

& PROUD & PREJUDICED

The story of the Burghers of Sri Lanka



Rodney Ferdinands

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of Sri Lanka

by Rodney Ferdinands

First published in 1995

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PROUD AND PREJUDICED

to
Rosalie and Maxwell
Thomas and Cameron
and
all the grandchildren
of the Burghers
from
Sri Lanka

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PREFACE

My motivation for writing about the Burghers from Sri Lanka (formerly Ceylon) came from a sudden awareness that my children, their children and the children and grandchildren of other Burghers of my generation knew little, if anything, about the society their parents and grandparents had grown up in and the country they called 'home'.

I feel certain that many of the current generation will, as I have, develop a stronger interest in their roots as they grow older. As my generation is the last to remember what life was for the Burghers in Ceylon under British colonial rule and the period immediately following the grant of political independence in 1948, a record of that period may well be of great value to them—and to all the Burghers now assimilated into other countries—in the years to come.

Researching the 500 year history of the Burghers and writing this book has taken three years. Over 200 people were interviewed in Australia, the UK and from the Burgher community of Sri Lanka. Many contributed their recollections and personal anecdotes about life in Ceylon and their experiences in the countries of their adoption. To all these people I express my appreciation and gratitude.

My research has been helped and encouraged by many interested people, not all of them Burghers. My brother Ivor refreshed my memory, contributed articles and critically evaluated my drafts. Many others, too numerous to name, lent research material, contributed experiences or evaluated conclusions.

From its inception in 1908, the Dutch Burgher Union (DBU) was the leading Burgher organisation. The DBU Journal recorded the views of the leading members of the Burgher community on social, political and economic issues. This was especially so in the latter days of the British Raj and the decade that followed the grant of political independence. No research on the Burgher community would have been complete without a study of the Dutch Burgher Union Journals. Harold Speldewinde, the current President, authorised my use of copyright material in the Journals and The Victor Melder Sri Lanka Library in Broadmeadows, Victoria, made available the complete set for my use. Victor's files, notes and ready assistance helped me complete this book on schedule.

Deloraine Brohier gave me permission to use the publications of her father, Dr. R. L. Brohier, probably the last of the eminent Burghers; Helene de Rosayro kept me informed of items of interest to Burghers in the new Sri Lanka and Cornelius van Eersel from the Netherlands provided me with much historical information on the Netherlands and Belgium.

Chris Lawton, Cecil Fernando, Ralph Moldrich, Therese Anthonisz, Allan Drieberg, Ramsay Ziegelaar, Brian Ernst, Doug Fernando, Victor Melder and many others supplied me with the Burgher and Eurasian names in appendix 2.

The contributions of many Burghers, children of Burghers and Australians made this book the intimate factual record it eventually became. They delved into old records, shared memories and experiences, lent photographs and helped create a record of the experiences of my generation, the last generation of the Burghers of Sri Lanka.

My gratitude to Nigel Kelly for his patience while I struggled to master the intricacies of the computer; to Mignon Turpin, who, with constructive suggestions and critical comments, helped fashion the finished product; and to Peter Boes, who scanned the photographs and patiently typeset the finished product.

This book could not have been written without the complete support and encouragement of my wife Persis. She willingly took on more than her just share of the household chores, contributed her experiences, patiently read many drafts and corrected both grammar and spelling.

INTRODUCTION

This is the last generation of the ethnic group known as the 'Burghers'. This community migrated from their original home, Sri Lanka, and now live in the many countries where English, their home language, is spoken. This is a history, a record, of the Burgher community and how it got its name, adapted, survived for 150 years, and then disappeared. It is a story of achievements and failures and of everyday living. It is the history of a community of extraordinary diversity, a people who were proud, often prejudiced, but were also relaxed, confident, extroverted and sociable, a people who adjusted to difficult situations, matured and survived. They were then forced to emigrate. Their children adapted and assimilated into mainstream communities in their new homelands. One day their children will wish to search for answers as to who they were, why their ancestors left the land of their birth and why they celebrate certain events in certain ways. This book has been written for them.

The word 'Burgher' referred to a citizen of a town (or burg). It is a well-known English word meaning 'a citizen or inhabitant of a berg, borough or town'. The Dutch and German equivalent was burger.

During the period the Vereenigde Oost Indische Compagnie (V.O.C.) or Dutch East India Company, traded in Ceylon, there were no burgers (free citizens). All Europeans, of whatever race, were 'employees' and not 'free citizens'.

During the 140 years of Dutch rule many V.O.C. employees retired or resigned and remained in Ceylon as private citizens. Other European nationals also arrived to seek their fortune and to perform the numerous activities that were necessary to support the trading activities of the Dutch. These latter persons were not Company employees and were known as vrijburgers or 'free-burgers' to distinguish them from Company employees, local inhabitants and slaves.

The term burger originally had no connection with race or ethnicity. It was a mark of civic status. This category of citizen was gradually extended and became increasingly diverse in the latter years of Dutch rule. Certificates of burgerij were granted to both Europeans and trusted locals and entitled burgers, their families and domestic employees, to live in the towns and to certain civic rights. The civic right to be a burger also involved responsibilities such as enrolment in the Town Guard.

Some status did attach to burgership so that it was not uncommon for persons who were not legally burgers to pretend to be such. In 1781 all burgers and free citizens (those who were not slaves), together with all those who were Christian, wore European dress and were between sixteen and sixty, were compelled to enrol in the burgerij or Town Guard.

In the events that followed the French Revolution, Ceylon became a British colony. The British arrived in Ceylon in 1796, with a letter from the Dutch Stadtholder directing the Governor to surrender the island.

At the time the British arrived there were about nine hundred Dutch and non-British European inhabitants in Ceylon. (J.R.Toussaint quoting James Cordiner in DBU Journal XXV 1935 p.45). Many of them had intermarried with the Portuguese descendants. These Dutch nationals were given the opportunity of a free one-way passage to the Dutch East Indies (now Indonesia) but the offer was conditional in that they were not permitted to sell their property to persons other than Dutch descendants and Europeans. This restriction forced many Dutch descendants to remain in Ceylon as they could not find buyers for their property. Those who remained became the nucleus of the Burgher community. As there was now no longer a 'Dutch East India Company' (V.O.C.), there were no 'company employees' and all former Dutch nationals became 'citizens' or Burgers (Burghers).

The term 'Burgher' appealed to the British government as a convenient label for their subjects who were not indigenous people and were descendants of the Dutch and Portuguese. The word became the ethnic or racial label to describe the 'people in-between'. Within this group were at least two well-defined and identifiable communities. Those of Portuguese origin, usually Catholic, and those of Dutch origin, usually Protestant.

The (Dutch) Burghers had not lost their sense of ethnic identity, even though they had lost their position as the ruling race. The new conditions forced closer contacts with the other communities because all Ceylon nationals were now subordinate and inferior to the new ruling race, the expatriate British. Social contacts were especially close with the Mestices or descendants of the Portuguese. From the early days, when Dutch women were not available in sufficient numbers, Dutchmen had married Portuguese women of mixed descent, called Mestices in Dutch or Mestizos in Portuguese. Descendants of Mestizos who had married Sinhalese and Tamils were usually darker in skin colour and were called Tupases or Tuppai.

Most of the Portuguese and Dutch descendants remained separate communities because they belonged to different denominations of the Christian religion, spoke different languages, were from different ethnic groups, and looked different. To those external to the two communities, it was convenient to classify these two groups as one community but the 'Burgher' community was divided by class, colour, ethnicity, and religion. In time, the Burghers evolved into another section of a plural colonial society where a lighter skin colour was advantageous for upward social and economic mobility.

An increase occurred in the 'Burgher' population when the slaves were emancipated in 1815 and merged with the Mestizos (Mestices) and Tupases. Many emancipated slaves took the family names of their Burgher masters.

Although the British classified all these communities as 'Burghers' for administrative convenience and to emphasise their own racial superiority, the term was not accepted by the Dutch descendants or the indigenous people of Ceylon. The Sinhalese people continued to call the Portuguese descendants Tupases or Tuppai and the Dutch descendants Lansis (from Hollandsche). Official definition became necessary and in 1833 the Supreme Court (Chief Justice Ottley) ruled:

The name Burgher belongs to the descendants of the Dutch, Portuguese and other Europeans born in Ceylon...whatever number of generations through

which the family has passed in this Island if the male ancestors were Dutch, Portuguese, or other Europeans, whoever may have been the female parents but only if the parents were married.

In later years the term 'Burgher' was extended to include 'Eurasians' or children of unions between the British and the indigenous people of Ceylon whose parents were most often not married. Burghers and Eurasians were not enumerated separately in the periodic census reports and the term 'Burgher' eventually began to include the Eurasians.

The original Burghers were town dwellers and traders. Deprived of their livelihoods by the British, they began to emphasise education, and employment in the public service, as the preferred route for economic survival. They became the people who delivered the professional and bureaucratic services in early British times when no other ethnic group was either competent or prepared to do so. They became the instruments of modernisation and western development. They were the people 'in-between'.

The British brought modernisation, the advantages of western civilisation, commercial plantations, and improved communications. It was the Burghers who converted the plans into concrete achievements. Burghers were pioneers in land surveying, construction and maintaining of road and railway networks and delivery of health and medical services. They were pioneers in education, upholders of the law, maintained order and impartially delivered the numerous government services that enabled all communities to improve their living standards. They were instruments of western progress as Ceylon inched, without violence, towards economic and political independence. Burghers avoided politics and political power. Their role was to impartially serve the administration and this they did well.

Burghers maintained law, order and discipline irrespective of class, caste, ethnicity and religion. After the Burghers left Sri Lanka, these divisions became magnified. Over 50,000 Sri Lankans have been killed in ethnic, religious and class violence since 1958.

The Burgher community, at the time Ceylon became independent from British rule, was a diverse one. It comprised both rich and poor; those more European in skin colour and life style, and those indistinguishable from the indigenous Asians. The term 'Burgher' had been widened to include all those who were Christians, spoke English as their home language, wore European clothes, and had British, Dutch and Portuguese names.

The persons who described themselves as 'Burghers' in the periodic census reports were never more than 0.6% of the population and never more than 46,000. They lived in a compact tropical country with a variety of religions, languages, races, scenery, exotic foods and the cultures of both East and West. They were a visible and influential community and their casual, relaxed, open, urban life style blended the West with the East.

Why did they leave their island paradise? What made them migrate? The Burghers did not change. Ceylon changed for the Burghers. The Government decreed that the language of the Sinhalese, the Sinhala language, was to be the language for all official purposes. The Burghers became marginalised. They left their homeland for countries where their language, English, is spoken. The Burghers have adapted to life in their new countries and those who remained in independent Sri Lanka have also adapted. The ethnic word 'Burgher and the community it described will soon be extinct. The

children of the Burghers do not think of themselves as 'Burghers' for they are Australians, British, Sri Lankan, etc. It is their parents who were nationals of Ceylon and ethnic Burghers. In a world where colour, religion and ethnicity are increasingly irrelevant, their children have adapted and assimilated into the cultures of their host communities. They are no longer Burghers.

No official numbers of Burgher migration are available but it is probable that about 38,000 Burghers and children of Burghers no longer live in Sri Lanka. Of those Burghers who migrated after World War II about two-thirds migrated to Australia and about 60% of them settled in Melbourne. The former Burghers have assimilated or are assimilating rapidly. They are English-speaking members of established church and community groups and comfortable with Australian institutions. They have been absorbed. They are no longer visible.

History is about change and the people who influenced those changes. This book describes the events, the lives and the activities of members of the Burgher community as they coped with change and the society around them. The book also records the words and actions of non-Burghers who had a major impact on the Burgher community. Descriptions and analyses of more recent happenings, which arose from the social revolution of 1956 and caused the Burgher exodus, are from personal observation and analysis. George Macaulay Trevelyan, the eminent British historian, once wrote:

No one can write or read history for ten minutes without coming in contact with the question of bias, whether aware of it or not. Bias in history is not necessarily bad, it is the personal interpretation of historical events and not necessarily acceptable to all.

In my research it became evident that many Sri Lanka-born academics of the post-independence period too often ignore and misrepresent the Burghers and the contributions of the Burghers. Too often sentences and statistics from published material is selectively quoted out of context and edited to support a preconceived view. Further analysis of the original text often leads to a different conclusion. Every country, every society writes its own history. My ethnic, social and religious background, life experiences and information sources may have caused bias in my analysis and understanding of events but for that I make no apology.

The Burghers held a unique place in Ceylon's history. They were a community, European in culture and tradition, minuscule in relation to the total population, whose influence in the 150 years of British domination of Ceylon was out of all proportion to their numbers. To understand how this came about it is necessary to delve into the history of Portugal and Holland, two small pioneer nations whose mariners and traders explored a world that was then unknown to Europeans. Only in this manner can the diversity and adaptability of this talented community be understood.

A community is only a collection of individuals. Proud and Prejudiced not only endeavours to give the history of this community of extraordinary diversity but also describes individual Burghers who, by their lives and achievements, gave colour and meaning to this proud, often prejudiced, but extraordinarily talented community.

1

THE PORTUGUESE

Great explorers of the 15th century

It is hard for us, living at the end of the 20th century, to imagine what the world looked like in the mid 15th century. South of the Sahara was shrouded in mystery. The Americas, Australia, New Zealand and the Pacific countries were totally unknown. India, China, Ceylon and South-Asia were the subject of rumour and legend. Did Africa go on and on until one fell off the end of the Earth? Or could a ship sail around and eventually reach the fabled lands of India, Taprobane (Ceylon), and even China?

It was the small kingdom of Portugal, a country of a million people, that created reality from the rumour and it was Portugal's sailors who chanced their lives on the seas and on foreign shores, found the fabled East and brought back its treasures. Her geographic situation, with a long coastline on the Atlantic, encouraged her people to look to the sea rather than to the Continent of Europe and her fishermen became the most experienced deep-sea sailors in Europe.

In 1412, Prince Henry, known as Henry the Navigator, assembled a group at the town of Sagres, at the southern tip of Portugal, where anyone who could contribute to knowledge on how sailors could find their way on the seas was welcome. Seamen, astronomers, merchants, mathematicians, navigators, explorers, cartographers and shipbuilders of every race and every country were made welcome. Within a few years sailors began to sail the Atlantic coast of Africa. They discovered Madeira in 1420 and the Azores in 1427. They continued southwards and, fifteen years later, Goncalves brought back gold and a cargo of slaves from West Africa.

The sale of the slaves, at a huge profit, made other European nations envious. A scramble began to obtain a share of this inhumane trade so in 1455 the Pope decreed that the Portuguese had the right to enslave any non-Christian people they might capture in the course of their explorations. Slavery was an almost universal fact of life in the fifteenth century and Portugal exploited the existing system for commercial gain. Profits from this trade were substantial so King John II of Portugal decreed that foreign ships found off the African coast would be captured or sunk and the crew thrown to the sharks. Portuguese explorers discovered, named and exploited the Gold Coast, Slave Coast and Ivory Coast of Africa.

In 1486 Bartolomeu Dias, unable to sail south because of adverse winds and currents, sailed south-west into the unknown and away from land in the hope of finding favourable winds. He failed, turned east, found empty seas and next turned north. Battling heavy seas and raging winds he eventually sighted land. He followed the

coast northwards and realised he had rounded Africa. Dias' crew refused to go any further and he returned to Lisbon at the same time that Christopher Columbus, a Venetian, was visiting King John II to discuss Columbus' theory that the world was round and India could be reached by sailing west. King John II now knew he had the easterly route to India and dismissed Columbus. This was how The Americas were discovered by the Spaniards and the inhabitants came to be known as 'Indians'.

Pope Alexander VI, a Spaniard by birth, had decreed in 1494 that Spain was to have authority over all discoveries of land and sea more than 370 leagues west or south of the Azores. This would eventually give the Portuguese the land of Brazil, Africa, India, Ceylon and the three thousand islands of Indonesia. The Spaniards were given control of the Americas (except Brazil), China, Japan and the Philippines. The Papal edict did not prevent poaching by both Catholic and non-Catholic maritime countries and in 1530 King Charles I of Spain ruled that none other than Spaniards were allowed to sail the Pacific Ocean!

In 1498 Vasco da Gama finally reached India after a voyage of 12,000 miles. It had taken a year and in the South Atlantic he had spent ninety-three days out of sight of land. Da Gama only knew of Catholics, Protestants, Muslims and Jews. He had not heard of Hindus and Buddhists and thought that the Hindus in India, with their gods and images, were not Catholics but a decadent form of Christianity.

Vasco da Gama returned to Lisbon in 1499. The voyage had taken two years and more than half his crew were dead. Da Gama did however bring back a rich cargo of cinnamon and pepper and this vindicated the hardships of the voyage. The Portuguese came as traders and were not interested in acquiring new territory. They wanted the monopoly of the trade in pepper, cinnamon, cloves and nutmeg, as these made rotting food palatable in 15th century Europe. (See map on page 18.)

The Eastern Empire

There were fantastic profits to be made from inter-ocean trade. A merchant who, in today's terms, had \$20,000 to invest could expect to obtain \$500,000 from a successful two year voyage to India. He could also lose it all in a shipwreck. There was also an enormous amount to be made from piracy. The trade in spices was controlled by the Muslim Arabs so, to the Portuguese, it was only right and proper that this trade, and its wealth, should be diverted to and controlled by the Catholic Portuguese, especially as the Pope had decreed that this trade was theirs.

Afonso de Albuquerque arrived in the East in 1503 and within a few years this empire builder wrestled the Indian ocean trade from the Arabs by controlling all entrances and exits. 'Albuquerque the Great', as he became to be known, had exceptional foresight, determination and unerring judgment. Within a few years he gave Portugal almost a monopoly of an exceptionally rich spice trade and the beginnings of a huge colonial empire.

In 1505, Dom Lourenzo de Almeida, son of the Viceroy of Portuguese India, was driven by a storm to the southern coast of Ceylon in the reign of King Vijaya Parakrama Bahu VIII, King of Kotte (1484 to 1509). De Almeida entered into a treaty of friendship and trade and departed.

In 1509 Francisco de Almeida, Governor at Cochin, defeated a combined Egyptian/Gujerati (Indian) fleet of Sulaiman the Magnificent and the Sultan of Egypt. The next year Albuquerque conquered Goa and made it the capital and hub of Portuguese

India. In 1511 he conquered Malacca, the town on the western coast of Malaya, and was then in command of the straits between Sumatra and Malaya.

In the next four years, Albuquerque found the sources of spices in the Moluccas, commenced trade with China from Macau, closed entry and exit from the Red Sea by conquering the Island of Socotra, conquered Hormuz, the narrowest point of the Persian Gulf, and effectively closed the Indian ocean to everyone. At sea, no one could match the Portuguese who now had a monopoly on the spice trade. Manuel, King of Portugal (1495-1521) was now able to style himself 'Lord of the Conquest, Navigation and Commerce of Ethiopia, Arabia, Persia and India'. Every ruler in Europe had to acknowledge that the spices, gold and riches of Asia were a monopoly of the Portuguese and completely in their control.

In 1517 the Portuguese returned to Ceylon with masons and carpenters and built a fort. The natives had a mango tree with many leaves which they called kola-amba, so the Portuguese called the place 'Colombo'. Thus began Portugal's involvement with Ceylon which lasted a hundred and fifty years. The city, and the name, remain to this day, three hundred and fifty years after the Portuguese finally departed.

In 1519 a Portuguese sea-captain, Fernao de Magalhaes, who had sailed to the east under the Portuguese flag, took service with the Spanish. The Portuguese did everything to prevent him sailing, but as Ferdinand Magellan, he captained the expedition that first circumnavigated the globe and proved conclusively that the earth was round, the continents were surrounded by water, and the water was at one level. Magellan lost his life in the Philippines and his second-in-command completed the epic voyage. The voyage took over three years; four of the five ships were lost together with 232 of the 250 crew. For the first time Europeans, Africans, Asians and Americans came into contact with one another's customs, beliefs, prejudices, superstitions, foods, goods and services. Fifty years of exploration by those magnificent Portuguese had changed the world for ever.

On land, manpower was the main Portuguese problem. Their young men were enterprising and fearless but they were few in number. Portugal was a country of only a million people so military power was combined with militant evangelism. Portuguese colonials were encouraged to marry into the local population. Albuquerque encouraged his sailors to become Casadas or married settlers to help stabilise the Empire.

Foreigners were considered low-caste, or 'outcast' by high caste Hindus and Buddhists so marriage to foreigners was thought of as a disgrace. However to many low-caste Hindu, Buddhist and Muslim families it meant improved status and economic opportunities. This mingling of the races produced a 'Mestizo' Asian community who were strongly Catholic, spoke a Portuguese patois, and were loyal Portuguese.

Between 1498 and 1580, 620 ships left Portugal for India. Two hundred and fifty-six ships remained to trade in the East, 325 returned safely to Portugal and six in every hundred were lost at sea. Between 1581 and 1612, with the Dutch and British in active competition, only one ship in three returned to Lisbon safely. The cost in seamen's lives was therefore enormous (quoted in V.H.H.Green, 1959, p.77).

Sailors thought of themselves as condemned persons and feared the sea, devils, shipwrecks, storms, drowning, savages, a lonely life on a lonely shore, pirates and enemies of every kind, known and unknown. A Portuguese proverb said 'If you want to learn to pray, go to sea'. Scurvy caused arms, legs and bodies to swell, gums to bleed, and teeth to fall out. A lack of vitamins resulted in beri-beri, numbness, swell-

ing, paralysis, dysentery and diarrhoea. Water was always foul and sanitation nonexistent. Sailors experienced hunger, thirst, sickness, cold and damp. There were maggots in the food, weevils in the grain and rats everywhere. Ships were farewelled by crying mothers, wives and sweethearts. Priests prayed for a successful voyage and a safe return and promised heaven to those who died. 'God gave the Portuguese a small country as a cradle but the whole world as their grave' was a common saying (quoted in Severy, 1992, p. 64).

The Viceroy, and the capital of the Eastern Empire, was in Goa. Portuguese forts and satellite settlements were scattered along the coasts of East Africa and Asia. At every settlement the Portuguese erected a fort guarded by guns and with safe entry from the sea. They made no attempt to conquer the land except in Ceylon where they were forced into defending the lands that grew the spices.

A Portuguese dialect became the connecting language in the ports of Asia and Africa. When the Dutch and English arrived later, they adopted this patois or commercial Portuguese for use in trade. Many Portuguese words became part of the language of Eastern countries. Examples were Caste (a rigid social system of separation by hereditary occupation). 'Caste' is an integral part of Hinduism and Buddhism and important for an understanding of Sri Lankan society. A few of the many Portuguese words that were appropriated in an evolving Sinhalese language from products and customs introduced by the Portuguese were: ayah (nurse or nanny), gram (pulse or food grain), peon (messenger or office boy), almirah (cupboard or store for clothes), plantain (banana), viduru (glass), janela (window), mesa (table), kamisa (shirt), kalisum (trousers), sapattu (shoes), viskotu (biscuit), pahan (bread), saaya (a full length skirt) and lensoowere (handkerchief).

The Portuguese brought to the East corn, tobacco, pineapple, papaya or papaw, sweet potato, cashew, chilli and many other plants. They became part of the fabric of Eastern cultures and survived for two hundred years because they learned to accommodate, collaborate, intermarry and assimilate. They were realistic and pragmatic in everyday matters.

In only one respect were they rigid and uncompromising and that was in their Catholicism. They refused to compromise or accept the existence of other faiths and that was why they were always at war, or in a period of armed neutrality, with the local rulers. They brought their religion, complete with rosaries, images, crosses, pageants, priesthood, mysticism and cathedrals. Even the dreaded Inquisition was brought to Goa in 1560 to maintain spiritual discipline among both Catholics and non-Catholics. Goa was dominated by its churches, monasteries, convents and seminaries.

The enduring monument to the Portuguese in Asia is the Catholic religion. It was said that the Portuguese came with the sword in one hand and the Bible in the other. The Sinhalese said the Portuguese were 'Eaters of stone and drinkers of blood', their explanation for the custom whereby converts shared in the Eucharist by communally eating bread and drinking wine. The most famous missionary was the Jesuit Francis Xavier. He arrived in Goa in 1542 and visited many Portuguese possessions, including Ceylon. He created for Asian Catholics a sense of local identification with the Catholic faith and with Portugal, its defender.

The population of Portugal was only about a million people and her conquests exterminated her bravest sons. The population of Portugal was replenished with slaves and mixed race peoples from her colonial possessions. Portuguese women very

seldom sailed to the settlements and defence became the responsibility of the descendants of local women and Portuguese men. Colonial administration, manning of ships and protection of settlements became the responsibility of these mixed-race peoples.

The Dutch took Malacca in 1641 and Ceylon in 1658. They also drove the Portuguese from the West African coast and Brazil. The Empire was over.

The memorials to the Portuguese Empire are its churches and fortresses scattered around a world they were the first to explore, in the strong and vibrant Catholicism they left behind wherever they went, and in the human traces they left behind in the many Portuguese names like Almeida, Gomez, Rodrigo, and Dias. To this day in Sri Lanka the most common names are Fernando, Perera and Silva.

Ceylon between 1505 and 1656

The arrival of the Portuguese in 1505 is recorded in the Sinhalese historical narrative, the Rajavaliya.

There is in our harbour a race of people fair of skin and comely withal. They don jackets of iron and hats of iron. They rest not a minute in one place, they walk here and there, they eat hunks of stone and drink blood, they give two or three pieces of gold or silver for one fish or a lime...the report of their cannon is louder than thunder when it bursts upon the rock. Their cannon balls fly and shatter fortresses of granite... (quoted in Roberts, 1989, p.3).

The Portuguese departed to return twelve years later when Soares de Albergaria arrived at Galle, in south-western Ceylon, with a number of ships. After a month they sailed north and landed in what is now known as Colombo. Ten kilometres inland was Kotte, the capital of one of the kingdoms of Ceylon. There was also a Sinhalese Buddhist kingdom in the highlands centred in Nuvara, (Kandy), and a Hindu Tamil kingdom at Jaffna. The Portuguese built a fort in Colombo to signify their intention to remain permanently.

They had arrived at a time when Sinhalese civilisation was fast disintegrating. The period from 1200 AD to 1500 AD was one of decline with the single Sinhalese kingdom collapsing and being replaced by petty rulers using hired mercenaries from South India to fight their battles. There had been a gradual collapse of the ancient irrigation systems in the north central dry zone. The people had retreated due to malaria and abandoned the ancient capitals of Anuradhapura and Polonnaruwa. A series of kingdoms gradually shifted southwards, based on capitals at Sigiriya, Yapahuwa, Kurunegala, Gampola, Nuvara, Sitawaka, Rayigama and Kotte.

The Portuguese did not want to become involved in land battles but they wanted security over the cinnamon growing areas between Matara and Chilaw. These lands were in the kingdom of Kotte.

In 1521, three sons revolted against their father, the king of Kotte. The Portuguese supported the king and the superior fire-power of the Portuguese always won the battles. The king of Kotte, to ensure a smooth succession to his grandson Dharmapala, sent an image of the prince to Lisbon where the king of Portugal crowned it and guaranteed to protect the prince and the kingdom. In return, the Portuguese were granted a tribute of cinnamon, allowed to rebuild the fort of Colombo higher and stronger, and the education of the prince became the responsibility of the Franciscan monks.

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The old king died and in 1557 his grandson was baptised a Catholic. This conversion disqualified him as ruler in the eyes of his subjects for, as the king, he was expected to be the protector and defender of Buddhism. Very soon most of the kingdom of Kotte was controlled by the invading grand-uncle Mayadunne and Portugal now found the king's war had become her war. The city of Kotte had to be abandoned and the king, as well as the Portuguese, retreated into the fort in Colombo. This was the end of the kingdom of Kotte. Dharmapala was not even a puppet king and in 1580 gifted his kingdom to the king of Portugal.

Mayadunne now became the most powerful ruler in Ceylon. He died in 1581 and was succeeded by an even better general in his son Rajasinha. On several occasions Rajasinha laid siege to the fort of Colombo and the Portuguese were only saved by reinforcements from Goa. Rajasinha died in 1593, and this gave Portugal the opportunity to re-establish her authority in the cinnamon growing areas.

Portugal was having an equally difficult time in the north of Ceylon. Portuguese priests had converted the fishing community on the island of Mannar to Catholicism and the king of Jaffna became upset and decapitated all six hundred of the Catholics in Mannar. The Portuguese invaded Jaffna and the king fled to the Vanni, a thick belt of jungle ruled by chieftains and which historically separated the Tamil and Sinhalese kingdoms. On the way back from Jaffna the Portuguese re-captured the island of Mannar, built a fort and settled the area with Sinhalese Catholics from a fishing community in the south. In a second invasion the king was killed, an annual tribute was levied and a garrison left behind. Four hundred years and fifty later the Tamils still do not have an independent state. To the Sinhalese, they are the descendants of invaders from South India.

Dharmapala, king of Kotte, died in 1597 and the Portuguese were now in possession of the whole island except for the central highlands and the eastern coast. Their conquests had taken the Portuguese eighty years of almost continuous warfare.

The kingdom of Nuvara now became increasingly important. The Portuguese called it 'Kandy' from Kanda-ude-rata-raja (the upper kingdom). The Kandyan kingdom had possession of the tooth relic of the Buddha, was poor, landlocked, mountainous and inferior to its neighbours. As the only Sinhalese kingdom, it became the guardian of Sinhala nationalism and Buddhism. The Portuguese were in control of the heavily populated coastal areas from Chilaw to Hambantota and the Mannar and Jaffna districts. Much of the rest was thick jungle and high mountain.

In 1594 the Portuguese attempted to install a gentle, convent-reared princess named Dona Catharina, whom they considered the rightful heir to the throne of Kandy. A trusted Sinhalese who had been baptised and given the name Dom Joao de Austria turned traitor while escorting the princess to Kandy and had all the Portuguese, including the captain-general, killed. Dom Joao became a Buddhist, took the name Konappu Bandara, forcibly married Dona Catharina, and assumed the Kandyan throne.

The Portuguese spent the rest of their stay in Ceylon attempting to conquer the Kandyan kingdom but always failed. The mountainous terrain always defeated them and there were never enough soldiers, supplies and equipment to finish the war. There were seldom more than five hundred Portuguese soldiers in Ceylon at any one time and the Portuguese were forced to depend on Mestizos, Tupases (people of mixed race) and Sinhalese hereditary chiefs and their lascarins (conscript soldiers) to do most of the fighting.

Captain-General Dom Constantino de Sà

In 1618 de Sà was appointed captain-general. Like other *fidalgos* (nobleman) high in the service of their king, Dom Constantino de Sà had all those ideals of a seventeenth-century gentleman-at-arms. He espoused courage, loyalty to king and country, piety, openness of manner, pride, unquestioning trust in comrades, complete loyalty in battle, and sensitivity. He fought his battles by the old rules and assumed his enemies knew these rules and would abide by them. He was to be disappointed.

De Sà was honest, vigilant, well-liked and respected by the Sinhalese in the areas under Portuguese control. During his period in Ceylon he became convinced that the Kandyan king was violating the treaty he had signed and plotting to eject the Portuguese with help from the Dutch. De Sà therefore decided to fortify Trincomalee and Batticaloa to isolate the Kandyan kingdom from external contacts.

In 1624 his troops destroyed an ancient Hindu temple, used part of it for their fortifications, and pushed the rest down a steep cliff into the sea. In 1628 de Sà built a fort at Batticaloa. The Kandyan king was furious. He offered de Sà a fortune in jewels but de Sà instead raided Kandy, burned the palace and forced the king to flee to the remote mountain area of Uva. The next year, on his way back from reinforcing Batticaloa, de Sà diverted to Uva and destroyed that area. All trust had been lost between the Portuguese and Kandyans and co-existence was no longer possible.

Sinhalese *lascarins* served as soldiers in return for the right to cultivate land and were under the command of Sinhalese chieftains known as *mudaliyars* and *aratchis*. The *dissawe* was the local commander of the Portuguese troops and most of the *dissawes* were Portuguese. By this system de Sà was able to muster 4500 troops of whom about 400 were Portuguese. In 1630 he decided the time was opportune to do battle with the Kandyans. He had been warned that four *mudaliyars* were traitors but when he repeated the accusation to the *mudaliyars* they denied it and he believed their denials.

The jungles of Ceylon are among the most dense in the tropics. Huge trees tower overhead and are covered with vines and creepers seeking the sun. At lower levels bushes grow in profusion and cover every vacant space. The tropical jungle is a noisy place and completely different to the silent forests of Europe and the bush country of Australia. The jungle is home to leopard, bear, deer, elephant, buffalo, monkeys and many other animals. There are birds of every variety and colour, butterflies and snakes. On the ground, and on the plants, are leeches and poisonous insects. To those used to the tropics the jungle is not a place where one need be frightened when in a large group, but to the Europeans, unused to the humidity, the heat, the rain, the insects and the snakes, it must have been a terrifying ordeal. The Portuguese were completely dependent on the Sinhalese *lascarins*, *aratchis* and *mudaliyars*.

The army marched higher and further into the Kandyan hinterland. It was hard and risky work and they knew they could be ambushed. They went across valleys, and streams, wound their way up the other side, and crossed over into the next valley where the process was repeated. After a climb of a thousand metres, the dense jungle was behind them and before them were the grassy plains of Uva.

The Portuguese sacked and burned the palace, the town, the temples, the fields of ripening rice, the thatched homes of the peasants, the cattle and the harvested rice. The once peaceful and beautiful district was left a smouldering heap of ashes.

The day before de Sà was to strike camp, he was told by *dissawe* Luis Gomes

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Pinto, that a Sinhalese aratchi, had seen some manuscripts in a building that instructed the Sinhalese to kill all the Portuguese. De Sà now knew the four mudaliyars were traitors and that the Portuguese were trapped but it was too late as the mudaliyars had deserted the previous night with their lascarins.

Twelve thousand Kandyans now surrounded the 400 Portuguese. The final battle began with a volley of Portuguese muskets and a shower of Kandyan arrows. It started to rain and continued without a break. The rain ruined the powder and cord in the muskets of the Portuguese and soon there were only a few Portuguese not dead or wounded. De Sà received an arrow in his chest, an arrow in his arm, a lance in his thigh. He finally fell, after which the Kandyans killed him and cut off his head. All the other Portuguese, dead and wounded, were beheaded, piled into a pyramid and burned. De Sà's head was presented to the king on a drum.

In Portuguese writings there are regular references to the Kandyan habit of creating suspicion between Portuguese officers and their Sinhalese troops and the many instances where Sinhalese deserted to the enemy at the time of battle. The Portuguese could not understand how mudaliyars, who had been elevated to positions of authority and wealth and who were trusted friends and associates, could become traitors in the face of the enemy. Assuncao, a Portuguese writer of the time, wrote of the Sinhalese. 'a people weak, pusillanimous vile and without word or honour'. Joao Rodrigues, wrote 'in the end, the blacks are all our enemies'. Dom Cosmo, one of the traitors, said at a meeting of the four Sinhalese mudaliyars:

How long shall we live as slaves to these vile Portuguese, whose harsh servitude we have borne for 125 years without any liberty other than what they permit us? ...though liberty is the thing of greatest value, you should be so habituated to slavery as altogether to forget it, or to despise it to such an extent that, being able to be free men and lords, you exchange your freedom for slavery...for if by our weakness and irresolution we are reduced to slavery...our children will have either death or banishment before them...if today they let you enjoy our property, tomorrow they will become the owners, either with death or the extinction of the Sinhalese name or at least with the banishment and transmigration of your families...The Portuguese are anxious to perpetuate themselves in Ceylon and enjoy altogether its riches and delights...our religion is fallen, our nobility extinct and our riches drained...there is not a year when all there is in Ceylon does not pass to Goa and from Goa to Portugal.

(Winius, 1971, p. 28, quoting an extract from the book *Rebellion de Ceylan* by de Sà's son, Joao Rodrigues.)

atriots or traitors?

It depends on who interprets the story and who writes it.

The siege of Colombo and the end

The Portuguese had been successful in creating and retaining an empire in the East because they had command of the sea. Thus any nation that hoped to displace the Portuguese had to be superior at naval warfare. The Dutch gained this superiority because Portuguese official policy favoured the wars in Europe. The Eastern Empire was starved of ships, sailors, soldiers and materials. Widespread corruption and theft in Goa and the dependencies hastened the end.

In the wars against King Rajasinha II and his ally the V.O.C. (Dutch East India Company) between 1635 and 1638, Portugal lost over 4000 fighting men in battles at sea and on land and received only 500 in replacement. Quality was also very poor with soldiers untrained, in their early teens, and often shipped direct on sentencing for petty crimes, or from the jails in Portugal. On arrival in Goa they were often coaxed into Holy Orders by the Jesuits and Franciscans who were also desperately short of priests. Ceylon was the only country in Portugal's Eastern Empire where European troops fought one another and the Portuguese were always at a disadvantage in numbers.

King Rajasinha II defeated the Portuguese at Gannoruwa (Peradeniya) in 1638 and when Dutch Governor-General van Dieman in Batavia learned of this he decided the time was right to expel the Portuguese from Ceylon and take over their trade. In 1638, and after long negotiations, Admiral Westerwold arrived in Batticaloa, travelled to Kandy and negotiated a treaty with King Rajasinha. About the same time the Dutch general, de Coster, arrived to attack Galle. King Rajasinha wanted the Dutch to attack Colombo but the Dutch decided they were not strong enough to attack Galle or Colombo without Kandyan help and instead sailed to Trincomalee where they attacked and forced the fifty defenders to surrender. Two Kandyan mudaliyars later arrived with 3000 men and demanded that de Coster hand over Trincomalee and the captives. De Coster refused and again refused when asked to sail to Jaffna and conquer the Portuguese fort there. De Coster instead sailed away to Batavia (now Jakarta).

Agreements between the Sinhalese and the Portuguese and Dutch invariably resulted in subsequent recriminations and accusations of dishonesty, bad faith and unfair dealings. Whether this was due to language, translation, commercial interests or some other reason, the relationship was never comfortable, trusting or long lasting.

In the years that followed, the Kandyans and Dutch between them gradually expelled the Portuguese. In 1638 Trincomalee and then Batticaloa were handed to the Kandyan king. In 1640 the Dutch captured Galle after a bloody siege of eighteen days. The Portuguese defended the city so valiantly that the Commander, the 700 Portuguese and their slaves were transferred to Batavia with all their possessions pending transshipment to other Portuguese possessions. The Sinhalese defenders were delivered to King Rajasinha for punishment by execution. The Portuguese held Galle for only forty-three years.

The next fort to fall was Negombo. It was defended by a few old, sick and disabled Portuguese who refused to surrender and the Dutch had to blow-up the gates. Lucasz, the Dutch general, then began the process of repairing the fort. The King protested and wanted it destroyed because his copy of the Westerwold treaty had the words 'if the king is so disposed'. Lucasz refused saying that these words were not in his copy. The king said forts were not necessary because the Portuguese were no longer there, but Lucasz said forts were necessary to prevent the Portuguese from coming back. It was then that the King is said to have remarked 'We gave pepper and in exchange got ginger'. Translated, it meant that he had exchanged one bad bargain for another.

To collect cinnamon, spices and elephants the Dutch assembled an organisation for the Galle district. The Portuguese were saved from further attacks by the conclusion of a truce in Europe between the Batavian Republic (Holland) and Portugal. The Dutch held on to the captured territories because they said the Kandyan king had not

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reimbursed them their costs and expenses.

The Portuguese/Dutch truce ended in 1652 and fighting re-commenced. In 1655 Jaffna received the remains of an armada of five Portuguese ships despatched from Goa and destined for Colombo but intercepted and sunk by the Dutch. This was the beginning of the end for the Portuguese in Ceylon. In September 1655 General Hulft arrived from Batavia with 1200 soldiers and fourteen ships. They landed at Kalutara, blockaded the fort and waited for the Portuguese to starve. Thirty-two days later two hundred and fifty-five gaunt men surrendered.

Colombo had been a Portuguese city for almost 140 years. Its fortifications had been extended and improved. The fort required at least 2500 soldiers to defend it but the Portuguese only had about 800. There were not enough cannons and ammunition, not enough food, and the fortifications were not designed to withstand European artillery.

The siege continued into 1656 and still the Portuguese would not surrender. The Dutch dug tunnels into the fort but the Portuguese met them in savage man-to-man combat and blocked the tunnels. The Dutch smashed the ramparts by day and the Portuguese built them up by night. The Portuguese cut down coconut trees to use for their fortifications even though it deprived them of precious food. Women and children were used as lookouts and a number lost their lives. Food became scarce. Starving, skeleton-like women and children who had taken refuge in the fort fled or were ejected. Lascarins and Tupasses escaped at night from the hell-hole that the fort had become.

Priests and civilians fought side-by-side with the soldiers. Plague followed famine and drought. Bodies were first buried, then later thrown into pits and finally left where they died. Dogs, cats, rats, horses and elephants became food for the lucky ones but the poor, who had no other food, began to eat the flesh of the dead.

The Dutch heard that the Portuguese were breaking down houses and using rubble to block streets and fight house by house and street by street. On 7th May, they scaled the walls while the Kandyans rained down arrows. The area was covered in blood, the dead and the dying. Over 300 Dutch died and the Portuguese lost over a hundred that day. Some Portuguese wanted to surrender and others wanted to herd the women and children into a church and set it on fire while the men fought on until everyone was dead.

On 10th May, 1656 the fort surrendered. The siege had lasted seven months and seventy-three ragged starving soldiers emerged followed by a hundred civilians, women and a few children.

The bravery of the Portuguese astonished the Dutch so the survivors were guaranteed safe passage with their goods to Portugal. The civilians, known as *crusedos*, were allowed to stay in Ceylon under the protection of the Dutch or take safe passage to Portuguese India. All the Catholic clergy had to leave.

The Portuguese period in Ceylon was a period of constant wars, rebellions and unrest. The loss of Ceylon resulted in the loss of the Portuguese will to fight. Ceylon's geographical position was crucial to Portuguese control of her sea routes and when she lost Ceylon she lost the heart of her Empire. When finally a truce was signed in 1668 the Portuguese were left with only Goa and Diu in south Asia.

Dutch descriptions of the conquest of the Portuguese forts can be found in the journals of the Dutch Burgher Union and in R. L. Brohier's book *Links between Sri Lanka and the Netherlands*.

Some consequences of Portuguese rule

The Portuguese made no changes to the administrative hierarchy at village or provincial level. They compiled a land registry, or *tombo*, to manage the collection of taxes in place of the hereditary *rajakariya* system of compulsory service on the roads and in the army. Their system of land registration continues unchanged today.

The Portuguese appointed Portuguese *dissavas* (government agents) over the hereditary Sinhalese officials in charge of *korales* (districts), *pattus* (areas) and villages. Sinhalese who held positions of authority and responsibility had to become Christians and many took Portuguese names. There were marriages between Portuguese and important Sinhalese families and some Low Country Sinhalese have a Portuguese ancestor while many more have Portuguese family names. The Portuguese attempted to develop a land-owning settler colony of mixed Portuguese/Sinhalese *fidalgos* (landed gentry) but the plan failed because of the tropical heat and the relatively safe and comfortable life in the towns.

Perhaps the greatest impact of the Portuguese was the introduction of their religion. There were seldom more than five hundred Portuguese in Ceylon at any one time, very few females came to the Eastern empire, and few Portuguese returned home alive to Portugal. Today there are 1.2 million Catholics in Sri Lanka. The Portuguese were most successful in their conversions among those who had most to gain and those who had least to lose. Whole communities are Catholic, and strongly Catholic, in the coastal regions extending from Mannar to Moratuwa with pockets in other coastal areas. There are relatively few Catholics in the inland areas.

The Portuguese had a major impact on the caste system. The *Karawa*, or fisher caste were a low caste in Sinhalese society but with their wholesale conversion to Christianity and privileged access to education and commerce they were the first group to achieve increased status, upward mobility and wealth.

A further impact of the Portuguese period, due to their inability to conquer the Kandyan areas, was the development of two kinds of Sinhalese society. The Low Country Sinhalese (Sinhalese in the Portuguese dominated areas) developed the advantages of contact with the west three hundred years before the Kandyan Sinhalese. As a consequence, the Low Country Sinhalese benefited from education, commerce, and many new occupations that were unknown before the arrival of the Portuguese.

Portuguese Burghers

The other impact of Portuguese colonisation was the creation of the *Tupase* or mixed-Portuguese. The word 'Portuguese Burgher' came into use for the *Tupase* or mixed Portuguese/Sinhalese ethnic group only in British times and 150 years after the Portuguese had left Ceylon. After their departure, despised by the Sinhalese, Dutch and eventually the British, these *Tupases* as they were known, took over the skills introduced by the Portuguese such as shoemaking, tailoring, printing, carpentry, blacksmithing, and working in iron, copper and ferrous metals. They became known as 'mechanic-burghers' or, insultingly, as 'mico-burghers'. Occupations requiring new skills did not fit into the existing caste structure and they were conveniently considered low caste or outcaste by mainstream society. The descendants of the *Tupases* are among the poorest of the poor in the caste conscious Sri Lankan society. They have

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little hope of upward mobility in a society which to this day down-values mechanical skills as inferior to both agriculture and service occupations. It is not surprising that plumbing fixtures, refrigerators and other minor mechanical equipment often remain unrepaired and unused for extended periods in Sri Lanka even today!

The downward economic spiral of the Tupases commenced with the Portuguese capitulation to the Dutch. The Dutch were rigid (Protestant) Calvinists and had suffered persecution from the Catholic Spaniards. The Dutch Batavian code of 1642 stated that no religion, other than Calvinism, was to be practised and the punishment for contravention was confiscation of property. Catholics were barred from holding any office, their churches and schools were taken over and the Tupase community of mixed Portuguese/Sinhalese/Tamil descent found themselves low-caste and without work. Many of the community remain in this position. There are about two thousand of them in Batticaloa, many in Colombo's northern suburbs and smaller numbers in Trincomalee, Akkaraipattu, Mannar and Colombo's southern suburbs. Called Parangi by the Sinhalese and Parankiyar by the Tamils, they continue as a separate community with a mixture of Portuguese and Dutch names. A.N.W., writing in the DBU Journal Volume XX 1931 said of them:

Song and dance the mechanic dearly loves and his appetite for pleasure, like his thirst, is insatiable. They are firm believers in 'eat, drink and be merry for tomorrow we die'. This community betake themselves, usually on feast days, to Hendala, Ragama and other Catholic churches, where they make a regular picnic of it, singing and dancing to the music of violin or mouth organ and feasting on various dishes in which pork plays a prominent part and their thirst is quenched with something stronger than water...The Portuguese language is gradually giving way to what is commonly known as 'broken English' and is intermingled with numerous aiyos and anes (p.127).

Poor, without power and on the fringes of Sri Lankan society, they remain a community full of fun, music and laughter. That tradition, together with the Portuguese bolfiado (laminated cashew nut cake), foguete (sugared pumpkin in pastry rolls), pentefrito (fried pastry balls), borowa (semolina biscuits) and bolo de coco (coconut cake), are part of Sri Lanka's multi-ethnic heritage.

Strongly Catholic, but otherwise indistinguishable from the Sinhalese, Tamils and Moors around them, they co-exist with the neighbouring majority communities. There is a Burgher Union in Batticaloa. The Batticaloa Burgher Union conducts its meetings in the Portuguese patois, almost three hundred and fifty years after the Portuguese departed! (Colin Thome in DBU Journal LXII 1985, p.173-176). In Batticaloa they try to stay out of the ethnic violence between the Muslim Moors, Hindu Tamils and Buddhist Sinhalese. It is not easy.

Overlaid on this style of speaking is a form of pidgin English or patois. It was a conversation style that was relatively common with the lower-class urban Sinhalese and the poorer easternised pre-war Burghers. Carl Muller's fictitious novel, *The Jam Fruit Tree*, has many examples but that book is not representative of middle-class 'Burgher-English'. Pidgin English was often a literal translation of spoken Sinhala.

Here are a few amusing examples (E) with the translation (T):

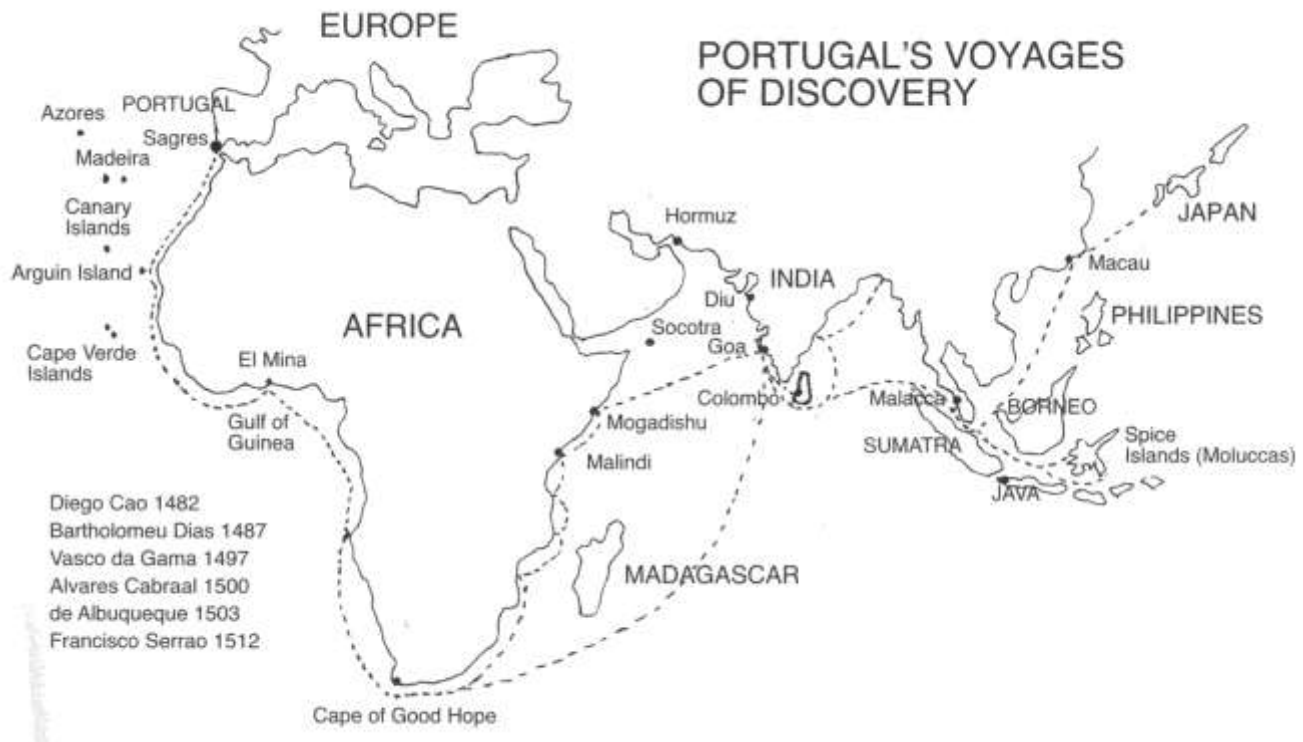
E How you can do like this?
T How can you be so unreasonable?

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- E See if having candle in whatnot
T Is there a candle in the sideboard?
- E No hanky-panky nonsense
T Don't get up to any mischief
- E Catch and give a good pasting
T Bash him up
- E Think they can take and take and then kick my backside, no?
T Do people think I will continue to be generous when they slander me?
- E Hit to see
T Make one aggressive move and you will be surprised at my reaction
- E I going Canal Street bottom
T I am going to the lower end of Canal street.
- E Give to see
T I would like to have a closer look
- E That's what telling that fellow living Colombo
T He says he lives in Colombo
- E Putting a party
T A celebration with liquor and many friends
- E She's in the backside
T She is at the rear of the house
- E What for keeping
T We don't need that, it can be thrown away
- E Let him try to come and see
T Should he try violence, he will be the loser
- E Only asking, no?
T Don't be upset, I thought I could ask
- E Putting parts
T Pretending to be someone more important than one really is
- E Have to cut with cloth that have
T We must manage with the resources we have
- E Put a shot
T Have a quick drink

To the Portuguese Burghers, any occasion is an excuse for a party. The cafferinga and its derivative the baila, are lively can-cans. The music is light, racy and filled with rhythm, cadence and movement. The chikothi is slower and more graceful. Those who are not dancing generally sit around in a circle and keep time by clapping, whistling and making rhythmic sounds. The best known of the cafferingas is Sinhala Nona and no Sri Lankan dance is complete, even in Melbourne, without at least one of these dances that came from the Iberian Peninsula. The rhythm has spread into Sinhala culture by way of the romantic Sinhalese cinema music.

Portuguese Burghers enjoy their christenings, weddings, birthdays and saints' days. They are sociable, hospitable and speak a patois derived from Portuguese but spoken in English with the addition of Sinhala words and grammar.



