

FLOREAT

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FLOREAT EDITOR

GEORGE FERNANDO



FLOREAT CONCEPT AND DESIGN

LOCHANA PREMARATHNA

President's Report

Dear Members,

It is with great pleasure that I wish you and your loved ones a New Year full of happiness and good health. One more year passed, and a new beginning is here, so let us welcome the coming year with love, joy, and peace.

The New Year is the time when we all are excited about the new opportunities which are going to knock at our doorstep. It is time to forget all the past bad memories and move forward with a positive outlook. Everyone has been very quick to wish 2020 away but, as we reflect on the year that was, we should realise how many lessons we have learnt and how much we must be grateful for. Many of us entered the world of lockdown and were forced into entirely new psychological and social situations. These changes created stronger bonds with our families while looking after each other in the confined space of our own homes. Many of our members resorted to online programs like Zoom to keep our lifelong friendships alive and maintain the camaraderie built up over the years.

Due to COVID restrictions, all our key events were cancelled or postponed. During this period, RCOBAA committee decided to assist student Royalists in need of urgent help due to loss of employment and income. A sub-committee was formed to assist the students by purchasing and delivering dry rations. A few of the members from our community and from our membership came forward to assist with generous donations, free legal, accounting, and medical help.

On a positive note, we managed to honour our commitment to our deserving disadvantaged Royalists via the Loyalty Pledge Program, and I am happy to report this will help a total of 46 students for year 2021. We also transferred funds to "Royal College Past Teachers Association" to help our former teachers for their medical needs.

We are hopeful that we will be able to hold our AGM in the coming months and we will send you an update early in the New Year.

Again, let me wish you another great year and hope to catchup with you in the upcoming events.

Floreat!

Soba Ranasinghe

President RCOBAA



In Search of Dambadiva (continued from last issue of Floreat)

Lochana Premarathna

Nalanda is located in the eastern Indian state of Bihar. It is well known as the ancient Centre of learning as it has the remains of the great Nalanda University. The University was established in the 5th century BC and was one of the oldest universities of the world. Nalanda predates the early universities of Al-Azhar in Egypt (10th century AD), Bologna in Italy (11th century AD), and Oxford in England (12th century AD). The ruins of Nalanda are spread over an area of 14 hectares land and include several temples and monasteries built by the kings of the Gupta, Kushan and Palva dynasties. Lord Buddha visited this place and it remained a renowned learning centre till 12th century. The famous Chinese traveller Hieun Tsang studied here and his documents provide details about the university.

Nalanda could accommodate 10,000 students from all over the world and 2,000 professors, and the dormitories provided by Nalanda University are believed to have been the first of its kind. The complex also included lecture halls, meditation halls, libraries, monasteries, hostels, chetiyas, temples, lakes and parks.

The arrival of Muslim invaders in 1197 led by Mohammad Bakhtiyar Khilji, a general of Qutbuddin Aibak. The invaders were intolerant of other religions and cultures and much of the university was demolished, its priceless library was burnt down, and many of its scholars, including Buddhist monks, were mercilessly slaughtered. This was one of the greatest acts of cultural vandalism in India.



Professor explaining the site plan of Nalanda University

A retired university professor welcomed us to the site. He spoke good Sinhala and English. He explained the history of establishment of the Nalanda University to the present day. His knowledge is sufficient to write a good book on the subject.

The great library at Nalanda named Dharmaganja (Treasury of Truth) comprised three large multistoried buildings, the Ratnasagara (Ocean of Jewels), the Ratnodadhi (Sea of Jewels), and the Ratnaranjaka (Jewel-adorned). Ratnodadhi was nine stories high and housed the most sacred manuscripts including the Pragnaparamita Sutra and the Guhyasamaja. (Tantra of the Secret

Community) Its collection was said to comprise hundreds of thousands of volumes, and to be so extensive that it burned for months when set aflame by the invaders in 1197.



Wide angle view of the ruins of Nalanda University



The exact number of volumes in the Nalanda library is unknown, but it is estimated to have been in the hundreds of thousands. When a Buddhist scholar at Nalanda died, his manuscripts were added to the library collection. The library not only collected religious manuscripts but also had texts on such subjects as grammar, logic, literature, astrology, astronomy, and medicine. The Nalanda library must have had a classification scheme which was possibly based on a text classification scheme developed by the Sanskrit linguist, Panini. (The history of linguistics begins not with Plato or Aristotle, but with the Indian grammarian Panini). Buddhist texts were most likely divided into three classes based on three main divisions of the Tripitakaya: the Vinaya, Sutra, and the Abhidhamma.

It was a great experience and it is well worth visiting to see such destruction to a treasury of knowledge that could have been used for generations. We saw the Veluanaramaya, King Bimbisara donated the Bamboo Grove Veluvana to Buddha for his residence. Today, it is a park with views of bamboo, flowers and a large pond with Buddha's image in the centre.

The stupa of Sariputtha contains the bones of one of the two chief disciples of Gautam Buddha. Sariputtha became a celebrated Arahant after he was able to attain salvation following Buddha's footsteps. The stupa is of a pyramidal shape and is imposing in size, surrounded by pillared structures, typical of Buddhist structures. Seven stories of construction explain its colossal size. We then viewed the 4 meters wide 40 km long fortification wall encircling the city built by the Mauryans. Today most of it stands in ruins.

We were taken to see the remains of Bimbisara fort built by Ajatshattha was the king and the ruler of the Magadhas in 6th Century B.C. According legend, Ajatshattha imprisoned his father Bimbisara in a jail inside this fort after he took the throne. Bimbisara, a staunch Buddhist, chose a spot from where he could see Lord Buddha give his sermons every morning. Next was the Sona Bhandar cave. Legends say that the treasure of Bimbisara was hidden inside this cave by his wife and then sealed with a spell. This legend became so widely accepted and an effort was made to blow open the cave with cannon during the British era to get the treasure. However, the effort failed and all that remains is a door apparently sealed by rock. There was more of the Shell script on the wall which, according to our guide, was the key to the treasure, if it could be deciphered.

Then we visited Jivaka's Mango Garden located in the Jivakameavan Gardens inside Rajgiri City. Jivaka was the Royal Physician of Bimbisara and Ajatashattha, the Magadha rulers. He was famous for treating Lord Buddha's wounds. His dispensary in this garden was gifted to him by Bimbisara, and he used the herbs there to make Ayurvedic medicines for treatments. The Chariot Tracks were next, two parallel furrows cut into the rocks which are believed to be the place where Lord Buddha stopped the Koliya Army who had declared war against Shakya King Suddhodhana thus preventing the loss of many lives.

After viewing the famous Ancient Rajagaha Nuwara ruins in Rajagiri, we proceeded towards Vaishali. Vaishali is well known for its close association with the Buddha. After leaving Kapilavastu for renunciation, he came to Vaishali first and had his spiritual training from Udraka Ramaputra and Alara Kalama. After the Enlightenment, Buddha frequently visited Vaishali. Vaishali was established as a republic by the 6th century BC, prior to the birth of Gautama Buddha in 563, making it the world's first republic. He organized his Bhikshu Sangha on the pattern of Vaishalian democracy. It was here that he established the Bhikshuni Sangha, initiating his maternal aunt Maha Prajavati Gautami into the order. His last Varshavasa (rainy season resort) was here and the place gains significance from the fact that it is here that Lord Buddha announced the imminence of his Mahaparinirvana (the final departure from the world) just three months in advance. Before leaving for Kusinagara, where he attained Nirvana, he left his alms-bowl (Bhikshu-



Patra) with the people of Vaishali. Lord Buddha also visited Vaishali five years after the attainment of His enlightenment. The Lichchavis offered a grand welcome to the Lord on his arrival in Vaishali.

The Relic Kesariya Stupa here is where the Lichchavis reverentially encased one of the eight portions of the sacred ashes of the Lord Buddha, in a stone casket, which they received after the Mahaparinirvana. A few hundred metres from the Relic Stupa is Abhishek Pushkarini, the coronation tank. The sacred waters of the tank anointed the elected representatives of Vaiśālī.



In front of the Ashoka pillar

Kutagarasala Vihara is the monastery where Buddha most frequently stayed while visiting Vaiśālī. The Ānanda Stupa here has an Asokan pillar in very good condition, with perhaps the only complete Asokan pillar left standing, and an ancient pond. The 18.3 m lion pillar was built by Emperor Ashoka and was chiseled out of a highly polished single piece of red sandstone. It stands surmounted by a bell-shaped capital. A life-size figure of a lion adorns the top of the pillar. The difference between this Ashoka pillar and other Ashoka pillar is that, this one has only one lion capital. This pillar beside a brick stupa commemorates Buddha's last sermon. The Shanti Stupa, built by Buddha Vihar Society, lies on the south bank of the coronation tank.

Kushinagar the place where Lord Buddha passed away was next. In ancient times, the town was also known as Kushinara and Kasia. We all were well prepared to pay our respect to reclining Nirvana statue of Lord Buddha. One lady prepared a six-meter-long robe from Sri Lanka for all of us to cover the statue with more respect. At the entrance to the temple site all of us got together and held it above the heads and took it to the temple entrance chanting Sadu Sadu. We had the feeling that we were attending to the funeral of Lord Buddha. Different items had brought by members of our group to offer them to the statue.

The reclining Nirvana statue of the Buddha is inside the Parinirvana Stupa. The statue is 6.10 meters long and is made of monolith red sandstone. It represents the "last stage of Buddha" reclining on his right side with his face towards the west. It is placed on a large brick pedestal with stone-posts at the corners. The facial expression of Lord Buddha seems to change when viewed from different positions. From the front it looks like he is smiling; from behind the head, he looks like as if thinking; and viewed from his feet, it looks like he is dying.



Covering the reclining Buddha statue with the robe brought in





Parinirvana Stupa

On the front of the couch are three sculptures, believed to represent Ven. Ananda near the feet, Ven. Subhadda at the middle and Ven. Dabba Malla at the corner. At the center is an inscription of the 5th century AD, which states the statue was "a gift of the monk Haribala of the Mahavihara and was fashioned by Dinna". It was discovered in 1876 in a dilapidated condition and the scattered fragments were successfully pieced together.

Kushinagar is another principal center of Buddhism as it is the place where Lord Buddha attained Nirvana (passed away). It was once a celebrated center of the Malla kingdom. Many of its stupas and viharas date back to 230 BC-AD 413 when its prosperity was at the peak. In 543 BC, on a full moon night of the Month of Wesak the legend delivered his last sermon to his Sangha and declared that he is going to leave the mortal world soon.

The Buddha's last days are described in the Pali text called the Great Parinirvana Sutra. The Buddha made his journey to Kushinagar, the village of Kusinara of the Mallas died there, and this is where he was cremated. The Buddha realized that his end was fast approaching and it is believed that during his last day he walked into the groves of trees near the city and rejoiced at the blossoms of sal trees (*Shorea robusta*) before laying himself to rest. He told Ananda to prepare a bed for him with its head turned towards the north between two sal trees. His final words, "Behold, O monks, this is my last advice to you. All component things in the world are impermanent. They are not lasting. Work hard without delay to gain your own salvation." Buddha's body was kept at this location for one week, before the cremation.

The present temple was built by the Indian Government in 1956 as part of the commemoration of the 2,500th year of the Mahaparinivana or 2500 BE (Buddhist Era). We had an opportunity to listen to a Dhamma sermon preached by a Bangladeshi Buddhist monk who had studied in Sri Lanka near the stupa standing directly behind the Mahaparinirvana Temple which was built over the very place the Buddha attained final nirvana between the twin sal trees.

King Ashoka built a stupa and pilgrimage site to mark Buddha's parinirvana in Kushinagara. The Hindu rulers of the Gupta Empire (fourth to seventh century) helped greatly enlarge the Nirvana stupa, Kushinagar site, and building a temple with reclining Buddha. This site was abandoned by Buddhist monks around 1200 CE, who fled to escape the invading Muslim army. The site decayed during the Islamic rule in India that followed. The British archaeologist Alexander Cunningham rediscovered Kushinagara in the late 19th century, and his colleague A. C. L. Carlleyle unearthed the 1,500-year-old Buddha image. The site has since then become an important pilgrimage site for Buddhists. Archaeological evidence from the 3rd century BCE suggests that the Kushinagara was an ancient pilgrimage site.

Next was the Ramabhar Stupa, also called a Mukutbandhan-Chaitya, the place where Lord Buddha was cremated. This site is 1.5 km east of the main Nirvana Temple on the Kushinagar-Deoria road. Most of the Buddhists all over the world visit the place with great respect, pay homage to Buddha and meditate in a peaceful environment for a few minutes, to understand the teachings of "Enlightened" one.

Our next destination was Lumbini the birth place of Lord Buddha, 175 Kms journey to Nepal crossing the Indian border. The highway to the Nepal border was full of huge colorful heavy goods vehicles in queues for kilometers long. Almost all those trucks had the words such as "Blow Horns", "Horn Please" "Use



Dipper at night". After a few long hours we arrived at the Indian Nepal border and while we were in the bus our two guides went to the Immigration office with our passports to comply with the immigration formalities. Another an hours' time we arrived at the hotel in Lumbini.

