

The Ceylanika



The Journal of the
CEYLON SOCIETY
of AUSTRALIA

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The Ceylon Society of Australia

Keeping Our Heritage Alive

(Founded in 1997)

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How to become a Member of the CSA

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

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The Ceylankan

From the Editor...

The Ceylon Society of Australia is something special. It is a vibrant composite of people with like minds and kindred spirits, almost all Sri Lankan-born, with a legitimate need to keep the umbilical cord with their Motherland intact while domesticated worldwide staying steadfastly patriotic, law abiding, exemplary citizens of their adopted countries at the same time. This is a unique situation to be in. Both for the expatriates and the countries they now call 'home'.

It is only natural and human for us to hunger for a deeper knowledge of the land of our birth – the history, culture and ethos – so that our children will have an understanding of and partake in the riches of their parents' heritage as well.

The Ceylankan plays a vital role here. It has become the source of knowledge to all our members and numerous other casual readers who have come to be acquainted with its sought-after

contents. With this issue, the Journal records a milestone – the 50th in number to leave the press in the 12 years since inception. Keeping intact irreplaceable ties with the land of our birth is not the expression of some plain sentimentality. Rather, it is the tangible response to an instinctive human need, like feeling as one with the rhythm of the universe. The journal plays a decisive role in this regard.

The Ceylankan is a remarkable journal. It has been made that way by the scholarly dedication of many of its contributors who unflinchingly submit the fruits of their prodigious research, delving into the misty past without the prospect of a tangible reward. Enriching the minds and hearts of fellow spirits is satiating reward enough. This, complimented by a dedicated readership, is the link that keeps the journal rising to the heights it has reached now. Reader appreciation is evident in the numerous letters received. Also, the unheralded services of the Editorial team, working behind the scenes with the editor, help maintain the pivotal role of the publication.

No need for the throb of Kandyan drums and the sway of dancers just yet. The CSA can be justly delighted with its attainments till now. This is only one riser up on the stairway to the top. A long way to go yet.

Aspirations of a society in the throes of birth

**Ceylon Research Society
Of Australia**

(Name under review)



Vol 1 : No 1.

February 1998

How We Started

The society has been organised over the past few months because of interest in matters relating to Sri Lanka. Dr Chris Puttock, a Canberra scientist, has been one of the prime movers, organising the initial meeting. The society envisages discussion and dissemination of information on any aspect of Sri Lanka: history, antiquarian, (books, memorabilia, ephemera), art, coins, architecture, costumes, genealogy, cartophily, etc.)

One small, but growing group is getting its act together. The four meetings we have had so far, in four different homes, have proved that there is a genuine desire to have such a society develop, and a

most pleasant camaraderie is apparent (not to mention the absolutely wonderful food we have indulged in thanks to the ladies!!). The object of the organisation is to improve knowledge of Sri Lanka in as many areas as possible, and with members having expertise and interest in so many different fields, we have the potential to learn about "Lanka" in a most affable way.

At present we are organising the mechanics of the society. In some ways it is a shame that things have to be almost "set in stone" as far as having the society "official", but that is the order of things today, and once we have these mechanics functioning properly we can get on with the more interesting aspects of learning and enjoying more about "Lanka-Sri Lanka_Taprobana-Serendip-Ceylon-Ceilan".

This is from the cover of Vol.1 No.1 of the journal published in 1998. It is reproduced here for the benefit of those newer members. Note the interim name of the society. The excerpt above may well be the first editorial. Also, the aims of the society have not changed one iota from the inception. It is a tribute to the foresight of our pioneering members.

Our Readers Write

50 Issues of Journalistic Excellence

The Ceylon Society of Australia marks yet another milestone in its journey of publishing informative and well-crafted articles relating to the history and heritage of Sri Lanka.

The journey commenced a little over 12 years ago when a few enthusiastic friends of Sri Lanka headed by Hugh Karunanayake put out the inaugural volume under the able penmanship of David Goodrich. Sixteen issues later, Sumane Iyer picked up and wielded a quill that flowed across the pages for seven years and 28 volumes of the journal till Doug Jones took up the baton and is running full steam ahead.

With each issue the bar was set a mite higher but the next cleared the crossbar with inches to spare (I do apologise for mixing my metaphors).

The Journal became a simple solution to our dire need for an increase in financial members, and today provides a nostalgic recall of women, men, events, places and the unique mix of cultures, peoples and religions that make Sri Lanka, Ceylon, Serendib, Taprobane, the wonder we know it to be.

SUNIL DE SILVA

President

Reading at leisure

I love reading the Journal and it educates me on the history of my birth country that I never knew, as we did not have time to study about it nor were we interested as younger individuals. As we get older there are more topics which are relevant to us and hence this journal seems to fill up the gaps in our knowledge. The cooking section is of particular interest to me and I keep the recipes for our future generations, in case they get interested one day.

Yes! I peruse it immediately I receive it; to see the headings first and then read at leisure.
DR EULIE HERAT

I keep all the Journals

I received the Journal this morning and as usual everything else dropped and I started reading it right away. I always enjoy reading the Journal ever since I became a member, thanks to the late David Goodrich who happened to be a relation of mine on my mother's side (Prins family) -

something I did not know at the time. Sometime back I had sent a few articles from my late father's scrap book. If they are still available, you are free to go ahead and publish them. I shall try to pull out some old time interesting articles when time permits and send them along. I have kept all the journals from the first one I received dated 2nd April 1988.

CLAIR HERFT

(Keep those articles coming in, Clair - Ed).

Much appreciated

Congratulations and thank you for the well presented colourful Journal No.49. Your editorial was a very good, tactful reminder which drove me to search my records of payment of subscriptions. Not being able to determine the financial status of my membership, I promptly sent off a cheque.

The article by Anne Sutherland Fraser brought back memories of an exceptionally happy and privileged period of my life as a very young Sinna Dorai (SD) in the Kelani Valley, on a place called Halgolle, off Yatiyantota and up against the Dolosbage Ranges. Halgolle was very much like Maliboda in its isolation; hilly beauty and wetness. The Sutherland Frasers were still on Maliboda; but nearing retirement. And Ken Peddy was for a time the Senior SD on Pannawatta when I first served in the K.V. Later, when I returned to the district as PD. I got to know Maliboda quite well; through visiting the successors of Sutherland Fraser, enjoying the drive through forested hills; often close to fast flowing streams. Getting there was always a challenge, but if one liked the silent muffling dampness of wet zone forests in Sri Lanka, it was a lastingly memorable drive. The Sutherland Frasers were very highly regarded, not only within the planting community, but by the villagers and workers.

Sadly, the Talduwa Club, when I visited it 15 years ago from Australia, was only a run down building with no social activity - for the new generation of planters had little inclination and cash to meet socially at district clubs which only served as venues for Planters' Association meetings. The only joy I got from going to Talduwa was from meeting Aaron, the faithful bar attendant - I can not bring myself to call a respectable old man 'bar boy'. Aaron proudly told me that his son was a squadron leader in the Air Force. I was so happy for him - the once

spirited cheer leader at our rugger matches. Maliboda was lucky to have a succession of good planters - post Sutherland Fraser and was still an attractive and well kempt property.

If you do have the address of Anne please pass this message onto her, conveying my appreciation for a beautiful evocative article. And Anne, please pass my salaams to Ken and Marie.
MAURICE FORSTER

Tony recalls

Once again I was taken with the contents of *The Ceylankan* (February 2010) and its range of subjects appealing to most tastes – and what excellent colour reproductions of CSA personalities on the back cover.

Having learnt to fly (starting December 1959) at the old Ceylon Air Academy at Ratmalana Airport, I was particularly interested in Stefan D'Silva's article on the airport's place in Sri Lankan aviation history. It jogged my memory of a very early visit there, in 1940 or possibly 1941. A carnival was held at the airport, I believe, for War Charities or it may have been for the 'Send A Plane Fund'. The theme or title of the carnival was 'Silver Wings' and, I believe, it was an initiative of the Aero Club of Ceylon. There were aircraft displays and stunt flying, as well as –most importantly for me – joy flights for Rs. 10 a head.

My father took me on a flight – I think the aircraft was a Curtiss Jenny – and we flew along the coast, around the Port of Colombo and back. This led to my being bitten by the aviation bug which was not satisfied until I got my Private Pilot's Licence in 1960.

I do realise that Stefan's article deals with Ratmalana Airport but it is worth mentioning that aircraft from the base on the Colombo Racecourse also defended Colombo in the April 1942 Easter Sunday air raid by the Japanese.

In reply to your inquiry re 'favourite things' I would have to pick 'Letters to the Editor' which are appearing more regularly now as they uncover a wealth of fascinating material.
TONY PERIES

Like coming home

It must be about ten years ago that I came to know *The Ceylankan*. I have been a regular contributor since then, though I cannot now remember who it was who introduced me to

the Journal. From first glance I realised that this was the kind of publication one wants to read: short pieces with no delusions of grandeur, good to have by your bedside and dip into at leisure, just the right bit of nostalgia, bits of arcane information, a coterie of writers of all ages, races, nationalities and, most importantly, no hang-ups, no controversy, no preaching, no condescending attitude to its readers. A good, civilised read.

In time I got to know David Goodrich, a really good man whose rich goodness perhaps set the tone of the Journal. We had a good friendship and I was happy I was able to have him to lunch with us on his visit to Sri Lanka. He was succeeded by an old friend, Sumane Iyer, who had been a schoolboy at Ananda College when I was tripping over my early steps in school-mastering, but he was fortunate to have slipped my grasp.

What do I wish the Journal to be hereafter?

Everything must change and progress but I wish the changes will be incremental. Its essential character, which mirrors that of the CSA should remain unchanged. It should remain unpretentious and essentially an in-house Journal - not to be a 'wannabe' scholarly one. I also feel that it will reproduce out-of-way pieces that have been published elsewhere: after all, we readers don't read *everything* even in latest newspapers and often miss out on articles and news items of particular importance. After reading and writing to academic journals, it is refreshing and restful to turn to *The Ceylankan*: it is a bit like coming home. I hope it will continue to be like that because that has been its strength. I would like to see the Journal online, and I wish we can do that in spite of the difficulties that we see just now. These are thoughts for the future, based upon over a decade of friendship with *The Ceylankan*: yes, I consider it a valued friend. Long may its simplicity, honesty and readability last.

SOMASIRI DEVENDRA

Your views are valuable!

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

The journey of a Journal - The Ceylankan notches a 50

With this issue, the 50th since the launch of the journal in 1998, *The Ceylankan* has reached a remarkable milestone.

When the first edition rolled off the press, its Founding Editor the late David Goodrich would not have foreseen the remarkable progress the journal would make in the ensuing years. The journal was originally meant to be a newsletter keeping members of the newly formed Ceylon Society of Australia informed of the Society's activities. Within the first few issues, however, the pace and tone was set for a unique semi-academic journal that would bring together contributions from an assortment of writers to give the journal a distinct image and character. The articles represented fragments of the cultural heritage of Sri Lanka scattered within the memories and knowledge of those who left its shores, seeking greener pastures elsewhere. *The Ceylankan* became the medium through which Sri Lankans and others with an interest in the country, could express their thoughts, delve into their memories and enjoy journeys back into the past within strictly non-partisan, non-political parameters. David Goodrich himself had not set foot in Sri Lanka, at the time the journal was founded. He was born and educated in New Zealand and in the USA and spent most of his working life in Australia. His maternal grandmother was Sri Lankan born and therein lay the spark that kindled his interest in the country. David edited the first 16 issues of the journal and laid the base for its image and did it with such vigour and enthusiasm that spelt nothing but success for the journal.

David's untimely death three years after he commenced editorship would, in normal circumstances, have been a mortal blow to the journal. His enthusiasm for the progress and development of *The Ceylankan*, however, was something that even the ravages of cancer could not stifle. Before he was incapacitated, he

By Hugh Karunanayake

arranged for the smooth transition of editorial work to his successor Sumane Iyer, and thence onwards it improved in leaps and bounds. In his farewell editorial David emphasised the need for continuing the principles of non-confrontational, non-political, non-racist and non-sectarian editorial policy - and that has been upheld meticulously by his successors.

International repute

Upon David's resignation, Sumane Iyer, who was the Society's librarian, very generously put his hand up for the position of editor, and dug into it immediately. Sumane, a man of considerable versatility by any standard, soon took the journal to

new heights of sophistication in design, layout and diversity of content. The journal gained in international repute and there were many bonuses coming its way, chief among which was the increase in the number of articles submitted for publication. This provided the editor with more options with regard to content. Unfortunately Sumane decided to throw in the towel after editing the journal for seven years. The Society owes Sumane a debt of gratitude for his highly acclaimed work and for giving us of his valuable time and guidance. Fortunately for the Society we once again were blessed by a successor - an equally enthusiastic and experienced journalist in Doug Jones who has taken on the editorial mantle after Sumane's resignation in 2009. The journal continues to be in competent and talented hands and it is our hope that Doug will continue to give us of his time and effort for many years to come. The editor's work is purely voluntary and is essentially a labour of love.

During the 12 years of its existence, the journal has drawn contributions from scores of eminent writers, some of whom have



The Long Shadow

He walked, enduringly unbent, tread firm.
Declining, dimming sun in swift pursuit.
His lengthening stride no match for marching rays;
He strove to catch the shadows ere they fled.

The ground lay sequined with the shards of day
The tall gums dripped with memories and sighs.
His heart ached to see the waving fronds of palms
And hear the Bo leaves in the clouds.

With anguished hands he grasped the passing moment
He strove to hold the finely sieving past
Centuries of heroes, villains, monument paused to mock
An aging exile's futile bid to turn the clock.