NETHERLANDS

(in 1831)

Provinces and
Provincial capitals



BELGIUM

(after 1830)



PLATE I

Furniture from the Dutch period in Ceylon



Wardrobe or 'almirah'—late 18th century



Maternity chair
mid 18th century
(satinwood)



Dining table chair
circa 1670 (nadun)



Early 18th century
chair (calamander)

PLATE II

Furniture from the Dutch period in Ceylon



Satinwood 'almirah' (cupboard)—
edged in ebony—early/mid 18th century



Indo-Portuguese chair
late 17th century
(calamander)



Indo-Portuguese chair
late 17th century
(ebony)



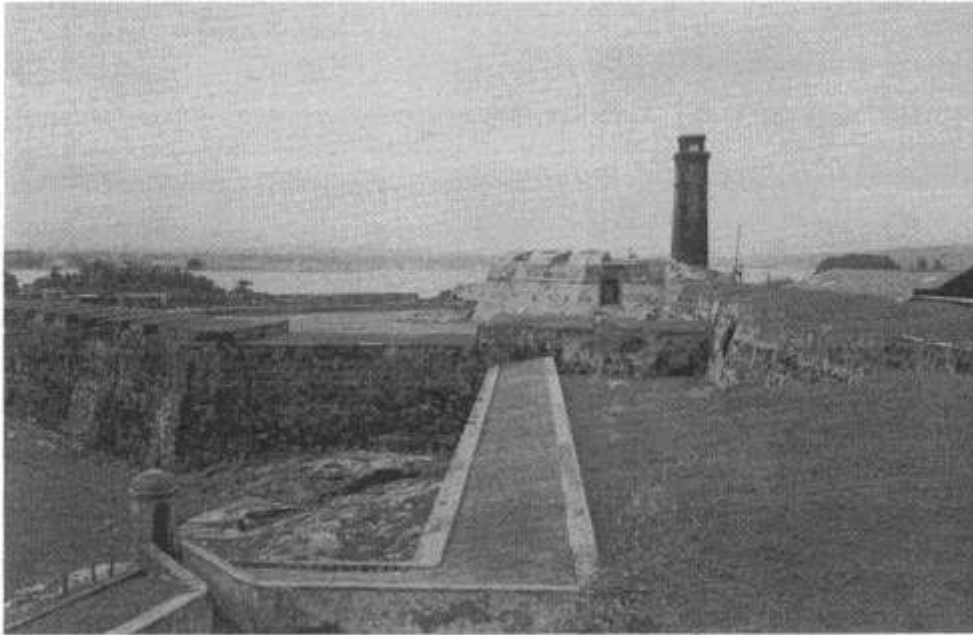
Collapsible surveyors
chair—mid 18th century
(ebony)



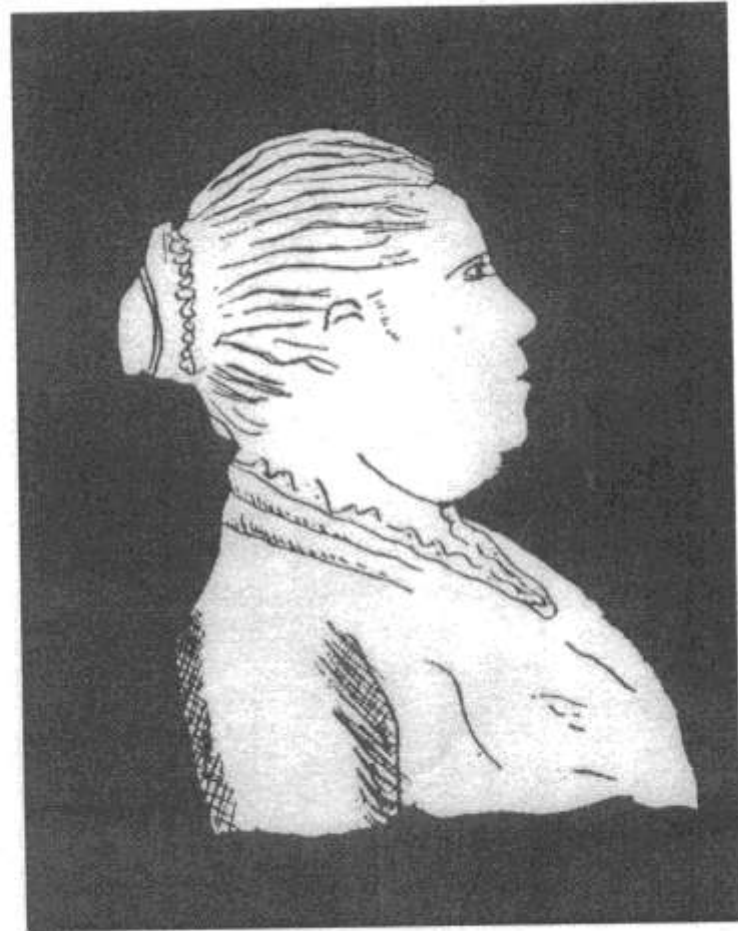
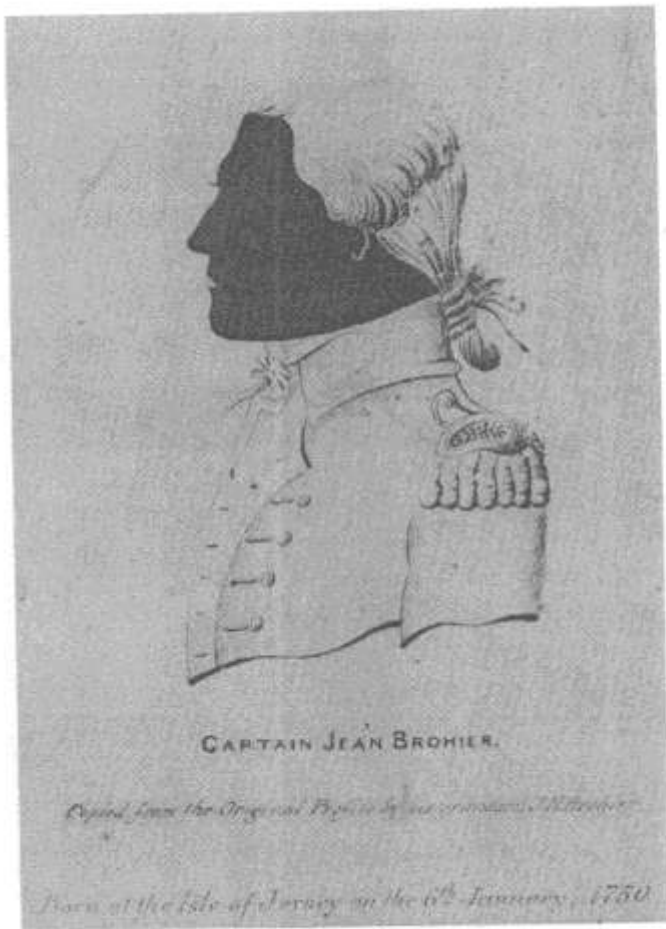
Interior of the Dutch Church at Wolvendaal, Colombo



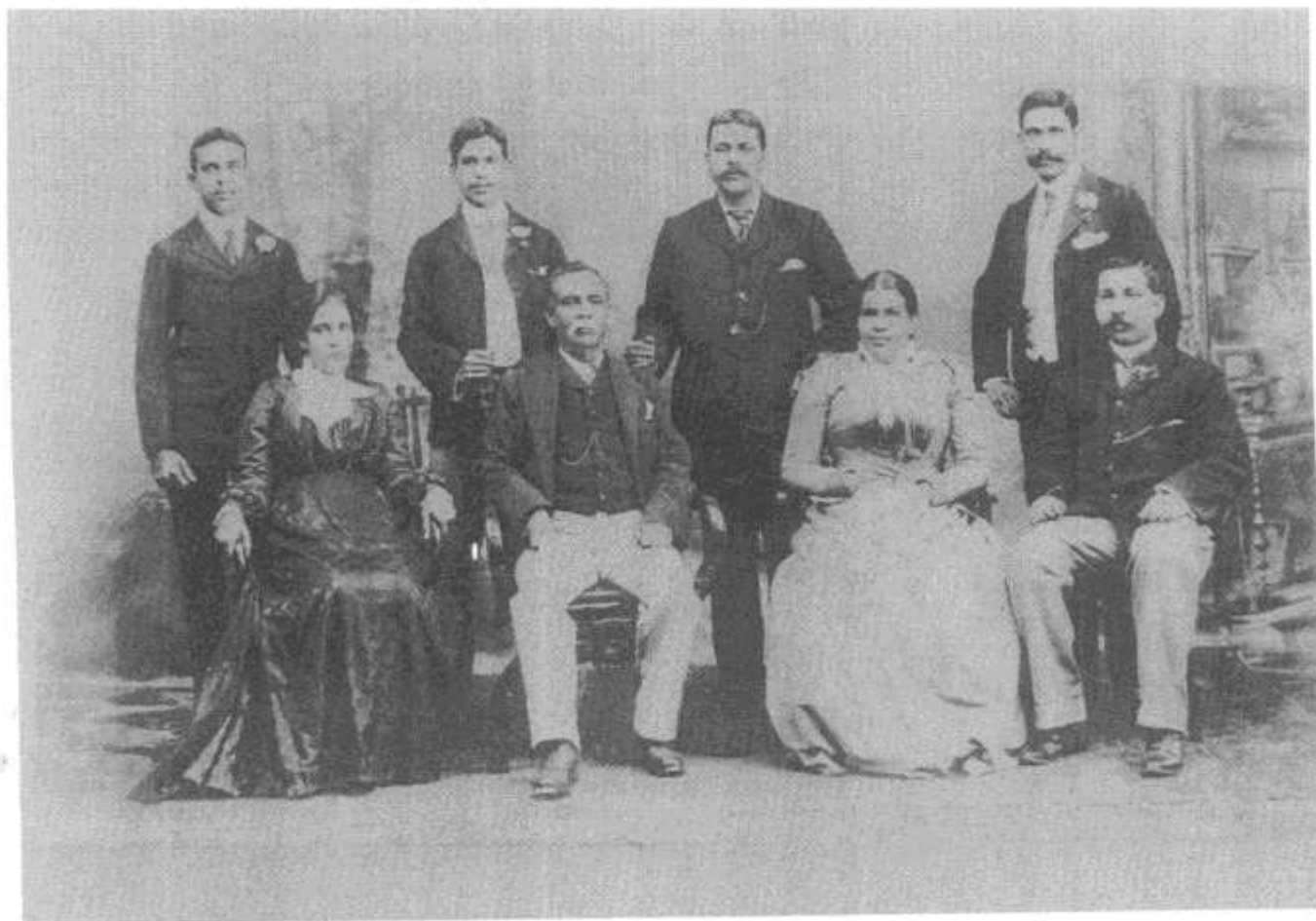
Exteriors of Dutch churches at Wolvendaal (top) and Galle (bottom)



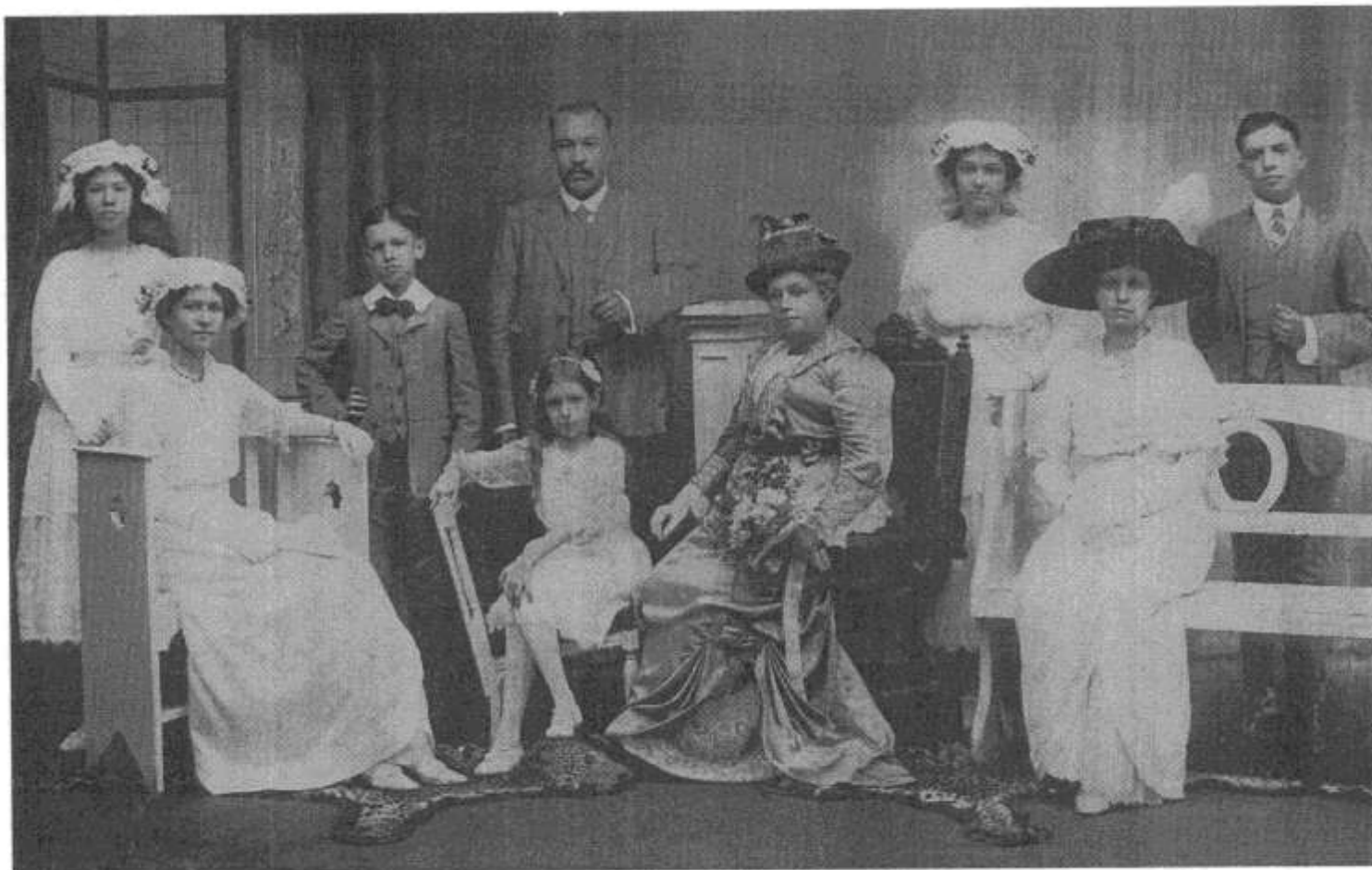
Ramparts of the Galle Fort (top) and interior of the Dutch Church at Galle (bottom)



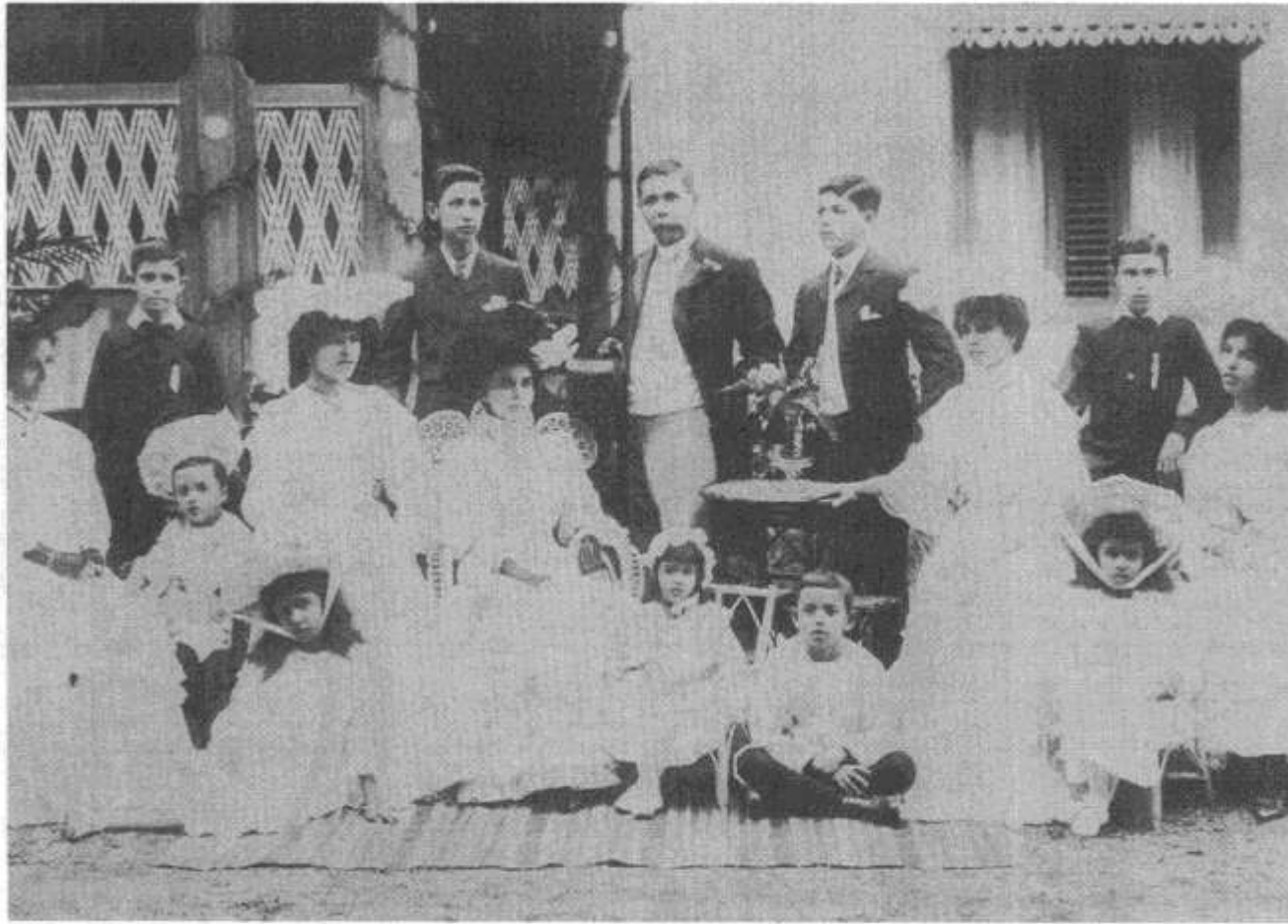
Captain Jean Brohier and Isabella Ferdinand in 1800 (a sketch)



John Christian Pereira, Jane Adelaide *nee* Crozier, and family (1889)



Julian Fryer, Florence *nee* Stork, and family (1904)



William Metzeling, Agnes *nee* Maartenstyn, and family (1906)



Bertram Crozier and Rose Ferdinands (1908)



Lloyd Paternott, Beatrice *nee* Nicolle, children and *ayabs* (1911)

PLATE XII



Charles Gerrard Speldewinde, Rosa Frederica *nee* de Boer, and family (1912)

PLATE XIII



Sophia and Percival Siebel with daughter Alix in London (1913)



Gregory Nicollé and family on his 70th birthday (1914)



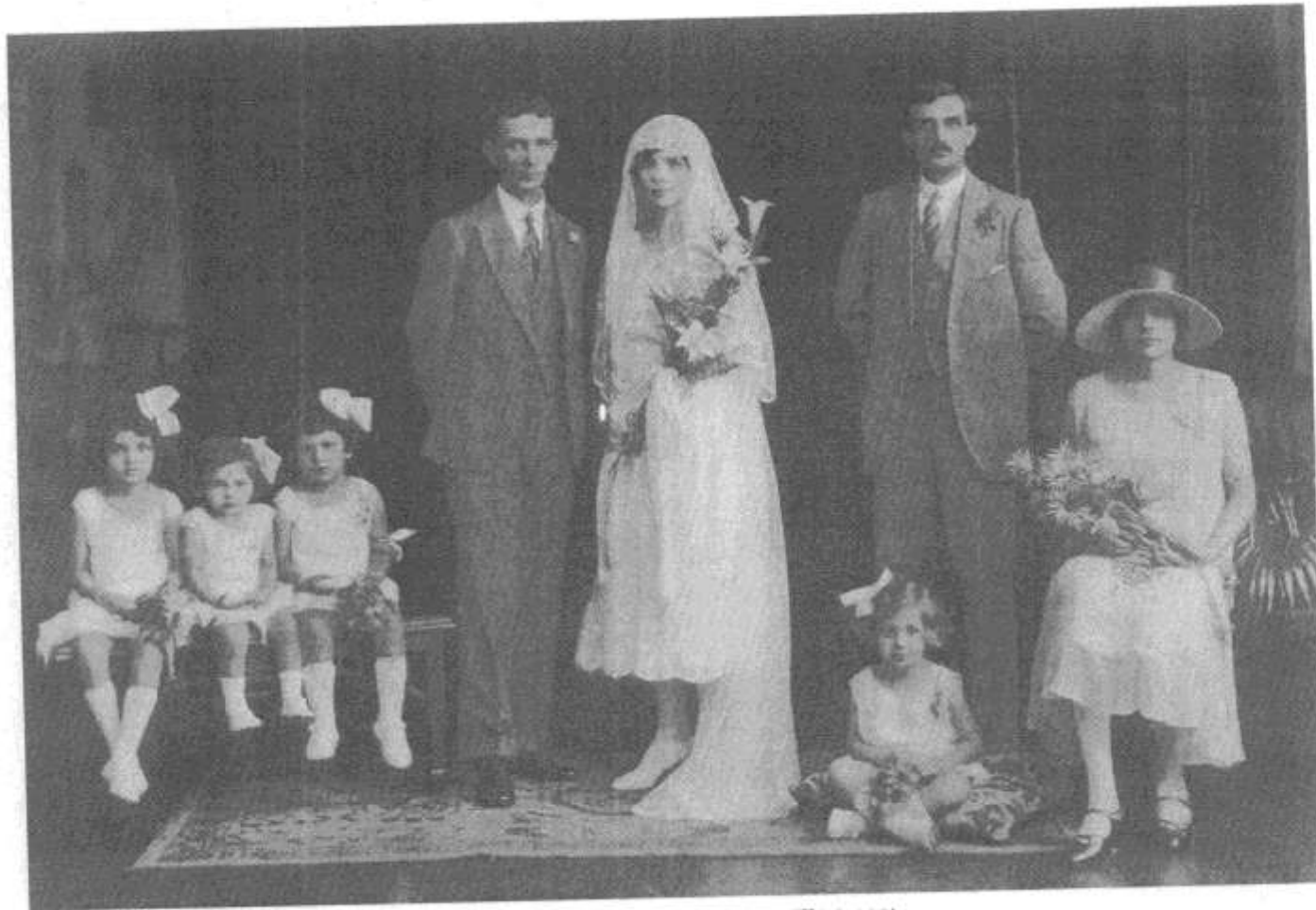
Louis Hunter and Edith Fretz (1915)



Stanley Schokman [Snr] and Doris Ginger (1917)



Theodore (Tim) Ferdinands and Rhoda Mack (1922)

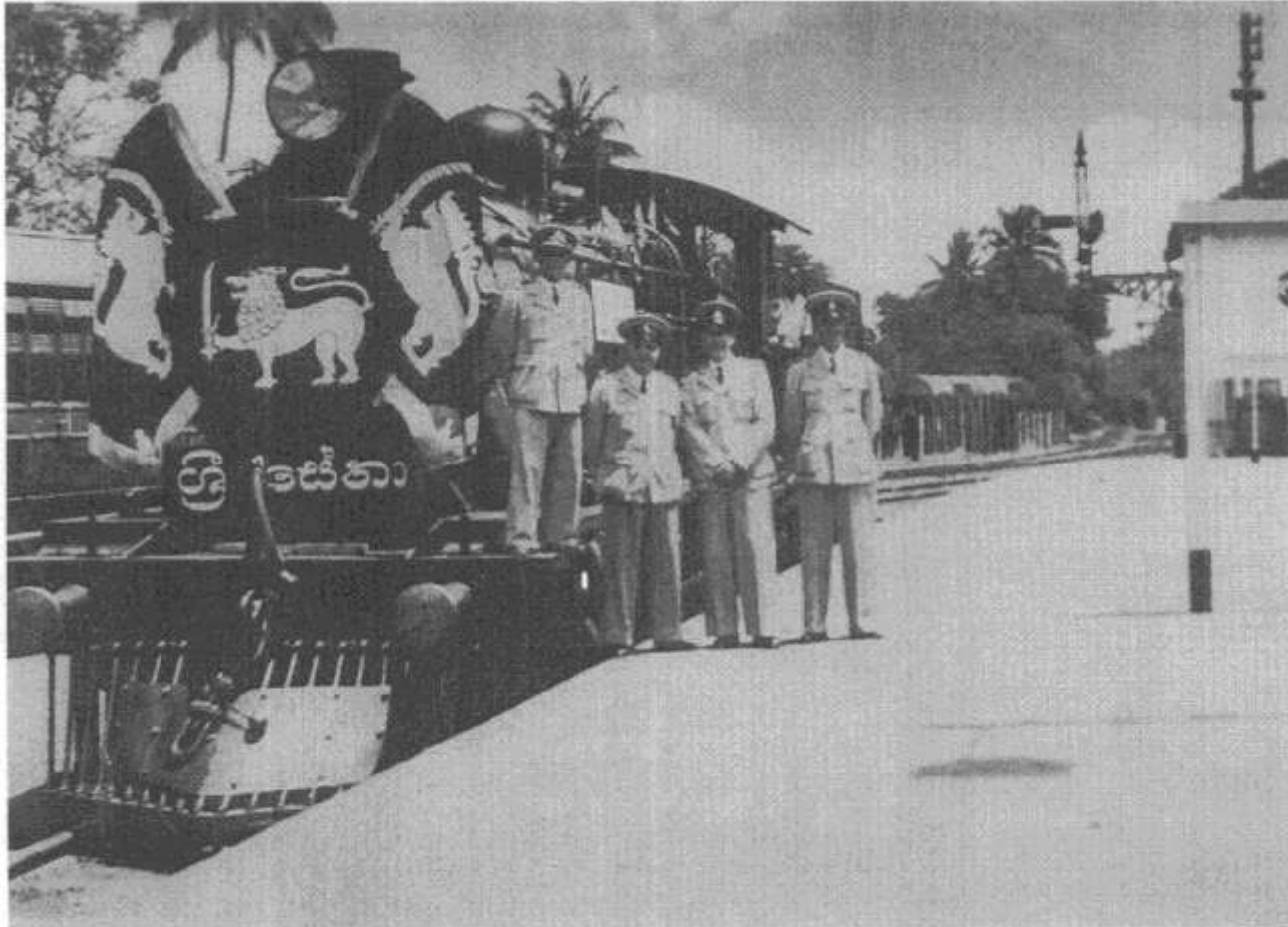


Cecil Speldewinde and Irene Willé (1922)



PLATE XIX

Rando Melder and Phyllis Bulner (1934)



Kandy—Inspectors Ebert, Ferdinands, Loos and Miller with the 'Queen's Special' (1954)

PLATE XXI



John Walter Bulner (1900)



Sisters Agnes Metzeling and
Alice Maartenstyn (1929)



Hilda Silva and her Austin 7 (1958)



A family group (1958)



Primary school children (1959)

PLATE XXII



Henrietta Ferdinands *nee*
Jansz in 1935 (b. 1857)



Alice Lorenz Ginger, *nee*
Daniel in 1934 (b. 1870)



Doris Lorenz Ferdinands, *nee*
Schokman in 1930 (b. 1894)



Stanley Schokman [Jnr] with Ivor
and Rodney Ferdinands in 1930



Lieut. Dr. Eric Stanley
Brohier in 1919
(b. 1894)



Alix Josceline Siebel,
nee Speldewinde
in 1920 (b. 1894)



Carlotta Persis Brohier,
in 1934 (b. 1930)



Frederick Colin Ferdinands,
in 1955 (b. 1899)



Frederick Rodney Lorenz
Ferdinands in 1956 (b. 1925)

PLATE XXIV



'Ceddie' Ferdinands and Enid Rodé (1933)



Eric & Alix Brohier, sisters, daughters, grandchildren and Appuhamy (1961)



Everard Schrader and Peggy van Twest (1948)



Arthur Anderson and Lorraine Metzeling (1953)



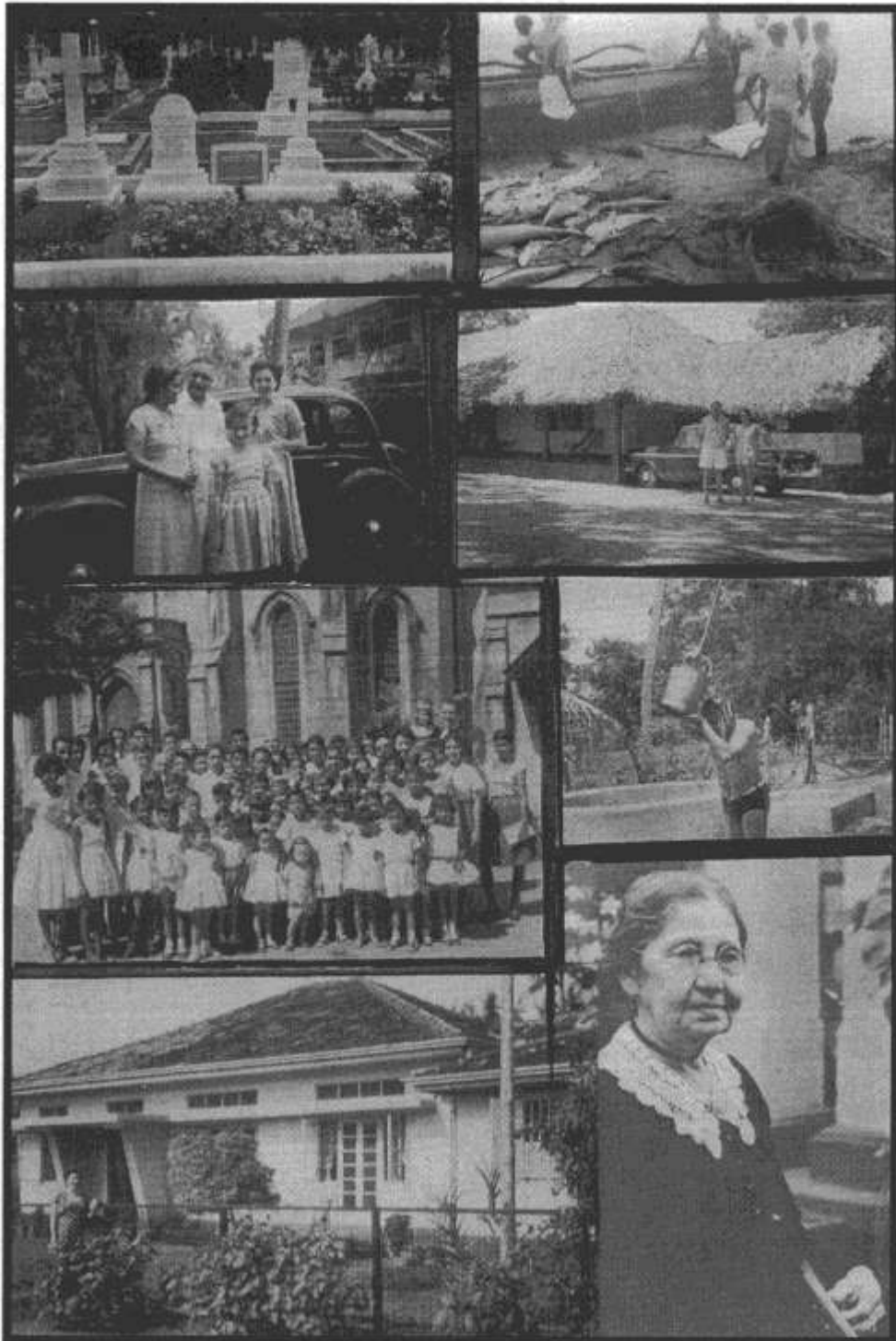
Rodney Ferdinands and Persis Brohier (1953)

PLATE XXVII



A single-storey bungalow and an 'Upstair' bungalow (1961)

PLATE XXVIII



A collage of memories (1962)



Persis Ferdinands and Stuart (1964)

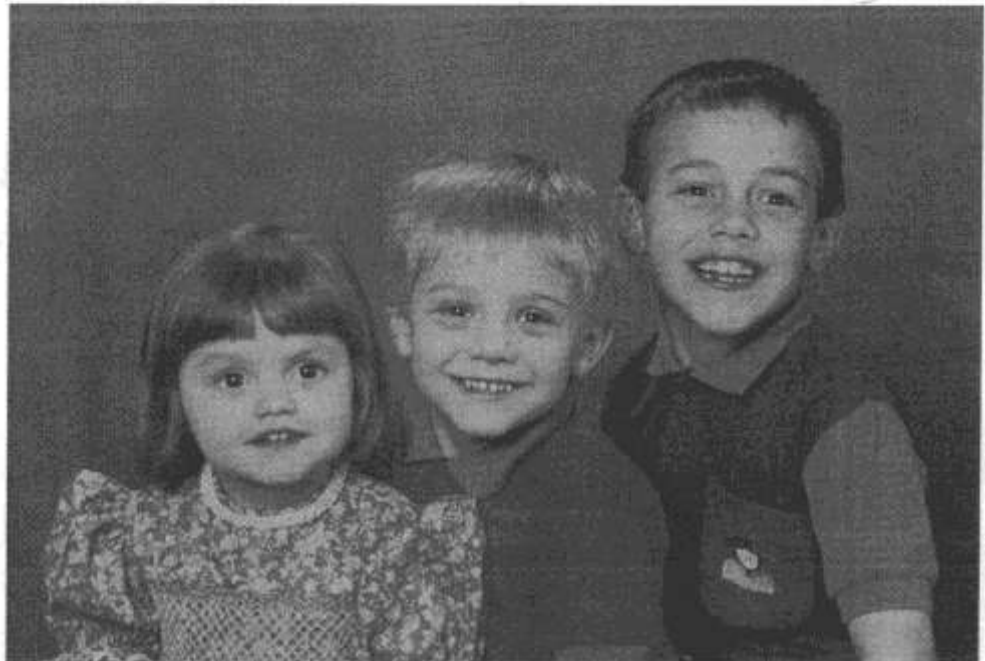
PLATE XXX



Emilio Moreno and wife Carol *nee* Stork (1966)



Hans Ferdinands, wife Honarine *nee* de Zilwa (1990)



Birgitta, Thomas and Benjamin Ferdinands (1995)

PLATE XXXII



Stuart Eric Ferdinands in 1990 (b. 1963)



Suzanne Persis Banfield in 1994 (b. 1965)



Rosalie Claire Ferdinands in 1994 (b. 1990)



Thomas Ferdinand Banfield in 1994 (b. 1992)



Maxwell Stuart Ferdinands in 1995 (b. 1991)



Cameron John Banfield in 1995 (b. 1994)

2 THE DUTCH

Dutch history between 1500 and 1800 A.D.

The term 'Holland' is applied to the whole of the Kingdom of the Netherlands in a somewhat similar manner to the way England is used to describe the United Kingdom of England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.

The term 'Holland' should only be applied to one part of the Netherlands and that is the provinces of North and South Holland centred around Amsterdam, Rotterdam and the Hague.

The term 'Low Countries' (or Nederland) described the regions that were once under Spanish rule and comprised the present Netherlands, Belgium, Luxembourg, and parts of Northern France. The Low Countries, situated at the mouth of the Rhine, were in a good position for the exchange of information. They were in many ways at the cross-roads of trade and ideas in Europe in the 16th and 17th centuries.

Charles V, Emperor of Austria and Spain, which included the low Countries', was an ardent Catholic. He burned heretics at the stake in the Dutch towns of Dordrecht, Delft and Leiden. When he abdicated in 1555 to live in a monastery, his vast possessions were divided between the Hapsburg kingdoms of Austria and Spain and the Low Countries became the possession of Philip II of Spain. The new king continued to harass his Dutch subjects and established the Inquisition in 1565. William of Orange, later known as William the Silent, became a Calvinist and started a national religious war. Dr. G. Molsbergen, writing in the DBU Journal Volume XIX 1929, describes how the northern and southern parts of the Spanish Low Countries (Holland and Belgium) became separate and independent countries (see maps on pages 19 and 20):

Flanders and South Brabant (now Belgian provinces) have always been Dutch by race and language, except in their southernmost districts. The language spoken in what is now the northern part of Belgium is commonly called Flemish and this is a dialect of Dutch. Brussels, Antwerp, Ghent (Gent), and Brugge (Bruges) are all Dutch-speaking areas. Race and language were not the causes of the separation from Holland. Nor was religion a cause. One third of the people in Holland today are Catholics. When Calvinism began to establish itself, it spread from France to Belgium and was stronger in what is now Belgium than in the North, now Holland. In Flanders, the Reformation received its first impetus...There was a time when the whole of Flemish Belgium was Calvinist. The religion of the various provinces was the outcome of the struggle rather than the cause.

As the Spaniards took one Flemish or Brabant town after another, the Calvinists were driven out and found refuge in the northern provinces...and

22 PROUD & PREJUDICED

it was not easy to displace them...The separation is explained as the result of the war. As the Spaniards advanced from the south they were checked by the rivers. Flanders and Brabant were subdued by the Spanish enemy but Holland and Zeeland held their position until 1590 when they took the offensive and retook the eastern provinces north of the rivers. (p.66)

The northern provinces became independent of the Spanish in 1596, took the name 'Republic of the United Provinces', and were recognised as independent by France and England. A truce was concluded in 1609 but the southern provinces remained under the Spanish. They became known as the 'Spanish Low Countries', were later given as a wedding gift to the Austrian queen and became known as the 'Austrian Low Countries'.

The Dutch built dykes and gradually reclaimed one third of present day Holland from the sea. The Parliament of the United Provinces represented the burgers (town-people) and was an oligarchy of shippers and merchants and had a positive attitude towards trade and commerce. This governing oligarchy consisted of the children and grandchildren of tanners, brewers, cloth buyers and similar workers who were of independent mind and had grown rich and powerful from commerce and trade. Other countries at that time were ruled by hereditary kings whose preoccupation was war and the preservation of their privileges. The United Provinces were the envy of Europe at that time and the 17th century was the golden age of the Netherlands.

The Dutch Republic was formed in 1609 from the provinces of North and South Holland, Gelderland, Zeeland, Utrecht, Friesland, Overijssel and Groningen. It also included North Brabant, Flemish Zeeland, Limburg and Drente as possessions of the Dutch Republic.

The Dutch speaking provinces that were not members of the United Provinces were the Flemish provinces of Flanders, Hainant, Namur, Liege, Antwerp and South Brabant in the southern Netherlands.

The governing body, The States-General, consisted of forty leading citizens elected to represent their respective provinces. They decided questions of war and peace, finance and administration. Because the major towns desired their autonomy and did not want to be dominated by the province of Holland, this resulted in a loose form of federal government. Every province had a Grand Pensioner (Chief minister) for civic administration and a Stadtholder (chief of the armed forces). Because the province of Holland was the most powerful and had taken the lead in the fight for independence, the Chief Minister of Holland was in effect the Chief Minister of the Republic. The Prince of Orange, Stadtholder of the province of Holland, was Captain-general and Admiral.

The 17th century opened with a bitter religious controversy between the Calvinists and another group of Protestants known as the Arminians. The victory of the Calvinists at the Synod of Dort in 1618 had far-reaching political and social consequences. The Calvinists wanted to renew the war with Spain and were opposed to reconciliation with the mainly Catholic southern provinces (now Belgium) then under Spanish rule. The Calvinists were initially supported by the burgers of Amsterdam because they thought that war would be profitable and would boost trade with the Indies. The middle class and the farmers were staunchly Calvinist and Puritan in thought and conduct and they too were for war with Spain. This puritanism was to have an enduring effect on the Dutch character. The supporters of the Stadtholder wanted a strong central authority, were fervent Calvinists, and were prepared for war

to meet their objectives. It was only the *Grand Pensioner*, supported by ship owners and city merchants, who did not want war and wanted peaceful trade and religious tolerance.

War with Spain recommenced in 1621 because the Dutch would not agree to freedom of worship for their Catholic minority. The division between the north and south Netherlands then became permanent. The south developed a stiff, unenterprising Catholic culture in which merchants and the middle class were excluded from power and these provinces eventually became the independent Kingdom of the Belgians.

The Northern provinces defeated the Spanish fleet, discovered they were superior at sea, and proceeded to search for trade and markets outside Europe. This was how the overseas Empire of the United Provinces came into being. The northern provinces became rich because of Dutch commercial honesty, close contact between commerce and government, the exclusion of the clergy and nobility from power, and the concentration of political power in the middle class. The Dutch became the envy of other countries because of the manner in which they accumulated wealth and power.

The Verenigde Oost-Indische Compagnie (the United East Indies Company) or V.O.C. was formed in 1602 through the foresight of Johan van Oldenbarneveldt, the chief minister of the seven provinces of the Netherlands. Trade with Lisbon, where the spices and silk from the Indies was unloaded and from where the Dutch transported it to the other ports of Europe, became impossible because of the war with Spain. The V.O.C. was formed from amalgamating a number of smaller competing companies and was given a monopoly of trade with the East. The V.O.C. had authority to employ troops, guns and ammunition, sign contracts with the rulers of foreign lands, govern and punish and be the Government east of the Cape of Good Hope.

The V.O.C. had its headquarters in Amsterdam and it was there that the V.O.C. recruited its employees and from where ships sailed to the East. The people in the provinces of Zeeland and North and South Holland were mainly Protestant Calvinist so it was only natural that the majority of those who came to Ceylon in the service of the V.O.C. were Calvinists, opposed to religious extremism and Catholicism. These Dutch Calvinists were supplemented by Lutheran Germans, Scandinavians and French Huguenot religious refugees. They were determined to oppose the Catholic Portuguese and the Inquisition.

The V.O.C. was one of the main reasons for the 'golden century' of the Netherlands, the 17th century. Between 1602 and 1796 the V.O.C. equipped 4700 ships with a million seamen, judges, doctors, merchants, clerks, labourers and administrators. The company maintained meticulous records and these still provide considerable information on Dutch rule in the East.

In 1606 Janszoon discovered New Guinea and north-west Australia, other Dutch explorers discovered many points on the coast of Australia in voyages in 1617, 1618, 1622, 1629, 1696 and 1705 naming the country 'New Holland'. Many names still commemorate those voyages.

Rembrandt was born in 1606, the famous Bank of Amsterdam was founded in 1609, had ample capital and lent money easily for business and commerce. There was an active stock market and there were over one hundred insurance companies in Amsterdam and Rotterdam prepared to cover the risks in overseas trade and at rates lower than anywhere else. There was religious freedom in that Jews and Catholics could live and trade without discrimination. Horticulture or tulip growing was

started in 1636, herring fishing made a fortune for Amsterdam and the towns of the Zuider Zee, trading in wool, velvet and ceramics flourished and the shipbuilders yards brought many foreigners to learn the Dutch methods of building boats.

The Dutch dominated the trade of the Baltic, were called the 'wagoners of the world,' and owned 16,000 ships when England had 4000 and the French only 600. The Dutch had a colony in Indonesia from 1595 and were the only Europeans permitted to trade in Japan. Their colonial empire included the East Indies (Indonesia), Ceylon (ceded to the British in 1802), Formosa, Malacca, the Cape of Good Hope (passed to British control in 1806), and many settlements on the coasts of India. Abel Tasman discovered Van Diemen's Land and named it after the governor-general of the Dutch East Indies. It was later renamed 'Tasmania'. Tasman also discovered New Zealand in 1642 and named it after his home province.

In the West, the Dutch founded trading settlements in New Amsterdam (taken by the British in 1664 and renamed New York), Surinam, the Antilles, Aruba, Saint Martin, Brazil and Pernambuco. Dutch supremacy in ships secured this trading empire at the expense of the Spanish, Portuguese and English.

The Dutch rise to economic pre-eminence in Europe was astonishing because the country consisted of less than one and a half million people. It was not built on wars but by commerce and trade at sea. The Dutch founded five state universities, had an array of commercial institutions, permitted religious freedom, had a famous school of painters, led the world in scientific research, and developed advanced political, legal and social theories. They also built and traded with the lowest cost ships and, because the Spanish controlled Gibraltar and the Mediterranean, were forced to trade away from Europe in the West and East Indies.

Their colonial empire was an accident of trade and commercial expansion was the governing factor. Trade had priority over nationality, morality, religion and politics. Profit was the overriding factor and conquered lands were managed like plantations. The Cape of Good Hope was founded by Jan van Riebeck primarily as a provisioning station for ships sailing to the East. Dutch colonial administration was practical and devoid of idealism. The books were kept, the reports were made, and all activities were organised for maximising profit. Fortified settlements became necessary when trade expanded but the Dutch avoided becoming involved in the politics of the countries in which they traded until forced to defend their commercial interests. They carried out no missionary work but would not permit any form of Christianity other than their Reformed faith because of their experiences with their enemy, Spain. There was no overt racial discrimination but they insisted that people who married locals did not return to Holland.

Spain recognised the Netherlands as independent only in 1648 and only after 80 years of continuous warfare. The Netherlands became independent as a result of the '30 year war', a war that devastated Europe and only ended at the Treaty of Westphalia. In Holland, there continued to be considerable antagonism between various sects of Protestants, between Catholics and Protestants and between the Stadtholder and the Grand Pensioner who represented the bourgeoisie.

Cromwell proposed a political union with England but the Dutch refused because they had a policy of neutrality. In the war that followed Cromwell ruined Dutch trade by insisting that only English ships could load or unload cargoes in English ports. The second English war was fought between 1665 and 1667 in the Dutch colonies in North America and in the West Indies. Then Louis XIV of France shifted the interest

of all parties back to Europe by invading Holland in 1672. The Dutch opened the dykes, flooded their country and halted the French just outside Amsterdam. Sweden and England then joined the French to crush their rivals in trade, the Dutch Republic. William of Orange, the Dutch leader, arranged for the English Protestants to change sides from the Catholic French to the Protestant Dutch and then sealed the union by marrying the daughter of James II of England. As William III he sat on the throne of England and also ruled the Dutch through the *Grand Pensioner*. When William died there was no person strong enough to succeed him in defending the country because everyone was more interested in trade than in war.

The Dutch were now so militarily weak that the Dutch Republic was not even invited to the table when the French, English and Spanish divided the commerce of the world into spheres of influence at the Peace of Utrecht in 1713.

The Treaty of Utrecht founded Britain's fortunes as a great commercial and colonial power. From then on other countries looked to Great Britain as the model of how to succeed as a great power. The Republic of the United Provinces was only granted the right to occupy the fortresses on their southern border with what is now Belgium. That was the end of the glorious 17th century, a century that had produced Rembrandt and the Dutch painters, Spinoza, Grotius, shipbuilders, sailors, explorers and a colonial empire.

After the French Revolution, the United Provinces oligarchy lost its initiative, its sense of national interest and civic pride. France's power in Europe and England's naval supremacy overseas resulted in Holland losing her earlier dominance in trade, industry and fisheries. The Dutch had to stoop to the French in Europe and follow the English overseas. They were only able to retain their colonial empire because the English did not want them to become allies of Britain's enemy, the French.

A new group, the Patriots, sympathetic to the sentiments of the French Revolution, took power in Holland and decided to help the American colonists in their war of independence. This resulted in another war with the English in which the Dutch lost 300 ships and their colonies in the west to the English. These reverses forced the Stadtholder to flee to Germany and the Patriots to flee to France. The resulting power vacuum left a group who could not agree on how to govern or defend the country.

The French, supported by the Patriots, invaded the United Provinces in 1793, occupied the whole of Holland, and even captured the fleet as it lay ice-bound. It was a total defeat and the Stadtholder, William V, took asylum in England. The Patriots were now back in power. In England, at the instigation of the British Foreign Secretary, William V, Stadtholder of Holland, wrote a letter directing the Governors of overseas territories to hand over control of colonial possessions to the British. They were supposed to be kept in trust until William V as Stadtholder was able to take possession again. This was how Ceylon passed from the Dutch to the British.

In 1795, at the Treaty of The Hague, the Batavian Republic (former Republic of the United Provinces) agreed to give 100 million florins and parts of Flemish Zeeland in reparations to the French. Holland had effectively become a dependency of Revolutionary France between 1795 and 1810 and was even made a province of France for three years and integrated into Napoleon's Empire. The British, who were at war with the French, considered themselves free to seize Dutch ships, take over Dutch colonies and destroy the Dutch navy.

There was utter confusion in Holland and in 1801 Napoleon imposed a Constitution. He introduced the Code Napoleon, freedom of worship, and laid the founda-

tions of the modern Dutch state. Ceylon was finally given to the British by the Treaty of Amiens in 1802 and this ended the fiction of Ceylon being temporarily occupied until it could be handed back to the Stadtholder.

After the defeat of Napoleon, the European nations decided to establish a strong state on the borders of France. At the Congress of Vienna in 1815 a nation was created from the Dutch, Flemish and Walloon people which combined Holland, Belgium and Luxembourg. It was named 'Nation of the Low Countries'. There was considerable antagonism between the northern and southern province due to history, language and religion and the Union only lasted from 1815 to 1839.

After the Congress of Vienna in 1815 the Dutch took no part in European wars. No longer were they an international power and they concentrated on what was left of their empire in the East Indies where they had discovered petroleum and tin and developed plantations of rubber, tobacco and spices. These territories were ultimately lost to the Japanese in World War II and became the Republic of Indonesia after World War II.

After the Dutch recovered from the traumatic Napoleonic years they became more at ease with the British and, in a series of treaties, traded parts of their former empire in exchange for various privileges. Britain was now the greatest world power with dominion over one quarter of the globe.

Holland managed to stay neutral in World War I but was invaded by the Germans in World War II and suffered greatly during the occupation. The Dutch suffering was made even greater when the German 15th Army was cut off in Holland and the Dutch starved in the final months of the war.

Three-fifths of Holland has been reclaimed from the sea, is under sea level and protected by dykes. Barges and boats sail the canals and bridges high above the roads. The Dutch continue to be a tidy people living in a crowded land. They are industrious and continue to look to the sea and the ports of Europe for their livelihood.

Ceylon and the Dutch between 1656 and 1796

The battles of the Dutch to wrest control of the Portuguese possessions in Ceylon have been described in the chapter on the Portuguese occupation of the maritime provinces. Dutch rule may be said to have commenced with the capture of Colombo in 1656 and ended with the Dutch capitulation of Colombo in 1796 to the British. It was a period of 140 years in which they were involved in few wars. They initially fought the Kandyans to stabilise their position and again fought them towards the end of Dutch rule when the Kandyans were negotiating with the British to evict the Dutch.

The V.O.C. (Verenigde Oost-Indische Compagnie), or United East Indies Company, was the organisation that fought and overcame the Portuguese in Ceylon. It was a commercial organisation and was in business to obtain a profit for its shareholders. Wars and rumours of wars were bad for business and the Company did not seek to control the areas that were of no importance to the production of cinnamon and spices and the capture of elephants. All V.O.C. actions, whether warlike or diplomatic, were directed to the collection and shipment, at the least cost and in safety, of the products it wished to export. The Dutch civil establishment consisted of about 450 civilians and the military consisted of about 3000 Dutch and 2000 Asians. The area they ruled was smaller than that controlled by the Portuguese and only extended

inland for about thirty-five kilometres from Hambantota in the south to Negombo and the whole of the Jaffna peninsula, the district of Mannar, and the areas of Kalpitiya, Trincomalee, Kottiyar Bay and Batticaloa.

Most employees arrived with the lowest rank of soldaat (soldier) and were gradually promoted to pennist (writer), assistent (clerk), boekbouder (book-keeper), onderkoopman (under-merchant), koopman (merchant) and opperkoopman (chief merchant). Many non-Dutch Europeans entered the service of the V.O.C. They were generally described as Vrylieden (freemen) or burgers (citizens) with some of them being vryburgers (free citizens). Some of them became vrykooplieden (free merchants) and this allowed them to trade as individuals but not in competition to the V.O.C.

Even in the districts where they ruled directly, the influence of the Dutch was not widespread. They were great law-makers. They sought continuity, predictability, stability and good order. They codified the family law of the Tamils and conducted law courts in a systematic manner unlike the arbitrary and unsystematic manner of the kings of Kandy. Dutch rule was most evident in the towns of Colombo, Jaffna and Galle where they established law courts and enforced Roman-Dutch law. Outside the towns, rural courts adjudicated land disputes and family disputes and followed the historic customs of the Sinhalese and Tamils. Judges included indigenous people familiar with local customs.

The Dutch did not disturb or interfere with local customs. They rigidly observed the caste system and the custom of rajakariya, or compulsory labour in projects like road building and, except for prohibiting religious practices of which they disapproved, the people were allowed to get on with their lives.

Any changes the Dutch made were connected with the development of export crops. They developed orderly plantations of cinnamon, pepper, indigo and other spices when in the past these had only grown in the jungles. They developed canals from Puttalam to Kalutara by joining lagoons, constructed a main road with bridges and ferries from Mannar to Matara and roads from the inland to the coastal towns. Using irrigation techniques, they encouraged close cultivation of rice in the areas around Colombo, Kalutara, Matara and Hambantota. The cultivation of chillies, pulses and onions was developed in the Jaffna peninsula and they granted land to anyone who was prepared to cultivate it for commercial purposes. The Dutch also developed coastal shipping.

Trade rivals, especially the Muslim Moors, were rigorously repressed while Dutch settlers and ex-company employees were encouraged to set-up in business with special privileges and exemptions. In the V.O.C's pursuit of wealth, defence had a low priority because it was deemed unnecessary and unproductive when the country was at peace. The V.O.C. intended to keep their lands peaceful, even adopting an attitude of servility towards the Kandyan Court by calling the king by high-sounding titles and stooping and humouring him in his feudal ways. The Dutch, in consequence, were completely unprepared for external threats and collapsed at the first British attack.

The Dutch carefully compiled land and tax registers and methodically kept books of record. There are over 7000 volumes of the Dutch administration in the archives in Sri Lanka, and considerably more in the V.O.C. archives in Amsterdam, and these are a major source of information about the Dutch period. The memoranda of the thirty-two Governors, as each one handed over to his successor in a manner rather similar to

the superintendent of a plantation handing over to his successor, are a valuable record of changes during the 140 years of Dutch hegemony.

An article by E.H. van der Wall in DBU Journal Volume XXII April 1933 identifies about seventy Dutch words which passed into the Sinhalese language. They were for new items introduced by the Dutch and among them were:

<i>Dutch</i>	<i>Sinhalese</i>	<i>English</i>	<i>Dutch</i>	<i>Sinhalese</i>	<i>English</i>
Baadje	Baachia	Jacket	Das	Dasiya	Necktie
Haarnaald	Haarnaala	Hairpin	Handschoen	Hanskun	Glove
Lapje	Lappia	Patch	Ooring	Arungola	Ear-ring
Passement	Passmentu	Border lace	Bier	Biera	Beer
Kalkoen	Kalukun	Turkey	Rosijn	Rosine	Raisin
Aardappel	Arthapal	Potato	Boontje	Bonchi	Beans
Peterselie	Peterselie	Parsley	Salade	Salade	Salad
School	Iskola	School	Blik	Belek	Tin
Frikkadel	Pirikidel	Fried meat balls			
Smore	Ismore	Dry meat, curry			
Pispont	Pispontu	Back stitch			
Melk-pons	Melak-ponsa	Milk- punch			

All the playing cards, and all the months of the year, were adaptations of the Dutch word as were many items of household and cooking equipment. (pp.141-149).

The Dutch constructed enduring forts and buildings, introduced their beautiful and well-constructed furniture to Ceylon, and started the process of modernisation by introducing intensive agriculture for both consumption and trade. In their domestic habits they were neat, clean and honest and their women excelled in and were admired for their culinary proficiency. The Dutch broeders (dough cake), poffertjes (fritters), pannenkoekjes (pan biscuit), suikerbrood (loaf sugar), wafels (waffle), and ijzerkoekjes (thin biscuit) are well known delicacies among the Dutch Burghers.

In their religion, born out of opposition to the Church of Rome, they cared little for ceremony. Their churches were governed by elected consistories of lay-men supported in the interpretation of the scriptures and in discipline by the clergy. The Dutch Reformed Church stressed the supremacy of the Bible and its study so they placed a high priority on education and particularly on religious instruction. They exercised religious tolerance towards other religions except the Muslims (on economic grounds), and Roman Catholicism because Catholicism was the religion of their oppressors, the Spanish, from whom they had suffered for many generations.

They opened schools and many schools had enrolments in excess of five hundred pupils. Between 1750 and 1780 there were 91,500 pupils on the rolls in the districts of Colombo, Galle, Matara, Jaffna, Mannar, Trincomalee and Batticaloa. It was this advantage in education that propelled the Tamils and low-country Sinhalese in the Dutch administered areas to dominance during Dutch and British times. The school was also the church and school registers are valuable genealogical sources for successive generations of Sinhalese and Tamils. Education was in the local languages and consisted of reading, writing, arithmetic and the study of the Bible.

The Dutch East India Company was not only a trading company but also the civil authority. The Company observed native customs and traditions and provided safety, order and the principles of natural justice. It also encouraged individual initiative and economic betterment by developing modern commercial practices.

Today's commercial society is very different to that of the 18th century. During Dutch rule, the farmer continued with his ploughing, his wife continued to cook and live as she always did, and no middle class was created. Nevertheless, the Dutch started the modernisation process by planting commercial crops, introducing new plants, fruits and vegetables and greening the countryside. They introduced cocoa and coffee, mangosteens, the soursop, the loquat, the star-apple, the lovi-lovi, sapodilla, the canary almond, the durian, beans, parsley, celery and white cabbage. These vegetables are known to the Sinhalese by their Dutch names and the fruits were introduced from the Dutch possessions in Malaysia and Indonesia.

The Dutch laid the foundations of a modern state, introduced the printing press, constructed roads and canals, improved communications, introduced tools, nails and binding materials, and increased the use of hardwoods in major construction. They prepared and applied laws, planted the coastal areas from Puttalam to Matara with groves of coconut and completely altered both the topography and the food habits of the people in the Wet Zone.

In their buildings they are represented, three hundred years later, by massive storerooms and warehouses, fortresses, churches, and public buildings and these continue in use. Their skills in furniture and wood-working have passed to the furnituremakers of Moratuwa who reproduce copies of the original Dutch furniture, now only found in the Dutch churches and the ancestral homes of the rich.

In two other aspects they were ahead of their time. They provided an education in the native languages to everyone, irrespective of caste, ethnic background, religious affiliation or class. Their *predicants* or preachers, were teachers rather than preachers. Religious efforts were directed to attract rather than compel people to their faith. Some Dutch clergy excelled in the native languages and both translated and wrote books. Religious tolerance resulted in the Reformed Church, the denomination of the majority in their homeland, being restricted mainly to the Dutch descendants.

The information above has been extracted from various articles in the Dutch Burgher Union Journals: Volume XXII (1932 pp. 51-55) and Volume XIII (1921 pp. 13-19) by E.H. van der Wall; Volume XXIV (1935) by R.G. Anthonisz; Volume XL April (1950 p. 170) & October (pp. 63-65) by two anonymous authors; Volume XLV (1955 pp. 129-133) by G.L. Mendis; Volume XXXIII (1943 pp. 33-38) and XXXIII (1944 pp. 65-71) by J.R. Toussaint; Volume LIX (1981 pp. 6-10) by S.A.W. Mottau; and Volume LIX 1981 pp. 26-45) and Volume LXII (1985 pp. 179-192) by P. Colin-Thomé. Appendices 3 and 4 are of interest to the Dutch descendants.

The evolution of the Dutch descendants

Most new arrivals in the employ of the V.O.C. were unmarried men. It was only the officers and some civilians who brought out wives. At the capitulation by the Portuguese and to strengthen the European element, the marriage of company employees and European military men to Portuguese women was encouraged. Many unmarried Portuguese women and widows remained behind to become wives of the Dutch. It has even been stated that a secret codicil to the treaty of surrender of Jaffna required

the Portuguese to leave behind the unmarried women and widows as potential wives for the Dutch. As a consequence many former Dutch families have a history that blends the lighter northern Europeans with the darker southern Europeans.

When the Dutch capitulated to the English the same process was repeated with many Dutch women marrying Englishmen. Examples were Bridgetina Mooyart, daughter of the Jaffna Administrator under the Dutch, who gave her husband twenty-six children. Seven daughters of John Conradi married English military officers or civilians, as did three of Galle Commandeur Fretz's daughters and two daughters of Arnoldus de Ly. All these ladies married in their early teens, often died early and records list successive marriages of both husbands and wives. The Dutch wives had names like Adriana, Charlotta, Henrietta, Gerhardina, Petronella, Isabella, Jacomina, Dominica, Josina, Magdalena, Rudolphiana and Wilhelmina.

Governor Maatsuyker (1646-1650) encouraged intermarriage with persons of Portuguese descent if they were Christians and of suitable standing. This was during the period when the Dutch and Portuguese were warring in Ceylon and before the capture of Colombo. As the Dutch descendants gradually increased, Governor van Goens (1662-1663), intending that the 'Dutchness' should be preserved, encouraged his men to marry the Dutch descendants and discouraged further marriages with Portuguese descendants, Sinhalese and Tamils. He was concerned that the Dutch community would deteriorate so he encouraged Dutch customs and schooling in the Dutch language for this group to wean them from Portuguese and indigenous habits.

Governor van Goens Jnr (1675-1679) carried the prohibition further. He forbade further marriages with native women because, in his opinion, there were sufficient women descended from Europeans to satisfy both the Dutch descendants and European newcomers. As a consequence, Dutch women of mixed European parentage increasingly married Europeans and the Dutch community began to look and become more Dutch. The difference between this community and the Portuguese descendants widened.

The 'more Dutch than the others' community increased in influence, gained preference both socially and in employment with the V.O.C., and developed into an upper caste or upper class. Those who had Portuguese names, often from the original Indo-Portuguese families, were disadvantaged and were forced to accept a lower social and economic role. Family divisions were further accentuated by persons with Dutch surnames being Protestants and those with Portuguese surnames continuing as Catholics. In a male dominated society, ethnicity was established through the male line.

Marriages with coloured people were looked upon with disfavour and a second wife, or living together when not married, was prohibited. It did occur, however, as slavery was normal and acceptable. An Englishman in the early British period, Cordiner, reported of the Dutch women:

Many of the ladies are genteel, well bred and even beautiful. Some of their female slaves are likewise extremely handsome and have complexions similar to the brunettes of England. They dress in all respects like their mistresses, who treat them in private as companions.

When the Dutch arrived in Ceylon they found the Portuguese language in general use and they had to learn it to communicate with the Portuguese descendants and the Sinhalese/Tamil administrative hierarchy. The influence of the Portuguese-speaking

wives, and the household slaves who brought up their children, was a major factor in the retention of Portuguese as the favoured medium of communication. The Portuguese language was soft and musical when compared to the Dutch and the Dutch did not attempt to discourage its use. The Dutch language consequently became the official language, the language of Government and the Courts and Portuguese continued as the language in the home and in the commercial community. The author's wife's grandmother, who was born 130 years ago, could speak Portuguese and did so when she did not wish her children and grandchildren to eavesdrop on what was being said. When Dutch rule was replaced by English rule, Dutch was no longer required for official purposes and soon fell into disuse.

Religion was important in this period and the denomination was even more important. Religion and race were divisive factors and remained so in the Burgher community until secularisation in the middle of the 20th century. Marriages in the early Dutch period between Dutchmen and Portuguese women were probably in the Catholic Church and the children would have been baptised in that church.

Because of the importance of religion to the Burghers and every other community in Ceylon before secularisation in the late 20th century, religion developed both a social and a class aspect. The British and Dutch conquerors were Protestant while the conquered Portuguese descendants were Catholic. Lower than these groups in the social scale in colonial times were the Buddhists, Hindus and Muslims. The English Parliament passed the 'Catholic Emancipation Bill' only in 1829 (after Dutch rule had ceased in Ceylon) and it was this Bill that opened up civil and political offices in Britain and the colonies to Catholics.

Religious division remained throughout the one hundred and fifty years of the Burgher community and characterised relations between Dutch Burghers and non-Dutch Burghers. Catholics perpetuated the division by prohibiting Catholic children from attending non-Catholic schools. This policy disadvantaged Catholics in obtaining the best education during colonial times and created two Burgher communities.

The original Dutch colonists and their descendants had accumulated assets such as houses and land. After the capitulation to the English they remained in Ceylon because the English placed restrictions on property effectively restricting sales to Europeans, that is to Dutch descendants and British. The property restrictions forced the more established Dutch descendants to remain in Ceylon.

The information above has been collected from DBU Journal Volumes XIII (1921) & XXII (1932) by E.H.van der Wall, Volumes XXIV & XXV (1935) by R.G.Anthonisz, Volume XXVI of October 1936 (p.52 quoting Cordiner), Volume XXVII (1937), Volume XXXVIII (1938 and 1939) by F.Dekker, and Volume XXIX of October 1939 by J.R.Toussaint.

The reminders

Forts and buildings

The Dutch left many reminders of their stay in Ceylon. The most noticeable are the forts at Galle, Jaffna, Trincomalee, Batticaloa, Kalpitiya, Mannar, Matara and Hammenheil island. There are many other Dutch forts in various stages of disintegration at Negombo, Kalutara, Colombo, Kayts, Elephant Pass and the Island of Delft.

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Galle is the town that continues to retain most reminders of the Dutch period. The large and imposing fort with ramparts 20 metres high and 20 metres thick is the most obvious. Within the fort are many buildings that date from Dutch times. The New Oriental Hotel, is an example of 16th century Dutch architecture as is the library next to it. The hotel has a large and distinguished collection of Dutch period furniture. The hotel, and many old buildings, have high ceilings, thick walls, wide and high doors and windows with inner courtyards.

The Sunday Times of 14 May 1995 had this tribute to Nesta Brohier, the owner of the New Oriental Hotel, on a her 90th birthday.

Preparations for the party began weeks in advance. Holes in the hotel's roof were repaired but the rains still came...starched white table cloths were ironed into place, polished silverware with the NOH crest was carefully laid out...the hotel's huge, high ceilinged lounge, dining room and terrace were decorated with thousands of deep purple lotus blossoms...Many guests came from Colombo by the Viceroy Special train...Galle Fort and its buildings are on the UN's World Heritage List...It is the oldest hotel building in Sri Lanka having started life in 1683 to house the Dutch garrison, becoming a hotel in 1865.

With the departure of the Burghers, the houses and businesses in the fort passed to the Muslims, major beneficiaries of political independence because of their monopoly of the gem trade.

Fort Ostenburg in Trincomalee is equally impressive with its steep drop to the sea, the deer that roam within the fort and the barracks. Matara fort, now somewhat the worse for wear, is smaller and increasingly encroached upon because of its strategic position in the town. Kalpitiya fort is small and neglected but is in reasonable repair. The forts in the Northern and Eastern provinces have been damaged due to the civil war between the Tamil Tigers and the central Government. The ten-year war is continuing...

The Churches

Another lasting reminder of the Dutch period are the churches. The Dutch focussed their religious and educational efforts on their schools and the schools always had the church alongside them. The most impressive of their churches is Wolvendaal in north Colombo. It sits high on a hill overlooking the harbour and is easily seen from the sea. Building commenced in 1749 and is the shape of the cross. R.L. Brohier writing in *Links between Sri Lanka and the Netherlands* says:

Wolvendaal Church...can look back on a time when it was envisioned by Dutch villas, clean shaded streets and luxuriant gardens. In the latter half of the 19th century, a mounting flood of industrial enterprise, of trade and commerce, forced the merchants godowns, the shops of the petty traders, the labourers employed on the wharves, and that mysterious crowded life inseparable from Eastern ports, out of the principal business centres of the Dutch castle-fort into the girdling suburbs...the spacious gardens and the Dutch houses had to make way for the stores, boutiques, and dingy dens where humanity massed together. Bustling crowds, pestiferous hawkers, slow moving bullock carts, trams and trolleys gradually invaded and clogged the narrow streets (p.112).

Wolvendaal Church was the mother church of the Dutch Reformed Churches in Ceylon (Sri Lanka) and members of that church will remember the Good Friday

'Profession of Faith' services, the Sunday School prize-givings, and the other special occasions when the faithful gathered in the ancient church with its thick walls, high ceilings (up to twenty metres high), tombstones and vaults, organ loft, pews for the Governor, elders and deacons; pulpit, baptistery and lectern, and the old Dutch chairs that worshippers brought from home and left in church. R.L. Brohier's book *De Wolvendaalsche Kerk* (1957) has a complete description of the history of the Church and its contents.

