained control of the countryside. Besides the attacks on remote police stations across much of the country's rural south, a large group also travelled north in order to rescue Wijeweera who was in custody in Jaffna.

Attacking with home-made weapons in groups of 25 to 30 in order to seize better arms from the police stations, the JVP believed that controlling these rural police stations would provide them with areas of military and political control, thereby denying the government access to such areas which would provide secure rear-bases for subsequent attacks by the JVP on towns and cities. Ten out of the island's 22 Administrative Districts were battlegrounds. "Ninety two Police Stations had been attacked, damaging fifty and causing around 50 to be abandoned." (Muttukumaru: 188)

The military background

In November 1947 on the eve of Independence, Ceylon signed a Defence Agreement with the United Kingdom. The Ceylon Army's threat perception was determined by "the Government's concern, (which) was invasion by India. The military's focus was to have a defence force capable of meeting any external threat until assistance arrived from Britain." In the words of Air Vice-Marshal P.H. 'Paddy' Mendis, who was Air Force Commander in 1971, the objective that determined the capabilities of the armed forces therefore was to "hold up an invading force of the enemy until assistance arrived from a bigger country with which we have an alliance." (Blodgett:1 & 40) Furthermore, in the wake of the 1962 abortive coup against the SLFP Government, and the alleged 1966 coup against the United National Party Government, both major parties were wary of the Army which in 1970 had an authorised strength of 329 officers and 6,291 other ranks, and an annual budget of Rs 52 million (US\$10mn), just 1.2% of total government expenditure.

The battle rages

Despite these inherent limitations the Government and the Army responded swiftly, appointing regional Co-ordinating Officers to the worst affected districts. They were Colonels E.T.De Z. Abeysekera in Anuradhapura, S. D. Ratwatte in Badulla, Douglas Ramanayake in Galle and Derek Nugawella in Hambantota, Lieutenant Colonels R.R. Rodrigo in Jaffna, Cyril Ranatunga in Kegalle, D.J.de S Wickremasinghe in Matara, Tissa Weeratunga in

Moneragalla and Dennis Hapugalle in Vavuniya.

The Ceylon Volunteer Force was immediately mobilised, and the first military casualty was Staff Sergeant Jothipala of the 2nd Volunteer Battalion, Sinha Regiment [2(V) SR], who was killed at Thulhiriya in the Kurunegala District on the first day of the insurrection. While Major Noel Weerakoon of the 4th Regiment, Ceylon Artillery was the first officer of to be killed whilst leading an ammunition convoy from Vavuniya to the besieged town of Anuradhapura; he was wounded when the convoy was ambushed and later succumbed to his injuries.

In 1971 the Royal Ceylon Air Force (RCyAF) consisted of three squadrons: No. 1 Flying Training Squadron with 9 Chipmunk trainers based at China Bay, No. 2 Transport Sq. equipped with 5 Doves, 4 Herons and 3 Pioneer fixed wing and four helicopters, 3 Bell 206A Jet Rangers and one Hillier; and No. 3 Reconnaissance Sq. with Cessna aircraft. In the 1960s Britain had gifted five Hunting Jet Provost T51s jet trainers which had gone out of service by 1971.

Beginning at 9:00 am on April 5th the Jet Provost, which were in storage at China Bay began operating out of this airbase. They carried out air to ground attacks using 60lbs rockets. Meanwhile the three Jet Ranger helicopters airlifted 36,500 lbs of ammunition during April to critical police stations. In addition, the Doves carried out supply missions and during the course of April, 900 soldiers and 100,000 lbs of equipment were transported by the RCyAF. "The Jet Provost were armed with Browning machine guns and rockets while the helicopters were provided with Bren Guns." (Wickremesekera:23)

The JVP seized parts of the Colombo-Kandy A1 Trunk Route at Warakapola and Kegalle, cutting off the main artery between Colombo and the tea growing highlands. In response the Jet Provost had to mount aerial attacks on the key bridge at Alawwa which led to the downing of one aircraft and the death of its pilot. As rural police stations fell, the government abandoned others, regrouping its limited forces and anxious to protect the cities. This tactic paid off. The JVP only had equipment captured from police stations. They did not go on to overrun military camps or capture their more sophisticated weapons. While the JVP did control parts of Kegalle, Elpitiya, Deniyaya and Kataragama uncontested, the Army replenished its meagre stocks of arms and ammunition.

International support

Wijeweera had focussed solely on a single decisive blow against the Government. There was no provision to conduct even a short term guerrilla operation, or an attempt to lead a peasant uprising. And during the first 72 hours his strategy appeared to be working. What dramatically altered the balance of forces against the JVP was the immediate and sustained influx of military equipment that flowed in from overseas to enable the armed forces to turn the tide in their favour.

Within four days of the JVP attack, Air Ceylon's Trident took off from Singapore carrying a consignment of small arms provided by Britain from its base there. The following day the UK agreed to supply six Bell-47G

Jet Ranger helicopters armed with 7.62mm machine guns. On 12 April on board a US Air Force Lockheed C-141 Starlifter, Washington shipped out critical spare parts for the RCyAF helicopters which were flying twelve hour days. And at Colombo's request New Delhi on the 14th sent six Indian Air Force Aérospatiale SA 315B Lama utility helicopters with crews to Katunayake Air Force Base, along with troops to guard them as well as arms, ammunition and grenades. They would remain in-country for three months.

On the 17th Air Ceylon flew in nine tons of military equipment which the USSR made available from supplies in Cairo. While on the 22nd a Soviet Air Force Antonov AN-22 transporter arrived with two Kamov Ka-26 rescue helicopters and five Mikoyan-Gurevich MiG-15 jet fighters and one MiG-17 high-subsonic fighter. The Soviet aircraft were accompanied by 200 trainers and ground crew.