– MANNY CANDAPPA

April 2010

continued to adorn its pages with well-crafted articles on diverse topics. Apart for the odd exception, all articles have been contributed by members of the Society and in the words of Sumane "the journal is the glue that binds our worldwide membership together". Among the contributors, whose names may now be familiar to most readers through their many articles, are Joe Simpson from Canada, the late Kingsley Seibel, Somasiri Devendra from Sri Lanka, Vama Vamadevan, our Founding Treasurer, Malcolm Abeyakoon from the UK, the late Rodney St John and Tony Peries, our past President. We have had many contributions from *The Rambler* and from the *Raconteurs* on a wide variety of subjects, including the well-received series on well known homes and landmarks in Colombo by *The Rambler*.

The impact of the journal goes well beyond the membership of the Society as copies are distributed to all the major libraries in Australia, Sri Lanka, the United Kingdom and selected libraries in the USA. The international impact of the journal is underscored by the article by Gillian Parsons in this issue of the journal. She refers to her search for a photograph of her

great grandfather who had lived in Ceylon in the 19th Century. On visiting the library of the Society of Genealogists in London, she was pleasantly shocked to see an early issue of the *The Ceylankan* with a group photograph in which her ancestor was a member and which was the only image she ever has of him. A priceless discovery for her! A similar genealogical investigation by Glennys Ferguson led to her article describing the first Ceylonese family to be transported to Australia in 1826, a fact hitherto unknown even among historians. *The Ceylankan* has carried many similar stories with snippets of undiscovered historical information or information not placed in the public domain. The journal can therefore take its rightful place as a primary source of information for student, researcher, and academic.

With its 50th issue we can say that *The Ceylankan* has indeed arrived! It has secured its place in the literary firmament and is well established as a journal of unique character, unequalled by any comparable Sri Lankan publication. We salute our editors, past and present, for their magnificent work.



With time to kill on a bleak London day, GILLIAN PARSONS was browsing in a library when she chanced on a copy of the CSA Journal. In it she discovered that some of her Scottish ancestors were tea planters in Ceylon in the 1800s. She pursued details of her family history and writes about what she found.

Bisset treasure in The Ceylankan

It was a damp, dark day at the end of October. We were in London, at the Society of Genealogists, finally arriving after what should have been a quick two stop journey on the underground from St Pancras Railway Station. It had turned out to involve two train journeys

planter in Ceylon, but that other members of the family also, including my great grandfather, had worked in Ceylon as planters. The story starts in about 1852 in the county of Kincardineshire, in Scotland, when a group of 14 young men were recruited by one Peter Moir to work as Coffee Planters on the Ceylon Estates.

Author Shiva Breckenridge (2001) describes the group as being “small people of good stock”! They may have been small in stature, but one group member, James Taylor, was responsible for pioneering the growth of the first commercially viable tea plants and thus for starting off Ceylon’s great tea industry.

Breckenridge writes of two “Bissets” in the group; these were my great grandfather, William, and his older brother Hugh. They were later joined in 1864 by their younger half-brother, James Bisset (Fig.1). Hugh and Will are listed in *Ferguson’s 1863 Directory* as Planters at Imboolpittia and Bowhill Estates respectively. In

Peterson’s Ceylon Almanac for 1870 James is listed as Superintendent at Kataboola Estate and William has moved north to work as Manager of Kandanuware Estate, near Matale. There is, however, no mention of Hugh. This part of a 19th century Ceylon Estates Map (Fig 2) shows the proximity of the Imboolpittia, Bowhill and Kataboola Estates.

About 1869 a fungal infection first struck coffee plants in the Madulsima region. Within ten years the fungus had spread throughout the island. Although it did not kill the plants it reduced the yield by such an amount that the crop would no longer be viable. Hugh left the island first, and by 1871, was farming at Pitarrow Farm, Fordoun Parish, in Kincardineshire [Scotland]. By 1875 William had also returned to farming in Scotland, taking up the tenancy at Tewel

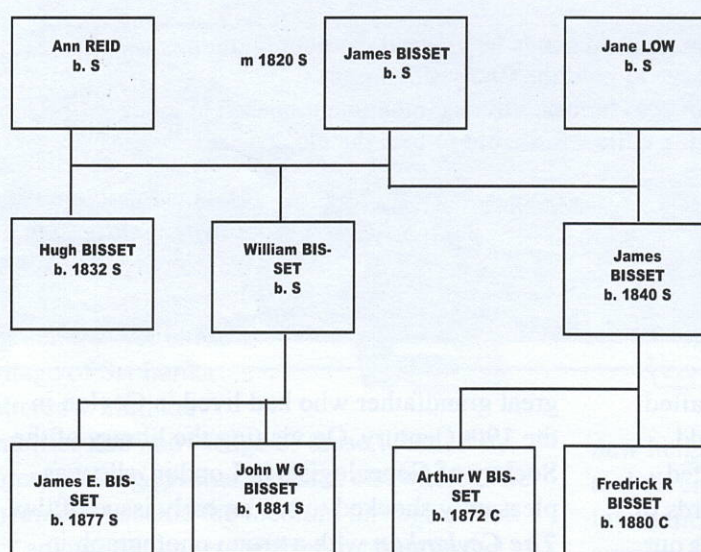
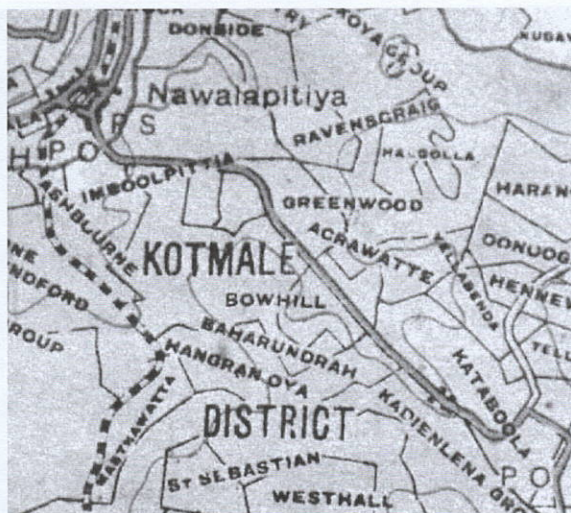


Figure 1: Simplified Bisset Family Tree, with birth (b) and marriage (m) and place of birth (S Scotland and C Ceylon) © MA Parsons.

• **Figure 1: Simplified Bisset Family Tree, with birth (b) and marriage (m) and place of birth (S Scotland and C Ceylon) © MA Parsons.**

in overcrowded carriages, plus a long walk. We had timed our London visit on a day when many of the lines were closed for maintenance! My plans to spend a short time in the Society’s library and then go on somewhere else in London evaporated. Instead I decided to have a “serendipity” day in the library – a day when I just “see what is there” rather than “hunt for a specific fact”- but back to this later.

My love affair with family history research started in earnest in 2004. Since then I have researched both in Scotland and London and travelled abroad to India and Sri Lanka. From research I learned that not only had my grandfather, James Edmond Bisset, been a tea



• *Figure 2: Detail from 19th century map showing Ceylon Estates, mounted on the wall of The Hill Club, Nuwara Eliya; photographed with permission of The Staff of The Hill Club. © (photograph) MA Parsons 2004, copyright status of map unknown.*

Farm (Fig. 3), Fetteresso Parish. Hugh and William did not live out the rest of their days in Scotland, but emigrated with their wives and families in 1883/4 to South Africa and Australia respectively. Their brother James stayed on in

This picture (Fig. 4) is the first glimpse we had in 2004 of the Broughton bungalow, which was sadly derelict.

My grandfather was joined in Ceylon by his brother, John William Gibson Bisset, listed in the [*Ceylon*] *General Directory for Addresses* (1907) as a Planter, Maha Uva, Kandapola (Also listed as planters are AW Bisset and FR Bisset; I believe these Bissets to be Arthur William and Frederick Robert, both sons of my great grandfather's brother, James Bisset). John William Gibson Bisset did not stay in Ceylon but left to work as a planter in the Nilgiri area of South India, followed in about 1910 by my grandfather, who took up a post as Superintendant on Mayfield Estate, and was to make good use of the knowledge he acquired in Ceylon. We were told that, according to the Mayfield Estate Records, James Edmond was responsible for planting the first tea plants on the estate; before his arrival the estate grew only coffee. Tea plants are kept in production for 150 years, so these same tea plants are still producing tea at Mayfield! We were able to sample tea from them when we visited Mayfield in 2007.

It is unfortunate that, although I have managed to track down many Scottish and



• *Figure 3: Tewel Farm, Fetteresso, Aberdeenshire (this area formerly Kincardineshire) Scotland. © G. Parsons 2004.*

Ceylon and turned to planting tea. James died in Colombo in 1899. Although he is buried in Ceylon, there is a memorial inscription to him on a family grave in Dunnottar Kirkyard in Scotland. My grandfather, James Edmond Bisset, left Australia and went to work as a tea planter on the Broughton Estate near Bandarawela in 1898.

Australian documents and have found "sightings" of the family in the Ceylon and India Directories, I have no contemporary family photographs of any of my family from the 19th century.

(Continued on page 10)



• **Figure 5:** *A group of Ceylon Coffee Planters, 1868, first published in The Times of Ceylon Annual 1917, republished in The Ceylankan, Journal #2, April 1998. Photograph supplied by Hugh Karunanayake.*



• **Figure 7:** *James Edmond Bisset, Nilgiris, Southern India, c1935*
© G Parsons.

• **(Right) Figure 6:** *Detail from Figure 5 (above) James Bisset (obscured) of Kataboola Estate seated behind another unknown person.*



The earliest photos I have of my grandfather are dated about 1935, taken in South India just before his retirement; there are none of my great grandparents. But what happened during my “serendipity day trip”? The very last thing I expected to discover on that day in London was a Bisset photo. Scanning the shelves on the upper floor of the Society of Genealogists a black, metallic, magazine holder caught my eye. It contained early copies of *The Ceylankan*. It was the first time I had heard of the Ceylon Society of Australia and intrigued when I discovered a picture entitled “Coffee Planters in Ceylon (circa 1868)” (Fig. 5). Seated in the second row, his face partly concealed, was James Bisset of

Kataboola Estate! The person in front of him is unidentified – would it be his brother William? There are some splendid beards on show; in fact most of the group have whiskers of one sort or another. I contacted the Society and was put in touch with Hugh Karunanayake. Hugh very kindly sent me a photographic copy of the group. The detail in the photograph (Fig. 6) shows James Bisset seated behind the unknown planter. Although part of his face is obscured, it can be seen that he has a receding hairline. My grandfather, James Edmund Bisset, may have inherited this gene as pictures of him show a gentleman with little hair (Fig. 7). My mother remembered helping to rub hair oil into his scalp to encourage growth, but with little effect!



•Figure 8: Broughton Division sign, Leangawella Estate, Sri Lanka © MA Parsons 2004.



•Figure 4: Approach road to the Broughton Bungalow (roof can just be seen), near Bandarawela, Sri Lanka. © G Parsons 2004.

Although my Bisset ancestors are long gone, the estates in Sri Lanka live on, but there have been changes. Tea replaces coffee as the main crop, and estates have been amalgamated with neighbouring estates. The estates we visited in 2004, old names Kandanuware and Broughton are now part of Bandarapola, and Leangawella (Fig. 8) Estates respectively. We were told that some estate records were well kept and the history of these estates can be traced back to their beginnings. Unfortunately this was not the case with Kandanuware, and in the limited time we had in Sri Lanka, I was unable to find out about the Bowhill and Broughton Estate records. It is reassuring to know that, through efforts of The Ceylon Society of Australia, the history of Sri Lanka is being kept alive.

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Good bowlers are born, not gifted says **PREMASARA EPASINGHE** in his fine tribute to a cricketer who became a legend in the game, not only in the country of his birth, but also, and more so, in the land where cricket was born.

Gamini Goonesena – a flawless cricketer and charming gentleman

Good bowlers are born, not made they say. No amount of practice and determination can make a first class bowler, if he has not been gifted with a great deal of natural aptitude, ability or skill. Basically, there are two fundamental principles to all types of bowling. This, I presume, every bowler must master – length and direction. Without them a bowler cannot hope to succeed. You may be able to hurl as quickly and fast as Courtney Walsh, Glenn McGrath, Wasim Akram or Brett Lee, but they will be liabilities to a side if they cannot aim at the stumps. There is also no point in spinning the ball like a top, if it reaches the batsman as a full toss. Therefore length and direction are the foundations of a good bowler.

Leg break bowling

In today's context, leg break bowling or leg spin bowling is a dying art. Anyone wishing to become proficient in leg break bowling must be prepared for hours of hard work. The spin for a leg break is usually imparted by lifting the third finger sharply and at the same time turning the wrist from right to left. The anticlock-wise spin which is thus obtained should make the ball break from leg to off when it pitches. A leg spinner should endeavour to flip the ball when he delivers it.

I dedicate this article to my good friend and co-commentator, the legendary Gamini Goonesena, whom I have lost touch with for many decades. The last occasion I met him was about two decades back, when he entrusted me to translate his valuable book *Art of Leg-Spin Bowling* to Sinhala. The two of us commented in the Royal-Thomian matches in the late 1980s. It was a real honour to be seated with him in the box and what pleasant times we had those days. He was an expert in analysing the game, which he loved so much.

At that time, the Royal-Thomian commentary team consisted of Mevan Peiris,

Ranil Abeynayake, Neil Chanmugam, Michael de Zoysa, S.Skandakumar, Mahinda Wijesinghe, Lucien Wijesinghe and Gamini Goonesena and yours truly, guest commentator in Sinhala. This, I feel, was the best commentary team and to commentate with such experienced cricketers was something I cherish to this day.

Gamini Goonesena is a lovable character, a fine human being and undoubtedly one of the best or the best leg spinner that Sri Lanka has produced. In fact, I will always remember the year 1989 when I had the honour of commenting from Lord's with Gamini Goonesena, Trevor Bailey, Colin Milburn and company. It was Gamini who introduced me to Peter Baxter and the commentary team. What an experience that was!