Galle Church, built circa 1752, is smaller and not in as good condition. 'It is the most distinctly Dutch Building in Ceylon' (Brohier, p. 108). Matara church is not as old and not as impressive. The Jaffna Church was built in 1706 over the remains of the Portuguese Catholic Church, Nossa Senhora Dos Milagres, or Church of our Lady of Miracles. As a result of the present conflict in the North, the Jaffna fort, in which the kerk (church) is situated, has been extensively damaged and its present condition is not known.

Furniture

The Dutch period in Ceylon coincided with the golden age of furniture making in Europe. The Dutch in their colonies were adept at copying the architectural styles of their homeland and adapting them to the tropics with the addition of gables, fanlights, door and window mouldings. Some of the original Dutch furniture would still be in the *walauwas* (ancestral homes) of the old upper-class low-country Sinhalese but the greater portion would have been transported overseas by the British Civil-servants, planters and merchants to their homes in Britain. Some articles remained in the homes of the Burghers and have continued to grace their homes in their new countries.

DBU Journal volume XLIII 1953, author unknown, has this to say on the furniture at Wolvendaal Church:

From an angle of artistic value the remarkable collection of Dutch chairs of the 17th and 18th centuries...is a veritable group of treasures. There is a variety of designs worked in ebony, in nadun, and that aristocrat of Ceylon woods, calamander, that will fascinate the connoisseur, as it will capture the admiration of the casual visitor. Authorities say that the furniture, devoid of the rococo decoration was inspired by Chinese decorative art, which the Dutch copied, and are the oldest European styles introduced into this Island (p.147).

The article continues on and describes the heraldic hatchments, tombstones, monuments, crypts, vaults and the communion plate. DBU Journal Volume L 1960 has this article on Dutch furniture:

One of the articles of Dutch furniture the amateur collector yearns to possess is the Dutch chest. It was the custom for new recruits...to be given a wooden box and key in which they could lock everything they wished to carry on the voyage. The chest was lightly decorated with brass handles and lock-pieces. Later, those who stayed ashore, made feet for their sea-chests and,...by abolishing the cover and making the legs higher, provided the chest with drawers and doors with a lock and made it into cabinets...Meanwhile, Ceylon craftsmen were delighting Dutch fraus by producing gaily decorated family chests with hinges, handles and lock-pieces of heavy brass, and adding those familiar brass blobs that conceal projecting bolts and screws. In those days, timber was of gigantic

size. The older chests made here were turned out entirely from single planks of finely-grained wood...The round burgomaster chairs...are said to have been made in Holland about 1650. They were brought to Ceylon before the close of the 17th century. The semi-circular backs...have three oval panels, which like the seat were woven in cane. They had six legs joined by stretchers. Nearly all these chairs were turned out of kumbuk or sooriya wood. (pp.33-34).

Readers interested in the Dutch furniture in Ceylon are referred to R.L. Brohier's book Furniture of the Dutch period in Ceylon. Those who wish to purchase antique Dutch furniture will be interested in the article in DBU Journal volume XLVII 1957.

Not much of real untouched Dutch furniture remains in Ceylon. Most of the so-called Dutch furniture, especially the chests which are greatly in demand, are made of old wood, and in the latter instance plentifully covered with modern brass-work copied from the old (p.95).

The Reformed Faith

The Dutch had only recently emerged from their desperate struggle in the eighty-year war for religious freedom from the Catholic Spanish and were convinced that there could be no security for themselves if they tolerated the Catholic priests. Catholic priests were therefore banished from the Dutch areas of Ceylon. The Dutch even went further. In their treaty with the King of Kandy in 1638 one of the clauses was 'no friar, priest or clergy be allowed to remain in the dominion...as they are the authors of all rebellions and the ruin of all Governments'. Dutch anger was directed at the clergy and not at the adherents who could worship as they wished in private. The Dutch issued various plakaats (proclamations) forbidding the harbouring of priests but Catholics continued to ignore these regulations. The Dutch East India Company did not budget for more than twelve priests and these married predicants were no match for their rivals, the two hundred or more Catholic priests who were celibate, dedicated and spoke the local languages.

Neither the Buddhist, Muslim nor Hindu religion actively attempted to convert persons of other faiths. The Dutch were not a proselytising nation, even though the Dutch Government had charged the V.O.O with the responsibility of 'spreading the gospel' in their colonies. The efforts of the Dutch to introduce the austere Reformed faith were therefore tentative and feeble.

The liturgy and practice of the Reformed Church was no match for the ceremonies of the Catholic faith. The Dutch Reformed Church cared little for ceremonial and stressed education of the people so that they could read the Bible and learn the teachings of Christ for themselves. The Dutch were the first to translate the Bible into Sinhalese and Tamil and set up printing presses for this purpose. The simple, austere Calvinistic church services would not have impressed the Catholics, Hindus and Buddhists who were more used to worship with candles, incense, flowers, images, processions, festivals and Saints.

The Dutch took possession of the Catholic churches and monasteries and converted them into churches, schools and houses for the poor. The V.O.C. was expected not only to exploit the colony for its crops but also to spread education and religion. In most towns therefore there was a preacher who, besides ministering to the employees and burgers, had to propagate Christianity to the indigenous peoples.

The Dutch Reformed Church was officially established in Galle in 1642 and the first Consistory established in Colombo in 1658. The Dutch Reformed Church Consistory has functioned without interruption to this day and is therefore the oldest Christian court in the East. The Dutch translated the whole of the new testament and a major part of the old testament into Sinhalese so names from the Bible are, to this day, pronounced by the Sinhalese in a manner similar to their Dutch names.

Up to 200,000 attended the Dutch religious schools in 1696 but even the Dutch had to admit that the vast majority were only nominal Christians. Those who could repeat the Lord's Prayer, the Ten Commandments and the Articles of Faith were baptised and then assured of the Government's protection.

When the Dutch left, the predicants left with them for Batavia and the Dutch Reformed faith was not encouraged by the new rulers, the British. In the years that followed the British occupation, little remained of the religion of the Dutch other than a few churches and the monuments to their dead, the burial grounds. Many churches fell into disrepair or were appropriated for the Anglican faith, and only the churches at Wolvendaal, Galle, Matara and Jaffna remained for the use of the Dutch descendants.

The Reformed Faith continued with the Dutch descendants. During the 150 years of British domination, Dutch names continued through the male line but religious affiliation was generally a female responsibility so many Burghers with Dutch names joined other Christian denominations. Large numbers of children of Catholic marriages were baptised as Catholics and, at the time of Ceylon's independence, there remained only a few thousand members of the Dutch Reformed Church in Ceylon.

Roman-Dutch law

The Dutch introduced their system of law, the Roman-Dutch law, and it remains to this day in South Africa and Sri Lanka, although superseded in Holland by the Code Napoleon at the time Holland became a province of France. Many of the Sinhalese words used in the Courts and the Judiciary are of Dutch origin. The Dutch codified the law, laid the foundations of a modern legal system with appeals to successively higher Courts, and ceased the arbitrary system of justice practiced by the kings, the nobles and the powerful. The jury system was first introduced by the Dutch as was the concept that all persons were equal in the eyes of the law.



with acknowledgments to R. L. Brohier in 'Sri Lanka and the Netherlands'.

3

THE BRITISH

Why the British came to Ceylon

When the British departed from the newly independent Dominion of Ceylon in 1948, it was a condition that they would continue to occupy the naval base at Trincomalee. This harbour, which Admiral Nelson regarded as the greatest deep water harbour in the world, was the reason the British came to Ceylon. In 1801 Pitt, the British Prime Minister, described Trincomalee in the Commons as 'the most valuable colonial possession on the globe, as giving to our Indian Empire a security it has not enjoyed...the finest and most advantageous bay in the whole of India'. During World War II it was home to the Far Eastern fleet and springboard for the offensives in South and South-East Asia. The author's only experience of an active war was when the Japanese bombed the port of Trincomalee in 1942.

The British came to Ceylon because a safe harbour was essential to shelter their fleets during the north-east monsoon, the defense of their Indian Empire and to prevent the French, their historic enemy, from obtaining its use. Britain's main interests in India, after Clive's successes in Bengal, were in the Bay of Bengal. India's east coast where Madras and Calcutta are situated, had no safe port. The only safe harbour was Bombay, half way up the western coast. Bombay became important only after Napoleon's Egyptian expedition in 1799. Madras was not satisfactory because ships had to anchor out at sea with goods transported by boat to the shore.

The French had an excellent harbour in Mauritius and were increasing their influence in India. The world events that brought the British to Ceylon were their conquests in India, the American War of Independence (1776), the French Revolution (1789), the European wars, and Napoleon's conquest of the (Dutch) United Provinces (1795). Britain's counter was her naval power and her conquests overseas. Ceylon became British to protect India, the 'Jewel in the Crown'.

Neither the Portuguese nor the Dutch developed the area around Trincomalee. It was uninhabited, the soil was arid, the hinterland belonged to the King of Kandy, and the garrison was vulnerable because it had to be supplied by sea. It became of strategic importance only after the British became interested in the east coast of India.

The French occupied Trincomalee temporarily in 1672 and again in 1782. They did not stay. Trincomalee was of little concern to the Dutch whose interests were Ceylon's west coast, where the cinnamon grew.

Holland had permitted the British the use of Trincomalee to both the British and the French but the American War of Independence, when the English blockaded Dutch ports and caused great suffering in Holland, forced the Dutch to become allies

of the French. This made Trincomalee an enemy port. The French and the British were at war for most of the 17th and 18th centuries. In 1780 the English declared war on the Dutch, who then allied themselves with France. The British realised that Trincomalee, which had been a neutral port, could now become the forward base for the French fleet to challenge the British fleet and invade India.

Britain's main objective in Asia between 1782 and 1795 was the security of her Indian Empire and she was determined to have Trincomalee. To Holland, Trincomalee was a link in her East Indies Empire, and to the French it was the ideal naval base from where to launch an attack on the British Empire in India. The British and the French met in Paris and decided to negotiate. The Dutch were too weak to be even invited to participate.

The method for settling disputes between great powers at that time was to swap territories like bits of real estate. Holland was the victim on this occasion. The Paris Treaty of 1784 ended hostilities in Europe but the settlement caused great anger in Holland. Britain had achieved her goals at Holland's expense and in consequence Britain was loathed and despised by the Dutch.

The unpopularity of Britain was a triumph for the French who were able in 1785 to sign a defensive alliance with Holland. Even though the British offered to fortify, modernise and share port facilities at Trincomalee, the Dutch still refused. British efforts failed mainly because of Dutch suspicions of British perfidy and the legacy of bitterness from the fourth Anglo-Dutch war. Compromise was finally abandoned in 1791 and Britain waited for another opportunity and it came in 1795.

In the East, the Dutch and the British continued to be on friendly terms. The French had transferred their interests to Europe and left India to the British.

How the British conquered Ceylon

In January 1795 the French invaded the Netherlands and this resulted in the formation of the Batavian Republic. The invasion was a spectacular success. French cavalry captured the ice-bound Dutch fleet and the performance of the English commander, the Duke of York, was so pathetic that it caused a song to be written about the noble Duke 'who had 10,000 men and marched them up, and marched them down, and marched them up again'. The invasion of Holland was to give France a springboard for her wars in northern Europe. The British, however, saw it as a deliberate escalation of the struggle for the balance of power in South Asia.

To the Dutch it was neither of these. It was the climax of a civil war between the Patriots party supported by France, and the Nationalists party of the Stadtholder backed by the British. The Stadtholder had been responsible for many repressive acts and had forced thousands of his subjects to flee to France and the Spanish Netherlands. Many Dutch people therefore were glad when he fled and England granted him royal asylum and installed him in London's Kew Palace.

Soon after the Dutch Stadtholder had been installed in Kew Palace, the British Foreign Secretary prepared a letter for the Stadtholder's signature which had, *inter alia*, these words:

Commanders, Governors...of all forts, garrisons, ports, settlements, colonies, ships...forthwith deliver possession of the said forts, garrisons,...to the King of Great Britain...that it may be secured from falling into the possession of the

enemy...and they shall be restored to my full sovereignty and use as soon as it please God to restore to my afflicted country the blessings of independence and of its ancient and established forms of government (Mendis 1971, p. 141).

The British Foreign Secretary next made certain alterations to the letters for the Dutch Commander at Trincomalee and the Dutch Governor in Colombo and the letters then read:

Require you to admit into Trincomalee and elsewhere in the colony under your rule the troops of His Majesty the King of Great Britain...and admit to the harbour...ships...and you are to consider them as troops belonging to a power that is in friendship and alliance with us and have come to prevent the colony being invaded by the French (Mendis, p. 142).

The letter was addressed to Angelbeek, the Dutch Governor in Colombo, with a copy directed to the Commandant in Trincomalee. The letter made it quite clear that the properties were to be held in trust and returned to the Dutch on the conclusion of a satisfactory peace. Similar letters went to the Dutch Officers-in-charge at the other settlements in South and South-East Asia. British troops and ships accompanied the letters. In the majority of places the Dutch Commanders rejected the letter. Ceylon was no exception.

Lord Hobart, the British Governor in Madras whose fleet and troops were to take the letters for Ceylon, included two new paragraphs—existing laws and customs would be respected, no fresh taxes and duties would be imposed and force would be used if the Dutch resisted. The letter now read:

The Officers of the Dutch Government would be left in full and free possession of their employment until his Majesty's [wish] shall be known, European troops in the Dutch service would be taken into British pay on the terms on which they were already employed and should there be any resistance to these proposals the British would take possession by force. Friendly relations would be maintained with the inhabitants who would be permitted to carry on their occupations and their external trade carried on a most-favoured nation basis. (Mendis, p. 146).

The Commandant at Trincomalee was Fornbauer, a German, and he asked for time to contact the Governor in Colombo. Before a reply could be received there were skirmishes which developed into a full scale war. The forts at Trincomalee surrendered two months later on 30 September 1795.

The resort to hostilities altered the whole complexion of the enterprise because it violated the terms of Hobart's letter and freed the British of their undertaking to treat the possessions as protectorates taken in trust (Mendis, p. 150).

The British next proceeded to Batticaloa where the Commander, Wambeek, capitulated. Although the Stadtholder's letter did not permit the use of force, the British used force and captured the forts at Jaffna, Mannar, Puttalam, Kalpitiya, Chilaw and Matara. Only Colombo, Negombo and Galle remained in Dutch control.

The Stadtholder's letter and Hobart's letters were delivered to Governor Angelbeek in Colombo on 25 July 1795. The Dutch Council met but could not agree on whether to admit the superior British forces. The Dutch became upset when they heard about the visit by Andrews, the British envoy, to the King of Kandy requesting

the king's help in expelling the Dutch. The Dutch decided they could not depend on the British returning Ceylon to them when eventually peace was declared because of the British offensive actions and capture of Trincomalee. News was then received that the Batavian Republic had the support of the majority of the people in the Netherlands so the Council decided to forcefully resist the British.

The Dutch forces, as was the custom in all armies at that time, consisted mainly of mercenaries. There were, in addition to the soldiers of the Dutch East India Company, Malays (Ambonese), Sepoys (Indians) and the Swiss de Meuron Regiment. Many issues caused concern to the troops and their commanders at that time. Were they defending the Batavian Republic, were the French acting as liberators of the Netherlands? Or were the British the allies of the Dutch because they were defending the Stadtholder? The troops were also concerned about who was their employer and who would pay their wages and pensions when the fighting was over. The officers and the troops often held different views.

The Swiss mercenary regiment de Meuron was formed in 1781 by Colonel Daniel de Meuron and had served under the French at sea and in India. They had next transferred to the Dutch, served at the Cape for five years, and arrived in Ceylon in 1788. Cleghorn, a Scot and former Professor, approached the Count in Switzerland and proposed that the Count transfer his regiment to the British for a sum of five thousand pounds. De Meuron accepted and Cleghorn then sailed for India with the Count's instructions for the Commander of the Regiment in Ceylon, the Count's brother.

During the siege of Colombo and after extracting a promise from Major Agnew, the British envoy, that the regiment would not be called upon to fight against the Dutch, the Regiment de Meuron was formally released from its oath. On 8 October 1795 the Regiment transferred to the English together with plans of Colombo's defences and a knowledge of Dutch strengths and weaknesses. The Dutch were merchants and unprepared to fight but they defended their trading concessions for another five months. The British had a reputation for intrigue so the Dutch did not feel they trust them and so they fought on, finally surrendering on 15 February 1796.

Ceylon then became an English possession under military occupation and Captain Pierre de Meuron, commanding officer of the de Meuron regiment in Ceylon, was appointed a Brigadier General in the British Army and Commander-in-Chief and Military Governor of Ceylon until the arrival of Lord North in October 1798. Cleghorn was rewarded with five thousand pounds and arrived in Ceylon as Principal Secretary to Lord North on a salary of three thousand pounds a year. Because of the part they had played in the transfer of power, the rewards to Cleghorn and Pierre de Meuron were considered gross insults by the Dutch community. Some members of the de Meuron regiment remained in Ceylon and the Piachaud, Senn and de la Harpe families are among their descendants.

The English did not honour the guarantees in Lord Hobart's letter to Governor Angelbeek. The Dutch soon lost their social positions and economic livelihoods. Diplomatic negotiations commenced in 1796 to end the wars between the French and the British but Holland was not privy to those discussions. The French and British agreed that Britain should be allowed to develop the wealth of her overseas empire without hindrance from France and France had the right to natural frontiers in Europe. There was disagreement as to what were 'natural frontiers' and whether the 'Lowlands', the present Belgium and Holland, were within France's natural frontiers.

The Dutch owed France five million francs for France's expenses in 'liberating' Holland from the Stadtholder. Britain wished to buy the colonial real estate she had acquired. The two parties eventually agreed that Britain would pay France five million francs in return for Ceylon and the Cape. The Dutch, when the proposition was put to them, became very upset. They were prepared to guarantee that the Cape would be neutral and that the Ceylon garrison would not have French troops and demanded direct negotiations with the British. Britain realised she could not obtain Ceylon by direct negotiation with the Dutch and appointed Frederick North as Ceylon's first British Governor in 1798. Various offers and bribes continued to be made by the various parties, for that was the style of diplomacy in those days, but nothing was finalised.

Napoleon then came to power and Ceylon again became a pawn on the European chess board. Napoleon was master on land and Britain master at sea. In 1801 Napoleon and the British commenced negotiating. Napoleon was prepared to allow the British to keep Ceylon and her overseas possessions on the condition that Britain recognised French hegemony in Europe. An agreement was signed on 27 March 1801 and then the process of selling the agreement to the Dutch Batavian Republic commenced. Britain insisted that the French arrange for Dutch agreement and signature of the treaty documents. Napoleon balked at this because, only months earlier, he had assured Schimmelpenninck, the Dutch leader, that Dutch colonial possessions were guaranteed under the Hague treaty. Schimmelpenninck continued to refuse to sign and then Napoleon said he would send an army to lay waste to Holland. Schimmelpenninck then signed the Treaty of Amiens on 27 March 1802 and Ceylon passed to the British.

British descriptions of the earliest Burghers

The earliest English writer to describe the people of Ceylon in early British times was Captain Percival. He was in Ceylon between 1796 and 1800, during the military occupation. Percival had arrived in 1796, after warring with the Dutch Boers in South Africa, and had written a book describing the Boers as lazy, cruel, inhospitable and uncivilised. It is probable that he considered the Dutch inhabitants in Ceylon and their supporters as enemies and possible traitors. Percival was convinced that England and her people were superior in all respects to other races and cultures and his account of the Malays, the Low-country Sinhalese and the Kandyans is equally prejudiced. It would have made good reading in his day for his English audience. This extract is taken from his book *An account of the Island of Ceylon*.

The Dutch, and the Europeans of every other nation but our own who are born and reside in India differ much in their habits and modes of life from those of Europe. Our own countrymen alone in whatever climate or situation they are placed, still remain steady to the manners and customs of Great Britain.

The chief trait of the original Dutch character, which those in Ceylon retain, is their fondness for gin and tobacco. In other respects they adopt the customs and listless habits of the country. A Ceylonese Dutchman usually rises about six and either goes to walk or sits down by the door in a loose robe and night cap to smoke a pipe. This with a glass of gin fills up the interval to seven. A dish of coffee is then handed him by his slaves and his lounging posture and

tobacco pipe are again resumed. He afterwards dresses and goes to business or more frequently to pay visits. In these visits the Dutchmen usually take a pipe and glass at every house. They are wonderfully ceremonious and make a profusion of bows with a stiffness peculiar to themselves.

On their tables they have very gross and heavy food and are particularly fond of a great quantity of butter and oil mixed with their fish and other victuals. After that they resume their favourite regale of smoking in an undress and then go to sleep for an hour. After they are again dressed, they again go abroad to pay visits, or receive visits at home and this fills the interval until supper at nine when the same heavy sort of food is again served up. This mode of living cannot fail to make them lazy and indolent which indeed they are...they make no effort to increase their knowledge...have no curiosity nor enjoyment in anything...they are of course ignorant and stupid, without capacity and without desire of excelling by exertion. Their children are treated with the same neglect and are committed to the care of slaves. Their selfish and contracted minds become equally callous to the feelings of humanity and their poor slaves are treated with cruelty upon the slightest provocation to keep them in proper subjection.

The conversation of women...forms very little of a Ceylonese Dutchman's entertainment and there is little attention and politeness to which the fair sex is accustomed...so it is not to be expected that the women are very polished or skilled in the arts of pleasing. In the forenoons their dress is particularly slovenly. I have seen many in the mornings with only a petticoat and a loose gown or jacket with their hair rolled up in a knot and without shoes or stockings and yet these women at evening parties appear dressed out in an abundance of finery.

Their minds are less cultivated than their bodies and they are nearly as ignorant on their wedding day as in their infancy. The charms of polite conversation...are utterly unknown among the ladies of Ceylon. From infancy they are given to the management of female slaves from whom they imbibe manners, habits and superstitious notions and their morals, being derived from the same source, are destitute of dignity or virtue. They usually converse in barbarous Portuguese which is vulgar and only fit for slaves.

After marriage they become coarse, corpulent and dirty in their persons and their dress during the day is slovenly and negligent to excess. Their complexions are mostly a pale deadly white. Those women who have a mixture of native blood are easily distinguished by a tinge in the colour of the skin and their strong thick black hair...and...sooner begin to look older than those of wholly European extraction. The women of the half caste...keep their hair constantly moist with coconut oil...The odour of the coconut oil, joined to the perfumes of the jasmine wreaths, quite overpowers the senses of an European and renders the approach of these women disgusting.

A race known as Portuguese forms another part of the inhabitants of Ceylon. The name is derived from the spurious descendants of that people by native women...It is common to see a respectable and wealthy Dutchman married to a woman of this description, a connection which our countrymen look upon with the greatest abhorrence and would not enter into on any account. Scarcely any woman leaves Holland to come to India except those who are already married. It is customary for any black fellow who can procure a hat and shoes with a vest or breeches and who has acquired some smattering of the

catholic religion to aspire to the title of a Portuguese, a distinction of which he is exceedingly proud.

Though they are commonly Roman Catholics, yet they retain many pagan customs and their religion is a compound of both. Complexions of all sorts are found among this mongrel race from a jet black to a sickly yellow or tawny hue. Some of the women are pretty and much admired for their figures. The men are about the middle size, slender, lank and ill-made...They are lazy, treacherous, effeminate and passionate to excess (pp. 104-110).

Percival carried on in the same fashion about the Malays:

The greater number of Malays have remarkably ugly faces and their features indicate their ferocious, treacherous and revengeful dispositions...(p. 110).

The author will not quote Percival's further comments on the Malays, or on the 'Cinglese' or the 'Candians' for this is a book about the Burghers.

Anthony Bertolacci arrived in Ceylon in 1798 to replace Cleghorn as secretary to Governor North and remained until 1813. In his book *A view of the agricultural, commercial and financial interests of Ceylon*, published in 1817, he expounded the advantages of governing the colony with a trained, dedicated and experienced bureaucracy committed to equality and the rule of law. He said this about the Burghers:

The European inhabitants, or descendants of Europeans, are distinguished by the appellation of Burghers...They consist of Europeans and descendants of Europeans, but not Englishmen, in the service of the Government, descendants of Europeans by native women, children of Ceylonese who have become Christian and have changed their dress and assumed the dress of Europeans and descendants of slaves freed by their masters...They are employed mostly in trade, some are employed as clerks in the public offices and a few are possessors of land. Their number does not exceed five or six thousand.

Many of these who were employed in the service of the Dutch Government and remained in the Island are now considered as Burghers. Many have been reduced to great poverty. Those Europeans who were in trade, and all the servants of the Dutch Government were carrying on trade, lent out their capital, at high interest, to the natives. Their manner of living was by no means expensive and their salaries were trifling...After our arrival, the old Burghers lost their employment and hoped to support themselves by trade but could not compete with the natives in buying and selling because their wants in food and clothing were considerably more than the natives and all trade has passed to the natives leaving the Burghers in a state of poverty except for those employed as clerks in the public offices and the lower judicial situations.

The Burghers, who form the middle class in Ceylon, cannot for several reasons be assimilated to the same class in Europe where it can mix with itself and with those above or below it. The Burghers cannot expose themselves to the intemperance of the climate, to work in the fields, or follow the drudgery of lower mechanics.

A few of the Burghers have hitherto supported themselves by the work or hire of their slaves as servants or labourers, as bricklayers, palanquin-bearers, house servants and similar pursuits. They [the slaves] are bound to give to their masters whatever part of their wages exceeds what is wanted for the supply of the mere necessities of life. Slavery is still acknowledged and sanctioned in

Ceylon by law but importation of slaves is forbidden...The number of male and female slaves...amount to between eight and ten thousand...As the Burghers...are now reduced to a lower and poorer condition, so must be the position of slaves. The general good conduct of the Burghers themselves shelter the slaves from any harsh treatment (1983, p. 32-35).

The other writer of interest was John Davy, M.D., F.R.S., physician to Governor Sir Robert Brownrigg. Davy travelled extensively in Ceylon between 1816 and 1820 and his book *An account of the Interior of Ceylon and its Inhabitants* is an important historical document because of his description of the Kandyan Sinhalese. I quote the section below as a counter to Captain Percival's uncomplimentary remarks about the Burghers and their life style in a tropical country only 8 degrees north of the equator.

To counteract...the effects of heat...much exposure to the sun and violent exercise should be avoided nor should the contrary extremes be shunned were it only for the sake of escaping habits of indolence...which too often...creep on Europeans in India, and deprive them of their native strength and energy...Less animal food...is required than in a cold climate and the simpler the diet the better...the heat is all oppressive, the dress...must be of the lightest kind...Cleanliness and comfort cannot be indulged in without frequent changes of linen and the daily use of a bath...and if soap be used once a day, and the body washed all over with it, and afterwards rubbed with a little sweet or scented oil, it may have a very salutary effect (p. 356).

The skin loses its fresh ruddy hue and if not tanned by exposure to the sun becomes exceedingly pale of a sickly yellowish tinge. Both body and mind seem to diminish in activity, there is less disposition to exercise...Irritability is increased in a hot climate and frequently in a high degree (p. 358).

It is also said that a hot climate disposes to voluptuousness. I doubt the correctness of the assertion. The behaviour of the natives does not show it. If felt by Europeans in an increased degree, I would attribute it...to idleness and facility of indulgence rather than to the mere effects of climate (p. 358).

Instances of insanity...are of frequent occurrence [and] most frequently appear among Europeans of the higher ranks in society who either lead debauched lives or sedentary ones (p. 364).

Davy describes his first sighting of Eurasians:

Where the soldiers are stationed you are surprised to find human beings, and still more, Europeans. The men had made themselves comfortable huts, they had connected themselves with native women, who came out with their children. The sun-burnt countenances of the soldiers were very striking, they were so dark as to equal almost the fairest of the natives and would almost persuade one that the different shades of colour of the human race may be owing to climate and mode of living (p. 269).

Percival was representative of the arrogant British 'imperialists' who considered themselves superior members of a master race. As representatives of the might of the 'British Empire', they lorded it over the locals. Big fish in a very small pool, they avoided physical and social contact with the locals. When contact was necessary they talked down so that the locals were constantly made aware that the British were the rulers and did not have to be liked but had to be feared, obeyed and respected. The

'Percivals' socialised only in their own ethnic group and were completely ignorant about local society, customs and traditions.

Davy, brother of the famous scientist and inventor, Sir Humphrey Davy, had a distinguished career in the British Army. He was educated, curious about differences and keen to expand his knowledge. Davy, as did many of the British who arrived in Ceylon, had an open mind, were prepared to modify preconceived ideas, and was interested in creating and retaining contacts with local professionals on a relatively equal footing.

Bertolacci represented the best type of British colonial. They were administrators, educators, and missionaries. They were often educated at English public schools followed by a stay at Oxford or Cambridge. As bureaucrats in the prestigious Ceylon Civil Service, missionaries and teachers at various private schools, specialist engineers, surveyors and scientists, they were curious and made a useful contribution to the modernisation of Ceylon. They worked in Colombo and the provincial capitals, travelled the provinces, conferred with the locals, sometimes learned the language, dispensed justice, were sensitive to local customs, and respected the local elite.

Race, religion, language, caste and class

The elite of every ethnic group, including the Burghers, emulated the British in their attitudes and social manners. Local society produced its own Percivals, Bertolaccis and Davys. British Ceylon was a strongly hierarchical society stratified by colour, class and caste. Sinhalese society was strongly conscious of caste, class, inherited wealth, colour, titles and power. In that plural colonial society every community was equally proud and prejudiced. The British set the example and the others followed.

Before the arrival of the European Portuguese there were two major ethnic groups in Ceylon. The Tamils were Hindu by religion and ethnic Dravidians. They had migrated from what is now Tamil Nadu in successive invasions from south India from about 1000 years earlier. They speak Tamil, a Dravidian language, retain the rigid Hindu caste system, and occupy the coastal areas from south of Batticaloa on the east coast north to the Jaffna peninsula and then south in the west to Mannar. The Tamil homelands are generally dry, experience only one wet season, and sparsely populated. The shifting border between them and the Sinhalese is the band of jungle known as the Vanni that extends from coast to coast.

The Sinhalese homelands are the central highlands, the south, and the west. These areas receive two monsoons, have an abundance of rainfall and are closely populated. The Aryan Sinhalese arrived from north-eastern India about 2500 years ago and are similar to the people of Bengal in north India. They are Buddhists, speak Sinhala, a language derived from Sanskrit, and their arrival displaced the Vaddahs, the aboriginal people of Ceylon.

Religion is a divisive factor, especially because the Sinhalese who, like the Jews and the Japanese, think of themselves as a 'chosen people'. They say the Buddha chose them, in preference to other races, to guard the true faith. The Sinhalese have a caste system, derived from their origins in Hindu north India, but it is less rigid than the Hindu system. Buddhists do not have a class of Untouchables.

The age-old divisions of history, religion, language and race were all present to divide the Sinhalese and Tamil communities and they remained separate kingdoms, intermittently at war and at peace, until the arrival of the Portuguese.

Another minor ethnic group, the Moors, were originally middle-Eastern traders who had married women from Kerala on the western coast of India. The Moors were Muslims, spoke Tamil and lived in the south-western coastal areas. Many of these coastal Moors were subsequently dispersed to the south-central areas of the eastern seaboard by the European invaders.

The arrival of the Portuguese changed these settled relationships. The Portuguese conquered the coastal areas and this in time resulted in marked differences between the Sinhalese in the coastal areas and the Sinhalese in the mountainous central areas who remained under the King of Kandy. The differences became so marked that the early British thought there were two races of Sinhalese, the 'Low country Sinhalese' and the 'Kandyan Sinhalese'.

The majority of the Sinhalese were in the highest caste, the Goigama or farmers. Above this caste were the aristocratic Kandyan Radalas or Bandaras. Lower in the caste hierarchy were the Karava (fishermen), the Durava (toddy tappers or brewers of beer and spirits), the Salagama (cinnamon peelers), Navandanna (metal workers), Hena (dhobies or washermen) and various other (lower) castes. The Kandyans also had their Rodiya or outcastes who were not permitted to cover the top half of their bodies.

The Karava and the Durava were in occupations that were contrary to the teachings of the Buddha, (which prohibited the taking of life and the consumption of alcohol). The Salagama (cinnamon peelers) benefited from the main commercial activity of the Portuguese and Dutch, the collection and export of cinnamon. The Portuguese were particularly successful in converting the low caste Karava fishing community to Catholicism. Many low caste Sinhalese became Catholics, took Portuguese names, and were then in a position to hide their caste, change occupations and take advantage of new economic opportunities.

With the arrival of the Europeans and the introduction of a militant Catholicism, the Buddhist religion lost its premier position as the royal and official religion. The lower castes had least to lose from a 'caste-free' Christianity and readily converted to obtain the benefits of European colonisation. Conversion from Buddhism or Hinduism to another religion immediately made one an outcaste. However this was not the disadvantage it had been in pre-Portuguese times for it brought rewards in education, jobs and honours from contacts with the new decision makers.

The proselytising fervour of the Catholic missionaries radically altered the settled relationships between Buddhism, the Sinhalese people, and the government. This occurred to some extent even in the Kandyan kingdom where Catholic missionaries successfully converted some Buddhists in, for example, the Kegalle district. Neither Buddhism nor Hinduism was a proselytising religion and neither knew how to cope with this new force that actively pushed its way into the lives of the local people. It would be centuries before Buddhism made a come back and that would only occur when the last of the European colonisers had departed and the Sinhala-Buddhists once again became all-powerful. A measure of the energy and success of the Portuguese Catholic missionaries, when compared to the Dutch missionaries, is that there are 1.2 million Catholics in Sri Lanka today compared to only a few thousand members of the Dutch Reformed Church who are mainly the Dutch descendants.

American missionary schools brought major advantages to the Tamils in the Jaffna peninsula. The very early acquisition of a knowledge of the English language by the Tamils gave them a head-start when job opportunities became available in the govern-

ment sector and the professions during the British period. Both Christian Tamils and high caste Hindu Tamils became very early beneficiaries in the modernisation process. Lower caste Hindus have still not overcome the early educational advantages enjoyed by Tamil Christians and high caste Hindus.

The Portuguese and Dutch consciously sought to maintain the traditional laws of every ethnic group, even though all religious and ethnic groups were under one authority. The Dutch even formulated codes of law for each group and this effectively separated Sinhalese and Tamil communities for legal purposes.

The Muslim Moors were treated harshly by the Portuguese because they were not Catholics and were commercial rivals in the export trade. The Dutch were more moderate but continued to treat the Moors as a separate social group. They codified a set of laws, based on the laws for their Muslim subjects in present day Indonesia, for their Muslim subjects. The Moors were not greatly attracted by westernisation or education and continued to practice their old occupations, the village retail trade.

The Dutch imported regiments of Ambonese, who, in British times, became known as Malays. They formed another group outside the traditional Sinhalese society. The British brought indentured Tamil labourers from south India to work the tea plantations and they eventually outnumbered the Kandyan Sinhalese in the hill country plantation area, growing to 8% of Ceylon's population. Other outcaste groups were the mixed descendants of the Portuguese from the Portuguese period and the mixed descendants of the Dutch from the Dutch period. They were known as Tuppai, Mestizos and Lansi. Children of British mixtures with Sinhalese and Tamils were the Eurasians. These ethnic mixtures were conveniently known as 'Burghers' by persons outside these groups.

Within the Burgher community, not all Burghers were equal. They were not one big happy family. Within the collective word 'Burgher', individuals were referred to, often derogatively, as 'Portuguese Burgher', 'mico-Burgher', 'Railway Burgher', 'Dematagoda Burgher', 'Matara Burgher', 'Panankotte Burgher', 'Batticoloa Burgher', 'Bambalapitiya Burgher', 'Eurasian' and 'Dutch Burgher'. Older family members would say to children 'They are not our kind of people' and this remark promptly classified the other Burgher as socially inferior. Many Burghers were proud and prejudiced but no more than the British, the Sinhalese and the Tamils with their rigid caste systems. It was relatively easy to move within the Burgher class system. Caste, and the custom of dowry on marriage of a female, made this difficult in the indigenous communities.

Burgher sub-classifications were a reflection of ancestry and occupation and was an amalgam of the original European ancestor (identified by genealogy and family name), skin colour (the lighter the better), occupation (professional, clerical, technical or manual), religious denomination (Dutch Reformed, Anglican, other Protestant, Roman Catholic), and family connections or relationships.

There were a bitter series of battles before the Dutch conquered the Portuguese but the capitulation of the Dutch to the British was relatively peaceful so that while the descendants of the Portuguese were treated harshly by the Dutch the descendants of the Dutch were treated relatively gently by the British. The Portuguese were not particularly colour conscious and encouraged marriage with the local peoples. The Dutch, after some initial relaxation in the early years, did not encourage liaisons with the non-Dutch descendants so the Dutch descendants are smaller in number and less mixed with non-Europeans. The gulf between the Dutch Burghers and the other

Burghers arose from the same differences that divide other ethnic groups: history, race, religion, and language. These differences when coupled with colour, (which was a major divisive factor in a colour-conscious colonial society where the dominant ethnic group was white), created class distinctions within the Burgher community. V. Samaraweera, a Sinhalese, writing in 1963 in *The evolution of a plural society: Sri Lanka, a Survey*, said:

There is an important distinction which is maintained among the Burghers, namely between the Portuguese Burghers and the Dutch Burghers. The socially inferior of the two are the former, the descendants of the Portuguese and the Dutch who established unions with local women...Liaisons with local women not only received the opprobrium of the European society but were also socially unacceptable to the local population. Dutch Burghers had stronger claims for social acceptance, for they were the products of 'pure' Portuguese and Dutch marriages or marriages contracted by them with mixed (European-Asian) women (p. 89).

Tissa Fernando, a Sinhalese, writing in 1972 in *The blending of races; the Burghers of Ceylon* stated:

Despite an appearance of unity and homogeneity in the eyes of non-Burghers, the Burghers are in fact sharply divided...when a Sinhalese or Tamil identifies a fellow Ceylonese as a Burgher, he simply takes his cue from their fairer skin colour and from certain names associated with this community; normally he would be oblivious to the subtle distinctions that prevail among the Burghers themselves, but just as caste behaviour has persisted covertly among the Sinhalese and Tamils, similar niceties are observed by the Burghers in evaluating one another. The most important distinction made within the Burgher community is between the 'Dutch Burghers' who claim unbroken paternal Dutch descent, and all the rest that in Ceylonese usage are lumped together as Burghers.

Dutch Burghers...have objected to extending the term Burgher to those of Portuguese origin and to Eurasians...and...the strength of this resentment is partly a matter of religion for Dutch Burghers are largely Protestants, whereas those of Portuguese origin are mainly Catholics...But it is more a matter of class attitudes. The Dutch Burghers, who have always been a minority among the Burghers, have also been the economically well-to-do as well as the 'respectable' section of the community. The Portuguese Burghers, for example, have in general not risen to positions of importance in public life in Ceylon having been employed mainly as shoemakers, mechanics and artisans.

Class differences in life style divide all communities in Ceylon and the Burghers are no exception. The society of the affluent Burgher lawyer, doctor or civil servant has always been strikingly different from that of lower class Burghers, most of whom are of Portuguese origin and have for generations intermarried with Sinhalese and Tamils (pp. 64-65).

Australians are intrigued at the common Sri Lankan accent combined with the variety of shades of skin colours in persons who stress they are 'Burghers' and ethnically different to Sinhalese and Tamil Sri Lankans. One Burgher decided that the easiest explanation was to say that the colour of a Burgher was dependent on the time of birth, the darkest being born at midnight, the lightest at mid-day, but with most born at some time in-between! The correct explanation, of course, involves a study of Mendel's

laws of heredity and subsequent experiments on genes, dominant traits and the correlation between the colour of the skin, hair and eyes. The Burghers, unlike the Eurasians, evolved their external differences over many generations!

Burghers in the 1830s

The article 'A hundred years ago' was written by the editor of the DBU Journal in Volume XXVII of July 1937. It records the entry of the Burghers into the legal and medical professions in the early British days. When this article is compared with the article in Appendix 5, it reveals how the initial entry of the (Dutch) Burghers into Government service had developed into virtual dominance only thirty years later!

A casual glance at the Ceylon Almanac for 1837 reveals the fact that the locally recruited men, whose names appear as Proctors (solicitors) of the Public Service, are nearly all Burghers. The Burghers were the first to realise the advantages of an education in English and their names ranked high for integrity and efficiency of service. There were three Judges of the Supreme Court [all were British]. V.W. Vanderstraaten was Registrar and P.A.Loos and J.Cramer were Deputy Registrars. There were no Advocates, but the role of Proctors practicing in the different parts of the Island was largely filled by members of well-known Burgher families.

One of the District Judges of Colombo was C.E.Layard [British] who married a Dutch lady, Barbara Bridgetina Mooyart, by whom he had twenty six children. The Burghers in the Judicial Service were J.J.Kriekenbeek, District Judge of Ambalangoda, P.F.Toussaint, District Judge of Point Pedro, and H.G.Speldewinde, District Judge of Chavakachcheri.

F.C.Grenier, Secretary of the District Court of Jaffna, was father of Sir Samuel Grenier [who became Attorney General in a later era]. F.Dornhorst, Secretary of the District Court of Trincomalee, was father of Frederick Dornhorst, K.C, the famous Advocate.

The medical services...had several European officers most of whom had obtained the M.D. In the Vaccine Department were: Lt. Col. E.F.Kelaart M.D...a mere youth aged 18, and Dr John Garvin, aged 17, who was at the time a medical volunteer. In the Medical Department is the name of Dr P.H.van Cuylenberg...father of Sir Hector van Cuylenberg and Mrs F.C.Loos.

P.L.de Vos was Superintendent of the Government Printing Office and Jacobus van der Wall was Deputy Fiscal of Colombo. (Vol. XXVII, pp. 2-3).

Christmas in the 1850s

'Christmas in the days of my youth', appeared in Volume LXI (1983) of the DBU Journal and describes a Colombo Christmas in the mid 19th century. The author was W.A. Weinman. This is a shortened version.

If you had lived in the Pettah, Wolvendaal or Small Pass [suburbs that were the residences of the Burgher elite a hundred years ago but have subsequently been industrialised and commercialised and are the least desirable suburbs of today] you would know how much the Burghers looked forward to Christmas.

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Old Avoo Lebbe and Sinne Lebbe (Muslim Moors) were the chief shopkeepers in Main Street and on 1 December would announce by posters that a great display of millinery would take place. There were no morning papers, no cheap sales throughout the year as today so on 1 December Ma and Pa and sisters and brothers would journey to the Pettah on their great shopping expedition.

Closed carriages, commonly called bandies, plied about for hire. Carriage stands were unknown and if you wanted a conveyance, Chetty Street was where you went. The Colombo Chetty (a businessman of an Indian ethnic group) hired his horse and carriage, with his well dressed Muttu (groom) on the 'dicky seat' (outside seat), complete with Jaffna cigar in his mouth, and those lucky ones who had booked a 'trap' would find it at their door at 7 a.m.

You had to leave early or your neighbour, or great friend, or bitter enemy, would get the best hat, the finest pair of varnish shoes, the Thomson's glove fitting corset, the pair of black stockings and garters. The bustle that prevailed on that morning lives in one's memory. The children were wakened and got ready, the hopper women ('hoppers' were the Sri Lankan equivalent of bread but made from rice flour into cakes) would arrive especially early, the family mount the bandy (a horse drawn carriage) and set off.

The list of requirements had long been in preparation and included a cloth (a wrap-round skirt from waist to the ankles) for the ayah (children's nanny), a jacket for the domestic who rules the domestic cuisine (a blouse for the female cook), and a banian (undershirt or singlet) and handkerchief for the boy (male domestic responsible for cleaning, sweeping and physical work around the house). There was also the curtains, window blinds and new brown Holland for chair coverings, and the most gaudy damask for re-upholstering the chairs. Replacements for crockery and cutlery and a new set of table mats were not overlooked.

In Barber Street lived old Cramer, who was employed at Cargills (the fashionable store in pre-war Colombo) and who was therefore the authority on the fashions that were to be exhibited. There were no Weldon's Journals, but the Young Ladies Journal, in which were stories that always began with love and ended with death, were freely consulted for the next twenty four days when stitching and arranging was undertaken in the midst of white-wash and the smell of tar (as the house was given its annual spring clean).

There was Bredher (sweet bread eaten with Edam cheese and lots of butter) and Kolu-Kuttu plantains (special expensive bananas) for early morning 'tea' (breakfast) on Christmas morning and then the walk up the hill to Wolvendaal Church, or Trinity Church at San Sebastian. It smelt like Christmas before you left the house with mother giving out the things for breakfast, decanting a bottle of wine and waxing garrulous over the cake she had made with her own sweet hands.

Wolvendaal Church was full to overflowing. Old Siekert would be seating arrivals and corpulent Mr Ludekens would be ready to open the service by reading the Bible. 'Hark the Herald Angels' roared out and reminded you of the special day you were celebrating and, when the service was over, there were, at the church exit, the handshakes and kisses, the renewal of old acquaintances, a discussion of Fanny's lovely hat, or Edith's lovely dress and everyone emphasised Peace on Earth and Goodwill to All.

A glass of wine on reaching home and then lunch of shin bone soup and, to all those who could not afford a turkey, a fowl or a duck that had been fattened for months. That was the prominent dish and, with ham and cheese, devoured with bread and fricassees (small round fried balls of meat) and to be remembered for the next 365 days. The evenings were utilised for visiting and in the afternoon great hilarity was displayed by old Singho, the man who used to draw water for various houses, getting 'jolly', Conne, the odd job man giving a speech, or old Mafutsteyn giving in his best style, 'love among the roses'.

Carols invariably started from the Belfry in the Pettah and finished up much earlier than now. That was how Christmas was celebrated by the Burghers fifty years ago (pp. 127-128).

The evolution of the English speaking middle class

The British, like the Dutch and Portuguese before them, made no revolutionary changes in the way the colony was administered. The first Governor, Frederick North, saw the advantages of a local elite educated in the English language and supportive of British institutions and culture so in 1799 he established the Colombo Academy. The elite was to come from the families of native chieftains, the mudaliyars, and the Burghers. The British would govern through them. North furthered the move to English in 1802 when he decided that he would no longer accept petitions unless written in English. This screening process provided employment to graduates from both the Academy and those Dutch schools that had changed to teaching in English.

A report (in the Douglas papers) sent by the British Governor to the Secretary of State in 1800 stated:

The Dutch inhabitants are inimical [unfriendly, hostile], being almost to a man ruined by our occupation. Their personal as well as their national connection between them, their mother country and the Dutch settlements...require their exclusion from government employment so as to render us independent of the Dutch and to destroy their influence in the country...in certain cases it was impossible to do without Dutch help and...an exception was made in favour of the Burghers who, it was considered, would give an easy supply to all places of an inferior nature...and, in the police and other inferior departments, Dutchmen whose local knowledge and acquaintance with the language have rendered them necessary, have been employed (DBU Journal Volume LVII, 1967).

The Secretary of State in his reply stated:

The circumstances of the Dutch and other inhabitants considered as Europeans...make it requisite to act in a manner consistent with both the principles of justice and humanity and...those who could not be suitably provided for according to their rank in life without dishonour or inconvenience...are to be considered proper objects of charity (DBU Journal Volume LVII, 1967).

The Burghers knew how taxes were collected, how justice was dispensed and how the country had been managed by the Dutch so, after Amiens in 1802, the British mistrust of the Dutch inhabitants grew less and Dutch descendants (Burghers) began to be employed. William Digby writing about Sir Richard Morgan (an early Burgher legal luminary), said:

As British rule became consolidated, it was found that in the civilised, fairly educated European descendants, the authorities had in their hand material which could be manipulated for a thousand and one inferior offices rendered necessary by modern systems of government. The natives (Sinhalese and Tamils) were altogether unacquainted with the English tongue...their sympathies are likely to be anti-European while the Dutch and Dutch descendants would naturally be on the side of the European rulers (as quoted by T.Fernando in *The Burghers of Ceylon in The Blending of Races, Marginality and Identity in World Perspective*, p. 72).

From the earliest days the Burghers were considered honest, loyal and patriotic and suitable for employment. They lived in the towns, aspired to an English education, were mobile, and prepared to work not only in clerical and supervisory roles but also in the dangerous and unpleasant jungle and outstation areas in the government and mercantile sector. They had learned to speak English while at work and then in the home, (but Portuguese with the freed domestic slaves). In due course some of the Burghers became professionals when the opportunities presented themselves.

An education in English became the passport to upward social and economic mobility and the chief place for competition between the ethnic groups. A very high premium was placed on English for it brought prestige, access to higher education, material rewards, possessions and closer contact with the decision-makers. It was the entry requirement for careers in the bureaucracy and this in turn brought high social status and security in an agricultural economy where all the insecurities of weather and unstable prices were present.

An English education was never available to more than 10% of the people so it had an almost unattainable scarcity value to the other 90%. Those who did not have access to an education in English were condemned to an inferior role as unskilled or semi-skilled labour in the towns or tenant farmers in the rural areas. Neither they nor their children could aspire to the elite.

The British considered that the best way to modernise the locals was by way of an English education that exposed them to English culture and institutions. Missionaries had the monopoly for teaching the English language so Burghers and Christian Low-country Sinhalese, usually of the Goigama and Karawa castes, were the first to be given an education in English. This advantaged them in status and skills and led to secure jobs in the administrative hierarchy. American missionaries were assigned the role of education in Jaffna and as a result both high-caste and Christian Tamils in the Jaffna peninsula received a superior English education ahead of the other indigenous communities.

The education in English was provided in Christian missionary schools, mainly Protestant, and so the non-Catholics were the main beneficiaries. Catholic missionaries followed much later and modelled their schools on the Protestant missionary schools. Non-Christians were encouraged to attend the missionary schools but for the first fifty years of British rule it was mainly the Christians who attended and benefited from a quality English education. They went on to become the elite in Ceylonese society.

The Burghers were the community who were the greatest beneficiaries of an English education. They had quickly discarded Dutch and turned to English. Unlike the Sinhalese, Tamils and Moors, they spoke English inside the home and it had become their 'mother tongue'. The other communities continued to only speak in the vernac-

ular inside the home so the Burghers had a head start at school. English had become the Burgher language and their native tongue.

The author remembers that in his class at primary school in the early 1930s, Burghers were the first seven in scholarship ranking. The cleverest non-Burgher was ranked eight. In secondary school the advantage of English as the mother tongue became less important as the other children gained equal proficiency in English.

A major disadvantage of the British education system was that it produced clerks and administrators but not mechanics, plumbers, carpenters and technicians. It so downgraded these latter occupations that no educated person took to them. The faults of this education system continued after Ceylon achieved political independence because of the high value placed on 'book learning' as opposed to a practical education.

The missionary schools did more than provide an education in English. The schools were modelled on the public (private) schools in England and, by the time the pupils left, they were 'more English than the English'. Pupils were steeped in English literature, English history, the intricacies of English grammar, a second language (usually Latin or French), mathematics and the optional subjects of world geography, chemistry, physics, botany, zoology, biology and various subjects in the arts.

Academic staff were often British from Oxford or Cambridge, Burghers and anglicised Sinhalese and Tamils. There was minimum reference to Ceylon history and Ceylon geography. The speaking of Sinhala and Tamil was discouraged. The stated aim of the schools was to create a colony that would look to England for its inspiration, and by example and not compulsion, modernise and westernise the country. It was a laudable objective but it encouraged an elite, an oligarchy, unsympathetic to native culture and religious traditions.

In this environment, ethnic identity and religion became irrelevant. The mixing of ethnic groups created a new ethnic identity, the 'Ceylonese', who were no longer Burgher, Moor, Sinhalese or Tamil. The pupils were often Christians or respectful of Christians. They all spoke the same language and developed the one culture.

They were single gender private schools in which pupils were socialised to a view of the world that was centred on a civilised Christian England, its culture, its literature and its institutions. The teachers were themselves products of the same process, an anglicised culture. After they left secondary school, this special group were found in supervisory positions where training in leadership and management were important or enrolled at a tertiary institution and eventually became professionals. This group, the westernised elite, thought of themselves as chosen to lead, privileged by birth, and with a mission to serve the country. They had a stranglehold on social and economic power. They were a network of influence. Burghers were major beneficiaries of this system and a part of this privileged group, but at a level lower than the British who were the rulers. (A description of school life in one of these schools is given in chapter 6, 'The English language fee-paying schools').

The evolution of the specially advantaged Burgher

Prior to the arrival of the British, employment and social mobility for all communities, other than the rulers, was conditioned by race, religion and occupational castes.

After the arrival of the British, the Burghers became another ethnic group subordinate but closer to the British because of their Christianity and European heritage.

The British took no account of ethnicity, religion and caste but the Dutch Burghers quickly improved their economic and social position because they were Protestant Christians and had adopted English as their mother tongue. This made them ready collaborators of the government but distanced them from the elite of the other ethnic groups as competition for power and influence intensified from the late 19th century.

Some of the daughters of the defeated Dutch had married English officers and this helped build bridges between the two European ethnic groups. There was a shortage of British people to administer the country so the trained and experienced Burghers were the obvious choice. The Burghers were the first ethnic group to become clerks, teachers, policemen, customs and excise officers, prison officials, doctors, lawyers, and a host of other occupations that were required in a society that was being modernised. The Burghers, during British times, were the favoured ethnic group but this special relationship did not extend to all Burghers. There were many poor and unemployed Burghers. The powerful and favoured were the Dutch Burghers who were professionals and senior bureaucrats. Non-Dutch Burghers, though at some advantage due to their knowledge of English, were disadvantaged in comparison to the Dutch Burghers in education and employment.

The Burghers seldom saved or grew rich because they learned to depend on a safe regular wage and spent it as soon as it was received. They seldom owned land and, as land was the basis of wealth in pre-industrial colonial Ceylon, amassed no capital. Burghers developed a philosophy of seeking safety (and not taking risks), and accumulating intellectual capital in the persons of their educated (male) children.

Because the banking system was completely British dominated, no other community had access to loan funds. The British had a complete monopoly on the import and export trade but a few land-owning Low Country Sinhalese did accumulate capital and became competitors in a few areas of local trade. The Burghers became a community that had lost the incentive to take financial risks. The few Burghers who did have wealth were professionals and they tended to invest in real estate in the towns. The Burghers, as the name implied, were townsfolk and ventured into rural areas only in supervisory roles as planters, doctors and police inspectors.

The Burghers were less than 1% of the population but held 18% of the administrative and professional positions in 1921. (Burghers had held 32% of administrative and professional positions in 1901.) This was ultimately to be the downfall of the community because they were mainly in government employment and therefore precluded from involvement in political, social and economic issues. By the time Burgher community leaders were in a position to express the community's views on important political, economic and social issues they had grown old and conservative, had retired, and thought of the British as peers, benefactors and protectors. Burghers were mainly in the public sector in safe and secure jobs or in the professions and did not exploit the opportunities that were available in the private sector. Burghers thought of politics, commerce and trade as degrading, unpleasant and unworthy of gentlemen.

The extent of the Burgher partiality for service with the Government, and their success at it, can be gauged by some statistics in V. Samaraweera's article referred to earlier. In 1921 the Sinhalese, though 76% of the adult population, held only 46% of the administrative and professional posts in the public sector. Of this 46% who were Sinhalese, only 3.5% were Kandyan Sinhalese with the balance of 42.5% being Low

Country Sinhalese. The Tamils held 32% of administrative and professional positions though they were only 13% of the population. The Tamils had benefited from the dedicated efforts of an education in English from the early American missionaries

The Moors (Muslims) were 8% of the population but held only 2% of administrative and professional positions. This community continued to miss educational opportunities because they were the small traders and middlemen and saw little value in a profession or in a formal education. The situation has changed after Ceylon became politically independent.

The Burghers who achieved leadership roles in the community and in the country were mainly the Dutch Burghers and mainly non-Catholics. They were advantaged by connections within the Dutch Burgher community, a non-Catholic Christian private school education, networks developed at school and the help of other Dutch Burghers.

Burghers had other advantages over the indigenous communities. All the early surgeons were Burghers because Sinhalese Buddhists would not work with flesh and dissect corpses. An essential part of western medicine, surgery and medical training, was consequently taboo because of religious beliefs. The disposal of waste and the handling of corpses was for Hindus the responsibility of the lowest caste, the 'Untouchables'. Since medicine and surgery had to be studied with the use of human corpses, and because high caste Sinhalese and Tamils would be defiled by contact with corpses, Burghers and Christians (the outcasts) were advantaged in surgery and medicine for many years.

The caste system also advantaged Burghers as lawyers. The higher caste lawyer would usually refuse to represent a lower caste person. Sinhalese and Tamils would not approach a solicitor of a higher caste or a different caste because of the expectation of rejection or partiality. Refusal would be a certainty when the other party belonged to a higher caste or the caste of the solicitor. Sinhalese Buddhists and Tamil Hindus were therefore often restricted to litigants of their own caste and creed, even when different castes were in litigation. Burgher and Christian lawyers were relative 'outcasts', indifferent to caste differences, impartial, available to all, and with a reputation for fairness and competence. Judges were consequently British and Burgher in the early stages of British rule.

Being Christian, fluent in English, residing in Colombo or the main provincial centres, attending the prestigious Protestant private schools and belonging to a family in the bureaucracy or a profession helped Burghers, Christians and the low country landed gentry stay ahead of other communities for many generations.

A comparison of the 1921 percentages with the 1949 'Civil List' (which contained the names of the executive officers employed by the Government of Ceylon), reveal changes favouring Sinhalese and Muslims at the expense of the Burghers and Europeans. The Sinhalese now held 52% (previously 46%) of executive positions. The Tamils had increased from 32% to 33% but the Burghers had been reduced from 18% to 10.5%. Others (mainly Muslims) were now 4.5%. Burghers numbered only 186 officers in a total of 1773 executive positions with the majority being the older and more senior officers.

It is interesting to realise that the 'Sinhala only' policy of 1956, which resulted in the resignation of almost every Burgher from the bureaucracy, created only about 186 extra executive jobs for other communities. However, the stranglehold of the pre-1956 English-speaking elite had finally been broken. The ethnic composition of the

bureaucracy would now begin to reflect the political importance of the various castes, religions and ethnic groups in the power structure of independent Sri Lanka. Additional opportunities were also created in the bureaucracy from the enormous expansion of the public services due to the 'Sinhala only' policy, the nationalisation of private businesses, the creation of new government trading monopolies and the retirement or resignation of all the officers who could not speak, read and write fluently in the new official language.

Political progress between 1796 and 1948

In October 1798 The Honourable Frederic North, younger son of Lord North, later Earl of Guildford and Prime Minister at one time in the government of George III, arrived in Ceylon as Governor. In 1802 Ceylon was made a Crown Colony, directly responsible to the Colonial Office. North was vested with considerable discretionary powers and he, like every Governor after him, used these powers to rule as he thought best.

In 1832 the Colebrooke/Cameron report recommended that the British colony:

- Be treated as a trust for the benefit of the people.
- The administrative and judicial functions be unified over the whole country.
- Unused crown land be sold for development.
- Exports be encouraged by changes to customs duties.
- Education for all be encouraged.
- There be established a high class English education system so that local-born people would eventually fill all administrative positions, irrespective of race or religion.
- The Government cease responsibility for education in the English language and English language education become a Christian missionary activity.
- An Executive Council of fifteen persons be formed to advise the Governor and to consist of the nine most senior bureaucrats with six other members, who were to be selected by the Governor.
- No elections be held, but a Sinhalese, a Tamil, a Burgher and three British be nominated as 'unofficial members' to represent the interests of their respective communities.

In 1889 the unofficial members on the Executive Council were increased by two to represent the Kandyan Sinhalese and Moors (Muslims) communities. The official majority remained, there were no elections, and representation was still communal.

The Colebrooke/Cameron recommendation that the higher levels of the administration were to be opened to the Ceylonese was ignored by successive Governors and British administrators filled the higher levels of the bureaucracy until almost a century later. The country was divided into nine provinces with 'Government Agents' in charge of every province. Reporting to them in the nineteen districts were 'Assistant Government Agents'. These top administrators were the elite of the 'Ceylon Civil Service', selected by competitive examination from British candidates in English public schools and supported at the lower levels by the traditional power structure of local officials known as mudaliyars, rate mahatmayas, and headmen.

In 1920, and after World War I, the principle of an elected body was accepted and eleven Ceylonese were elected on a communal franchise based on property and literary qualifications which eliminated 96% of Ceylonese. The elected members, who

had no executive responsibility, thought of themselves as an opposition to the British officials (the Chief Secretary, Financial Secretary, Auditor General and Commander of the Armed Forces) and hampered speedy government administration by debating every issue in minute detail. In 1929 the Donoughmore Commission decided on a single chamber 'State Council' combining executive and legislative powers and with members elected by universal suffrage on a territorial and not communal basis.