China, Australia, Pakistan and Yugoslavia would also send arms and equipment. Colombo's Non Aligned foreign policy which enabled it to source and receive military weapons and equipment from countries across the globe had succeeded. However "the wide variety of equipment became a logistics nightmare." (Sri Lanka Army 50 Years On: 214)

Cordon sanitaire

Meanwhile there were reports that the JVP were endeavouring to bring weapons in by sea. But the Royal Ceylon Navy's (RCyN) frigate and Thornycroft boats could not secure the island's territory nor prevent supplies reaching the rebels. This compelled Colombo to rely on the Indian Navy which sent three of its Hunt-class escort destroyers, INS Ganga, INS Gomathi and INS Godawari to patrol Ceylon's maritime perimeter. "Sri Lanka's dependency on the Indian Navy during the Insurgency to patrol its sea frontier in order to prevent arms supply to the Insurgents, was total." (Keerawella:4)

This sudden influx of arms and ammunition rapidly altered the balance of power against the JVP. For example the Army took Yugoslav artillery into Kegalle to flush out the rebels. And around 16,500 JVP members were captured, arrested or surrendered. The remaining combatants withdrew into jungle sanctuaries in the Kegalle, Elpitiya, Deniyaya and Kataragama areas.

At Anuradhapura the JVP had established a base camp as well as six sub camps in the surrounding jungle where weapons, explosives and food had been stored. JVP operations in the Rajangana and Tambutegama areas were controlled from this base camp. A platoon of 1CLI armed with 82mm mortars was sent to Anuradhapura in May and participated in Operation Otthappuwa, under 1CLI 2iC Major Jayawardena to take control of this area. By the end of May the insurrection was completely crushed.

Some counter insurgency operations however continued into the following year. A-Company 1CLI established a forward base in Horowapatana as late as November 1972 from where they carried out combing out operations until April 1973 while 1CLI's D-Company closed its Kegalle operations only in December 1974.

Outcomes

The international media reported that summary executions had taken place. Writing from Colombo in the *Nouvel Observateur* on 23 May, Rene Dumont said "from the Victoria Bridge on 13 April I saw corpses floating down the (Kelani) River which flows through the north of the capital watched by hundreds of motionless people. The Police who had killed them, let them float downstream to terrorise the population." The New York Times in its 15 April edition said that "many were found to have been shot in the back."

Lieutenant Colonel Cyril Ranatunga commanding troops in Kegalle was emphatic. "We have learned too many lessons from Vietnam and Malaysia. We must destroy them completely." While another officer was quoted alongside him in the *International Herald Tribune* of 20th April as saying "Once we are convinced prisoners are insurgents we take them to a cemetery and dispose of them." And the *Washington Post* on 9th May quoted a major who said that "we have never had the opportunity to fight a real war in this country. All these years we have been firing at dummies, now we are being put to use." One of these public executions became a celebrated case, the brutal murder of Premawathi Manamperi of Kataragama. She had been crowned festival queen at the previous year's Sinhala New Year celebration. Two soldiers, Lieutenant Wijeysooria and Sergeant Ratnayaka would be convicted, but both claimed their orders were: "Take no prisoners; bump them off, liquidate them."

(Obeysekara: 391)

Conclusions

In the aftermath of the insurgency the armed forces expanded. The Air Force which had 1,400 personnel in 1971 grew to 3,100, including 36 pilots, by 1976. New units, a Special Police Reserve Force, a Volunteer RCyAF and a new Field Security Detachment targeting subversion was raised under Lieutenant Colonel Anurudha Ratwatte 2(V) SR, the Security Liaison Officer to the Prime Minister. And a new Volunteer Army unit the National Service Regiment, targeting recruits over 35 years provided "a damning sign that the whole of the country's youth was in opposition to it (the Government)." (Halliday:200)

The JVP uprising broke the back of the left parties which were trapped politically by the insurrection which they could only denounce at the cost of their long term influence. The SLFP too was isolated from its electorate due to the harsh measures adopted; curfew, censorship, trial without jury, postponement of elections, suspension of habeas corpus and other civil rights. Their Government suffered a devastating defeat at the next elections in 1977.

The uprising questioned the efficacy of a parliamentary system that could not accommodate a generation of educated youth, nor keep politicians aware of their needs and strengths. The decades-old mass national parties seemed to have no place for them. And the JVP charge that the leaders in parliament were of a different class and therefore they themselves of a different sub culture, seemed valid now. (Cont. bottom left Page 26)

A Hidden Story of World War II

by Logan Thurairatnam



Sabapathipillai Rajanayagam commenced his career in 1934 as a 26-year-old Telegraph Engineer in the Ceylon Central Telegraph Office after completing his undergraduate studies at Imperial College, London.



• S. Rajanayagam in the 1930s.

(Continued from page 25)

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He joined the Signal Corps of the Ceylon Defence Force as a volunteer officer in 1938. When the Japanese entered the war, Rajanayagam was mobilised and sent to Trincomalee. He describes life in Trincomalee to be hard, living in the open. After two months he was demobilised with the rank of Captain and sent back to Colombo as it was deemed that his civil duties in the Central Telegraph Office was more important for the war effort.

The Commander-in-Chief, Admiral Sir Geoffrey Layton had set up a Telecommunications Board composed of representatives from the Army, Navy and Air force. Rajanayagam was appointed a member of that Board as a civilian officer. Signal (communications) requirements for the war effort was discussed and Rajanayagam was made responsible for land-based telecommunication lines.

Mountbatten established his office in Kandy. A dedicated communications cable was laid between India and Ceylon by a British ship and another cable between Colombo and Trincomalee. Rajanayagam was also responsible for supplying shore-based labour and for the land installation.

Aircraft, including fighter aircrafts were based in Colombo, Trincomalee and Koggala, a new sea plane base in south west Ceylon. Singapore had fallen and the idea was growing that Ceylon would be next.

While patrolling the Bay of Bengal, an allied pilot Leonard Joseph Birchall CM, OBE, DFC, OOnt. CD saw the Japanese fleet in the Bay of Bengal through a gap in the clouds and his message reached Colombo. The pilot was requested to repeat his initial report of the sighting. This message was intercepted by the Japanese and they realised that the element of surprise was lost. The Japanese shot that plane down, fortunately the pilot, who was later referred to 'Saviour of Ceylon', had survived. This successful reconnaissance enabled the forces in Ceylon to be prepared.

When Japanese planes attacked Colombo harbour on 5th April 1942, fighter aircraft from Trincomalee and Koggala took off to assist the fighters in Colombo. In this big air battle both sides incurred losses. Subsequently when Trincomalee was attacked on 9th April 1942, fighters took off from Colombo and Koggala to assist. The significance of this defence was that it was the first time that the Japanese felt real opposition after the fall of Singapore. Sir Winston Churchill was extremely pleased and told his parliament so¹.