On the our 6th day of the tour, we visited the Birth Place of Lord Buddha the Lumbini. Lumbini is one of the world's most important spiritual sites for Buddhist pilgrims. Mayadevi Temple is the most sacred site in the Lumbini Garden where archaeologists have identified the exact spot where Lord Buddha was born. Inscriptions on the Ashoka Pillar nearby refer to the spot as his birthplace. The birth took place in the beautiful Sal grove, which is now the focal point of the Lumbini Garden. Maha Mayadevi, the Queen of Shakya King Suddhodhana of Kapilvastu, while passing through the Lumbini Garden, on her way to her parent's home in Devdaha on the day of Vaishakha Purnima (full moon day of Vesak in 623 BC) took a bath in the Sacred Pond Pushkarini and soon after gave birth to Prince Siddhartha. The Prince is said to have announced, "This is my final rebirth" as he entered the world. Buddhist tradition also has it that he walked immediately after his birth and took seven steps, under each of which a lotus flower bloomed and delivered his peace message to humanity here.



No Camera were allowed. The inside was well protected ruins of mud bricks. Special flat forms had been erected for walking inside and observing the ruins of the exact place of the birth. Another focal point in the Lumbini was the Ashoka Pillar built by the great Indian Emperor Ashoka who became a devout Buddhist while visiting the birthplace of the Buddha in 249 BC. Ashoka's Pillar bears an inscription that translates as: "King Piyadasi (Ashoka), beloved of devas, in the 20th year of the coronation, himself made a royal visit, Buddha Sakyamuni having been born here, a stone railing was built

and a stone pillar erected to the Bhagavan ["blessed one"] having been born here.

Monasteries and temples were built at Lumbini until the 9th century, but Buddhism declined in the area after the arrival of Islam and later Hinduism. The garden of the Buddha's birth was lost for a thousand years. The site was rediscovered in 1895, when a German archaeologist came upon Ashoka's Pillar, identified by its inscription. Records made by the Chinese pilgrim Fa Xian were also used in the process of identifying this religiously acclaimed site. Lumbini was designated a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 1997. The next important place is the Bodhi tree beside the Maya Devi temple which is decorated with many colorful prayer flags. Certainly, the most colorful and decorated sight in Lumbini is the famous "Bodhi tree". Most of us had brought prayer flags from Sri Lanka to be hang there. The silent atmosphere kept our hearts at peace. After spending a little time there, we returned to hotel and resumed our journey towards Sravasthi ancient name Savath Nuwara 260 Kms from Lumbini back to India.

At the Immigration India office there was a sign board read as "STOP, INDIAN IMMIGRATION- Check post – Sonauli- Maharajanj U.P. - Foreigners are requested to stop and get their passports stamped on their



arrival/departure in/from India” by the side of the small office. After about half an hour again we were on our way to Kapilavasthu, the kingdom of the clan of Shakyas, where Siddhartha Gautama spent the first 29 years of his life with his father King Suddhodana.

Excavations by Archaeological Survey of India have revealed this to be from the Kushan period. An excavated stupa bears text that proves the existence of an ancient monastery named Devaputra in this place. Two mounds have also been excavated at only a little distance (1.5 km) from this village which, are considered to be the ruins of King Suddhodhana's palace. The village has a mystic charm, the magic of which can be felt through devoted mind and dedication. There are many stupas scattered around the place, built by Ashoka and the Gupta Kings. The symbols left behind by the Sakya dynasty is clearly visible here. We spent the time looking at the remains of the palace complex and the palace where Siddhartha was. After visiting the Relic stupa constructed by Shakyas over 1/8th part of Buddha's relics received by them, we started our journey to Sravasthi.



Next day we went to the Jethawanarama (Dewram Vehera) premises. Jetavana is currently a historical park, with remains of many ancient buildings such as monasteries, cottages (such as the Gandhakuti, the Kosambakuti and Anandakuti), ponds and stupas. A visit to Savatthi (Ancient Savathnuwara) and Jetavana is part of the Buddhist pilgrim route in North-India. The second-holiest tree of Buddhism the Anandabodhi Tree is also located in Jetavana. The most revered place in Jetavana is the Gandhakuti, where Buddha used to stay. It was the second vihara donated to Gautama Buddha after the Venuvana donated by King Bimbisara in Rajgir. The monastery was

donated to him by his chief male lay disciple, Anathapindika.

At the entrance of the Jethawana our bus was surrounded by the pitiful beggars, mostly young children that are such a common sight in pilgrim sites in India. Our attention was drawn towards a musical band comprised with two young ladies, one was singing with a small child in her arms and the other playing a drum (Dolki) on the ground at the door step of the bus. We were amazed by the beautiful voice and the way she sang the beautiful popular Hindi song (Paradeshi).

The Commentaries state that the Buddha spent twenty-five rainy seasons in Shravasti, thus leaving only twenty to be spent elsewhere. Of the 25 rainy seasons which Buddha lived in Shravasti, he spent 19 in the monastery named Jetavana, and 6 in the monastery called Pubbarama close to Savatthi which was built by the Buddha's chief female lay disciple, Visakha, Thus, Shravasti is the place where Buddha lived the longest amount of time, and it is the place where he gave the largest amount of discourses and instructions.

Remains of the Jethavana are well preserved by the Archaeological Survey of India. It is a fantastic place. We walked along well-maintained pathways viewing all the important Buddhist historical places guided by a Sri Lankan Bhikkuni who was in a wheel chair. She explained all the details of each place. All of us



took more time at the remains of Mulagandakuti where Lord Buddha said to be stayed, with the feeling that we were contacting the ground of the sacred place on which Buddha spent time. We were taken to see the ruins of the large assembly hall used to deliver sermons on daily basis and the beautiful stage, chambers of other monks such as Ananda, Sariputtha, Moggallana who stayed nearby, large pond and number of small sthupas. The most important place in there is the Ananda Bodhi. There is a belief among Buddhists that if someone touch the Bo tree while worshipping and make a wish it would become true. We conducted some rituals under the Bo tree, and I saw most of the people made wishes touching the Bo tree, which was a sapling of the original Bo tree at Mahabodhi in Bodhgaya where Sidhhartha Gouthama attained enlightenment. It is a very old tree and well preserved. Jethavana also has a magical charm that enlivens tired tourists instantly.

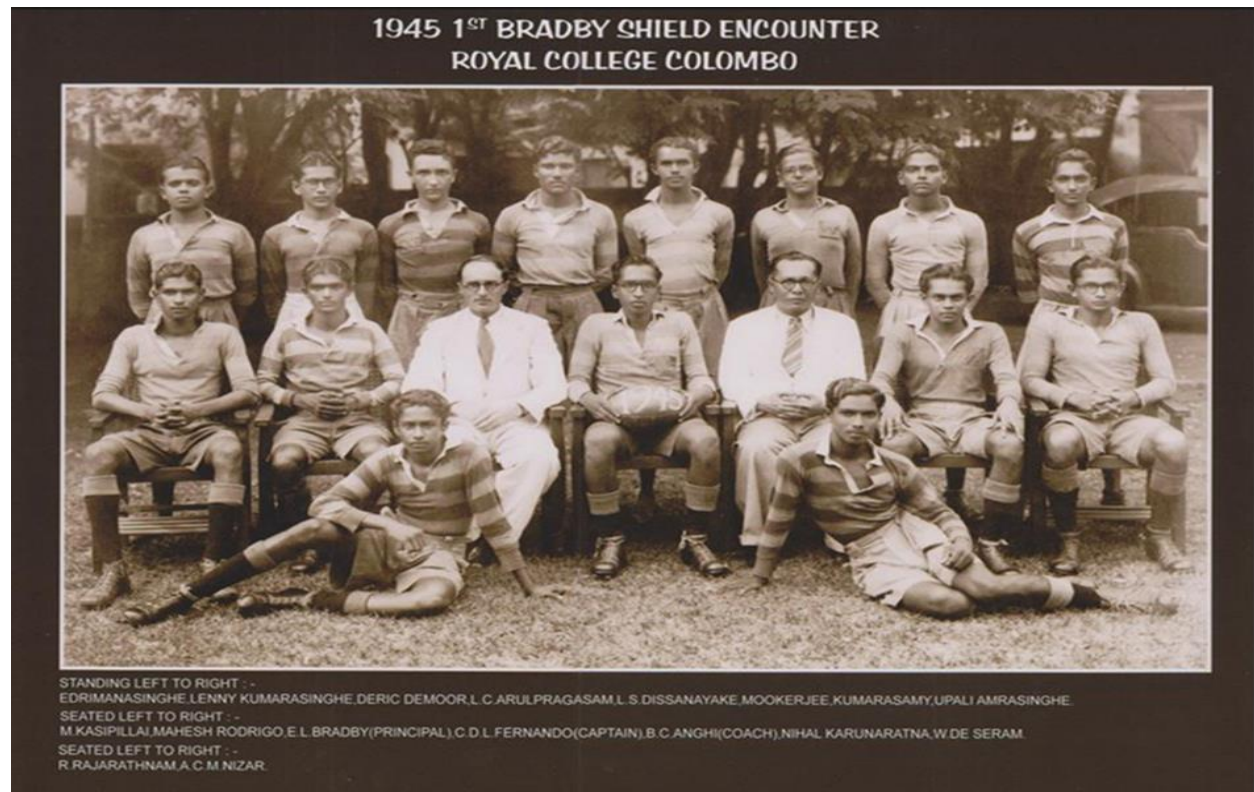
The tour concluded and we returned to Varanasi, contemplating the success of the pilgrimage and how fortunate we were to be associated with the footsteps of the Supreme Buddha.

Founding Partner of the Bradby Shield encounter – Dr Robert Sourjah passes away

Hugh Karananayake

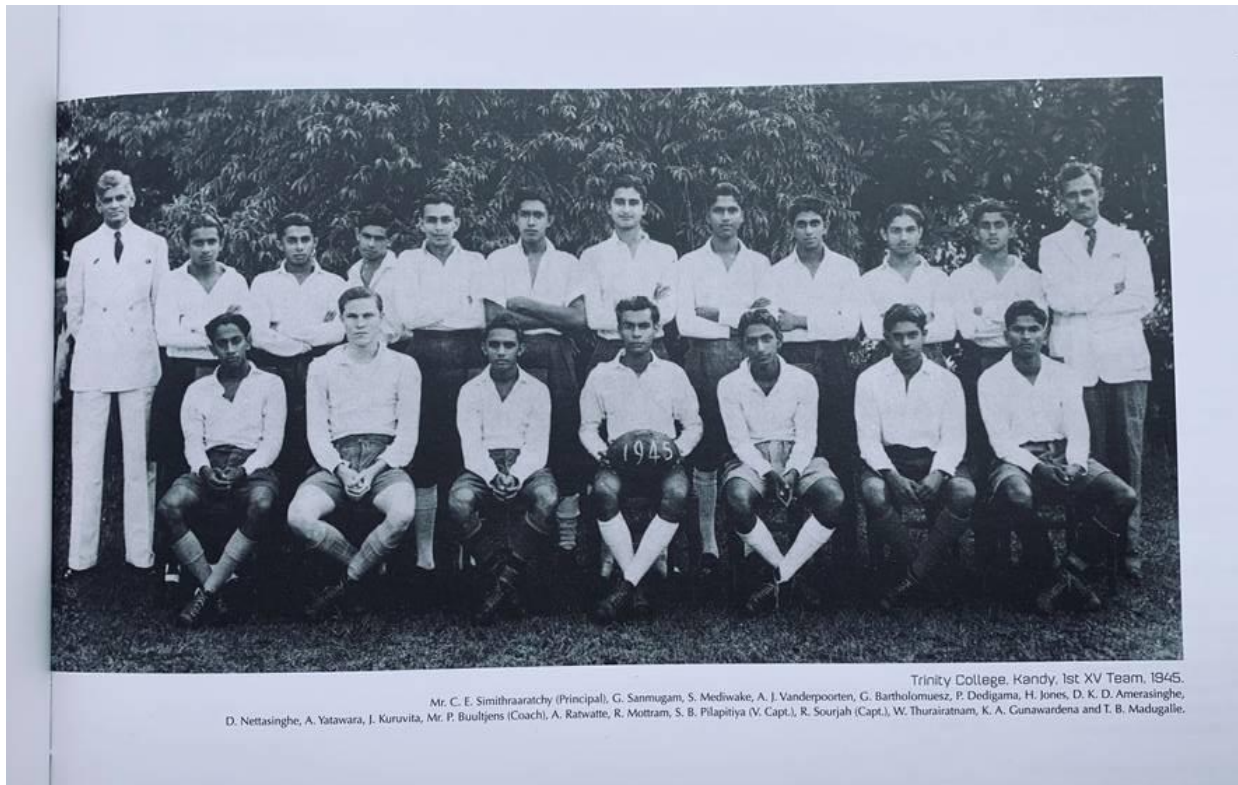


The Bradby Shield is the award long recognized as the “Holy grail” of school rugby. First awarded in 1945 for the winner of the annual rugby encounter between Royal College and Trinity College, it was donated by the Principal of Royal College, Mr E L Bradby as an impetus to greater interest in school rugby. The annual encounters have since grown into a massive sporting cum social institution much akin to the annual Royal Thomian cricket encounter. The two captains that led the two sides were CDL(Derrick)



Fernando from Royal and Robert Sourjah from Trinity. The encounters have since been played over the subsequent 75 years. Both CDL Fernanado and Robert Sourjah on leaving school enrolled as medical students and both passed out as medical doctors. Derrick Fernando practiced as a physician in Kandy while Robert Sourjah whose home was in Kandy worked in government service, and later overseas before settling down in Australia. Both remained good friends until the demise of Derrick Fernando some 33 years ago. Robert Sourjah passed away a few weeks ago at the age of 95 years. His death marked the end of the founding partnership of captains of the original Bradby encounter.