It was accepted that the Burghers and Europeans (British) would not gain election so five persons were to be nominated by the Governor to represent these ethnic groups. The first elections took place in 1931 and the Sinhalese, who were 66% of the population, secured a large majority. Every member was elected to one of seven executive committees and the elected Chairmen of every committee became the Minister responsible for that function e.g. Minister of Home Affairs, Minister of Lands, etc. After the 1931 elections, the Sinhalese, due to their numerical strength, secured a majority on every committee and were able to elect every Chairman. The sense of collective Cabinet responsibility continued to be lacking and Ministers and members fought in Council for the adoption of their own programs and opposed the programs of the other committees.

In 1944 the Soulbury Commission recommended a House of Representatives with 101 members, ninety-five elected by universal franchise on a territorial basis and with six members appointed to represent 'unrepresented interests'. These 'appointed' positions were expected to be filled by two Burghers and four British as these communities could not be able to elect members to represent their ethnic groups when the elections were territorially based. The Commission also recommended a second Chamber, or Senate, to consist of 30 members, 15 of whom would be elected by the House of Representatives and 15 to be nominated by the Governor-General.

A condition attached to the grant of political independence was that Britain would retain control of defence and external affairs. When Dominion status was granted in 1948 however this condition was removed.

Politics from a Burgher perspective (1918-1948)

Government employees were prohibited from taking part in any form of political activity or criticising the Government. Almost every Burgher who was important or influential was either employed by the Government or had retired after long and meritorious service in the bureaucracy. The Burgher leadership comprised those most supportive of the British, those who looked on any change to the status-quo as anti-British and therefore anti-Burgher. They were the Burghers who modelled themselves on the British, were British to their boot-straps and had most to lose by devolution of power to the other ethnic communities. Most Burghers were generally contemptuous of the elective principle, elected politicians and political organisations. The majority of the leaders of the Burgher community had retired, were economically comfortable and had attained social and community leadership positions because of success in some field of professional or bureaucratic endeavour. These Burghers visualised the future as a mirror image of the past. Fine upstanding men in the best European tradition, they were nevertheless not representative of the wider Burgher community, most of whom socialised with the indigenous middle-class in their everyday lives.

This chapter contains extracts from the Dutch Burgher Union Journals and document, in summary form, the development of political issues as they affected the

Burgher community. The DBU stressed the non-political nature of its activities. It was enshrined in the constitution and serving public servants were always quick to challenge even the slightest infringement. The Burgher community were the losers because the DBU, the premier Burgher organisation, could play no part in politics in the progress towards independence. The Burgher community became increasingly irrelevant and marginalised from the 1920s onwards in the political process.

Between 1931 and 1948, when Burghers nominated by the Governor represented the community, too many Burgher representatives were conservative, opponents of change and incapable of visualising a future for the community other than in continued service to the British colonial rulers.

The Union could not, and did not intend to, become a political organisation. With hindsight, that decision was a very serious blunder. The Union's objectives were the preservation of a community of Dutch descendants by erection of an ethnic wall, by descent, between (Dutch) Burghers and others who also claimed to be Burghers. Upper middle-class Dutch Burgher views generally represented their class only. The mass of the Burgher community was not properly represented in the political process.

The views of these distinguished Dutch Burgher spokesmen were accepted by the decision makers as the view of the whole Burgher community. However, these retired upper middle-class Dutch Burgher Governor-nominated representatives were too close to the British, loyally echoed British sentiments and were thought of as 'lackeys of the British' by the political representatives of the other communities.

It is inappropriate to judge yesterday's events by today's standards and norms. A proper understanding of this chapter requires an appreciation of the effects of two world wars, the rising expectations of the Sinhalese and Tamil English-educated elite and their demand for 'self-rule', communal politics between 1918 and 1956 and the contra arguments of the colonial administration supported by the British mercantile interests and sections of the colonial elite. At no time were the 'ordinary people', the non-English speaking majority, consulted or made part of the political process.

The Dutch Burgher Union Journal Volume XI 1918 reported the President's address:

When the Union was formed, we adopted the policy...that we abstain from politics because a large number of our members are Government servants and 'politics' are taboo to them. We are resolved to meddle as little as possible with matters which are likely to bring us into conflict with our countrymen of other races for it is our desire to live in perfect harmony...A crisis has occurred...we have been represented in the Legislative Council for 75 years by a member of our own community and if this representation is taken away it will be a loss of all social and political prestige and must lead eventually to our being blotted out as a separate community. We are concerned that Legislative Council members will be elected on a territorial instead of a racial basis...The population of Ceylon is composed of a large variety of races with traditions, sentiments and modes of life peculiar to one another, some [races] are even divided into castes which still retain most of their ancient prejudices...Our knowledge of existing conditions, and relations between the diverse communities, gives us no assurance...we do not have to actively participate in any political movements...but it is better that our feelings and sentiments are clearly understood and not misinterpreted to our disadvantage...we must strengthen our own position while we contribute to the common welfare (p.73).

In 1928 the Governor was the guest and DBUJ Volume XVII reports the welcoming speech:

This is the first time...we have been graced by the visit of a Representative of our King...we yield to none in our loyalty to the Throne and our respect for the Supreme Authority in our land...respect for those placed in power and authority was a kind of religion with our Dutch ancestors...In public life the subordinate approached his superior with great deference...we have become less formal...but the Governor is still to us a very exalted person.

The Governor replied:

I have found them all 'jolly good fellows' and wherever I have met them they have stood forth as good men and good sportsmen...among the Ceylonese people none are more loyal than the Burghers...I see around me three judges of the Supreme Court, Heads of Government Departments and a great sportsman in Colonel Joseph...the Burgher community has produced some of the greatest sportsmen and the greatest athletes...and it is remarkable so small a community should have produced so many men of such varied distinction in different spheres of activity...So far as the Burgher community is concerned, the Burghers do not need any special clauses in the Constitution to hold their own and they can hold their own on their merits...the Dutch stock is a fine stock...and the English, in our colonisation have followed...in the footsteps of the Dutch'. (p.114, pp.119-121).

(Author's comment: By British tradition, Judges and Heads of Government departments were precluded from expressing opinions on anything that was even remotely political).

DBUJ Volume XIX 1930 has this editorial:

The long awaited Donoughmore Commission report has arrived. The council will consist of fifty elected members, there are to be eight nominated members, women are given the franchise on the same terms as men, at twenty-one instead of thirty. What the plain man understands is that there is no longer separate representation for the Burghers, except by grace of nomination. There is to be none of this vile thing called 'communal representation' and the Burgher seat, which has existed from the very beginning of the Legislative Council has been abolished with the stroke of the pen. The loss has been borne by the Burghers with dignity, though they remain utterly unconvinced by the statements made. In the great experiment, their claims are of little account...The educational, social and political changes taking place cannot leave us untouched...the younger members of the community are indifferent to their fate and are hopeless. The young men and women of the other communities are studying economics, passing high examinations and taking eager interest in social and public concerns. There ought to be at least the same spirit of enterprise in our community. If education has only enabled them to pass examinations occasionally and secure employment, education has been a most unfortunate failure (p. 112, pp. 147-148).

Volume XXI 1931 of the DBUJ had this letter from a member who had migrated to South Africa:

If England, Germany and Holland have their emigration schemes, there are more cogent reasons for the Dutch Burghers to seriously organise and produce

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a scheme to assist those of the younger generation who...are faced with the loss of their European heritage and are desirous of...new homes in a more suitable environment...During my visit to Ceylon I was forcibly struck by the utterly colourless and hopeless outlook for the future which so many of our community have to face. Some scheme must be organised (pp. 103-104).

In July of the same year DBUJ, Volume XXI 1931, the editorial reported:

The elections to the State Council are over. Analysing the returns, a morning paper points that there are in the Council, twenty-seven Low Country Sinhalese, eleven Kandyans, five Tamils with four more to follow, two Europeans and one Muslim who is a Moor. The one Burgher who contested a seat had to forfeit his deposit...If by communalism is meant racialism, everyone knows that racialism was very much alive at the elections and there is communalism of creed and caste as well as of race. We now know who 'the people' want as their representatives and our duty...is to co-operate as heartily as we can with them to secure good government (pp. 45-46).

DBUJ Volume XXI 1931 had this editorial:

We are, many of us, Angliores quam Angli, (more English than the English themselves)...It is extraordinary that at a time when every other community has wakened to a realisation of the duty and manifest necessity of a communal sense, those who might be leaders in our community are drifting in the opposite direction...We shall be more useful as Ceylonese by doing what the other communities, Sinhalese, Tamil, English, Malay, etc. are doing, by recognising that we are, like them, a separate community with our own traditions and ideals. We have more to serve the general interests as a solid and self-respecting Dutch Burgher Community than by exposing ourselves to the taunt of being a body of nondescripts without race or language (p.3, pp 6-7).

The 25th anniversary issue, Volume XXII 1933, of the DBUJ reported:

We have kept out of the hurly-burly of politics...Our small community has in the past 130 years produced...men to fill positions of the highest trust and authority, and has contributed more than its quota of public men, poets and painters, doctors and lawyers, and a long generation of men, who as minor officials, have been the backbone of the public services, we must realise we no longer have the advantages we had...in the early days of the British occupation (pp. 93, 95).

The Chief Guest was S.W.Dassenaik, a Sinhalese and Member of the State Council, and DBUJ Volume XXII 1933, reported his speech:

The [Burgher] community has very great historical traditions, but was in danger of losing its identity because...it was being dumped into a heterogeneous job lot with other communities of quite other origins...The community is unique in the East...The Dutch Burgher community...has always occupied a very important place in our life in Ceylon...is Western in outlook but yet looks to no other place than this country as home... Great names like Lorenz are not the property of your community only, they belong to the whole Island. When one looks down the decades...despite the smallness of its numbers...its contribution to public life has been overwhelmingly great...There is something in the Burgher community that contributes brightness to the social life of our coun-

try. One cannot attend a Burgher function without feeling entirely at home...I have never gone to a Burgher function and not felt entirely at home and...that is the experience of all my countrymen...there was never any awkwardness...Emphasis has been laid on the non-political character of the Union. I do hope individual members will not stand aloof from politics because...if you consider politics a dirty thing or one that is not desirable to touch, then you leave it to the people who are least qualified to manage what are most important affairs of state...You should take vigorous part in the political life of the country and pull your weight because your weight is more than your numbers. We, Sinhalese and Tamils, are at one in saying we have missed you (p. 152-156).

The President in his reply said 'we are not politicians, the majority of us are public servants. We are debarred from taking an active part in politics. Sometimes we are sorry that this is so'. (Volume XXII 1933, p.158).

The Presidential address for 1934 in Volume XXV 1935 contained this comment:

There is no doubt that sooner or later a greater measure of responsible Government will be placed in the hands of the people and we must prepare ourselves...to take our full share in development...no longer can we 'sit on the fence' or cling to the skirts of the European community in the hope of crumbs that fall from the table. We must face the issue that we are part of the people of Ceylon. We must wholeheartedly study the history of this country, which is now our country, learn from the lessons of the past, take a deep personal interest in politics, teach our children the languages of the country, and take a human interest in the life and welfare of its varied peoples. Let those of us of the older generation realise that times have changed (pp. 21-22).

The Soulbury Commission on Constitutional Reform arrived in Ceylon to discuss with all parties and make recommendations to the British Parliament on a proposed new Constitution. A special sub-committee of the Union was appointed to place before the Commission the views of the wider Burgher community. The following is a summary of their views as recorded in Volume XXXIV (January 1945, p. 94).

Franchise: That while deprecating the premature enfranchisement of the masses, no suggestion should be made for restricting the existing franchise but the Burghers should press for machinery designed to secure its better working and reduce to a minimum the evils and malpractices.

Qualifications of Councillors: They should be able to read, write and speak the English language.

Representation: A scheme should be devised that would ensure (1) no undue preponderance of any one community and (2) the creation of a Burgher electorate and the election of five members from that electorate.

The Legislature: Establishment of a second chamber.

The Executive: Introduction of a Cabinet system with provision that at least one third of the members of the Cabinet should be members of minority communities, otherwise the Prime Minister is free to choose his colleagues.

The Public Services: There should be an independent Public Services Commission with five members, the Chairman appointed by the Governor and the

other four members to be selected so as to represent each of the (ethnic) groups.

General: The Governor to have power to refuse assent to legislation and the Supreme Court to have the power to declare legislation unconstitutional.

With hindsight, it is clear that the community were fighting a losing battle which they had no hope of winning and should never have commenced. It was a demand for going back to the good old days and completely out-of-step with current hopes and aspirations of the majority communities. The British were departing.

Niemand (L.E. Blaze), who looked ahead rather than to the past, had these comments in the same issue of DBUJ Volume XXXIV 1945:

The political restlessness forewarns us of changes which we may resent because they upset our accustomed ways of living and may even be harmful. After every great war, far reaching changes take place, new leaders come to power...and the changes are more likely to be soon and more significant than those made after former wars. In every country where Europeans are dominant, there is a swelling wave of discontent and a desire for what is vaguely termed freedom. To resent it and grumble about it is illogical. We have to adapt ourselves to the inevitable and recognise the justice of natural claims and human rights (p. 125).

DBUJ Volume XXXIV of February 1945 reported that a delegation had appeared before the Soulbury Commission and had given oral evidence. G.A.Wille was spokesman and the other members were H.K. de Kretser, Dr V.R. Schokman, J.R. Toussaint and G.H. Gratiaen.

Volume XXXI (April 1945) had another article by Niemand:

There is communal conflict in Ceylon, a disturbing element in the friendly relations which until a few years ago existed among the communities which have so much in common. Why is this bitter contention dividing the people and bringing into play all the cruder possibilities of caste, race, religion and temperament?...Self government does not mean government by a single self. All communities should be partners in the firm, not mere employees of one predominant employer. The much vaunted 'majority rule' may work in a country where the population is homogeneous but it cannot apply without strict limitations in a country like Ceylon where races, religions and interests are sharply divided. Heads must be counted as well as noses. There should be no driving out or squeezing out of any of the various communities. If we cannot at once agree...we must work towards an end where agreement is at length possible (pp. 80-83).

An item in Volume XXXV (January 1946) stated:

Nov. 20, 1945. The President reported that a cable had been sent to the Secretary of State (of the Colonies) urging allotment of a specific number of seats for the Burghers. Decided that, as the Dutch Burgher Union was founded for cultural and social service purposes and not for political purposes, it is considered desirable that...its activities should be confined to the furtherance of the objects specified in the Constitution (p. 94).

DBUJ Volume XXXVI 1946 reported Kenneth de Kretser's Presidential address.

Up till now the slogan of the Burghers has been 'Government [service] or nothing'. My advice is not to think government employment is the only employment but to strike out on their own...The principal professions, by which I mean Law, Medicine, Engineering and so forth, will always afford work to any who are outstanding but for the average man these are getting rather overcrowded. Dispel the notion that manual labour is 'infra dig' and only meant for the lower classes...Ceylon has been offered a new Constitution...and we form one of the minority communities and will get a few nominated seats. We hear of people throwing up their hands in despair and crying out that the death knell has been sounded for the Burghers, that we are lost, and that the only thing left is to migrate. Admittedly the situation is serious but not alarming. The attitude we take to the new Constitution is either going to kill or make us... We must realise we are a very minor community as numbers go and as such we must be ready to accept the good things offered to us in proportion to our numbers.

We cannot expect to receive the same proportion of Government appointments as in the past. As a race we are noted for our good feelings to others, for our kindness and generosity. We are good mixers and our relations with the other communities have always been cordial, so why should we feel we will be down-trodden or driven away?...Please let us not talk of Holland as our Home and all that kind of thing. It is true we belong to a European race...but do remember that our Home is right here in Ceylon and that being so, let us join with the other communities to the best advantage of ourselves.

Those who wish to emigrate, and have the grit and necessary wherewithal for life in a new country, may certainly do so. Australia, for instance, offers many inducements and people of our community who have gone have done well and never regretted it (pp. 12,16).

Volume XXXV (Jan 1946) of the DBUJ reported the full speech by the Nominated Burgher Member Mr G.A.Wille, in the State Council, on the debate on the acceptance of the new Constitution. This is an extract:

On behalf of my community...I gladly accept the Constitution...we have played an important part in the administration and history of this Island and are part of its permanent population and, although we are the smallest community...I cannot let our case go by default. The provision so far as representation...is very scanty...the Soulbury Commissioners emphasised that representation is fundamental to the Constitution of a country which contains a heterogeneous population.

The Soulbury Commission were very emphatic on the point that racial feeling in Ceylon is endemic, very deep seated, very widespread, almost an antiquity...recent history has taught us that racial feelings are a part of human nature and we cannot ignore them in any Constitution we may frame...that is why the minorities ask for special representation. Where there is suppression of minority views, there is no democracy. The Burghers played a considerable part in the progress of Ceylon during the last century and the Leader of the House himself (S.W.R.D. Bandaranaike) acknowledged it. They led all public movements...and they should be given the opportunity of contributing (pp. 85-87).

An article in the DBU Journal Volume LI (July–December 1961) contains the complete speech by G.A.H.Wille under the heading 'The Burghers and the reform of the Constitution' (pp.64-70).

Dutch descendants and Burghers who represented the Burghers in the Legislative Council between 1835 and 1948 (in appointment date order), were:

J.G.Hillebrand, J.F.Giffening, J.J.Staples, J.N. Mooyart, J.Stewart, R.F.Morgan, C.A.Lorenz, J.H.Eaton, J.Martensz, C.L.Ferdinands, J.van Langenberg, (Snr), Sir Samuel Grenier, Dr P.D.Anthonisz, H.L.Wendt, F.C.Loos, J van Cuylenberg (Jnr), F Beven, Dr W.G.van Dort, Sir Hector van Cuylenberg, C.van der Wall, Sir Stewart Schneider. K.C., A Drieberg. K.C, N.J.Martin, T.F.Garvin. K.C, A.Alvis, H.A.Loos, C.E.de Vos, F.H.B.Koch, O.L.de Kretser (Snr), G.A.H.Wille, Dr V.van Langenberg, Dr V.R.Schokman. Two of each of the above 'nominated' members represented the Burghers at any one time.

Some consequences of British rule

The influence of the British on Ceylon was greatly in excess of the influence of the Dutch and Portuguese. There were many advantages that arose from British rule. The earliest advantage was the conquest and absorption of the Kandyan kingdom in 1815 because it brought to the Kandyans the benefits of westernisation. The Kandyans, because of a closed economy and a feudal past, did not immediately share in the benefits of English education because they had not had access to western techniques and ideas. From about the 1930s, however, they caught up with the Low Country Sinhalese, Tamils and Burghers from the opportunities that became available in the expanding commercial agricultural economy.

The creation of a single Sinhalese nation, and the opening up of the country as a single administrative unit, was another major benefit. The British constructed roads and railways over mountains and through jungles and connected the country from coast to coast, north to south and east to west. Ceylon became one country, one administrative unit.

Opening-up the interior made possible the replacement of the jungles in the central high country with commercial plantations of coffee and tea. Due to the reluctance of local labour to work in these plantations, the British imported labour from India. The Kandyan villagers were disadvantaged by the loss of forests, hemmed in by the plantations, and eventually lost their access to ancestral lands. This became a serious problem when, as a result of western medicine and the control of diseases, population increased in the 20th century and no land was available for Kandyan expansion.

The British developed an export economy based on coffee and later on tea, rubber and coconut. The export earnings paid for imports of manufactured goods. Ceylon became part of the global economy but the terms of trade always favoured the home country of the British. Production of rice was neglected and, in the 20th century, food had to be imported to feed an expanding population.

There was total destruction of wild life when habitats were cleared. Writing about a visit by a Dr. Hoffmeister to the home of Major Rogers, the elephant hunter in Alupota (Badulla) between 1828 and 1833, J.R.Toussaint, writes in DBUJ XXIII (1933) as follows:

(in the) house filled with ivory...among the hosts of the slain, were more than sixty tusks of elephants. At each door of his verandah there stood huge tusks while in the dining room every corner was adorned with similar trophies. The floor was covered with the skins of elk, deer and bears and the tails of elephants were scattered about in profusion (p.64).

Rogers died aged 41, struck by lightning. The Buddhists said it was retribution for having caused so much destruction of innocent lives. Storey's book, *Hunting and Shooting in Ceylon* published in 1907 says:

After 1831 the destruction of elephants was encouraged...and Major Forbes mentions that a party of four Europeans killed no less than 107 elephants in three days in the 1840s. Major Rogers is credited with having slain upwards of 1400, Captain Gellway over 700, and Major Skinner, the road maker, almost as many. Sir Emerson Tennent relates that in the 1840s and 1850s Government rewards were paid for no less than 5500 elephants (p. 66).

There was similar destruction of the herds of deer, bear, buffalo, leopard, wild pig, pythons, crocodiles and every other form of wild life. The elimination of wild animals, by the destruction of their environment, continues today because of the need to clear jungle to plant food crops for a rapidly expanding population needing food, clothing and shelter.

The re-discovery of the ruins of ancient cities were the result of British explorations in the jungles of the North Central Province. These ancient cities had been abandoned a thousand year, before and almost forgotten.

A major contribution, for which dedicated missionaries were largely responsible, was the development of the English language schools based on the system of education in England at that time. This education system produced educators, administrators, writers, clerks, lawyers, engineers, doctors, railwaymen, and a host of other skilled people who became the inheritors and then the proponents of modernisation and westernisation. The development of a unified anglicised middle class, sometimes referred to insultingly by the Europeans as 'WOGS' (westernised oriental gentlemen), educated in the ways of the West and freed from animosities that resulted from differences in race, religion and language, was probably one of the greatest advantages of British rule. A glaring omission was the absence of an education for the 'blue collar' workers, the skilled trades. There was a serious lack of skills in, for example, plumbing, electrical and mechanical repairs. The education system produced a class of people who looked at manual work as inferior and the responsibility of the uneducated.

The greatest legacy of the British is, in the view of the author, the English language. It opened the world of literature and science to the people and made Ceylon a part of the civilised, commercial world. By being a part of the British Empire, it brought the advantages of Pax Britannia, exposure to the ideals and realities of parliamentary democracy, and all those Institutions that were British and are taken for granted today in most of the world. It brought the language of Shakespeare and Milton, the discoveries of Darwin, Newton, Francis Bacon, Stephenson's rocket, the industrial revolution, justice, law and order...and it brought many other advantages too numerous to list here. Because of the westernised, English-language education system and exposure to the products of western literature, science, medicine, law and political theories, the colony also had access to the literature and culture of continental Europeans. Ceylon was able to develop outstanding teachers, lawyers, doctors,

engineers, law enforcement officers, administrators, scientists, and business professionals. Many western concepts and traditions remained after the British departed. The judicial system has remained fearless and independent. The importance of the courts, and an impartial legal system that interprets statutes and follows precedents and case law in accordance with Roman-Dutch and British precedents, is another British legacy.

The development of political institutions was an outstanding aspect of British rule. Though often slowed, it never stopped and Ceylonese leaders could expect understanding, compromise and tolerance and not incarceration.

The introduction of competitive sport such as cricket, rugby football, athletics, soccer, tennis, hockey and volleyball was another British innovation. The British community first introduced sporting clubs for themselves and the other communities followed. With hindsight, it was unfortunate that most sporting clubs catered for individual ethnic groups. The Sinhalese had their S.S.C. (Sinhalese Sports Club) for cricket, the Burghers had their B.R.O (Burgher Recreation Club) for cricket and hockey and the other groups and interests had similar clubs and social institutions. The Burghers were the leaders in most sporting activities, consistently representing Ceylon in every sporting activity. Ceylon's only Olympic medal was won by a Burgher.

Probably one of the most important discoveries of the British period was the British discovery of the Burghers. It was a unique advantage in their colonisation of Ceylon. Nine hundred European families, relics of the Dutch occupation and including the Dutch Governor, Commanders and priests, were deprived of their social position and livelihood. They were poor and dispirited at the British takeover in 1796, but by the 1830s had become the 'brazen wheels of the British administration' and agents of modernisation and westernisation. They became the doctors and lawyers, educators and nurses, ministers of religion, upholders of law and order, surveyors, engineers, book-keepers, supervisors, operators of the railway, officials in the customs and excise service...They were in every position of trust and responsibility and set the scene for the Sinhalese and Tamils who followed them.

The Burghers, a creation of the British period, modelled themselves on the British in their attitudes and behaviour and took their cue from the British on social, cultural, political and administrative issues. The presence of the Burghers undoubtedly speeded-up the process of modernisation. Burghers, forced to adapt when the British arrived and when the British departed, were the 'people in between' and were depended on by both the rulers and the ruled.

When the rulers departed, the new rulers decided they had no need for the 'people in-between'. New concepts of equity and fairness in respect to ethnicity, family, caste, religion, language, and culture became fashionable. There was no need for an outcast group to intercede between the rulers and the ruled. The role of the Burgher was over.

The Eurasians

Captain Percival, quoted earlier in this chapter, said:

It is common to see a respectable and wealthy Dutchman married to a woman (who is a spurious descendant of a Portuguese to a native woman), a connection

which our countrymen look upon with the greatest abhorrence and would not enter into on any account (p. 109).

It would appear that the British soldiers took little notice of his words because John Davy, writing fifteen years later, said:

Where the soldiers are stationed...they had connected themselves with native women, who came out with their children (p. 269).

E.F.C.Ludowyk wrote in the Modern history of Ceylon:

Unions between European planters and Tamil and Sinhalese women...were well known in the nineteenth century and a small new element, described in official documents as 'Eurasian', was added to the island's various communities...The offspring of such unions had no knowledge of their father's world from which they were excluded, nor did they really belong to that of their mothers. It is unfortunate that the enclave of the plantation, over which the planter held sway, should have produced two groups of people in different ways underprivileged and denied their rights: the coolie [unskilled labourer], the worst sufferer of all in the system, and the planter's illegitimate children. The tea plantation furnished the two extreme limits of life in the last century (and perhaps even today). The highest and the lowest, the richest and the poorest, the most powerful and the weakest, were to be found together in it (pp. 110-111).

It was only natural that British males who lived a lonely life in the outstations on the tea and rubber plantations would 'connect' with the women in the vicinity. The woman was usually the daughter or niece of an estate contractor, a coolie (unskilled labourer) from South India, or from a village in the vicinity. The woman and the children lived in the estate 'Bungalow' and the children grew up there but without relations and without a community. The British 'planters' in due course brought out British wives and the concubines they had 'connected' with and their children had to leave the bungalow. Planters usually bought their former mistresses a plot of land with a thatched roof house and that was the end of the relationship. The children resided with the mother but many planters continued to hold themselves responsible for the education and upkeep of the children. This was usually at the boarding schools and convents and they often endowed funds for that purpose.

The Burghers were fortunate when compared with the Eurasians. Though divided by class and religion, Burghers were a community with common roots, lived in urban areas where regular socialisation strengthened bonds and were related by blood and marriage. The Eurasians could not benefit from this bonding process. The majority of Eurasians lived isolated lives and did not have the opportunity to socialise with others like themselves, to become a part of a 'community'. Many Eurasians were deprived of an education and a social life because of the extreme disparity between the father's and mother's economic, social and educational achievements.

A British missionary, who was married to a Sinhalese, built and managed the Paynter's Homes' for Eurasian children. The institution was supported financially by the British planters and the Estate Agency Houses. The Paynter's homes helped create a feeling of affinity, or 'togetherness' for some first generation Eurasians.

It is not possible to make generalisations about Eurasians. There were many differences between first generation Eurasians in the 19th century and second generation

Eurasians in the 20th century primarily because the isolation of the estate communities was lessened by improvements in transport and communications. The 19th century isolation contributed to many misconceptions about Eurasians. First generation Eurasians could not be thought of as one 'community'.

Most Eurasians continue to live on the plantations as tea makers, apothecaries, book-keepers and managers due to the self-contained life style and the ease with which they obtained middle and senior management employment on plantations. Certain Sinhalese owners of plantations in the Galle and Deniyaya planting districts even preferred Eurasians to every other ethnic group. Relatively few Eurasians ventured into occupations outside the plantation districts. There were few if any Eurasians in the public service, perhaps due to the absence of adequate documentation to establish entitlements to superannuation. Eurasians always seemed more suited to, and comfortable with, life on the tea and rubber estates and small up-country towns. A few Eurasians, like Rex Hermon, did become professionals and many others, like the Reith, Winter, Hermon, Roberts and Jenkins families were outstanding in various sports.

Some British married and maintained a close and loving family relationship with their families. The children were educated at the English-language private schools and Catholic convents, completely entered into school and family life, inherited their fathers' plantations, and married Eurasians or into other communities. They were absorbed into Sri Lanka's plural society or migrated to Australia and the United Kingdom after the 1950s.

In Ceylon's racially divided, caste ridden society, where every community thought of itself as superior to some other caste, creed or community, the Eurasians were considered an 'out' group and separate rather than inferior. The difficulty of placing Eurasians in the social hierarchy arose from a factor over which Eurasians had no control and stemmed from the circumstances of the birth of the first generation of Eurasians. However, fairness of skin is greatly prized in Sri Lanka and a Eurasian ancestor has often become an advantage to the descendants.

THE MIDDLE PERIOD

Burghers in the middle period

Many Burghers did exhibit pride and prejudice in word and action. The attitude was not unique to the Burghers. It was common in Ceylon's class-ridden, plural colonial society. This pride, and the prejudice that accompanied it, became less with every succeeding generation due to social contacts, schooling, travel, work peer-groups and inter-ethnic marriages. Traces of this pride, and the resulting prejudice, remained with the Burghers, especially the older generations, up to the time Ceylon gained its independence. It was part of the community's survival technique, part of Burgher culture because Burghers, though minuscule in numbers were very noticeable. They held an advantaged niche position in the colonial power structure.

The British were supported by the Burghers in the development of the wild and desolate up-country, dry-zone and 'out-station' areas. As assistants to the British pioneers, Burghers worked in jungle and remote areas, administered justice and medical needs, maintained government revenue collection agencies and transportation networks and helped develop natural resources in remote, dangerous and unhealthy places. They gradually lost this special pioneering position as the country developed, an English education became more easily available and other ethnic groups realised that public service, though it meant frequent travel, transfer and living away from one's gama (home village), also provided prestige, a regular income and a pension in retirement.

In this chapter are summarised extracts from some early DBU Journals. Unlike the Anglo-Indians and even pre-war and early post-war Australians, Burghers thought of and spoke of Ceylon as their home. No other place, not Holland, not England, was ever thought of as 'home' by a Burgher. The Burghers in this chapter played a major role in Ceylon's development between 1830 and 1930. They were a proud, honest, reliable and caring people, a hardy breed with a positive attitude to the vagaries of life. They worked hard, often enduring great hardships.

Garret and the Leembruggen family

An article tracing the history of the Leembruggen family, from 1744 in Dutch times to 1934 in the British period, appeared in Volume XXIV 1934 of the DBU Journal. It is a typical history of many Dutch Burgher families for their ancestors would have had similar experiences:

Henricus Leembruggen of Leyden came to Ceylon in 1744 as secretary to Governor van Gollennesse. During his thirty eight years he was Chief of the Cinnamon Department, Chief of Calpentyn (Kalpitiya), acting Dissave (Agent and Collector) in Colombo, and Dissave of Matara, where a rebellion resulted in his entire contingent of fifty being either killed in battle or subsequently killed after being taken prisoner, and [in] Leembruggen [being] taken hostage. After his release, he became Opperkoopman (chief merchant) at Coromandel [the south-east coast of India]. He had thirteen children and the last was Casparus Henricus, born in 1782, five months after his father's death.

Casparus was Magistrate at Matara, Pooneryn and finally Jaffna. He married in 1808 Maria Elizabeth Adelaide du Bois de Lassosay, daughter of Count du Bois de Lassosay, Captain in the Luxembourg Regiment. They had nine children.

The sixth child was Gerard Hendrik who was Inspector of Police at Jaffna and married Elizabeth Rieberg in 1844 and had ten children. Of their seven sons, five served the Government. Robert became an Inspector of Schools, Garret became Superintendent of Surveys, Caspar became Deputy Fiscal at Galle, Wilmot was Assistant Colonial Surgeon, and John followed his father's career in the Police. The two youngest sons went overseas, Charles to the Federated Malay States where he was a surveyor, miner and big game hunter. Richard became a farmer and preacher and founded a family in Melbourne.

When Garret was a boy, the majority of Dutch Burghers in Jaffna lived in Main Street and the adjoining cross roads, which were seldom disturbed by wheeled traffic. Each house had its 'stoep' or verandah, from where they could see the world go by and indulge in friendly gossip. When more quiet was wanted, the inner paved courtyard and garden, in many of which grape vines were cultivated, were favourite places of resort.

They must have had their share of picnics to Pooneryn, Mandativu and the islands and, as they grew older, they accompanied their uncle John in his hunting trips to the Wannu. These hunting trips...consisted in lying in ambush in a pit dug in proximity to a water hole or game path and 'blinded' with green leaves, etc. In this ambush the hunters would lie concealed and shoot bear and leopard, wild pig and deer as they came down the game path to the water hole. This form of shooting was not without risk...On return, laden with spoils of venison and peafowl, wild pig and partridge, there would be feasting and music while the skilful housewife ministered to their needs.

The day came when young Garret had to 'pack his swag' and make for Colombo to seek his fortune...He joined the Survey Department and showed a great aptitude and keenness for work. He married his second cousin, Evelyn de Waas. The life of a junior Surveyor was a wild and woolly one...most of the roads connecting the Northern and Eastern provinces to Colombo were jungle tracks crossing elephant infested wilderness, unbridged and without conveniences for man or beast. Garret used to relate how he made a forced march on foot through these jungles from Batticaloa to Jaffna to see his parents.

Major Skinner, the famous road builder, has given us some vivid pictures of life in the 1840s and 1850s. He wrote:

I have often had hard rough work, crossing flooded rivers and living on edible roots and plants, which the Sinhalese alone familiar with the forest could have selected, but my last two and a half months were the most trying from insufficiency of food. I had hoped to get some fowls from

Ratnapura but my messenger returned with only five and three were dead on the journey from the cold and the wet. The remaining two... were the only animal food during the ten weeks... and I have thought often of the sustaining properties of boiled rice ever since.

Garret worked in that difficult district and one of his children was born in Ratnapura. In places the camp consisted of palm leaf fronds and half walls. If a bed was placed too close to the wall and the sleeper turned over too much... he found himself outside. This is one of the most wet and windy spots in Ceylon, full of virgin forest, snakes, elephants and leopards. In 1893 he cut his foot badly on a bamboo splinter while crossing a stream and blood poisoning set in. He was brought to Ratnapura and treated for six months by Dr Muller who almost despaired of his recovery. This accident had happened not long after, while passing a jungle shrine, he found some pieces of metal and took them away as a souvenir, although warned not to do so by his camp followers. The serious accident was attributed by them to the wrath of the tutelary gods. On another occasion, he looked down and found a cobra pecking at the sole of his boot. Such were the common incidents of a surveyor in those days. He became the first Ceylonese Superintendent of Surveys in 1902.

The accident to his foot in 1893 gave him trouble in later life. He had eleven children by his first wife, who died in 1922. Some years after her death he retired to Jaffna. In 1930 he married Eugenie Isabella Mary Vanderstraaten and went to live at Rozelle where the cool climate, peaceful surroundings and beautiful hills were very much to his taste. He had two serious illnesses there, but the devoted care of his wife, and [District Medical Officers] Dr Herbert Schokman at Watawala and Dr Eric Brohier at Dickoya, enabled him to shake off these ailments. His terminal illness began with an ordinary cold, followed by bronchitis and he was brought to Colombo where he died of heart failure within an hour of arrival (pp. 55-61).

Jaffna in the 1860s

'Burgher associations with Jaffna', written by Joseph Grenier, appeared in DBUJ Volume XLVI, July 1956. Later in the same year, it was reproduced in Tamil, an English language magazine published in Jaffna, with this comment:

If today Ceylon is at all known in the world of culture, it is because of Collette, Keyt and Wendt. It is a pity in these days of parochial communalism, when half wits have been pushed into temporary power, the services of this great community have been so quickly forgotten that many of the best of them have decided, like the Arabs of old, to fold their tents and go away. The Burghers forget that the present phase of tribalism and individualism, under the guise of religionism, cannot last.

Sadly, the writer was wrong. The ethnic, language and religious communalism of 1956 have continued and the Burghers were sensible to fold their tents and move away. Extracts from the original article are reproduced below:

In 1867, when I left Jaffna for Colombo, there were in residence in that town, which was a typical Dutch one, a large number of the Dutch Burgher community bearing these names: Grenier, Toussaint, Arndt, Krause, de Rooy, Koch,

Vanderstraaten, Kriekenbeek, Leembruggen, Anderson, Maartensz, Margenout, Straatenburg, Ebell, Modder, Speldewinde, Heynsberg, Van Zyl, Claasz, de Hoedt, de Lile, Jobsz, Breckman, de Niese, Schneider, Wittebron, Lieversz, Vandergucht, Bartholomeusz, Van Hagt, Thiele, Gratiaen, Altendorff, Keegel, Boudewyn, Matthysz, Janseque, Thiedeman, Beekmeyer, Meyer, Francké, Rulach, Roelofsz.

There were others with Dutch or European names who were not regarded as Burghers. The Burghers owned slaves before the British occupation and it was the common practice with them to give their names to their slaves. I know of at least two cases where the descendants prided themselves on having Dutch names and I believe some are on the Burgher electorate.

The Toussaints were a numerous family in Jaffna. I can remember the head of the family, Peter John Toussaint, travelling into town with his wife in a carriage drawn by labourers. He was a portly old gentleman and administered patriarchal justice at Point Pedro Court. Culprits were generally whipped instantly on sentence being passed and there were no appeals. The head of the family of Arndts was the Colonial Chaplain, his grandson and great grandson both entered the Anglican ministry. The latter is Vice-Principal of St. John's College, Panadura and his brother is in the Indian Civil Service.

Krause was the Town Constable. Van Zyl was a giant in stature and sub-Collector of Customs. There were two de Rooy's, John William and Edward, and the latter became blind after a severe attack of typhoid. I believe the family is of Belgian descent. The Kochs, like the Toussaints, were a numerous family. The best known were Cyrus and John. Edwin, son of the latter, was one of the eminent surgeons and physicians of his day. The Kochs were a musical family and of German descent.

The Leembruggen family had as one of their ancestors Count van Ranzow. The Kriekenbeek family was rather a small one, but one of the best families in the Burgher community equally with the Grenier, Toussaint, Koch, Ebell, Anderson, Maartensz, Modder, Gratiaen, Breckman and Theile families. In the Speldewinde family there was, in the remote past, a judicial functionary who held the office of District Judge of the Vanni. His descendants were very proud of the distinction and often introduced the fact in even ordinary conversation.

The proctors were Cyrus and John Koch, Tom Anderson, Maartensz and Straatenberg. Tom Anderson had a large house in town and a country house in one of the islands, Mandativu, about four miles from town. He was a handsome old Dutch gentleman, but fell into great poverty in his declining years, emigrated to Negombo and died there. He had three sons, one of whom was Port Surgeon in Colombo. John Koch excelled more in the art of photography than in the exercise of his profession, but brought up a large family in comfort and was an accomplished musician (pp. 62-65).

Cricket in the 1870s

An article by 'Rip van Winkle', an unknown author in Volume XVI of the DBUJ (1927) discusses cricket in the 1870s.

Seeing that there are many votaries of sport in our community, I will describe cricket in the 1870s. There were no boundaries. Every hit had to be run out. There was a rule providing for what was called 'lost ball'. If a ball was hit into

the outskirts of the cricket field and lodged in the roof of a building, or fell or rolled into water, the fielder would call out 'lost ball' and six runs were given the batsman. The grounds on which matches were played were Galle Face (present Sports Club pitch), the Barrack Square, the Racket Court in the Pettah and the Fort green (now Gordon Gardens). All these were circumscribed areas so 'lost balls' was not an unusual occurrence at every match. 'Underhand' was the only form of bowling when I first learnt the game in the early seventies. The once redoubtable Colts Club was first established in the 1870s when I was eight. The first match of any importance was against Kandy. for the first time in those days, a team of cricketers visited an outstation. They returned victorious and were met by a large crowd. A procession of older residents with flags greeted them singing 'Here the conquering heroes come'. The next match of importance was against the 'Galle True Blues'. The team from Galle travelled by Stage Coach and the Racquet Court was the venue. The team from Galle returned to Galle sadder and wiser. School cricket was hardly known then and at the Colombo Academy (later Royal College), we played 'Prisoners base', 'leap frog', 'foot and ladder', etc. No boys were permitted to remain after hours except those 'kept in' (pp.138-139).

G. A. Willé remembers (1870-1920)

G. A. Winé delivered a lecture in the DBU Hall in 1940 on 'Seventy years ago'. Here are some extracts.

My life has not been free from sorrows and disappointment. I lost my father when I was six and was left to the care of a mother who had to depend on the charity of friends as there were no Widows Funds or Provident Associations those days. The frugal and simple ways of those days had their compensations...and one of the compensations was that it gave us a true value of money and impressed me with the value of thrift...we cannot get away from Micawber's principle that expenditure below our fixed incomes, by whatever narrow a margin, is happiness and expenditure above it, however small, means misery. When I left College, the examination that determined the award of the University Scholarship was the Senior Cambridge Local. Except for those who could afford to go to England, this examination represented the Ultima-Thule of College education in Ceylon. In the year before I left College, the order of merit was C.E.de Vos and myself from Royal and E.H. Van der Wall and J.P.Salgadoe from St. Thomas'.

Education in Ceylon today has advantages that were beyond the reach of my generation but still gave the Public Services many an outstanding figure. Although trained teachers were not dreamt of, education seems to have been thorough and students went out into the World with a better grounding and keener appreciation of literature than today. The greater multiplicity of subjects now required is to blame. In the Royal College of fifty years ago the sixth form boy learnt English Literature, History, Geography, Political Economy, Latin, Greek, pure and applied Mathematics and some Science subjects. The Senior students also took part in debates and followed the course of events in Ceylon and elsewhere with keen interest. There was not the plethora of books and magazines that are available now. The school library had about a hundred

books and the University library about six thousand. There were only two bookshops in Colombo.

In the two decades before 1890 the University Scholarship was won on twelve occasions by Burghers. The winners were J.T.Blaze, Mack, C.B.Nicholas, Arthur Joseph, La Brooy, Anthonisz, Morgan, Charles van der Wall, Buultjens, Frank Grenier, Ernest Stork and C.E.de Vos. Even though many more compete now, should not the proportion of Burghers be more?...

Comparing Government posts between now and fifty years ago we find that there were fifteen in the First Class of the Civil Service, all Europeans. In the second class, eleven Europeans and two Sinhalese. In the Third Class, 19 Europeans, one Burgher, G.C. Roosmalecocq, and one Tamil. In the Fourth class were 17 Europeans and one Burgher, R.A. Brohier. In the Judicial Service there were three Sinhalese, two Burghers, and two Tamils. The position today, in an expanded Service, is that in the First Class of twenty four, there are 12 Europeans, five Indians, three Burghers, two Sinhalese and two Tamils. The comparatively favourable position of the Burghers is because of the favourable position in earlier years.

Mr Willé continued, making comparisons between 1890 and 1940 of the numbers of Burghers in the various government departments. He highlighted the decreasing proportion in the higher echelons of the colonial bureaucracy and concluded by saying:

In 1890 in the Legal department there were Sir Samuel Grenier, Morgan and Louis Nell. C.L. Ferdinands was District Judge of Colombo. If in the Legal profession we can hold our own where there is a fair field and no favour, surely we can do better in other professions? There were 49 Burghers out of 105 Doctors in the Medical Department in 1890 but out of the 351 Doctors in the Medical Department today, there are only 48 Burghers (pp. 29-40).

Lene Weinman remembers (1875-1950)

Caroline Maud Weinman, known as 'Lene', died in 1962 aged 89 years. She was a regular contributor to Ceylon periodicals, including the DBU Journal, on topics of interest to women. From her account, I suspect that her husband was a station-master in the railway. This is a shortened version of 'Memories'. It appeared in Volume XXXIX in 1949.

My earliest memory is of a beautiful garden in Kadugannawa where mother gathered flowers. I remember the arrival by train of the Prince of Wales. I was disappointed he wasn't wearing royal robes and a crown. He did then change in an adjacent railway bungalow and reappeared in a dazzling uniform bedecked with medals and various orders and looked like my ideal of what a Prince, minus his crown, should look like. He again boarded the train for the civic reception in Kandy.

My next memory is of three little sisters boarding a train for the first time. My grandfather met us at Maradana (Colombo) and took us in a funny four-wheeled carriage drawn by a horse to his house in Hulftsdorp where grandma awaited us. We ascended many steps to get to the verandah, which was unlike the comfortable verandahs of today with their comfortable chairs and pots with palms and ferns. There was a screen in front of the door and bamboo screens to give privacy from the road but it was otherwise bare of furniture.

The floor was red brick. We went into a long room which had ebony chairs lining the walls on either side and a round table in the centre. Above hung a coconut oil lamp, rather like a chandelier. The shining glass pendants fascinated us. I don't remember curtains of any sort or pictures on the walls. We were taken straight away into the dining room, a room running the full length of three doors into bedrooms. There was a long dining table, with many chairs around it, all set for dinner. Two comfortable ebony couches were at each end of the room, covered in a bright coloured glazed chintz. On the massive sideboard, by the window overlooking the back verandah, was a magnificent breudher. It must have been just after the annual Christmas cleaning that we arrived, when walls and floors were freshly washed and painted.

The next day, Christmas day, stands out vividly. The hurried breakfast of thickly buttered breudher, then getting dressed, service at Trinity Church, back for lunch and then free to amuse ourselves. In the evening we were taken to visit relations and friends.

I remember being taken for a walk by grandfather to the Hulftsdorp Courts. It seemed a lovely place with imposing buildings standing in large shady grounds shaded by grand old trees. In later years I searched for this place, the buildings were still there but everything was incredibly shabby and dusty and surrounded by noisy, dirty streets. Another memory is of setting out in the early morning to some cadjan (dried coconut palm branches) enclosures where there were wooden tubs filled with water for baths. The water was drawn by a pulley. Looking back, I wonder why we had to go out for baths. Was it because there were too many of us for the facilities in the house? After our return to Kadugannawa, there was incessant rain, we were flooded out, and we three children had to sit huddled on my mother's big bed.

During another visit, I remember standing in the store room watching rice being measured and stores being given out when there was a sudden commotion and we were told our grandfather had fallen from his bed and was dead. A vivid memory remains of seeing him laid out on a couch, looking noble and peaceful. After this event the house was broken up and I remember living in a house in Dam Street run by my mother and with grandmother and two aunts staying with us. My father's work took him to out-stations and he was able to only pay occasional visits to his family. On occasions, we were wakened in the early mornings and walked all the way, with our aunts, through the quiet streets to Main Street, Pettah. That could not be done today with the traffic, the noise and the people. How we enjoyed the expeditions, roaming about the shops while our elders made their purchases, receiving little gifts from kindly old shopkeepers who had known the family for years.

At about this time, my elder sister and I were sent to school. We had previously been taught by my mother until we reached the ages of seven and nine. The school was a small one, carried on in a house a few yards away. There we learnt the mysteries of arithmetic (we had done some reading and writing earlier at home). Our next door neighbours were a family consisting of a widower with many boys and girls and we had happy times together. We also started going to Sunday School with another neighbour taking us along. Her father was a patriarchal old man, with a big white beard. A frequent visitor was my mother's adopted brother who was looked up to by my mother and her sisters in no uncertain manner. He was their escort to all the parties they attended and had been known to order them to change their attire if he didn't approve. Their

real brother, a padre, did not interfere or resent this usurpation of his rightful position. My mother's real brother's children were our age and our constant companions.

Our uncle W was a real pioneer in moving to the remote country district of Borella [this was only about ten kilometres away and a dusty, busy, crowded suburb when the author lived there in the mid 1940s]. After they had settled there we were invited to spend the best part of a day and experience the delights of their new home in Cotta Road. I remember the joys of roaming a large garden compared to the little bit we had at home in Dam Street. Very soon, listening to uncle W, who was always talking about the salubrious air of his country home and the improvement in the health of his children, he persuaded my mother to let him find her a home in the same locality. We took our daily walks along Cotta Road to a school run by two ladies, the Misses P. Only a few large houses, within big gardens, stood at intervals on either side. The residents at that time were the van den Driesens, Charles Thomasz, 'Chindo' Silva with three pretty daughters, the Ludovicis, Siebels and others whose names I do not remember. Ward Place also had large detached bungalows where the van Rooyens, Henry Thomasz, Ohlmuses, Martenstyns, van Gezyels and many others lived. The roads had only a few horse-drawn carriages or bullock carts.

Within a few years many Burgher families migrated to Borella and the need for a Church was strongly indicated and St. Luke's was built. It drew a large congregation from Borella and Cinnamon Gardens including Dr J.L. van der Straaten and family, the Misses Nicholas, the Ludovicis, the Misses van Geysel (six of them), van Rooyens, Kelaarts, de Kretsers, Andrees and others too many to mention. A good proportion of the congregation were Dutch Reformed but Wolvendaal Church seemed so far away, so those who did not own horses and carriages became regular worshippers.

The day school we attended was in a spacious house standing in a large garden. We made many friends and each day seemed too short. The parents of the two sisters running the school celebrated their Silver Wedding and in those days the celebrations took over three days at least. The daughters were given a new frock for each of the three parties and dressmakers were kept busy. Three evening frocks for each daughter must have entailed a big drain on the family purse. On these days, the rooms were thrown open, chairs lined every wall, and to the strains of music, couples of the same generation as the hosts, formed up for the opening quadrille. Later the young people had their turn and danced the polkas, mazurkas, waltzes and sets of lancers. Sir Roger de Coverley, the stately dance, brought proceedings to a close in the early morning. A year later our two young teachers were married and we had the excitement of organising the subscription lists. Our school then closed down and our next school was run by a man with many lady teachers to assist him. The education was of a higher order and there were boys as well as girls. Our principal was a martinet and when handing in our slates [used with a chalk for writing. There were no exercise books in those days], we watched his face with beating hearts. He gave us the foundation of a good education.

Looking back, I realise how much our aunts helped. There were now six children and our mother had her hands full. How daintily they dressed us. One aunt was a great reader and we gathered around her after dinner. These aunts taught us to darn, sew, mend and trained us in the habits of neatness and per-

sonal cleanliness. Both were exquisite needle-women and excelled in dainty work. I often wonder why they didn't get married. What splendid wives they would have made. It seems a waste they spent their lives devoting themselves to children who were not their own.

My father's work next took him to Gampola and so we left Colombo. Great was our delight over the change of climate and environment. There we had a lovely garden to play in and our schooling was temporarily suspended. We spent all day in the garden sailing paper boats in a stream and eating luscious mangoes that fell from a Jaffna mango tree.

About a year later we were back in Colombo and school resumed. Another year and we were in Peradeniya. Once settled in, we went to our first big schools. We went by train, the four girls to Kandy Girls High and the two boys to Trinity College. My father bought a pony and two wheeler and often drove to Kandy to fetch us and save us the tedious wait till six o'clock waiting for the train. With new found friends at school, our horizons widened. A new joy was music, which we were taught at school, and my father bought us a piano. Memories come back of holidays spent in Colombo with cousins copying sheet music, walking to Victoria Park to listen to the Police or the C.L.I.[Army] Band and listening to the music as we rendezvous with friends. During these holidays a new interest came into our lives. A cousin had a tennis court and we spent many happy evenings learning to play tennis. On our return home we persuaded our father to dig up the vegetable garden and turn it into a tennis court instead. That relieved the monotony and brought many people over to our place. We even started a cricket club.

I left school at sixteen and remember accompanying my parents to parties. A couple of years later my elder sister and I were taken to our first big dance in Colombo, the Medical Students Ball. We wore frocks of Indian muslin and were enchanted to dance to the strains of a band at what was then called the Public Hall, which later became the Empire Cinema. Our first experience of sorrow was when my elder sister got ill. A neglected cold turned into pneumonia and lung trouble and in three short months the brightest and best was taken from us at the early age of twenty one. Six months later I married and left my childhood behind.

Within a year my first child was born. I was young and inexperienced. I had miscalculated and when I got ill in the small hours of the morning I was frightened and dismayed. My husband rushed to the nearest town in a hackery [a two wheeled cart with steel rimmed wheels drawn by a bullock] and returned in what seemed an interminable time, with the District Medical Officer. In a few hours the child was born. My mother arrived later with a nurse and baby linen. She stayed a month and tried to initiate me into the difficulties of caring for a baby. I thought it cruel of her when she left a month later and did not consider that she had a home of her own and a large household who had first claim on her....Two years later my eldest son was born. It amazes me what dangers I went through with only one Sinhalese midwife to attend to me. The child was baptised by Rev Franké in the Dutch church at Galle and soon after my husband sent us to Hatton to recuperate.

After a spell in Kandy, we were transferred to Hatton and a few months later my third child was born. Soon after, the baby was taken ill followed by my husband. Both were very ill and my little boy, only two years old, also required my constant attention. The whole world seemed dark and gloomy, the

rain fell in torrents, sleepless nights followed, with my anxiety relieved only by the doctor's visits. The doctor advised we move to Colombo. My parents came to the rescue and took the two older children off my hands. I left for Colombo with two patients and an ayah and a heavy heart. After a wearisome journey, we reached our destination. My burdens were lightened once we reached the house of my husband's parents. My husband rapidly improved but after three months the frail life of my baby flickered and I lost him when only eleven months. Before we could go back my husband was transferred to Nawalapitiya where our children joined us. My little boy had forgotten his mother and had grown attached to his grandmother. She remained with us until my son had adjusted. Children's memories are short and they quickly adapt to changed circumstances. We liked the new place, even though there were no neighbours for miles, our only visitor being the doctor who dropped in when in the area. Some months later I came in for measles and then dysentery. I had hardly recovered when my fourth child, a boy, was born.

When my baby was five months old we had to move again and we went to Colombo. Another son was born eighteen months later and I found my hands quite full. We remained in Colombo for five years, then were transferred to Nanu-Oya. The house was too small, life seemed harder, housekeeping more troublesome, and servants more trying. It was a great joy when we were transferred to Peradeniya where we remained eight years. While I was there I lost my mother and then my sister. The sunny spots were when our girl and boy did well at their respective schools and carried away many prizes, and my youngest son was born.

In 1914 the world was shocked by the outbreak of war. The first Ceylon regiment was the C.P.R.C., the Ceylon Planters Rifle Company. The boys from Trinity College came all the way to Peradeniya to cheer them on their way. A year or so later many of these boys also enlisted and many of them made the supreme sacrifice. I was so glad my own son was too young to go. In 1915 we experienced the riots between the Sinhalese and the Muslims. It started in Kandy and Muslim shops were set fire to and their goods flung into the streets and made into huge bonfires. My husband's eyesight began to give him trouble and soon after he retired.

We left Peradeniya and moved to Colombo. Hard times followed and it was difficult to make ends meet. After a year of struggle, the children tried to help by getting minor jobs to make them self-supporting. The war dragged on and my eldest son volunteered and left for England. Within a few months he obtained a Commission in the Indian Army and was stationed on the North-West frontier of India where he remained seven years. In 1922 my husband died suddenly. The future seemed dark, especially with two children still attending school. The home fires were kept burning with liberal remittances from my son in the Indian Army. In 1925 he, together with 2000 surplus officers, were axed.

In the years that followed, my children all married except my youngest son. World War II having broken out, he left for Australia where he joined the Australian Imperial Forces. He served throughout the war in the Middle East, New Guinea, the Pacific Islands and Borneo. He married during the war and has settled in Australia.

My eldest son had also been recalled for service and the home was a very bleak place. Hong Kong surrendered and in February 1942 came news of the

fall of Singapore and letters ceased coming from my son in the Indian Army and from relatives in Hong Kong. Scraps of news came from our absent ones and we knew they were alive.

At long last came the end of the war and the return of our loved ones. They were sadly changed after four years of malnutrition and hardship. It took some time to settle down again to life in Ceylon. Four more years have passed and I am coming to the end of life's journey. Life flows on peacefully in beautiful surroundings (July 1949, pp. 80-88, October 1949, pp. 125-131).

A shooting expedition in the 1890s

Here is an edited extract 'Reminiscences of travel forty years ago' written by H.C.R. Anthonisz that appeared in Volume XXVI (1936), of the DBU Journal.

We went fully equipped with guns and ammunition to Mr Seneviratne's residence at Matara, from where we set out in a dog cart harnessed to a diminutive fat pony. Mr Seneviratne's cook went ahead in a single bullock cart with the necessary paraphernalia.

We went from Rest House to Rest House in the Matara District and often stayed at schools when no Rest House was available. From the Matara District we travelled to the west of the Tangalle District. At Wallasmulla, we were entertained right royally by the Gansabawa (Village Court) President and were given luxurious divans to sleep on...I was intrigued to see Ephraums walking through the fields, in high grass and water, and getting blue coots. I hurried up but was too late for he must have scoured completely the portion in which the birds were. I had to be content with bowling over a couple of painted snipe and a few water pheasants.

From there we went to the delightfully situated Rest House at Ranne where you have to take precautions against contracting malaria. The place abounds in mosquitos, whose sting brings on an attack of malaria, and the villagers have distinctly enlarged spleens. We saw pea fowl but could not get a shot at them.

We then went to Ambalantota on the bank of the Walawe river where we had some delightful teal shooting. We were surprised to see dhobies [washer-man] washing in a pool with huge crocodiles as their companions. These monsters passed close to them time after time, almost rubbing themselves against their thighs but they said the crocs were quite harmless. I was fortunate in bagging a couple of pea fowl. On reaching the Rest House we were accosted by the Police Officer who asked to see our shooting licences, which we had.

Our next halt was Hambantota. En route we had some blue coot shooting at Hathgala, at that time an ideal sportsman's paradise for birds of all kinds but now, alas, practically denuded of them as the vast uncultivated plains have been converted into paddy (rice) fields. The harbour is often dotted with fishing boats and there is fair sea bathing at the bottom of the cliff in front of the Rest House. I walked into the scrub, a hare scampered off and I shot two. These days you do not see a hare.

Next we went to Gonnoruwa and Megahajandure, very isolated villages, which had only a bad cart track as the only mode of approach. They possessed tanks [artificial lakes], a stream and extensive plains abounding in game. Ephraums and I went out after dinner, it was bright moonlight, and the plain was black with [wild] pig in the area towards the jungle. I had a very distant

shot and one was hit. There was a lot of snorting and noise and as I approached for a second shot, the brute made its way into thick jungle and his snorts and grunts diminished as he moved further. It was a hopeless task to track him so we turned back. The Police Officer, who was also the village schoolteacher, had made a platform high up out of reach of crocodiles and from here we lowered buckets and had a good souse. While we were bathing a herd of deer, with three or four young ones and a couple of fine antlered stags, came out of the jungle to the edge of the opposite side of the tank, had their drink and slowly walked off. I learnt subsequently that the Police Officer was a staunch Buddhist and would not tolerate any shooting within his jurisdiction. During a walk later, we came across some monster crocodiles, the largest I have ever seen. They lay like huge logs on an almost dried-up tank and, before we could approach, they took off. I then walked along a dried-up stream in the hope of getting a shot at a leopard, a pig or a deer but all I disturbed was a crocodile.

We next went to Tissa where there are majestic forest trees, beautiful tanks and smiling paddy fields. The pretty egret has snowy white plumes, much valued for hats, and is now protected and its shooting renders one liable to a fine. From Tissa we went to Kirinda where one can get fair sea bathing and plenty of fish. I saw large quantities of almost transparent prawns heaped up on the beach where they are dried and then transported for sale.

On the return, at Tangalle, I saw a turtle bobbing up and down in the sea in front of the Rest House. I had a shot and was lucky to get it in the head. I sent a man who brought it ashore with difficulty and I sent it to my cousin, Arthur Anthonisz, who was Superintendent of Minor Roads of the Tangalle District. This brought our beautiful trip to a close.

On this trip, Mr S. went about dressed in thick homespun and did not even discard his vest. We youngsters had a laugh but he said 'Don't you know that flannel is a non-conductor of heat? One does not necessarily feel any warmer whilst wearing flannel'. I must pay a tribute to Mr Seneviratne. I have known many school masters of renown but I will always have a tender spot for dear Seneviratne who was as good a type as any bluff English gentleman (pp. 80-83).