The telecommunication lines laid and maintained by Rajanayagam and his staff made it possible to divert the fighter aircraft to where they were needed most. Wireless (radio) was not used for communication as the Japanese were listening to the Allied forces radio communications². Critical communications between the fighter bases, harbours, anti-aircraft batteries and command centres took place via land lines. To complicate matters the Army cable between Colombo and

Trincomalee had been cut and the copper wires stolen by the locals!

Rajanayagam in his memoirs says, "I was rewarded with an OBE. The reward should really have gone to my staff. When attacks by enemy aircraft were expected, I instructed my line staff to patrol their section daily and so my lines worked during the air attacks." Telephone exchange to telephone exchange communication too, had to be maintained during the air raids.

He further states, "I too worked. The work was carried out in secret. The communication lines had to be continuously tested, repaired, and maintained. Theft of copper lines had to be prevented. The day after Trincomalee was attacked I went there to give confidence to my staff. They said all civilians had gone, shops were all closed, they had no food and wanted to leave. I promised to send food to them from Colombo."

When I returned to Colombo and approached Ragama I found that everybody was moving out of Colombo, people on foot and carts filled with furniture, pots and pans. In Colombo after the Colombo air attack all shops were closed³. I could not find a shop to buy food to be sent to my staff in Trincomalee. So, I went to the Civil Defence Commissioner, Sir Oliver Goonetilleke and he sent me with his men with the authority to break open the shops to obtain the necessary food stuff for my men.

So, we went to Maradana and broke open a big shop. We collected rice, dhal and some other food items and sent it with one of my faithful men by train to Trincomalee that very evening. This act was sufficient to

convince my men in Trincomalee to remain at their stations".

The work done by Rajanayagam and his staff must have been extremely vital for the war effort that the O.B.E was awarded in 1943 whilst WW2 was still going on. The following appeared in the Times of Ceylon on 4th June 1943. (see image of article below left).

"Recipients of honours are as a rule men grown grey in service. Rarely is a young public servant singled out for special distinction. The youngest man to be thus honoured, probably the youngest on record in Ceylon, is Mr.S.Rajanayagam, who has been awarded the O.B.E (Civil). He is only 35 years of age.

Born on November 25th, 1908, Mr Rajanayagam is a Bsc. (Lond.), A.C.G.I., A.M.I.E.E. He has been in the service of government only nine years, having joined the Telecommunication Department in 1934. He is now Superintending Telecommunication Engineer.

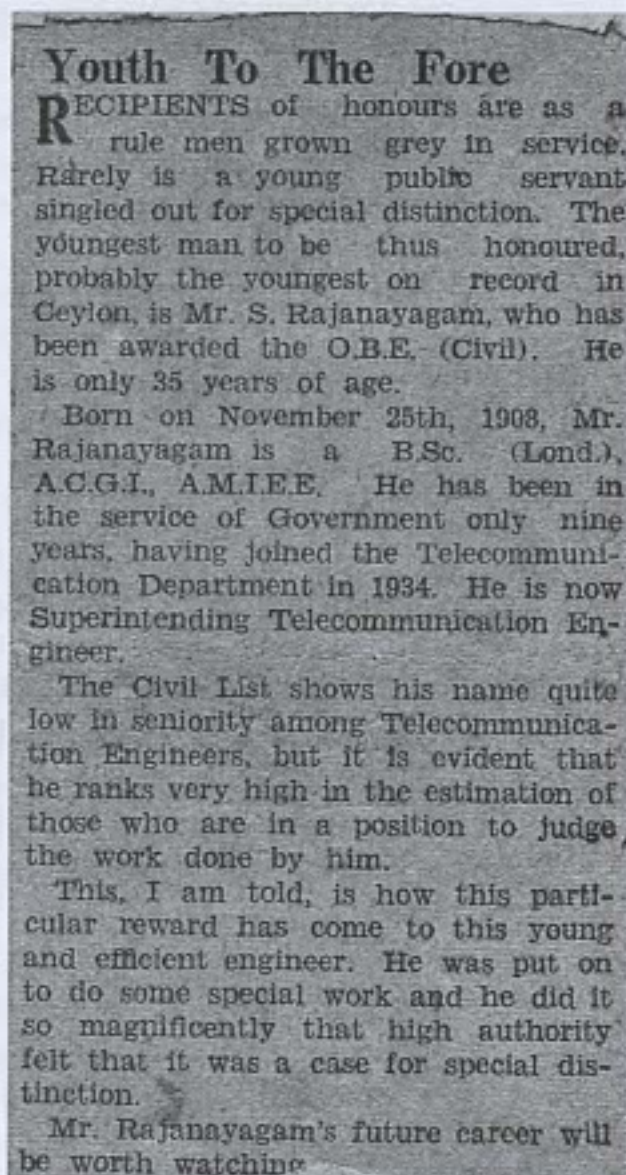
The civil list shows his name quite low in seniority among Telecommunication Engineers but it is evident that he ranks very high in the estimation of those who are in a position to judge the work done by him.

This, I am told, is how this particular reward has come to this young and efficient engineer. He was put on to do some special work and he did it so magnificently that high authority felt that it was a case for special distinction.

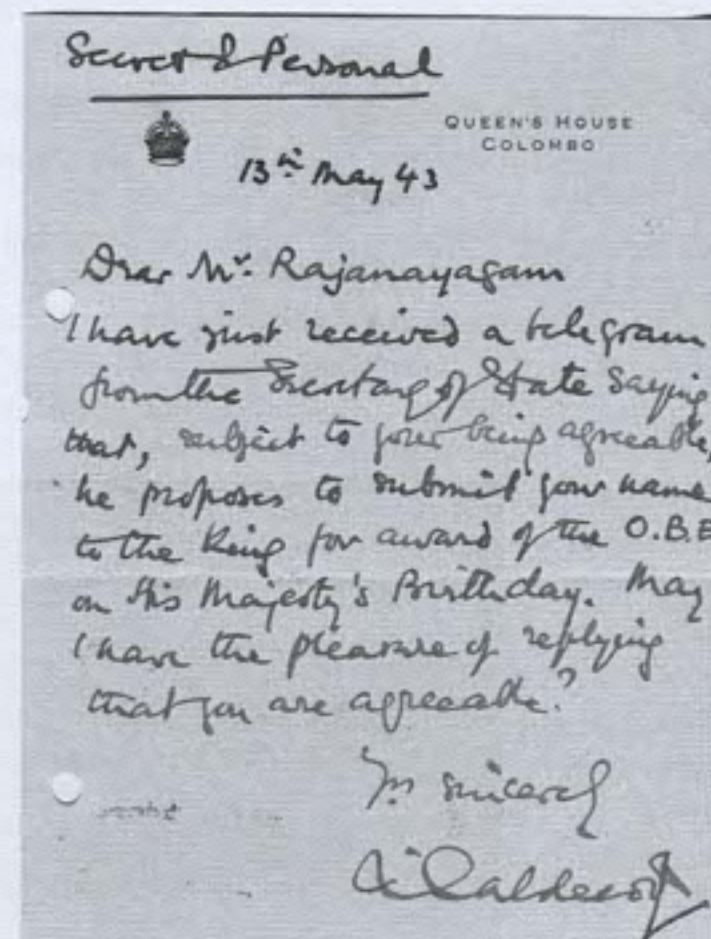
Mr.Rajanayagam's future career will be worth watching".