The passing of Dr Robert Sourjah has created the moment for us to take a brief look at the two teams that battled for the Bradby shield. The shield itself was made by Kandyan craftsmen using a sterling silver carved round tray embalazoned with traditional sinhala motifs as in the ancients moonstone carvings on stone slabs seen in Polonnaruwa and Anuradhapura. Royal emerged winners in the first ever match by 3 nil, but in the return encounter Trinity led by Robert Sourjah had the edge winning 6-0, thus holding the shield in the inaugural year. Of the Trinity fifteen led by Robert Sourjah that played in that historic first Bradby encounter five including Robert viz Ivor Bartholomeusz, Kenneth Gunawardene, Harvey Jones, and SB Pilapitiya joined the Havelocks Club in Colombo and they were all in the winning Clifford Cup team in 1951. Of those who represented Trinity only three survive today Ratwatte, Gunawardene and Madugalle.



Of the Royal College team skipper Derrick Fernando passed away in 1987. None of the team I believe are alive today, with humble apologies to any who may have survived. There are some notable in the Royal team. Mahes Rodrigo who represented Ceylon in both cricket and rugby, M Kasipillai who captained Royal in cricket in 1947 and went on to Cambridge University, Upali Amerasinghe the finest example of *“men sana in corpora sano”* who won a first class honours in English from Cambridge University, and a doctorate, and represented Royal in cricket, athletics, boxing, and rugby, winning a Cambridge blue in boxing was sadly plucked away at the the age of 29. Chandra Arulapragam entered the Ceylon Civil



Service and later served with the FAO overseas, Dr Willie de Saram from the reputed brotherhood of Royalist sportsmen Chris, Alan, and Willie; who was a Veterinary surgeon who retired in Adelaide, Nihal Karunaratne who like his father before him became a prominent doctor in Kandy and was a celebrated historian on Kandy, Derrick de Moor an early migrant to Australia in the 1940s, R Rajaratnam and ACM Nizar members of the legal profession. My apologies on the lack of information on the others who I have no doubt would have excelled in whatever field that they chose to enter.

The Tale of The Beer Bottle Stopper and The Markowich Cigarette

Dr. Nihal Jayawickrama

Sunday Island -November 15, 2020



Recent contributions to the Sunday Island by my school friends Godwin Perera (Remembered Yesterdays) and Gamini Seneviratne (Disce aut Discede) have brought back memories of the simple, uncomplicated, halcyon days of the nineteen fifties. Those idyllic schooldays were rudely interrupted, as far as I was concerned, by an event to which Gamini has referred in his article (November 8, 2020).

The return Royal-Trinity rugby encounter marks, I believe, the grand finale to the rugby (or rugger) season. In 1956, that match was scheduled to be played in Kandy. I had no interest whatsoever in rugby, and I cannot recall having spent even one hot afternoon watching a school rugby match in Colombo. However, all that was to change. One Friday afternoon in July saw me confined within a close cramped railway



carriage bound for Kandy. All but two of my fellow passengers were the members of the Royal College Rugby Team. The two non-players and I were the Royal College Debating Team, travelling to Kandy for the annual Royal-Trinity Debate which was scheduled for that weekend in the Trinity College Hall. I cannot now recall who the other two members of our debating team on that occasion were, but our six college debaters that year were B.P.M. Peiris, L.A.D. Williams, Godwin Perera, Percy Wickremasekera, K. Shelton Alahakone and me.

The visiting Royalists were provided hospitality and accommodation in a section of the Trinity College hostel. On Saturday afternoon I watched Royal defeat Trinity on the Bogambara grounds and returned to the Trinity College Hall for the annual debate. Sarath Amunugama was the leader of the Trinity College Team. That night, in our quarters in the Trinity College hostel, the Royal rugby team celebrated their victory. They were joined by our Head Prefect N.Rasalingam and the other Prefects who had travelled independently to Kandy to watch the rugby match. We returned to Colombo by train on Sunday evening. Monday was a normal quiet day at school, except for expressions of jubilation at having twice defeated Trinity that rugby season. On Tuesday afternoon everything dramatically changed. There were no teachers to take our regular classes. Rumour had it that an emergency staff meeting had been convened by the Principal, Mr Dudley K.G de Silva. There were no classes on Wednesday. The staff were attending an all-day staff meeting summoned by the Principal. There were wild rumours afloat on Thursday of a deadly missile from Kandy that had landed on the Principal's desk. By evening, it all became known – at least to the twelve College Prefects, of whom I was one.

Mr Norman Walter, Principal of Trinity College, had written a letter to his Royal counterpart. In it he had congratulated Royal on its performance at the annual rugby match; confirmed that boys from his school would be visiting Colombo shortly for a combined schools rugby game; and expressed the hope that, as usual, Royal would accord them accommodation and hospitality during their stay in Colombo. Below his signature, he had added a PS: "I am returning something that your boys had, perhaps inadvertently, left behind (a Beer bottle stopper and a Markovich cigarette). Don't worry. Our boys will bring their own supplies. In any event, they cannot afford these expensive brands."

On Friday morning, the five Prefects who were officially in Kandy on that weekend – Fritz Crozier, Lionel Almeida, Suranjan de Silva and Loci Guneratna (members of the rugby team) and I were summoned to the Principal's office. We were informed that, by our conduct, we had disgraced the school and the office of Prefect. We were removed from the office of Prefect and asked to hand back our Prefect's badges to him immediately, which we did. At the general school assembly that followed a few minutes later, the Principal repeated what he had told us, and informed the assembly that the five of us had been removed forthwith from the office of Prefect. I believe the members of the Rugby Team were also denied "colours" despite their brilliant performance that year.

At the end of that year, when it was time for me to leave Royal, I wondered what the Principal would write in my school-leaving certificate. Mr Dudley K.G. de Silva was very magnanimous: "Jayawickrama has made a very substantial contribution to the general life of the College in many fields. He has a cheerful and kindly disposition and has always proved himself to be loyal and efficient. In all work entrusted to him he has displayed diligence, zeal, and conscientiousness. His conduct and character have been very good." I was pleasantly surprised to note that he ended his comments thus: "He was appointed a Prefect". That was characteristic of that warm-hearted gentleman with whom I later associated closely in the United Nations Association of Ceylon.



Reflecting on this episode there is little doubt that Mr. Norman Walter would not have expected his letter to be taken seriously. It was banter between two principals, one an English public-school boy and the other a relatively new school head from a bureaucratic background.

An Apology to all Trinitians

Following the publication of my article “The Tale of the Beer Bottle Stopper and the Markowich Cigarette” in the Sunday Island last week, I have been informed by old friends from Trinity College that I had made a grievous unforgivable error in claiming that Royal College won the 1956 Royal-Trinity rugby encounter played on the Bogambara grounds. As I confessed in my article that was the first occasion when I had witnessed a rugby match, and the fact that we “celebrated” that night probably led me to believe that we had actually won the match. What was there to celebrate if we had lost? It was suggested that we might have won the debate. I then recalled the Royal College anthem: “True to our watchword Disce aut Discede, we will learn of books and men and learn to play the game”. I apologize to my Trinity friends for claiming victory if there was none, but wish to remind them that, at Royal, it mattered not whether we won or lost so long as we “learnt to play the game”.

The Colombo Oval and I

S. Skandakumar

Sunday Island August 30, 2020



The majestic Oval scoreboard clock showed ten minutes to three on a Sunday afternoon when our final wicket fell. We had conceded first innings points by a small margin to Moors in a P. Sara Trophy encounter. The year was 1973 and it was my first game for the club. The many Moors supporters hugged each other and left the venue to return to Braybrook Place to celebrate. With just half an hour left to tea, and two hours thereafter to the end of the game, their optimism was justified.

In our dressing room our skipper Benedictine Tony Appathurai had other ideas. “I want five by tea,” he thundered as he briskly led us back on to the field for that half an hour. I admired his arrogance! We came back for tea with Moors tottering at 11 for 4! Johnian Sooriakumar and Josephian Viji Johnpillai produced an inspired opening spell.

Immediately after the tea break Tony handed the ball to me whispering ‘finish them off’.



Forty-five minutes later, the final Moors wicket fell with their total at 19, and I had the flattering figures of five overs three maidens two runs four wickets!

We knocked off the required thirty odd runs for the loss of one wicket. Tony insisted that I went in at three to make the winning hit. We were home by nine wickets with time to spare and so began my memorable forty-seven-year association with the finest sporting and social club in Colombo!

Appreciation

Having watched International cricket at the Oval as a schoolboy from the Gandhi stands, queuing up from 4 am to get a ticket, the experience of playing on that hallowed turf was magical.

Prior to that, it was twice in successive years (1965 and 66) in the Royal -Thomian and once in the Gopalan Trophy, (1970) and yet now I was there with an identity. Yes, I belonged to that great venue!

More than four decades later my heart still warms to that genial gentleman, and outstanding administrator cum sportsman P. Saravanamuttu whose vision for sport in general for the country and cricket in particular gave birth to that awesome cricket ground and stadium that came to be known as the 'Colombo Oval' in 1940.

The only venue in Sri Lanka which for over three decades provided facilities for Public Schools Athletics Meets, National and International Hockey Tournaments, Schools 'big matches' and International Cricket. A selfless act of the Tamil Union in the best interests of National Sport. I felt a surge of pride to be a member!

Personal Challenges

In 1976, at my peak as an off-spinner cum batsman I went down with a virulent attack of Hepatitis that put paid to my chances of playing for Sri Lanka.

I followed medical advice to the letter to stay away from strenuous physical activity for three years and in 1979 made my way back cautiously into the club's cricket scene at Division 3 level under the evergreen Josephian stalwart Felix Perumal (currently Club Patron) as skipper of the 'Daily News' Trophy team.

We emerged runners-up and during that period, initiated by Benedictine Selva Perumal, we pioneered the influx of talented young cricketers from the south to the club and to competitive cricket in Colombo. The lads were understandably shy and unsure of themselves at first in an English-speaking environment as the Tamil Union then was. It was refreshing to see how the Colombo schoolboys at the nets rallied round to help them overcome this initial handicap and soon we saw the emergence of a cohesive, confident and strong combination of players.

Yes, the club's unwritten rule for equal opportunity led to many young cricketers from modest backgrounds achieving their full potential, while the exceptional among them reached stardom! Sadly, the pool of talent in the north was beginning to dry up at this time as painful events began to take hold of that otherwise tranquil area and its gentle, affectionate people.

Progress

After a season at Division 3, I felt ready to move up and found a place in Josephian Rajiv Benedict's Division 2 team vying for the "Donovan Andree" trophy in 1981.



Rajiv was a revelation on the playing field. Fiercely competitive, he bemused many a batsman with his very late in swing and amused the genial umpires of that vintage with his aggressive show of exasperation whenever an appeal of his for a wicket was turned down.

The season, needless to say, was most enjoyable and if my memory serves me right, we clinched the trophy that year.

With Royalist Rohan Jayasekera, the P. Sara team captain migrating to Canada mid-season in 1981, I was yanked out of Rajiv's team and placed in charge of a very young and talented Division 1 team.

The players showed their approval of my appointment in my very first match as captain against the Police at the Park, when our openers Josephian Wayne Jansz and Mahindian Athula Samarasekera broke a long standing record for the first wicket held by Moors' Makeen Salih and Herbie Felsingher of 352 runs! A remarkable achievement indeed for two youngsters barely out of school!

At age 35, the following year 82/83 was my only full season as captain and player, and was memorable for more reasons than one.

The team and squad comprised of boys from Royal, S. Thomas', St. Joseph's, Ananda, Isipathana, D.S Senanayake, Thurstan, St. Peter's, Prince of Wales, and Mahinda. The atmosphere in the dressing room throughout the season was one of amazing cordiality and good humour while on the field it was serious endeavour.

'P. Sara' had given way to the 'Lakspray Trophy' that year as the game needed sponsorship modest though it may have been. As it was the inaugural year for that trophy, we were eager to win it and repeat history to match our peers who annexed the P. Sara Trophy in its initial year.

We lost it to Bloomfield on a scorer's lapse by a margin as infinitely small as 0.15 points when scorebooks were unprecedentedly opened after the tournament was concluded. That lapse made in the very first match of the final round in recording penalties for slow over rates went undetected throughout the rest of the season!

However, each of us who played in that team will forever look back on that season and say with pride that 'we won that trophy on the playing field and conceded it off it to uphold the spirit of the game' Headlines such as 'Tamil Union's Mathematical Magic'; 'Tamils do the Impossible' and 'Tamils Worthy Champions' told their own story of how that final game in the tournament was planned and executed! Exhausted mentally and physically at the end of that memorable season, I then turned my attention to tennis at the club which in the ensuing years became almost a daily ritual inspired by competition of an enjoyable nature from like-minded fellow members.