Struggles and success 1875-1967

Dr Lucian de Zilwa published his autobiography in 1967. Born in 1875, his book *Scenes of a Lifetime*, is a fascinating story of an average Burgher boy growing-up in the late 19th and early 20th century. He recounts the difficulties of earning a living, the obstacles to a good Catholic education, racial pride and religious prejudice culminating in success as a physician and surgeon. It is the story of a Burgher who from humble beginnings reached the pinnacle of his profession. Here are some extracts.

In 1815 (my grandfather) Peter married Catherine Ledulx, a Dutch girl...of French descent, both families being members of the Dutch Reformed Church at Wolvendaal. The term Burgher is strictly applicable only to legitimate descendants of the Dutch settlers but the word is now debased and many Eurasians without a particle of Dutch blood in them call themselves Burghers.

My father became an overseer on the making of a new road through the dense jungle between Matale and Dambulla (but later) gave up the jungle life, where the thatched roof of his hut was sometimes pulled off by wild elephants, who were driven away by workmen with flaming torches. He found employ-

ment on a coffee plantation near Hatton and it was from here that he went down to Colombo for the wedding of his sister who was marrying the son of a French subject from Pondicherry named Gerreyn who had married a Miss Rosario. There he met Elizabeth, a sister of the Bridegroom. She was nineteen, slim and delicate while my father was ten years older, a weather-beaten man of powerful physique. My father realised he had met his destiny.

The Gerreyns were uncompromising Catholics, who could not dream of marriage with a Protestant, while my grandmother was a dour Protestant, who hated anything that smacked of Popery. Her daughter's defection was a terrible blow and now it seemed one of her sons would follow. It was hard to suffer these trials in her old age. My parents married in July 1886.

In 1886 the Railway only extended to Ambepussa, a distance of 36 miles and the remaining 36 miles to Kandy was in a mail coach drawn by horses. The ascent to Kadugannawa was so steep in many places that some passengers had to get out and walk. The highwayman Sardiel had been captured two years earlier so now passengers did not have to stand and deliver. From Kandy a carriage was hired to the end of where wheeled traffic was possible. From there to the estate travel was by horse for the gentleman and, for the lady, an arm chair, tied to two long poles and with four men to carry her.

The following year a girl was born but she lived only eight months, probably owing to the youth and inexperience of the mother, with no matron at hand to advise her. There followed a long period of sterility. Seven years passed and the cradle was still empty despite her supplications, and all kinds of nostrums. She was then advised that she should go on a pilgrimage to make a vow to St. Anne of Talawila, an arduous undertaking. She did so and within a year from that date I was born...I was given the name of the Saint's day, Lucian.

Two other boys followed in 1878 and 1879... and in 1881 my father brought us all down to Colombo and dumped us with his elder brother, who was a widower, because my father had been discontinued, like thousands of others, due to the collapse of coffee. He then returned to the hill country to find work.

My grandmother was a slim little woman, with yellowish white hair tied in a knot at the back of her head. She had no teeth, and dentures were then unknown. She spoke Indo-Portuguese and Sinhalese and a few words of English. She had no occasion to speak Dutch but she must have known the language as she had been a Dutch subject for twenty years. When I commenced practice in 1907 in Colombo, Burgher doctors like Garvin, Thomasz and the van Geyzels spoke fluent Portuguese, and Canon O. Beven preached in Portuguese to his parishioners of the so-called mechanic class. Today Indo-Portuguese is almost a dead language for all Burghers speak English, while the Portuguese descendants, shoemakers, mechanics, seamstresses, prefer to speak Sinhalese to their children. My grandmother enjoyed chewing betel, a habit that was quite common even among European women. Its place has now been taken by the cigarette. We next went to stay with an uncle who was a booking clerk in the railway at Kalutara...where we had a large garden to play and often went to the sea shore. We next went back to my father at an estate in Rattota, ten miles beyond Matale, which the railway had reached in 1880. My mother often sang as she worked, supervising the women in the kitchen, cutting out and making our clothes and taking our lessons. She often used to say, as she was going to bed, 'toiling and moiling, another day is over'. My father was up

before dawn and out of the house to muster the coolies and appoint the day's work.

Our standard of living was now better and we could afford to employ more servants. I was now ten but there was no prospect of my being sent to school. My mother kept us occupied about five hours a day with English grammar and reading, geography, arithmetic, English history and English composition. My father was really a Protestant at heart and I never saw him make the Sign of the Cross or recite the Rosary, as my mother did daily. At about six every evening an earthenware bowl with glowing coconut-shell charcoal was sprinkled with incense and carried into every room and then my mother retired to her bedroom with her children and we said our evening prayers and recited the Rosary.

My parents often spoke about school but there were none suitable nearer than Kandy, twenty miles by road and rail... We went to Colombo for Christmas in 1885 to my uncle. He had moved to a house with his son-in-law Mr Soertsz in New Chetty Street, in which nearly all the houses were owned and occupied by Roman Catholic Tamils known as Colombo Chetties, to distinguish them from Hindu Indian Chetties, who lived in Chetty Street and Sea Street and were moneylenders and traders. At that time many streets in Colombo were almost solely occupied by people of one race, or who were doing one kind of work. Thus there was Barber Street, Silversmith Street, Old Moor Street, Brassfounders Street, Shoemakers Street and Fishers Hill.

I was now eleven and had reached the limit of my mother's knowledge of arithmetic and was transferred to my father. My father was impatient, quick tempered and got very angry if I got 'a sum wrong, ascribing it to stubborn naughtiness or to laziness and I was punished with the cane. Things went from bad to worse. The decision was made that I had to be sent to school but the prospect of finding the necessary money was rather gloomy. Suddenly the clouds dispersed. The English superintendent who lived on the neighbouring estate and daily visited ours on horseback, had two children by a former Tamil mistress, who had been sent away with the children to the coolie lines. He did not like to see his offspring, a boy of six and a girl of four running about almost naked, like the children of the coolies. He wished to first send the boy to an English-speaking boarding school but it was not possible in his present condition. He asked my father whether he could take the child into our family for a year or two until he would be fit for admission into a good school. He would pay my father for board and lodging and the boy's mother would get an extra allowance for surrendering the child on the condition she would not visit the child.

When the boy was brought to us he behaved like an untamed wild animal. He cried and yelled and ran out of the house and was caught and locked in a room with the windows bolted. Presently his frantic crying and howling ceased and he fell asleep. Later my mother went in and spoke to him gently in Tamil, gave him something to eat and drink, took him to the bathroom, cut his Robinson Crusoe hair, deloused and washed him. He was quite passive. She made him wear the clothes of one of my brothers. He needed no shoes as none of us children wore any shoes except when we travelled or expected visitors. Some months later my mother found the boy in the garden in the arms of his mother, who was sniffing him with deep inhalations. (Orientals who are not westernised do not know how to kiss in the western fashion, though they are very apt

pupils). My mother said 'you know you should not come here' to which she replied 'but you will not tell'. That night my mother spoke to my father and the upshot was that the mother was given permission by the English father to visit monthly.

Two years later the girl was brought to us on the same terms. The first thing she needed was an operation for the repair of her ears. The lobes had been pierced, and heavy metal earrings had enlarged the holes to a diameter of three inches or more. A few years later she was sent to a convent. In addition to the boarding fees for the boy my mother also supplied eggs to Mr. X and the prospect of my going to school was changed from a vague dream to a possible reality.

In January 1887 my mother went down to Kandy with my little sister and me, the three other boys being left in the charge of my father. She went in a chair tied to two poles carried by four men. I walked behind her. It was three miles along a footpath where we found a travelling cart with upholstered seats, a tent overhead, and rolled-up curtains of oiled cloth, which took us to the Gampola railway station ten miles away.

We arrived in Kandy and when Mrs Cramer discovered my mother was expecting a baby in February she insisted my mother stay until it was all over. The school I was to attend was a brick storeyed building in front of St. Anthony's Cathedral. I was led to the Head Master, Mr. R.P.Jansz, a clean shaven old gentleman with a reddish face and closely-cut white hair. The sounds and sights of the ancient city of Kandy were thrilling after the monotony of a tea plantation. The Gordon Highlanders were stationed at Kandy and we loved to meet them gaily marching along in their kilts and highland caps to the weird music of the bagpipes. I entered the Boarding where the monastery only asked for ten rupees a month. When the Cambridge Local examination results were known, I found I had been placed in the second division. I decided I would like to become a seminarist but my father ruled I was too young to decide and should decide only after a College education in Colombo.

In 1889 there were only three schools for higher education in Colombo: The Royal College which was the government institution in which no religion was taught, the Anglican St. Thomas' College and the Methodist Wesley College. My parents were told at the Monastery that a Catholic boy could attend only the undenominational Royal College as in the Protestant schools he would be liable to infection by heresy. St. Benedict's Institute, managed by the Christian Brothers, was an excellent school, but of a lower grade than the three others. My uncle in Colombo, who would always accommodate us for a few days, was to take me to Royal College for admission but on the day for admission there was a snag. Royal College opened at ten but he had to be on his stool at work at nine o'clock and it was too late to apply for leave of absence. St. Thomas' was only a hop, step and a jump from New Chetty Street and opened at eight. The school was beautifully situated on a hill by the sea with ancient banyan trees in the grounds. It had more than once beaten the Royal College for the University scholarship and at the annual cricket match. Thus did my fairy god-mother change my destination from Royal College, Pettah to St.Thomas' College, Mutwal.

The Head Master was Rev G.A.H. Arndt, a tall handsome man with a heavy, black moustache curling down over his lips and in the cap and gown of the Calcutta M.A.He questioned me about what I had learnt at the Monastery

school and assigned me to the highest class, the sixth form. A teacher later came round and asked me to bring ten rupees as the fee for every month.

Catholic boys, like Hindus and Buddhists, were exempted from the scripture class. I had been accustomed to reading the Bible so went voluntarily. When I went to confession at Easter and recounted all the wicked things I had done and waited for admonition and the absolution, there was a pause and the kindly priest said 'Don't you know that you can't go to confession and communion if you are in a Protestant school?'. He was sorry he could not grant me absolution but he gave me his blessing. I was asked to inform my parents of the situation. Forty six years were to pass before I went to confession again.

The next year was crowded with difficulties. The primary cause was that my father threw up his job. He was a quick-tempered man and resented the arrogant tone of some young British creepers [plantation apprentices]. He did not realise he was now fifty five and that was a handicap in competition with younger men. He tried for many jobs unsuccessfully and finally had to settle for the post of conductor on a coconut estate in the low country. The pay was small but there was a bungalow (house) where the family could once more have a home.

My mother's health had deteriorated considerably during her stay in Colombo. Apart from the gnawing feeling of dependence, there was the inadequate food, the cramped accommodation, the lack of exercise, the drudgery of minding two little girls and three small boys, whom she had to teach daily as they could not be sent to school. I could not pay my school fees for January and it was the same at the end of February. The collecting teacher said that if the fees were not paid by Easter I would not be allowed to return at the start of the next term. There continued to be discussions at home about my fees and finding a job as a clerk and I decided I was sick of it all and decided to see the Warden and tell him that I would not be returning after the Easter holidays. I explained to him all the circumstances. He said he was sorry to hear what I had told him and would speak to me again before the term ended.

What happened next was revealed to me more than twenty years later. The Warden had a meeting with the masters of the higher forms to find out whether he would be justified in giving the Prince Of Wales Scholarship (two years free board, lodging and tuition) to a Roman Catholic when the endowment was the gift of an Anglican. They all approved it.

I had not attended the undenominational Royal College but had instead attended the Protestant school of St. Thomas' because that school had a boarding establishment and had scholarships for board and lodging with tuition. If I had not gone to St. Thomas', it would have been necessary for me to leave school and seek employment at the age of fifteen.

One morning we set out for the church of St. Philip Neri in the Pettah. We were shown into the visitor's parlour and presently a priest, English or Irish, came in and greeted us pleasantly. When my mother explained the object of our visit, he asked what school I attended. My mother said 'St. Thomas' College'. The words acted like an electric shock. He stood up as if he had been stung. His face flushed red, his eyes glared and he said angrily 'Do you think God will hear your prayers?', and with that he left the room. My mother picked up the money she had placed on the table and put it back in her purse and the tears rolled down her face. The way back was indeed a *via dolorosa* for she did not cease weeping until we got home. The incident hardened my heart. To my

mother the psychological effect of this disappointment was terrible. My relations with the dear Benedictine monks of St. Anthony's saved me from generalising from one example of bigotry and intolerance...I wrote to my friend Father Leitan O.S.B. of my mother's experience and within a week had a reply stating that His Lordship the Bishop, Dr. Pagnani, wished to inform me that he himself offered the Mass of Thanksgiving which my mother had desired.

Author's note: Victor Melder, the historian and librarian of the Sri Lankan community in Australia, states:

A number of Burghers joined the Sylvestro Benedictine Congregation, Kandy. These Benedictine monks manned the entire Kandy Diocese which extended from Wahacotte in the Matale district through to Badulla in the Uva district. The diocese therefore covered almost the entire up-country tea growing districts.

Among the names I recall are Fr Phoebus, Fr Berenger, Fr Dunstan Barsenbach, Fr Philip Caspersz, Fr Columban Mackay, Fr Ildephonius Robinson, Fr Hildebrand van Reyk, Fr Benedict Joachim, Fr Bertram Mack, and Fr Thomas de Zilwa. One of these priests, Bishop Bede Beekmeyer, was appointed Bishop of Kandy, a signal honour for the entire Burgher community. He died in 1935. There is an important article about Bishop Beekmeyer in the DBU Journal.

Dr. Lucian de Zilwa continues and describes a school play he organised:

My father saw the play but my mother was too ill to come. She realised the gravity of her condition and wished to have the rites of the Church. During the five years I had been at St. Thomas' College, she had not been admitted either to confession or to communion and she did not wish to die without the Viaticum and Extreme Unction. We applied to the parish priest, who afterwards rose to become Archbishop of Colombo, fully explaining the circumstances of her case and the urgency...but he refused to come. My father called on Archbishop M...and within a few hours everything was settled and the patient returned home. The London Matriculation results, when I passed in the first division, were published just in time for my mother to hear the good news. She died that same month.

Dr. de Zilwa's autobiography continued. He won the University scholarship, went to England, lived frugally, married the daughter of the family he boarded with in England, and eventually returned to Ceylon where he accumulated wealth and distinction. He describes a house he built in Ward Place in Cinnamon Gardens, a fashionable part of Colombo in the 1920s.

Unlike most big buildings in Colombo...this house was flooded with light. For the front verandah and the steps I procured marble from North India, like that used by the Moguls in Agra...a hundred and twenty one points of electric light were available. The front verandah and corridor had large pendant globes... Each wing had its bathroom and toilet and a main bath on the west had a geyser...The two garages had lights and collapsible iron gates. The two stables for horses had lights and were lined with teak planks...Beyond was the bathroom and lavatory for servants...Thirteen ceiling fans were placed in the bedrooms and reception rooms...The maintenance of such an establishment was expensive and required a large staff of servants. We had a butler with a white turban and coat, a house-cooly, a cook, a kitchen maid, dressing boy, two

lady ayahs, a gardener and poultry man, three grooms for the horses, chauffeur for the ladies, car cleaner to go about with me as I always drove myself, and to assist the chauffeur in the maintenance of four cars, two Burgher seamstresses who came in the morning and went home after tea.

(*Scenes of a lifetime*, was published in 1967 by H.W.Cave & Co., Colombo).

Civil Engineering (1900-1940)

Kenneth de Kretser retired in the 1940s as Director of Public Works and was awarded the honour of the 'Companion in the Order Of Saint Michael and Saint George' in 1950. He was President of the DBU from 1942 to 1945 and migrated to Brisbane in the early 1960s where the author visited him. He died in 1966. An entertaining and convivial person, he was an active Rotarian, President of the Ceylon Rugby and Football Club, an active and influential member of Wolvendaal Consistory and well known in public life. In this article he reminisces about his early experiences as a civil engineer. This is an abridged version of an article in DBUJ Volume XXXI (1942).

Before the advent of the British in 1795 there were no proper Government buildings and no proper roads. The buildings that existed were confined to Colombo, Galle, Jaffna, Matara, Hambantota and Batticaloa and were mainly forts and churches constructed by the Dutch. Roads existed only between the principal towns and were mainly clearings through the jungle, suitable only for rough traffic during the dry season, but impassable during the rains. Governor North, when he toured the maritime areas in 1800, had to be accompanied by 160 palanquin bearers, 400 labourers, two elephants, six horses and fifty infantrymen.

Road building really started in 1820 with Lieut. General John Fraser but it was during the time of Major Skinner and Captain Dawson, between 1841 and 1867, that Ceylon changed from a purely military possession into a colony of commercial importance. From 1820 to 1867, when Major Skinner left, he was responsible for the construction of 5000 km of made roads, one fifth of which consisted of first-class metalled roads and another fifth consisted of excellent gravel highways. Every major stream had been bridged or was soon to be bridged in structures of stone or iron.

During the early days of British rule there was a great dearth of skilled labour and whatever labour was available was unwilling to undergo the hardships of this pioneering work in often unhealthy districts. Labour had to be recruited from South India and this pioneer force in 1867 was 4000 strong. From then on the numbers gradually decreased. Today (1942) there are 30,000 km of roads and cart tracks and 13,000 km of bridle tracks..

I arrived from studies in England in 1906 and was ordered to report for duty to the Provincial Engineer at Jaffna. The only way I could get there was by steamer (boat) or road. There was no convenient steamer so I decided to go by road. The Railway had just been constructed as far as Anuradhapura (185 km) so I went to that point and then changed to the Royal Mail Coach. This coach, which had a wonderful Lion and Unicorn painted on the sides, was drawn by two bullocks and was only a glorified double-bullock cart. It travelled day and night and carried 1st and 2nd class passengers. In the front section the mail bags were heaped and on them sat the oily and perspiring 2nd

class passengers, consisting mostly of Moor traders from the coast. The first class, the rear section, had two wooden benches and the journey to Jaffna of took the best part of a week as we did, with changes of bulls, about 25-32 km each 24 hours. I was warned by Mr de Niese, the Anuradhapura Postmaster, to be careful of the light-fingered gentry but in spite of his warning when I arrived at Jaffna I found I had lost my best waterproof (raincoat) and a set of drawing instruments.

My first post was Mihintale. My work consisted mostly of inspections. Cars were unheard of then and my first conveyance was a travelling cart and a pair of trotting bulls. The cart was made to my design and had pockets for keeping guns, a hook for a bicycle, a seat that could be converted into a sort of lounge chair, and various other contraptions. The journeys were very slow and I walked a good bit of it with the overseer. Shooting was indulged in and it was very good shooting those days. We knew our coolies (unskilled labourers), and the coolies came to the 'dorai' (master) for everything. I used to carry with me large quantities of quinine [malaria tablets], white mixture [for upset stomachs] and sticking plaster. Every time I stopped at a cooly line [row of single rooms each occupied by an immigrant Indian Tamil tea plantation family], the sick and the palsied would gather around. Like any Harley Street specialist, I did the needful.

We used circuit bungalows and the usual practice was to have two carts, one for me and the other for the orderly and kitchen cooly, who travelled ahead at night after preparing and serving dinner with the idea that they reached the next Circuit Bungalow to prepare a meal in readiness for my arrival some hours later. Travelling during the day was excitement enough but, during the night, it was much worse. On one occasion I arrived at a stream to hear loud screams. My servants were up a large tree and the cart was up-ended by the road. The previous night an elephant had attacked the cart, the servants had climbed the kumbuk tree, the bulls had bolted and could not be found, and the cart had been up-ended and abandoned. On another occasion, during the monsoon, I could not delay my inspection, and set out. Near Kahatagasdigiliya I came across a sheet of water across the road. We continued and soon found the water was up to the platform of the cart and the bulls were swimming and the flood water was moving over the road at a great velocity. It was exciting as quantities of brushwood were also rushing past. My saman (everything I owned) was washed away together with a coop of chickens I carried for food, but my gallant bulls swam straight on and gradually we reached a level where the bulls could walk.

One day I was doing some metal consolidation and an elephant was being used when, after going a few yards, he dropped down dead. To move a dead elephant is not like moving a dead dog so the entire labour force had to be summoned, ordered to cut a hole by the side of the road, and poor jumbo pushed in and covered. A few days later, the poor villagers living close by had to abandon homes and flee because of the smell from the rotting carcass.

Those days the mail was carried in the outlying districts by tappal runners (postmen) who were supposed to run or trot with the mail from one location to another. They were responsible to the P.W.D. Engineers and I kept getting complaints about the lateness of the mail in one particular area. I later found the tappal cooly was also the area's barber and would stop and cut hair as he went about his duties.

One job I heartily disliked was the payroll or distributing the wages in cash to every workman. Payments were made at a Circuit Bungalow, which meant I had to sleep there overnight with large amounts of cash. These circuit bungalows had no proper doors and I used to sleep with the cash-box chained to my wrist. At that time the railway was being constructed and there were a number of undesirables in the area. That night I locked the cash in my travelling safe, and put my revolver under my pillow (one always carried a revolver in those days). Earlier, when having dinner, I had noticed some black stuff in my soup, but took no notice and drank it. The same happened with the fish course. When the next course arrived, my servant came to me quite agitated and said that the food had been tampered with. I summoned my servants, explained what I thought had happened, and told them to be prepared during the night. I went to bed, heaped some empty kerosene tins at the door, and at 2 a.m. was wakened by a crash. There was a hue and cry, a chase into the jungle and the culprit was caught. I was not prepared to dance attendance at a court-house so I took the law into my own hands, had the overseer tie the man to a tree, had him summarily whipped, and then got rid of him with a railway ticket I bought (pp. 113-122).

My Burgher grandparents (1870-1942) by the author

My Grandpa was what is called 'a character'. I didn't see him very often because he lived upcountry and I lived in Colombo. He and my grandmother were legally separated. That was most unusual because at that time, in the mid 1920s, Burghers did not legally separate or divorce. I remember him as a tall dark man, bald on top and surrounded by a friar's fringe of hair. He always had a Jaffna cheroot (cigar) stuck in his mouth, walked fast, talked fast and was supremely confident of himself. He had many friends, many acquaintances and many enemies. You either liked him or you hated him. People talked about him. He was generous, never petty and did not suffer fools gladly. His friends belonged to every race and creed.

My mother was well educated, an accomplished painter, played both classical and jazz on the piano, had an excellent sense of humour, and was a lively and witty person with a wide circle of friends. She was an only child and my grandparents owned a large house, 'Riverside', in Mutwal. After her first husband (my step-brother Stanley's father) died she played the piano at the 'Pagoda', the famous eatery in the Fort, to support herself. Her mother was a Daniel and a descendent of the Lorenz family of which the most famous was Charles Ambrose Lorenz, the nationalist leader of his day. Every member of our family therefore had 'Lorenz' as a middle name. I was Rodney Lorenz and my brothers were Ivor Lorenz, Stanley Lorenz and Christopher Lorenz. My mother was Doris Lorenz and my Grannie was Alice Lorenz. On my father's side the eldest son always had the name 'Frederick'. My grandfather had it, my father had it and it was bestowed on me. When my son was born in Australia we decided we could not burden him all these names from the past. He, and we, are Australians and he most often answers to 'Mac'!

I have vague memories of the family home, 'Riverside'. It was a large house in a very large garden that sloped down to the Kelani river in Mutwal. It had a broad verandah that went around the front and both sides of the house. It must have been a lovely place to run around as a child, on warm tropical days, in 'rompers', and with an

ayah in constant attendance. Sadly, those days ended after my mother died and my grandparents parted to live separate lives.

My grandmother lived in Colombo and we had a lot of contact with her. She was the Grannie all children would love to have. She took us to the cinema and the circus. At the 'Pagoda', 'Fountain House' and Paiva's we ate patties, cakes and savouries of every kind. We loved to visit her and were rewarded with lollies, ice-cream and pocket money. The ice-cream was special. It was made at home in a mould and we called it 'mole ice-cream' throughout our lives. It was so completely different to the ice cream we have today. Thick and creamy, made from 'kundance' (condensed) milk, lots of eggs and sugar vanilla essence...it was out of this world. We would run around excitedly while Grannie filled the container with the ice-cream mixture and then filled the outside jacket with ice and salt. The servant would next commence the process of turning and turning. It would be easy at the start but would get progressively more difficult as the mixture hardened.

Periodically the ice that had become water was drained, salt would be pushed aside and the cover carefully removed and we would all look in. Then there would be a conference between Grannie and the servant which invariably ended with the words *thava podak* (do a little more). The lid would be closed, more ice and salt added, and the turning would recommence while we kids jumped around in a frenzy. Finally the big moment arrived, the lid was once again lifted, and this time the words *thang hondai* (now its right) was said. The resulting feast was never enough but remains one of my special memories of childhood. This love of ice-cream has remained to this day in every member of the family.

Grannie had a major fault. She loved to gamble on the horses. She was not a successful gambler because in time she had to give up her house and rent a room with friends. By Australian standards it was a large room. She had her bed, a washbasin with a jug, pail and soap dish, a full length mirror on a stand, a large almirah (wardrobe), chairs to lounge in and her own bathroom. The almirah was the treasure trove. She would unlock it (every cupboard in Ceylon had a lock because of the fear of thieving servants). Out of the almirah came sweets and chocolates. Before we left there was always some 'pocket money' to take with us. It was a house with a large garden. The people were rich. They had a motor car, a rickshaw and a rickshaw man, a bullock cart and carter, their own dhoby, and a long verandah with 'lounges' lining both sides. There were breadfruit trees and jak trees, mango and biling trees and plenty of space to get lost in. We did enjoy the days we spent there but the ice-cream days, sadly, were over.

Grandpa used to rear fancy fowls and was a regular winner at the poultry shows in Colombo. He did not often visit Colombo but one regular annual visit was to exhibit his birds for he often won prizes at the poultry show. He walked into our house on a day Grannie was visiting us. The dislike on Grannie's face was obvious. She got up and left immediately. It was not a pleasant experience.

Grandpa was proud of his three grandchildren. They were all boys and he had high expectations for them. My parents were always cautious of him. His mouth got him into trouble. He was clever, sarcastic, short-tempered, always in a hurry, a great raconteur and storyteller. He was well read and quite a brilliant man. He had retired to live upcountry in 'the sticks' after two careers and two pensions. He called himself a J.P. but this did not mean he was a Justice of the Peace. He was a Jolly Pensioner.

Our first holiday with him was when I was about twelve. We had another holiday with him when I was about fifteen. The first visit was great for us but must have been a disaster for him. He was looked after by a cookie and her two sons who were a few years younger than us. Rumour had it that the cookie was his de facto and the two boys were their children but that was something no one ever spoke about. I learnt about it by accident much later.

On the property were prize hens and cockerels, coffee and cocoa bushes, pepper creepers, various other spice bushes, other plants like billing and carapincha, a couple of goats for milk and curd, a stream, a bit of jungle and leeches everywhere. I remember those leeches. They got on and stayed on and eventually fell off, bloated with the blood they had sucked off. I hated them. Grandpa lived a sort of life mid-way between a hippie and a squire. Bananas were bought by the bunch and hung up in the store-room. Each time I went past I would grab a few ambuls (acid bananas). There were pigeon coops and pigeons and they periodically found their way into the pot. So did the paddy-birds (sparrows). They went into the soup. It was all very different to our normal settled life as urban Burghers. We played a lot of cricket. One of us would bat and the other bowl. The cookie's children did the hard work, the fielding. The only flat land was the long drive to the property so the cookie's children had a lot of exercise scampering around down the hill and up again to find the ball. That upset Grandpa who thought we should all take turns at batting, bowling, fielding and searching for lost balls.

Our elder brother Stanley was some years older and had been placed first in Ceylon in the London Matriculation examination. Grandpa was naturally very proud of him and was determined his grandson should enter the Medical College and study medicine. Grandpa was going to pay for the seven extra years of schooling and didn't expect opposition from his grandson. His grandson had other plans. He wanted money in his pocket and all the delights that money bought. He sat for the Government clerical service examination, passed it, joined the public service, and had money to spend. He found a girl, married her and started a family. I overheard an Aunt saying 'Poor Stanley, he can hardly stand on his feet and he is getting married' and my Uncle's reply 'He won't have to stand. He will soon be on his back in bed'. Grandpa's anger was heightened when he heard that the wife-to-be was a Catholic and from the wrong end of the Burgher hierarchy. Grandpa did not attend the wedding and never again acknowledged his grandson, his daughter-in-law or their children.

During our second holiday at Grandpa's there were a number of framed photographs that had been reversed with the side with the photograph facing the wall. These were photographs of our brother that had been taken over the years. They remained like that so that everyone would know how Grandpa felt about his eldest grandson. Even the wedding cake, then over a year old, remained unopened as did Christmas cards and letters. A good friend and bad enemy that Grandpa of mine.

Grandpa was a teetotaller and felt strongly about the evils of drink. I remember him describing his brother-in-law, 'I may be a rogue, a thief and a liar but at least I am not a drunkard'.

Like other Burghers of that time, Grandpa had a large and heavy family Bible in which he recorded births, deaths and marriages. He had crossed out the entry of his own marriage and written across it 'the worst mistake of my life'. Because he suffered from high blood pressure, he attempted to cure himself by eating copious quantities of cadju (cashew) nuts throughout the day. Cashews are my favourite nuts, not too

hard and not too soft. They are just right. The cashew nuts were left around so we nibbled them and in a few days there were none left. Grandpa became very angry cause the cashews were medicine to him. He accused us of wanting to kill him!

Cashews eaten in quantity have an effect at the rear end so Grandpa kept passing rind regularly. We thought that immensely funny and guffawed every time it happened. This made him self conscious so he developed the habit of pushing and scraping his chair on the cement floor every time he broke wind. His timing wasn't perfect.

The scraping of the chair on the cement floor and the start and end of breaking-wind were not synchronised so we continued to bellow with laughter each time it occurred. This annoyed him very much. He must have been glad when the holiday was over and he could go back to living a normal life.

On our second visit things had not changed much but we were older and better behaved. We often visited the Watawala club and the District Medical Officer's house. They had a gramophone and many red label HMV records. I was enthralled by the singing of Beniamino Gigli and his Neapolitan love songs. Male opera singers have continued to thrill me throughout my life.

Grandpa had many famous visitors and had a book in which they signed their names. He was very proud of this book because it included Sir Solomon Dias Bandaranaike (grandfather of the present President of Sri Lanka and father of an earlier Prime Minister, S.W.R.D. Bandaranaike), the Prince of Wales, various Governors of Ceylon and other notables of the colonial era. One day, during World War II, and when we were living in Trincomalee and inconveniently far away from where Grandpa resided, my father received a message from the local police to say that they had received a message from the Bandarawela police that my grandfather was dead. Dad, as the nearest relative, was asked to attend the Bandarawela police station as quickly as possible. I heard Dad mutter 'I wonder what trouble he has got himself into now'. It took three days to get to Bandarawela by train. Grandpa had dropped dead at his home from a heart attack and the cook had informed the local police. There had been no 'problem'. The police had contacted our local Police Station, who had contacted our postmaster (who was, of course, a Burgher), and he passed the news to Dad. By the time Dad arrived the famous book and many other souvenirs had gone missing. I was given Grandpa's gold pocket watch and a pair of boots a size too big. I also had a legacy, enough to buy my first motor-bike some years later. A few months later, on a visit to the Colombo cemetery at Kanatte, we had a surprise when we found Grannie seated by his grave. What was she thinking? We will never know. I would have liked to have had my Grandpa around when I grew-up. I think I would have enjoyed his company. I could have benefited from his knowledge and his experiences in life. He was a brutally honest man. He embarrassed people. Yes, my grandfather was a character.

Many years later a man stopped me on the street with these words 'You are Fred Ginger's grandson'. I looked down at him and, with some disdain and replied 'What's it to you?'. His reply almost knocked me over. 'Fred Ginger was my father. My mother looked after him'. I hurried off, upset, dismayed and feeling cheated. It was some years before I would accept what others had known for many years. He was a character my grandfather and a rebel who spoke his mind. He was contemptuous of conventional Burgher middle-class mores. He must have made life very difficult for those who were close to him, related to him. Was he a big man in a small world, a man

who created waves when there were none, or a pain in the rear regions? I will never know.

Some early Burgher emigrants

Ceylon was part of the glorious British Empire on which the sun never set. Burghers, as British subjects, could move freely, without passports, to make their fortunes in other parts of the Empire. Many families knew of uncles, cousins and friends who left 'to better themselves' in other countries. Some of them came back but most did not. Among Burghers who emigrated to the Federated Malay States, now Malaysia, to seek their fortune in the tin mines were persons with the name Speldewinde, Anthonisz, Frugtniet, Foenander, van Geyzel and Siebel. An Ernst took to farming in South Africa, a Leembruggen surveyed in Fiji, Christie Ferdinands tried for a new life in Burma, Woutersz in the United States, Weinman and Koch in Hong Kong, Mack in India; De Boer, Brohier, Prins and many others in England and still others in Thailand, then known as Siam. They ran the railways. Victor Melder gave me most of the information that follows:

Siam was a British Protectorate and in about 1900 the King of Siam needed qualified staff to operate the various mechanical services in his country. Many young Burghers took this opportunity and among them were Clement Ferdinands, the Rabot, Keith, James, Rankin and Cappers and the Jacobs family consisting of Bertie, Eugene, Daisy and Lily. Bertie Jacobs' father had driven the first train when the Colombo–Kandy rail track became operational.

John Bulner was also in Siam and married Daisy Jacobs at the British Consulate on 19 December 1912. The ceremony was repeated at Christ Church in Bangkok two days later. Their three children, Hal, Iris and Phyllis were born in Siam. During World War I the King of Siam decided that only Siamese nationals should be employed. Rather than lose their British citizenship, almost all the Ceylonese returned home. John and Daisy Bulner settled in Kandy. Their daughter Phyllis Dagmar married Randolph Melder on 27 December 1934 and Victor Melder is their eldest son.

THE DUTCH BURGHERS

The evolution of the Dutch Burgher

The Dutch Burghers were those Burghers whose ancestors were Dutch or employed by the Dutch East India Company (VOC) in Ceylon. 'Dutch' in this connection included Germans, Scandinavians, French and Belgians. They were the greatest beneficiaries of British rule. This group commenced with about nine hundred families at the time of the Dutch capitulation in 1796 and had grown to about 10,000 'Dutch Burghers' at the time of the great exodus in the mid 1950s and 60s. Of those who called themselves 'Burghers' in the periodic census returns, less than a quarter would have been descendants of the original Dutch and northern Europeans. The Dutch Burghers were a community of extraordinary talent and diversity. They were pioneers and leaders in almost every field of endeavour where intellectual capital, technical ability and a pioneering spirit were necessary. The family names of those original 'Burghers' kept reappearing throughout the 150 years of British rule. They continued to stay- ahead of every other ethnic group right up to the time of the first Bandaranaike Government. At the end, they were the first Burghers to quit Ceylon and migrate to Australia, the beneficiaries of the 'White Australia' policy.

(In these days of egalitarianism, and to deflect criticism from past and present Sri Lankans, it should be said that the Dutch Burghers were not unique. The Bandaranaike and Senanayake families, leading Sinhalese high-caste political families, were no different to the Dutch Burghers in the importance they placed on tradition, class and caste, the past and a history of service to persons 'less fortunate than themselves'. Yasmine Gooneratne's book, *Relative Merits*, is about the Dias-Bandaranaike family, a story that continues in past and present Prime Ministers and the present President and of Sri Lanka).

The Dutch Burghers were a close knit community bound by history, marriage, common traditions, and religious beliefs. They were proud, laid great stress on their past, and maintained a close supportive society modelled on, but separate from, the British. It was not easy to gain acceptance as a full member of a group that thought of themselves as different and superior to others. There were a strictly moral, regular church-going group and marriage between cousins and relatives was common. They were a fraternity, proud of their ancestors, their family genealogies and family crests. They expected much from their children. The written history of the Burghers is mainly about this group of Burghers for they were the community's leaders. How this situation occurred is interesting. This chapter is about that group of Dutch descendants, the Dutch Burghers.

During the 17th and 18th centuries Dutchmen and other Europeans arrived from Europe to work for the V.O.O (Dutch East India Company). They were joined by free settlers who arrived from northern Europe and the other Dutch, French and English settlements in the East. These men, adventurers, soldiers, sailors, merchants and ne'er-do-wells, arrived to carve a future for themselves in Ceylon. Unless they were senior officials and private traders who arrived with their wives, they married the descendants of earlier Dutch and Portuguese settlers. This group evolved into a community distinct from the more Asian-looking Eurasians.

Certain families of this group of Dutch colonials continued to be more culturally and ethnically European than the other Dutch and Portuguese descendants. These more 'European' Eurasians were usually Protestant and their ancestors had been employed by the Dutch East India Company as merchants, clerks, schoolteachers, revenue collectors and storekeepers.

Cordiner, charged in 1799 by Governor North with developing an educational system, was one of the earliest British writers and described this group:

The Dutch inhabitants are about nine hundred in number, and excepting a few families, are reduced to circumstances of great indigence but...they maintain an appearance, in the eyes of the world, sometimes affluent and gay, always decent and respectable...There are [also] some 5000 Portuguese, completely degenerated, to whom the Dutch gave all the privileges of citizens under the denomination of burghers (quoted by Toussaint in DBU Journal XXVI 1936, p. 43).

The second group, the more Asian-looking Eurasians, were more numerous, often had Portuguese names, looked less European, were often Catholic, spoke a creolised form of Portuguese (Indo-Portuguese) and married within their community and with the Sinhalese and Tamils. Mixed-race Mestizos were not employed by the Dutch India Company except as soldiers or as unskilled and semi-skilled labourers. Slavery was acceptable and widespread at that time so it is improbable that members of this group were employed in domestic duties. When the slaves were freed, they became members of this latter group.

Statements about 'race', 'ethnicity' and 'nationality' are generalisations. Boundaries are ill-defined, continually moving, and are not fixed in time. Membership of ethnic groups and classes change over time as gifted and influential individuals gain acceptance into higher social groups as do attractive and wealthy females.

When the British occupied the areas previously controlled by the Dutch East India Company in Ceylon there were hundreds of Dutch descendants, thousands of Portuguese descendants, and hundreds of thousands of Asian Sinhalese and Tamils. The British administration conveniently classified all those who were not Asians as one community. There were in reality a number of separate communities divided by religion, history, language, colour, class, and degree of European-ness. There were only about nine hundred families who were either vryburgers (free citizens) or employees of the Dutch East India Company at the time of the capitulation. Since the Dutch Company was now defunct, all these persons were now bergers (Burghers) and British subjects. (In this connection the article 'Burgher etymology' by G.V.Grenier in DBU Journal Volume LVI 1966, pp. 25-29 is relevant).

Between 1796 and 1802, when the British claimed to have occupied Ceylon as agents of the Dutch Stadtholder, the term 'Dutch inhabitant' was used for European-born Dutch and 'Burgher' was the term used to describe descendants of the Dutch

born in Ceylon. After the British conquest was regularised in 1802 the British referred to both the Dutch and the Dutch descendants as 'Burghers'. There were occasions when the British used the terms 'Dutch Burgher' and 'Portuguese Burgher' but gradually the term Burgher was used to describe all those Europeans who were not British and those Eurasians who dressed in a European manner.

The term 'Burgher' ceased to be the civic label it had been under the Dutch and became under the British a racial, or ethnic word to describe the non-British people who were not Sinhalese, Tamil and 100% Asian. All Burghers were, in the British colonial hierarchy, half-castes and racial mixtures and inferior to the British. This was, to the British, adequate reason to treat Burghers and non-British as subordinate, whatever their language, class, religion or colour. It confirmed British hegemony as proper because the British were European, white, a superior race and destined to rule.

This destiny to rule was irrespective of class, ethnicity or religious denomination. It legitimised their position at the apex of the power structure. It confirmed that race and colour, and to a lesser extent religion, were to be the criteria for placement in the hierarchy of 19th century British colonial society. It was a simple explanation for it legitimised British hegemony and exclusiveness. Other ethnic groups had to accept this situation and a society developed in which lightness of skin was a social and economic advantage.

There were Burgher families who thought of themselves as European and direct descendants of the Dutch. They continued to exercise strict control over the marriages of their children, and successfully bred out any traces of earlier marriages with Portuguese or Mestizo partners. These families had been the elite during the Dutch period and soon began to be favoured by the British. They quickly mastered the English language and by the 1830s filled the numerous subordinate positions that became available under British rule. They had been officials and employees under the Dutch, had experience of colonial government and, after the British had satisfied themselves about their loyalty, became an asset to the British in the numerous in-between positions of the colonial administration. Appendix 5 reveals the extent of British dependency on the Dutch Burghers in the 1860s.

The British reserved the highest levels of administration, the Ceylon Civil Service or C.C.S. (in capital letters) for themselves but opened the clerical services, such as the Ceylon clerical service (c.c.s. in lower case), the medical services (dispensers, laboratory assistants), judicial service (clerks of courts, fiscal, etc.), and the subordinate grades to non-British. The highest positions, whether technical or administrative, were filled by the British until about the 1920s after which non-British filled them in increasing numbers. It was a satisfactory arrangement for the Burgher elite who became a separate class. This elite group thought of themselves as the Burghers and did not consider other members of the mixed Eurasian community as Burghers, whatever the British or anyone else may have thought.

The introduction of the Colebrooke/Cameron reforms in 1832, and the selection by the Governor of individuals to represent the respective ethnic communities, confirmed this position for the Burgher members were always selected from this elite class. The antecedents of the Burgher representatives continued to be Dutch/English, never Portuguese, and the Burgher elite consolidated their leadership.

In 1833 Chief Justice Ottley had ruled that the term Burgher applied only to persons who could claim unbroken European descent in the male line and if once broken it could not be re-established. This ruling officially disenfranchised from the Burgher

electorate those who thought of themselves as Burghers but could not prove it because of a lack of genealogical information. It did however allow Eurasians from the British period into the Burgher electorate. Burghers stressed their legitimacy as against the Eurasians who they considered illegitimate offspring of British fathers and native mothers. The Ottley ruling did not prevent persons from calling themselves Burghers but it excluded them from the Burgher electorate until communal electorates were abolished in 1929.

The Burghers were among the leaders in the struggle for self-government and Charles Ambrose Lorenz, a leading lawyer who bought and edited the Ceylon Examiner newspaper, was leader of the unofficial members in the Legislative Council between 1855 and 1864. He coined the word 'Ceylonese' to emphasise the unity of all communities in Ceylon in their demand for proper political representation.

Due to the importance of an education in English, education in the westernised Christian schools became the path to social and economic success. This also created a hybrid westernised elite unrepresentative of their roots and traditions.

A movement which stressed the uniqueness and importance of Buddhism and Sinhala culture to the Sinhalese people took root and was given an impetus by the visit of an American Buddhist, Colonel Olcott, in 1880. This was followed by the conversion of Alfred Buultjens, a prominent member of the Burgher elite. Buultjens, among others, spearheaded the movement to establish Buddhist schools and a Buddhist education. The Tamils, in a counter movement, stressed Hinduism and Tamil language and literature. It was the beginning of politics based on culture and ethnicity. Religion was the catalyst in that process. It was the first occasion when the anglicised leadership of every community claimed to speak for and represent their own community. It was the end of the gentlemanly sport of British-baiting politics by the combined westernised leadership of all ethnic communities.

The religious movement developed and became the premier political organisation for the Sinhalese. The movement grew into the Ceylon National Congress and stressed Sinhala ethnicity, culture and religion. The Tamils countered with the formation of their own Tamil Congress. The Burgher leadership excluded themselves from these movements because they thought of themselves as Ceylonese, European, Christian, westernised and at ease with the British establishment. The importance of the Burgher elite in the political process began to decline as the power, numbers and influence of the Sinhalese and Tamil educated elite increased.

The Burghers were now the only ethnic group who could not emphasise their uniqueness as a community. They were the people in-between, without a special culture, religion, language and history. The formation of the Dutch Burgher Union, and Dutch Burgher ethnicity, arose from the need to create a separate, unique ethnic group. The closing of the ranks, or the division of the official Burgher community into two overlapping social groups of 'genuine Burghers' and 'other Burghers', can be traced to this period.

The 'parting of the ways', when the Burghers had to decide whether they were to be of the East or the West, probably occurred in 1915. There was an eruption of communal violence between the Sinhalese and the Moors (Muslims). The British reacted violently importing Indian troops and some Sinhalese were killed or imprisoned including the first Prime Minister of independent Ceylon, D.S. Senanayake. The Dutch Burgher leadership condemned the violence, the Burgher regiment was mobilised and the Burgher urban community actively supported the British in containing

the rioting. The Burghers came to be seen by the majority community as obstacles in the march to self-rule. No longer were Burghers seen as political partners of the indigenous political leadership. When the British finally departed, the Burghers would have to follow...but that was still forty years in the future.

Dutch Burgher Union

The history of the Burghers in the British period is mainly the record of the activities of :the Dutch Burgher Union and the Burgher community leaders who were, without exception, Dutch Burghers and members of the DBU. Very little information is available to help research the 'other Burghers'. Only after the exodus of the Dutch Burgher elite in the 1960s did the descendants of the Dutch, Portuguese and English commence the process of 'coming together' in their shrinking social institutions. The community that remained in Sri Lanka after the exodus of the 1960's was no longer elitist, no longer part of the power structure and no longer part of the social elite.

By the 1890s the Burghers of Dutch descent were becoming increasingly concerned that the term 'Burgher' had become so changed from its original meaning that it had become a synonym for any Eurasian or Asian who wore European dress. These more-European Burghers had little in common with the other 'Burghers' and decided that a fresh term had to be invented to restrict the term to genuine Dutch descendants.

The British had legitimised their own superiority by an ideology that power and domination over other ethnic groups was racially determined. The Burgher elite created a similar ideology by which they were equally superior because of Dutch origin, conquest and culture. The Dutch Burgher movement took many years to come to fruition because of its cultural and political implications. The members of the Burgher elite were economically and socially comfortable and in government employment or retired. This situation did not encourage them to 'rock the boat' and become involved in public controversy so the movement towards a separate Dutch Burgher ethnicity had a long gestation period during which the historical, cultural and social issues were emphasised and religious and political issues de-emphasised. Considerable preparatory work was done by R.G Anthonisz who later become Government Archivist. He researched old Dutch records, learned to read, write and speak Dutch and married a Dutch researcher. His efforts were supported by Burghers residing in Galle, that cocoon of Dutch history, and eventually the Dutch Burgher Union was inaugurated in 1908. The movement added 'Dutch' to Burgher and thereby re-created the Burgher as a descendent of the Dutch but as an ethnic label rather than as a civic title. The Union created a social and cultural club for the Burgher elite. Membership was restricted by the necessity for genealogical proof of unbroken paternal European ancestry.



The founder of the Dutch Burgher Union was Richard Gerald Anthonisz who was Secretary until 1916 and President from 1916 until his death in 1930. Extracts from an article in the DB UJ Volume XXXIII, January 1944 describe him:

He had a varied career. He enrolled as a Proctor [solicitor] in the District Court in 1876, was at Richmond College, Galle and the Colombo Academy, Head-master of his old school in Galle, Registrar of Lands, Police Magistrate, and

eventually Assistant Registrar-General in Colombo...he had no training as an archivist, he trained himself by examining old Dutch 'tombos' [deeds of grants of land in Portuguese and Dutch times], reading Dutch manuscripts, and learning the Dutch language.

He was admitted a member of the Society of Dutch Literature of Leyden in Holland and was also awarded the Imperial Service Order by the British...In all his wanderings, from one town to another, a persistent, compelling idea in his mind was the ambiguous and precarious position of the community to which he belonged, and to which he was historically and personally proud to belong. Always conscious of his community, and its members separated from one another by place and environment, drifting, not deliberately but sullenly and almost unconsciously, from their old moorings. Their racial name, to which they had clung, was given a wider and less desirable application. What he insisted was that the Dutch Burghers were and are 'a distinct class, with an origin, history and character of their own'.

He would bitterly resent any imputation that they were a body of non-descripts without race or language...towards the end of 1907 discussions were held with leading people but there was little interest...because it would break up homes and families, would create disunion, and would antagonise other communities. Eventually a meeting was held in the Pettah library on 18 January 1908 and the Dutch Burgher Union was formed. He married twice, first to Miss Deutrom of the well-known Ceylon family and then to Miss Pieters of Holland...His other interests were music, painting, sketching, photography, heraldry, and even stamp collecting.

He sought nothing for himself, but laboured to restore to the community a realisation of its identity, its honourable past, and its place in public and social life. He wrote the first volume of his book *The Dutch in Ceylon* but did not live long enough to complete the other volumes. He had a son in Colombo and his daughter, Mrs. Denzil Koch, settled in Perth (pp. 62-65).

At the inaugural meeting, 268 people with 108 Dutch/Scandinavian/French/German and Belgian names attended. A committee of 45 was elected from Colombo and the various provincial towns. Membership increased, then decreased during the Great Depression, increased and peaked during World War II when Dutch service personnel joined as members. Thereafter membership declined, stayed steady, and finally declined sharply as Dutch Burghers emigrated. In 1995 there were only 137 members and wives and husbands were now counted separately. The most recent list contained non-Burgher names, presumably females married to non-Dutch Burghers.

Ceylon's 1920 political reforms, which included a new franchise that restricted voting to persons with property and/or education, and which eliminated 96% of the population, advantaged the urban educated Burghers of Dutch descent who had by now become a distinct community with economic and social influence quite out of proportion to their small numbers. The Dutch Burgher elite became their elected leaders, the Dutch Burgher Union their social gathering place, and the DBU Journal a record of their history, traditions and achievements.

Not all the Burgher elite, or the Dutch Burgher elite, joined the DBU. There would always be controversy about a group that based its entry criteria on events over which the individual had no control so the Union never had a membership in excess of 600 families. It was a cosy shelter for the elite, the nostalgic, those with old money and the successful. Its members recommended the Union only to those

Burghers who would be comfortable socialising inside the fence that they themselves had erected.

The DBU thus came to represent the conformists, those who were happy with the status quo, the successful upper middle-class Burgher professionals who were 'European' and belonged to the old established Burgher families. Ostensibly the only restriction on membership was unbroken Dutch/European paternal descent. Dutch Burghers who had not yet established themselves, or could not afford the subscription or were not in Colombo or did not wish to apply because of a fear that they did not have a history that could meet the entry criteria of unbroken paternal European descent and would not feel comfortable in the DBU social group, were not invited to join.

Colombo society had numerous social and sporting clubs, most often based on ethnicity, that catered to every interest of the English-educated middle-class. Young Burghers, irrespective of class, joined the Burgher Recreation Club for social cricket and hockey, the Havelock Sports Club or the Ceylon Rugby and Football Club for rugby football, the Otter Aquatic Club for water sports, and the DBU Tennis Club for tennis. There were numerous other sporting clubs, both communal and non-communal, and the DBU had to compete for the young Dutch Burghers. Dutch Burghers joined the DBU during their courtship years, or after marriage and the start of a family. The 'DBU Comrades' were formed to encourage young Dutch Burghers to meet, fraternise and form more permanent relationships.

The Union continued throughout the 20th century to be the premier Burgher organisation, the visible apex of the influential section of the Burgher community and the official organisation representing Burgher interests and Burgher society. The individuals who were nominated to represent the Burghers in the State Council, the House of Representatives and the Senate were always members of the DBU and usually past or present Presidents.

The unfortunate fallout from the existence of the DBU was that the 'other Burghers' were not represented in the political process and their social needs were not given adequate attention. The Burgher leadership was paternalistic, preached thrift, thought of Burgher poverty as moral irresponsibility (too many children, gambling, drink, inability to live within one's means, etc.), and as evils to be overcome by the individual. The men of the elite were convinced that a superior education was the only solution to Burgher unemployment and so they concentrated on the education of the children of the community.

The DBU had an active Social Service Committee, mostly female, and this committee was active in moderating the views of the men and in helping poor and needy Burghers whether members or not. The practice continues today for the poor remain needy.

It was from about the time of the presidency of retired Justice Percy Colin-Thome in the late 1970s that a revived Dutch Burgher Union began to lose its elitist communal tag and begin the process of regularly reaching out to other communities by way of meetings, speeches, articles about non-Dutch Burghers in the Journal and inter-ethnic invitations to non-members.

The DBU was managed by a President, Secretary, Treasurer and a General Committee. In Volume XLIX 1959, a year when the Burghers were feeling the cold winds of change and talk of migration was widespread, the President was Dr. E.S. Brohier, the Secretary was G.S. (Scotty) Dirckze, and the Treasurer was Ivor Wendt. The com-

mittee consisted of thirty Colombo members and fifteen outstation members. They were:

Colombo: D. V. Altendorff, M. S. Walbeoff, C. P. Brohier, A. E. Christoffelsz, W. J. A. van Langenberg, C. G. Ebell, A. L. Loos, G. V. Grenier, C. L. Speldewinde, C. J. van Alphen, D. Jansze, A. L. B. Ferdinand, H. van den Driesen, E. N. Wambeek, Frank. E. Loos, C. P. Wambeek, H. C. Sansoni, W. G. Woutersz, I. L. Ferdinands, W. W. Beling, F. R. L. Ferdinands, C. L. H. Paulusz, M. E. van den Driesen, R. D. P. Paulusz, O. L. de Kretser Jnr, J. A. Leembruggen, Dr. Sam de Vos, Dr. E. L. Christoffelsz, Dr. H. S. Christoffelsz, and Dr. L. D. C. Austin.

Outstation: Dr. V. H. L. Anthonisz, H. P. Austin, T. F. Blaze, A. E. Buultjens, T. P. Carron, E. F. N. Bartholomeusz, A. R. Demmer, G. F. Ernst, F. W. E. de Vos, E. S. de Kretser O. L. de Kretser, Snr, H. R. Kriekenbeek, V. C. Modder, Donald M. A. Speldewinde, and F. L. C. van der Straaten (p.87).



The objects of the Dutch Burgher Union were (in summary form):

- To promote the moral, intellectual and social well-being of Dutch descendants in Ceylon.
- To inculcate in the minds of the youth of the community principles of self-help, self-reliance and thrift; to foster and encourage by financial aid...talent and industry in those who are deserving and to relieve by charitable help distress and want...among those destitute.
- To revive and conserve...beneficial customs of the Dutch ancestors...and to promote the study of the Dutch language.
- To promote and foster a feeling of fellowship among members and to draw families into closer association with each other.
- To gather by degrees a library...of...Dutch occupation literature...and... Dutch literature.
- To...prepare and read...papers...on questions...relating to the origin and history of Dutch Burghers...and publish genealogies of Dutch families in Ceylon.
- To prepare and publish a memorial history of the Dutch in Ceylon, their social life and customs,...and their influence upon existing institutions in Ceylon.
- To consider and discuss other matters kindred to the above.

In The Sub-nations of Western Europe, in N.Glazer and D.P.Moynihan [Eds] Ethnicity: Theory & Experience, 1975, W.Patterson describes 'ethnicity' as:

A people, a folk, held together by some or all of such more or less immutable characteristics as common descent, territory, history, language, way of life or such attributes that members of the group have from birth onwards (p.181)

The Dutch Burgher Union created a community, a freemasonry, bound to one another by common descent, history, language and a way of life. The emphasis was 'Dutch' and 'descendant' and membership was restricted to:

Any Dutch descendant of full age and respectable standing in the community shall be eligible. The term 'Dutch descendant' shall include the descendants in the male line of all those of European nationality (race) who were in the service, or under the rule of the Dutch East India Company in Ceylon, and the chil-

dren of such descendants in the female line by marriage with Europeans (DBU Journal Volume 1, 1908, pp: 55-60).

The rule allowed entry to the male descendants of the Dutch who had married non-dutch females but excluded non-Dutch males and their children, even when wives were of Dutch descent.

The DBU failed in one respect. It could not develop an interest in the study of the Dutch language. In other respects it fulfilled its aims. It published the Bulletin every month for members and the Journal every three months for subscribers until the 1960s (except when there was a shortage of paper during the war years) and even less often after the 1970s. The Union has as its motto 'Eendracht maakt Macht' (Union gives strength), an anthem written in Dutch and the Union celebrated Dutch national events. The Journal contained articles about the Dutch period in Ceylon, the early British period, Dutch history, the Dutch Reformed Church, Burgher family genealogies, revisions and updates of these histories, proceedings of meetings, reviews of articles on the Dutch, the Burghers, obituaries of leaders of the community, news of weddings and social events affecting the community and an array of other information that helped create and sustain a community of people claiming a shared past. The DBU Journals are a mine of information for researchers into the Burgher community and the author has quoted extensively from that record. The opinions expressed and the language used are now dated but reflect the concerns of those days.

The Dutch Burgher Union was a gathering-place for the leaders of the Burgher community, the 'movers and shakers' in that community. Young achievers were encouraged, the poor of the community were helped and the community's interests were protected. The Union created a special feeling of 'belonging'. It was a group that was privileged not only by birth but also by achievement. The DBU provided a comfortable gathering place for both young and old. The Union premises were a place where the young achievers, respected older leaders and the elder statesmen would meet, discuss issues and arrive at a consensus on issues important to the Burgher community. The requirement on a Dutch/European past effectively prevented a great number of Burgher families from becoming members. Many Burghers and Eurasians deeply resented this.

The DBU was able to provide Burghers with the historical documentation that was required by the Australian Government to satisfy the '75% European descent rule' at the time this was a requirement for permanent residence in Australia.

The Dutch Burgher Union achieved most of the aims laid down in its constitution. After political independence and the departure of many Burghers the Union has now modified its emphasis on the Dutch past. The DBU continues as the main Burgher organisation. It is active in social work among the poor, the old and the needy.

The Dutch Burgher Union Journal

The Dutch Burgher Union Journals (DBUJ), contain many interesting articles about the Burghers and their history in British times. R.G. Anthonisz was editor between 1908 and 1912, Vernon Grenier from 1913 to 1916, L.E. Blaze from 1917 to 1923, E.H. van der Wall in 1924 and 1925. J.R. Toussaint edited the next 25 volumes between 1926 and 1950 and R.L. Brohier from 1950 to 1960. G.V. Grenier then edited the Jour-

nal for a year until R.L.Brohier again took over the editorship until Volume 68 in 1968.

The exodus of the Dutch Burghers resulted in the Journal not being published for thirteen years until P.Colin-Thome revived the Journal and published Volume LXIX, Volume 69, in 1981. Volume LVIII (1968) contains an index of all articles in the Journal between Volumes I and LVIII. In 1985 Mrs G. Young became the editor.

The Journals are a private record of Dutch Burgher history, the activities of its members, and the concerns and achievements of the community. It is a remarkable record and chronicles the changing social, political, inter-ethnic and economic fortunes of the Burghers from 1908 onwards. Volume XXXVIII, January 1948, has a list of the seventy-seven subscribers. There were never more than a hundred. The Journal continues to be published but annually rather than quarterly as in the earlier years.



The DBU celebrated Dutch occasions such as St. Nikolaas' Day on 6 December (the Dutch equivalent of Christmas), the (Dutch) Queen's birthday and Founder's Day (R.G.Anthonisz's birthday). There were also monthly members' days, dances and special social events where members and their children socialised.

The DBU was a meeting place for many young Burghers and many of them formed permanent alliances. For example, Volume XL of April 1950 reports (p.79) under Stamboek contains certain items that are of interest to former Burghers now resident in Melbourne.

Marriages:

- 26th November, Miliani Sansoni and Monique Deutrom.
- 22nd December, Jack Berry Joseph and Vilma Rita Gander.
- 26th December, Godfried Gerard van den Driesen and Thelma Ebert.
- 26th December, Pat Guinan and Valencia Ferdinands.
- 27th December, Mervyn Werkmeister and Primrose Koch.
- 28th December, Ronald Bartholomeusz and Therese Pietersz.
- 4th January, Rex Miliani Sansoni and Ruth Mary Arndt.
- 18th February, At Kandy, Allan Rex Demmer and Christine Amy van Twest.

Deaths:

- 2nd January, Jennifer Brohier, daughter of Mr and Mrs F. Brohier.
- 8th January, Aileen Woutersz, daughter of Mr and Mrs A. Woutersz.
- 9th February, Hugh Ferdinands Beling.
- 19th February, Francis Adolphus Speldewinde.
- 14th February, at Matara, Glenville Hubert Altendorff.
- 26th February, at Kalmunai, Dr. Terence Earle de Kretser.
- 5th March, at Kurunegala, Joseph Elon Brohier.
- 7th March, at Colombo, Arthur Alison Loos.
- 10th March, at Colombo, Mrs Lucille Prins.
- 24th March, in London, Miss Dorothy Kathleen Jansz.
- 24th March, at Colombo, Mrs Anna Mariya van Langenberg.
- 26th March, at Colombo, Shelton Dickman Loos.