Rajanayagam's career spanned 29 years in the Posts & Telecommunications department. He was appointed the Chief Telecommunications Engineer in 1956 and retired in 1963. He passed away in 2012 at the ripe old age of 104.

This article is based on Rajanayagam's memoirs and letters sent by him to various members of his immediate family. The documents and letters are in the private collection of Premila Thurairatnam, granddaughter of S.Rajanayagam.



• Times of Ceylon news article.



• Governor A. Caldecott's letter (Figure 1)

Notes:

1. Most likely propaganda as Allied losses were heavy, and the Eastern Naval Fleet was moved to Kenya.
2. Even today wireless internet is not secure. Critical networks are made up of fibre optic cables.
3. The Ceylon public was very aware of the treatment meted out to the locals by Japanese forces, especially in Nanking and Burma. As such they were fleeing Colombo.

Explanation of images:

Date: 13th May 1943

Handwritten letter from the Governor, Sir Andrew Caldecott marked "Secret & Personal" advising Rajanayagam that his name was being submitted to the King for award of the OBE.

Content

Dear Mr Rajanayagam

I have just received a telegram from the Secretary of State saying that, subject to you being agreeable he proposes to submit your name to the King for award of the O.B.E on His Majesty's Birthday. May I have the pleasure of replying that you are agreeable.

Yours sincerely

Signed

A Caldecott

(See Figure 1 on right column of Page 27)

Date: 2nd June 1943

Letter from the Secretary of State Rt Hon Oliver Stanley advising Rajanayagam of the OBE further stating, "This is a well-deserved tribute to your valuable services to Ceylon".

Content

Colonial Office

Downing Street, SW1.

Dear Mr Rajanayagam

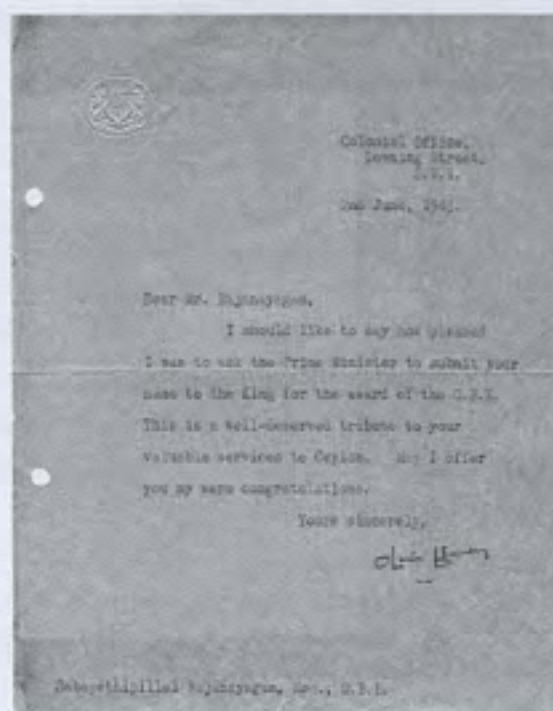
I should like to say how pleased I was to ask the Prime Minister to submit your name to the King for the award of the O.B.E. This is a well-deserved tribute to your valuable services to Ceylon. May I offer you my warm congratulations.

Yours sincerely

Signed

Oliver Stanley

• Letter from the Secretary of State Rt Hon Oliver Stanley.



Content

It gives me much pleasure to inform you that His Majesty has approved your appointment to be an Officer of the Civil Division of the most excellent Order of the British Empire (Stop) Please accept my cordial congratulations.
Governor



• Governor's telegram. (See above).

2nd June 1943

Telegram from the Governor congratulating Rajanayagam on the award of the OBE.

Get yourself a copy of The Ceylankan Index



A combined A4 size volume of a 64-age Index to compliment *The Ceylankan*, has been compiled. It is neatly set in large font with an appropriately designed cover. The Subject Index takes up 39 pages and the Author Index has 20 pages. The composite work will be very useful

for anybody who wishes to track down an article in a past issue of *The Ceylankan* and as Hugh says "... this significant work will no doubt be a great resource to writers, researchers and scholars of the future".

Prior to printing copies of the Index we would like to have some indication of numbers required. Members interested in obtaining copies need to contact a Committee member to reserve their copies.

APPRECIATIONS

Srini Peries

31-12-1936-05.01.2021

Srini Peries who passed away peacefully on 05 January in Sri Lanka was the wife of the late Tony Peries, 2nd President of the CSA whom she married in 1956.

Srini who hailed from a distinguished Sri Lankan family, was the granddaughter of Sir Frank Marcus Fernando a prominent Ceylonese man of medicine and in later years, in the political arena.



•The Late Soulmates Tony and Srini Peries when they attended the CSA Annual Dinner and Christmas Party at the Kuring-gai Town Hall on 27 November 2011.

She was educated in the United Kingdom initially and on completion of her higher education, she followed courses at the Corden Bleu School of Cookery and the art of Flower Arrangement with Constance Spry. She was a multifaceted lady who had become a dedicated bridge player and a keen golfer.

After their migration to Australia in 1973, they settled in Sydney for a few years but then moved to Melbourne because Tony obtained new employment there. Srini graduated with a BA degree in Humanities from the University of Western Sydney in 1996.