Recognition of the Club

In 1981, Sri Lanka's admission as a full member of the International Cricket Council as a 'Test playing nation' was very much on the cards and was conditional upon the availability of an appropriate venue. The Oval was the only venue that met the standards stipulated by the ICC when the application was tabled in London at Lord's that year.

Appropriately the first ever Test match versus England was played at the Oval in February 1982, opening a new and exciting chapter in the nation's cricket history. Happily, three years later the first ever Test win was also registered at the same venue when India was humbled.



The blessed turf for decades was nursed with motherly care by the only grounds women the world had known at that time, Mari Amma (Mary) and her daughter Innasi Amma. In later years, Amaravathy and her sister Saroja continued the excellent work under the supervision of Head Groundsman H.D Jayasena. I was privileged to be Hony Ground Secretary when the 'Inaugural Test' was played in 1982.

The Setback

A year and half later, the events of 'July '83' had a devastating impact on the club and its premises. The main pavilion suffered extensive damage and valuable records and photos were irretrievably destroyed. A contribution from the Colombo Cricket Club was the only gesture of financial goodwill the club received at that time.

The then Cricket Board's silence was deafening! A monumental tragedy for a club that provided so much for cricket in particular and sport in general for the country.

Gifts of cricket equipment were received from the High Commissions of England and Australia.

The Revival

In the club's centenary year in 1999-2000, which coincided with the new millennium, a re-development programme was pursued in earnest.

As club President in that period, I was fortunate to have office bearers as dedicated as the players I had in 1982/83 when I led the club's Division 1 cricket team. The general committee provided excellent support to me to put into effect the programme of activity aimed at the resuscitation of the club. Well-wishers both in Sri Lanka and overseas contributed generously to swell the Development Fund. Donations from overseas-based members and well-wishers from the US, UK, Emirates, Botswana, Zambia, Australia and New Zealand were proof, if indeed proof were needed, of their appreciation of the service that the venue had provided for the cause of sport over the decades.

A quote from a letter from the then CEO of the England and Wales Cricket Board Tim Lamb merits recording. His letter reads:

"We recall with sadness the events of 1983 and their impact on your stadium because I know that the 'OVAL' to Sri Lanka Cricket was in many ways what Lords is to us today. I have no doubt that you will receive the fullest support in your efforts to restore the stadium to its former glory."

The initiatives to re-vitalise the club in 1999/2000, were taken to greater heights by succeeding Presidents and their committees.

What we have today is a tribute to their perseverance, commitment and generosity in terms of their time and resources as also that of our sponsors and well-wishers over the years. The Cricket Board's support merits special mention.

The contribution of our sportsmen in the centenary year also merits mention. Our cricketers annexed the championship of three of the four tournaments conducted by the Cricket Board (Premier Limited Overs, Under 23, and Div 2 Donovan Andree while ending runners-up in the fourth viz the Premier Division 1 League)

Our Tennis stalwarts not to be outdone annexed the Veterans All Island over 55 singles and doubles titles rounding off a unique year for sport at the club.



To the incoming members and those who have joined in recent years, I say acquaint yourselves with the proud history of this great institution which has stood unwaveringly for all that is fair, just and equal in its every endeavour. When it is your turn to take office remember what has gone before you, and never forget the responsibility you have, to maintain its rich traditions and above all its cherished reputation.

“Today is what it is, and tomorrow what it might be, simply because of all the yesterdays.” For me, the forty-seven-year association with the Oval, has indeed been “A Rewarding and Emotional Affair to Remember”.

Book Review - Glendale: Stories from the Bandarawela Branch of Royal College by M. B. H. Wariyapola



This booklet provides a glimpse into life at Glendale, the Bandarawela branch school of Royal College. The Second World War (1939-1945) disrupted the lives of millions of people around the world, including those of our own students. Royal College Colombo had to hand over its buildings to the British Army to be used for the army hospital. Alternate accommodation was needed to house and educate students. The branch school at Bandarawela was one such attempt. The Warden, teaching staff, and other employees did an excellent job in trying circumstances, and the students rallied to give their best in studies and sports.

Glendale, the war-time branch school of Royal College, was about two kilometres from the Bandarawela town. You had to take the Badulla Road for about a kilometre, turn right, and follow a winding path the rest of the way to get to the school. When the last of the climb was done, the road turned into an imposing drive, somewhat reminiscent of the approach to Manderley (in Daphne du Maurier’s Rebecca). However, the resemblance ended at the clump of overgrown trees and the gate framed thereby - the building itself not holding its own against the mansion in the film we loved.

The drive led to a small hill - levelled on top and containing a large bungalow. There were a number of outbuildings doing duty as office blocks and classrooms. The planter’s bungalow itself had been expanded to accommodate around a hundred hostellers - whose ages ranged from 11 to 15. “Although I myself attended the branch school only during its final two years, the stay in Bandarawela taught me much. To this day I am grateful for the opportunity that Glendale afforded.

These are some of my experiences going back more than seventy years. It is a long way to reach back through the fog of time - I hope what I have put down here is factually correct. I ask the reader for generosity and forgiveness, should any of my recollections fail that test.” (Wariyapola)

Link to the book on Amazon: <https://www.amazon.com/Glendale-Stories-Bandarawela-Branch-College/dp/B08GVGMZFR/>

For further information about the book contact George Fernando:

ghfernando@bigpond.com

Ph 0448 296 258



Believe it or not! Old Royalist jailed in Sri Lanka

Nihal Kodituwakku

Felix Ranjit Sirimanne (Ranjit) made his regular two-yearly “rest and recreation” pilgrimage from Sydney to Sri Lanka accompanied by his wife Gillian. Gillian’s family is from Kandy. This is the town where the couple usually spend their holidays at the residence of her sister. Visits to other places are intermittent, and mainly to Colombo for a “bajau” session with classmates or friends. Classmates he had many, with a record-breaking ten-year stint at Royal upper school, beginning in 1957, with many juniors catching up with him in later years. This was all for the good because he had many school colleagues he knew well in influential places in the country when he needed them.

Ranjit was a Ceylon Tobacco Company employee, stationed in Kandy. While at Tobacco, he also played rugby - representing Kandy Sports Club in the Clifford Cup until he migrated “Down Under” in the mid-1970s.

Thus, on his visits to Sri Lanka, ‘chilling out’ and reminiscing with a glass in hand was a regular duty, which he religiously practiced with his friends and relatives.

Ranjit and Gillian’s previous visit to the Island was in 2010, where Ranjit was the witness at his niece’s wedding. There was a video of the signing of the register and the wedding festivities. Unknown to him at the time, this was to be the vital piece of evidence that saved him from a nasty accusation two years later.

On Wednesday 3rd September 2012, at about 9 am, while Ranjit was browsing through some books at Vijitha Yapa bookstore in Kandy, a policeman tapped him on the shoulder. From that moment onwards he virtually went through hell for the next 10 days.

The policeman requested Ranjit’s identity card. Ranjit replied that he did not have an identity card as he is now an Australian citizen. The policeman did not accept Ranjit’s statement and claimed that Ranjit was actually one de Alwis from Kandy who had fraudulently taken money from two men in Anuradhapura in 2010. According to the police records, the policeman said the money was taken on the pretext of procuring jobs for the two victims in Japan.

Ranjit was stunned! What on earth was this! He pulled out his Australian driver’s licence and showed it to the policeman. This only confused the policeman even more. Ranjit was asked to accompany the policeman to the Kandy Police Station, which was at one end of the town. Vehement protest and denial that he is not the man the policeman was looking for, was to no avail. Ranjit was literally frogmarched through the town like a common criminal. Marching, of course, was one of Ranjit’s favourite past times. He had been a cadet and also the Sergeant of one of the two Royal College senior platoons in 1965. Later he was elevated to Company Sergeant Major and “numero uno” of the College contingent. Marching this time was different, with his boot being literally on the other foot. Ranjit followed the policeman to the curious looks of the passers-by.

At the Police Station, the Inspector on duty also refused to accept his Australian driver’s licence as evidence of Ranjit’s true identity. On further attempts to prove his identity, the police were willing to go with Ranjit to Asgiriya, to Gillian’s sister’s residence, where he was staying. So off they went in a police jeep. There were three policemen and the inspector to keep Ranjit company. At Asgiriya, his passport



was tendered as evidence, which had the details of the last visit in 2010. That Ranjit was not in Sri Lanka on the date that the alleged transaction took place, based on passport stamps, was ignored by the Inspector who refused to “buy into the story”.

Ranjit was brought back to the Police Station, and after some formalities and delays, was formally arrested and put in the remand cell at about 5 pm, to be brought before a Magistrate the following morning. He was not given any food, nor did he get any drinking water. The forlorn pleas of Ranjit did nothing for the authorities to change their minds.

The following day at a trial held in camera, the Magistrate made his decision. The Magistrate said in English, “The case will go for trial and the first hearing will be in eight days’ time, which is 11th September, and until then the accused is to be remanded at Bogambara Jail”. A week’s time was granted for further investigations and it was necessary for the accused to be behind bars during that period. An identity parade was to be held before the next day at the courts.

Ranjit was then taken to Boga (as the prison was called by the inmates and police) and the following preliminaries were carried out at the office: trousers searched and belt confiscated, his ring and watch taken, and Ranjit was made to sign a document.

The next destination was through the corridor to a cell, where it was obvious that the guards had heard through the grapevine that the man who swindled the innocents was on the way. The cell into which Ranjit was pushed had five other occupants. Among them there were two ‘Mahattayas’, a Trinitian and an Anthonian.

Of the others, one was remanded for an alleged murder and the other two for theft. As Ranjit was to soon find out, the alleged murderer had pleaded his innocence at the first trial. But within the confinement of the cell, took visceral satisfaction of boasting about the gory details of stabbing and dismembering the victim.

The Trinitian was accused of swindling a bank of millions, whilst the Anthonian was accused of rape. Ranjit was given a piece of cloth to cover himself from the welcoming inmates, whilst sleeping on the bare floor. There were five plastic bottles for pissing into and nothing for the big job. An extra bottle was supplied the following morning. Holding tight was mandatory till the roll call at 5 am.

After being woken up at 5 am and a head count done, the inmates were marched off to wash up and to go to the toilets. On the first day, one of Ranjit’s cellmates lent him soap. Gillian brought two more bars of soap during her subsequent visit.

The 12 toilets were the squatting type in a row with no doors. Ranjit had a wonky knee being a legacy of rugby tackles and squatting was difficult, but as they say - “what to do, but bear and bare”.

The standard breakfast of plain rice and pol-sambal was served at 7 am. Lunch was at 11 am followed by dinner at 4 pm. These two meals were mainly vegetarian with the exception of karavadu (dried fish) in a curry or fried. Meals were brought to the centre in big pots from the prison kitchen. The servings were dished out by the kitchen staff, who themselves were “lififers” and service was according to the cell number. Aluminium plates and mugs were used. After breakfast one was free to walk around the restricted and fenced off quadrangle or visit the sick bay with a guard. Those who so wished had access to the reading room.



One visitor was allowed each day, and Gillian became the regular visitor with some food. The meals Gillian brought were shared with some inmates in the night. The visitor meeting room was limited to five prisoners at a time and it was a case of shoving and pushing to get some space. The prisoners and the visitors were separated by a wire mesh.

A cement tank near the toilets was filled during the night and the ablutions, including bathing, were carried out before breakfast. The contraptions used were a pail and a tin can for each inmate. The process was supervised by another “lifer”. Soap was provided by the prison but of inferior quality to the ones supplied by Gillian. The supervising ‘lifer’ kept a count of the pails consumed. The rule of thumb was one pail per prisoner. He was not averse to taking a bribe of five rupees for an extra pail of water. Thus, there was a ‘have and have not policy’ even in prison, based on monetary considerations. Nothing new compared to the life in the open, outside the walls.

Ranjit, ever the optimist, accepted his fate and went on to relate stories from Australia to the prisoners. Soon they were requesting more stories about kangaroos and life in Australia. As a result of this story telling, many became familiar with greeting format of “good day mate” whenever Ranjit approached the tank. The old boys from the two prestigious Kandy schools in his cell made sure that Ranjit was safe.

At 5 pm, there was again a headcount, and all were off to the cells to be locked up. The prison guards could be bribed to deliver outside food to the cells in the nights. Ranjit’s cell always had some extra food. The going rate for bribes was Rs 1000/diem and the main contributors were Ranjit and the two old boys. The food was shared amongst the six cell mates.

During his school days, the personal charm and skills of Ranjit that made the College Masters captive, and which made these school decision makers to appoint him a prefect in 1965 and then as the head prefect in 1966, also reappeared nearly half a century later and under the trying circumstances, to get into the good books of prison guards.

Bribery in the prison was not always in monetary form. Packets of Maliban “Marie Biscuits”, cigarettes, or even a ‘Buth Packet’ from a nearby restaurant or an eatery was also sufficient. A guard’s mobile phone being borrowed to do the ordering. Gillian became the “Marie” carrier on a daily basis. The biscuits were left in the meeting room.

The goods bought through the help of guards for dinner, were delivered to the guard house at the entrance and subsequently passed through the door grille of the cell by the guard in attendance. Cigarettes were allowed, but strictly no form of liquor.