Volume XXXIII of January 1944 reports the President's speech on Founders Day.

This is our day of Remembrance. In the first place let us think of our Founder, that great and simple man, who had the foresight to realise that unless our community was united by an association of this nature we were in danger of losing our identity and place in the well-being of the country. There was great opposition to his scheme, but the force and sincerity of his arguments were so convincing that very soon his opponents became his strong supporters...It may be true that ours is not a Political Association, but it would be unwise for us to shut our eyes to what we see around us and sit tight and do nothing, whereas all the other communities...are watching to seize every opportunity of forging ahead.

It is true we are of European descent and we are proud of it, but let us not forget that we are also Ceylonese and that this is our home. We must, of course, keep our identity and all that this stands for, but we must join hands more closely with other communities and work together for the general advancement of the Island but...Our community is too small to stand aloof and work for itself. Our relations with the other communities have always been cordial and it must continue to be so...(pp. 85-86).



F.H. de Vos of Galle prepared forty family genealogies in the early years of the Union and his successor, Durand Altendorff, compiled a further two hundred. It would have been a difficult and laborious undertaking. All Dutch Burghers who applied to enter Australia during the period of the 'White Australia policy' owe them a debt of gratitude for their piecing together the jigsaws of family histories. Volume III of 1910 included an article by F.H.de Vos 'Hints to Pedigree Hunters in Ceylon'. This is an extract:

Having for many years been engaged in compiling the pedigrees of Dutch descendants, (these) hints will be useful to those anxious to know something about their ancestors...one must be equipped with a tolerable knowledge of the language of the original settler...next step is to subscribe to a periodical devoted to genealogical research...and commence a correspondence...with the Burgomaster of the town...requesting the dates of the settler, his brothers and sisters, and the marriage of his parents. The probable year of birth of the original settler is ascertained by deducting twenty from the year of arrival, most settlers being of that age on arrival in the East.

Resort should be made to the marriage registers of the Dutch churches in Ceylon. In these registers the name of the birthplace is always given, and sometimes the age of the parties to the marriage. Where the latter is not mentioned, by deducting twenty five from the year of marriage, the probable date of birth can be ascertained as, under Roman-Dutch law, that was the legal age of majority...Fancy names were not fashionable in those days and the invariable custom was to give the eldest son the name of the child's paternal grandfather, and the eldest daughter the name of the paternal grandmother. By this means the names of the child's grandparents can be ascertained with tolerable certainty, that is to say, the full name of the grandfather and the Christian name of the grandmother...

Compile a skeleton pedigree in a note book from the information available and enter likely names as they occur from further investigation. After some

years one will find that some of these notes can be pieced together...the conjectural part of the pedigree should be kept separate from the part that has been clearly ascertained and established...Where a man and a women are sponsors (at a baptism)...it is almost irresistible that they are man and wife. In many cases this is expressly stated in the Church register...Genealogical investigating should not be...in a spirit of ostentation but of intelligent inquiry. Never conceal or misstate facts (pp. 14-17).



Durand Altendorff was born in Matara in 1873 and died in 1966 in his 94th year. His ancestor had arrived in 1730 from Germany. He joined the Police where he held various offices until promoted Inspector. In 1902 he was sent to the Finger Print Bureau in Madras...and on his return introduced the system to Ceylon. In 1905 he was again sent to Madras to study their system of training and on his return set up the Ceylon Police Training school in the old Racquet Court, now the Chalmers Granaries, and this was where the Police recruits paraded and were put through their drill. In 1906 he was appointed Assistant Superintendent of Police, Colombo. In 1925 he was appointed Deputy Inspector-General of Police in charge of the Criminal Investigation Department and the Provinces. He was also honoured with the Imperial Service Order and retired in 1931...He evinced a deep interest in the Dutch Reformed Church, the church of his fathers, and was a stalwart member of his Consistory. The Dutch Burgher Union received his chief attention where he has been Treasurer, Secretary and on the General Committee. His greatest, most noble and valuable contribution...has been the compilations of the genealogies of Dutch Burgher families...only those who have attempted the task know what the labour involves. It is not difficult to get the right names of one's father and grandfather but then comes the real trouble. Inquiries have to be made, faded and often torn records and registers have to be searched in various old churches and musty old family papers have to be verified. The results have to be then put together in some order. It is difficult to imagine anyone who is not keenly interested in the task going through all this trouble...so it is no slight credit that Mr. Altendorff made this his study and occupation in retirement and since 1933 has compiled no fewer than 100 genealogies of families. These have been printed from time to time in the Journal. Mr. Altendorff never charged for his services and his efforts have placed the Dutch Burgher Union and many Dutch descended citizens...under an obligation that cannot be repaid (Abridged version. Volume XLI (July 1951, p. 100). 1

The Saint Nikolaas' Day fete was a special occasion for the children. Between 200 and 300 children, in their best clothes, and many dressed in Dutch costumes, gathered on 5 December to celebrate the Dutch Christmas day. This is an edited summary of the story given by Miss Pieters (who later became Mrs. R.G.Anthonisz) to members' children. It was reported in Volume XIX, 1930:

This day in Holland is a very happy one for all children. For a whole month before every child is very good because on the 5 December a great Bishop comes flying through the air from Spain, on his white horse, descends through every chimney, and brings every child a present. He comes with an attendant carrying a big bag and all naughty children are put into this bag and taken away. He is not like the English Santa, who is a funny man. He is a stately

Bishop with mitre and crook whom you must receive respectfully...here he comes...He is followed by a Negro attendant in medieval Spanish costume, carrying a sack on his back and birch rods in his hand (pp. 156-157).



The Journal had articles that especially targeted women. The articles are dated and could be a source of amusement today. They are reproduced because they represent a people, a time and a place that have gone for ever. It was a world of relaxed charm, of warm dignity, a slow and unchanging life-style. It is no more. The articles were written by Lene Weinman under the pen-names 'Athena' or 'Lillith'. They appeared in the Journal between 1950 and 1955. Here are some extracts:

How to keep servants. Domestic service is decidedly more comfortable, but less well paid, and both women and men prefer to be employed in factories...Domestic service seems to have fallen into disrepute...It is quite common to hear the 'servant problem' discussed whenever two or three women are gathered together, each reciting their woeful experiences, and some seem better off than others. Some women seem utterly incapable of keeping their servants and one constantly sees new faces among their domestics, who seem to go as fast as they come, while that house acquires 'a bad reputation for servants' in the locality and eventually they find it very difficult to induce anyone to take service with them. The reason seems hard to find as the family is small, the wages fair, duties reasonable...but the exodus continues and each new servant engaged remains only a few weeks. In others, the work is harder and the wages the same but they seem to possess the secret of inducing their servants to stay...I have concluded that the secret is in the personality of the mistress of the house. If she has sympathy with her servants and tact, it goes a long way in her management of them.

Some women give an unpleasant order to a servant in a tone which instantly arouses feelings of resentment and gains only sullen obedience, while others give the same order in such a pleasant manner that it removes the feeling that there is anything derogatory in it and the order is obeyed with cheerful alacrity.

It is also a fatal mistake to be constantly scolding servants, as some women have the habit of doing. It only makes them rebellious, discontented and sulky. At their best, servants are but human and as liable to have their faults and make mistakes as ourselves. A grave rebuke, moderately uttered carries far more weight than hours of hysterical scolding and nagging. Others make their servants dishonest and unreliable by continually distrusting them. The result is that in spite of all their precautions they are robbed and cheated in a manner never experienced by their more easy-going and confiding neighbour who makes her servants understand that she trusts them, depends on their honesty and gives them opportunities of proving it.

Never interfere in servants quarrels, or take sides in differences. Let them settle it among themselves. Since the chief drawback in domestic service from the servants' point of view seems to be the lack of liberty, I think we might try to make it more attractive to them by letting them have more time to call their own after they complete their round of daily duties, time they can spend in attending to their own sewing, their own little business, or visiting relations and friends. Some mistresses and masters treat their servants as if they were mere machines for working. They seem to think that a servant's life ought to be

one perpetual round of duties. When they have done all their daily duties, some other work must be found for them to do, they must never rest, never feel tired. Needless to say, these are the people who are always in trouble regarding servants...they can never keep them and they are indignant when they leave.

We must try to remember that our servants are mortals just like ourselves with the same longings...that we all have, of whatever class, colour, or creed (pp. 8-10).

Mothers and sons. (Volume XL October 1950). The average boy is brought-up in masses, I mean when school life begins for them. They are put in twenties and thirties into classes each receiving the same treatment and teaching as if equal in age. This system, as a rule, works well, as impartial justice rules the community, and honest and upright men are frequently the result. But it is before school life commences that a mother influences her son's whole later life. The life and character of a boy is largely influenced by the home training that precedes it. Olive Schreiner says 'The first six years of our life make us, what is added later is only veneer'. Of the parents, the mother's influence is mightier, because of her deeper affection, and her continual presence with the child.

Fathers may win position for their children, but mothers impart character. The mother is generally faithful to her trust, but many fathers are indolent and careless...There is the mother who is too amiable and easy going, who forgets her dignity and the respect due her by her children, who figuratively makes a doormat of herself, forgetting that boys not trained to politeness and thought for others, develop into boorish, disagreeable men...

Some mothers are fussy, constantly fussing over the health or possible accidents to their boys. Health, undoubtedly is of great importance to a man's future welfare, but ordinary thoughtful care and silly fussiness are different things altogether, the latter being annoying to the boy and misery for the mother. It is both ridiculous and unnecessary. Accidents, with ordinary care, may be guarded against and a boy wisely trained to be aware of danger and to act with discretion. It is a silly mother who sees danger in everything. Nobody can be kept in cotton wool...

We meet some mothers who pray and lecture, and are so absurdly and unreasonably strict, that they drive their sons to do the things they would most want them to avoid, forgetting that goodness and uprightness need not necessarily mean gloom and misery...There are the mothers so short sighted that they think innocence ought to mean ignorance and would fain send their sons into the world so shielded and fenced from evil that they go unaided by a wise knowledge of natural and social facts...

I must not forget the ultra-domestic mother who is so immersed in providing good meals, etc., that she loses her social status, finds friends slipping away, and home becomes uninteresting to her big sons. This is a radical mistake for boys need young companions and fun suitable to their years and if this is not encouraged in the home, they will look for it elsewhere and it is quite possible that the friendships they make, and the fun they will get, may not always be quite desirable...Many errors are made purely from want of thought, so let us think about it more, and strive ever to attain the ideal (pp. 140-142).

Mothers and daughters. (Volume XL October 1950). Most of us have, consciously or unconsciously, exalted ideas of motherhood...It is built up from

many sources. Books, the behaviour of real mothers of our experience, the tributes of the great to the love and influence of their mothers...all of these help to make up our own ideal mother...It is this ideal, I am sure that is at the bottom of the wretchedness a girl feels when between her mother and herself arise 'mistakes and misunderstandings'. The ideal so fondly cherished has been shattered...and is a great shock to heart and mind. The ideal of the daughter to be good and kind to her mother has also been shattered and consequently much wretchedness of soul results...What then are the conditions necessary to ideal relations between mothers and daughters? The most obvious are patience, love and a sharing of interests...there are times when daughters think that their mothers are not as patient as they ought to be, frequently they are not loving, and it is impossible to share interests when mother does not share interests, invite or inspire confidence.

Mothers, most of them, are shy and lonely...For years their lives are crowded with duties and cares, for years they have had their children dependent on them for everything, the mothers have been indispensable...but as time goes by, the children develop strong characteristics and temperaments, and become wonderfully independent...and the mothers begin to see that they are not needed as they used to be, and if they do not have much self-confidence, they sometimes begin to think they are not needed at all...and so they begin to feel lonely...and there is nothing in the world so lonely as the sense of not being needed...

One of the surest of life's ironies is that the young do not appreciate their mothers to the full until they are gone from them...But there is one time when daughters are somehow sure of their mother's sympathy, and that is when they tell them of their friends, particularly male friends, for in this every mother is interested. Every mother likes her daughter to marry, but at the same time, is in a panic lest she should marry the wrong man...and perhaps, because of this, there is so much feeling on both sides, and this is where the mother most frequently blunders, and the daughter most often fails (pp. 142-143).

From a Woman's standpoint. (Volume XLII October 1952). It is within the power of every girl or woman to develop just that sort of womanliness which every man, if he is fit to be called a man, respects. Such respect, when womanliness and goodness blend, soon bears fruit in homage, reverence and devotion...women were ordained to be the noble and honourable mates of men...she must learn to respect herself, prove herself worthy of man's respect by her own quiet strength of consistent goodness. She should shun flippancy and frivolity, steadily strive for all that is highest and noblest, and then she will command rather than demand respect. The world has no room for silly women who trade on their femininity...The charm of a woman to men lies in the contrast between the sexes...men abhor masculine women. Womanliness is a woman's chief asset...How few women realise what a tremendous responsibility is theirs! Mothers, wives, sisters, sweethearts are always influencing men for good and evil. In a wonderful way a good woman can influence and ennoble the life of a man who feels her spell, be it lover, husband, son or brother...Man forms his idea of womanhood from the woman he comes in contact with. Women stand for his ideals of daintiness and order, faith and chastity, tenderness and pity, or in short, all that is understood by the word 'womanliness'...and those who have children to bring-up have a yet larger responsibility. We are moulding the next generation, with all its possibili-

ties...it is truly overwhelming to think of the awesome responsibilities and tremendous power of women...and it is not given to a chosen few, for it is given to all wives, mothers, sisters and sweethearts in the world...To those young girls at the dawn of womanhood, who are faintly beginning to realise their influence over the opposite sex, I would say, do not abuse your newly acquired power by indulging in the pastime of breaking hearts...retain your self-respect, do not indulge in the silly game of flirting, thus destroying all reverence for womanhood (pp. 191-192).

A Woman's thoughts about Women. (Volume XLV 1955). Many readers of the older generation will remember when it was considered forward or immodest for a girl to leave the seclusion of her parents' home and go out to earn her living...the only work for her to do was a little needlework, or to make Dutch sweet-meats and fancy dishes in the house...Things have changed and in nearly every home we now see girls taking their place in the working world. Many have taken to the profession of teaching very successfully, a great proportion are music teachers, others leave their homes to take paid positions as nurses in hospitals, nursery governesses or even nurse maids, while numbers take up posts as typists, shop girls, and telephone operators, receptionists, stenographers and secretaries.

It is gratifying to find the dignity of labour is at last recognised...Girls have now reached the happy position of being able to assist their parents in the arduous task of bread-winning...The Burghers are not wealthy...and need the united efforts of the parents as well as the children to keep the home together...

We have realised that want of occupation and a blank and aimless existence saps a woman's life and makes it an idle and useless inanity. It is not only noble but obligatory on every women that she should justify her existence by working for the well-being and happiness of others, if not for her daily bread. There is no joy like service...and it is most favourable that so many are earning their livelihood instead of looking to their fathers and brothers to support them in idleness...In how many of our big shops do we see men in all the vigour of health selling ribbons and laces....surely these are occupations that might well be left to women...but this is a wide subject which I am not prepared to enlarge at present...In the nursing profession the salary offered is really nominal. I do not think it fair this should be so, as the duties are quite arduous.

No longer do we see girls unsuitably and ridiculously attired. It is quite refreshing to see our business girls dressed with simplicity and taste that compel admiration. Only seldom do we meet with the solitary exception that proves the rule, of a working girl wearing silk stockings, velvet shoes, muslin dresses bedecked with laces and ribbons, and long ear-drops, and it only serves as an object lesson of what to avoid...the general tendency is to dress plainly but with all evidence of good taste...a well dressed woman is one who is always suitably dressed...The skin-tight, slashed skirt is now happily a thing of the past, but the pendulum seems to have swung to the other extreme and devotees of fashion seem determined to nullify the graceful lines of our ampler skirts by wearing them so absurdly short that it makes the wearer absolutely coarse and vulgar, in short, like a ballet dancer off the stage (pp. 88-89).

Courtesy (Volume XLII 1952). Courtesy is a virtue which is in some danger of being forgotten today, yet it forms such a necessary part of a beautiful character that no one can claim the title of 'gentleman' or 'gentlewoman' if he or she

neglects the practice of it. Courtesy has been aptly defined as 'love in little things'...and from these words we gather the reason why we should show courtesy to one another. We must not forget that a courteous manner should be worn always and not only on special occasions. Courtesy is the happy way of doing things, and should adorn even the smallest details of life...Therefore, first and foremost, courtesy should be practiced in the home...by a courteous manner and gentle speech, more influence is often attained over others...Woman, not man is the home-maker, so girls should be particularly careful to be courteous, and by gentle, gracious ways set an example to, perhaps, rude and selfish brothers...To parents too, how much more gentle and courteous should we be?...We must not think that when we are courteous to those dear to us in our homes, it is all that is required of us. We must take pains to be courteous to our servants too. Orders should be given politely, pleasantly and kindly and we should avoid troubling them unnecessarily. For instance, there are some of us who are fond of lying in bed late. This results in delaying servants' work in the mornings, and often those who are responsible for the delay...will be heard blaming the servants later on when they are late in their work. A courteous and kind mistress always gains more cheerful and willing service than a rude and arbitrary one, and the former is rarely troubled by the 'servant worry'...We carry courtesy into school life too...how many opportunities there are for doing those little services for teachers and class-mates...it promotes harmony in the class-rooms and the playgrounds...

The rude discourteous girl loses many opportunities of giving pleasure to others, she is always oblivious of the little services she might render...we find her talking boisterously where others are reading and pays scant attention to the wants of her neighbours...In recent years there has been a deplorable slackness in the behaviour of men towards women...but this harmful tendency is neutralised by the man who always rises at the approach of a woman, who always opens the door for her, and who takes his cigarette or pipe out of his mouth (pp. 84-85).



Burgbers were prominent in the regular armed forces and volunteer reserves from early in British rule. This special interest continued after independence and until the general exodus in the 1960s. J.R Toussaint wrote this article in Volume XXIX (July 1939):

As early as 1803 the Burgbers enlisted in the Corps of Militia for the security and protection of Colombo. Their services were used in 1848 in suppressing the Kandyan rebellion and they were the first to join when the Volunteer movement was inaugurated in 1881 and many held high rank. They took a prominent part in helping put down the 1915 disturbances and were in the forefront in volunteering on the outbreak of war in 1914.

An attitude, current at that time, was that of the President whose speech was reported in Volume XXIII, 1933:

Many of you will remember how the riots of 1914 led to the formation of Town Guards on a racial basis. There was a Burgher Section of the Town Guard in Kandy of which I was the officer-in-charge. A question arose regarding the admission to the Burgher section of some persons, who were not

regarded as Burghers. When the matter was referred to the Commanding Officer, who was an English planter, he said 'Your men claim to be Dutch Burghers but are they members of the Dutch Burgher Union?' That was the test. I could have taken my hat off to that man (p. 85).

The President did have some reasons. The same issue reported that membership had declined to 267 and that further resignations were imminent. The Great Depression between 1929 and 1933 had cost many members their jobs and many could no longer afford to be members.

Volume XIV, July 1924, had the Roll of Honour of members who 'fought for King and Country' in the 1914-1918 war. They were all volunteers. The small Dutch Burgher community supplied 154 combatants of whom seventeen died in action. Thirty-eight were officers, four enlisted in Australian/New Zealand regiments (Ducat Auwardt, S.N. Schokman, James Loos & Marck Nell), and four were in the Army Flying Co/R.A.F. There were fourteen surgeons, Captains in the Royal Army Medical Co, among whom were two with the name Leembruggen, and H. Speldewinde de Boer. C.G.O. Speldewinde was a Second Lieutenant in the Indian Army, attached to the 40th Pathan Regiment. C.P. Brohier was a Second Lieutenant in the same regiment attached to the Erimpura Regiment.

Multiple names included three Brohier, seven de Vos, five Fretz, four Jansz, nine Leembruggen, five Loos, six van Cuylenberg and four Woutersz, one of whom was in the United States Army (pp. 2-6).



Burghers were prominent as teachers in schools. It was one of the very few 'respectable' occupations available to Burgher women outside the home. Burgher women and men were music teachers, musicians, seamstresses, nurses and doctors. In more recently times, after World War II, women also worked as clerks, typists and shop assistants. Burgher women were often the only middle-class females who took paid employment outside the home in the first quarter of this century. The 1939-1945 war had a major effect on employment opportunities for Burgher women. The following article on male Burgher teachers appeared in Volume LII, December 1962. Ceylon was a male-dominated society and I could not find an interesting article in the *Journal* on female teachers.

Burghers find few places in our schools today either as teachers or pupils...and this of course is triggered by the educational tribulations of present times. In happier days there were Burgher teachers who served their age and generation right well and nobly. To them many pupils are immeasurably in debt, but few are left to bemoan their passing. Their's was a true sense of vocation, but a thankless generation whose memories shorten as they grow in opulence, have failed to give recognition to the invaluable contributions they made to the country.

Who that knew them does not recall with gratitude the names of Kriekenbeek, van der Wall, van Cuylenberg, van Hoff, Paulusz, Vollenhoven, Jansz, Nicholas, Poulier and Mack of Royal College, Arndt and Beven of St. Thomas', Mack and Honter of Wesley, Jansz of St. John's of Panadura, and the Blazes of Kingswood.

Other family names associated with teaching are Ludovici, Meerwald, Ludowyke, van Langenburg, Austin, Raffel, Marshall, Rode, van Geyzel, Spelwinde, Felsing, de Zilwa, Ondaatje, and Alvis.

The writer did not include the many dedicated teachers at the schools in Kandy, Galle, Matara and the smaller schools in Colombo. Such an article would have run into many pages. Burghers were pre-eminent as school teachers until the introduction of the 'Sinhala only' policy in 1958. Many schools, including the schools of the Dutch Reformed Church, had a continuous line of Burgher school Principals until 1958.



The education of bright and poor children was an important aspect of the DBU. Various trust funds were established and there were also regular subscriptions and special collections. General Legacies included the Isabel Loos Legacy, the Arndt Trust Fund, the Beling Memorial Fund and the Speldewinde Trust. Dutch Burgher charity was directed mainly towards education and the Dr de Hoedt Medical Scholarship and the Schneider scholarships at St. Thomas' College were especially valuable. The first issue of the journal in 1908 reported this speech by Dr. W.G. van Dort:

I can recall the names of some dozen or more prominent members of our community who, during their lifetimes, earned large incomes but at their death had squandered all by foolish extravagance...leaving their families destitute...We must...by education...render (individuals) useful and self-helpful members of the community (p. 22).

In Volume XVI (1927, p.129) it was reported that the school fees of eight children had been paid and another twenty-two were in need. By 1930 (Volume XIX, p. 225) the number helped had increased to twenty-two and the President reported:

There never was a time when so many members of the community were filling posts of responsibility, both official and unofficial, which were never open to Ceylonese before...but there is poverty existing among certain classes of the community...Parents who have been used to a thrifty life during the boom years have given their children so much that they are unfitted for the battle of life and [we] are fast becoming a community of motor-car Burghers...and a disquieting feature was the large number who have adopted genteel begging as an occupation, parents even training their children to beg...The strength of a chain is its weakest link...so the community and its welfare has to be saved in this period of economic stress and cut-throat competition (Volume XXIII April 1934, p. 212).

(Author's note: In his reference to 'motor car Burghers', the President was referring to the fact that when motor cars had been introduced into Ceylon the Burghers had enthusiastically welcomed its introduction and drove, sold and repaired cars in preference to continuing their secondary and tertiary education).

The number of applications...in the Primary classes in English schools exceeds the number of (Government) scholarships available...our aim is to secure equitable treatment for pupils whose mother tongue is English as children who learn in Sinhalese and Tamil receive free education in their mother tongue up to the school leaving grade. English speaking children should...be placed on an equal footing (Volume XXIV, January 1935, p. 117).

The Union has ensured that Burgher and other English-speaking children obtain free elementary education like the children of other communities...The State Council voted Rupees 40,000 for 1,000 scholarships for this purpose (1935 July issue).

The school fees of twenty six children have been regularly paid...so their studies are not interrupted through unemployment or financial embarrassment of their parents, four aged ladies and an orphan young lady were helped...one girl whose education and board were provided...has joined the nursing profession (Volume XXIV, July 1935, p. 27).

There is much destitution in the community...the usual distribution of hampers to the poor took place at Christmas...much useful assistance has been granted to promising students by payment of their college or school fees (Volume XXXI, July 1941, p. 23).

The desire and aim of the Union is to provide facilities for the poor boys and girls, especially the brainy ones, to continue studies when the parents find it impossible to afford to pay the necessary fees...Our boys must not only be able to compete with other boys [of other communities] but be better than them if we are to retain our place in the social and political life of the country (Volume XXXIV, April 1945, p. 104).

The chief object of the Social Service and Education Standing Committees is to prevent young people, who from circumstances of unavoidable calamity or misfortune, are falling away from the conditions of life in which they were born, and to encourage those with virtuous ambition and personal endeavour to strive and win their way to positions of influence in the community...Unemployment, hunger and disease are appallingly prevalent...Ill-nourished anaemic children, bred in the midst of poverty and squalor, are ill-equipped for life or to maintain the community's reputation for honesty and ability. The Committee appeals for all assistance in their task of alleviating distress and invites any members who are interested, to join in visits to the poor...to see the frightful conditions of misery (Volume XLIV, April 1954, p. 90).

The Dr. de Hoedt Medical scholarship (refer to Volume XV, 192, p.75) was one of the early specific legacies. Over the years many members' children were assisted through medical school. Volume XVI (October 1926, p. 45), reported that D.C.Buultjens, Byron Josef, Elsely Koch and Edgar de Kretser were being assisted financially. In Volume XXIII (1933, p. 53), it was reported that a student was being assisted in a dentistry course in England. In Volume XLV, April 1955, it was reported that sixteen-students, including four women, had been assisted since the inception of the fund.

The DBU also administered a number of other legacies to be used for poor relief. They included the Loos Legacy, the Arndt Trust Fund, the Beling Memorial and the Speldewinde Legacy.

The most important scholarships were the Schneider scholarships tenable at, St.Thomas' College. They were donated by the widow of Sir Stewart Schneider who was a (Burgher) judge of the Supreme Court. Volume XXIX (July 1939, p. 29-30) reported the details. All the scholarships were reserved for Burgher Christian children and only half were reserved for children of members of the Dutch Burgher Union. Half the scholarships were for day-scholars and the other half included board and lodging. The scholarships came into effect from 1939 and enabled bright Burgher boys to complete their education at a prestigious secondary educational institution

Among the winners of the Schneider scholarships were I.L. (Ivor) Ferdinands, who next won a scholarship to the University, and, after graduating, was placed first in the open C.C.S. (Ceylon Civil Service) examinations. F.C. (Charles) Speldewinde was 'another Schneider scholar who subsequently was awarded the 'Bayliss prize' because he was placed first in the British Empire in parts A & B of the examinations of the British Institute of Civil Engineers. Douglas Arndt and Benjamin Chapman were another two Schneider scholars who subsequently completed their medical studies and eventually migrated to N.S.W. where they practice. Volume XXVII, April 1938, had this extract from the President's speech at the A.G.M:

The question of higher education for the poorer boys of our community is one that merits serious consideration...unless we can pick out from members of our community boys of good character and high mental ability for the professions, we will...be left behind...We will receive just treatment at the hands of the majority community...but we must show that we have boys qualified to take high and responsible office (p. 164).

Of the scholarships reserved for children of members of the Union, there was not a single boy who offered himself for the examination (Volume XXXI of July 1941p. 28).

It is regretted that full advantage is not being taken of these [Schneider] scholarships. The Warden has not been able to find sufficient scholars to fill the vacancies as they arise. There is a danger of the scholarships being withdrawn...it is a sad reflection on our community that we should fail to realise the advantages offered to us...in education (Volume XXXI, 1942, p. 179).

Sadly, Burgher boys thought differently...the war was on and there were lots of jobs in flashy uniforms, in the armed forces and the Schneider scholarships, even those that were not reserved for the children of members of the DBU, were often not awarded.

The versatile community

The Journal reported the obituaries of important members and also occasional articles on members' achievements. This selection reveals a community with many interests, varied skills, and a determination to succeed, often from humble beginnings, and a harsh working life with minimum prospects of advancement other than by hard work. These Burghers often came from families that had few comforts but studied, won scholarships, worked hard and long in unspectacular jobs and ended life without great wealth or property but respected by the community at large. The careers they aimed at were law and medicine. Creative careers in the arts, media, advertising, marketing, communications, finance and banking were unheard of in pre-war II Ceylon. The highest administrative posts in business, academia, and the bureaucracy were not available to Burghers in colonial society. This chapter records the achievements of some of those who exhibited the special Burgher characteristics of 'toiling and serving'. They were the pioneer doctors and nurses, judges and teachers, bureaucrats and clerks, custodians of law and order, historians, surveyors and sportsmen, artists and photographers and all representative of a versatile community. Sadly, there are no records of the lives of the 'ordinary' Burghers, the drivers and guards, the dress-makers and home makers, the mechanics, the inspectors of police and excise, the customs appraisers...They are the unsung and unreported majority.



On 22 May 1983, National Heroes Day, a postage stamp was issued in honour of Charles Ambrose Lorenz. It was a tribute to this eminent Ceylonese and his contribution to Sri Lanka's political emancipation. Journal Volume XIX, October 1929, had an article by E.H. van der Wall on C.A.Lorenz. This is an abridged version:

By common consent, most writers regard Charles Ambrose Lorenz as the greatest Burgher of all time. There are numerous books and articles about Lorenz who was born in Matara in July 1829...and died at the height of his career at the age of forty-two in 1871....Lorenz's father was the Magistrate in Matara and Lorenz had to learn privately from his father until sent to the Colombo Academy when thirteen...He was already an accomplished musician on the violin and piano. Lorenz rapidly worked his way to the top at school...and at seventeen shared the Tumour prize with Frederick Nell, his senior by some years. Three years later he completed his articles...was enrolled as a solicitor and commenced a practice at which he soon became very successful...The next year he started a publication Young Ceylon with Frederick Nell as editor...Lorenz wrote verses, was a great socialiser, managed stage plays in which he acted, composed music, scene painted, and also wrote newspaper articles in addition to his legal practice. A year later he married the sister of his friend, Eleanor Nell...They had no children...Three years later they left for England to read for the Bar...and to visit his spiritual home, Holland. Lorenz returned, short of money, because of living without an income in Europe...and took the post of District Judge at Chilaw...When the Governor visited later and met Lorenz, he offered him the Burgher seat in the Legislative Council...Lorenz was one of those rare people who could do many things at the same time. He wrote rapidly and never read over or corrected...what he wrote, talking and listening at the same time. This was the cause of his tremendous output of work. He even drew a cartoon...which was accepted and published by the famous English magazine Punch.

Lorenz was the greatest verdict winning lawyer of his day, he loved a good argument and his wit and humour were the talk of the town...He was equally at home with the greatest and the poorest and was...especially interested in the young and their education. He was a member of the Colombo Municipal Council...represented the Burghers in the Legislative Council...but resigned his seat in 1864 in protest at the actions of the Secretary of State and...led the Unofficial Members in a walk-out...Lorenz played cricket, became involved in almost every public controversy, and enjoyed living...In 1870 he developed tuberculosis and never recovered. He died in August 1871...and a vast number...followed the remains to Kanatte for burial. He was only 42 years old (pp.49-65).



An article that did not appear in the Journal was the death of Alfred Ernst Buultjens in 1916. Rosita Henry and Percy De Zilwa provided the missing information.

Alfred Buultjens was born in 1865 in Matara. He attended St. Thomas' College, Colombo and in due course obtained distinctions in every subject in the Senior Cambridge examinations, being placed first among all candidates in Ceylon and India. He entered Cambridge University and in due course graduated with honours.

'A.E.B.' returned to Ceylon and became involved in the Buddhist revival. He renounced Christianity and became a Buddhist. His old school, St. Thomas', was so

upset that they had his name expunged from the panel of honour. He became the Principal of Ananda College, the premier Buddhist educational institution, and endeavoured to lift it to the standard of the Christian missionary schools.

Buultjens travelled overseas to Portugal and Holland where he collected and translated documents on the Dutch and Portuguese occupations of Ceylon. He pioneered the trade union movement and spent much of his time fighting for workers rights in factories and on the plantations. After he retired, he bought several coconut and citronella estates near Matara and busied himself with these until his death in 1916.

Alfred Buultjens was another example of a Burgher who devoted his life to those less fortunate than himself. He was a person prepared to go against the system for what he thought was right. An acknowledged historian and a lover of music, he also pioneered the trade union movement in Ceylon. He became a Buddhist when everyone in his community was Christian. He was indeed a maverick, loved by the Sinhalese Buddhists but detested by the Burghers, the Christians and the colonial administration.



Volume XXI, April 1932, has an article by L.E.Blaze on Dr. Lorenz Prins whose ancestor had arrived in 1690 as Governor Falck's Ambassador to the King of Kandy.

Lorenz Prins' father was a solicitor in Matara. Prins was educated at Trinity College, Kandy and St. Thomas' College, Mutwal. He entered the Medical College, passing in 1895...and...in 1905 obtained specialist qualifications in tropical medicine...He then followed the usual pattern of District Medical Officers and...served in a variety of places before returning to the Head Office as Deputy Director. He married Winifred van Cuylenberg in 1906 in England and...she returned there later to reside...and see to the education of her children...Lorenz returned there to live in retirement (pp. 222-223).

(Author's note: A few Burgher families educated their children in England even before the advent of air travel. The children often studied, worked, married and established residence in the United Kingdom. They did not return to Ceylon. Many Dutch Burgher families have relatives long resident in the U.K.)



Arthur Anthonisz: (Volume XXIII, October 1933).

He was one of the earliest licensed surveyors. He was from Matara, the brother of the founder of the DBU, and the second child in a family of six...He joined the brotherhood of the chain and arrow and was responsible for the railway line from Nawalapitiya to Nanu Oya....The experienced reader can understand the life of a surveyor half a century ago...tent soaked by the monsoon rains, chilled by the cold at night, or a veritable furnace under the rays of the tropical sun, furniture consisting of a narrow camp-bed, a camp table, the eternal problems of food, the companionship of leeches or ticks (pp. 78-79).

B.R.Blazé (editor) on Lawson Koch, born Jaffna 1838, founded the Medical College, died 1877.

Dr. Lawson Koch did not belong to us alone, for he belonged to all humanity. His great-grandfather, Godfried Koch was from Brandenburg, and came to the

East in 1755. Lawson...had his early education in Jaffna and, at the age of twenty, won a government scholarship...to the Medical College in Calcutta. There he won the Gold Medal and met, and married, Emma Miller...He began his medical career in 1862 and, when the Ceylon Medical College was founded in 1870...he was one of the three lecturers appointed. In 1875 he succeeded Dr. Loos as Principal. At this time he had the widest private practice and one of his patients was the great Charles Ambrose Lorenz...He never cared for remuneration for his services, he served the poor with special generosity and devotion. The grateful fishermen paid a striking tribute to his memory at his funeral by spreading white cloth all along the route from his home to the cemetery gate...He died within a week from the result of a slight scratch sustained in the course of a post mortem examination...All the best doctors hurried to his bedside but their combined efforts were of no avail...The Koch Memorial Tower is an expression of his countrymen's love and respect for his memory. His son, Dr. Vincent Koch, was given a medical education in Great Britain with subscriptions offered by a grateful public (Volume XXIV, July 1934, pp. 30-31).



William Sperling Christoffelsz was educated at the Colombo Academy and then at St. Thomas' College, Mutwal...He entered the Colonial Secretary's office in 1866...and remained there until he retired in December 1920...Sir Henry Blake, awarding him the Imperial Service Order, said 'The record of you and your family is a peculiar one, for between the services of your father and your own you represent a continuous service of almost a century...Your father served with distinction for fifty years and you have already served forty'...(the son served another fourteen years in the same job...retired at the age of seventy five years, and lived another fifteen years)...His greatest interest, apart from his official duties and domestic life, was the Dutch Church at Wolvendaal...He regularly attended services, grieved over the lack of support...and delighted in welcoming visitors, showing them around, telling them about the history of everything...from the Governor's pew and the pews of the Elders and Deacons, the choir gallery...the shields and armorial bearings of old nobles and gentry, the tablets on the floor...the ancient chairs, the massive chandelier, and the silver communion plate...He never wearied in that duty and his reverence with those things was apparent to all (Volume XXVI, April 1937, pp. 148151).



Sir Samuel Grenier's family is of Norman-French origin and Captain Jean Francois arrived to become Commandant of Matara...He married a Dutch lady, Charlotta Pietersz, and they had nine children...Samuel Grenier's father had twelve children by Matilda Maria Aldons...They lived in Jaffna, the family were...practicing Methodists and Samuel, the eldest...was destined for the Church...However, when his father was told that Samuel would be treated as a native minister...and not allowed to mount the pulpit, he decided that the cloth was not for his son...Samuel had high intellectual gifts...and was appointed Headmaster of the Central school when only twenty years of age. He also tutored the children of the District Judge in his spare time...Samuel was next apprenticed to Advocate Catheravelupillai [a Tamil]...Samuel and father next

went to Colombo...where he was to enter St. Thomas' College...but the parting with his father was too great...and they returned to Jaffna.

On the second occasion the parting was successful and Samuel remained in Colombo...Within a short while, his father died...and it took Samuel a full two weeks to travel to Jaffna where he was late for the funeral...Having done all that was necessary for the comfort of his mother and the education of his younger brothers and sisters, Samuel returned to Colombo...Lorenz helped him by giving him a job as sub-editor...Samuel continued his legal studies and in 1864 passed the Advocate examinations...He next became Secretary of the Colombo Municipal Council, being supported by Lorenz in his application...In 1868 he advanced his career by marrying Emily Drieberg, Lorenz's niece, and...when his wife's father died, took over the practice...He regularly practiced as an Advocate and gradually became recognised as the unofficial leader of the Bar...Eight years later he was offered and accepted an appointment on the Supreme Court Bench...Returning from a holiday in England, he was offered the Attorney Generalship over his friend, Charles Ferdinands, the Solicitor General...In 1891 he again went to England on leave...and received his knighthood direct from the Queen...Sir Samuel Grenier's character was seen in his home life and its simplicity. He was never happier than in the company of his gracious wife and two affectionate daughters...while up to the last his widowed mother and unmarried sister were the objects of his unceasing care (Vol. XXIX of January 1940 pp. 80-86).



C.E. de Vos was seventeen years old when he won the English University Scholarship for the Royal College. beating E.H. van der Wall of St. Thomas' by a narrow margin...He graduated at Cambridge University, gaining a Mathematics Tripos...entered the Middle Temple and was called to the Bar in 1894...returned to Galle and was appointed Crown Advocate in 1899 frequently acted as District Judge and was for many years a member of the Galle Municipal Council...was persuaded to sit as the Burgher Member of the Legislative Council...He was a long honoured President of the Y.M.C.A. and a loyal and warm supporter of the church of his fathers, the Dutch Reformed Church...He was a man of gentle disposition, scholarly habits, and simple tastes...A man without ambition for prominence in public affairs or public life...He was tolerant and liberal minded, yet holding firmly to those convictions which he formed himself...For many years he was the acknowledged leader of social and public life in Galle...and belonged to one of the oldest families...All communities, classes and creeds found in him a friend and adviser...At his funeral the citizens of Galle were present in large numbers (Volume XXXI, October 1941, pp. 83-84).



On December 20th 1944 Lionel Wendt passed away at the age of forty four...He was one of the most brilliant, original and versatile members of the Dutch Burgher community...He was a son of Mr. Justice Wendt, a former President of the Union. Lionel Wendt was a lawyer by profession, a musician by preference, and a photographer by choice...He was educated at St. Thomas' College and his ample proportions, brilliant mind, and unusual modes of speech and dress set him apart quite early in life...He went to England where

he was eventually called to the Bar. He returned and grew a beard. A Judge before whom he appeared rubbed his judicial chin and made a wry face. Wendt rose, bowed to the Bench and left the Bar never to return...Later he neither practiced law nor grew a beard and that was typical of the man...As a pianist, his technical accomplishment kept pace with his understanding, his taste was catholic ranging from Bach to Ravel and as a critic he was equally at ease with music, letters, and the fine arts and his knowledge of books was extremely wide...A brilliant conversationalist, with a significant assortment of expressive shrugs and gestures, he would tell a tale in a fascinating manner and there was, in his wit, a sophisticated urbanity, extremely irritating to those who attempted to impose on him...A man of warm, intense enthusiasms and small hatreds, it was a joy to hear him venting his wrath on little incapacities or pouring out his appreciation of new discoveries, particularly in the realm of photography...but his mordant sarcasm and impatience with mediocrity and pretence were always counter balanced by his great personal kindness and his unfailing encouragement of artistic ability wherever he found it. He would stoop to fan the smallest spark of talent to a flame.

Lionel Wendt displayed a predilection for complicated mechanical apparatus in his photography and in his music...he had a scientific mind, a great deal to say and yet could exercise rigid control over his emotions...He was the only Ceylonese photographer who had to his credit one-man exhibitions in Ceylon and London...Those who were privileged to know him will always remember him as host, conversationalist and raconteur and it will be long ere we see his like again (Volume XXXIV, April 1945, p. 124-125).

The 'Lionel Wendt Centre' is the acknowledged home of the Arts in Sri Lanka.



The Racquet Court was the birthplace and nursery of Ceylonese cricket. Its only rival was an open piece of ground where the first Royal College vs. St. Thomas' match was played...Among those early cricketers of the 1870s were Dr. T.F.Garvin, E. Ohlmus, and Charles, Horace & Edward de Kretser, Harry Ball, and F.O. van Langenberg. Charles de Kretser was an under-arm exponent and 'Eddo' Ohlmus was their hardest hitter...The matches played were chiefly against the different Regiments that were stationed in Colombo at that time...Such was the beginnings of the Colts Club in 1873 and then were added the pioneers of Ceylon cricket...Edward and Walter van Geyzel, Collie and 'Banda' Kelaart, A.O van Cuylenberg, V van Dort and B. and F. Thomasz. The Captains were Collie Kelaart, Ossie van Hoff, Dr. E.H.Ohlmus, Dr C.T.van Geyzel and W. Fransz.

In 1889 Tommy Kelaart joined the Colts, fresh from Royal College...In the match against St. Thomas' he had taken 7 for 14 in the first innings and 3 for 15 in the second. It took only two years for this young Colt to stake a claim to cricket's immortals...In 1891 he had the distinction of bowling out the world-renowned Dr.W.G.Grace...Tommy was undoubtedly the greatest left-arm bowler Ceylon has ever produced and one of cricket's finest gentlemen...The same year that Tommy bowled Dr. Grace, the Colts made their first appearance against their rivals, the Nondescripts. This club had been formed after the Burgher families had migrated from their 'Gibraltar', the Pettah, to the suburbs [of Borella and Cinnamon Gardens]...A total of eleven runs was all that the Cinnamon Gardens cricketers could put together in the first innings. Kelaart

took six wickets for three runs and C. Heyn took four wickets for six runs...For the five years before 1893 the European cricketers had to face defeat in their annual encounter with the Ceylonese team, and that was virtually the Colts. In the match of 1893 feelings were running high and the incidents of that match are best forgotten. It was the coolness of Tommy Kelaart alone that saved the day and the Colts won by eight runs...It was a highlight of Ceylon's cricket history and inspired many verses and songs...To write of Tommy's other remarkable performances will be a great task but the episode when in 1892 with four successive balls he clean bowled M.H.Payne, G. Vanderspar, G. Alston and W.B.Kingsbury...Writ large on the panels of that age are the other cricket names of A. Raffel as both batsman and bowler, J.C. Mc Heyzer & Sydney Joseph who long held the record of 128 runs for a first-wicket stand, Laurie Thomasz and O. Weinman (Volume XL, July 1950, pp. 110-112).



Sir Francis Soertsz's death has left a void in the Burgher community. Born on March 14, 1886 he entered St. Joseph's College, Colombo as one of its first pupils. After a brilliant career there he joined the Law College in 1908. He passed out as an Advocate and, after a short period of practice, proceeded to England where he was called to the Bar at Gray's Inn. On his return he practiced as a Crown Counsel and then moved to Galle where he became leader of the Bar. He later returned to Colombo to build a lucrative practice. In 1936 he was appointed a Puisne Judge, and acted on many occasions as Chief Justice. Retiring from the Bench in 1948, he placed his brilliant intellect and culture at the Country's disposal by accepting the professorship of the Faculty of Law in the University of Ceylon. He was knighted in 1947. Sir Francis was a brilliant speaker and writer and a most charming, unassuming and open-hearted man. He was the soul of generosity and fond of entertaining, not for swagger but from a love of seeing people enjoying themselves. Sir Francis was held in high esteem as a member of the Catholic Church and was a recipient of the high Papal honour of a Knight Commander of St. Gregory. (Volume XLI, January 1951, p. 39).



In the late nineties, A.C.B. (Colonel A.C.B.Jonklaas) entered on his professional studies at the Technical College, to qualify eventually for appointment in the Public Works Department. Later years were to prove him as one of that band of road-makers and bridge-builders who, with 'sweat and tears', and bullock-drawn rollers, founded the network of roads which today evokes the praise of many visitors to the island...His record as a 'Volunteer' in the Ceylon Light Infantry and as an officer of that military unit, which he rose to command from 1923 to 1927, was one packed with unflagging enthusiasm. His many older contemporaries who inspired his passion as a soldier, have nearly all gone before to the echo of those last volleys. From that host it is possible to pick a few names like Arthur Bartholomeusz and 'Dicky' Brohier, Jim van Langenberg, the Jayawardenas and Dep, Ohlmus and Modder...but there were none better or keener than A.C.B. In his last years he would delight to talk about the good old days in khaki, when he was the liveliest of live wires, a bundle of energy and sparkling efficiency. Lean of build, with not a spare ounce of

superfluous flesh, A.C.B. could outlast and outmarch the youngest and cockiest rookie among his officers. (Volume XLI, January 1951, pp. 37-38).



George Alfred Henry Wille was a regular contributor to the Ceylon Examiner and, when that paper became extinct, the Ceylon Independent...He next came into prominence as Secretary of the Colombo Pettah Library, a famous institution started by the Burghers in the early days of British rule when literature in English was scarce...By his reports he gave prominence to the institution and the Governor obtained a large loan, with the approval of the Secretary of State, to erect a new building. This was a unique instance of Government help to a private body...In due course even that building became inadequate and the books were transferred to the present Public Library. Mr. Wille's services over a quarter of a century were publicly acknowledged by the presentation of a gold watch and silver plate....

In 1911 he was elected Chairman of the largest and oldest Provident Association, the Ceylon Mutual Provident Association...He has been in the forefront of thrift movements for the middle and poorer classes all his life and was President of the Ceylon Workers Federation...He was the only public man of standing who took an interest in the Ceylon Savings Bank and was instrumental in forming the Lawyers Benevolent Association...His interest in public affairs was such that there was hardly a public movement during the last generation in which he did not play a part...

He was well known for his knowledge of constitutional matters and when the Ceylon National Congress came into existence, he had the sagacity to foresee the political reforms could not be stayed and alone among the minorities, joined Congress and took a prominent part in moderating its affairs...Such was the general confidence in his integrity and ability that when the Burgher seat was contested he was returned by the Burghers as their 'First Member'...A procession of Governors held him in high esteem, as indeed did the whole country...When the first State Council was constituted in 1931 he was nominated as Burgher member but a business misfortune prevented him from accepting until that was overcome...

He held numerous public offices, including President of the Y.M.C.A., Chairman of the Municipal Education Committee, President, Discharged Prisoners' Association, President Ceylon Social Service League, President Ceylon Workers Provident Association, President Ceylon Association for the Arts, Vice-president, Ceylon Economic Society, Chairman, Ceylon Industrial School, Member Council of Legal Education, Member University College Council, Member of the Railway Advisory Board, Local Government Board, Labour Advisory Board, Committee of the Public Library, Bible Society, and others. He was also Scriba, or Secretary of the Dutch Reformed Church...

He was a tower of strength to the poor, and particularly of his community...He worked for the general good with a rare catholicity of spirit. There was no one, not even in the majority communities, who has for generations rendered such varied and signal services to the country and George Wale's life was a fine example of hard work, a serious purpose in life, a keen sense of public duty and a belief in Ceylon as a home of all communities...He deserves to be numbered among the great Ceylonese (Volume XLI, October 1951, pp. 156-159).

Another Burgher who brought honour to his community and his country was Dr. .L.Spittel. He showed a keen interest in the DBU of which he was President between 1936 and 1938. Dr. Spittel was the first and possibly only person to interest himself in the Vaddahs, the original inhabitants of Sri Lanka. These aboriginal hunter-gatherers, relicts of the time when Ceylon, India and Australia were part of Gondwanaland, lived in the mountain vastnesses of the province of Uva. R.L. interested himself in these people, studied their customs and social structures, wrote books and articles about them, and attempted to have governments interest themselves in ameliorating their living conditions. The Vaddahs have now died out or been absorbed into village society in the jungle areas of Uva. Dr. Spittel was also a successful medical practitioner and managed his own hospital. He gifted the land on which the DBU later built Saint Nikolaas' Home for aged and homeless Burgher women.



The suddenness of the death of Cecil Alexander Speldewinde O.B.E., L.L.B. on 2 December 1959, while attending a meeting of the General Consistory of the Dutch Reformed Church, adds poignancy to the loss which his family, his community, and his Church have sustained by his passing...His charm of manner and personality, his energy and strenuousness put him at an advantage. These qualities added to his popularity.

Passing out as an Advocate...he commenced practice in Matara, was then Crown Counsel and Magistrate, and joined the Income Tax Department at its inception. He retired twenty six years later as Commissioner of Income Tax, Estate Duty and Stamps. Unsparing in energy, his rich experience was readily given the Government in various capacities. After his retirement, he was Adjudicator of Income Tax, a Member of the Bribery Commission, and Chairman of the Bus Nationalisation Compensation Board.

His contributions to the community were manifold. He was earlier Secretary of the Union, and President for four years from 1949. He was closely interested in education and social service and it was fitting that St. Nikolaas Home [for elderly women] was opened during his term in office.

He was the authority on all business matters affecting the Church of his Fathers and will be greatly missed. Scriba (Secretary) for many years, he enthusiastically promoted commercialisation of the former Dutch burial ground in the Pettah, thus placing the finances of the Church on a sound footing. He will be much missed. He was sixty one years of age (Volume L, April 1960, p. 57).



Few persons have left a more indelible impression of the rare qualities which command genuine respect among men than the subject of this appreciation [referring to Dr. Eric Stanley Brohier who had died on 9 August 1961]...The large crowd drawn from all communities which attended his funeral recently bore testimony that he had given of his best in service to the country, that he had achieved much in the walk of life which he chose and that his unobtrusive warm humanity had formed many sincere friendships.

Eric Brohier was born on 16th August 1894...He was educated at Royal College in San Sabastian days when Charles Hartley was Principal... When seventeen he passed the entrance examination for the student who desired to take medicine as a profession. A difficulty he had to face was the sudden death of

his father, R.A.Brohier at the early age of forty nine...He completed his studies in the minimum period of five years, winning the Garvin Gold Medal for surgery in the final examination and obtaining his Licentiate in 1916...He learnt that a ship in the harbour was in need of a surgeon and signed up...He had many a thrilling experience to relate on his return for the 1914-1918 war was in progress...On his return he was an intern at the Colombo General Hospital and then Resident Medical Officer of the Eye Hospital...In 1919 he accepted a Commission in the Indian Medical Service and for the greater part was stationed in outposts on the Indian Frontier...where, at that time, tribesmen on the borders with Afghanistan were engaged in breaking the peace.

He returned after two years, rejoined the Medical Department and served as D.M.O. at Trincomalee and Maturata, next proceeding to the United Kingdom in 1924 for further qualifications...and on his return...served in many outstations and as Superintendent of Mandapam camp in South India...In his long service he was perhaps best known in Dickoya and Nuwara Eliya...During the Malaria epidemic of 1935 he was detailed for special service as District Medical Officer Kegalle, one of the districts worst affected...He subsequently served as Medical Superintendent at Galle and was Assistant Director...and acting Director of Medical & Sanitary Services at the time of his retirement in 1954.

He had the respect and regard of his brethren in the Consistory and in the Wolvendaal Church...where he was a regular worshipper...He took an active interest in Freemasonry and was a Past Warden of the District Grand Lodge....Shunning publicity, he was of great service as Chairman of the Colombo Committee of the Red Cross and on the Board of Governors of the Deaf & Blind school.

In 1959 he was...pressed into the House of Representatives as an Appointed Member, although politics was something very alien to him...On his death, the Leader of the House described him as 'a charming gentleman of whose kindness and conscientiousness as a Medical Officer he had personal experience'

But it is as member and President of the Union that is of most concern to us...There was hardly a branch of its activities in which he was not interested....He concerned himself in relieving the anxiety of those in the community in less favourable circumstances, and in sickness or distress...was a regular visitor to St. Nikolaas' Home and unstintingly gave his professional services in an honorary capacity, and as Chairman of the Board...His character and kindness will not be forgotten easily (Volume LI, July—December 1961, pp. 8687).



Richard Leslie Brohier (R.L), elder brother of Eric and Clarence Brohier, was perhaps the last of the eminent Burghers. The Sunday Observer, Sunday Times and Island newspapers of 10 October 1992, the centenary of his birth, had articles by Dr. W.H.Fernando, Denis Fernando, and Roshan Peiris and this summary combines extracts from those articles.

The Brohiers have had a long and distinguished association with Sri Lanka. They have adorned and served with distinction in most of the professions and in the services of the State...The Brohier saga began when Captain John (Jean)

Brohier, born in 1752 in Jersey, arrived in Ceylon in 1777 in the ship Loo ...He was the son of Philippus Mattheus Brohier of the Island of Jersey, (of French Huguenot parents) and married in the Dutch Reformed Church Wolvendaal, Isabella Ferdinand. Their son Peter Isaac was born in Jaffna in 1792 and married Anna Elizabeth, daughter of August Carl van Ranzow, son of Christoff Ferdinand Anton (Count) van Ranzow. Their son Richard Annesley married Almera Marian de Boer and became Assistant Post Master General and a Major in the C.L.I volunteers.

R.L. was the eldest in a family of three boys and four girls. He was educated at Royal College, joined the Technical College in 1909 for training, and then the Survey Department in 1910. He eventually became acting Director General of Surveys in 1949 and was elected a Fellow of the Royal Institute of Chartered surveyors. He retired in 1950 when appointed by D.S. Senanayake, [Ceylon's first Prime Minister], Chairman of the Gal Oya Development Board. Other appointments followed.

He was honoured on many occasions. He was elected a Fellow of the Royal geographical Society, Officer of the Order of the British Empire, the degree of D.Litt., Honoris Causa of the University of Ceylon, the Obeysekera Gold Medal of the Royal Asiatic Society. The Netherlands Government made him an Officer of the Order of Orange Nassau in 1978. In 1987 the Government honoured his memory with the issue of a special postage stamp.

R.L. was the author of numerous books, editor of the D.B.U. Journal for nineteen years, and an authority on the ancient irrigation schemes and the Dutch and early British periods.

R.L. (Leslie) Brohier was eighty seven years when he died in 1980...His life was spent in a thirst for knowledge and he wrote at first hand. In his early days as a Surveyor he travelled by cart, caravan, boat or just walked and at the end of the day sprawled himself on a camp chair, dressed in putties from boot to knickerbocker breeches, in a sweat-soaked khaki shirt and surrounded by villagers who squatted in a half circle around him. He learned to love those people who lived in the jungles and isolated villages, he learnt of their mode of life and their philosophy and he loved the land and the people of Ceylon.



A record of the Burgher community would not be complete without a reference to the Blaze family. Louis Ezekiel Blaze, born in 1827, was a medical practitioner, a chemist and then editor of the Penang Times in Malaya. He married Henrietta Charlotta Gamier and they had three sons. Their eldest son, Louis Edmond, was a lay preacher of the Methodist Church.

L.E. (Louis Edmond) Blaze was the eldest son of Louis Ezekiel Blaze. He became the first person from Trinity College to become a graduate when he was awarded the B.A. from the University of Calcutta in 1882. He taught at various schools in India, returned in 1891 and founded Kingswood College, in Kandy. Louis was a great admirer of the English public school system and named the four school houses Eton, Harrow, Rugby and Winchester. Students were always referred to as 'Gentlemen of Kingswood'. Pupils were given many responsibilities and elected their prefects and school captain. Blaze attracted many eminent teachers to Kingswood. The first two Sri Lankan principals of Royal College had been teachers at Kingswood. Blaze emphasised character building, a sense of honour and the obligation of duty as the

most important responsibilities of his school. Kingswood was the first school to introduce rugby and the first boys' school to have a female teacher. Blaze was a close friend of Cyril Jansz who also became a great schoolteacher and founded St. John's Panadura. Blaze retired from Kingswood in 1923 at the age of sixty two. He next became editor of the newspaper, the Ceylon Independent for a short while. He was a good friend of J.R. Toussaint and in retirement was editor and author of many articles in the DBU Journal about historical and sociological subjects under the pen-name 'Niemand'. He was awarded the Order of the British Empire, wrote poetry, was active in the English Association and President of both the Historical Association and the Ceylon Geographical Society. He died in 1951. His only child to survive childhood was his daughter Ray who was a journalist and prominent in the scouting movement.

The second son of Louis Ezekiel Blaze was Robert Ezekiel Blaze. He was a university scholar and a lawyer in Uva where he was renowned for his hospitality, wit and involvement in local charities. He married Annie Paulusz and was the first person in Uva province to own a 'horseless carriage' and to own a house with electric lighting. Robert was referred to in the newspapers as 'The uncrowned king of Uva'. Nine of his children grew to adulthood and to become leaders in their respective fields. They were John Robert (JR), who was an eminent heart specialist and Professor of Medicine at the University of Ceylon, consultant to the W.H.O., a classical scholar and 'Kings Physician'; Louis, surgeon and one-time Head of the Medical department; Anna, mother of Robert de Kretser the all-Ceylon cricketer and principal of St. Clare's College Wellawatte; Judith Pinto, a teacher and mother of Christopher Pinto, specialist in international law, Ceylon's ambassador to the Hague and adviser to the World Bank; Fred the Crown Solicitor in Badulla and father of Marbit Gunasekera, Principal of Methodist College, Colombo; Tommy, a specialist in tropical medicine; Kitty Kalenberg, principal of Regent Street Girls school and Akela or leader of the scout movement in Ceylon; Benjamin (B.R) referred to as lacer and lastly Robert, superintendent of police.

The third son of Louis Ezekiel Blaze was John Thomas who won a University scholarship to Oxford. He was a brilliant orator and an eminent barrister in England and Ceylon. Like his brother L.E.B, he was also a lay preacher. He later became a lecturer at the Law College.

'B.R.' or Benjamin Blaze taught at and managed a number of schools in Ceylon. In Australia he continued to be a school teacher. Benjamin was keenly interested in the welfare of the Burghers. One of his earliest literary efforts was *The Lees of Lanka*, a book, published in 1933, which attempted to create a sense of urgency for the survival and revival of the fortunes of his community. B.R. also published *The Life of Lorenz* and a *History of Ceylon for Schools*. In Australia, he published a biography of Governor Hunter, Australia's second Governor. With his son John and wife Dorrit, he founded the 'Australia Ceylon Fellowship', the earliest Ceylonese organisation formed specifically to assist poor Ceylonese to migrate to Australia. With the assistance of colleagues in the Presbyterian, Methodist and Catholic churches and the 'Good Neighbour Council' they obtained interest-free loans from the W.C.C. so that poor Ceylonese migrants could be loaned their passage monies. Benjamin and his son John were founder members of the 'Australian Institute of Genealogical Studies' Benjamin was editor of that magazine. Benjamin compiled many Burgher family his-

tories. Some of these early records are unavailable to researchers because of changes in office-bearers in the Sri Lankan organisations.

(Author's note: Benjamin's grand-daughter Ann-Marie was a teacher, then a missionry in South Africa and is now a social worker attempting to rehabilitate delinquent and homeless youth. Her brother, John Jnr, recently cycled 2600 km from Melbourne to Queensland to publicise and raise funds for research into juvenile diabetes. Rev. John Blaze was the first endorsed Burgher candidate for a State seat and brother Carel (Tom) was Mayor of Knox City. The Blazes continue to be active in public and community affairs).





THE LAST GENERATION

The land and the people

Sri Lanka is shaped like a tear-drop off the southern tip of India. Known as 'Ceylon' until 1972, it is a tropical island in the Indian Ocean, five to nine degrees north of the equator and about the size of Tasmania or Holland and Belgium combined. Sri Lanka has a land area of 65,000 square kilometres, is 430 km from north to south and 225 km from east to west at the widest points.