Pinnacle of school big matches

It's a dream for any schoolboy cricketer to play in a Royal-Thomian encounter. This annual encounter can be considered as the pinnacle of all big matches. A Royal-Thomian encounter was first played in 1879 and it is considered the second longest uninterrupted cricket match in the world. Therefore, any school cricketer who wears the Blue, Gold and Blue or Blue, Black and Blue cap and blazer will go down in history of the great tradition of these two great schools. Whoever wears the prestigious cap can proudly state to the world that he played in the greatest sporting pageant in Sri Lanka.

Gamini Goonesena, born on February 17, 1931 first played in a Royal-Thomian on March 16 and 17, 1947 under the captaincy of M. Kasipillai. Here Royal won by nine wickets. In his debut big match Goonesena captured 1 wicket for 9 runs in 7 overs at the Oval.

Under T.Parathalingam's captaincy in his second Royal-Thomian, played at the SCC grounds, Goonesena destroyed the Thomian batting by returning the magnificent figures of

30-10-44-7. This big match was played on March 12 and 13, 1948.

We must mention here another great bowling feat by another Royalist G.Tissa Kapukotuwa, son of the great educationist and administrator S.L.B.Kapukotuwa, who returned the figures of 17-6-35-7 in 1945. The late Tissa Kapukotuwa took to politics later on and represented the Teldeniya Electorate in Parliament.

Gamini Goonesena played in the 70th Royal-Thomian under the captaincy of Channa Gunasekera and captured 3 wickets for 64 runs in 24 overs. In this match, Goonesena scored 58 runs.

He represented the Sinhalese Sports Club (SSC) in the club circuit and later migrated to England. With sheer determination, commitment and hard work, he became a right-arm leg spinner and middle order batsman and signed up to play for Nottinghamshire County Cricket Club, which was founded in 1841. Gamini Goonesena began his career as a professional in 1963.

Cambridge University star

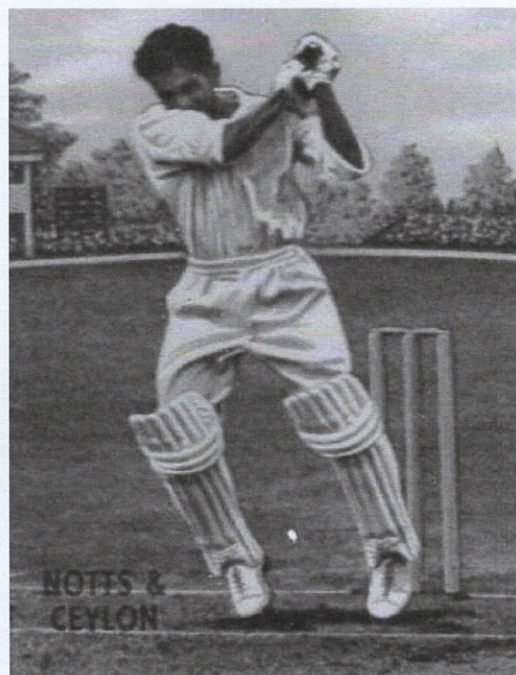
In 1964 Gamini Goonesena entered the prestigious Cambridge University which was founded in the 12th century. It was here that he brought credit and honour to Sri Lanka, winning the *Cricket Blue* and captaining the *Light Blues* University of Cambridge in his first year (1957) having a future England captain Ted Dexter (who played 62 Tests, 102 innings, 8 not outs, 4502 runs, highest score 205, Average – 34.93 and best bowling figures of 4/10) as his deputy.

In the historic annual cricket fixture between Oxford and Cambridge, Gamini Goonesena was at his best and scored an epic double century (211) at Lord's – the Mecca of cricket. He is the only Sri Lankan to score a double century for Cambridge. Goonesena's match bag of 5-90 for Cambridge was a major factor in the defeat of Oxford University by an innings and 186 runs. It was the heaviest defeat inflicted on the *Dark Blues*. Further, Goonesena and G.W.Cook (111) were associated in a 7th wicket partnership of 289 runs, which was a first class record at Lord's.

During his distinguished career at Cambridge University from 1954 to 1957, Goonesena was the only player at that time, from either university, to have amassed more than 2000 runs (2309) and captured 200 wickets (208)

in first class cricket. This is the highest recorded by a Cambridge player.

Undoubtedly, the great Gamini Goonesena was the most outstanding all-rounder produced by Oxford or Cambridge universities since the big contests began in 183 years ago. The battle between the universities was interrupted due to world wars in the early 1900s and the 1943-1946 period.



Gamini Goonesena's is a household name in England. He performed the 'Double' – 1000 runs and 100 wickets - twice for Nottinghamshire. His best was in 1955 with 1350 runs and 134 wickets. His all-round performances earned him a place to represent E.W.Swanton's XI in 1955-56 and the Cavaliers in 1964-65 to the West Indies and an International XI to India, Pakistan and Ceylon (Sri Lanka). Later, in the early 1960s, he worked for the Tea Board in Australia. During this period, he played for New South Wales in the Sheffield Shield.

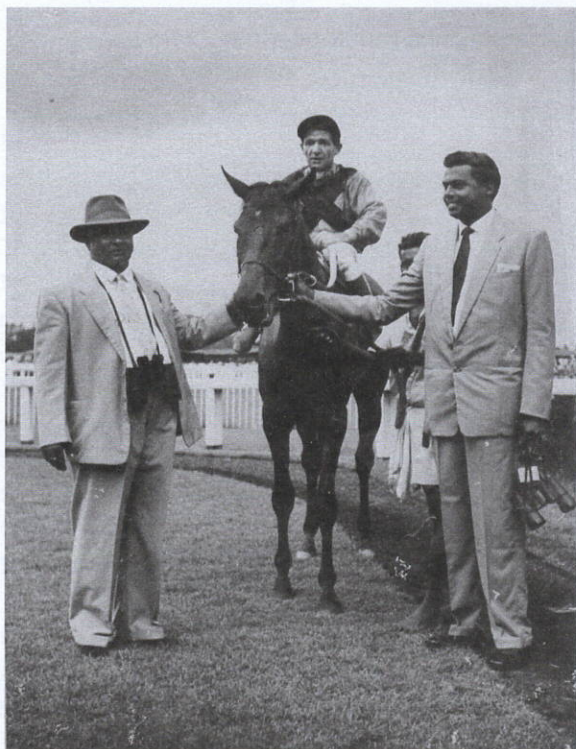
In the 1960s, the late Gamini Dissanayake, who is considered the 'Yugapurusha' of Sri Lanka cricket, invited Gamini Gunasena to join the cricket administration of Sri Lanka. He captained Ceylon, his native land, but his great heroes in cricket flourished in England and Australia.

(Continued on Page 18)

*HARRY DE SAYRAH gives us a fleeting glimpse of some exciting days of horse racing in Ceylon as he recalls youthful dreams of owning race horses and leading them to the winner's circle.

From the "Gandhi Side" to the Queen's Box

It is said that horse racing is the *Sport of Kings* but I was no king when I got interested in this sport. I went to the races at the Havelock Racecourse in my youth and stood in the baking hot sun in the Rs 1.00 enclosure called the 'Gandhi Side' in the middle of the racecourse. My parents, who were keen turfites and silent punters, sat in the Members' Enclosure in the Grand Stand whenever they attended.



• Miss Anoma *after her victory of the A.W.Bartlett Cup at the Havelock Racecourse with veteran trainer A. Selvaratnam (left) and proud owner Harry de Sayrah. Australian jockey Bill Stevens astride.*

It was greatly exciting to me to see the famous Cotton Hall, Kunj Lata, Cosy Corner go past the winning post and watch the owners of the winning horses lead them into the paddocks and face a battery of photographers and receive those Sterling Silver Trophies like the Governor-General's Cup for Thoroughbreds and the Roberts Cup for the Arab horses. I often use to dream when will I get an opportunity to achieve this?

That opportunity came one day in the late 1950s when my mother Charlotte purchased, on easy-payment terms, a grey mare called *Persian Approach* from Sir Donatus Victoria for Rs.5000 and registered the mare in my name. My racing

colours were Orange Black Cross Sashes, front and back, and Black Cap.

The mare was trained by Eustace Samaraweera and won five races. She liked the left hand track at Nuwara Eliya where races were held during the April season. *Persian Approach* found the heat in Colombo distressing and whenever she raced in Colombo, she was taken back immediately after the races to Nuwara Eliya to be brought back on a Thursday for the following Saturday's races.

We had a misunderstanding with Samaraweera and moved stables to veteran trainer A.Selvaratnam – a trainer who won many famous races for his clients. One day,



• *Persian Approach led into the Winner's enclosure by me and trainer Eustace Samarawira with jockey P D P Perera on board in Nuwara Eliya.*

Selvaratnam came home with his stable jockey and son-in-law Ted Fordyce and persuaded us to purchase a two-year old filly *Golden Optic*, imported by the Ceylon Turf Club (CTC) for Rs.8000 on easy-payment terms. The filly was renamed *Miss Anoma* after my lucky sister. *Miss*

Anoma won 16 races, including four Sterling Silver Trophies. Our string of race horses increased with the purchase of a third horse *Master Rukman*, named after the first De Sayrah grandson. *Master Rukman* won only one race - the S.G.Morley Cup which was presented to me by the Prime Minister Dudley Senanayake.

Now my dream had finally come true and I got numerous opportunities to lead my winning horses into the paddocks and go up to the Queen's Box and receive trophies from various political and racing dignitaries at the time. *Miss*



Members of the Board of Stewards (from left) Francis Amarasuriya, Eric de Soysa and S.R. de Silva presenting the Channer Cup to Harry and his mother Charlotte de Sayrah at the Queen's Box in Colombo.

Anoma won for me the W.B.Bartlett Cup and I received the trophy from the Governor-General Sir Oliver Goonetilleke.

This mare also won the Channer Cup and I received the trophy from Francis Amarasuriya, President of the Board of Stewards of the Ceylon Turf Club. The fourth Trophy, the Closenbergh Cup, I received from Sir Razik Fareed, President of the Board of Stewards a year later

Origin of Channer Cup

The origin of the Channer Cup is worth noting. In the early days of horse racing in Colombo, the 1000 meter-long straight course starting from the Queen's Club end of the course

and leading up to the winning post', was known as the "Channer's Straight". This straight course was scrapped in the late 1950s and a trophy named the Channer Cup was introduced.

There were many foreign jockeys who rode for me. To name a few: there was Ted Fordyce, Bill Stevens, F L Smith and Ted Doone - all Australian jockeys. Ted Doone is now 92-years old and an inmate in a Nursing Home. Fordyce and Smith rode in Sri Lanka for many years and married Sri Lankans. Among the local jockeys were F J Isaacs, P D P Perera,

J T Samarawira (nephew of the trainer) W Somapala and Don Benjamin. Isaacs, a light weight jockey, won many races for my stables.

There were many well known race horse owners, namely, Vernon Rajapakse, Thaha Cassim, Sir Razik Fareed, The Amarasuriya Brothers (Francis and Buddy) Chevalier Sir Chittampalam Gardiner, Sir

Donatus Victoria and Sir Oliver Goonetilleke, who raced his horses in the name of his

daughter Sheila Dodanwela.

AUTHOR'S NOTE: I have presented two of the Sterling Silver Trophies to my Old School St Joseph's College and are offered as Challenge Cups to the school's Senior and Junior Sportsmen of the Year.

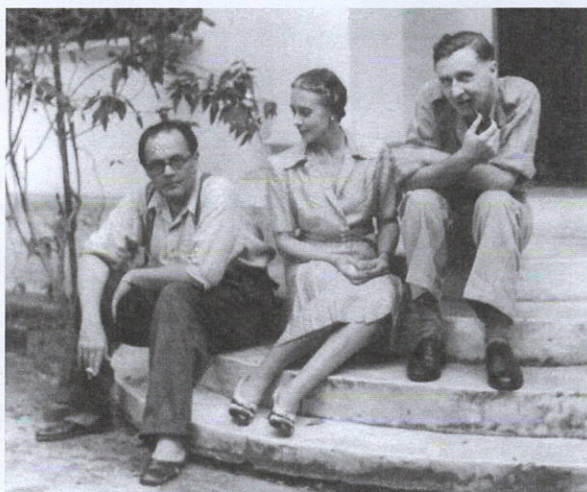
*Harry de Sayrah OAM JP was awarded the Order of Australia in the Queen's Birthday honours in 2007. He is also a **Melvin Jones Fellow**, a rare honour bestowed on Lions Club members for distinguished service to charity.



Mementoes of Lionel Wendt

BILL MACKIE, son of a tea planter, was born in Nuwara Eliya and spent his first six years on a tea estate near Kandy before his father in 1927 took up farming in Victoria. Here Bill pursued a career in agricultural science. Family history is now his main preoccupation.

When my Aunt Gladys died 30 years ago I inherited some mementoes of her friendship with Lionel Wendt and of their shared interests. These items reflect Lionel's great enjoyment of humour, his creativity and his desire to share his interests with other people.



• (From left): *Lionel Wendt, Gladys Forbes and Brian Easdale.*

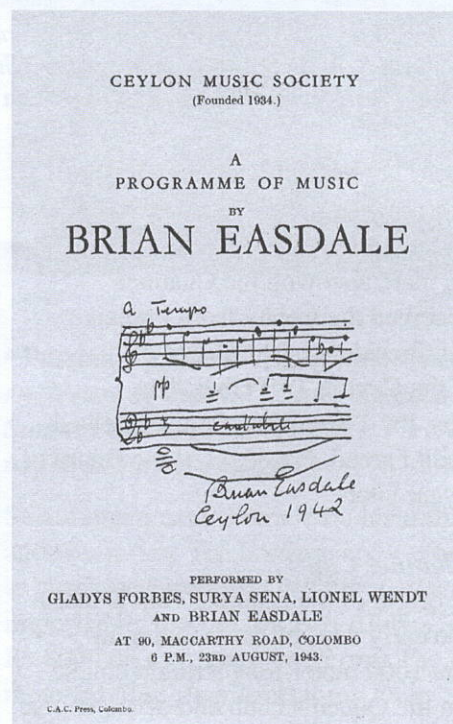
Gladys Mackie was born in 1897 and attended school in Melbourne, where her father was a tea merchant before he moved to Colombo in 1909 to continue his career in the tea industry. After leaving school, Gladys lived in Edinburgh from 1914 to 1919, when she studied piano and singing and became a professional pianist. In Edinburgh in 1919 she married O.B. (Ossie) Forbes before she returned with him to his home in Colombo. For many years she had an active role as a pianist, teaching and performing in public recitals. For three years she was president of the Music Teachers Association and from 1938 to 1948 president of the Ceylon Music Society.