Srini was a marvellous hostess turning out exotic dishes and Tony was her best critic when it came to the food she used to make as he was labelled a 'true foodie'.

Srini and Tony were soulmates in every sense of the word, sharing their common interests of extensive overseas travel, especially to Europe and Canada, lots of writing and copious book reading, playing bridge and golf. She was the Ladies Captain of the Havelocks Golf Club in Colombo in the 1950s.

She did a degree course in English/Writing and is the author of two books - "Gaggle of Aunts" published in 2005 and "A Three Generation Tale" printed in 2012 - about her family which she called a "celebration of life". She and Tony loved attending the Sydney Writers Festival every year, often staying on in the City over the week to attend various events during the Festival.

Srini also volunteered to teach English to new Migrants in Australia.

When Tony was elected President of the CSA in 2004, Srini has her responsibilities of assisting him cut out for her. She took on the duties of ensuring that the social aspects of the meetings went off without a hitch. She was heavily involved in the local branch of the Australian Labor Party until a few years after Tony's death when she went back to Sri Lanka but she never got over the loss of her dear husband.

We have no doubt she is reunited with her Tony in Paradise.

Dr Brahman Sivaprakasapillai

16 December 1936 - 28 December 2020

Dr Brahman Sivaprakasapillai, 84, passed away peacefully on December 28, 2020, in Fairfax, Virginia, USA. He was an accomplished gentleman who, in addition to his Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) in Aeronautical Engineering, was well read, loved the symphony and opera, and global travel (by ship or plane). Brahman loved swimming laps in the pool, and enjoyed many a recreational tennis game with friends. He



especially loved a good debate with anyone willing (and able) to take him on. :-) Brahman was the son of late Mr. and Mrs. Thambyahpillai and Leelamani Sivaprakasapillai, brother of Dr. Pratab Sivaprakasapillai and Dr. Premala Sivasegaram. He was the husband of the late Dr. Vijayalakshmi (Viji) Sivaprakasapillai, father of Narayani, Dr. Brahmesh Sanjeevan and Dharshana Sivaprakasapillai, father-in-law of Dr. Maya Sivaprakasapillai, and, most lovingly, grandfather (Thatha) of Neel, Vaishnavi and Nitish Siva.

He was born and grew up in the Sri Lankan capital, Colombo, and attended Royal College during his school years (grades 1-12). Brahman worked at the Ceylon Transport Board (CTB) during the holidays before he entered the Faculty of Engineering, University of Ceylon. He attended Imperial College, London for his graduate work and worked in England, Scotland and Sri Lanka before Viji and he emigrated to New York with their three children in 1978. He was a practical and able engineer and was responsible for the design and manufacture of pumps and dredgers.

They settled in Mamaroneck, New York, where they raised their children, continued their professional careers, and built a community of lifelong friends. He was a great family man who not only got along with his own family, but also exceptionally well with Viji's family so much so that he would insist that the children stop what they were doing, even sleeping, to speak to their maternal uncle when he called from Colombo. He would drop the children off at school, including to and from their colleges, and loyally attend Narayani's swimming meets. Brahman was a tower of strength to the children at moments of anxiety, and even to children of friends. A cousin who was sent to boarding school in England

remembers that when he was extremely homesick and disoriented, Brahman's very positive and cheerful personality gave him strength to cope with the challenges of adjusting to the new environment. Brahman wanted the children to be independent and encouraged them to figure things out for themselves and not rely on their parents for everything.

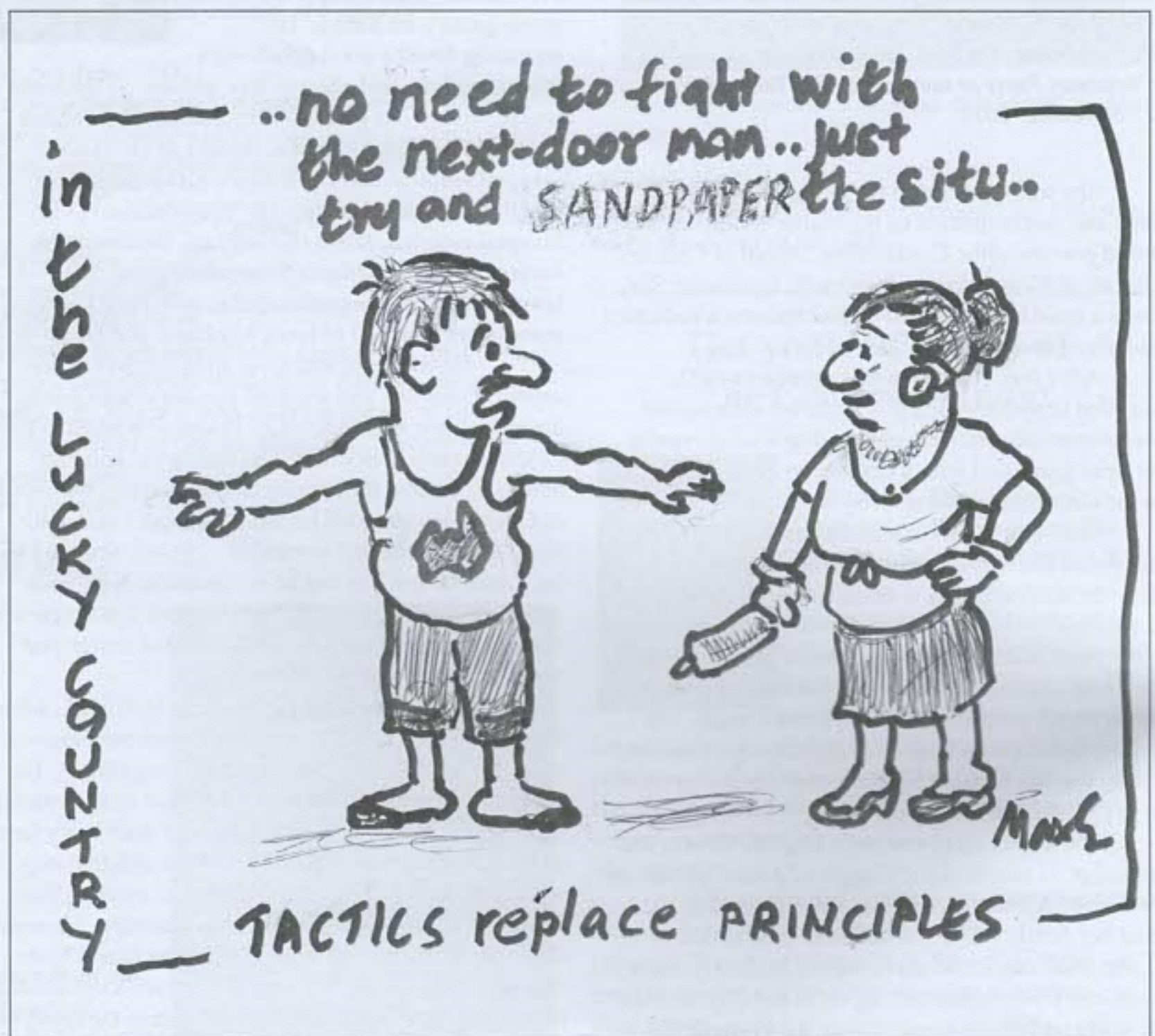
The social calendar in New York overflowed with dinners and dance parties, multi-state Christmas Eve celebrations and, most notably, New Year's Eve bashes hosted by Viji and Brahman for many years culminating in the collapse of foam ceiling tiles in the basement due to much dancing and revelry by guests!! Until impeded by knee injuries, Brahman generally befriended many a neighbor while running outdoors with the two family dogs in the mornings and was an avid New York Yankees fan until the very end. After decades of living in New York, Viji and Brahman decided to spend winters close to Sanjeevan in Florida. With the loss of his beloved Viji in January 2019, Brahman spent his final years living close to Narayani in Virginia. He is survived by his beloved children, grandchildren, siblings, cousins, nephews/