The land mass, originally part of the prehistoric continent of Gondwanaland that joined Australia, Antarctica and India with Africa, rises in a series of mountain ranges, valleys and rivers to heights of 2200 metres. The temperature averages from a humid 27°C in the lowlands and coastal areas to 24°C in Kandy at 300 metres and 16°C at Nuwara Eliya at 1900 metres.

It is a land of spectacular tropical scenery. The south-west and central mountain regions receive two monsoons each year and are a paradise for plants and animals. The northern, eastern and north-central regions receive only one monsoon a year and in consequence is known as the 'Dry Zone'. The animals and plants in the 'Dry Zone' are not as prolific as in the 'Wet Zone'. There is beauty everywhere...in the mountains, the beaches, the flowers, the trees and the smiling attractive people.

Sri Lanka was the home of all the ethnic groups and that included the Burghers. The Sri Lankan aborigines, the Vaddahs were the first inhabitants. They arrived in the distant past and were followed by the others, all of whom were immigrants. Ceylon, now Sri Lanka, is a country of unsurpassed beauty, of warm seas and golden sands; jungle sanctuaries, elephants, deer and buffalo; monkey, leopard, bear and crocodile; birds of every colour, majestic rain forests; mountains, streams and waterfalls; winding roads, mist covered valleys and terraced rice fields; willowy coconut palms, gloomy rubber trees and glistening tea bushes. It is a land of smiling children; kind, hospitable, beautiful, friendly people; a land where time almost seemed to stand still. This was the country I grew up in, the country I lived in for thirty-seven years. It was my home and I loved the land and the people. This chapter records the memories of a number of Burghers who were once citizens of that beautiful country.

Until their exodus in the decade that followed the early 1950s, Burghers were prominent as educators, surveyors, customs and excise officials, policemen, soldiers, sailors and airmen. They practically monopolised the railway as guards, drivers, plate layers and engineers. They were in every government department, in the banks and insurance companies and in the mercantile sector as clerks and middle-managers. They staffed the estate agency houses and the import and export trade.

Burghers were highly visible in many aspects of Ceylon's urban life. They were happy and carefree, knew how to relax, how to socialise, how to enjoy living and to accept life's ups-and-downs. In this chapter individual Burghers describe a state of mind, a period in time and a style of living that was unique to the privileged westernised middle-class, but especially the urban Burghers. The Burghers who describe their experiences in this chapter were born during and after the early 1920s. They experienced the sleepy pre-war period and the rapid changes that occurred when Japan became a threat to the security of the Island. They shared the excitement when Ceylon became politically independent and again shared the benefits when the invisible 'glass ceiling' was removed and the fruits of independence became theirs. Then, only eight years later, they watched, amazed and stupefied, at the ascendancy of Sinhala Buddhist nationalism, the dethronement of the English language and the rejection of every European influence as foreign. They were a part of that European influence. They left Ceylon when their children could no longer be educated in English, their mother-tongue.

In this chapter the last generation of the Burghers of Sri Lanka share their experiences. The society they describe was the Burgher middle-class in the period from the late 1930s to the early 1960s, a period and a life-style that have gone for ever. It is the story of an urban group who felt safe and secure and looked forward with confidence to a future where change would be controlled, gradual and non-threatening. It was not to be so.

Marjorie and the pre-war generation

Marjorie, born in 1911, belonged to the generation in-between the Burghers in Chapter 4 and the Burghers described in this chapter. Her opportunities in education, employment, socialisation and marriage were restricted because she completed her education before World War II.

Her sisters, five and thirteen years younger, benefited from the opening-up of Burgher society during the war when servicemen from Europe, North America, India and Africa arrived to fight the Japanese. Many servicemen were billeted in Colombo and the major towns. The new-age Burgher girls were in demand. They learned marketable office skills, easily obtained paid employment outside the home and were no longer dependent on their parents. They socialised at public facilities with men who were not Burghers, were often of a different class, did not have a 'background', had no family histories and were from countries and places of which the parents had an incomplete knowledge. All this took place without chaperones, without parental permission and often without even parental knowledge.

Marjorie missed this exciting new world. She grew up in an age when 'boys' did not whistle at her, were not permitted to speak to her without a formal introduction and were not allowed to court her without permission from her parents. The man had to be a 'good' Burgher and his intentions had to be honourable and that meant marriage. This is Marjorie's story.

I was born in 1911 and we lived in Maradana in a house with an open verandah. We had five servants for the seven people in our family. There was the servant boy who did the sweeping and dusting, making the beds and all that sort of thing. Then there was the ayah who looked after my younger sister, a cook-

woman who did all the cooking, a rickshaw man who took me to school and a carter who looked after the bull and the buggy cart and took us out when we went out as a family. The servants quarters and the animal quarters were as big as the main house. We had a cow that gave us our milk, the bull for the cart, a dog, fowls to lay eggs and for the pot, and turkeys. We had a large clump of cactus in our garden and one day one of the turkeys got lost. We thought it had been stolen but some weeks later it re-appeared with a brood of chicks in tow. It had made its nest in the bunch of cactus. Many houses, but not all of them, used to have large gardens and kept cows, chickens and transport animals in those days.

The Sinhalese ate with their fingers. We thought of our servants as servants, not as friends. We treated our servants better than the Sinhalese who treated them as inferior and a separate people. Each caste employed its own. A Goigama caste person would not work for a Karawa caste person. I once engaged a girl from upcountry but when I got to Colombo my other servants refused to allow her to come into the house. She was a beautiful girl of the Rodiya caste so the other servants would not let her even touch a cup or plate or anything and I had to send her home. The other servants said they would leave if she remained. Having both Sinhalese and Tamil servants was not a problem until after the troubles in 1958.

We always felt very secure in those days because most officials were Burghers and nobody would trouble us by stealing or cheating. Burghers were in positions of authority in the police, post office, customs, railways, government offices and shops. We always knew someone or knew of someone who could get things fixed. The Sinhalese were angry that we had so many jobs in the departments like the customs, police, excise, postal, railway and in the banks and mercantile offices.

Later we went to live in Mutwal and I used to go to Bishops College in a buggy cart. It took one hour. There were 176 girls in school, half of them were Burgher and the other half were mainly rich Christian Sinhalese. There were only three Tamil girls. At school I studied in English and the subjects were British and world history, but not Ceylon history, world geography and that included Ceylon geography. I did not study Sinhalese but the Sinhalese girls could do so if they wished. I think we could have studied Sinhalese but no Burghers did that.

I went to Bishops College up to the first term in the Senior Cambridge class. Then my parents took me out because they said my youngest sister had to start school. From then I stayed at home and occupied myself with sewing. I was also good at painting and had learnt some cooking when I was young. My father was a sanitary inspector so he would not eat anything that was not cooked. If a fresh malung (salad) or sambol (fresh coconut with spices) was required, then I had to make it because he would not trust the cook-woman to be clean and germ-free.

I never thought of wearing a saree because that was not for us, that was for the Sinhalese. My father would have blown up if I even thought of it because I would be insulting him. When I was a child, I did not play with Sinhalese or Tamil children. It did not enter my mind to even think of Sinhalese and Tamil boys. Tamils anyway were very few in Colombo in those days. My brothers would come with their Sinhalese friends from school on bicycles. I would be on the verandah and I would immediately run into the house. The other boys

never were allowed into our house. It was only later that I realised those boys wanted an introduction to me but that was not possible because we all knew that my parents would not permit me to marry anyone other than a Burgher. It was made clear to us than we should not even think of it because it would be unsuitable. Later those boys said they were in love with me but my brother said he would not introduce us because it would be a useless thing. There was a Sinhalese who wrote to my father with a proposal saying he had land and a farm at Kelaniya but my father threw away the letter. I don't know who he was or if I had ever noticed him and only heard of it many years later.

Private courtship was not possible. We always had to be in a crowd. The only boys we had the opportunity to meet were the cousins and sometimes their cousins. Before the war, the girls were only allowed to go out with boys from families the parents knew. Outsiders were not allowed into the group. Burgher marriages were not arranged by the parents but they had great influence on who was good enough. My father had boarded at my mother-in-law's place when he was going to school and that's how he got to know and become engaged to my mother. My husband was my cousin. My mother would send me to his parents' house because they made clothes for me. I went there from the time I was twelve and got married when I was twenty-six. It was not considered wrong for Burghers to marry first cousins. It was the easy way to meet and be accepted. It was not easy to get to know a strange Burgher.

Burghers had many standards by which they judged people. They would say 'not good enough', or 'not our kind of people', or 'better not marry' and that meant that the man was not a good Burgher to bring into the family and the marriage would not be safe because the man came from a family with a reputation for womanising or drinking, or could not hold down a job, or was not from the right family. In those days if the parents did not know the family they would make inquiries until they got the answers they were looking for. Our Burghers were a small, connected group where everyone knew everyone else or knew someone who knew someone.

Our parents wanted their children, especially the daughters, to marry into a family they knew. There were a lot of unmarried girls who were aunts and spinsters and never mothers. This was because, though there were men who came asking to marry them, the parents would not give permission because the man or the family was not good enough. Daughters would not go against their parents. Men often took many years to become established and afford a wife so if the girl's parents thought he could not support a wife, permission to visit and become engaged was not granted. Sometimes understandings went on for many years and nothing happened [eventuated]. Too often the men who came along were not good enough. This rule did not apply to the men. They could choose their own marriage partner and if not accepted they moved on to another. There was one family I knew where no one got married because one child had tuberculosis and after that no other person wanted to marry into that family because it might bring T.B. into the family. That was the society at the time.

My mother did not sew. From the age of eleven I used to sew by turning-out a dress and using that as the pattern. Mother never said it was not good enough. She encouraged me. After doing this for some time I gradually became known as a dressmaker and people came to me. When I was about forty years old I took a course from Good Housekeeping and became a teacher. The major-

ity of my customers were Burghers but when I had my dressmaking school most of my pupils were Sinhalese.

My mother had a forty-five acre rubber and coconut estate near Galle. A number of Burghers, had estates with rubber, coconut and cinnamon near Galle at that time. Burghers enjoyed themselves too much. They went in for safe government jobs so when we lost that there was nothing else they could do without experience of something else. Whatever Burghers earned they spent and never saved. My aunt had a bakery and four men used to carry the bread to Galle for sale. I went to Mrs Lucien Jansz for cooking lessons. The only Burghers who had shops were the Pouliers in Bambalapitiya, E.W.Jansz in Wellawatte and the van den Driesens in Borella.

My mother did not socialise much. We were not taken around much so we didn't meet many people. When the gates were closed, no one could come in. It was easy to marry cousins because they were the only boys we got to meet.

The war made the difference. My sisters were five and thirteen years younger and they both were able to remain at school and pass their London matriculation. We all wanted my youngest sister to study medicine because she had the brains but the war broke out and it was easy for the Burgher girls to get good well-paid jobs. Both my sisters, who were much younger than I was, got the opportunity to go out to work and to meet lots of people and form attachments. Going out for work, and earning good incomes, prevented our parents from controlling them closely. We had a large house and had four servicemen boarding there. My sisters would have nothing to do with them and would not even speak to them though they all worked in the Naval Office. The servicemen would push notes under the door of my sisters' bedroom but my sisters would not even read them and put the notes straight into the bin.

Some other Burgher girls did fall into the trap. They thought all Europeans were educated and middle-class because they wore shoes and dressed like us and it was only after they married and went to live with them in their home country that they discovered they were working class and unsuitable.

If we had remained in Ceylon, I would have liked my children to marry Burghers because I feel comfortable with Burghers, they are my community and my friends and by my family marrying Burghers I gain new friends.

However, now they marry outsiders, whether Sinhalese or Australian or other, and I accept it and enjoy the grandchildren. In my time divorce was unheard of, living together was unknown and both were a disgrace not to be contemplated. Divorce had to have a cause, a fault. If you had marital problems and were divorced and were in the public service, you had to leave your job. That was in the early 1930s.

Note 1: When the author of this book was courting the girl who became his wife, the custom was to sit and talk to one another in the varandah, a not very private place. We were fortunate in that she lived in a house with a large garden so, to have some privacy, we would sit in my car in that garden. This privacy was only relative because one servant would be lounging at the front door and another peeping from a window. Signs of physical endearment in public were not acceptable in Burgher or Ceylonese society even as late as the 1950s. When my fiancée's parents thought we had been together long enough, it was heralded by the sound of rattling crockery and cutlery as the dinner table was made ready. That was the signal to join the adults for dinner or leave for home!

Note 2: The author of this book was recently shown a letter dated 25/4/1917, written by the widowed mother of a young lady to a young man who had requested permission to become engaged to her daughter. The suitor must have been 'our kind of people' because he was successful. The couple were married a month later. This is what the letter said:

Dear Mr. Drieberg; Your letter of 22nd inst. safe to hand and in reply I have to inform you that I have considered over the matter and think it is not right on my part to stand in your way as you have been successful so far in gaining the affection of my daughter. I have also consulted my son on the matter and we both cordially join in giving our consent to your engagement and trust heavenly blessings will attend you and yours in the future. We wish you health and happiness. I am yours sincerely.
Maude.

The English language fee-paying schools

The Catholic Church insisted that Catholic children attend Catholic schools. Ceylon society revolved around church and school in the years immediately before and after World War II. Because religion was an important part of Ceylon society, the religious affiliation of Burgher families was of major importance in social networks and family formation. The gulf between Catholic and non-Catholic Burghers began with school and continued through life. It created two Burgher societies.

Burghers boys who lived in Colombo went to Royal, Wesley, St. Thomas', St. Peter's, St. Joseph's or other English language, single gender, fee-paying schools. The girls attended Ladies, Bishops, Milagiriya, Methodist, Lindsay or Regent Street schools and Holy Family, St. Bridget's and other Catholic convents. Students living in the country attended the schools and convents in Kandy, Galle, Jaffna and the Catholic schools and convents in the smaller provincial towns.

Very few of these schools had boarding houses. Burghers children who lived in the out-stations or whose parents were moved frequently due to work commitments, had to board with relatives and friends in the main towns or become live-in boarders at those few schools that had boarding facilities.

In this article the author describes the ethos of Trinity College and how that school developed a concept of 'Ceylonese' (as distinct to Sinhalese, Tamil and Burgher) unity that revolved around an English-speaking, Christian Protestant elite. It was a unique process of socialisation. Many Burghers attended the English-language schools as boarders or as day-boys and some of them would have had experiences similar to the author's.

Trinity College in Kandy was founded in 1872. It was an Anglican school that had as its core a boarding establishment. Trinity had an enrolment of 600 students of whom about 300 were boarders. The boarding establishment was the school and sporting heroes were the heroes. Boarders monopolised every sporting activity because they lived there and participated in everything.

Warden Stone, Principal of a rival school, said 'Trinity is all steps and drains and no brains'. He was only correct in the 'all steps and drains' but that is because Trinity is in Kandy where 'river, lake and mountain meet'. The school produced its fair share of Ceylon's leaders. There were doctors and lawyers, engineers and teachers, professors and preachers, policemen and soldiers, planters, farmers, and businessmen. There

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were also honest caring citizens. This small school of six hundred catered for pupils from kindergarten to matriculation and was quite unique in both the quantity and quality of its products. An unfortunate aspect of the 'boarding' ethos was the concept of the 'stiff upper lip' and the inability to show love and affection in public. Emotion was private, 'sissy' and for others. Boarders learned to be self-sufficient, independent and unemotional in public.

We used to sing a song in the 'Glee Club' in school days. The words of the first three lines were: (When I die) 'Wrap me up in my old Trinity Blazer, with the red, gold and blue in my view, my view. Six stalwart fellows shall carry me, carry me'. That Trinity old-school bond is so strong that, in Melbourne, we recently gathered around an old-boy's coffin, draped in the college flag for the occasion, and honoured his last wish which was to sing the school song while his body was committed.

Many Trinitians later migrated to the English-speaking nations of the world. There are active 'Old Boy Associations' in Melbourne, Sydney, London, Canada and the U.S.A. When Sri Lanka lost her Trinitians, she lost loyal, disciplined, dedicated, team-players.

A very special aspect of the comradeship at Trinity was the absence of ethnic divisions, class and wealth. Every boy arrived at the start of term with a cabin trunk and a quantity of clothes exactly the same as every other boarder. Those who came earliest took the best mattress, least battered bed, and most favoured position in the dormitory. The school became our home and the school fraternity our family.

We would arrive at the Kandy station, put our battered trunks in a rickshaw, and walk with the rickshaw to school. Some boys did arrive in chauffeur-driven limousines but that caused no special interest for the pupil's home situation was of no importance to anyone else. We all wore similar clothes, slept on similar battered mattresses and beds and ate the same unappetising plain food at communal meals. We dressed in white shirts and blue shorts until, in the fifth form, we blossomed into white 'long trousers'.

Malcolm Muggeridge, who later became editor of Punch, visited Trinity, and described it thus:

A transplanted (English) public school where boys wore blazers, played rugger, sang English songs and hymns heartily though in fairly cracked tones...took cold showers, and were taught to be manly and speak the truth.

Muggeridge was not impressed, indeed he became quite depressed!

Many of us found the order and predictability of Trinity College very satisfying. At 5.50 a.m. a bell rang and we awoke because we had to be in the 'quadrangle' for ten minutes of daily exercises. There was no way to avoid that chore. When that was over we knew that twenty minutes later we had to be showered, washed and dressed for 'prep'. When the 'prep' bell sounded we went into the 'hall' and, supervised by a Prefect, began swotting our home work. Thirty minutes later another bell rang and we rushed to a breakfast of two hoppers, two jaggery balls (two centimetre round brown balls of a sugar-like substance), a plantain (banana) and a cup of tea. At the sound of the next bell we had to be 'at assembly' in the school hall. Throughout the day the bell announced the next class and so it went on and on. It was all very predictable and rather comforting.

After school there was *tiffin* (afternoon tea of bread, butter and either a banana or jam) and then to Asgiriya for sport. When we got back there was just enough time to

shower and then the bell rang for dinner. We were never late for meals. Later another bell would ring and we went for 'night prep'. Then another bell sounded and prep was over. When the next bell rang it was time to get ready for bed. When the final bell sounded the dormitory lights were switched off and we had to sleep.

Saturdays and Sundays were different but life continued to be dominated by the bell. It was order and method. There was even a time allocated on Sundays for 'letter writing'. My letters were short, complained about the quantity and quality of the food and ended with a request for some extra pocket-money to buy food at the tuck shop. My grandmother was always good for a soft touch so she got many letters!

This order, this predictability, this progress up a well-trod ladder, was probably why Trinitians were excellent as members of a team. After leaving school, 'old boys' seemed happiest in organisations that had a hierarchical structure. They were conspicuous in the armed forces, the police, the large multi-national commercial organisations, the departments of government administration and the professions. All these organisations had their well known, well trodden avenues of promotion where loyalty, seniority and integrity were rewarded. Subordinates could be depended on to 'do the right thing' because it had always been done that way before. The ordered life produced few poets, writers and painters. It seemed almost a pity that Sri Lanka did not have an Empire of its own where Trinitians could sail forth to civilise the savages!

There was a separate 'Matron's dormitory' for the kindergarten age boys (managed by the Burgher 'mothers' stout Mrs Kaule and lean Miss van Schoonenbeek), a Junior School for the primary school boys, a Squealery' for grades 1 and 2 and an Upper School for the seniors. Every section of the school was divided into 'Houses' that competed with the other houses. All the day-boys were in one 'house'. The boarding houses had relatively few boys so we had to join in every sporting activity if we wished to survive in that male competitive sporting environment.

Honour, responsibility and authority came when a student was appointed captain of some activity. In the senior school further honour and responsibility arrived when special individuals were appointed 'house monitor', 'school monitor' and then 'prefect'. The Dux of the school was the senior prefect. Each year the senior boys, the teachers, and the Principal, voting separately, elected the 'Ryde Gold Medallist' or best all-rounder. It was the highest honour to which one could aspire. In this manner Trinity trained its pupils to be fit and healthy, to be tolerant of others, to give and take, to live in amity with other members of the community, to protect the weak, to set an example, to accept responsibility and to exercise authority. In summary, to be honourable gentlemen in an honourable society. It was instilled into us that we were the privileged few, the future leaders and ours was to be a life of service to those 'less fortunate than ourselves'.

Food remained a subject of intense interest during my days at boarding school. It was wartime, Burma had been over-run by the Japanese, there was a shortage of rice and the rice substitutes were yams, barley, pulses and other sticky, gooey grains too horrible to remember. Those responsible for feeding us did their best, but it was impossible to find enough food to satisfy the appetites of perpetually hungry, active, growing boys.

The dining room consisted of long tables laid with empty plates, spoons, forks and small individual bowls containing a concoction that had a smell of meat or fish. The tables were large plates of rice and bowls of *parippu* (dhal) or some other vegetable. There was also the famous Trinity *pol-sambol* (hot, spiced shredded coconut)

Boarding school taught us that if we did not eat fast, we did not eat at all. We learned not to leave food on our plates, to eat everything, and never to leave something behind that could be eaten. There were no second serves, no second opportunities.

Before we could begin to eat we had to stand still while a House Master at the high table mumbled grace. Then there was a crashing sound of benches being adjusted as we sat down, grabbed the nearest bowl of rice, vegetable or sambol and filled our plate. Those boys nearest to the rice took all they could and those near the vegetable or sambol did the same. Boys who were on the outskirts and not within reach had to wait for what was left to reach them. If this happened too often the boys who were 'backward in coming forward' probably grew into smaller boys. Some boarders occasionally received food parcels from home. This gave them instant popularity and we crowded around to salvage a share. Kitul honey, to be eaten with our morning hoppers, was a favourite and we sat close to the lucky boarder in the hope of being offered some of his nectar. He was called a gopal if he didn't share, the name given to this act from the actions of a boarder named Gopal who, in the dim distant past, had not shared his bounty with his fellow boarders.

A lack of food did not seem to affect the brain cells. Many of the weedy little boys who were pushed around and bullied grew into bright bureaucrats, doctors and judges. After independence, some of them even became ambassadors, diplomats and politicians. The physically active boys, the natural leaders in this all-male community, became the strong, well-muscled heroes of the rugger field and the cricket team. Many eventually became officers in the police and armed forces, District Revenue Officers, superintendents of plantations, excise inspectors or were employed in other open-air physical occupations where leadership, dependability and integrity were essential qualities. There were many boys between these extremes and there were also those who excelled at both study and sport.

Trinity's policy was the 'mingling of the races' and we were moulded into one community where those inherited differences over which we had no control were subordinated. I don't remember my school mates as Christians, Buddhists or Hindus, Kandyan or Low-country Sinhalese, Ceylon Tamils, Indian Tamils or Indians; Burghers, Eurasians, Moors, Malays or English. I knew that some of them were Christians and others were not, but that was only because Christians were in the choir and were compelled to attend chapel. Non-Christians had 'Prep' (homework time) instead. Many boarders joined the choir but that was because we were rewarded with a feast of bread, butter and cocoa. Growing boys are always hungry and every morsel of extra food was important.

We thought of ourselves as Trinitians first, Ceylonese second, and Burghers, Sinhalese, Christians, or whatever, last. We were the pre-1956 Ceylon elite who placed honesty, integrity, comradeship and service to others above all else. We were taught that we were a privileged group in training to be future leaders. We were expected to dedicate ourselves to those 'less fortunate than ourselves'.

J.H.Oldham, who visited Trinity in 1925, wrote:

The College includes a great variety of races—Sinhalese, Tamils, Burghers, Eurasians and Europeans, various races from India, Burma, and a few Africans from Uganda. A more heterogeneous company could not easily be found...I am convinced that in the life of the college, feelings of race do not exist. It is entirely transcended by the spirit of the institution. I was present at the time of the annual athletic sports. In these the different Houses compete...for a shield.

I observed the crowd throughout the afternoon. The whole excitement and enthusiasm of each house was concentrated on the victory of its representative, quite irrespective of race...in the atmosphere of comradeship and service which permeate the life of the school, racial distinctions have ceased to count. In no English public school is there a greater esprit de corps...Among the awards of the college is a medal given annually to the best all-round boy. In making the award, the result of a vote by the upper classes is taken into account. I was assured by the principal and members of the staff that voting is entirely uninfluenced by racial considerations.

This culture, this ethos, became part of us, part of our life. The teachers were from many ethnic groups. There were the British missionary teachers who arrived all the way from Oxford and Cambridge. They were a special breed, those British educators. They came to learn and to learn to teach. There was Charles Wrong who arrived all wrongly dressed in 'pith' hat and jungle khaki for his role as housemaster of Alison House. Wrong was an immediate source of merriment as very obviously he had been told that he was going to be living in a jungle of wild snakes, wild elephants and wild boys! We already had Oswin Wright, who was a very important person because he was the cricket coach, so it was appropriate that Napier House had Dennis Ballance to even out the Wright and the Wrong!

In Ryde House we had Jock Young. He was a cheerful young man (they all were) and would breeze into Latin class and be greeted with salve Magister to which he would reply salvete. He had an unforgettable experience in his first Latin class. As he asked each pupil his name, the pupil would reply with a Sinhalese swear word instead of his real name. It became quite noisy as ugly, uncomplimentary, unparliamentary Sinhala words like 'son of a prostitute' were shouted out by various boys and repeated by Jock Young in his very English, cultured Oxford accent. The class was continually convulsed with laughter.

Mild Mr Tennekoon, who taught the Sinhalese language class in the room next door, became quite agitated and embarrassed at the Sinhala being spoken in the Latin class. Mr. Tennekoon usually found great difficulty controlling his class but that day it was impossible. His pupils were listening to a form and style of the Sinhala language he did not want them to know! We had a hilarious Latin class that day but the consequences, when Jock Young found out, were not amusing.

Two other teachers from England I remember for their kindness were Mr. Deen and Miss Taylor. Mr. Deen was carpentry master and we called him Kolla (young boy). He developed in me a love of turning and shaping timber into objects of beauty. The other teacher was my 'cub mistress', Miss Taylor. Her big calves and thick legs fascinated me when I was a child of ten because all Ceylonese had kotu kakul (sticks or skinny legs). These two teachers decided to marry and after that were known as Kolla and Kellie (young girl).

A teacher I remember with great affection was Miss Edna Wells. She taught Biology and developed in me a life-long love of unusual animals and plants. I loved to dissect rats and fish and study plants and tissues under the microscope. Lady Horton's Drive was a fascinating jungle of plants and insects and Rodney Jonklaas and I took an active interest in the care of Miss Wells' private zoo. Disappointed in my desire to become an eminent surgeon, I took to carpentry in later life.

Oswin Wright and 'Jontha' David were two teachers who developed my interest in English language and literature. I owe it to them that I eventually became editor of the school magazine and the winner of the English literature prize.

Philip Buultjens was another teacher who was very important. He was the 'rugger' coach and therefore a man of supreme importance. Teachers like him were held in great respect and never had difficulties controlling their pupils. During the rugby season it was the ambition of every boy to be selected to play rugby for Trinity. Midway in the middle term Mr. Buultjens would place a list of 'probables' and 'possibles' on the notice board. These were the thirty boys who he had chosen to play in opposing teams in practice games and from whom a team would be selected to represent the college. I played house rugby but did not think I would ever be selected as a 'probable' or 'possible' and had the biggest thrill of my life when I saw my name on that list! At my age and at that time, it was more important to me to play rugger for the school than to matriculate and enter the university. That was one of the faults of the Trinity culture.

Trinity had many Kandyan Sinhalese. They were a proud, confident, generous people with melodious names like Aluvihare, Dedigama, Dissanayake, Divitotawela, 'alangoda, Kobbekaduwa, Keppetipola, Madugalle, Mediwake, Molegoda, Moone. malle, Nugawela, Panabokke, Paranagama, Ratwatte and Rambukwelle. The Low country Sinhalese names included Abeyasinghe, Amarasekera, Devendra, Goonetilleke, Jayasinghe, Jayawardene, Mendis, Perera, Siriwardene and Wijewardene.

Among the Tamil names, which were sometimes Christian and anglicised, were Breckenridge, David, Peripanayagam, Gunaratnam, Naganathan, Sahayam and Sundaramani. Moor and Malay names included Deen, Fuard and Izzadeen and there were a few 'foreigners' like Kagwa from Africa and Chandy from Kerala. There were many Burgher and Eurasian names too. I remember Aldons, Blaze, Buultjens, de Hoedt, Ferdinand, Fernando, Geddes, Hardy, Hermon, Janszé, Jenkins, Keyt, Meares, Oorloff, Paynter, Reith, Schokman, Schoorman, Wells, Winter, White, Wright and de Zilwa.

I don't remember any of us having any special affinity to students of a similar ethnicity or religious background. Friendships became special because of a common interest in some sport or in study or by being in the same school 'house'.

Sadly, the real world outside was very different and from the mid 1950s, race, religion and language became the dominant themes in Sri Lanka and what divided became more important than what united. These changes had their repercussions on Trinity where the unifying language, English, was replaced by separate Sinhala and Tamil language streams. I became personally aware of the cleavage when I visited Trinity in 1977. Two ethnic groups cannot socialise, cannot become friends, if they cannot talk to one another.

Politics, population pressures and a lowering of standards resulted in the school growing to over 3000 pupils by the end of the 1970s. The English language was no longer the bond and instead there were separate Sinhala and Tamil 'streams'. The Burghers, Eurasians and English-speakers were no more. Teachers and pupils had lost that special feeling of bonding, that feeling of 'together-ness', that special sense of belonging. That special world of 600 pupils and teachers, bound by a fierce and unique bond, had gone for ever. It was symptomatic of the upheavals that Sri Lanka experienced from the mid 1950s.

Lakshman Kadirigamar, the present President of the O.B.A and now Sri Lanka's Minister for Foreign Affairs said in 1992:

How will the present Trinitian, who is educated for good citizenship...cope with the rough, crude, amoral world outside...? Is a Trinity education an impediment to survival in the turbulent world outside?...Are the...Trinity values outdated, mere relics of a genteel, bygone age?.

Hilary Abeyaratne, former vice-Principal, posed a similar question recently when he wrote:

By and large we shy away from ruthless competition and allow ourselves to be elbowed out by those more personally ambitious and less scrupulous. An Old Boy said to me that what the school had done for him was no longer relevant in his son's time. It was good to have his claws trimmed but he wanted his son's (claws) sharpened and that was more likely to happen at another school.

Power and wealth too often do not seem possible without deceit, dishonesty and compromise in the capitalist, competitive, industrial consumer society of today. Does the Trinity ethos, that of the pre-1956 elite, seem inappropriate in today's society where wealth and power, however attained, is universally lauded and acclaimed as the purpose of modern education? Trinity in my day was a reflection of a style of life of which many Burghers were the beneficiaries. Has Trinity, and schools like Trinity, passed their 'use by date'? Are they, like the Burghers, now a part of colonial history?

The Colombo Burgher community

The majority of Colombo Burghers in the period immediately before and after World War II lived in the southern suburbs of Colombo between Colpetty (Kollupitiya) and Mount Lavinia and the Borella and Mutwal areas. The majority occupied rented bungalows (houses) in the lanes (streets) off the main roads. The father was the main bread-winner and usually worked in a clerical capacity in the Public Service, or in a bank, or in a British-owned import and export organisation. Mothers would often supplement the family income by teaching, cooking, sewing or taking in boarders. The family usually consisted of between two and five children and attended Royal College, St. Peter's, Milagiriya, Lindsay or the other fee-levying Colombo schools. The family employed one or more domestic 'servants' to help manage a household that had a minimum of labour-saving devices.

The young Burgher males played sport, were gregarious, did not focus too much on study for its own sake, hoped they would one day become doctors, lawyers, planters and police inspectors, thought often of the other sex, went to the cinema once or twice a week, were regular church goers (for that was where they met their future marriage partners), disdained physical manual work as 'infra dig', knew few non-English speaking and non-Christian Sinhalese other than the servants, knew very little about Buddhism and Sinhala history and culture, wore shirts, long trousers and shoes (and white drill and tussore suits on Sundays), ate with spoons, forks and knives, and when the time arrived to earn a living, found a safe job where seniority was more important than brilliance. A pension was the final reward, if one lived that long. If one didn't, then the W & O P (widows and orphans pension) was there to help the survivors eke out an existence.

How did the Burghers remain a separate and distinct ethnic community throughout the one hundred and fifty years of British hegemony? The first boundary was the conservative, relatively isolated Victorian society they lived in with its strict rules on ethnicity, class, family antecedents, colour and religion. These rules, drummed into the young as part of their socialisation, conditioned young Burghers about whom they should associate with, break bread with and marry. It also conditioned them to whom they could associate with but not marry. In Ceylon's plural society customs and habits differed widely so crossing the barriers could lead to social isolation and even exclusion. Burghers had the example of the British class system and the Sinhalese and Tamil caste systems to remind them how difficult, even impossible, it was to breach ethnic, language and religious boundaries.

A second boundary was colour for it was a society in which Burgher children, socialised by their parents, grew up to avoid absorption into the majority communities. This social conditioning encouraged Burghers to seek out fairer Burghers and Europeans as marriage partners. It also dissuaded them from seeking out partners much darker than themselves. Attitudes to colour had been absorbed from 18th and 19th century colonial attitudes, the centuries when Western writers and philosophers created scientific 'facts' from dubious experiments that were supposed to prove that whites were superior to browns who in turn were superior to blacks (who were at the bottom of the Darwinian pile). Lighter skinned Burghers had an advantage in colonial Ceylon and that was a major reason for Burghers continuing to think of themselves as 'European', 'Dutch descendent' and 'Dutch Burgher' in preference to anything else. It was the root cause of Burgher pride and Burgher prejudice.

A third boundary was religion. The Burghers were surrounded by non-Christians and non-Catholic Burghers were a minuscule number in a sea of other faiths. To the small non-Catholic Christian parents it was important that their children continue in the Protestant faith. They did this in two ways. The children attended the non-Catholic private schools and Burghers remained an urban community, living close to where they had their churches, their social clubs and their community facilities. They supported these institutions and fraternised in their own group. It was a close, tightly knit community.

The author was a baptised Anglican but frequented the Dutch Reformed Churches in Colombo after he left school because that was an important part of Burgher social life in Colombo. Acceptance into that social group resulted in numerous invitations to birthday parties where the girls wore short-sleeved dresses with full skirts gathered at the waist and boys wore 'Hently' and 'Arrow' shirts, bright ties and bell-bottomed white drill and 'Indian tussore' suits.

At these birthday parties we would sit out in the cool of a Colombo garden, eat cake, patties and sandwiches, drink 'Vimto' and 'OBW' soft drinks and periodically move into houses with polished cement floors to jive, jitterbug and boogie-woogie to the recorded music of the Big Bands of the 1940s. The fox-trot, the slow fox-trot, the waltz, the tango, the rumba and the baila completed our repertoire! It was a society where liquor was unknown. Later, in our early twenties, we formed groups and went in long frocks, white sharkskin jackets and black trousers to the formal dances at the hotels and the Town Hall. There we danced to the live bands and topped-up our spirits with whisky or arrack and ginger-beer. Sri Lanka's large wedding receptions were another major social event. We danced with everyone in the group for that was our custom. The social group was large and friendly and, in our small community, pro-

vided a full choice of friends and marriage partners. It was a close, all-Burgher social group and the parents knew, or knew of, the family and the antecedents of every friend and suitor. Those were the student years, the best years for a young Burgher. The two articles that follow describe this close and supportive process of acceptance and socialisation. The children of our generation could not repeat the process. The dethronement of the English language forced us to emigrate.

Eric, the Colombo Burgher

I was a boy from a large family. My parents could be described as middle class. My father had a reasonable job as a clerk in the Government Service on a modest but livable income and my mother did her share to supplement the family income by regularly selling prepared food such as lamprais (cooked packets of curry and rice with spices), stringhoppers (cooked strings of rice-flour dough, finer than vermicelli, squeezed through a mould to form circles and eaten with curries and sambols), and other food preparations.

Our house had three bedrooms and we lived in a lane in Bambalapitiya, a quiet suburb of Colombo, where many Burgher families lived. The house was being purchased, with the help of a mortgage that was discharged in 1942, the year my father retired. We were within walking distance of the railway station, the local cinema, markets, the Dutch Reformed Church and Royal College. We could also walk to the beach and spent many hours in the sea in the months the monsoon allowed us to swim without danger.

We had a 'servant boy' (a domestic help), who performed various chores around the house and occasionally helped us in the reading of our Sinhala language text books. Sinhala was a compulsory subject during my time at school but for the most part we found the language too hard to follow and instead memorised the verse and texts as we could not translate them into English. We also had a cook (cook woman) who prepared all our meals and assisted my mother when she accepted a catering assignment. Our newspapers were the Daily News during the week and the Observer on Sundays. We looked forward to the sports pages while our parents read the world and local news.

We owned neither radio nor gramophone, television was not even dreamed of then, so we often went to the local restaurants to listen to music on the radio and the record player. We did not have the luxury of a car and either walked or used public transport. My father travelled to work in the 'Tort', as the city was known, and back again in overcrowded second-class compartments into which he squeezed himself, standing all the way. Our friends were from every ethnic group and as children we enjoyed playing cricket and hockey with home-made bats and hockey sticks in the lanes where our homes were situated.

Our school days were spent at Royal College, where tuition fees were levied. We were a middle income family and our parents encouraged, indeed urged, us to sit for the scholarship examinations so we would be exempt from tuition fees. Two of my brothers obliged by winning scholarships. We were also encouraged and directed to buy second-hand text books. The majority of the students were from relatively poor or middle-class families. We walked the four miles with hundreds of other boys of varying ages and ethnicities. (Royal College, like all the fee-paying schools in Ceylon, was a single gender school). Many of these boys travelled from their homes in distant places such as Mor-

atuwa and Panadura. We would link up with them, as they left the local railway station, and walk in groups to school. We would also link-up with other boys from neighbouring suburbs as we walked to and from school. Sometimes, but only occasionally, we would go to school in a rickshaw (a two wheel vehicle, now banned, with a high shaft and pulled by a man between the shafts) and on these occasions there were numbers of rickshaws heading in the same direction with comments and repartees being cast by the passengers at each other to the annoyance of the rickshaw-pullers.

I longed for the day I would have my first bicycle and ride to school and attend the many recreational activities at which I wanted to be present. That day finally arrived when my parents presented me with a second-hand bike. I could now travel independently to play rugby and athletics and I hoped to represent my school in those sports one day.

Sunday mornings were spent at the Sunday School of the Dutch Reformed Church where the teachers, boys and girls were almost all Burghers. Besides learning the scriptures and catechisms, it also gave us the opportunity, as we matured, of meeting girls, some to notice and others to be noticed by. We would meet in the church grounds, or 'compound', where we would exchange messages direct or through third-parties.

An adjunct to the Sunday School was the local 'Band of Hope and total Abstinence Society' which met on Monday evenings. This was an almost 100% Burgher gathering. We enrolled at an early age and signed 'The Pledge', the promise to abstain from all intoxicating drinks. It was a good start and that perhaps has kept me a 'TT' to this day. It was also another opportunity to meet the girls after dark and without bothersome chaperones!

April school holidays were something to always look forward to. Our parents would rent a house for a month 'up-country' i.e. in the mountains where it was cool and invigorating, and we would travel to either Nuwara Eliya, Diyatalawa or Bandarawela by the night train. We used the free second-class railway warrants that were a 'perk' of every Government employee. April was very hot and humid in Colombo and everyone who could, would leave Colombo for a spell in the hills.

We were fortunate that in addition to the Christian festivals we also participated in and enjoyed several of the festivals of the other religions. During the Buddhist Wesak (celebration of the birth of the Buddha) we also purchased paper lanterns. These were illuminated at night with candles and displayed on the outside of the house and in the garden.

During the Hindu Vel festival [a week-long sexual frolic between a god and a goddess], we would join with thousands of others to watch the procession in which the Vel cart containing the male god, preceded by dancers and elephants and beautifully decorated with coloured electric globes, garlands and sundry trappings, wound its way from the Hindu temple in Sea Street Pettah to the temple of the female god at Bambalapitiya. There it remained for a week. Bambalapitiya temple became the site of an enormous carnival and fair where thousands, including us, enjoyed the fun for a whole week.

The approach of Christmas was always an exciting time. This was the time when the house took on a new look with its annual coat of white-wash and paint. Our clothes, as youngsters, were mostly hand-me-downs, so it was exciting to look forward to Christmas when we got new shoes and were measured for a new outfit by the local tailor. There was a lot of activity centred on

making the traditional 'Christmas cake', in which my mother excelled. We hung around trying to help in stirring the raw mixture in the certain knowledge that we would be allowed to scrape the pan and spoon for the residue.

On Christmas day, after exchanging greetings and opening our presents, it was time to attend the children's morning service, all spruced-up in our new clothes. We would next move to the main church for the service with our parents. The custom was to receive friends and relations at home and then visit friends and relations in their homes, a custom affectionately known as 'cake hunting' because Christmas cake was served liberally on that day.

We went to the Havelock Park and the Burgher Recreation Club for our sporting activities after we had left school. My father was a member and I became a member in due course. We would join in games of hockey with women and men players, gradually learning as we grew older and more experienced. Cricket was another sport our seniors encouraged us to become involved in. The club had its social side and we joined in the various social activities. As we grew older we joined in the dances and social events. Moonlight music would often be provided by the bands of the Police or the Army in the vicinity of the club. These were popular occasions when boy met girl and formed close, and sometimes lasting, relationships.

The de Kretzers, the Bambalapitiya Burghers

The de Kretser name, and the Jansz and Bartholomeusz names, were the commonest Burgher names in Ceylon. The de Kretser families were related, connected and a closely-knit group. Most of the Colombo de Kretzers lived in Bambalapitiya except for a few who had moved 'up-market' to live in Cinnamon Gardens, Colombo 7. Burghers said that if one threw a stone in Bambalapitiya the probability was that it would fall on a de Kretser! Burgher social life in Bambalapitiya revolved around the de Kretzers. Here two de Kretser females, who wish to remain anonymous, describe their social life in the 1940s. A similar social life-style occurred in the other Burgher sub-groups, whether in Mutwal, Mount Lavinia or Mount Mary and whether the core was Catholic or non-Catholic.

Most of the Burghers lived around the 'Golden mile' which stretched from Colpetty south on Galle Road to St. Paul's Milagiriya and Havelock Town. Many of us lived in School Lane, Edwards Lane, Lauries Road, Daisy Villa Avenue, de Vos avenue, Dickmans Road and the roads off Dickmans Road like Layards Road, Skelton Road and Anderson Road. The girls attended Lindsay Girls School, Holy Family Convent and St. Paul's Milagiriya. The boys attended Royal or St. Peter's College.

Our young days were centred around the Dutch Reformed Church at Bambalapitiya. During the day we attended Lindsay Girls School situated in the Church grounds. Ninety per cent of the pupils were Burghers. We were also there at 'Sunday School' and often during the week at special evening services. Here too the congregation were mostly Burghers. On Mondays we went to the 'Band of Hope and Total Abstinence Society' meetings where, at a very tender age and at the urging of Mildred and Trilby de Kretser, we signed the pledge.

As children, we were encouraged to sing and recite and take part in the evening's entertainment and this taught us self-confidence. The Church, during our 'teen years, was the place where boys and girls of the various Protestant

denominations met and where many a romance began...right on the steps of the belfry. This belfry had been erected by the large extended de Kretser clan in memory of the 'dear departed de Kretzers'. Any person with the de Kretser name at the school would monopolise the steps of that belfry. We would only allow our friends the privilege of sitting or playing on those steps. Following the Sunday morning school, we would all meet in de Vos Avenue and one of the fathers would take us, Pied Piper style, to the sea beach for our weekly swim. Some of the boys were good swimmers and members of the Kinross Swimming Club. When we were teenagers, many of the girls were members of the church choir and enjoyed participating in the Easter and Christmas Oratorio.

After Sunday evening service we looked forward to going for a walk along the railway line. This was a few metres inland from the sea shore and trains were relatively infrequent. As it got dark one of the more daring lads would try to hold your hand, the only contact that was permissible in those days!

After school, the boys congregated at Lion House where Bullers Road meets Galle Road. This place was a 'no no' for us girls and we went to Paiva's Ice Cream Parlour or the 'Dew Drop Inn' on the other side of Galle Road and many a gossip session took place there.

With school days nearly over we began to think of careers. We hoped to go to either University or Teachers Training College. The start of the Second World War put a stopper on those plans. Singapore fell to the Japanese and the majority of the bigger schools were commandeered as barracks for the troops, who were suddenly everywhere in Colombo. We girls became Air Raid Wardens manning the A.R.P. posts during the day while the boys did duty at nights. Some of us went on to work in the main Civil Defence Centre too. We did our bit for the 'Send-a-plane' fund, organising concerts, making the younger ones take part in plays and even parties where all proceeds went to the Fund. Our parents were very understanding and supportive and very patriotic.

We did not have cars and it was sometimes hard holding our picture-book hats in place as we cycled everywhere. The bicycle took us everywhere, even to parties and picnics at night and the outer suburbs of Maharagama and Nawala. Many parents were members of the Dutch Burgher Union and the Burgher Recreation Club (BRC) so the sports-inclined among us, both boys and girls, became members of the BRC and played hockey and tennis. The boys were good at cricket and rugby and spent their Saturday afternoons playing sport. Of course we all looked forward to the monthly dances at the DBU and BRC clubs as well as the picnics organised by the grown-ups. We were well chaperoned by our parents who watched goings-on and our experiments with the latest dance steps. The wider circle of Burghers all knew one another and our parents were happy we were meeting the right sort of marriageable male. Marriages were never arranged by parents but we were certainly pointed in the right direction. We were allowed to attend all the social events at the Dutch Burgher Union and the Burgher Recreation Club for this purpose.

Another very happy memory is of the Presbyterian Youth League (PYL) conferences. Rev. Bryan de Kretser was in charge of the first conference which was held at his aunt's rubber estate in Maharagama. Girls were accommodated in the house and the boys slept in a school dormitory some distance away. It was war-time and there was a 'black-out' so the boys had a hazardous walk in the night trying to make sure they didn't fall into the open drains that were on

both sides of the path. Because of the fear of air-raids subsequent conferences were held in Dehiwala as that venue was closer. At those conferences the girls slept in the Manse and the activities were held in the girls' school next door. The boys had their sleeping quarters in the school. Because those attending were from all the six Dutch Reformed Church congregations in Colombo, supplemented by the Kandy, Galle and Matara congregations, our parents encouraged us to attend. We would get to meet other young people of our religious denomination. This was another subtle way by which our parents made sure we met the right partners. We had Bible study in the mornings and then divided into groups. A knowledgeable adult was the leader and we spent the rest of the day in discussions and debates. In the evenings we had well-known speakers who addressed us on a variety of subjects. On the Saturday night every district took it in turn to provide a play, a short skit or charade. On Sunday night we ended the conference with a Service of Dedication followed by a candle-lighting ceremony. We each lit a candle and walked around the church grounds singing 'Follow, follow the gleam which is the Chalice of the Grail'. There were quite a few seniors to look after us and make sure we didn't become too noisy or excited. We remember Will and Ninette Stork, Viva de Kretser, Dr. and Mrs. Schokman and the Ingram sisters. We were well chaperoned!

Ceylon became South East Asia Command Headquarters, or SEAC HQ, in 1943. The arrival of troops changed all our lives. Highly paid jobs for Burgher girls suddenly became available with the Navy, the Army and the R.A.F. We took crash courses in shorthand and typing at the Muttukrishna Polytechnic and became expert in six months. We had good jobs as temporary Woman Assistants and soon learned to hold our own with the Europeans.

Even though some of the boys were now working in Government or mercantile jobs in the Fort or business district, we got together on Saturday mornings, gathered around a piano in someone's home, listened to up-and-coming jazz pianists and sang the latest war-time songs. On many of the Saturday afternoons the girls would be at the matinee shows at the 'Majestic' cinema. This was within walking distance of home. Our pocket money paid for our amusements. We enjoyed watching our favourite movie stars including Bette Davis, Joan Crawford and others and copied their dress fashions. Dress materials were hard to come by because of war-time restrictions but our dressmakers were expert in following the latest fashion trends.

Harris de Kretser lived in the house 'Charmaine' in New Bullers Road. The Japanese air raid on Colombo resulted in his family being evacuated upcountry and the house was given to Harriet (Jinks) de Kretser to use as a Christian canteen for the servicemen billeted at the Race Course and Royal College. It was called 'The House by the Side of the Road' but soon became known to the visiting R.A.F. and Army personnel as 'The hole in the wall'. Jinks de Kretser had been our Sunday School teacher so we were allowed to help. No alcohol was allowed. Only tea, coffee and lime juice were served and, the great favourite, hand churned ice-cream. Drinks were free on Sunday evenings but everyone had to join in hymn singing. We taught many a serviceman to play the game of carrom and even held carrom competitions.

We looked forward to the Christmas and New Year's Eve dances held at the Town Hall and the Galle Face and Mount Lavinia hotels. We continued to go

out with our old friends and were not allowed to go out with the Servicemen, even though many of them had become our new friends.

Perhaps the occasion we remember best is the fancy dress party in August 1945 held to celebrate V.J. day. It was a spur-of-the-moment affair but everyone managed to come in a costume, varying from imitations of 'Carmen Miranda' to Wee-Willie-Winkie. We had food from the Chinese cafe at the rear of the house and kept increasing the order as more and more people arrived. We had no alcohol, only soft drinks, and lots of dancing and party games. It was good to see how all our old and new friends (we had several servicemen as friends too), got on for 'Those were the days my friends, we thought they would never end'.

It seems strange, but none of our group married one of our crowd though we remained friends through life. Today, most members of our group are here in Australia and even though our partners were chosen from outside our group, we are still interested in one another's doings.

Phyllis, the bureaucrat's daughter

Phyllis' father was a senior bureaucrat who, as a member of the Ceylon Civil Service, was stationed in many towns in Ceylon. He eventually retired, left Ceylon and lived in Sydney. In this article Phyllis describes some of her early experiences.

My memories of Ceylon are always connected with the houses we lived in and my earliest memory is of the house in Wellawatte on Galle Road. It was called 'Homestead' and I was about five years old when we lived there. It was a typical Colombo house of that period and had a wide verandah running the full width of the house with steps leading down to the portico. The verandah opened into the drawing room and then an arch led into the dining room. On either sides were doors leading to the bedrooms. At the rear was another 'L' shaped verandah off which were the kitchen and the servants' quarters. I probably remember this house well because I fell down the steps and broke my hand. There was a lot of to-ing and fro-ing to the doctor's to have it set, but all the fuss was just what a little girl wanted and I enjoyed it in spite of the pain.

We moved, a few years later, to Francis Road. This house was very similar to the other and my memories of the time we lived there were happy ones. All my grandparents lived near us, my father's parents lived opposite us, and my mother's parents lived further down the road. Behind us lived my cousins. We played with them and life was a happy one.

We next shifted to Havelock Town. It was a large two-storeyed house with many bedrooms and bathrooms and a lovely balcony over the porch. Like the other houses at that time, there was no sewerage. 'Thunderboxes' complete with wooden boxes of saw-dust was all we had. Baths were zinc and there was no hot water. When we wanted a hot bath, -a great big cast-iron kettle was boiled and brought up the back stairs by one of the servants. This staircase, which was outside the house, allowed the 'bucket man' to get to the toilet buckets once a day and clear them. Most houses had no basins in the bathroom. The bedrooms had washstands with china jug and basin, receptacles for soap, toothpaste and toothbrushes and slop buckets to empty the dirty water into.

We lived in this house for a few years and it was from here that I first went to school. I have happy recollections of this house, of being dressed in the eve-

nings, and going to the park with the ayah, of cousins and neighbourhood friends coming over to visit or spend the day and the many 'made-up' games we played.

A few years later my father was transferred to Kalutara and my sister and I were packed off to boarding school. The house in Kalutara was similar to the others we had lived in. It had two storeys and was built on the old Dutch fort, complete with ramparts and sentry boxes. There was also a stone tomb at one end of the garden. A cousin who often stayed with us was convinced that the place was haunted and she swears she saw a Dutch soldier in full armour in her bedroom one night.

Holidays in Kalutara were wonderful. We had many friends. The parents would get together and organise picnics and parties. Christmas was especially enjoyable. The Church was within walking distance and after the Carol service all our friends would come over and what a party it was with the singing and the games. It was about this time that I first became aware of food and this was especially at Christmas time. There was the delicious Christmas cake, breudher and Dutch Edam cheese (a whole ball of it), turkey and ham, Christmas pudding, 'bon-bons', crackers (Chinese fireworks), and all the lovely presents from Santa Claus. My father would take me shopping on Christmas eve and many were the wonderful things we would get for the dinner and Christmas parties. Life was truly wonderful for an eleven year old!

Dad was next transferred to Matara. That house was at the top of Brown's Hill and the views were magnificent. On one side the Dondra Head light house cast its beams and on the other side were the views to the Deniyaya hills. Holidays were again wonderful. Matara, being a stronghold of the Burgher community, gave us many friends and parents would arrange picnics for us to Dondra Head and to Weligama with its magnificent beach.

We next moved to Anuradhapura where we lived for three years. The house was in the sacred 'old town' and was old and infested with bats. A light was kept burning all night to keep the bats away but we never could get rid of the smell of them. I vividly remember the geckoes, some like little crocodiles, and the monkeys that came down to drink from a great carved rock near the house. These monkeys were always well organised and queued one behind the other for their drink. Friends were few so we had to make our own amusements. We spent a lot of time wandering around the ruins of the ancient city of Anuradhapura, which was over two thousand years old. There were no picnics here so, with our parents, we explored the places of interest in the district and visited Sigiriya, Mihintale, Polonnaruwa, Trincomalee and all those beautiful wewas (man-made lakes).

After my father retired we moved to Kandy. I later moved to Colombo for work and it was from there that I married a 'tea planter' or manager of a tea plantation. Life on a tea plantation was very different. It was a self-contained little world, very different to anything I had known before. There were three bungalows (houses) on the estate for the managers. The biggest and the best was for the Manager himself and the others were for the two S.D's. (sinnadorais or assistant managers) with the more senior having the bigger and better bungalow. We first lived in the 'small' bungalow. It was very comfortable with a drawing room and dining room, two bedrooms with attached bathrooms, and the usual kitchen, pantry, store room and drying room: We had an Aga

type cooker, connected to a hot water tank, so we had hot water on tap. I fell in love with the life.

There were glorious views on every side and the garden was full of flowers. Distances were great, along narrow, winding roads, often unmade, but we made many friends. A few years later we moved to the bigger S.D.'s bungalow and this was larger and more comfortable. We had an additional bedroom and grew our own vegetables and kept poultry. Both of us loved animals so there were dogs and cats that regularly produced puppies and kittens. The plantation was high in the hills of Uva province and the social life among the planters, both European and Ceylonese, was good. Two English families in our district became good friends. The P.D. (perai dorai or senior manager) and his wife, when we were newly married, often invited us for lunch or dinner and would have me stay overnight when Mervyn had to go away for Planters' Association meetings. We had no 'hang-ups' with regard to the European planters so were able to hold our own.

We had many friends among the Ceylonese planters. Often they would telephone, or we would telephone them, and say 'we are coming over' and the reply was 'Fine, I will get the cook to add more water to the soup'. We often got together in one another's homes and spent a wonderful day together. Often we would organise a picnic to the east coast to either Kalkudah or Arugam Bay, about a hundred miles away. We would leave home about 5 a.m, meet at a prearranged spot, and a little later halt at a boutique for hoppers and kata sambol. After a very relaxing day on the beach and in the sea, we would return home late at night. Another favourite haunt was Lahugala Tank, an artificial lake. It was very beautiful, peaceful and relaxing. The waters of the lake and the surroundings were full of bird life. All of us were interested in birds and this was encouraged by W.W.A. Phillips who resided in Uva, was an authority on Ceylon birds, and wrote many books about them. Most of the planters and their wives were bird watchers and we would remain at Lahugala until dusk to watch the elephants come down to the water's edge to drink before we returned home.

Thursday was 'Tennis Day'. Each week one of the wives was responsible for organising afternoon tea and it was always something special like homemade bread and scones, cream and butter, cakes and sandwiches.

Those who played tennis were on the courts and the rest of us would sit around gossiping and many were the reputations torn to shreds! After afternoon tea there was more tennis and then we went on to the 'pictures' in the tin shed that was the local cinema. 'Tennis meets' were held about three times a year and all the ladies contributed to the sumptuous meals. The party would go on all day and well into the night and many were the men who found it difficult to stand straight. The next morning was the usual 'hangover'. Life was good to us. We didn't pick-up the tennis balls, for there were paid 'ball-boys' for that purpose, and cooking and housework were the responsibility of the domestic help. The gardens were the responsibility of the gardeners and the washing was done by the dhoby. He collected our dirty linen and clothes and brought them back a week later beautifully clean, starched and ironed.

That life is now like a dream. I am glad I was able to experience it. When we left, we left everything we loved behind, the country where we were born, our friends, our favourite haunts, the beautiful hills, the beaches of the east coast, the jungles, all those places where we had spent many happy hours. Settling

down in Melbourne was not easy for there was little money, we had to do everything ourselves and the week-ends were spent cleaning and washing. I was too busy to become 'homesick' or to regret the decision to come here. We just looked ahead and, after 35 years, do not regret the decision...but there are times when my heart aches for the 'places and faces' we knew and loved but Australia is now truly home.

Persis, the doctor's daughter

Persis' father was a Government medical practitioner who, like most professional grade public-servants, was regularly transferred around Ceylon until eventually arriving in Colombo in an administrative position in the head office of the department. This is her story:

My memories of childhood fall into compartments, each segment relating to the outstation town in which my father was the District Medical Officer. My memories start in 1936 when my father was stationed in Kegalle. It was the time of the malaria epidemic. My sister and I were left in Colombo with my grandmother and it was then that I had my first experience of school, at Ladies College. I became ill with whooping cough and had to be sent back home. Immunisation had not been discovered as yet and I can remember being forced to drink a concoction, the memory of which still brings a bitter taste to my mouth. It was called valmi and was a dark brown syrup made from medicinal roots boiled to a prescription. While I was recovering, we had the news that Dad was being transferred to Nuwara Eliya. It was the first time that I remember the excitement of a shift. The glassware and crockery had to be wrapped in newspaper and packed in straw in large crates. The furniture was taken apart at the hinges and everything was finally taken to the railway station and placed in goods wagons.

By Christmas of that year we were settled in Nuwara Eliya. It felt strange wearing woollies and watching the lighted fires in the rooms. Santa Claus really remembered me that year for he brought me a dolls house, complete with a staircase, an upstairs and lights. It seemed like magic to a little girl. The four years I spent in Nuwara Eliya were some of my happiest years. I attended the Ceylonese section of the Good Shepherd Convent (there was a separate section for the European children), made many friends and adored the nuns. To me, they were a people apart. I commenced piano lessons with Estelle Bartholomeusz and the highlight of those afternoons was playing 'tic-tuc-took' (naughts and crosses) with Estelle's mother. In the evenings Dad and Mum would go out to the Club to play bridge, a very popular game at that time, or visit friends. My sister, who was eight years older than me, would be with friends and I would spend a happy couple of hours with the servants, the 'boy', the cook, the ayah, and my special favourite Annie, before being given dinner and put to bed. We would sit on the carpet and play rummy and thiam chonal, an Indonesian game somewhat similar to ludo. A fire would be burning and the rooms would be warm.

Playing with dolls was a favourite pastime. I had six of them, mostly large porcelain dolls with blue eyes and golden hair. Dolls' tea parties were wonderful affairs, with china tea-sets laid out (no plastic in those days), and make-believe sandwiches, cakes and tea. As a special treat, Annie would sometimes

make me tiny sandwiches and cut up a piece of cake into bite-sized pieces. Annie would join me in the make believe. The other occupation I remember is cooking for my dolls. It was called cooking chinchoru. Mum had got me a set of *chatty mutties*, a set of earthenware doll-size chatties (cooking pots). These would be set over three tiny stones, an imaginary fire lit underneath, and I would 'cook' leaves as vegetables in one, some pebbles in another pretending it was meat, and sand in a third to represent rice. Thus did my dolls have lunch. My favourite doll was a baby faced rubber doll. She was 'Betsy-Wetsy'. I would feed her water and in a few minutes I would have to change her nappie. She arrived in the pillow-case I used to hang up for Santa Claus. I remember Mummy teaching me to knit and then my spare time was spent knitting clothes for my 'doll family'.