Lionel Wendt's career as a pianist paralleled that of Gladys Forbes. His talent as a schoolboy in Colombo led him to further study of piano music in the Royal Academy of Music in London, after he had studied law. On return to

Colombo in 1924, he entered the legal profession, but became immersed in music, with public recitals and tuition and a declining interest in law as a career. While overseas he developed his appreciation of the visual arts, especially painting as it developed in the 20th century. Photography had interested him as a schoolboy and from about 1930, photography became his greatest creative endeavour. Recitals of compositions for two pianos brought Gladys and Lionel together on the concert platform, while the Ceylon Music Society was their common ground. Photography was probably introduced to Gladys by Lionel – he had his first Rollielflex camera in the early 1930s; Gladys had used her Rollei for some time before entering her work with it in the annual competitions run by the Ceylon Photographic Society in about 1938.

Mementoes of music – Concert programmes

A "Two-piano Concert Programme", presented by Gladys and Lionel in 1936, was a memorable occasion that received a glowing review in "The Times of Ceylon". Another concert, in

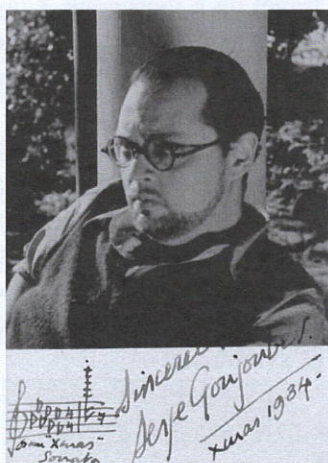


• *August 1943 concert*

August 1943, presented music composed by Brian Easdale while he was in Ceylon during the preceding year. In this concert, the pianists were Gladys, Lionel and Brian, with singer Surya Sena. Again they received the critic's approval and the comment: "This is probably the first time that a modern composer of any distinction has celebrated his world premiere in Colombo."

Christmas Cards by Lionel Wendt

An obituary on Lionel Wendt, published in "The Ceylon Daily News" shortly after his death in December 1944, stated "...some of his last hours must have been spent in the darkroom, preparing whimsical and indelicate surprises for distribution to his friends as Christmas cards". Some cards sent to Gladys show his fondness for whimsical self-portraiture; another is a surrealist surprise that he composed, while for an indelicate surprise he adapted a commercial card depicting indigenous art.



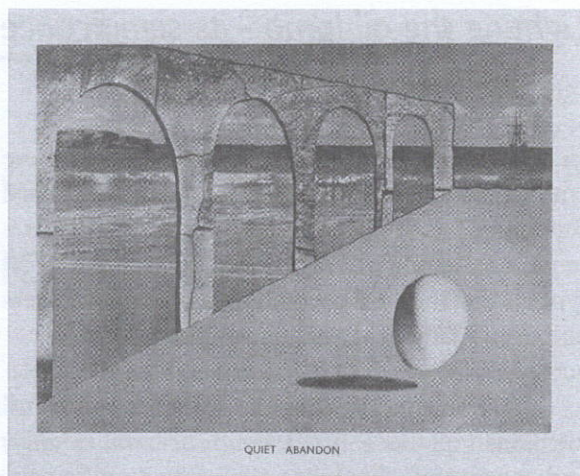
• 1934 – A whimsical surprise.



An indelicate surprise - undated.

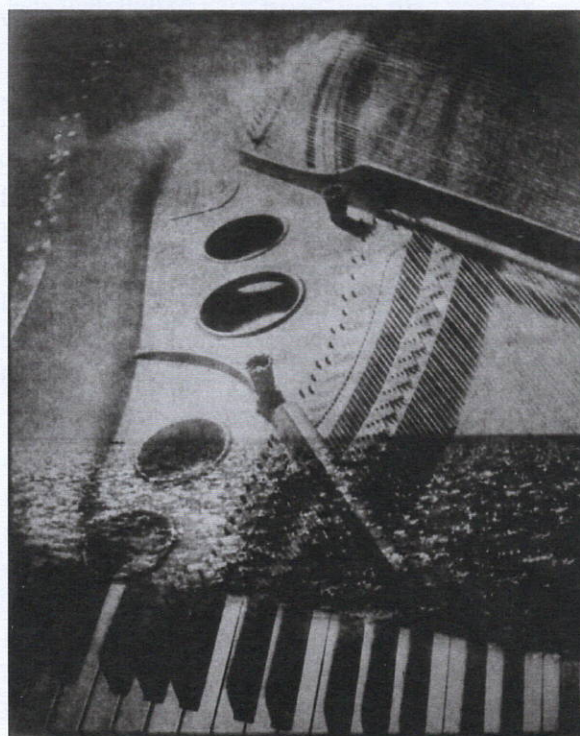
Lionel Wendt Photograph

Wendt built an international reputation as a photographer; the Australia's National Gallery, Canberra, bought one of his surrealist style works in 2006. A photograph he gave to Gladys



• 1941 – surrealist surprise

Forbes, showing montages of images of a piano keyboard, frame and strings, seems to have been created by Lionel to celebrate their joint interest in the music of the piano. This large photo (38 x30 cm) was given the title "Piano Lyric".



• Piano Lyric

Buried treasure

In the August issue Bill Mackie will continue on Wendt's passion for Beauty – especially for aural and visual beauty – and how he paved the way for his passion to be enshrined for posterity.

Lighting the oil lamp - its significance

SOMASIRI DEVENDRA explains...

In Sri Lanka, we light a lamp whenever we commence an undertaking or inaugurate a special function. It can be a simple little clay lamp or a large, ornate one of brass. What is common to all types is that they use coconut oil as fuel. Foreigners and even many Sri Lankans wonder what this act signifies.

The act of lighting the lamp brings several elements together – fire, a lamp (of brass or clay) and coconut oil. Each has a specific significance, but pride of place must go to Fire.

FIRE: In the Vedic pantheon, Fire was the manifestation of the god *Agni*. His special duty was to be the link between the worlds of gods and of humans, to keep the gods informed of what was happening in the human world. Thus, when we commence an undertaking we wish to succeed, we invite Agni to tell the gods of what we are about to do, so that they may bless it. The invitation is by lighting a lamp.

But Agni is not merely the flame on a wick. He is Fire. We invite him in other ways, too. Before we go into a new house, we make a temporary fire-place and boil a pot of milk till it boils over and spills on the ground. Here we find a collection of symbols: *Fire* is *Agni*, telling the gods that a new house needs their benediction. *Milk* is the symbol of the fertility that we hope our new house will be blessed with. The milk that overflows and spills

upon the *earth* is our offering to the goddess of the Earth, the “*Mahi kanthawa*”, a goddess from a submerged pre-Buddhist religion, whom we have still not forgotten. All these are fertility symbols of unknown, but universal, provenance added on to the rootstock of the pre-Buddhist Vedic pantheon.

LAMP: To these symbols is added the Lamp: originally of clay lamp and later a brass lamp. There is a link with Buddhism here. At a Buddhist temple, we place flowers before an icon (statue, tree or dagoba) not as a sacrifice to it, but in an act of meditation: that “just as the flowers fade away and die, so will this body of ours”. We next light the little oil lamp, meditating that, just as the flame on the wick will go out when the oil in the lamp is consumed, so will life end when the *karma* that generated it is exhausted. (Lamps are lit in Hindu temples too, but the fuel is camphor, and the act is a form of worship of a god).

COCONUT OIL: This was the all-purpose oil, symbolic of the hydraulic-agrarian civilisation of the Sinhala people. It is flammable, but of high viscosity, and cannot travel up a long wick. Clay lamps are therefore shallow and dish-shaped: the brass lamps also are shallow, though with multiple wicks and ornately designed.

Thus, in lighting the lamp we stitch together a Vedic god, a pre-Buddhist Sinhala deity, symbols of fertility, the essence of Sinhala agrarian civilisation and Buddhist meditation. In fact, we weave together many strands that make up Sri Lankan civilisation. A potent mixture, and a powerful aggregate of symbols..

Gamini Goonesena ... Continued from page 13

He acted as Sri Lanka's representative at the International Cricket Council (ICC).

Further he served as the manager of the Sri Lanka Test team in mid-1980s on its tour of India. Undoubtedly, he was one of the most knowledgeable of cricketers and an efficient cricket administrator. While in Sri Lanka he worked at Demos as their marketing manager.

Gamini Goonesena is the best leg spinner and the best all-rounder Sri Lanka produced before gaining Test status. Today, I understand that he is domiciled in Australia. Unfortunately, Sri Lanka did not make best use out of this great cricketer.

Gamini Goonesena was a shrewd captain. Peter May (Surrey), Colin Cowdrey (Kent), professional Cyril Washbrook (Lancashire) are some of his rival captains in

England. Peter May and Colin Cowdrey both captained England.

A fine conversationalist, Gamini Goonesena is a charming and charismatic figure. As a cricketer, he was meticulous, organised and flawless. His contribution to cricket has been outstanding. It will be remembered for all time.

Editor's note: *Gamini Goonesena is no stranger to us. A long standing member of our Society, he was a regular attendee at our meetings especially in the early days, and many members will recall with pleasure his delightful “Cricketing Reminiscences” presented to a CSA meeting in August 2000, and some humorous episodes in his cricketing career which he related to a very appreciative audience at our Annual Dinner in the following year.*

Innocence lost – the sad tale of Park Road, Colombo 5

by ANICCA

Park Road, Colombo 5 is a busy thoroughfare connecting Havelock Town to Narahenpita. A quick look at Google Earth reveals many roads leading from it, presumably to residential properties. Hundreds, perhaps thousands, of vehicles traverse it in both directions, day and night. A veritable congeries of man and machine performing an ‘insane’ dance up and down this road, prompting one to ask in the words of T.S. Eliot, ‘to what purpose? I do not know’. However, I am privy to certain memories of these surroundings of an eminently peaceful nature, which I would like to share with you.

In mid-1945 our family moved into a brand new four-bedroom house on Manthri Place (about 150 yards from the top of Park Road, on the left). It, however, had a few drawbacks. Firstly, although light fittings were installed in it, we had no lights! War time restrictions, I believe. A two to three-day temporary connection was provided for a sister’s wedding in September 1945. Secondly, although it had two spacious bathrooms, a drainage system was only a dream to be realised in the future (certainly not by 1950 when we moved). Each morning, night soil was removed by men euphemistically called ‘conservancy labourers’. They would gather at their workplace (at the top of Park Road) and



• *The entrance to Park Road from Havelock Road today. Conservancy labourers’ meeting point 25 years ago is to the left of the entrance.*

collect carts containing their paraphernalia and wander off to the houses. At each Sinhala and Tamil New Year these labourers would form small groups of instrumentalists (horns, drums,

etc.) and perform outside homes for a small donation. These groups were affectionately called ‘sakkili bands’.

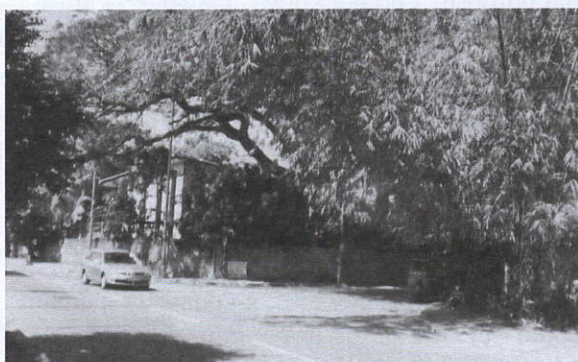
A third drawback (at least in adult eyes) was that, unlike Park Road, this road was not sealed. This was, however, a youngster’s dream come true, for during heavy rains, water would collect in pools along its entire length providing me with hours of enjoyment tramping barefoot through them! Simple pleasures!

At the beginning of Park Road on the left hand side was the conservancy labourers’ centre, followed by the grounds of the Colts Cricket Club extending up to Park Lane some 75 to 100 yards away. Military tents housing the army were visible on the ground in mid-1945. The entire area was fully fenced off by barbed wire. The club pavilion was presumably non-functional at that stage. The tents disappeared later in the year, the ground re-established for competitive cricket no doubt, and practice nets installed at one end. Tennis courts were established later, near the Park Lane end at the bottom. On some evenings the two Claessen brothers, excellent cricketers from Wesley College, would be given private coaching at the nets.

Beyond Park Lane was a slight dip in the road on the left of which was a cottage of a dhobi [people who washed clothes] family. They would wash their clothes and lay them to dry on a patch of land next to their living quarters. This land extended up to Manthri Place leading to a large two-storied house which was fenced off from the road. The land was owned by a dusky, moustachioed, swarthy old Indian called K.K.

(Continued on page 20)

Raman who lived at one side with his family, in an area fenced off by trees. His son, in later years, worked as a cashier at the Medical Faculty canteen and was affectionately known as 'uncle' to many batches of medicos. There were a few coconut trees in the area to which a few cows owned by Mr Raman were tethered. It provided a perfect area for a batch of restless youngsters to play tennis ball cricket after school, soon joined by some local lads, many of whom were classmates of mine at Royal College. Driving past the area some years later, I observed some government offices built there had obliterated all traces of its past 'life'.