Ranjit’s cadetting skills came in handy too in harnessing his cell mates to sing baila and sometimes they had the occupants of the cell on either side join in to sing in unison. Camaraderie grew within the cell.

Gillian in this time of adversity and personal bewilderment had done the networking through two Sydney based friends, Lloyd Perera and Tommy Sivanesarasa. She was able to secure the help of an influential entity, Colombo based Nalin Pathikirikorale, who was Ranjit’s senior in school and a well-known business icon. Nalin was a fellow hosteller at Royal and a rugby teammate of Ranjit’s. He got the ball rolling and contacted the Attorney General C R de Silva of the 1960s batch and himself a Rugby Captain and known fondly as “Bulla”. As luck would have it, Bulla was the best man at Mahinda Rajapaksa’s wedding.



On Wednesday 11 September, Ranjit was taken in the police van from “Boga” to the Courts with head covered, as he could not be exposed before the identity parade. Prisoners from the women’s prison which was closer to the President’s house and away from “Boga” were also the unseen fellow occupants. He could hear their giggles and some wisecracks.

But Ranjit was to get another blow at the hands of the police. At the identity parade at the Courts on the morning before fronting the Magistrate, two three-wheeler drivers identified him as the alleged recruiting agent, de Alwis. This de Alwis apparently had a fair skin colour. Ranjit is also very fair. All the others in the identity parade were darker. The accusers identified Ranjit as the alleged criminal based on his colour. Ranjit who also taught young prisoners English grammar inside Boga, came to be known as the “sudu seeya” for the same reason.

With identification being positive, Ranjit’s bail was set by the Magistrate in the afternoon at two million rupees along with two sureties. It was impossible for Gillian to get such an amount on that day, although she had until the following day to come up with the money.

Ranjit was kept in the Court’s cells until 4 pm and was taken back to Boga. Whilst crossing the road shackled and hand cuffed, to get into the police van, he saw the Australian cricket fans getting into their tour bus for the match at Asgiriya. Seeing this, Ranjit broke down. He should have been in the tour bus, not in the police van.

The following day and on Thursday, Gillian’s brother-in-law and his brother-in-law’s friend, tendered their house titles as security and they also were the sureties. An act of real kindness by the latter as he did not know Ranjit at all.

The police were obstructing at every turn, having failed to secure a large bribe from Ranjit in spite of the former’s broaching of this matter. There was also another side to the story, unbeknown to Ranjit which came to light later. Ranjit was granted bail on Friday and a court date was set about a month later for the next hearing. Ranjit returned to Australia as his job was at stake, vowing to comeback for the next court appearance.

This was where the Attorney General C R de Silva, known affectionately as “Bulla”, stepped in on a pro bono capacity, exercising his legal rights to appear for a friend. This was him paying back for the rugby lessons offered by Ranjit at school and because Ranjit being the “Head Cop” in 1966. Ranjit also won the prestigious Dornhorst prize for the top student of 1966. Ranjit’s seniority in school had taken such a stand that some of his classmates even stood up when he entered the class. “Bulla” was one such classmate.

In the intervening period after Ranjit’s departure and the next trial, the wheels moved quickly thanks to the political high connections and the high stature of Nalin and Bulla. The President’s Police Direct Unit (PDU) uncovered the real plot behind the recruitment saga.

- PDU arrested the real culprit within two days of departure of Ranjit. He had five passports and involved with him in the scam were a network of some of Kandy police and local politicians. And uncannily, the real culprit had a marked resemblance to Ranjit. Police were trying to make Ranjit the scapegoat to make certain of their future pay dates.
- Kandy Police had provided the photo of Ranjit in advance to the three-wheel drivers on the very first day he was arrested. Two of these drivers were the “official spotters” for the Kandy Police to find any absconding accused. The drivers were in the pay of the Police.



- Before the bail was set up and with the help of the President's DPU, travel records were provided to Kandy Police of international arrivals and departures which clearly showed that Ranjit was not in Sri Lanka in 2010 at the time one of the crimes was committed by the purported "recruiting agent for Japan". Records were provided to the Kandy police. Ranjit was to find out that these were not tendered to the Magistrate at the court sitting when bail was granted. Evidence was deliberately being withheld.

Ranjit flew back for the trial and watched a masterly performance by Bulla in taking apart the Kandy police and the "spotters" in the form two three-wheeler drivers. Nalin and many of Ranjit's classmates were there too. Bulla had the audacity to accuse Kandy police about their duplicity and evasion of duties.

One exhibit tendered as evidence was the video taken in 2010 at the wedding. At the day and time quoted by the Kandy police "as to the time of making payment", Ranjit was attending the wedding. At the day and time quoted by the second complainant, Ranjit had left the country and was in Australia. Passport and records being tendered as evidence.

Ranjit was freed. Bulla was very offended when Ranjit wanted to pay for the services. Bulla explained that he was very hurt by the miscarriage of justice towards a man whom he admired and respected in Ranjit and was glad that he was able to repay Ranjit for all the free coaching and advice during his rugby career at school and post-school.

The real culprit got a very light sentence.

Ranjit filed a civil rights case and flew to Sri Lanka again for the sittings. He hired a lawyer. Subsequently a policeman was charged for dishonesty and got a fine of Rupees One Thousand. This sum was not enough for him to lose his job. No compensation was paid to Ranjit.

Bulla sadly is no more.

(Note: This was the time when there were several cases of abductions and ransom demands. In some cases, the armed forces personnel were accused of such. Well known cases were those of 'refugees' taking the boats to get to Australia and the Navy who intercepted them allowing them to go on the payment of bribes. This case has some similarity to those. Had Gillian given a bribe of several thousands to the police, Ranjit would have been allowed to go, and the evidence provided by him about his identity would have been accepted.)

The article is an excerpt from Nihal Kodituwakku's book due to be published in 2021. Nihal and Ranjit are from the Royal College '57 batch. The book will be Nihal's fourth publication. "Magical Times in Ceylon/Sri Lanka", "Stranger than Fiction" and "Mastering Mental Mathematics" being the preceding publications. Nihal lives in Perth, Australia, being professionally active.



Nalin Jayaweera: Enterprising Restaurant Entrepreneur

Prasanna Mendis



Nalin Jayaweera is from the Royal College '87 Group. After leaving school, Nalin spent time working in information technology in Sri Lanka until he decided to go to the United Kingdom. He was in Liverpool for five years. It was there that for the first time that Nalin cooked a meal, which happened to be a drumstick curry. He was trying to imitate his dear mother's southern Sri Lankan traditional style of cooking. He struggled to achieve the colour of his mother's curry, adding more and more turmeric. The curry turned out fine regarding the colour. The taste however was imperfect! His first lesson - a quick telephone call to his mother in Sri Lanka. Nalin's inspiration was his mother.

When Nalin arrived in Australia, he worked for banks and a Telco in Canberra for about two years. After moving to Melbourne, his wife started work as a GP. At this stage Nalin took a long-awaited punt and gave up the security of a salaried occupation and dived headlong into his passion for food.

Nalin Jayaweera started a small restaurant - Spoon & Pan. It was located near Glen Waverley's huge gym and pool complex. Originally it only offered dining and takeaway meals. Shortly afterwards he succeeded in gaining a liquor licence for Spoon & Pan. He ran this for 14 months, becoming increasingly well known. Our Lollo (Lorenz Pereira) and our Bandu Dissanayake (of Pahana and Vishvavahini TV fame) were two of the first to patronise the restaurant. Even though it is now five years or so since he left that location, it is interesting to note that the new people have not removed his rear overhead sign.

Nalin's new restaurant, Shavans Pinewood, is in Pinewood Shopping Centre, 17 to 21 Centreway, Mount Waverley. It has been operating for five years now and has become very popular among Australian patrons, with many group bookings from Monash University and corporate clients. I have noticed many diners at Shavans whenever our family have been there, which is about twenty times over the last three years. It has operated at capacity on special days like Fathers' Day buffets. The changing demographic in Waverley area has given Nalin some cause for concern as the new residents might not favour this type of formal Indian and Sri Lankan meal. Still, the weekends are busier than other days or evenings. Some of our favourite Royal sportsmen of all time Fred Kreltshheim, Fitzroy Crozier, Michael Wille, Lorenz Pereira, and Nihal de Run, have been seen enjoying the fare at Shavans more than once.

Nalin prefers not to follow recipes but follows his instincts. He is very particular about the flavours, tasting every dish prepared in the kitchen by his chefs up to three times where necessary. He employs four chefs – two for Sri Lankan and two for Indian cuisine, and up to five waiters on busy days. Nalin is extremely health conscious and uses no msg. He uses canola oil in his quest for healthy cooking.

Shavans has been given a five-star rating as being an impeccable venue under HACCP food safety assessments. The restaurant is an elegant place with tables covered in white linen and white cloth napkin. The mirrored walls give it a classy appearance, with the exquisite easy-listening music piped in to create a lovely mood.



Nalin is palpably excited and fired-up about his new passion – a truly new innovation: a community first – a Sri Lankan Kara-oke Lounge in Melbourne. This is to be in the spacious upstairs area with room for 65 patrons. There is an entry fee for the Kara-oke lounge which has a state-of-the-art sound system and the Argent bar. Guests receive a welcome drink of beer, wine, or basic spirits, followed by a Sri Lankan buffet offering biryani, kottu-roti and fried rice. It is also possible to order from the Specialty menu of hoppers, egg-roti, devilled meat dishes, lotus root and polos curry. Nalin has secured exclusive rights to the import of the choicest of Lankan arracks – the 18-year-old Mendis Special and even more exclusive, the 20-year-old arrack from the government's Distilleries Corporation (DCSL). This luxury is also a first in Melbourne, Nalin insists.

An entrepreneur of innovation and enterprise!

Thangiah Ponniah (aka Kadalay): The Unique bond between Kadalay and Royal College sport

Eardley Lieversz

(Eardley Lieversz was winnings captain of the Royal College team that defeated St. Thomas' College in 1969).



Dr David Ponniah, Warden of St. Thomas' College remarked in the Thomian souvenir of 2003 that the Royal-Thomian involved people affiliated to the two schools "coming together to play and witness a game of cricket." Implied in his remark was that the nostalgia and collective traditions of the spectators provided an indispensable backdrop to what went on in the middle.

However, the greatest character to grace the Royal-Thomian encounters neither studied nor taught at either of the schools but was a humble gram seller who was affectionately known as Kadalay.

T.M.K. Samat was to sport writing in the 1960s what Neville Cardus was to Anglo-Australian cricket literature. Along with Bertie Wijesinghe, his erstwhile colleague at the Ceylon Observer. Samat covered the Royal-Thomian matches of the period, with great insight and evocative prose. According to Samat, in the mid-1930s Thangiah Ponniah (aka Kadalay) worked as a dressing boy for Jockey Don Benjamin. Thangiah's duties were to prepare the jockey and saddle the horse before every race. He subsequently worked as a ball picker on the Royal College tennis courts. However, he came from a family of gram-sellers resident in Slave Island and this was to be his main profession.

Kadalay arrives at Royal

Although Kadalay claimed to have been a follower of Royal College cricket since 1937, when Pat McCarthy was playing, he came to Royal in 1947 as a 21-year boy to assist the female gram-seller Kadalay Achchi. (Although he couldn't remember the year, he remembers M. Kasipillai as Royal's cricket captain). He used to sell vadai next to Kadalay Achchi and also collected debts for her. Subsequently he was allowed to sell gram by himself but only outside the college premises. It was only following the death of the Kadalay



Achchi, in the early 1960s, and when his black beard had turned white, that he started selling inside the college premises. At the 10.15 a.m. interval he parked his box in an area triangulated by the hostel, cycling shed and the west wing. This area is now occupied by a large three storied building similar to the east wing of the school. His association with Royal ended in 1991, the year he passed away.

Mixing business with sport

Kadalay's business was contained in a glassed wooden box, about two feet long and a foot wide, with glass panelled sides. In this was contained a selection of "taste" gram, thambappu (boiled) konde and bola kadalay with slices of newspaper to wrap up the gram and lime to give "taste". Although gram was his mainstay, he also sold a variety of vadais (masala and isso with a prawn on top) and coconut toffee. In the 1960s all his products sold at 5 cents a piece.

Kadalay would deftly fill the paper cones with gram and neatly stack them on a side during slack periods. His fingers were small and well-shaped and lacked the roughness of a manual worker.

During cricket matches at Reid Avenue, he was wont to park his business in the vicinity of the jam fruit tree at the point at which the two walls which separated Royal from Thurstan College intersected. On Saturdays, he sometimes arrived at the grounds unencumbered after fortifying himself with spirits. As a result, he was more vocal in his comments. Not unlike his loyalty to Royal, Kadalay's attire was consistent - white shirt and sarong. He only shaved his white beard after obtaining white collar employment in the late 1990s which returned him to the clean-shaven state that attended his arrival at Royal. In the 1970s he lived in the school's old cycle shed although where he lived before that is a mystery.

Kadalay symbolised the ecumenical spirit of the times. He communicated mainly in English and Sinhalese, the only concession to his Dravidian ancestry being the way he addressed everyone as "Dorai". To all those who knew him, he was simply the best supporter and friend Royal ever had. His identity was trans-ethnic.