nieces, friends and their respective families. Brahman was a wonderful family man who will be dearly missed forever. May he attain Moksha. 🙏

Courtesy: DEMAINE FUNERAL SERVICES

Obituary notices published in *The Ceylankan*

All Obituary notices and Appreciations of Life recorded on these pages are restricted to deceased CSA members only. In keeping with that policy all notices are accompanied with a note indicating such membership status. Occasionally, we may inadvertently fail to indicate this important fact, as in the case of the Late Dr R.K.(Rajpal) de Silva (see page 30 of J88 - November 2019) who was a Member since 2002. We trust readers will accept our apologies for these omissions.



Lankans who volunteered for service with the Royal Air Force during World War II

from research by CHARLES AMRERESEKERE

Within a year of the outbreak of World War II, the colonial government began looking for Sri Lankan volunteers to serve in various capacities with the British forces including the Royal Air Force (RAF).

Accordingly, 15,000 applied to join the RAF. Out of this lot, 15 were initially selected and sent for training at the RAF Cranwell Flying School in the United Kingdom in 1941. But a paper cutting dated the September 1941 gives only twelve (12) names even though it says in the beginning fifteen (15) Ceylonese for the RAF have arrived in Britain.

Of the 15 Lankans who joined the RAF during WWII, only four were selected for fighter pilot training. They were Emile Jayawardena, Noel Peiris, Rex de Silva and Shelton Flamer-Caldera who were sent to operational squadrons soon after completing their training.

Chelliah Kanagasabapathy a Sri Lankan, also a RAF Pilot in WW II mentions another batch of Sri Lankans who joined the RAF. He says that 18 persons were selected from Sri Lanka to join the RAF in 1941 and were sent to London, England for training.

According to that, Charles Ameresekere who has done extensive research on the subject, three more batches of Sri Lankans have served with the RAF in WW II.

"There were at least five batches of Ceylonese volunteers (approximately 15 in each batch) that served with the RAF in WW II. They were all very brave to volunteer for such dangerous duties, so far from home. Many were Killed in Action (KIA)," he says.

One of the names that has been uncovered as being another Sri Lankan who has enlisted in the RAF during the war is that of Michael Dias Bandaranaike who joined the RAF Coastal Command and served as a tail gunner flying in bombers.

Charles Ameresekere also says there was even a female pilot, Aimee Jonklaas, a Ceylonese by birth (born in Gampola) who served with the Air Transport Auxiliary (ATA) ferrying aircraft for the RAF. The ATA was a civilian aircraft ferrying organisation tasked with delivering aircraft (once manufactured) from factories to the operational stations of RAF and RNAS.

Another four Sri Lankans who have joined the RAF in 1944 are TB Daswatte, L Vanden Driesden, HAS Gunawardane and BSTE Vanderwall. The others whose names have been uncovered are those of P B Mawalagedara who had joined Air Ceylon after being released from RAF while the Memorial Board at Trinity College

Kandy for Old Trintians who served in the Second World War mentions the name, E S Godlieb under Royal Air Force.

Charles Ameresekere, whose research yielded much of the information, says he is at present engaged in writing the biography of the late AVM Rohan Amerasekera DFC* and also several books on "Orders, Decorations and Medals relating to Sri Lanka / Ceylon from



1795 to the present" and one titled "Boys from Ceylon" – Ceylonese in the RAF 1939-45.

"I have been researching these books since the 1990s and was fortunate to be in contact with some of these airmen and /or their relatives. Unfortunately, all of them have now passed away. I have spent years going through passenger lists and RAF records to figure out the five batches of Ceylonese who served in the RAF during WW II".

The names of Sri Lankans who joined the RAF in the five batches during WWII are as follows: –

1st Batch:

St. Elmo Muller, E E (Rohan) Amerasekera, Clarence S A Perera, R O'Brien Van Cuylenburg, S A Noel Peiris, M Rex De Silva, L Osborne, H Wanigasekera, K Graydon Joachim, L Shelton Flamer-Caldera, Mohamad M Omerdeen, Emile D P M Jayawardena, Frederick H Brohier, Patrick S A Pereira, Ponniah Balachandran, J Justin A Perera.