• *Park Lane entrance to Park Road. The dhoby house was located in the area to the right of the three-wheeler under the trees.*

On Park Road beyond Manthri Place only three houses then existed on the left. The first was owned by a Mr S.B.O. Illangakoon (of Lake House, I think). He and his family moved to a much more attractive house in Colombo 7 (probably serviced with drainage!) adjoining Mr H.V. Perera's house in Torrington Avenue. Next to the Illangakoons lived Mr Ephraims, a blind piano tuner. We youngsters were intrigued to see him cycling tandem behind his chauffeur, up and down Park Road in the evenings. The third house was occupied by a Mr Perera, a lawyer I think. Beyond his property was bare land up to the Fife Road intersection.

The opposite side of Park Road was quite remarkable. Its entire length from Havelock Road to Fife Road was fenced off by barbed wire. Within the fenced off area was a vast number of abandoned military vehicles. In the upper section of the field was a small hut which housed a watcher who sounded a gong (by striking a piece of metal) each hour throughout the night. Quite surreal!

Sometimes our cricket matches on Mr Raman's land would be interrupted by the arrival of a black Rolls Royce which pulled over on the right hand side and from it would emerge the figure of Sir Oliver Goonetilleke. We would gather round the car to admire this marvel of modern motor engineering. We took due note of the plush leather upholstery of the seats and, most striking of all, a box attached to the rear of the front seat. In our collective wisdom, we decided that this was a refrigerator that provided cool drinks for this august gentleman when on the move.

Beyond Fife Road, apart from a small area at the Park Road - Fife Road Junction, on the left, fenced off by trees and containing cadjan huts, was bare land on both sides of Park Road. The bare land beyond this was taken up for playing cricket. It was a fairly large area extending across up to Chitra Lane which came off Thimbirigasyaya Road. There were substantial properties on Chitra Lane across the road including one owned by the well known businessman W.D. Fernando, and a similar large house owned by the Abeygunewardenes, whose family included two well known tennis playing sisters and a young doctor.

This stretch of bare land was quite flat and was used for cricket matches by older



• *The location of our cricket field, now replaced by a Government office.*

boys. I was roped in to fill the numbers at one memorable match (for me, that is). Our side was bolstered by the inclusion of Gamini Goonesena and Channa Gunasekera, two schoolboy heroes of mine from Royal. I went in at number eleven when Gamini was in his 90s and clearly keen to get a 100. He gave me some advice which

was to no avail because I was too overawed by the occasion (even John Howard with his quaint action, delivering balls that usually stopped 10 to 15 yards from the batsman, could have got me!). Many years later when driving past I was stunned at the rape of this lovely area, with barely a blade of grass to be seen for the houses.

The Colts Cricket Club had a good table tennis table in the pavilion and a number of us local youths would gather there for a game. I would drop in frequently on my way home by bus after school. There were two bar 'boys', the younger of whom was particularly good at the game and gave me much practice in sharpening up my skills. I recall a tournament they held for us which was won by Soli Captain, then a young boy and now a leading businessman in Colombo. Later in the evenings the oldies would wander in after work, for a drink and a game of cards.

Although young, we had a certain degree of freedom of movement within the pavilion. This enabled me to get a feel of the Tamil Nadu cricket team that visited Sri Lanka around this time led by the burly V. Pattabiraman. Very little 'international' cricket was played in Sri Lanka at the time, so this was something of a highlight for me.

Although life was extremely serene in those days, I must recount two incidents of a slightly different complexion. A relative of ours stayed a few days with us to visit a relative in hospital. One night she came racing in, in great distress, and it was obvious that she had gone through quite a traumatic experience. We youngsters were told that someone had tried to snatch the necklace she was wearing. Much later, being older and wiser, I realised that the poor lady must have lost more than the jewellery round her neck that night! I suspect this might have happened in late 1945 when the army was still billeted on the Colts grounds.

The second incident involved me personally at a later date (1948/49?). I returned one night after a school prize giving and to my horror discovered that there was no one from home to chaperone me back. Blind terror gripped me as I realised my predicament. Memories of our relative's plight a while ago came flooding in. Would something similar happen to me, I wondered. Still, I decided I had to make a dash for it, and that I did, letting my little legs carry me as fast as I could down the road, completely dark on this stretch. Probably the feel of the

hard road surface under my feet steered me appropriately down it and away from the barbed wire fences on either side. The first trace of light from the dhobi house brought immense relief. I was safe once again. I cannot recall whether I was too proud to mention my fear and subsequent actions when I reached home. Still, the days of counselling, stress management, psychiatric help were not heard of at the time and that was the end of that.

I hope I have conveyed to the reader how easy going and fulfilling life in those days was, in this neck of the woods, for a youngster. Two further aspects of life I shall enumerate to illustrate this further.

Like any young boy, I had dreams of being able to ride a bicycle. So, when the rest of the family was having an afternoon siesta over the weekends, I would sneak out of home with my brother's bicycle and with our servant boy helping, struggle up and down Park Road attempting to acquire this skill. Never once were we in danger of being injured by speeding vehicles, the only injuries sustained by me resulting from tumbles on to the road. Later we young boys would cycle with impunity on the various surrounding roads.

Then again, a large group of us, all family members, would walk down Park Road of an evening (a common practice in Sri Lanka in those days) in total safety. Hardly ever were we in danger of being involved in an accident from a recklessly driven car – which were few in number anyway. Incidentally, the first hint of things to come was evident at this time (1948/49) when the first substantial properties appeared around the top end of Park Road, opposite the Colts grounds. Who could possibly have predicted the incredible proliferation of houses in this area right up to Narahenpita Road that was to follow?

Change, the Buddha (and Herodotus later) said, is inevitable in life and is its only certainty. An indisputable truth, but still, it is hard not to shed a silent tear for the lost innocence of this once serene corner of Colombo.



The more we care for the happiness of others, the greater our own sense of well-being becomes.

– The Dalai Lama

A Planter's Wife

by Anne Sutherland Fraser

The best preparation for being a planter's wife is to have been a planter's child as one is then familiar with the lifestyle and "knows the ropes". Most importantly, one is conversant in Tamil and Sinhala to get by and very much accustomed to the solitary plantation life.

My first married home was on Attampettia Estate, near Hali Ela where my husband, Ian Ritchie was a Sinna Dorai (small boss). He was of the last influx of "imported" planters and unusually for that era, had an university degree in Agriculture.

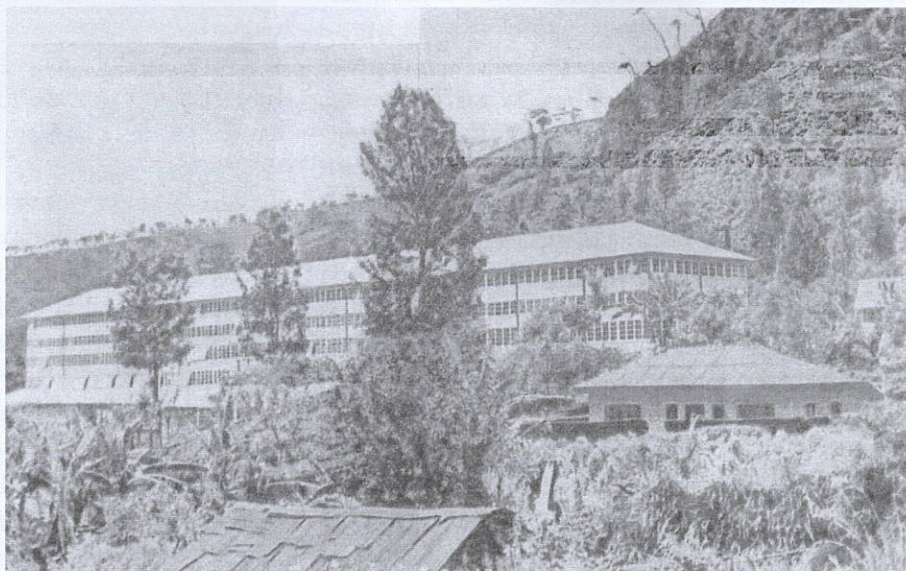
The changed status from being a senior (PD) Periya Dorai's (big boss) daughter to being an SD's wife meant a smaller bungalow and garden with fewer staff as befitted one's station and learning to *know one's place!* SDs' wives do not rush to greet senior Visiting Agents (VA) in the club bar even if they are old family friends.

So finally I had my own home and duties ... giving instructions to the cook, now peeved at having his position usurped; supervising the gardeners, likewise disgruntled at having someone there all day to ensure the required work got done. Only Emma, the dhobi woman, who came to the house each week, was pleased to welcome me and showed me the correct way to iron a shirt which has stood me in good stead ever since.

Uva was a far cry from the KV (Kelani Valley) where I had grown up as the estates were closer together and tarred roads existed everywhere. There was no jungle, which enabled an enjoyable social life with many planters clubs and cinemas in both Badulla and Diyatalawa as well as neighbours within easy driving distance. In those days, there was no TV and only the crackling BBC Overseas Service ... so socialising was the sole form of entertainment

we had. Club days with tennis followed by bridge, billiards and chatting in the bar were always something to look forward to, with "the Tea" being provided by members in roster.

Living in isolation meant one developed hobbies and interests to fill the time and coming from a family of avid readers, I eventually became the club librarian with the benefit of having all the books to read before the final few selected were put into the library. Like my father, I was an enthusiastic letter writer; wrote short stories and poetry for the fun of it and attempted to teach myself Italian.



• Dambatenne estate factory today.

Eventually my husband was transferred to Liptons and we settled on Dambatenne Estate in Haputale where Ian became the PD. The owners, Liptons were "the best." The estate overlooked spectacular scenery being perched on the lip of the escarpment looking down into the low-country and during certain times of the year, the light beam from the Great Basses lighthouse was visible.

The Manager's Bungalow had been Sir Thomas Lipton's eastern residence and was an enormous house, with seven acres of gardens. There were four blue-grass lawns running down to a large trout pond, croquet lawn and a swimming pool. As the water for the pool came down from 6000 feet, it was seldom used. In the

garden was an upright yew bush trimmed with a tip at the top. Legend had it that it was copied from the Duchess of Sutherland's right breast!

Many of Liptons VIP visitors came to visit the estate, from Lord and Lady Leverhulme with their two debutante daughters to busloads of Japanese tea buyers, 30 at a time, who were provided with lunch. I was pre-warned they were extremely fond of *Koli Kuttu* plantains and provided many bowls of them. At that time, bananas were rare and expensive in Japan.



• *Family Christmas in Queenstown 1970.*

After my sister Rose Somerville produced her first daughter, Gabi, I wanted one too (sisters copy) and in due course had my daughter Jacqui delivered by Dr Siva Chinnatamby - and so the fifth generation had arrived in the island. And in many ways my childhood was repeated.

Jacqui had a Delft pony, Sammy, who was very stubborn like all ponies are but she obviously learnt a lot as she's now at International level Dressage Training in England. And like me, she also had a pet goat also named Millie. Supervising the house and staff took up most of my time. One was always busy. We were provided with chest freezers to assist the extensive degree of entertaining and the home farm provided pork, chickens, ducks, rabbit and various vegetables and fruit. The vegetable garden was protected from invading monkeys from the low-country (who climbed the escarpment during the dry season) by a roster of gardeners banging saucepan lids but they still managed to get through.

Overseas visitors would ask, but what do you DO all day, eyeing five house servants and four gardeners. My reply was always the same: I had to manage and supervise everything from polishing of the silver to how many beds of beans were planted at a time. There was a lot to do but nothing to 'think about?'

Eventually I joined the BBC Overseas Listeners' Panel which required being knowledgeable about changing wavebands as they crossed from Hong Kong to the Middle East to submitting critiques of programmes.

Jacqui joined her three cousins at the International School in Colombo where the neighbouring house now provided the Boarding unit for upcountry children. (Two Peddies, one Somerville and one Ritchie). The children had an Exeat weekend every two weeks with parents providing a collection and return roster. Once when arriving home, our Appu, Rajaratnam, came running out in great excitement telling Jacqui, "Come quickly Missy, Millie has two man-children!" and we ran to the stable block to find Millie with twin babies

whose little faces weren't much bigger than an egg. The next morning, they were hopping and skipping so Jacqui now had three pet goats and Sammy, in the neighbouring stall, kept a wary eye on these two hyperactive new arrivals.

There was a dairy farm on Dambattenne as free milk was provided for labourer's children of school age. Once, my husband met the visiting vet with his AI kit and puzzled, said to him, "But none of the cows are in season?" The vet, with the greatest disdain replied, "Sir, it's the FULL MOON!" Well, what did Ian know; he was just a mere British planter.

Once when on overseas leave to England, little Jacqui had occasion to tell her 'very upright' and British grandmother that yes she'd seen God! He came every year to the house on the tractor with lots of lights and tom-toms. He lived in the temple. And the priest gave us garlands of flowers. For that I received a very stern look. But I too had grown up with many gods, including the one in the Catholic Church in Yatiyantota.

(Continued on Page 24)

A Planter's Wife...

Wesak in Uva was a glorious fairyland of twinkling lights as far as the eye could see and we always drove to some high point for the children to enjoy the display. Wesak or Christmas received equal appreciation as that was how I'd been brought up.

On a trip to the countryside (on leave), with English grandmother in the back seat, Jacqui also enquired why the buffaloes were black and white. I heard the sigh and for once, kept my mouth shut.

As political events overtook life, there came the time to recognise we had to leave Ceylon. A major insurgency required a dawn drive to Colombo to remove Jacqui from school and with the youngest and nanny Freda, in the back seat of the Land Rover, I cracked a rib while twisting around to ensure they were OK after hearing gun shots. We were advised not to return up-country. We gave our room at the Swimming Club to needy friends and accepted an invitation from old family friends, Srini and Tony Peries, to stay with them at their beautiful old Dutch home on the Galle Road.