An ubiquitous presence at sporting fixtures

Not only did Kadalay not miss a Royal-Thomian match, he hardly ever missed a game of cricket or rugby, even turning up when Royal played in Kandy. Kadalay was known to clear the cigarette butts, empty liquor bottles and other telltale items from the dormitories of St. Anthony's and Trinity Colleges, prior to the arrival of the master-in-charge in the morning. At Asgiriya in 1964, it was Kadalay who warned the vice-captain of the cricket team and a future Royal cricket captain, then a fresher of a plan to harm them. And during sparsely attended third term cricket games at Reid Avenue, Kadalay's presence lent importance to the proceedings.

Whether it be cricket, rugby, athletics, or any other sport, attended by all manner of VIPs, it was Kadalay mingling in the outer that completed the picture. He was to major sporting events what the Oval's ivy-covered scoreboard was to the Royal Thomian's aesthetic setting. Kadalay also made his presence to minor sporting fixtures, Tissa Atapattu recalls being padded up to bat in a Royal "A" fixture against St. Peters at Reid Avenue in 1953. Kadalay who was standing by, commented in Sinhalese that "Today we can boil two eggs in Mr. Atapattu's stomach" in reference to "butterflies in the stomach" which Tissa had difficulty in suppressing. The laughter all round relaxed the player who subsequently fared well with the bat.

It is very likely that Kadalay attended more sporting encounters involving Royal College than any other Royalist. His association with Royal sport was so complete that it buried all other associations he may have had. Almost nothing is known of his parents and siblings. As a result of his ubiquitous presence, he



developed a sporting wisdom which qualified him to comment on the state of games. He often picked cricket, rugby and relay teams ahead of the official selection and was very vocal when players who did not meet his approval were picked. Punithakumar, one of a family of six Royal hookers between 1963 and 1973, recalls that if there was a pivotal scrum in which Royal lost the ball and her opponents capitalised on the mistake and went on to win, he reminded you the next day in no uncertain terms the cost of losing the ball in critical play. His cry "Ennah Dorai" said it all.

By the early 1950s Kadalay was already a Royal institution and icon. His exuberance was exemplified in 1961 at the end of the public schools 4x400 relay. When Darrell Lieversz gained the baton for the final lap Royal were running third. However, he gained ground to win the relay for Royal. Kadalay embodied Royal's elation by running up to Darrell, hugging him and carrying him off his feet, spikes and all. Kadalay was also a vociferous supporter of the Royal boxing team at Stubbs Shield encounters. He was familiar with every punch in the boxing manual and advised the Royal boxer on the most appropriate punch to use while the fight was on. After the bout, if the Royal boxer had won, he took all the credit for the win. He attributed a loss, to the boxer's failure to follow his instructions and urged him to train harder and not bring shame upon Mr. Danton Obeyesekere, the legendary Royal boxing coach.

Making his mark on the Royal-Thomian

During his 43-year association with Royal, Kadalay witnessed four Royal wins over STC (1951, 1969, 1983, 1990) and possibly a fifth (1991), and was present at four Royal defeats at the hands of STC (1952, 1953, 1964 and 1988). During this period, the Royal-Thomian was played at the Oval and the SSC grounds. Kadalay's reaction to Royal's wins in 1951 and 1990 isn't known to the writer. In 1983 he is reported to have led the celebrations and to have carried Royal's cricketers around the ground. However, he was in his element in 1969 and took credit for Royal's win.

Before the 1969 Royal-Thomian T.M.K. Samat interviewed Kadalay who remarked: that in order to win, all Royal had to do was to capture the wickets of Jayasekera, Kariyawasam. Wijeysooriya and de Saram quickly. Samat later observed that Kadalay did much to protect his prediction.

The glory of his prediction

Sensing that pitch invasions would lose Royal time and derail Royal's attempts to capture the remaining Thomian wickets in 1969, he used his authority to restrain Royal's enthusiastic supporters. Around 5.30 p.m. on the second day, the last Thomian pair were at the crease, Royal were on their way to a victory they had waited for 18 years and Kadalay knew that only something that wasn't cricket would thwart Royal.

When an appeal was made unsuccessfully against the last Thomian pair, a large contingent of Royalists invaded the field and pitch. Fearing that this would encourage the Thomians, who had nothing to lose, Royal's captain raced towards the Royal boy's tent and urged the stewards to control the Royalists and prevent a repeat of such an incident. The captain's eye caught that of Kadalay whose look captured the seriousness of the situation. That Kadalay could subsequently keep the Royalists behind the barrier at such a pivotal stage in the game speaks volumes for the respect Royalists had for him.

According to an article by Samat which appeared after the game, Kadalay spent the evening following Royal's win at the beer stall of the Royal Fair basking in the glory of his prediction. Old boys from all walks of life shared a drink with him. Doctors, lawyers, businessmen and other distinguished old boys left their addresses with him in case he needed their assistance. (Such help was needed in the early 1980s when he



was put out of school and a case filed against him. Kadalay won the case and it is said that prosecution lawyer, defense lawyer and the judge were all old Royalists.)

There was no finer testimony to the iconic status of Kadalay than that Royalists, young and old, treated Royal's first win over STC in 18 years as his personal triumph. After all no one had cheered, encouraged and championed Royal's cricketers for as long as Kadalay, and if anyone deserved to savour this particular moment, it was him.

While Kadalay was being interviewed a car stopped and the occupant put his hand out to offer his congratulations. The moment the car left, Kadalay remarked to Samat that he didn't need help from anyone. All he wanted was that kind of acceptance and to be identified as part of Royal. This then is what made Kadalay such a special figure. Although he never studied or taught at Royal, and emerged from a humble background, through his devotion to the cause of Royal sport, he became so well-known, that he embodied the school's greatest sporting moments more than the players involved.

Kadalay worked out his priorities. To have accepted an offer of white-collar employment would have separated him from his beloved Royal and his interactions with Royalists. Hence, as long as he had enough to get by with, he was happier being close to his school.

Royal benefited from Kadalay's decision for there was no one better placed to pass on traditions, anecdotes, and folklore from one generation to another. No one had more credibility than Kadalay who himself had long since passed into Royal folklore. Many an old boy with a distinguished sporting record relied on Kadalay to convey his past glories to the present generation.

Tissa Atapattu states that Kadalay boosted his ego and that of all Royal sportsmen who visited the school. He referred to Tissa as "Appay Mahaththaya, Mr. Atapattu" and made him and others like him feel like they were the best Royal had produced. Kadalay could recall in detail every tackle Tissa made or missed, when he dropped the ball or made a good run as wing three quarter, and his triumphs and failures in pole vault. I am certain that many other old boys had similar experiences.

Most significantly, Kadalay treated Royalists equally regardless of whether they were stars or only played house sport. He would make a person who never made the first XI special by recalling some obscure performance in a house cricket match.

He defined the times

As was the case with many of our masters, we came to appreciate Kadalay after we left school, and after his death. In retrospect, we realise how much he defined the times and made them unique. All prestigious schools produced great sportsmen and scholars and had excellent teachers. But Royal also had Kadalay. How many schools could boast a character like him? It was Kadalay, not so much Royal's sporting and academic achievements, important as they are, which made Royal and Royalists special.

Playing the game

Niranjan Selvadurai remarked that Kadalay may not have read of books and men but he always played the game. More precisely, he read the game better than most. Hence, his views on games and sportsmen are particularly valuable.



Kadalay's views on Royal's finest were recorded in the 1974 Royal cricket souvenir. Although he is likely to have altered his views in the next 17 years, they are still worth mentioning for what they reveal about him.

Kadalay's best bowler, fielder, all-rounder and wicketkeeper were Asita Jayaweera, Lorenz Pereira, Nanda Senanayake and S.D. Jayaratne respectively. Although he is recorded in the souvenir as stating that Vijay Malalasekera was Royal's best batsman, he is also reported to have said the best batsman Royal produced never played in either the Royal-Thomian or for the First Eleven. His name was Sarath Kodagoda.

His favourite captain was Jagath Fernando whom he said played for the sake of the game. In 26 years of cricket (1947-1973) his most memorable Royal-Thomian was that of 1969 for the team spirit Royal demonstrated.

According to Royal's rugby fraternity Kadalay's favourite ruggerites were Lionel Almeida, Maurice Anghie, Lorenz Pereira and Jagath Fernando. He vividly recalled Maurice and Lorenz weaving and side stepping at Nittawella in 1958 before touching down. Other highlights for him were Lakdasa Dissanayake's drop goals which nailed Trinity in 1964. And he was positively thrilled when Royal whacked Trinity in 1968 - whether it be at Longdon Place, Havelock Park, Nittawela, Asgiriya, Bogambara or Peradeniya, Kadalay was wont to follow Royal's linesman during junior and senior games admonishing the boys in blue and gold to "jump for the ball and run, run, run", and being ecstatic when points were scored. Kadalay used to say that Rahula Silva was the deadliest boxer Royal ever produced. He also had a high regard for the Henricus and Anghie brothers, and Padde Withana who prematurely gave up hitting with leather for hitting at leather and played in the famous 1962 cricket XI.

A man of principle

In addition to his knowledge of sport and memories of great moments in Royal sport, Kadalay stood out because of his dignified bearing. Even when under the influence he behaved with complete decorum and never went overboard. He was an example to many a schoolboy who was inclined to show off by acting the fool and exceeding the boundaries of harmless mischief.

Never did he think of hurting other people in business. Jayantha Wickremasuriya observes that although there were enough opportunities for him to compete with Balloon Man (aka Bella) before Francis came into the scene, Kadalay never expanded his "business territory". Kadalay was content to stick to his niche market. Kadalay never fought with others although Bella and Francis had several altercations. And Bella's son, with the help of some old boys, looked after Kadalay in his final days.

A self-made Royalist.

While most Royalists merely passed through, Kadalay's links with Royal were more enduring. Apart from the small minority of old boys who devote their lives to either coaching at the school or participating in organising committees, many of us lose interest in the school after leaving it. Our enthusiasm is greatest when in junior school or when hogging the limelight.

To Kadalay, however, Royal was his whole life. Because his association with the school was voluntary and wasn't derived from membership of the student or school body, or any family links. Kadalay's devotion to Royal was bereft of self-aggrandisement or ego.

Kadalay had to carve his own path to glory without the inbuilt advantages that alumni had. In this manner he became a genuinely self-made Royalist although an honorary one.



A generous spirit

Although poorer than his clientèle there was many an occasion when Kadalay lent students bus fare. The mother of one particular student whose son once lost his bus fare and was rescued by Kadalay was always grateful to him. When Kadalay's obituaries appeared in the local papers she cut them out and sent them to her son who was domiciled in Singapore.

The end of a 43-year association

In the late 1980s, when in his late fifties. Kadalay obtained employment at a business run by ex-Royalist entrepreneurs and housed at Vauxhall Street. He used to reside on the premises of Royal College. A former prefect and house captain used to collect him after dropping his son off at school and take him to work. He did not have any specific job to perform and he used to sit at a desk at the entrance to the office more like a guest relations officer. When he passed away in 1991, he was living at Slave Island where it was believed he was born.

Kadalay was last seen on 9 March 1991 at SSC grounds on the occasion of the old-boys match. People had noticed how weak he looked. He passed away a week later, on 17 March, the day after Royal beat STC by 9 wickets. It appears that he was too ill to attend the Royal-Thomian. It is not known whether he followed the game or not, and if he did, what his emotions were on hearing the news. One thing's for sure. With good health the years 1990 and 1991 would have been the highlight of his life. Two successive Royal wins in the Royal-Thomian would have exceeded the wildest fantasies of a person who devoted his life to Royal cricket and sport.

Thangiah Ponniah gave his all for Royal and contributed much to her sporting camaraderie. In return Royalists either looked after him or cherished his example. We are all the richer for having represented Royal on the playing field with him in the audience or simply having had exchanges with him on matters of sport. We will never see the likes of him again. Kadalay's legacy is not reflected in school records or honour rolls. It is etched in the hearts of everyone who knew him. Kadalay rest in peace wherever you are.

Note: The author acknowledges the contributions of Niranjana Selvadurai. Edward Silva, Pryan Fernando, Nirmal Hettiaratchy: Punithakumar. Mithila Gunaratne. Darrell Lieversz. Brian Lieversz, Kusum Perera, Jayantha Wickremasuriya. Tisara Gunasekera, Tissa Atapattu, Prasanna Mendis, Randolph Baptist and T.M.K. Samar. Edward Silva filled me on Kadalay's involvement in Royal's boxing events. He also provided the background material required to kick start the article. Niranjana Selvadurai and Pryan Fernando provided many profound insights into the character of Kadalay. Mithila Gunaratne made useful editorial suggestions. Tisaraya Ganasekera sent me copies of obituaries on Kadalay. Darrell Lieversz, Tissa Atapattu and Punithakumar provided me with anecdotes of their dealings with Kadalay.

Kusum Perera took me deep into the botanical subject of Kadalay's business and acted as a sounding board for my ideas. I am also grateful to Jayantha Wickremasuriya for correcting me on Kadalay's product range and educating me on sidelights of Kadalay's business. Finally, the interviews Samat had with Kadalay, before and after the 1969 Royal-Thomian and which appeared in the local press, contained invaluable information on Kadalay's past and how he wished to be seen. Kadalay unites old-Royalists from far flung regions which is testimony to the irrevocable grip he continues to have on our psyches and the manner in which he is intertwined with our memories of school days.