2nd batch:

G F Dugald Abayasekera, D R P Abeywardena, N S Cooray, Kingsley W M N Perera, Ananda Kularatne, O P S Silva, R B Sielman, Clarence Harold Jacotine, Gilbert W Sirimanne, V Saravanapavan, S G E De A Seneviratne, S. Thirunavakarasu, J G Vaughan De Livera, Vincent F Fernando, C Kanagasabapathy, S S Sinniah, D S Navaratnam. (Only seventeen members in this batch even though it is said as eighteen in the fifth paragraph)

3rd Batch:

C H S Amarasekera, Roy J de Neise, Dixon Kotelawela, S Dion Bennett, P B Mawalagedera, G E L Ferdinand,



CEYLON FLIERS IN BRITAIN *26/9/41*

LORD MOYNE TO MEET THEM *26/9/41*

LONDON, Friday.
Fifteen Ceylonese for the Royal Air Force have arrived in Britain and will be seen shortly by Lord Moyne, the Colonial Secretary. (Reuter.)
Among them are: St. Elmo Muller, C. S. A. Perera, S. D. Flamer-Caldera, J. J. A. Perera, E. E. Amerasekera, P. Balachandran, F. H. Brohier, F. D. P. M. Jayawardena, K. G. Joachim, M. M. Omerdeen, P. S. A. Perera and L. O. H. Wanigasakera.

“There were at least five batches of Ceylonese volunteers (approximately 15 in each batch) that served with the RAF in WW II. They were all very brave to volunteer for such dangerous duties, so far from home. Many were Killed in Action.” — *says Charles Amerasekera who has done extensive research on the subject.*

Royle B D Jansen, Hector L Aserappa, R Kingsley Werkmeister, Clement Andrews, A T Paramanathan.

4th Batch:

H A S Gunawardena, H B Peiris, E L B Vanden Driesden, W M Hubert Daswatte, R G De Saram, E St G B Vanderwall, W J Jenkins, W S Sabapathy.

5th Batch:

E C Godlieb, M Karthigesu, S Kanagasabai, D Ranasinghe, K Sivasubradas, W Terence, J M Wijerama, A.A. Wijeyewickrema.

Amerasekera also says some of the others who joined the RAF, probably on their own were K K Nagalingam, R W M (Mickey) Dias Bandaranaike, Gnani Nadaraja, G E A Ebert.

Note: Those researching the history of Sri Lankans who served in the RAF would be grateful if any readers having more information, documents or photographs on the subject and wouldshare the same with K.W.Kirinde via email on kirinde@gmail.com.

(First published in the **Sunday Island** of 24 December 2020. Reproduced with kind permission).



Emile Jayawardene and his RAF Spitfire.



General Meetings Sydney Sunday 28 February 2021

The First General Meeting of the Ceylon Society in 2021 will take place on Sunday 28th February 2021 commencing at 6.30 PM at Pennant Hills Community Centre Hall, Corner Ramsay Road (off Yarrara Road), Pennant Hills. Admission is FREE to all members and their guests and any others interested are all welcome to attend.



Prianga de Fonseka will speak on on *"The History and Development of Architecture in Sri Lanka"*.

Mr de Fonseka arrived in Australia in 1972 to complete his education in Architecture. He had completed the Intermediate Certificate of the Royal Institute of British Architects in Sri Lanka and worked for two years at the office of the renowned Sri Lankan architect Geoffrey Bawa.

After completing his Degree in Architecture from the UTS in 1975, he was employed till 1989 at the Department of Housing and the Public Works Department.

Prianga then moved to commercial practice to enable his development into more diverse and interesting projects and joined the following companies: Davenport Campbell - 1990 to 1999 - Senior Design Architect; Group G S A - 2000 to 2003 - Design Architect; and G H D Doha and Sydney - 2003 to 2014 - Principal Design Architect - Design Director. His main commissions with these companies were in the design of six hotels, three high rise apartment developments and the adoptive reuse of historic buildings.

Synopsis

This presentation intends to show how Architecture has progressed in Sri Lanka, by highlighting significant examples of projects from the pre-historic era through to the present, comparing its evolution to other civilisations around the world.

The development of architecture in the present and recent past after the colonial period, and the influence of this era on traditional local architecture, and how this was adapted to suit our tropical climate, is significant in the evolution of architecture of Sri Lanka.

The present era, incorporating the advances in technology, in engineering, and with Sri Lanka's economy accommodating tourism as its major earner, has led to a revolutionary new hospitality architecture based on its traditional architecture, before other countries around the world also changed to an architecture relevant to the architecture of their country, moving away from the American style high rise hotels that were prevalent in the early 1960s..

Recent architectural projects incorporating and designed to be in harmony with the surrounding landscape, as well as innovative engineering in "traditional" buildings, will also be presented.

Future General Meetings for 2021

A Committee meeting will take place at 5.30 PM prior to the Public Meeting on 28th February.

The following General Meetings are tentatively scheduled as follows:

Sunday 30 May

Sunday 29 August

AGM & Social - Saturday 27 November

COLOMBO CHAPTER

**General Meeting
on Saturday 27 February 2021
at 5.30pm**



Ms. Sunela Jayewardene

will be addressing you on the subject of

Trails that the wild men tread

'A walker's tales of the jungles of Sri Lanka. Today, as our familiar, well recognised wilderness is being compromised by overcrowding and deforestation, to find true wilderness, one has to be on foot.'

The guest speaker Ms. Sunela Jayewardene is recognized as 'Sri Lanka's leading environmental architect' (Time Magazine, March 2007; India Today, 2008). Her award-winning hotel projects include, Jetwing Vil Uyana, Rainforest Ecolodge and Colombo Court. She was the first Chairperson of the Federation of Environmental Organizations of Sri Lanka. Her first book, 'The Line of Lanka, Myths & Memories of an Island', explores Sri Lanka's legends and myths.

Questions and discussions will follow.

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

(the OPA is situated midway down Prof Stanley Wijesundera Mawatha).

Note: Prior to the lecture presentation Mr. Frederick Medis will carry out a sale of rare and antiquarian books on Sri Lanka (Ceylon) and other books of interest.

Contacts: Tony Saldin, (President) E-mail: saldin@sltnet.lk Tel: 0777363366.

Anandalal Nanayakkara (Hony. Secretary) E-mail: anandalal10@gmail.com Tel: 0773272989

Asoka de Silva (Hony. Treasurer) E-mail: matdes@sltnet.lk Tel: 011 2822933/ +94 775 097517.



Meals Ammi Made

Readers will recall this familiar graphic illustrating our recipe column not long ago. Unfortunately this fell by the wayside for some reason. But it was never forgotten. Your editor certainly misses them. He often tested those recipes and discovered mouth-watering results. Yes, this is a warm welcome to all our readers to contribute their recipes for publication.