Early one morning, hearing unusual popping sounds, we all appeared in the garden to see a helicopter hovering and tilting over Slave Island, firing. Tony shouted for everyone to get indoors immediately. Later that morning, I accompanied Tony to George Steuart's stores in Slave Island where the manager gave Tony squashed bullets he'd dug out of the walls of the building. Tony gave them to me and I have them to this very day.

By this time, "a half coconut" had appeared on my rib cage causing me great difficulty in breathing so Srini phoned a doctor (it was now a 24-hour curfew) who advised she strap me up. Within a few days we were able to return upcountry through many Army roadblocks, which terrified the children, and those memories remained with them for many years. But as Chinese Maoists were then considered the culprits, we felt relatively safe.

Having given his resignation to Liptons, Ian and I agreed to move down to Colombo while Ian spent four days a week upcountry, training up his new SD to take over running the estate. We chose to live in the penthouse on top of the Liptons building which was spacious, open-plan and airy with opposing verandahs to catch every breeze.

Colombo life was a completely new and different scene for me. Both the doctor and the cinema were just a few minutes drive away. My early ventures in wives' coffee mornings provided a dining table loaded with nibbles and a variety of drinks covered over with an organdie cloth from Ladies League. The conversation was centred around who was the best gynecologist – Chinnatamby or Thigarajah?

We had to take our share of Liptons' entertaining of overseas visitors with much encouragement from a cook trained to *Cordon Bleu* standards. He loved to cook and would present meals wearing a tall white chef's hat. He would depart every morning on his bicycle and return full of excitement about all the fillets available or crabs in such and such a market and armed with further Rupees would dash out again to gain his prize.

I also had to learn to drive. I chose a family recommended ex-Army driving instructor who considered you couldn't reverse until you could back up a 6-wheel trailer. My first lesson was in the Pettah to break the ice, so to speak. By my third lesson, I was able to drive home through lunch hour traffic, much to the fury of my husband who had tried and failed for many years to teach me to drive on empty estate roads. He said things like "Let in the clutch... so I would stamp it in as hard as I could, hence the problems. Now at last, someone explained to me the relationship between the engine/clutch/wheels I got it in one ... and could drive.

Ian's new role with a Directorship of Overseas Agriculture meant we were on the list and were invited to many functions. With a young family and no entertainment for children, our life centred around the Swimming Club where we spent most early evenings with kids in the pool and nannies sharing gossip in the Cattle Shed (as the roofed over sun shelter was called). The children had their own bar outside, being banned from the adults one, with a box for an easier step-up access. They signed their own chits for Lanka Lime and banana crisps.

Once, when showering the children before returning home, my youngest son Ant disappeared. We searched everywhere for him and then witnessed a child being held up by his ankles having been retrieved from the bottom of the now underwater lit pool. Instinctively, I held him over my knees face down to cough up the



Meals
Ammi
Made

Love Cake by TEE KAY

Ingredients

500gms Semolina (Rulang)
1 kg butter
1 kg Caster sugar
30 Egg yolks, 15 egg whites
1 kg Pumpkin Preserve
1 ¼ kg Cashew nuts
5 bottles Rose essence- 50 ml each
3 bottles vanilla-50ml each
3 level teaspoons mixed spices
3 level teaspoons cardamom powder
1 ½ level teaspoons clove powder
700gms honey

Method

Roast semolina until light and powdery. Remove from heat and add 500 gm butter, mix well, cover and leave overnight. Cream butter and

Planter's Wife ...continued

water. He spent the night in the Fraser Nursing Home. He's now a certified Diver who's been from Sharm-el-Sheik to the Maldives with his SCUBA tank on holidays. Thus, from irascible ponies to near drowning, my children appear to have found their interests.

At the hairdressers, prior to some important function, I read an article on Making Interesting Conversation. So that evening I asked a man whom I vaguely recognised in our group, what is your "sphere of influence"? He replied: "Very small." And later it was whispered in my ear that he was the British High Commissioner.

And so ended my life in Ceylon.

HEARTFELT SYMPATHIES

The Ceylankan records with deep regret the recent passing of Donald Winston, beloved husband of our author Anne Sutherland Fraser. Our heartfelt condolences Anne.

sugar well, add egg yolks and beat until creamy. Mix in semolina and butter mixture adding chopped cashew nuts and pumpkin preserve. Mix thoroughly adding honey, and all the essences, and spices. Lastly, beat the 15 egg whites until stiff and fold into cake mixture. Line 3 cake trays with cardboard or folded newspapers and re-line with non stick greaseproof paper and bake at 150° for 2 ½ to 3 hours changing position of trays within oven every hour.

Send us your recipes

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

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

A Warm Welcome to New Members

Dr LND Abeygunawardene, Battaramulla, Sri Lanka. **Chandra Dias**, Asgiriya, Kandy, Sri Lanka. **Singha & Mala Weerasekera**, Colombo 7, Sri Lanka. **Ranjan Rodrigo**, South Strathfield, NSW 2136. **Mrs Maud Hensman**, Camberwell, VIC 3134. **Vernon & Carmen Lane**, Berwick, VIC 3806. **Deva & Ashra Ponnusamy**, Gladesville, NSW 2111. **Cecil & Padma Weerakoon**, Wahroonga, NSW 2076. **Rajanthan Sri Balasubramaniam**, Doncaster, VIC 3148.

Major R. Raven-Hart OBE

He lived in Colombo for some 12 years and travelled very widely visiting places of interest and associating with people with like interest. Raven-Hart canoed down the Mahaveli Ganga and all the extant Dutch canals from Chilaw to Galle. He used these canoeing trips to study nature in the raw.

Vama Vamadevan – The Ceylankan Number 12 (Vol 3 No.4) October 2000.



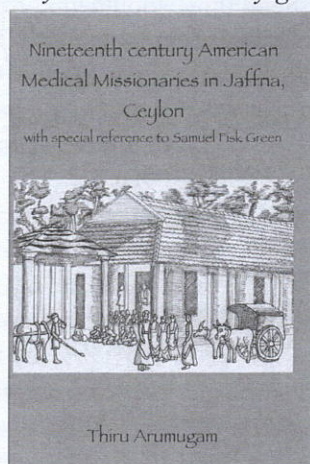
Nineteenth Century American Medical Missionaries in Jaffna, Ceylon (with special reference to Samuel Fisk Green)

By Thiru Arumugam

Published by MV Publications, Sydney. Hardback, 272 pages with Bibliography and Index. For further details of the book and how to purchase it please visit website www.thiruarumugam.com ISBN 9780646520902. Price Australian \$30 plus \$10 pph within Australia or \$20 pph world-wide.

An impressionistic reaction by **Ernest Macintyre**

Towards the end of this new and valuable book the author asks of Dr. Samuel Fisk Green, the main character in the story of the volume, " ... *why didn't our society give due recognition*

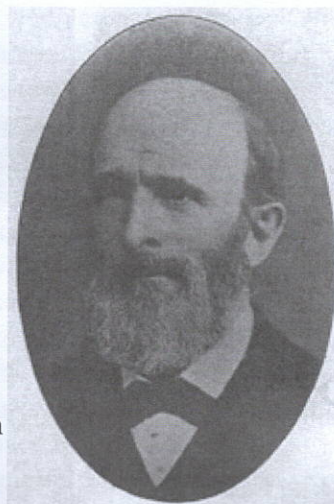


to his work as they did to the work of other dedicated missionaries?" He goes on to explain that nineteenth century Tamil society confined its recognition of contributors to its history, only to the ambit of Language and Literature. "Dr. Green dealt with an alien discipline, which

was totally new to the society. Science in general and western medical science in particular, were new to the Tamils and the then society did not really understand the nature of his contribution ". This reminded me of C.P.Snow's celebrated claim that most Englishmen who bask in the radiance from the works of William Shakespeare but have no idea of Newton's Second Law of Thermodynamics are surely semi-educated. This book of Thiru Arumugam's needs wide proliferation because of the role it must play in closing the gap in our own case of 'The Two Cultures'.

It is in the role of a general reader, not anything more, that I make my offering on a work thoroughly researched, interestingly written and a worthwhile contribution to the stock of knowledge. My overview here will be impressionistic in nature, meaning it will

suggest the effect or impression of the book on me, rather than one that takes the usual path of a review. It is worth keeping this in mind because the drama of the book carries much more varied material than I can hope to contain in an immediate contact view such as this is.



I said
"the drama of

• **Dr Samuel Fisk Green**

the book" because that needs highlighting. When turning over these leaves, one may easily identify the book as a progressive laying out of all the relevant and valuable information on the work, significance and circumstances of the nineteenth century medical missionaries in Jaffna. This, it certainly is and the work can rest on that alone. However, for the general reader like me, the human drama which lies just underneath the ongoing discussion of the medical history, functions like a flotation, a buoyancy, that moves the historical medical/ missionary information forward along the stream of 19th century Jaffna. And many times, the supporting float of the human drama underneath the factual medical historical material comes to the top, to significantly allow the reader moments of contemplation about men, women, children, 19th century Tamils, Americans and life.

Reading a book, particularly a worthwhile book, for me, and I'm sure for many, is two way traffic. Which is to say that while you are reading the book, in a manner of speaking, the book is reading you at the same time. If I may explain with an example – in chapter one I read the observations of the very first American missionaries who came to Ceylon in 1813, that they were happily opportunistic that only two languages were in use in this island, Sinhalese and Tamil and they were attracted to the northern Tamil speaking part even though it has a smaller population for conversions to Christianity compared to the Sinhalese. Why? Because of the remarkable opportunity it provided for reaching the millions of Tamil speaking people in South India, separated only by a narrow channel of shallow sea. And Arumugam provides evidence

of the launching pad role of Jaffna, into south India. Even one of Asia's foremost clinical medical schools at Vellore may claim descent from Jaffna. Now, the way I reacted when I read this, which is to say the way the book was reading me while I read the book, told me then and there that a book like this, in which the drama is played out among the Tamil people of North Ceylon cannot be read disconnectedly, remaining only inside that historical period of the first three quarters of the 19th century. You are reading it here and now in the condition of the Tamil people of the north today, and that is one of the reasons why the book is also dynamically reading you, the reader. For example it couldn't escape my mind that Delhi, has in recent times in varying degrees of unhappiness been considering the very same factors that happily struck the early nineteenth century American missionaries, the proximity of north Sri Lanka to Tamil Nadu with its multi millions of Tamils.

That example of how, at this moment in time, it is impossible to read a book about the society of the Jaffna peninsula in the 19th century, in a historical vacuum, without your mind allowing it to collide with your thoughts on the condition of that society today, that example, may look somewhat flamboyant but right through the book there are so many presentations and observations of the author that reach the reader in this enriching way, without in any way appearing to be sensational. And I think this richness comes from the way the author has created a diversified structure to tell the medical history of the period. What I mean is he does not relentlessly pursue the medical history on a single track. Instead he relaxes his writing at chosen points with a good sense of timing to take up a social or human diversion which can be imaginatively related to the main medical history. For example, towards the end of the story the author pauses to tell us that the sister of the President of the United States of America in 1885 was living in Vaddukoddai for four years. How that happened I'll leave it to the reader to discover. Or that the brother of Dr. Green, the hero of this story was the Comptroller of the City of New York and was responsible for the setting up of the famous Central Park in that city. Or that when Abraham Lincoln was shot in an exclusive theatre someone present had a connection with Jaffna and the medical missionaries. These apparent diversions,

however, give us the knowledge that these early missionaries to Jaffna were from the rich and more powerful families of America, which on further reflection means that they took to Christian missionary work, not as an easy option, having nothing else to do, but in absolute belief in what they were doing, and at great sacrifice; you realise the sacrifice when you read of the terrible regularity with which these missionaries lost their own lives, the lives of their wives and their little children from illness either in Jaffna or on their way to it from America, and the way



• *Group photograph of American missionaries resident in Jaffna in 1890.*

in which they faced these personal tragedies as part of God's design. In fact, the book provides evidence that they set out from America to Jaffna with the assumption that they would never return.

The book is indeed a valuable and interesting historical record of American medical missionary work in Ceylon in the 19th century, and now I say Ceylon, not only Jaffna, because when you read you will realise the debt owed by the Ceylon Medical College which opened in 1870 in Colombo to the preceding and pioneer medical work of the American medical missionaries in Jaffna, the work of Dr. Green, the work of the Tamil doctors he produced – names like Danforth, Waithilingam, Hitchcock, Mills, Paul, just to mention a few of the total of 115 that graduated between 1848 and 1879. All their work in establishing the Manipay hospital, the beginnings of Jaffna College Vaddukodai and Uduvil girls school, supervising the old Jaffna hospital that later became the main peninsular hospital, the Inuvil hospital, the short lived Karativu hospital and most of all teaching medicine in Jaffna which produced the first recognised medical doctors in Ceylon.

(Continued on Page 29)

BOOKSHOP & WEB RESOURCES

This is a regular column for the benefit of members (& others) who author books or have books, maps & other collectibles and would like the Society sell these material on their behalf. No charges apply to members, **but donations are encouraged from all using this service.** Please email the editor for details.

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Nineteenth century American Medical

Missionaries in Jaffna, Ceylon: with special

reference to Samuel Fisk Green by Thiru

Arumugam. 260 pp, hardback, December 2009,

ISBN 9780646520902. Price A\$30, postage

A\$10 within Australia, A\$20 worldwide. For

details contact the author at (02) 8850 4798 or

email: thiru.aru@gmail.com or visit the book's

website at: www.thiruarumugam.com

Musings & Meanderings by Derrick Mendis SJ

Publisher Carl Fernando, "Orient" 7 Mosque

Road, Dehiwela. Printed by Channel Link (PVT)

Ltd. ISBN 978-955-96636-1-4 Price \$15

(Book Review... from page 27)

Dr. James Loos the Colonial Surgeon and the first principal of the Colombo Medical School said in 1873 to Dr. Green, “*the work we are carrying on (in Colombo) – a work in which we are humbly imitating you. Medical education in Ceylon is deeply indebted to you and your predecessors*”. Dr. E.L. Koch the second head of the Colombo Medical College publicly announced that the number of patients who voluntarily resort to the main hospital in Jaffna is infinitely larger than the number who come voluntarily to any civil hospital in the island.