Note:

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HIGHEST TRADITIONS THAT INSPIRE ROYALISTS

Rear Admiral Dr Shemal Fernando PhD

Sunday Observer - 27 September 2020



In a glorious journey of 185 momentous years, Royal College has come a long way, producing some of the finest men to the country. The President and Commander-in-Chief, Gotabaya Rajapaksa recently elevated Vice Admiral Nishantha Ulugetenne to the helm of the Sri Lanka Navy as its 24th Commander. Thus, he becomes the newest Old Royalist, the name by which the alumni of Royal College are

usually denoted, to be appointed a Service Commander.

This portrayal is a reminiscence of some of the rich history and tradition that guide and inspire Royalists present and past to keep on breaking boundaries and moving forward, to hand down the College not less but greater, better and more beautiful than it was handed down. The core resolve of Royal College is being able to provide an upbringing to all walks of life. This purpose has been focal at Royal over its many decades of existence, promoting ethnic harmony and unity among all lifestyles.

The culture at Royal College instils in its students the understanding that you may enter the school from whatever society you belong to, but you will leave the school as a Royalist; equal to all the brothers that walked the path to man's estate along with you. Royal boasts active student movements for Buddhists, Catholics, Hindus and Muslims, which conduct events within and outside the school to unify all ethnic groups and promote unity among all people, in turn making it a flourishing multi-ethnic institution.

Started as the Hill Street Academy in 1835, identified as Colombo Academy (1836-1842), Colombo Academy and Queens College (1859-1868), Colombo Academy (1869-1880), Governor William Manning opened the present Halls of Fame at Reid Avenue; a permanent abode for the Oldest Public School in the island on October 10, 1923.



Felicitation of Vice Admiral Nishantha Ulugetenne, the New Commander of the Navy. Alma Mater Royal College - A Cradle for Nurturing Military Officers in Sri Lanka



Commander of the Navy

Vice Admiral Nishantha Ulugetenne, born on September 18, 1965, had his entire education at the prestigious institution from 1971 to 1984, excelling in studies as well as in athletics. His passion for cadetting inculcated in him great leadership qualities and aptly groomed him for a military career. He joined the Sri Lanka Navy as an Officer Cadet in 1985 and rose to become a Vice Admiral in 2020 through a brilliant professional trail graced by excellence.

In his immaculate white uniform and careful speech, he touched the hearts and minds of the entire Naval Force. A battle hardened officer decorated for valour and gallantry, he enhanced his professionalism by pursuing double master degrees on defence studies and maritime policy as well as a Master's in Philosophy. He held an array of key appointments and sustained injuries in battle when his craft was blown up at sea.

Right Royal felicitation

Vice Admiral Nishantha Ulugetenne was felicitated befittingly on his ascension to the pinnacle of the Navy by his alma mater on September 18, 2020. Upon his arrival, accompanied by his wife Chandima and daughter Samadinie, they were right royally welcomed and ushered in procession by the College Band. The Cadet Platoon accorded him a Guard of Honour before he paid floral tributes at the War Heroes' Monument. Of the many traditions associated with Royal College that a Royalist has the privilege of experiencing during his life span, a Special General Assembly within the hallowed portals takes pride of place. It is possibly the biggest gathering and shows the sheer might and power that Royal College possesses. Anyone who is blessed to hear the College Song that reverberates within the majestic portals would be reminded of his school days.



All in all the Special General Assembly is an event that embodies the true spirit of the school. I have had the privilege of seeing many a wonderful site in my years in College and as an Old Royalist for 40 years but trust me when I say that the felicitation ceremony to Admiral Nishantha was dazzling. Above all, the sense of gratitude that overwhelms you for this wonderful family that you have been bestowed by this hallowed institution is unforgettable because you know that there will be Royalists alongside you in the darkest of moments.

The Principal, B. A. Abeyratna in his address presented greetings to Admiral Nishantha who was celebrating his birthday on that eventful day and said how jubilant they were to extend their sentiments of felicitation. He went on to emphasise that Admiral Nishantha is a good role model for the fledging Royalist to follow.

The distinguished gathering was also addressed by the former Commander of the Navy and Chairman of Old Royalist Cadet Association, Admiral Thisara Samarasinghe as well as a fellow cadet of his battalion, Janak Weerakkodi and the Head Prefect, Sawinda Dissanayake.

Admiral Nishantha thanked everyone and expressed his delight of returning to Royal. Recalling his college days, he said that Royal is a unique institution where he learnt good lessons, such as how to live in harmony, embrace equality and refined core values to lead a successful career. Urging the budding Royalists to inculcate qualities like discipline, patience, commitment and hard work that will be key elements for the successful progression of a personality, he called upon young Royalists not to become prey to the drug menace and to become slaves of technology. Admiral Nishantha made his remarks in the Visitor's Book and took time to visit the Cadet Room to refresh his past memories. His Grade 1 teacher, Mrs. Sugathapala and Master in Charge of Cadet Contingent, Mr. M.N. Dharmarathna were present to make the event more dignified. Significantly, the presence of all living former Service Commanders produced by Royal College added glamour to the occasion.

Old Royalist Military Chiefs and IGPs

Among the Old Royalists, Lt. Gen. Tissa Weeratunga became the General Office Commanding Joint Operations Command; Four served as Chiefs of Defence Staff – Gen. Jagath Jayasooriya, Air Chief Marshal Kolitha Gunatillake, Gen. Crysantha de Silva and Adm. Ravindra Wijegunaratne; Six became Commanders of the Army – Major Gen. B. R. Heyn, Gen. Sepala Attygalle, Lt. Gen. Tissa Weeratunga, Lt. Gen. Nalin Seneviratne, Gen. Jagath Jayasooriya and Gen. Crysantha de Silva; Six became Commanders of the Navy – Rear Adm. Rajan Kadiragamar, Adm. Basil Goonasekera, Adm. Asoka de Silva, Adm. Thisara Samarasinghe and Adm. Ravindra Wijegunaratne; Three became Commanders of the Air Force – Air Vice Marshal Harry Goonetilake, Air Chief Marshal Harsha Abeywickrama and Air Chief Marshal Kolitha Gunathilake; Four were appointed as Inspectors General of Police – Messrs. S. A. Dissanayake, Ana Seneviratne and Cyril Herath.

College Motto, College Song and College Flag

An old Royalist writing his reminiscences in the Royal College Magazine of 1909 said, "the good old sailor king yet on the throne of his father when an eventful day dawned in the educational history of our island – that event which give it claim to be cherished by posterity was the founding of the old Academy – the installation of Rev. Joseph H. Marsh, Jnr as the Principal by Governor His Excellency Sir William Horton in 1835."

The motto of Royal College gives the youth of the school motivation more than anything else. It generates the spirit of the school in the minds of students. A bronze plaque at the main entrance to the College



reads thus; These stones have been preserved from the original building of the COLOMBO ACADEMY founded in 1835 which institution subsequently became the ROYAL COLLEGE.

The first mention of the Motto – Learn or Depart is during the regime of Principal George Todd (1871-1878) who constantly reminded the students that they must learn or get out. Reminiscences written by Royalists from 1893 do not make any mention of Royalists who have departed for not learning. Records only show that the vast majority have learnt and departed bringing credit to the College.

In 1927, Principal Major Harry Leslie Reed composed the College Song ‘School of our fathers,’ and it was found to be a ‘hit tune’ among the students. The credit for the brilliant performance behind this song goes to Mrs. H. L. Reed. The song made its public debut on July 13, 1928 and a shorter version was composed in Sinhala in 1968.

The song provides inspiration, a fervour and attachment to the hallowed institution. This College Song has come down the generations of Royalists and is cherished today for the values it represents. The first verse; Thy spirit first to life awoke – In eighteen hundred and thirty five – Beneath the sway of Marsh and Boake – Thenceforth did Lanka’s learning thrive. The Refrain; School where our fathers learnt the way before us – Learnt of books and learnt of men, through thee we’ll do the same – True to our watchword Disce Aut Discede – We will learn of books and men, and learn to play the game. The second verse; Within thy shade our fathers trod – The path that leads to man’s estate – They have repaid the debt they owed – They kept thy fame inviolate. The final verse; And we their loyal sons now bear – The torch, with hearts as sound as oak – Our lusty throats now raise a cheer – For Hartley, Harward, Marsh and Boake. The Royal College Flag has, through the years, kept up the College spirit during celebrations. There is no record in any document of the College Flag prior to 1904.

The role of the flag can be summed up with the Prize Day speech of Principal Lionel Henry Wynn Sampson in 1924; “As a part of the same scheme I have had the College Flag embroidered with the college Crest. I hope that the Flag will serve as a symbol of devotion owed by every Royalist past and present to his School. A school that is worth anything must impress on its boys a sense of loyalty and devotion and I hope that this Flag will help to produce in all Royal College Boys a sense of loyalty to their College, keep their flag flying as the proud symbol of the best school.”

College Houses, Athletics, Cadetting and Alumni

The Royal College Athletics Meet is a very significant event as it involves the participation of a great number of students and brings together a majority of the school together to celebrate true sporting spirit. It was during the golden era of Royal under Principal L. D. H. Peiris that we first met as athletes of Royal College in the late 1970s – a friendship that flourished at Royal and the Navy in the sports arena of athletics.

At Royal, the students are divided into five Houses, four established in 1918 by Principal C. Hartley and later renamed in 1921 by Principal Major H. L Reed and the fifth House established in memory of Principal Reed in 1970.

In the Government Gazette of April 1, 1881, the Lt. Gen. Sir John Douglas, granted permission for the formation of the Volunteer Corps. On April 12, John Armitage who held a Commission in the Volunteers in England was appointed the Commanding Officer and Captain Curone, the Acting Adjutant. The Royal College Cadet Battalion formed in 1881 was the first in the schools. The first parade by the Cadet Battalion was on July 2, 1881 at the College Prize Giving.



The Alumni of Royal College goes far back, stronger and established as an organisation as the, 'Royal College Union' (RCU). Founded in 1891 as a society for alumni of the College, it is the oldest such alumni society in Sri Lanka. The RCU was set up to further the interests of the College and its past and present members, and to keep former students in touch with each other and with the school.

World Wars I and II

The First World War (1914-1918) saw 88 present and past Royalist Volunteers serve in the British Army in France and the Near East (Iraq and Persia) and some made the supreme sacrifice. The first was a young Royalist W. E. Speldewinde who drowned when the Troopship Villa de la Ciotat torpedoed and sunk in the Mediterranean Sea while proceeding to England. This ship carried mostly student volunteers from Royal and Trinity Colleges.

As per records, five others sacrificed their lives – Bombardier J. Loos, Rifleman W. E. Edema, Private G. J. C. Van Rooyen, Sergeant H. A. E. de Vos, Sergeant R. H. G. Orloff and Flying Officer D. Bleakley. The first student to win a military decoration while on active service was a Royalist, Captain O. J. Robertson of the 23rd Battalion of the London Regiment. He was awarded the Military Cross for conspicuous bravery and devotion to duty in June 1916. Other recipients of the Military Cross during World War I were 2/Lt. Henry E. Speldewinde de Boer, Lt. Cyril W. Nicholas and 2/Lt. J. Robertson.

Many Royalists served in World War II from 1939 to 1945 as well. Among the Royalists decorated on overseas service was Capt. Dr. A. Thenuwara of the Royal Army Medical Corps who served in the Middle East and Malta under the British Army and was awarded the 'Africa Star.' Major A. N. Weinman and Wing Commander W. G. L. Wambeck had the distinction of serving in both wars. Major L. V. Gooneratne broke a long link with the Cadet Battalion having taken over in 1923 and given his heart and soul to the College Battalion. A big built man, his stirring, stentorian commands still ring in the years of those who knew him.

Royal College Monument

Of Sri Lanka's 30-year battle against terrorism, 47 Old Royalists have made the supreme sacrifice, in keeping with the imperishable truths ingrained in the College Song, "...They have repaid the debt they owed, they kept thy fame inviolate..." It was against that background that a Special General Assembly was held on May 20, 1998, graced by the next of kin of the Fallen Heroes and the foundation stone for the Monument was laid.

The RCU's War Heroes Committee constructed the Monument in honour of the patriotic Old Royalists mainly from the funds raised exclusively from the Royalists, young and old. The unveiling ceremony took place on June 2, 1999 and the youngest among the Old Royalists 'Wounded-in-Action', Captain Rohan Perera of the Sinha Regiment was bestowed the rare honour, thereby giving pride of place to the gallant men who have sacrificed their soul and body for the Motherland.

Among the Old Royalists who have made the supreme sacrifice, the first to be 'Killed-in-Action' was Major Milroy Fernando of the Army in Omanthai on January 6, 1986. Lieutenant-Commander (S) Sandun Gunasekera and Flight Lieutenant R. B. Kulatunga were the first Navy and Air Force officers to make the supreme sacrifice.

In the Roll of Honour, Major General Vijaya Wimalaratne remains the most senior, while two patriotic heroes, Lieutenant A. W. M. N. M. de Silva of the Army and Flying Officer Rohan Fernando Jnr of the Air Force have been decorated with the Weera Wickrama Vibhushanaya for their acts of gallantry and conspicuous bravery of a military nature of a high order in the face of the enemy.