As the title of the column suggests, your recipes need to be of Sri Lankan origin, family-orientated meals you learnt to prepare from your Ammi or Achchi. While keeping them brief, they need to have the recipe listed in full, accompanied with all the important preparation details.

So why wait? Show us how to make those delightful meals we can all enjoy.

WE NEED SPEAKERS

The CSA welcomes professionals and others interested in speaking at our public meetings on a subject of their choice. Meetings are held in Sydney, Melbourne and Colombo and take place quarterly in February, May, August and November of each year.

If you have anyone in mind, please contact CSA President Pauline Gunawardane on (Mob) +61 419 447 665 (email: paulineg@ozemail.com.au or Melbourne Chapter Convenor Hemal Gurusinghe (Mob) + 61 427 725 740 (email: hemguru@hotmail.com) or Colombo Chapter Secretary Anandalal Nanayakkara 077 327 2989 (email: anandalal10@gmail.com)

Human apathy

Science may have found a cure for most evils, but it has found no remedy for the worst of them all — the apathy of human beings.

— *Helen Keller (1880-1968)*
My Religion (1927)ch.

Advertising in The Ceylankan

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

Now, with the constant rise in costs of delivery of the Journal to members worldwide, we need to look at additional sources of revenue. Accordingly, the Committee has decided to accommodate advertising and promotional matter in the form of loose-leaf flyers, but not as part of the body of the Journal.

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

Once accepted, the advertiser will need to supply the printed flyers in sufficient numbers for inclusion in that particular issue of the Journal. The cost of inserting such flyers is \$500 per issue of the Journal, paid in advance.

Congratulations and a Warm Welcome to our New Members

Devaka Wickramasuriya, 4 B Peries Mawatha,
Kalubowila, Dehiwela, Sri Lanka.

Anton & Kay D'Costa, 17 Pamela Court, Darley,
VIC 3340.

Nihal & Lakmai Dias Abeyesinghe, 24/11 Busaco Road
Marsfield, NSW 2122.

GIFT SUBSCRIPTIONS

Walter & Sung Moi Olegasegarem Middle Dural
NSW 2158

Michael & Vasanthi Olegasegarem, Castle Hill,
NSW 2154

Sumanthiran Navaratnam & Romaine de Silva,
Colombo 8, Sri Lanka

Winston Olagasegarem, 16 Parish Street, Pemulwuy,
NSW 2145.

From Rex Olegesegeram, East Ryde NSW 2113

COLE PORTER 1

In olden days a glimpse of stocking
Who looked on us as something shocking
Now, heaven knows, anything goes!

COLE PORTER 2

Oh, give me land, lots of land
Under starry skies above,
Don't fence me in.

MEMBERSHIP RATES

- **General Subscriptions for Australia:** (All rates, unless otherwise stated, are in Australian dollars) \$35 per year;
- **Pensioners:** \$25 per year (to be reviewed in 2021)
- **Overseas members from USA/UK/Canada/Israel/Thailand:** \$45 per year.
- **Sri Lanka:** Rs.3000 per year.
- **Gift subscriptions:** \$35, or \$45 if the nominee is resident outside Australia.

Please arrange payment of Membership subscriptions for 2020 if still due, together with any arrears where applicable. Pay by cheque in favour of "Ceylon Society of Australia" and post to Deepak Pritamdas, P O Box 489, Blacktown, NSW 2148, Australia.

Or pay by Bank Transfer to Ceylon Society of Australia
Bank name: Commonwealth Bank of Australia
Account details: BSB 062 308
Account No. 1003 8725
Swift Code: CTBAU2S

NOTE: Please include your name as payee, and kindly email all payment details to deepakpsl@gmail.com

The pack-bull caravan

The place - Pahe-a'la near Hasalaka above Mahiyangana. The time — dusk. Kalawla Gedara Tikiri Ukkurala squats in the *Amutange* (guest house) preparing a *pandure* (token of a vow) that he should make to Vanni Bandara, who is the guardian god of this territory, while his jaws move incessantly chewing a quid of betel, his nimble fingers wrap a five-cent coin, a few grains of paddy and rice in a discoloured strip of cloth. He knots it: smiles and fetches the *Sokade* (neck bell) of the leading bull called Pulliya because of the white patch on his forehead. Ukku secures the votary bundle inside the bell. He mutters some stanzas which seek the blessings of the god Vanni Bandara to protect him and his herd through the long journey that lies ahead of him, on the morrow. He seeks divine assistance to ward off mishaps, ill-luck and disease. He then walks to the tethered herd and picking up a handful of fodder, throws it behind a tree and appeals to Gopalu Yakka — the Demon of Bovines. To him he says that has already sought the blessing of the territorial spirit and requests that the demon also should creat no mischief among the bulls. In appeasement he offers a clasp of fodder.

Now with his spiritual duties fulfilled, Ukkurala sets about dividing loads... He also sings of village lore, love affairs and rumours, besides singing praises of landscape and the terrain. To break the monotony, he occasionally yodels as well.

Daylight comes. Ukkurala and his eleven bulls tread the verge of the highroad... The bulls pant as they reach journey's end. Pack-bull caravans are rare these days and seldom seen,

(From *Ceylon Vagabond* by Lala Adithiya)

WANTED... YOUR LITERARY CONTRIBUTIONS



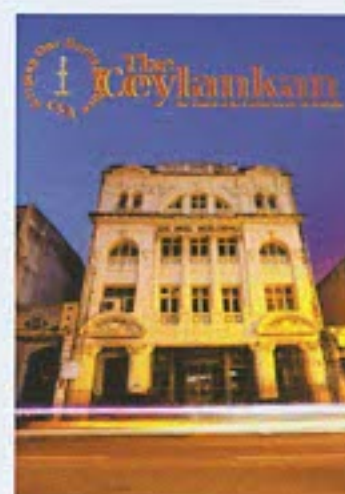
The Ceylankan is published quarterly and the Editor is on the look-out for your literary contributions. Be assured that your work will be given careful consideration with a view to publication at all times.

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

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

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

Present a Gift Subscription of The Ceylankan to family & friends



**For just \$35, or
\$45 if
the nominee
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“Portrait of Miss Sri Pathmanathan” Photo by Lionel Wendt.