This voluntary meeting of the Tamil population with Western medical practitioners was also a creative meeting of two different cultures in the process of the pursuit of western medicine as a part of Christian evangelical work in north Ceylon in the 19th century. The author does draw your attention to this phenomenon as he presents his material. For example Appendix V to the book is an overview of a publication/translation on the Medical Science of Childbirth in Jaffna by Dr. Charles Nallathamby Macintyre in 1856. In the first part of the publication there is a statement that “*if the soot at the bottom of the rice pot catches fire it is a sure sign that someone in the house has menstruated. When a girl first menstruates an auspicious day is selected ...*” and so on. Now the usual reaction of the Western colonisers of Asia to such beliefs was that the cultures, theirs and the native people’s were too far apart for meaningful communication, and there is such an example with Leonard Woolf, the famous Assistant Government Agent Jaffna (1904) and later of Hambantota. One night he stood in the open with the chief headman

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of Hambantota, the Muhandiram, an English educated man, watching the Halley’s Comet which appears once in 75 years and Woolf asked the Muhandiram what he thought about it. “*His answer depressed me profoundly,*” says Woolf. “*.....he told me that at the moment of our birth the position of these things in the sky determined our lives, that at a female child’s birth the horoscope predicted the year, the day and the hour at which her menstruation would begin*”. Woolf goes on: “*He believed that.... the infinite galaxies flaming away into space had been created and kept going through billions and billions of years in order that a grubby little man in the Hambantota bazaar could calculate the exact day and hour at which the muhandiram’s infant daughter would have her first menstrual period.*” I elaborated on that because underneath the humour it shows the sneering attitude of some ‘clever’ Westerners and to register how in comparison the medical missionaries in Jaffna showed a respect for and understanding of how other cultures had evolved. The publication of the Hindu childbirth manual was done with no feeling of superiority, but with the intention of understanding and communicating. On page 93 of this book there is a statement by Dr. Green “*I would rather here see Christian Hindus than Hindus Europeanized*”. Dr. Green’s idea was that Christianity and Westernisation should not be confused, one with the other. In passing I must mention that on reading this it made me think of S.J.V Chelvanayagam, a completely practicing Christian, who was accepted as the leader of the Hindu Tamils, something of the idea Green had.

In fact the very important work of translating Medical works in English into Tamil pursued under the leadership of Dr. Green would not have been possible if these medical missionaries did not respect and have confidence in the capacity of Hindu Tamil culture. Dr. Green was very happy that native physicians bought his Tamil medical textbooks and some of them sent their sons to study Western medicine under Dr. Green. He recommended that medical missionaries should investigate the native systems of medicine and consult with the native physicians. Regarding his confidence in translating Western texts into Tamil, it emerged from his having learnt literary Tamil. “*Written Tamil excels written English in indicating to*

(Continued on Page 33)

OBITUARIES

It is with deep regret we announce the passing of the following members of the Society. Our heartfelt condolences go out to their bereaved families.

SCHOKMAN - DR EDWARD

Husband of Rosemarie, father of Leonie and Christopher, father-in-law of Dinesh Yogaratnam, grandfather of Elizabeth Rannaya, brother of Lynette Tambyah and Mavis Martyn (both deceased), Albert (Australia) and Pamela Gray, passed away on 11/03/2010. Mortal remains cremated shortly after in accordance with his wishes.

WILLIAMS - PATRICK BASIL,

loving Dad to Rhonda and loving Pa to Henk, Justin and Daniel passed away on Tuesday February 9, to be peacefully reunited with his special Prisca. A Requiem Mass at St. Peter Julian Eymard Catholic Church, Mooroolbark

was followed by burial at Lilydale Memorial Park Cemetery, Lilydale on February 16.

RAFFEL, DR ORWELL CHRISTOPHER -

Born: 28 October 1923 (Colombo, Sri Lanka) ; Died: 30 March 2010 (Brisbane, Australia). General Practitioner Colombo Sri Lanka (1948 to 1975) and Eastwood and Concord West New South Wales Australia (1977 to 1999). Loving son of Dr E. L. RAFFEL and Mrs Enid Raffel (nee Foenander) (deceased) of Colombo Sri Lanka. Devoted and loving husband of Carmel Raffel (nee De Fonseka), loving father of Adam, Suhanya and Lahiru, affectionate father-in-law of Michael Snelling and Melinda Pereira and ever loving grandpa to Rahul, Jai, Janardan and Harshad. Passed away peacefully after a long illness.

A memorial service celebrating his life of care and dedication was held on Saturday 22 May 2010 at 1.00 pm in the Magnolia Chapel Macquarie Park Crematorium & Cemetery cnr Delhi and Plassey Roads, North Ryde in Sydney, Australia.

JOURNAL REPRINTS

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

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

CSA Annual Dinner

One date you must set aside on your calendar is Sunday November 28. It's the night of the CSA's traditional dinner & carol singing. It is a fun, family-orientated evening when you all join in the sing-along. From past experience, it is a night to remember! So please organise your tables from now. The venue is the Thornleigh Community Centre, corner Central & Phyllis Avenues (off Pennant Hills Road) Thornleigh. For details: Chandra Senaratne on 9872 6826.

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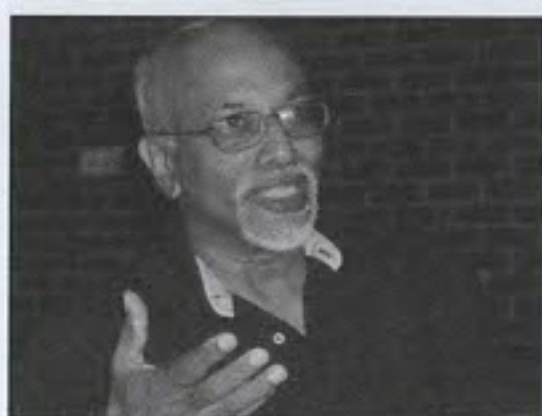
Please contact the Treasurer
Upali Dharmakirti
(02) 9986 0337

Synopses of Meetings

Sydney February 28, 2010

CSA President Sunil de Silva chaired the Meeting. He introduced the speaker for the evening, **Mr Indra Jayawardene** who was described as a Coastal Engineer, Beachcomber and Naturalist. The title of his talk was *Beachcombing and Diving in the West, South-West and South-East coasts of Sri Lanka, 1973-1990*.

Indra was educated at Royal College, Colombo and his passion for skin-diving



began when he was still a student. He has explored most of the dive sites in Sri Lanka. He graduated from the

University of Sri Lanka and obtained his Masters Degree from the University of Florida. He presently works as a Senior Consulting Engineer for the New South Wales State Government's Manly Hydraulics Laboratory.

Indra started off his talk with a tribute to his friends with whom he has made many memorable dives. The friends include Maurice Ferdinands, Athukorale, Andy Muthumani, Arjan Rajasuriya and Ranjan Perumal. He went on to describe the four parallel reefs off the coast of Bambalapitiya and Wellawatte. We landlubbers thought there was only one reef because that is where we could see the waves breaking. It appears that the other three reefs are much further out and are always under water. In fact the fourth reef is so far out that when swimming over it the coastline is not visible to a swimmer.

He went on to describe the fish seen in these reefs and illustrated his talk with many colourful underwater photographs. The types of fish seen included Diesel or Cleaner Wrasse, Volitans Lionfish (a popular aquarium fish), Parrotfish, Pufferfish, Angelfish and, of course, Thora. He also

described how he used to catch Nudibranchs which are a mollusc with no shells (or sea-slug) for which there was a demand in Hawaii.

Indra described his beachcombing experiences in Kirinda, Hambantota, Bundala and Lewaya where there are big sand dunes with high waves. He described how he installed current meters for the collection of wave data off Yala for a Fisheries Harbour investigation. Current meters were also installed by him beside the Little Basses Lighthouse which is about 10 km off the coast of Yala. This Lighthouse is the last man-made construction until one reaches the Antarctic. Meters were also installed in the Maldiv Islands and also in the Hamilton Canal in Puttalam. This canal was originally constructed by the Dutch.

He recollected diving with the Sri Lanka Aqua Club when they collected 43 Dutch clay tobacco smoking pipe bowls of the 17th and 18th centuries and 12 British bowls of the 18th century. Ceramic plates were also recovered from the wreck of the 60 metre long, 1800 ton, British steamship *Rangoon* which lies in relatively shallow water near Unawatuna near the entrance to the Galle Harbour. The ship sank in 1863.

Indra also spoke about his diving experiences in Australia, particularly in Manly, Sydney and Port Stephens in New South Wales. He described the fish seen such as Catfish, Skates and Sharks – small ones, he hastened to add!

He concluded his talk with three wishes for the Sri Lankan coastline: (1) Beach swimming pools to be constructed in the coastal towns to encourage children to learn to swim. (2) A cleaner Kinross beach in Wellawatte, Colombo which is presently covered with litter. (3) A move towards preparing for Climate Change.

The meeting ended with a lively discussion which was followed by the usual social evening.

– Thiru Arumugam

SYNOPSIS.... Continued

Colombo March 6, 2010

The meeting commenced with a welcome address by the President. The main item on the agenda was the presentation by Desamanya Vidya Jyothi Ashley de Vos, **on The Tradition of Ivory Carving, with special reference to Sri Lanka.**

The President introduced Mr. De Vos as a rare man with many high academic achievements as a Fellow of the Sri Lanka Institute of Architects, and a Member of the Royal Institute of British Architects. He is in addition a Landscape Architect and an Architectural Conservationist who is qualified in Heritage Management. He has served as the National Chairman of the International Council on Monuments and Sites and has served as Director Conservation on the Jetavana Project, Anuradhapura of the UNESCO/Sri Lanka Cultural Triangle Programme.

Humans have used bones and ivory for carving from ancient times. Elephants were special and protected animals in Sri Lanka. During this time in Sri Lanka, elephants were not killed for ivory but the ivory came from private collections.

Pliny the Elder or Gaius Plinius Secundus (23-79) Roman officer and author of the *Natural History* gave the first description of the capture of elephants in 40 AD. According to de Vos, the British, however, were the worst offenders declaring them to be vermins. British records show daily killings to clear virgin forests for tea and coffee plantations. Sri Lankan elephants were much in demand not only for the ivory but also for their fighting prowess. Quoting Emmerson Tennent (1859) and other historians, he explained how the export trade of elephants from Ceylon to India flourished. Elephants were caught, held in kraals and taken via the Elephant Pass to Jaffna or to Mantota, now Mannar, and loaded on flat beds, about ten at a time and exported.

However Sri Lanka's famed intricate ivory carvings in foreign museums are the result of the Portuguese quickly latching on to this lucrative trade in ivory. Under the Portuguese, the Sri Lankan ivory carvers produced some exquisite work for gifts to the Royal Court of Portugal. Sri Lankan elephant tusks were preferred for ivory carvings. These

included intricately carved jewellery boxes, bible boxes, Aurvedic pill boxes, fans, vatapathas and furniture. The carving was executed using diyatharippu lenses. There is one paramparik diyatharippu (traditional) carver left. The tradition will be lost when he is no more. Sri Lanka now has no ivory carvers.

Ivory combs or panawa in Sinhala were apparently flirtatious gifts, an expression of love and at times a gift given surreptitiously during a clandestine affair. The making of these combs included first choosing a piece of ivory free of inclusions, the precise shape whether rectangular



• Guest speaker Desamanya Vidya Jyothi Ashley de Vos. Photo by Chulie de Silva.

or square decided the teeth of the comb carefully sawn and a design like narilatha carefully first edged and then worked on with drills later. Most carvers worked from home in their verandahs.

The presentation also included a slide show of Sri Lanka's artifacts in ivory held in the Colombo Museum as well as in museums abroad.

A lively question and answer session followed. Answers to questions raised threw some interesting facts: the longest ivory panel was as much as 8-9 feet; Carvings are still done in China and also by Eskimos who use walrus teeth which is a softer medium; no part of a tusk was wasted; the largest ivory collections in Sri Lanka are now in Buddhist temples.

— Chulie de Silva

Money is like a sixth sense without which you cannot make a complete use of the other five.

W. Somerset Maugham (*Of Human Bondage*)

(From page 29)

the eye, the pronunciation, the accent and the syllabic division of words", Dr. Green wrote.