The military personnel are a brave breed who are used to take success and failure as they come. They take it in their stride, advancing and retreating, and winning and losing battle and they are 'officers and gentlemen' who treat "success and failure" as impostors. When a courageous officer with the finest military traditions and training risks his life, he does so without question.

Even though he may fear for his personal safety, he is always prepared to make the ultimate sacrifice for the greater good. His overriding concern is for the country he has to protect, the survival of his comrades in arms or the success of a particular manoeuvre.

(The writer, an Old Royalist, served the Sri Lanka Navy 1979 through 2018; he holds a PhD, MPhil and double MSc; he has been a livewire of the RCU since 1980 and served as Chairman, Royal College War Heroes Committee)

<http://www.sundayobserver.lk/2020/09/27/impact/highest-traditions-inspire-royalists>

ROYAL COLLEGE CADET PLATOON 1980

Admiral Ravindra C Wijegunaratne

(Retired from Sri Lanka Navy) Former Chief of Defence Staff
An extract from the book "G R A T I T U D E"

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The School Cadet Organization of Sri Lanka (formerly known as Ceylon) was established in 1881 by Mr. John B Cull, the Principal of Royal College, Colombo 7. The idea of introducing Cadetting to Royal was to train the students on drill to make them disciplined and responsible. Mr. Cull believed that well trained and disciplined youth at school will later become more responsible citizens with leadership skills and eventually will be better prepared for success in life.

History says that about 320 Ceylon school cadets at the ages of 16 to 20 years had volunteered to fight alongside the Allied Forces in the Great War from 1914 to 1918. Royal, St Thomas, Trinity and Kingswood sent their cadets to war. The contingent consisted of Royalists – 88, Thomians – 86, Trinitians – 74 and Kingswoodians – 72.

Even though very limited records on Royal College Cadets available on participation in Great War, first Ceylonese Cadet to paid supreme sacrifice was young Royalist W E Speldewinde who was drowned when troop ship "Villa Dela Ciotat" was torpedoed by Germans and sank in Mediterranean Sea.

First Ceylonese cadet to win a military decoration for bravery and valour was Captain O J Robertson, who was awarded with Military Cross. Other Royalist recipients of Military Cross in World War I were Second Lt H E Speldewinde de Boer, Lt C W Nicholas and Second Lt J Robertson.

Almost 30 per cent of them had paid the supreme sacrifice for the British Crown and many had been severely wounded in action. In 1917, a District Judge in Badulla, Mr. Herman Loos had presented a Challenge trophy to be awarded to the best school cadet platoon in the Island. This was the beginning of



the Herman Loos trophy competition for Cadetting in Sri Lanka, and it was first won by the Kingswood College, Kandy.

When we joined the Royal College Cadetting in the late 1970s, the Cadetting legacy of Royal College was reaching its 100th anniversary. I was a member of the 1980 Royal College Cadet platoon. Our Sergeant was Naeem Mahamoor. Lance Sergeant of our Platoon was Arosha Jayawickrama who was an outstanding cadet and the best Commander of junior Cadetting. Supun Hennayaka, C K Rajapaksa and I were the three senior Corporals. Later in our lives, Naeem went on to Airline Management and held high positions in Saudi Arabia and Dubai. Arosha migrated to the USA soon after leaving the College. Supun became a well-known specialist medical Doctor in the country. CK and I joined the Armed Forces.



ROYAL COLLEGE CADET PLATOON 1980

We were very fortunate that Lieutenant (NCC) H M Dharmaratne, came to Royal College in 1979 on a transfer from the Ananda Shastralaya, Kotte. He was a young and energetic Cadet Master who had brought several cadetting achievements to Ananda Shastralaya. Royal College finally had a very good Cadet Master. We began planning for our “Operation Herman Loos” at our Cadet room known as the ‘Armoury.’ Our ultimate goal was to win the prestigious Herman Loos trophy for the Best Cadet Platoon in Sri Lanka. We had our plan carefully reviewed and crafted by our Sergeant and Master in Charge. We knew that both the Commandant’s Test (which tested the First Aid knowledge and the Field craft & Map-reading test) offered 300 marks. All the other competitions namely ‘Hut Inspections’, ‘Squad Drill’, ‘Physical Training (PT)’, ‘Athletics’, and ‘Drama’ offered either 100 or 50 marks each. We also knew with



past experiences that most of the other schools concentrate and spend much time in practicing and training of the Squad Drill and PT.

Instead of focusing a lot on training for the squad drill and PT, we spent more time in learning first aid, fieldcraft theories, and map reading. I, being a President's Scout at the time was tasked with teaching first aid to the platoon.

Captain (then) Parakrama Pannipitiya, a distinguished old Royalist (who later rose to the rank of Major General) from Sri Lanka Army's Sinha Regiment agreed to teach us field craft and map-reading during evenings and weekends. He was working at the Army Headquarters at the time. With these arrangements, we knew our knowledge on first aid, and field craft & map reading subjects would be much superior to other cadet platoons.

We boarded the train from Colombo Fort Railway station to travel to the Army camp at Boosa for our annual cadet camp and Herman Loos competition. Under the able leadership of our Sergeant Naeem Mahamoor, we were determined and confident that we could change cadetting at Royal that year. In the 99-year history of Herman Loos trophy, Royal College had won it just twice. That was in 1963 under Sergeant Weerakumar, and later in 1970 under Sergeant MR Moosa.

As expected, we won the Commandant's test with a very high margin. Sri Lanka Army examiners were surprised by our performance and were very happy with our excellent knowledge. We also won the Hut Inspection and became second in place in the PT test. Those accomplishments helped us win the coveted Herman Loos trophy for the best Cadet Platoon in the country. Royal College won it after ten years and for the third time in 99 years.

The rest was history. Royal won the Herman Loos trophy again in 1981 under Sergeant Pradeep Edirisinghe (that was the centenary year of Cadetting at Royal), and again in 1982 under Sergeant H D Jayasinghe. Present Navy Commander Vice Admiral Nishantha Ulugetenna was Member of College 1981 and 1982 Herman Loos Trophy winning platoons. Later he rose to the rank of regimental quartermaster Sergeant – (RQMS) of 3rd Battalion of NCC.

Mr. Dharmaratne was the Royal College Cadet Platoon Master in charge for all three years. Later he was promoted to the rank of Captain in the National Cadet Corps (NCC). Thank you, Sir, for your guidance and advice as the Master in Charge of Royal College Cadetting for a very long time.

When we look back and see what we achieved 40 years ago with a clear plan and well-executed strategy and have a sense of pride and accomplishment. What Mr. Cull, the Principal of Royal College wanted to achieve by introducing Cadetting to Royal in 1881 has materialized.

“Long live Cadetting at Royal College!”

<https://island.lk/royal-college-cadet-platoon-1980/>



Lennie de Silva – An appreciation (1995)

Senaka Weeraratna

Article taken from The Observer Sri Lanka 1st September 1995

Lennie de Silva

On August 17, 1994 when the country was awaiting the birth of a new government in Sri Lanka, Mr. Lennie de Silva, a former teacher of Royal College, passed away peacefully and unobtrusively, and in a manner befitting the quiet graceful way he had led his life. He was 84 years at the time of his death.

A few days later a large crowd of mourners drawn mostly from among past students and teachers of Royal College, undeterred by the threat of the outbreak of civil unrest following the defeat of the previous government at the elections and the risk of violating an impending curfew, gathered at the General Cemetery, Kumbura, to pay the last tribute to a teacher who had embodied in large measure the timeless virtues of decency and humility, and who had shown an inexhaustible capacity for deriving joy at the success of his students achieved either in the class room, the playing field or in their adult life.

It is a year since his death and it is an appropriate occasion to reflect again on his life, personal qualities and achievements. Any assessment of the post-war development of Royal College would be incomplete without appropriate reference to the contributions of Lennie de Silva. His services to the school as a teacher of several subjects, particularly in the Form 1 classes, and as Master in Charge of a range of extra curricular activities, enabled him, among other things, to play a key role in guiding new entrants who found themselves grappling with the difficulties inherent in the transition from the primary school to the secondary school. The recollection of Lennie de Silva's life at Royal College evokes nostalgic memories of a wide ranging significance.

Mr. de Silva joined the Staff of Royal College in 1946. Several other teachers who were later to become indelible names in student memory also joined the Staff in the same year. They were E. W. Rupasinghe, S. W. Dias, A. L. Baldsing, Harold Samaraweera, A. N. Rathnathicam, K. I. Iyer and S. Muttucumaru. The year 1946 witnessed the assumption of office of Principal of Royal College by Mr. J. C. A. Corea, the first Ceylonese to head this institution on a permanent footing and thereby ending a long line of stewardship of the school by British scholars, beginning with Rev. Joseph Marsh (1835-

1838) and ending with Mr. E. L. Bradby (1939-1945).

Mr. Corea was no stranger to Mr. de Silva. Both had been colleagues on the Staff at Kingswood College, Kandy, where Mr. Lennie de Silva had his early education. He had performed well in both studies and sports, as a student at Kingswood College.

Though it fell on the new Principal to re-claim the college buildings at Reid Avenue (which had earlier been requisitioned by the Colonial Govt. for the war effort) for the students in May, 1946, it took another two years before the Royal College Hill School, Bandarawela (the school property being known as 'Glendale') was wound up and re-merged with the main school. This Hill School (a branch of Royal College) was established in 1942, to accommodate a part of the student population who had to be moved out of Reid Avenue, due to the occupation of the College buildings by the British Military authorities.

After a short stint of teaching at the main school in Colombo in early 1946, Mr. Lennie de Silva was asked by the Principal, Mr. Corea to discharge teaching duties at the Royal College Hill School. It was at Glendale, Bandarawela that Mr. Lennie de Silva spent some of his happiest moments. With his young wife Erin beside him, he found the wonderful climate and the rich scenic landscape in the Ella - Bandarawela region, ideal ground to instruct and mould the students, a good many of whom had been sent by their parents to this boarding school for the purpose of making them self-reliant.

He was one of the most respected teachers in the middle forms and his pet subjects were English Literature, Latin, Mathematics and Geography. He was much attached to outdoor life and extra curricular activities, and the latter included excursions to various parts of the country. He accompanied the

students in their biggest excursion (until then) which began in Bandarawela on April 26, 1948 covering Nuwara Eliya, Anuradhapura, Puttalam, Chilaw, Dondra, Tangalle, Hambantota, Wellawaya, and returned to Bandarawela on the 3rd of May, 1948, all together covering a total distance of about 800 miles.

Mr. de Silva used these opportunities to instill in the students a respect for our country's history and the natural environment. In

later years i.e. in the fifties, Mr. Lennie de Silva escorted select batches of senior students who were members of the Royal College Historical Association, on their visits to sites of historical interest in both India and Sri Lanka. These trips enabled the young students to develop insights into the historical ties and shared values which bind the two countries, and they learnt it in a way that no amount of book learning could match.

His most outstanding contribution to the uplift of sports at Royal College was the introduction of hockey till when the principal team sport in second term was rugby. One of the important legacies of the many English Principals who ran the school more or less along the lines of a British Public School, subject to the constraints prevalent in a third world colony, was the heavy emphasis they placed on character training through student participation in organized games. The playing fields were allowed to become a central feature of school life.

This attitude continued to prevail at Royal College even after the departure of the English Principals, and it considerably assisted Mr. de Silva's pioneering efforts in developing Hockey as a part of the College sports curriculum. Until the day of his retirement from the Staff, in 1969, Mr. Lennie de Silva was the master in Charge of Hockey.

His moment of triumph arrived in 1969 when Royal College under the captaincy of C. A. P. Samarasekera, became the inter-school champions winning 9 out of 13 matches and losing only two. Some of the notable Hockey players produced at Royal College were: Lionel Almeida, Harry Rasiah, Godwin Daniel, Nanda Senanayake, D. W. Somasunderam, M. R. Ashroff, M. D. Ilangage, Nilhal Nilaweera (deceased), Padde Withana and Ajith Wijesundere.

Mr. Lennie de Silva demonstrated a capacity to develop a wide range of interests conducive to the betterment of school life and consequently the College authorities appointed him as the Master in Charge of the Photographic Society, the Interact Club and the Social Service League. He also served as the Senior Master in Charge of Marsh House.

In that unique publication, the history of Royal College (1835-1985) by S. S. Perera, which incorporates a monumental compilation of data of life at the school from the time of its inception, Lennie is given an honourable mention.

On a personal note, those of us who entered Royal College in 1960 were indeed privileged to have had Mr. de Silva as the Form 1B Class Master. His 'teacher cum fatherly' approach to highly impressionable eleven year olds, just out of primary school, was, to say the least, quite reassuring. He was polite and gentle in his disposition and his outlook helped him to win readily the confidence of his pupils.

There was also a stern side to his character which expressed itself on the occasions punishment needed to be meted out in the interest of classroom justice. Even his own children who were students at school with us, were not spared 'the rod' when caught at mischief.

On one occasion when his son Vasantha arrived late for Hockey practice, he was asked by his father (the Master in Charge) to run around the ground as many times as run by others who had reported late for practice.

Though Mr. Lennie de Silva is no more, his family can rest content, that his past students and colleagues, will continue to revere his memory with affection and gratitude.

Senaka Weeraratna

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