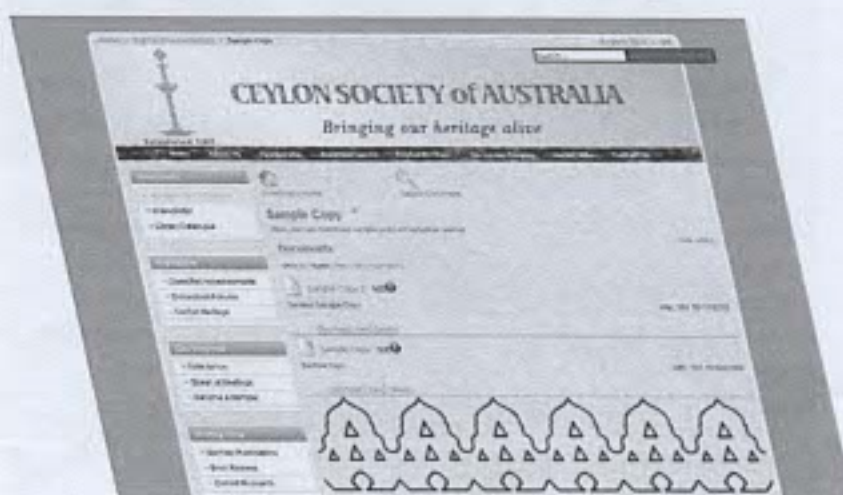
With some imagination one may even look at this book as containing the raw material, out of which could emerge a novel, as indeed an imaginative reader may see a complex and sometimes sad story even in the historical work as it now is, a tale of two places. Jaffna Peninsula (Ceylon) and Massachusetts (U.S.A.) a great and interesting story, of Samuel Fisk Green whose last will stated, *"Should I ever have a gravestone, let it be plain and simple – SAMUEL FISK GREEN. 1822 to 1884. MEDICAL EVANGALIST TO THE TAMILS. JESUS MY ALL."*

It is a complex and sad story because as early as the 1860s Dr. Green began discovering that the Tamils wanted to be taught in English to be able to obtain lucrative positions under the Government. In Professor Ludowyk's play: *"He Comes From Jaffna"* when Duraiswamypillai, the man from Jaffna is asked how the overnight train journey from Jaffna to Colombo was, he exclaims: *"Packed to the brim! Our people are invading Colombo!"* Dr. Green's objective was to prevent this, he wanted the Tamil doctors he produced to settle down as physicians in the villages and towns of their own people, and hoping to achieve that he wanted to educate them in Tamil alone, at least, so far as possible. In 1864

he made a dramatic move to stall the exodus on the night train to Colombo. His sixth batch of medical students was the first to be taught in Tamil and it went on to 11 batches.

In 1870 the Ceylon Medical College opened in Colombo and Green's bright indigenous dream faded. Fourteen years later Dr. Green was dead, back in his own Massachusetts. The 20th century opened with Jaffna as mainly a peasant population of dry zone crops, and fishing, essential government departments and a well developed schools system. Dr. Green's and the early American missionaries' vision of a 'separate' place with affinity to south India was moving away in the night train to Colombo. Green could well have been praying, silently, what another American thundered, *"I have a dream"*.

Whatever happens on the way, the dream is also part of concrete history. A worthwhile dream is never wasted, for each person does the best his or her motivation can produce, leaving us a valuable human story, with evidence such as the hospital at Manipay, Jaffna and Uduvil colleges and not least, tracts along which to think, found in Arumugam's work.



Webmaster wanted

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

type websites, familiarity with HTML and an ability to do simple graphics will be appreciated. It is essential to set aside sufficient time for a firm commitment to maintain and periodically update CSA website.

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

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

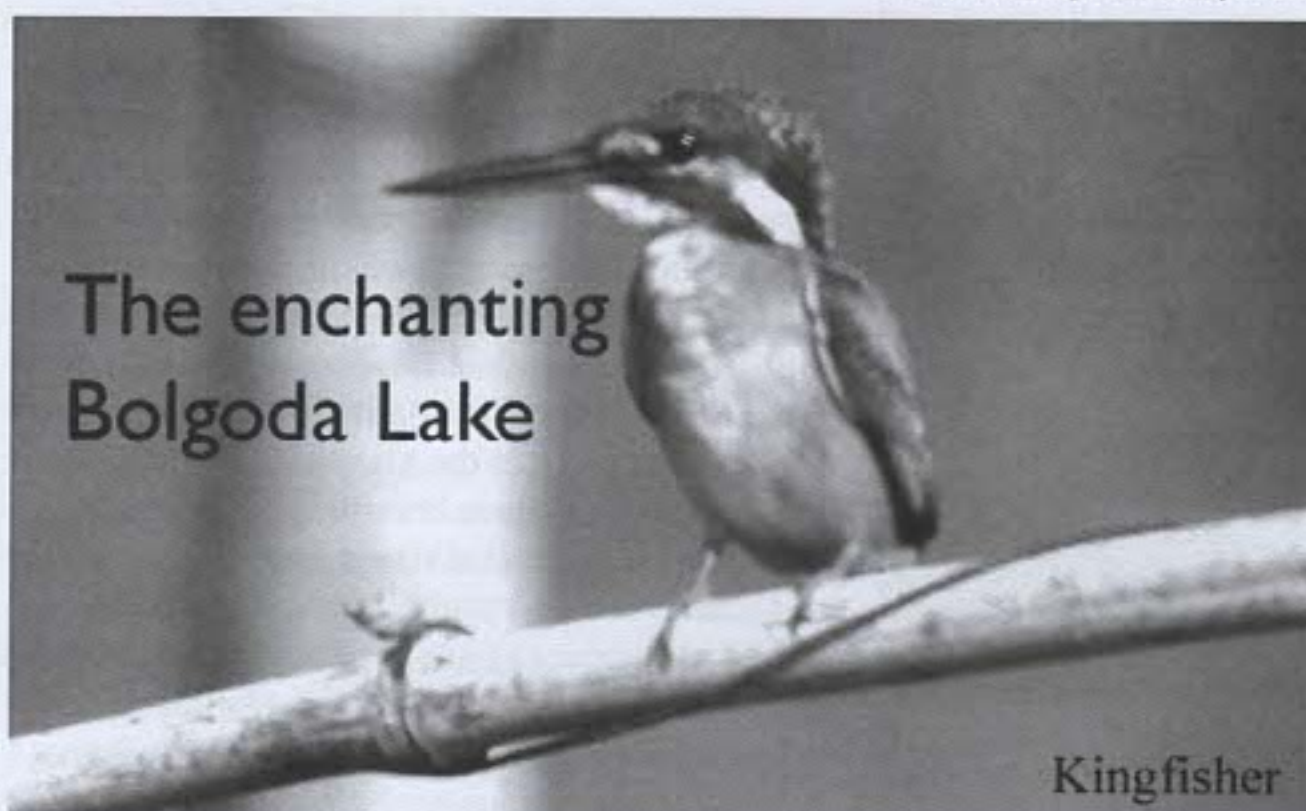
I sent the club a wire stating: "Please accept my resignation. I don't want to belong to any club that will accept me as a member."

— Groucho Marx



mangroves, some great exotic birdlife, mammals and reptiles. Fish traps or 'Jaa-Kotuwas' add to the ebb and flow of daily life on the lake as people go about the lake in 'orus'. Troops of Purple Faced Leaf Eating Monkeys frequent the gardens and

foreshores. Lotun Sun birds, Paradise Flycatchers, Orioles, Barbets, Brahminy Kites, Cormorants, Egrets, Herons, Hawks and Kingfishers (to name a few) abound in the house gardens along its foreshores. A great place to spend a day or two, relaxing, with binoculars or camera in hand.



Generally accessed from Moratuwa, it is thought to be the largest natural, fresh water lake in Sri Lanka and covers a large area of the Kalutara district. It is actually a lake system of two interconnected lakes and associated waterways, fed by two rivers; the *Weras Ganga* and the *Bologoda Ganga* and discharging into the sea at Panadura. Bolgoda has quite an ancient a history going back to the era of King Parakramabahu II. During the more recent Dutch period, it was used to transport goods and people from the Kalu Ganga. The lake supports

• *Clockwise right: Brahminy Kite; Monkey & baby & Purple Heron.*



Photography: by the author





CSA PUBLIC MEETINGS

Next Sydney Meeting

Sunday May 23, 2010
at 6.30 p.m.

Talks by CSA Secretary **Thiru Arumugam** (Chartered Engineer with Masters Degree in Business Administration) and Ernest Macintyre (well-known playwright, theatre producer, director and actor) on the subject :**Nineteenth Century American Missionaries in Jaffna, Ceylon: with special reference to Samuel Fisk Green.**

Thiru Arumugam will also introduce his book with the same title on the night.

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

Further details from Chandra Senaratne
(02) 9872 6826 or Thiru Arumugam
(02) 8850 4798

Meeting will be followed by the usual social.
Members, their guests & students are welcome.

Melbourne Chapter

No meetings have been scheduled for the Melbourne Chapter at the time of going to press.

Colombo Chapter

Srilal Perera will speak on

"The key to better appreciation of
THE KANDIAN DRUM MUSIC"

Date: Saturday, 19th June 2010 at 5.30 p.m.

Venue: Lions Activity Centre,
Vidya Mawatha, Colombo

There will be a live drumming presentation.

(Members please invite your friends)

Contact: Chulie de Silva (077 777 2220) email:
chuls201@gmail.com

Daya Wickramatunge (077 317 4164) email:
dawick@sltnet.com

Mike Udabage (077 541 2420) email:
Mike_Udabage@itechne.com;
mike@udabage.com

YOUR MEMBERSHIP.. ... KEEP IT CURRENT!

As you know, the CSA works on a shoe-string budget and struggles to meet ends. Therefore, it is vital that all members pay their annual subscriptions on time. We seek your cooperation in doing this promptly each calendar year. Subscriptions FOR 2008 & 2009 are overdue and those for 2010 are now due. Send a cheque or MO in favour of the Ceylon Society of Australia to the Treasurer, 3 Viola Avenue, Warriewood NSW 2102 or pay direct to the CSA bank account at the Commonwealth Bank: **BSB: 062308 Account Number: 10038725**. If you do pay by bank transfer, please ensure that your name is mentioned in the bank advice. We have received payments in the past where the bank had no record of the payees' names and we were unable to allocate the payment correctly. If you have made such a transfer in the past without providing your name, please contact Upali with full details of the transfer you made.

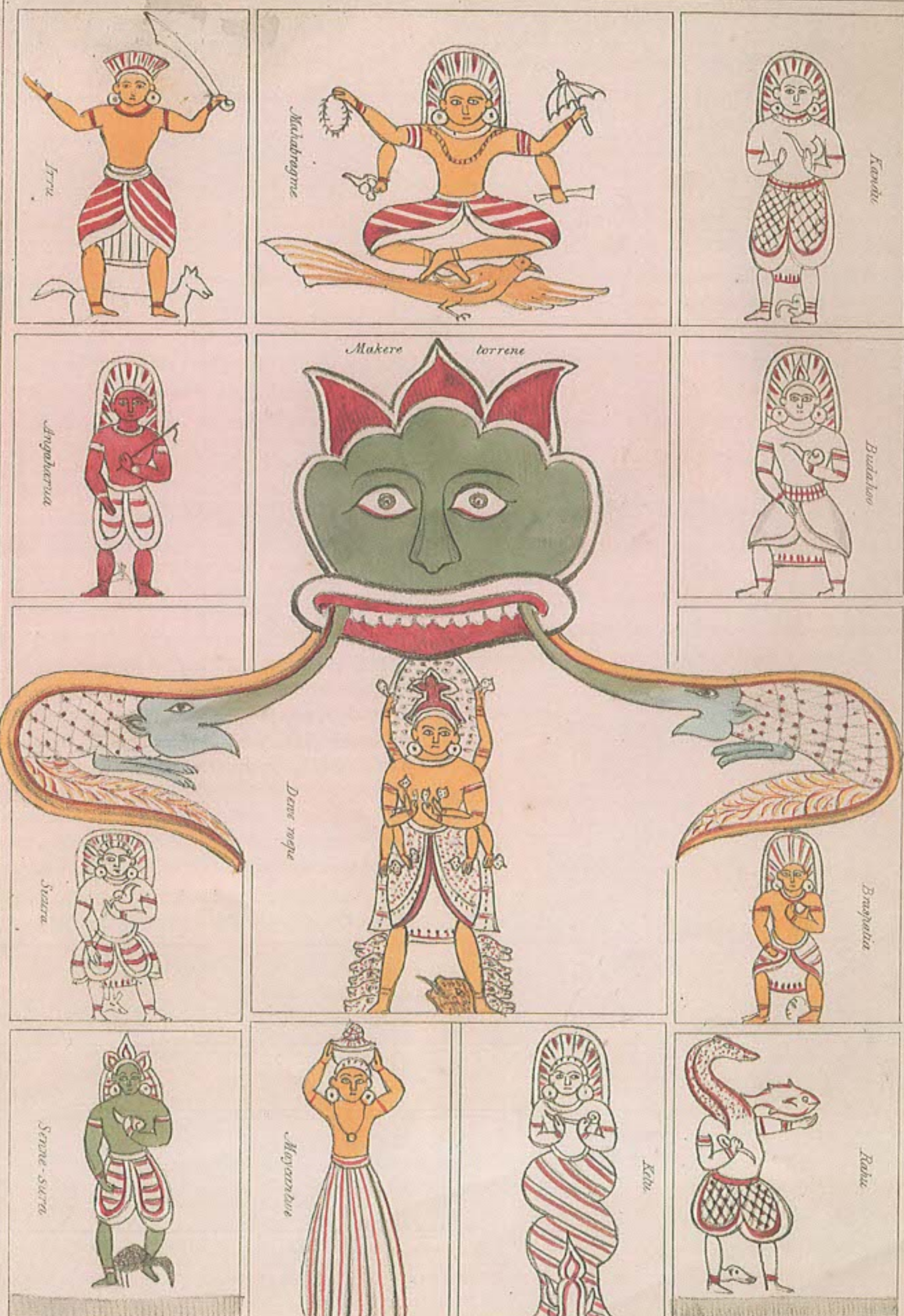
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Email: upalid@optusnet.com.au

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The production of this journal has been supported by a donation from the Lions Club of Bankstown, New South Wales, Australia, courtesy of our Public Relations Officer Lion Harry de Sayrah OAM JP.

Our back cover

The illustration in colour on the back cover of this journal is one of 43 such hand coloured lithographic prints from original Sinhalese designs which appeared in the 1829 publication by Sir Edward Upham entitled "The History of Buddhism popularly illustrated with Notices of Kapooism or Demon worship and of the Bali or planetary incantations of Ceylon". The prints were from original drawings collected from local sources by Sir Alexander Johnston, Chief Justice of Ceylon 1811 to 1819. Upham's book which is of folio size is extremely rare and much sought after by antiquarian book collectors.



N° 3. Kalemartoo Bali.