April and May were busy months in Nuwara Eliya. It was called 'the season'. The Governor, then Sir Andrew Caldecott, with Lady Caldecott and their staff would take up residence at Queen's Cottage, their official residence. The Ceylon Lawn Tennis Association would hold its annual tennis meet, the Ceylon Turf Club would have several weeks of racing, and there were hordes of visitors from the low country. We too had many visitors, the cousins who used to come up to join the fun. Being under ten years at the time, I often did feel left out and the remark 'You are too small' was one I often heard. One event I remember clearly was the night Daddy and Mummy went to dinner with the Governor. All the senior officials and wives had been invited. I remember the dress that Mummy wore, a black satin, with a large old-fashioned white sapphire brooch. But she was in a dither. The reason was that the Government Agent and the District Judge and their wives were not in town on that day and Mum, as the wife of the next most senior official, had to give the signal to the other ladies present at the dinner table that it was time to rise and leave the men to their port and cigars. It was only years later, when I went to dinners at the Shell Company and Navy Wardroom parties, that I realised how strict protocol was in those days.

Dad had a constant companion, a white Saluki dog called Pharos. Dad had trained him to refuse to touch a ball or food if the word 'foreign' was said. The moment Pharos heard the word 'British', he knew it was safe and permissible. Those certainly were the days of the mighty British Empire!

Trips to Colombo to visit grandma were a highlight. The heat, the noise, the people and the rush were so different to the peace, cool and quiet of Nuwara Eliya. We would go shopping and visiting relations. Traders-people I had never heard of when I was in Nuwara Eliya would come to my grandma's door. There was the egg man who arrived with a basket of eggs on his head. Grandma would call out for a basin of water and gently place the eggs in the water. The fresh eggs would sink, the others would float and Grandma would buy the eggs that sank to the bottom. Another arrival was the 'fowl man' who arrived with a pingo, a long flexible pole, across his shoulder with a basket or cage built with coir (coconut fibre) rope on a frame draped at either end. In each cage were fowls (chooks). The pingo would be lowered, grandma would point to a fowl, and then another and another. The man would put his hand into the basket and bring them out while there was a lot of cackling from the birds. Grandma would hold a fowl in her hands, examine it carefully to check if the flesh was dark or white and whether it was a fleshy bird. She rejected quite a few before deciding on her preferred birds. The chosen birds were then tied

with string to a tree and left there until needed. The servants were usually Buddhists so it was left to the gardener, who was usually a Tamil and a Hindu or Christian, to kill the birds. Another arrival was the 'bottle man' who arrived periodically to weigh and buy the old newspapers and bottles. He would carefully examine every empty bottle, turn them round and up to the light to spot cracks, and then announce how much he would pay. It was the East we lived in and bargaining was the rule. They would state a price, Grandma would look horrified, and the process of negotiation would commence until a price agreeable to all parties was established. There was another man who came on a bicycle with jaggery, thala balls, alphas and sundry other sweets. There was the baker who arrived each day with a big basket on his head. At the top was a shelf containing cakes, borowers (sweet, half-round biscuits), buns and rolls. When that shelf was lifted, the space below was revealed as full of loaves of bread. That bread was special. Each day and each loaf was just that little different to the next one...and they all had the hard date mark that every child loved and used to call 'the Baker's kiss'. And there was the 'fish man', the 'crab man', the bombai muttai (Indian sweets) man and so many others. Each brought something different, each was different. It was an incredibly varied society where everybody was an individual. Everything seemed hand-made and no two items were ever exactly alike. There are so many memories that flood my mind. There was the cookie who would do all the cooking. There was the servant 'boy' who swept, dusted, cleaned and served our meals at table sprucely dressed in a white cloth and a coat buttoned up to his neck with shiny brass buttons.

Dad's next station was Mandapam Camp in South India. He spent one year there. It was the quarantine camp for all the third-class train travellers travelling from India to Ceylon. Because of India's reputation as a place for infectious diseases, every effort had to be made to prevent the diseases from reaching Ceylon. All third-class passengers (but not the first and second-class passengers who were supposed to have a better standard of hygiene), had to remain at the camp for two weeks as a precautionary measure. Mandapam was a dry and arid place. The house was very comfortable and for the first time we lived in a house that had sewered toilets. We even had a swimming pool but there was no water in it as water was scarce. There was a common swimming pool for all the government employees working at the camp. The water was changed once a week and, by special order, the pool was reserved for the very senior government employees on the first three days of each week. I was only at Mandapam during the school holidays and at other times I lived in Colombo with Grandma and attended school.

The three school terms I spent at Grandma's were a quiet time. Annie stayed to look after me and keep me company. Grandma was a florist, the first in Ceylon, and I can still remember the fragrance in the 'flower room' from the gardenias, stephanotis, roses, carnations. I remember the vibrant colours of the barbetan daisies, gladioli and agapanthus. Beautiful indeed were the sheafs, bridal bouquets and wreaths that Grandma created. Dinner at Grandma's was a four-course affair. There was soup, a fish course, then meat and vegetables and lastly a pudding. It was all served by two servants dressed in white sarongs [a cloth wrapped around the waist and extending to the ankles] complete with coats buttoned up to the neck with brass buttons.

Grandma had a Sinhalese man servant, Hendrick Appu, who had come into the household when he was a young boy. At the time I remember him he was middle-aged and wore his hair tightly combed back and tied in a knot at the back of his head. On the top of his head was placed a tortoise-shell comb in the shape of a horseshoe.

There were other salesmen who arrived at our front verandah. There was the Chinaman who arrived with a large bundle wrapped in a khaki-coloured cloth tucked on his shoulder. Many were the afternoons we spent watching him display his wares. There were bedspreads, pillow cases, table doilies and cloths, silk pyjamas, kimonos and many more, all exquisitely hand embroidered. Under them were layers of materials of crepe de chine and Fuji silk. I can still remember my aunts and Grandma bartering with him. At that age I had little idea of the value of money but I do remember that garments were usually bought for not more than half the asking price. The other person who used to come to the house was a very dark man who wore the muslim fez. He would insist on talking in English so we children called him 'black Englishman'. He brought sheeting materials, drill (for school uniforms) and tussock (for men's suits). His famous saying was 'Lady, I got it through the back door of Whiteaways' (a very classy department store in Colombo in the 1930s).

I must tell you who 'Annie' was. She was a Sinhalese girl who was brought home to us to be a companion for my elder sister. She was a darling. She wore a cloth and jacket in the house and, when she was older, a saree when going out. I loved the beauty of the saree and one day, when I was ten and a half, she bought me a saree and showed me how to wear it. What fun we had together.

At the end of that year Japan entered the war. Dad was transferred to Anuradhapura and in the three years we lived there I had many new experiences. I attended the convent, where the great majority of nuns were Ceylonese and, for the first time, lived in a house that had 'an upstairs'. Two battalions of 'The King's African Rifles' were stationed at Anuradhapura. This was the first time I had seen Africans and they were big and very black with smooth shiny skin. There were parties to entertain the troops. We would meet weekly at the Government Agent's bungalow to cut and roll bandages and sew garments for the 'Hospital Supply Association'. It was during our stay in Anuradhapura that my sister was married. I was then sent to boarding school at Kandy to prevent me from 'growing into a spoilt brat'. I hated that spell at Kandy because I was essentially a 'home bird'.

In 1946 the Ladies College boarding school in Kandy was closed and I came to Colombo to board and attend school. Dad was now stationed in Galle and it was there that I learnt to love the heritage the Dutch had left behind. The ramparts, the old church, the building that was once a barracks and hospital and was then, and still is, the N.O.H., the New Oriental Hotel (rather a misnomer now for it is 200 years old!) and the lovely Dutch-looking houses that had been built within the Fort. We lived in Leyn Baan street in one of them. These Dutch houses were built in blocks of about ten with common side walls. We were fortunate that we occupied a corner site with streets at the front, side and rear. The house was bang-up against the roads. There were two very large rooms, each about 10 metres by 8 metres, and then these were the lounge and dining rooms. One side of the house had a narrow verandah leading to the bathroom, servants room and kitchen. Along this verandah, and to take up the width of the house, was a garden known as the mada midula or middle garden.

Upstairs there were two large rooms, similar to the big rooms downstairs. I finished with school at the end of 1948 and I remember Christmas that year because I went for a dance at the Galle Gymkhana Club to see the New Year in and to the races at the Boosa race course. Early in the new year, Dad was transferred to Colombo.

Life in Colombo seemed to consist of going to and fro on my bicycle to piano lessons, dressmaking lessons and dancing lessons at the DBU. Having grown-up in the outstations, I did not have too many friends in Colombo. It took a while to get into a group. My parents were not keen on my getting into the work force but were happy that I should continue with my music. The Dutch Reformed Church at Regent Street was one of my interests and I played the organ there. I have many fond memories of carol services, Sunday School and the people.

The Police dance in December 1949 is another memory. I wore a long frock for the first time. My sister and brother-in-law were my chaperones. Sad to say, I cannot remember who my partner was!

Many other memories flood in as I think about the past. Before I came to Australia, the first meal of the day was called hoppers, whether we had hoppers, stringhoppers, pittu, roti, bread or plain 'corn flakes'. I can still recall the sound of the coconut being cracked very early in the morning, then the coconut being scraped on the hiramina (coconut scraper) for 'milk' for hoppers and the grated coconut in the pol sambol. Hoppers must be eaten hot so great was the fuss and action when Dad was ready for his hoppers. A hot egg hopper and sufficient warm hoppers were quickly made ready and placed before him as he sat down at the table.

Tiffin was a meal our generation have almost forgotten. Half past three in the afternoon and the table would be laid with a dainty table cloth, usually one in which Mum had crocheted an edge, together with dainty napkins. On the table were bread, butter, pineapple jam, a cake and tea in a pot.

At the time I left school my father was stationed in Colombo and my grandmother now lived with us. As I look back on the years gone by, I realise what a protected young person I was. When I was eighteen years old I obtained my driver's licence but was not allowed to go on the road without our chauffeur sitting beside me. Grandma kept a very watchful eye on all who came to visit. I remember the day a male friend 'dropped in' riding a motor bike. Grandma's comment when he left was 'you are not going on the back of a motor bike'. In those days and at her age that was an order that had to be obeyed.

Among my memories are the dhoby who came once a week, rain or shine, with a freshly laundered bundle of clothes and to take away the soiled ones; Alice, who in the latter part of my life in Ceylon, cooked for us; Banda the servant boy who swept, dusted, cleaned and served our meals. They were almost closer than my own family. I thank God for the memories I have. It was a sheltered 'growing up' and perhaps I was not equipped for the rough and tumble of life in Australia but it certainly was a life full of loyalty, caring and love.

Aileen, the church minister's daughter

I always looked forward to Christmas. From the middle of November my mother would start buying yards and yards of flowered material to sew-up cloths for the ayah and the cook-woman and an organdie frock for me. There were many trips to the Pettah and black patent leather shoes from Cargills. What a delight were those shiny black shoes! My brothers too had new clothes and shoes. My mother would go shopping by rickshaw and return laden with parcels. Then she and my older sister would lock the bedroom door while they laid all the purchases on the bed and sorted the various gifts. I remember my cousin and I peeping through the window. It was all most exciting.

Then there was the Christmas cake. All the ingredients had to be washed, stoned and cut-up. The aroma of the rosewater, vanilla and spices was beautiful to my nostrils. When everything was ready my brothers were called to hold the pan while my mother beat-up the cake. Immediately after the mixture was put into the baking pans there was a fight over how the left-over in the basin and on the spoon were to be shared. What a lovely smell as the cake baked. Then there was the breudher. There was much excitement until that was made. I also remember the Carol services and the church packed to overflowing.

On Christmas morning my father would light chinese crackers outside our window and we would bound out of our beds to see what Santa had brought. I always received a baby doll and called it Podi MaIli, which in English is 'little brother'.

After breudher, butter and cheese for breakfast, we got dressed and went to church. Then came the visits to grandmother, aunts and cousins. We would be given more gifts, cake, drinks and all kinds of goodies. We got home to a hearty lunch, opened bon-bons, wore caps and read the riddles amidst much laughter and happiness. Then there were nuts and raisins. Parties and visits continued until early in January. It really was a season of Christmas cheer. Nowadays nobody seems to visit. They go away instead.

When I was a teenager I recall going to school and back in a rickshaw. It was about a twenty minute ride and I so enjoyed looking around at the huge flowering flamboyant trees, passing the Town Hall, Victoria Park and then into Flower Road. I loved those days at Ladies College and formed many life-long friendships. We used to sit on the chapel steps or under the bread-fruit tree and chat and many were the yarns, jokes and laughter. I was a boarder for two years and although I hated it then I have the most pleasant memories of midnight feasts in the dormitory, table-tennis after dinner, listening to records, and dancing with my friends.

My ayah was a dear thing. She was a great influence in my life and always somewhere in the background. When I was little she did everything for me and sometimes I would even fall asleep on her mat. She would talk in 'broken English' to me and I used to love her. When I left for Australia she came to farewell me, kissing and crying, on board ship for we knew we would never see one other again.

I remember staying with my grandmother and going down to the beach every evening. What a wonderful way to end the day, watching the red and purple sunsets, with the coconut palms delicately etched against the vivid sky. Then back home to a dinner of rice with a red seer-fish curry served by apodian (small boy) in his freshly starched coat.

Every year in August the Buddhists hold their annual festival or Perahera in Kandy. Over ten nights a procession of elephants, dancers, drummers, men on stilts and Kandyan chiefs in their regalia walk in procession through the streets of the town. The religious festival is watched by thousands of people and has grown into the greatest tourist event of the year. Hundreds arrive from overseas to watch it.

The elephants are covered with glittering cloths while the torch bearers accompany them waving torches of coconut-shells soaked in oil. One year, in the middle of the procession, an elephant accidentally stepped on a burning ember, wheeled around and stampeded into the crowd. Fourteen people were killed and 191 injured. After some time the police had to shoot the enraged animal and in its death throes it fell and smashed a car. The crowd ran in every direction and many were injured in the resulting confusion. We were safe in the upstairs of our flat and watched the entire incident. It took over two hours to restore order and the Perahera was abandoned for that night.

The next morning we walked over to see the huge elephant lying dead on its side. One of its legs was later made into an umbrella stand and is today in my brother's house.

I remember other long and lazy days, where life was unhurried, delectable meals prepared by loving hands, monsoon rain drumming on the roof, orchids and tropical plants, swaying palm trees, golden beaches...a real paradise. As I sit alone in a cold and wet and miserable Melbourne winter I thank God that I was born and bred in Ceylon and had such a comfortable home and loving family:

*and when the nights are cold with winter's sleet,
warm memories of that fair Isle will softly creep,
I know my heart will ache for tropic skies,
for surely this was once God's Paradise.*
(quoted from Astrid Le Mercier's poem.
She left for Canada in 1959).

Maureen, the dairyman's daughter

I was born during the years of the Great Depression of the 1930s. My father was one of its victims and lost his job as a coconut planter and manager of a 'copra' (desiccated coconut) mill. I was born at my grandparents' home 'West-bourne' in Colpetty (now known as Kollupitiya). Shortly afterwards my parents decided on a new venture and operated a dairy from where they supplied milk to certain suburbs in Colombo.

Inoculation of cattle was not common then and within a short time they had lost two herds and had to borrow money and start again. Life became very difficult and my grandparents, who had a large house and only one unmarried daughter with them, suggested that I should live with them. My parents were not in a position to devote a great deal of attention to me so my ayah, Carlina, and I went to live with my grandparents.

My earliest affectionate memories are of my lovely ayah, Carlina, and my Grandpa. Carlina was a beautiful slim young woman whose sole job was to

look after me. She lavished love and attention on me until I was four or five years old. Sadly, she died from tuberculosis some years later.

To my Grandpa I was his little blue-eyed 'Delcie', my other name, which he had chosen when I was christened. He used to delight in dancing with me while the gramophone played the first piece of music I can remember 'Spring-time in the Rockies'.

Life was very orderly at Westbourne'. After our afternoon siesta, we would get dressed and sharp at 5 p.m. the chauffeur would bring the car to the front portico and we would drive the short distance to Galle Face, a lovely stretch of promenade by the sea. Here were a cross-section of people enjoying the benefits of the fresh sea air. There were even the occasional 'Afghans' in their turbans and strange dress enjoying a friendly wrestle on the grass. If I was lucky, I would be treated to an ice palaam brought around by a young boy riding a tricycle with the ice-palaams in a big box that was insulated and from which the 'smoke' of the dry-ice emerged when the box was opened. Later, after we had returned home, the servant boy dressed in white with high buttoned jacket, would bring out the whisky and soda on a silver tray. I wasn't left out and the ritual was that I dipped my finger in the drinks and said 'cheers' with them. After that I would have my dinner and go to bed while on most evenings friends would 'drop-in' to socialise with my grandparents.

By the time I was five, my dear ayah had departed and I went home to my parents to start some form of learning and to enjoy the company of my new baby brother. As my father still kept rather odd hours and had broken sleep at nights, travel to school and back was difficult. I therefore did not go to a formal school but was taught by a kindly lady teacher, Mrs. Spittel. She would arrive each day in her rickshaw and I learnt many unusual things, especially poetry, songs and nature study because I had her undivided attention. This continued until I was nine years old and my brother was ready for school. We then both attended C.M.S. Ladies College.

I enjoyed carefree and happy times. I went to birthday parties, always dressed very prettily, and enjoyed games like 'Here the Robbers', 'Poor Mary', etc. In return, it was always exciting having my own birthday parties. Aunties came around to help make patties [half-moon shaped curried beef savouries] and sandwiches, and the cake was ordered from Perera & Sons. We also visited many aunties and uncles. Some of them lived out of Colombo and it was a great event to travel thirty kilometres to 'spend the day' with them. Uncle Hugh was a great favourite as he organised trips to the cattle pond for fishing. As for holidays, it was very exciting to go 'up-country' to stay with my godfather and family on a tea estate. Life was very different there and my aunt was a great favourite and taught me to love music. Christmas was also very special. We always had a traditional dinner at my grandparents' on Christmas Eve followed by lighting fireworks with my cousins. On New Year's Eve night it was exciting to hear the sounds of fireworks, the sound of ship's sirens, and the pealing of church bells welcoming the New Year.

Our servants were another very important part of our childhood because we spent so much time with them. We were fortunate to learn something about their culture, superstitions and fears. I remember being taken for a walk and coming across pretty little clay pots with dainty sweetmeats and flowers in them and being told 'not to touch' as they had been part of exorcisms. We had

heard the drums and chanting all the previous night and I had got a most eerie feeling listening to them.

School life at Ladies' College was a very happy experience and I consider myself very lucky to have been sent to such a wonderful school. The basis of my Christian life began there with the day commencing in our beautiful chapel, followed by a period of teaching scripture. Unfortunately my schooling was interrupted during the war years when our school was commandeered by the Military and I had to attend a Roman Catholic convent instead. I went back to Ladies College after the war.

There were few career options for girls those days. They went to University if that way inclined, or took to teaching, or went to the Polytechnic, or taught music from home, or stayed home as a lady of leisure. I would have liked to have qualified as a home economist, but the training for this was overseas and my parents would not hear of me leaving home 'so young'. I trained in shorthand and typing, worked as a secretary and that pleasant experience ended when I married.

The Railway Burghers (see map on page 125)

They were the salt of the earth, those railwaymen. They were tough, rough, courageous and hard-working, loyal to their fellow railwaymen, untroubled by discipline and obedience to superiors. They spoke disparagingly of European bosses and the pen-pushing 'other' Burghers who lacked their spirit of adventure and did not seem to know how to create fun and laughter from everyday incidents. They were the first of the Burghers who became true Australians because they were physical people and so much like the down-to-earth Aussies. They enjoyed living and refused to save. Life was for living. Two 'Railway Burghers' describe their childhood experiences below.

Victor, a second generation railwayman

My father, Randolph, was twenty-eight when he married his sixteen year old bride, Phyllis. They met when Randolph, 'Rando' to his friends, drove the steam-train from Peradeniya to Kandy and Phyllis was a school-girl who travelled daily to school on that train. The union resulted in eleven children and I, born in 1935, was the eldest.

Rando was stationed at Anuradhapura at the time of his marriage but was transferred soon after back to Kandy. There were no railway quarters in Kandy .. so the drivers and guards occupied private housing around the town and met occasionally at the 'Railway Reading Room', or 'Railway Institute'. Among the drivers stationed at Kandy were Wally Bowen, Earle Bartholomeusz, Artie Hodgson, Sonna Rozairo and Harry Solomons. The guards included Sonny, Lindsay and Koelmeyer. The railways at that time were mainly staffed by Burghers, especially in the transport section, where they were the guards, drivers and station masters.

Matale, where Rando was stationed from 1939 to 1941, was a small station with no official housing and no Railway Institute. The other drivers there were , George Wells and Kitty Keegel.

Rando was transferred to Nanu Oya in 1942 and the railway staff were provided with housing there. The houses were mainly weather-board houses and similar to many Australian houses of the immediate post-war period. Drivers

and guards worked the UPR (narrow-gauge Uda Pussellawa Railway). Among the drivers were Eric Corteling and Earle Bartholomeusz (whose wife, Phylli Herft, was fantastic on the piano at the railway `sing-songs'). The guards included Aubrey Vanderputt, Bertie Alvis, de la Zilwa and Beba Dickson. The locomotive foreman was Cholmondeley Jansz and the foreman plate layer was Brainard.

The Burghers of Nanu Oya were a close knit group and met frequently at the Railway Institute for a sing-song around the piano, a game of carrom, whist drives and table tennis and the wives often played tennis during the day. The cold, bracing weather added to the warmth of the festive Christmas season when the annual dance was attended by many visitors, including Burghers from the hospitals and plantations in the area. Drivers, guards and families even came from Nawalapitiya for the occasion. The Railway Institute was the focal point for Burghers in the district and Burgher postmasters, dispensers, tea-makers and others were regular guests at Institute functions. Rando was a leading member of the local 'Minstrel Troupe' with Earle Bartholomeusz, Sonna Rozairo and Aubrey Vanderputt.

My father was next transferred to Colombo in 1944 and occupied quarters at 'Mount Mary', the railway town near Wesley College. I cannot recall much of this period as I lived with my grandparents and went to school in Kandy. I visited Mount Mary only during the holidays and all that I can recall of those by-gone days were the massive searchlights with their beams scanning the sky for enemy aircraft and the occasional air-raid siren sounding an alert.

Rando next moved to Nawalapitiya, where he remained from 1945 to 1951. Railway staff could remain for three or more years at places like Nawalapitiya and Colombo but the stint at Anuradhapura and Trincomalee, the malarial stations, was restricted to eighteen months. Nawalapitiya, a sprawling railway town, had quarters for all its employees. The Railway Institute was a hive of activity every evening with tennis, badminton, snooker, billiards, table-tennis, bridge, darts and anything else someone could think of. Simeon, the resident barman, was kept busy from ten in the morning to the early hours of the next morning dispensing the spirits that cheer.

The Institute had dances at Easter, Christmas and September and large crowds would turn-up from Colombo, Kandy, Nanu Oya, Nuwara Eliya and Bandarawela. Other Burghers in the town also attended these festivities but the great majority were members of the Railway Institute. These events were not without excitement because the occasional punch-up occurred for no specific reason.

Among those stationed at Nawalapitiya at that time were the drivers Victor Webster, Eddie Ohlmus, Ralph Edema, Sam Henderling, Hardie, Noel Templar, Irwin Dickson, brothers Wally and Harry Miller, Denzil Vanderputt, Samson Tucker, brothers St. John and Tory de Hoedt, Conrad Berenger, Wally Bowen, Earle Bartholomeusz, Sonna Rozario, Fred de Kretser, U.C.de Zilwa, Cecil Mottau, Tappa' Pietersz, Joe Mustachi, Doddy Proctor, L.E.Don, George Rulach, Willie Craggs, Godfrey Balthazar, Aubrey Floor, Bill de Soyza, and the last of the European drivers, Jim Carson (who had his own private residence in town).

Train Controllers included Peter Phillips and Bobby Chapman, assistant station masters included Sonnie Bartholomeusz, Bertie Starling, and Hyron Pietersz; locomotive foremen included Bertie Rulach, Eustace Berenger, Eddie

Christoffelsz, Gerard Dircksz and Egerton Bogaars. Guards included Werkmeister and Ludowyke. The 'bosses' included Transportation Superintendents Alan Demmer, Mervyn Greve, Annesley Bartholomeusz, and Dudley de Jong.

Rando next went to Trincomalee, classified as 'uncongenial'. Most staff elected to occupy 'bachelor quarters' and lived together in a large building near the railway station that was known, because of its colour, as the 'white house'. I visited Trinco for the holidays and remember Willie Craggs and guards Caspersz and Batcho.

My father next moved to Kadugannawa from 1953 to 1955. There the drivers worked the big 'Bank Engines' that pushed the trains the thirty kilometres from Rambukkana up the Kadugannawa incline assisted by the smaller engine that had brought the train from the flat coastal plain. From Kadugannawa the trains continued forward, without the 'Bank' or 'Garrett' engines, on their own steam to Kandy, Nawalapitiya and the up-country. Kadugannawa was a small station, there was a small Railway Institute, and the railway people were a close-knit community. Among the railway people not mentioned previously were Tommy Gibson, Jim Todd, Patrick de Hoedt and Budge Colomb.

My father then returned, from 1956 to 1961, to Nawalapitiya. Burgher railwaymen not referred to earlier included the brothers Reggie and Rennie Solomons, Lynn Andriesz, Willie Kelaart, Reggie and David Ebell, Robert Jacotine, Godfrey Stork, Charlie van Langenberg, Percy Bartholomeusz, Lionel Serpanchy, Lawrie Crutchley, Shelton Schokman, Peterson, A.M. Ebert, Douglas Meerwald, brothers Barnes and Kingsley Dickson, Percy Keegel, George Gray, Egerton Beven, Lawson Koch, Mervyn Ferdinands, Lucian Pereira, Melville Pietersz, Jerry Mack, Crofton Simmons, Denzil Kleyn, Lou Cramer, Ivor Perkins and Shelley Anderson. Among the guards were Collin Jarkey and Willie Tyler. The building foremen were Oswin van Buren and Morel.

Rando was next transferred to Bandarawela and retired there in 1963. He had forty years in the railway and was 57 years old. Former drivers H.E. Williams and George Dunsford had also retired to live in Bandarawela.

In the best colonial tradition, various positions were reserved for the sons of railwaymen. In 1956, as Rando's eldest son, I joined the railway as a 'special apprentice driver'. That apprenticeship lasted until 1962 and during that time I trained on both steam and diesel locomotives. Part of my training included a compulsory four months on the Beyer Garrett locomotives at Nawalapitiya, recently oil-fired and now much easier to handle. We were the last of that earlier colonial tradition.

Among my colleagues, and sons of railwaymen themselves, were Maxwell Craggs, Denzil Berenger, Neddy Bulner, Ellis Bowen, Ivor Kelaart and Henry Nugara. There was also Gauder, now in England, and Eardley Nugara, Elmer Clarke, Victor Loos, and Ephraums (who died young). We all 'retired' very early and migrated to work again elsewhere.

Soon after my marriage in 1964 to Esther Dunsford, daughter of retired engine driver George and his wife Nora Rode, I was transferred to Galle. There were no railway quarters. The railway community at that time included Budge Ephraums, Orville Helsham, Joe Cunningham, Harry Kirkton, Mervyn Struys, Mervyn Fernando, Carlyle Ferreira, Dunstan Arnolda, La Brooy, Camillus Godlieb, Arthur vander Hoeven, and Willie Tyler. Duke la Brooy was stationed at Matara. The drivers at Galle worked with the guards von Hagt, Vernon Forbes, Joe Moldrich, Arthur vander Hoeven and Sandy O'Niell

who were stationed at Aluthgama. Their families were in Colombo and they commuted. I eventually resigned in March 1968 and migrated to Melbourne. By then most of the senior Burgher drivers, guards, station masters and loco-foremen had retired. A few remained. That was the end of the Burgher domination of the railways in Ceylon.

The author, a railwayman's son

At the time I was born my father was a junior grade engine-driver. He was the second youngest in a family with fourteen children. His father had been the station master at Gampola. In those days there were no electric lights, no radio or television, no motorised transport and people went to bed early and woke up early.

Two of my father's elder brothers had attended Trinity College but this was a luxury my grandmother could not afford because my father was eight years old when my grandfather died. My father told me he had to dress in hand-me-downs and at fifteen had joined the railway as an apprentice. He shovelled tons of coal every day and night into the belly of that huge, black, coal-eating monster, the steam locomotive, and then cycled from the 'Running Shed' in Dematagoda to shower and sleep. Shy, friendly and cheerful, rather nervous when he met people for the first time, he was kind, courteous and gentle and not prejudiced like so many others of his generation.

My cousin, Maureen, told me this story. My mother had been in love with her cousin, Stanley, who was a second year medical student. Both sets of parents would not countenance the thought of first cousins marrying so Stanley gave up his studies, took a job as a Health Inspector and married his cousin. There is an old superstition that it is an ill omen to pass Buddhist priests or see magpies on an auspicious occasion. The bridal party passed both a Buddhist priest and a magpie on the way to the ceremony. Three months later the bridegroom was dead from typhoid. Their child, my step-brother Stanley, was born seven months later.

Five years after her first husband died, my mother married my father who was five years younger than her. They belonged to different Protestant religious denominations, had different friends and social interests and were not even distantly related. There were three children of the marriage, born within a year of one another. My youngest brother died when six weeks old. I was told that I only just survived several bouts of malaria during my first year when we lived in Anuradhapura, a town infamous for its malaria epidemics. My mother died in Colombo when I was five years old. Ivor and I then found a home with my father's mother and unmarried sisters.

The next four years were chequered ones. We first lived at Tumour Road in Borella with my father, grandmother, an unmarried uncle and an unmarried aunt. I visited those houses in later years and wondered how so many people could have lived in such a small space. The other three houses were also occupied by Burghers. I did not know it then, but twenty years later: I would marry the grand-daughter of the owner of those houses. In front of the houses was a patch of land that at that time seemed as big as a park but was in reality only about as big as a home unit site. It had a single coconut tree, a jakfruit tree, a breadfruit tree and various other bushes such as billings, carapincha and rampe. There were also two open garage-type structures where, in times past, the coach and horse had been stabled. One 'garage' was occupied by the muthu or rickshaw man with his rickshaw and the other had 'uncle' Granville Helsham's motor car, a 'Clyno', that had a 'dicky' seat. It was a source of amazement to us. There were a series of levers that had to be carefully pulled or pushed and

controlled the petrol to the carburettor. There were other mysterious gadgets for gears and brakes and it was all rather like the cockpit of the early aeroplanes. The lights were acetylene lanterns that gave off a burning smell. The 'dicky' seat was fun and I got to sit in it on one occasion. We were not allowed into the car. That was sacred territory. That car did travel but only on very rare occasions for cars, whether old or new, were very unreliable and this one was not new.

Every few months the rickshawman would make a paste of cow dung and use that to paint the floor of his dwelling. It kept away the ants and tropical insects and its use was quite common at that time. I remember one occasion when I went in the rickshaw with Aunt Freda to Mattakuliya to visit a 'native' physician to have my tonsils taken out. He stuck his hand down my mouth and into my throat and daubed some horrid, burning substance. It hurt terribly and I couldn't swallow for days afterwards.

We played a lot of cricket, gudu (a game with some resemblance to baseball but played with a long and a short stick instead of a bat and ball), 'hide and seek', and climbed lots of trees. On one side was a high cabook (a type of brick) fence with broken bits of glass cemented to the top. On the other side were the 'tenements' where people very different to us middle-class folk lived. It was a slum area of tiny houses occupied by the working poor and there were often screams, shouts and fighting. If the cricket ball landed there, it was never returned. Among those I played with were our cousins Charles, George and Ian, brother Ivor, Angus Helsham and 'Frosty' (Dicky) van Langenberg. Some years later Uncle Charlie built a house on half the vacant land and Uncle Arthur built on the other half. They both worked in the Railway, as did Mr. Helsham. The Ceylon Government Railway, or CGR, was very much a part of my childhood years.

After those years with my grandmother and unmarried aunt we boarded with two married aunts in succession. The first aunt's regime was an experience my brother and I will always remember for its terror and cruelty. The second was with my Aunt Mollie. We remember her with love and affection. My father then re-married and we once again had a home of our own. My new mother had been a teacher at Ladies College, was well educated and determined that her step-children should develop to their full potential. She kept a clean house, was economical in housekeeping, an excellent hostess and most particular about manners and doing the right thing. She was a railwayman's wife but never completely comfortable with the railway fraternity. She had a major impact on my life.

We did not live in the consumer society of today where everyone is highly specialised in something and buys everything else from someone else. It wasn't like that in pre-war Ceylon. If I had to have a new pair of trousers my mother or aunt made them or it came down to me from someone else. If new clothes were to be made, then the material was bought (three and a half yards for a pair of long trousers, seven yards for a suit) and I then went to the tailor and was measured. In the days that followed, there would be one or two 'fit ons' and in due course I would have my new trousers. The same applied to a shirt, a jacket (we called it a coat). Even shoes were individually made, each foot measured and drawn separately, at the 'Majestic Boot Works' in Bambalapitiya. Everything was hand-made and everyone was an individual. It isn't like that today. We visit Coles and Myers and we all buy the same styles in different sizes and they all appear to be made in China. Ladies clothing was the same. The tailor would be 'booked' and would duly arrive, sit cross-legged on the cement floor and cut out dresses, using another dress as his pattern. There would be a number of 'fit

ons' with the tailor in attendance and a mouth-full of pins and in a day or two the new dress would be ready.

Shortly after Dad and my step-mother were married, we went to live in Anuradhampura. I was ten years old and remember the two-storey house with large rooms and Fns' interesting garden. Anuradhapura was a fantastic place for a boy of ten. The jungle ended at our rear fence and there were monkeys, snakes, frogs and a stream with little fish just outside the rear fence. Our maternal grandmother gave us a present of a Japanese bicycle (it only cost twenty-three Rupees, about seventy Australian cents, and about a quarter the price of a British 'Raleigh' at that time). My brother was a year younger and we took turns riding that bicycle everywhere, one riding and the other running behind.

We climbed the Ruwanweliseya Dagoba that was then being restored, the ruins of the Jetawanarama Dagoba (climbing dagobas is now not permitted because they are sacred), catapulted monkeys and birds, collected bird, lizard and snake eggs, killed snakes and got ourselves into all kinds of situations that kids love and cause parents to despair. We fished in the Nuwara Wewa (we couldn't swim because of the crocodiles), and wandered through the ruins of the 2000 year old city. With our parents, we climbed the 1200 steps at Mihintale, bathed in the hot wells at Trincomalee, looked at the sacred bo tree (the oldest tree in the world) and rode in hackeries (fast passenger carts with tinkling bells, drawn by castrated bulls egged on by impatient drivers with a stick and shouting jak-mak). Malaria was a constant problem so drinking water was brought from Colombo for the railway employees. The barrel was trundled from the railway wagon to the house by a servant using a stick to propel it.

From Anuradhapura we were packed off to boarding school. We returned at the end of the term to Nawalapitiya, where my father had been transferred. Nawalapitiya was hilly, up in the mountains, and there were no flat roads where we could ride the bike. The bicycle was now parked in the servants toilet (which was also the roosting place for the 'shooks' at night) and soon became rusty. Our new interest was tennis and we played it every morning and often in the afternoons until the adults arrived and took over the courts.

The Railway Institute was the centre of social life in the outstations and the 'Bar' was at the centre of the railway institute. Nawalapitiya had an excellent railway institute. There was tennis, billiards, bridge, dancing and lots of special activities. The Institute was managed by a committee and my step-mother, who was a meticulous and organised person, was soon active in its affairs. The railwaymen were Burghers with Dutch, Portuguese and British names. There were also a few 'covenanted' European drivers. I was beginning to discover the joys of female company and the Institute was excellent for this purpose. Occasionally a travelling cinema would pitch its tent and we would watch three films in three days before the tent was folded and the cinema moved on to another town.

The Mahaveli Ganga, Ceylon's longest and largest river, passed through Nawalapitiya. Swimming was impossible because the river was often deep and fast flowing but we would go there for a river bath in the shallows chaperoned by the domestic help. Tame elephants wallowed in the river enjoying their daily bath and scrub. There was a private bridge that spanned the river with Imboolpittia tea plantation on the other side. Everyone was prohibited from using that private bridge but on one occasion we saw the Peria Dorai, the European Superintendent, in all his majesty.

He did not even glance at the two little boys who gazed, fascinated and frightened at

him. Little did he or we know that thirty years later Ivor, as managing director of Mackwoods Estates, would approve the building of his new factory. The opening ceremony was performed by the Prime Minister, Dudley Senanayake, and the little frightened boy hiding in the bushes made the speech of welcome! The Superintendent's world, and our world, changed considerably in those intervening years.

Nawalapitiya was a railway town and there was a large Burgher community who regularly got together to enjoy themselves. Carl Muller's book *Yakada Yaka* (Iron Devil) is a hilarious but exaggerated account of those tough railway people and their way of life. They lived a champagne life on beer incomes, worked hard, played hard, swore like troopers (when my mother was not around), drank, told stories, argued and fought. The men worked long hours, had little use for 'education', grumbled and swore as they went to work at all hours of the day and the night, looked with scorn on the bosses, the weak and the unsociable, and took every opportunity to 'get some overtime'. The pay was good, better than that of a clerk, but it was strenuous work, alternatively fire-hot and freezing-cold and meals were when drivers could find the time on the run or when stopped for taking in water. Long, wasteful days and nights were spent in 'Running Bungalows' drinking and playing cards with the other drivers and guards. 'Running Bungalows' were houses for sleeping and resting with meals and beds provided for drivers and guards while they waited to take trains back to home station. My Dad's finger nails were always grimy with coal dust and grease and coal dust stuck to his hair, ears and clothes. Eight hours uninterrupted sleep was a luxury.

It was a time before alarm clocks were in use so there was a 'Running Boy' who went around the houses and woke drivers and guards by banging on a door or window one hour before their train was due to leave. I remember the occasion when there was a violent shaking of the glass in the front door and my Dad shouting 'Get away you...fool I am not on tonight'...but it wasn't the 'Running Boy'. It was an earthquake that shook the glass and brought some cups crashing down in the pantry!

My father occasionally took me on the railway engine when we were at Nawalapitiya. I would join him at the 'Running Shed' where the steam engines were garaged and made ready. Big, steam engines were being reversed on the turntable, every bolt and nut was tapped (I don't know why), the boiler would be fired, the door closed and steam pressure raised. I was fascinated with the noise and the size of everything. Then the hissing of steam, a few short blasts on the whistle, lots of hot, white steam from the pistons, and we would begin to move forward. Dad had a heavy wood and cast iron seat and he would drop this over the outer guardrail and I would sit on it and look important as we got under way. I had to keep out of sight while we were in the yards and stations. I loved those occasions, that feeling of enormous power sitting atop that big, black, shiny monster blowing steam and thick black smoke, the fireman toiling as he shovelled coal into that enormous roaring fire, my father looking ahead and adjusting dials and levers, the apprentice grinning and scanning the signals, and me feeling just great, loftily glancing down at the people turning to stare from the tea bushes, rice fields and level-crossings. The ride would last for an hour or two and then, when we crossed another stationary train, I would be passed into the care of another driver on the down line for the return trip. My father knew how much I loved those trips but would keep telling me 'no son of mine is going to be an engine driver, no son of mine is going to work in the Railway'. I couldn't understand why because I could not think of a better way of combining work and pleasure than driv-

ing that coal-burning monster. It seemed to me to be a fun way to earn a living. My mother would din into me 'You must study and do well and become an engineer' and again 'You must aim high to succeed. If you aim at the moon you may reach the top of a coconut tree'. I was rather vague about what they meant. My father had his fortieth birthday when we were at Nawalapitiya and I remember how shocked I was at how old he was!

My brother and I would sit by the railway line and hear the train approach. As it came through the cutting everything around us would be shaking and our excitement would increase accordingly. We would place a pin on the track and, after the engine - had gone over it, collect the pin that had now become a flattened sword. It is so sad that those mighty steam locomotives are no more for there is far less romance in diesel and electric locomotives.

We were at Nawalapitiya for three years, or nine school holidays, and then transferred to Nanu Oya where my Dad drove the 'Garrett' engine on the 'match box' narrow-gauge railway from Nanu Oya to Nuwara Eliya and Ragala, a round trip of fifty-five miles. He would leave home at 6.30 a.m. and return at 9 p.m., climbing the 300 steps in the dark from the Running Shed to our home. He did it every day except Sundays. The job was much envied because of the overtime and the resulting extra money. Each morning, we would hear the engine's bell (it had no whistle) at the main Nanu Oya Station where it met the broad-gauge train some hundreds of metres below. It then started the climb, puffing and panting, wheels screeching as it went round the bends, pistons working overtime, the firemen sweating, the engine straining as it climbed the mountain where the Railway bungalows were situated...The carriages would sway and the ground vibrate. The train would come noisily up the narrow track, snorting and panting, ringing its bell, sand continually released to grip the track, wheels spinning in the same place, the driver determined to go forwards and not backwards...

Two firemen were required for this special engine and it had double the normal storage for coal and water. It was very, very slow and we could walk faster. It wound higher and higher up the mountain. Half an hour later it would struggle past our house and we would hear it stuttering and snorting as it continued on its way. We sometimes travelled on these trains for a day in Nuwara Eliya, jumping in as it went past. Nuwara Eliya was six kilometres away but the train took a whole hour and never stopped once. Nuwara Eliya was the universally coveted place for a cool holiday in the mountains and there were many things to do there. Nanu Oya satisfied most of our schoolboy needs. There was tennis, the Corteling girls, Mrs Bartholomeusz on the piano, and the Railway Institute was at our back door for ping-pong and darts. My mother soon became involved organising a minstrel concert. There was lots of fun as we blackened our faces with Kiwi shoe polish. Nanu Oya was where I met my future wife for the first time and frightened her with a millipede. She was only five years old.

Alcohol was the 'demon drink' in our home but it was the custom at Christmas to give a double tot of arrack (the local whisky) to the butcher, the baker, the toilet cleaner and anyone else who called to extend his salaams (good wishes). The bottles were soon finished but unknown undesirables would keep arriving throughout the day for a free tot. My father had to act like an unpleasant drunk (he had seen drunks and their behaviour often enough), and our unwelcome visitors would run away in fright. We found it hilarious.

Streams on the mountainside would have water diverted into a channel, a pipe inserted, and the result was a 'spout bath'. We enjoyed these freezing cold showers and swims in little pools. We also had constant visitors on holiday from Colombo, who were not always welcome, and often curtailed our freedom. We had a peach tree in the garden and Nanu Oya had plenty of up-country fruits and flowers. We were surrounded by tea estates and explored them as if they were our own. One day while playing with matches we set fire to a clump of mana grass (a long, flat grass that burnt easily) on a tea estate. Ceylon is wet and not tinder-dry as is Australia, but the grass caught fire and spread. Thick black smoke, as if from a volcano, billowed up and could be seen by everyone. We were chased by a kangani (Estate labour overseer) and reported to the Police Inspector by the 'Lord of the Manor', the European Estate superintendent. The Burgher police inspector asked my father to caution us and that was the end of the matter. There was no permanent damage but that incident will remain long in our memory.

Dad was next transferred to Trincomalee. I remember the days my father would return from work, very upset, because some person had decided to commit suicide by jumping in front of the engine when it was too late to stop in time. He would also return upset when he had killed an elephant who had decided, at the last moment, to cross the rail track in the jungle. It was invariably too late to avoid the collision. Elephants were very common between Habarana and Trincomalee and, in spite of continually blowing the whistle, herds of elephants often crossed the rail tracks in front of the train. Our holidays at Trincomalee were fantastic. There was a war on. The sea was only a hundred metres away, the water was warm and we swam almost every afternoon. We had bicycles and so we would cycle and watch the aeroplanes and oil tanks at China Bay, the warships and the floating dock, the harbour and the little boats, the repair facilities. We took off only when frightened away by sentries. Trinco was a fantastic experience for a boy of sixteen. There was so much to do, so much to see. We lived near the Railway Station, surrounded by anti-aircraft batteries. There was constant activity as brown and black and red-necked, red-faced European soldiers, stripped to the waists and dripping with perspiration, unloaded guns, ammunition, food and all the other implements of war. Some of them would come to our door for a glass of water and we thought we were doing our bit to defeat Hitler when we invited them in for a cup of tea or a glass of water. They showed us photographs of family and we felt sad for them, so far from home and their loved ones.

As an engine-driver, my father was classified as 'essential services'. He was mobilised, given a uniform, some rations, a sergeant's stripes, and tied to his job for the duration of the war. Trinco was bombed by the Japanese in April 1942 and there was a lot of destruction. That was the end of our holiday for we were evacuated to Mah then Anuradhapura, then Negombo and finally I went back to school.

My father was next transferred to Colombo. Life in 'Mount Mary', the railway town, was not the same. The girls were familiar and similar but that strong sense of community was not there. 'Mount Mary' was also far away from 'Bambalawatte', my preferred centre for social activity. I had to cycle many miles every time I wanted some action so my days as a 'Railway Burgher' had come to an end. It was a fantastic childhood and prepared me for an exciting life.

Douglas and a life of privilege

I was born into a position of privilege, though for many years I did not realise it. I first attended St. Thomas' College, Mount Lavinia on my fourth birthday. A 'servant boy' about fourteen years of age used to accompany me, carrying my books and lunch. He would remain there and escort me back when school was over. This went on for about three years and then I walked the mile and a half each way by myself with another trip to and from home for lunch in the middle of the day. I often went back again to swim in the College pool. This nine or ten mile walk by an eight year old was the norm. Cars were very few. One feature of my life was my relative independence. I was allowed to walk alone wherever I wished, whether it was the sea shore, the railway line, the paddy (rice) fields where the main road had to be crossed, and anywhere and everywhere as long as I was back by sunset to do my home-work. There was never any fear of molestation.

The war came to us on Easter Sunday in 1942. I was walking home from the College Chapel when the air raid sirens sounded. I saw a 'plane I could not identify fly overhead at about 2000 feet and with anti-aircraft shell puffs bursting around it. The 'plane twisted on its right wing and dived down to earth. As I ran towards it, it dived headlong into the ground in front of the 2nd Form classrooms. I continued towards it, now accompanied by other church-goers, but the flames and bursting ammunition kept us at a distance. The next day Colombo seemed empty as people fled to the safety of the countryside. Colombo became the preserve of a few of us children whose parents were brave enough or foolish enough to ignore the possibility of more air-raids and the arrival of the Japanese. It was a whole year before most of Colombo's citizens returned.

It was about this time that I realised what privilege was. One night, at the dinner table, my brother Richard told my father that he was fed-up with studying and was applying for a commission in the army. Richard was at the University, had passed his 'Inter Arts', an examination less than the B.A. but at that time accepted as almost as good as a degree. My father mentioned that the Police had advertised for officers. Richard replied that applications had already closed two weeks earlier. My father advised patience and the next night brought in some forms which he made Richard complete immediately. This was done, Richard was called for an interview and in the course of time was appointed Probationary Assistant Superintendent of Police. The privilege was in having Richard accepted for interview.

My father was well known and respected in Mount Lavinia. His first job had been as a teacher at Royal College and he would relate how, at the annual Royal-Thomian match, his was the only Thomian rosette in the Royal College tent. He later entered the Clerical Service and finally retired as an under-Secretary at the Treasury with the 'gong' of the Imperial Service Order. Some years earlier, when in the Electrical Department, he had been promoted to the Ceylon Civil Service. He was told he had to possess a motor car so he bought an old Austin 8 for the purpose and gave it to Richard when Richard became a Police Superintendent.

Father's hobby was shooting. He was an exceptional shot on snipe, which he could sight in the sky, but was a poor shot against hare because he could not see them against the ground. He later took to fishing, travelling by bus to the

Colombo breakwater, stinking bait in his bag on the way out and stinking fish in the same bag on his way back.

It was accepted by my parents and me that I should do medicine. After I matriculated, I entered the university but almost gave up my studies when I found out how much my parents had to pay. Fortunately, at the end of the first term, the Government introduced that 'Pearl of Great Price', free education from kindergarten to university, and no more fees were payable. In due course I qualified and joined the Government Medical Service. It may amuse today's car owning society to know that I pedalled to university, a distance of six miles each way, returning home for lunch when time permitted. Medical College, where I went the following year, was over eight miles away so arrangements were made for me to lunch with Persis' grandmother, Aunt Sophia, who was in Flower Road and about three miles from Medical College. At this time I used the single-speed, sit-up-and-beg bicycle. Later my father bought me a secondhand motor cycle to my great delight 'out of the fees he now did not have to pay'.

In my fourth year after qualifying, I found myself at Kahatagasdigiya, the government medical officer at a hospital of ninety beds in the jungles of the North Central Province. The average occupancy rate was one hundred and twenty and there were about 150 confinements a month. My village patients had to walk, some for twenty and thirty miles to reach the hospital. All the confinements were done by the midwives and matron and I would only be called in emergencies. If I was called on more than four times a month, I would become very upset. My time was occupied with lancing boils, treating infected wounds from attacks by wild animals, typhoid, malaria and the normal accidents from mishaps in village life. Incidentally, a suture of the perineum was classed as an emergency, that is, I had to be summoned. What a difference between jungle Ceylon and urban Australia where 90% of confinements require medical interference!

Kahatagasdigiya was a typical Ceylon hamlet. No butcher, few provisions except rice and dry-fish and almost nothing else. The nearest town, Anuradhapura, was forty-five kilometres away, a great distance on those roads, and the butchers were closed in the evenings. If I wanted some meat I had to shoot it. The wild life regulations at that time had a curious anomaly. Villagers could kill protected game at any time for their own consumption but visitors were not permitted to do so. I therefore got myself on the electoral roll as quickly as possible. Each morning at dawn I drove out beyond the village tank (artificial lake) and listened for the crowing of the jungle-cock. I would then silently walk a short distance into the jungle, hide at the end of the clearing or a washaway, and clap my hand on my buttock simulating a male bird slapping its wings. The jungle-cock would hear the challenge and come stalking up completely oblivious to danger. I usually got one or two in a day, and never shot more than I needed. Vilma, my wife, became expert in cooking the tough game. When jungle-fowl were scarce, the pigeons that nested in the hospital went into the pot. It was a pity we did not eat dog because there were hundreds of mangy animals and I often had to shoot them because of the danger of rabies.

Sometimes I shot deer, the chittal or spotted variety mainly, but occasionally the massive sambur and sometimes the small barking deer. I rarely shot a wild pig because they were fast, difficult to shoot at, and difficult to kill. I got to know where the pig were likely to lie-up and I would crawl up on my belly

or on my bum through a passage in the thorny bushes that were not even two feet high only to hear and see the pigs crashing away into the distance before I could even raise my gun. It was almost invariably a frustrating experience. I also shot seven leopard, the most graceful animal you could ever see. I would hear the deer barking and walk quickly towards the sound. I would come across a herd of deer in a clearing, all staring at one point with puzzled looks of concern. I would approach that point as quickly as I could and suddenly a leopard would rise from behind a tuft of grass about sixty metres distant and effortlessly lope away. Sometimes I was able to get in a shot but a leopard could hide behind a six inch tuft of grass and neither deer nor human could see it. The leopard's hearing was so sensitive that it did not make any difference whether the hunter approached on tip-toes or not for the leopard could hear from a kilometre away and was then off. About three years later, just before we left Kahatagasdigiya, we found a leopard in her den only a hundred metres from our home. We sometimes saw deer and even pig on the opposite side of the tank behind our home. One day, when we were away from the 'hamlet', an elephant walked unconcernedly along the one and only street of the 'town' ignoring everyone.

Shooting parties were frequent, and almost every week-end some visitors would arrive. One party that remains in my mind was the Muslim Solicitor General who arrived in his car, escorted by the Superintendent of Police. They came in the 'closed season', when shooting was prohibited, shot a deer that was dutifully hallaled (bled), and then shot a pig. Muslims do not eat pork, which they consider unclean, so I was amused to see the Solicitor General's chauffeur run to the dying pig, say the ritual prayer, and cut the pig's throat. The pork went to Colombo with the Muslim Solicitor General!

I used to go out shooting with a hospital labourer who had his own gun and another villager who loved hunting but never used a gun. He had a wonderful sense of hearing and was a good tracker. Swaris, the hospital labourer did sometimes come during hospital hours but it was usually in the evenings or at night and in the week-ends in his own time. Bhaia, the tracker, came in his own time and there was never any question of fee or payment. They were barefooted, so I was also bare-footed when I walked the jungle, whether in the day or the night. I probably have enough thorns in my feet to grow a forest of wood-apple trees!

I next moved to Colombo, through the influence of a member of the 'Otters Swimming Club', so that I could resume my other hobby, swimming. I next went to Udugama and then again back again to Colombo.

When a Prime Minister made a public promise that English would no longer be taught in Ceylon schools, we decided it was time to migrate to Australia. I told my colleague, an assistant judicial medical officer who was a Sinhalese with considerable political power, that I was migrating and I will never forget his reply 'I am sorry to see Douglas Arndt, my friend and a swimmer, leave Ceylon but I am glad to see another Burgher doctor leave'.

To our friends, whether Sinhalese, Tamil or other ethnic group, we were not Burghers but friends, but to those Sri Lankans who did not know us personally we were Burghers and not entitled to the fruits of independence. The Sinhalese said the Burghers were not wanted. My Sinhala doctor 'friend' said to me 'The Burghers have had the advantages for too long. Now it is our turn'.

I was born in Ceylon, and it was still Ceylon when I left. Doctors had to obtain Government permission to leave Ceylon so I applied for permission one year before I was due to leave. Permission was granted only on the day the ship was to sail. I spent the last three days in the Prime Minister's office. At 4 p.m. on the second day I was invited in from the ante-room to sit in the room of the P.M.'s Personal Secretary. I spent the next half hour watching my friend and school-mate, Stanley Abeyweera, looking down, initialling and signing various papers on his desk. At 4.30 p.m. he left the room without a word and without looking at me. On the day I was to sail I went back to his office at 3 p.m. and at 4 p.m. the peon (office boy) brought out my papers duly approved. I would like that 'friend' to visit me in Gosford so that I could take him fishing in my boat far out to sea on a rough day.

My thirty-seven years in Ceylon are memories never to be forgotten. I had the best of both worlds, the early life in Ceylon followed by the stability comforts and wealth of Australia afterwards.

(Author's note: Douglas and his three children all practice as doctors or dentists in New South Wales. They belong to a family active in medicine for many generations. The family includes Henry Arnold de Boer, Alice de Boer (the first female doctor in Ceylon), Eric Brohier, Henry Speldewinde de Boer, Alma Brohier, Charles de Boer and Yvette Hermon).

Phyllis, the Jaffna policeman's wife

My father and husband were both Government (public) servants who were transferred often so I was fortunate that I lived in a number of outstation towns and had many different experiences. I will always think of Jaffna, known to our parents and grandparents, as Jaffnapatam, in a very special way.

Jaffna, the capital of the Northern province, is 350 kilometres and about eight hours by car from Colombo. Jaffna is a land of palmyrah palms and high cadjan (braided palmyrah palm leaf) fences behind which the people live their lives in private. The palmyrah palm is to the people of the north what the coconut palm is to the people elsewhere in the island and every part of the tree has its uses. We lived in Jaffna between 1952 and 1955 when my husband was the Superintendent of Police of the Northern Province. We lived in a Government house in the historic Dutch fort that contained many old Dutch buildings. The houses were inside the ramparts, one next to the other and without divisions and our house was next to Kings House, the residence of the Dutch Commander during Dutch times in Jaffna. The wall of the rear garden was the huge six metre high rampart in which was the heavy solid iron door to the moat and to which we were given a big old-fashioned rusty key. To get to the moat we had to open the door and go through a long dark tunnel through the ramparts. About half way through this tunnel was a widening on each side of the passage where special prisoners had been manacled in the days of the Dutch. I never felt like lingering there for it was very eerie.

Our house had been the chapel for Kings House and had been converted into living quarters during the British period. It had a verandah about ten metres long and four metres wide with entry to the seven rooms, i.e. the hall or living area, the dining room, and five bedrooms. Off the rear of these rooms I was another verandah that was enclosed and led to the kitchen and servants'

quarters. The walls of the building were about a metre thick and the roof was about six metres high. At the peak, in the middle of the roof, was a heavy solid beam that my father said must have been at one time the mast of a ship. Anchors were used to keep the beams and walls in position. To our astonishment, one of the back rooms had a fireplace and this was unusual because the temperature in Jaffna varied from about 26°C to 32°C! It did become a little colder in December and January and that was the time we grew 'up-country' vegetables such as cabbage, cauliflower and carrots.

The ramparts that enclosed the fort were coral and earth-filled and wide enough that, at one point, a house had been built on the ramparts in which the Assistant Government Agent, or 'Office Assistant' resided. Opposite Kings House was the Dutch church with its many crypts and tombstones embedded in the floor. There were no pews and I understand that it was the Dutch custom for parishioners to take their own chairs with them. That is the reason for the collection of very different chairs at Wolvendaal Church in Colombo. On windy moonlight nights we could hear the choir sing as we walked in the maidan (open grassed public area). The church also had a row of steps that led to the top of the roof.

Kings House is said to be haunted by a Dutch Commandant's daughter. She committed suicide in 1734 by throwing herself into the well in the garden because her father would not allow her to marry the man she loved. She continues to haunt the house. The ayah who looked after our children saw this beautiful apparition dressed in white in our children's bedroom. Kings House is unoccupied and reserved for the use of senior officials visiting Jaffna and staying for as long as their work demanded it. These visitors have had some eerie experiences with chairs and other articles of furniture being thrown around in the bedrooms. The wife of a V.I.P. told me she had been lifted off her bed. There was the other occasion when a conference packed up and left early one morning because the visitors said they had had enough!

The moat opened at both ends into the lagoon. One of my favourite pastimes, much to the amusement of the people who watched from the opposite bank, was fishing in the moat that surrounded the fort. When these spectators realised how successful I was, they too began fishing but from the other side. My fishing rod was 'home made' and consisted of a palmyrah tree branch that bent easily with the strain of the fish. On most afternoons I was followed by a retinue of animals. These were our two dogs, our pet deer Bambi, a pair of peafowl, cats, Rodeo our horse, and our pet Delft ponies. Besides fishing with the rod and line, I also enjoyed prawning and catching crabs. The servants also joined me and we had some very happy times.

Sir Richard Aluvihare, the Inspector General of Police at that time, decided that Jaffna should have a carrier pigeon service for use in emergency situations when other forms of communication broke down. He knew I loved animals and birds so the pigeon home, complete with pigeons, was erected near our front gate on the maidan.

The Dutch fort was square in shape with five bastions that had been used as musketry platforms in the old days. The gateway to the fort was in one corner. This was on the left side when facing the entrance from our house. To enter the Fort, one drove along a narrow and winding road with a couple of sharp curves near the gate to the Fort. The road had been constructed in this manner so as to prevent elephants from picking-up speed when charging the heavy wood and

iron gate in time of war. The prison was on the right side of the fort against the ramparts, the tennis club was on the left next to the church. William, the club boy, was famous for his lime squash made from fresh limes and they were not to be equalled anywhere. In the centre of the maidan was a sundial.

My husband received an allowance to maintain a horse for police work. One of the horses we were given was an ex-racer called 'Rodeo'. One evening, while playing the piano in the hall, I felt my neck nuzzled and turned around to find it was Rodeo. How he managed to walk on the polished cement floor I can't imagine. It took four people to lead him out gently to safety. It took some time too because gunny bags (jute sacks) had to be placed on the floor each time he took a step to prevent him from slipping. He was very fond of me and just before he died he came to the window in the rear verandah where I happened to be, put his head on my shoulder, nuzzled me, went back to his stable and died an hour later. Never did I have a horse so loving.

The Jaffna peninsula had many beautiful places for picnics. One of our favourite places was the small island of Hammenheil, occupied completely by a small Dutch fort that had also been used as a prison in Dutch times. To get to the island, we had to go by car and then by boat. Something else I enjoyed immensely was accompanying my husband on his inspections of the Police illicit immigration posts around the coasts of the Northern Province. We had to travel long distances along jungle tracks. It was so beautiful and peaceful. We used to leave in the early hours of the morning, sometimes with friends, stop at a certain kadday (milk-bar serving cooked meals) where we would buy warm hoppers and sambol (we usually took a curry with us), turn into a shady jungle glen, have our breakfast and move on. Wild boar, jungle fowl, peafowl and partridge were often on our table for dinner during the nights that followed. On one of these trips we were chased by a herd of elephants and had to leave the car and run and hide in a dry river bed, but our Lord always looked after us. The sunsets in Jaffna were indeed a thing of beauty, our Lord's handiwork. I have such wonderful and happy memories of our stay in Jaffna.

(Author's note: The Tamil 'Tigers' in the Northern (and Eastern) provinces have waged a civil war against the Government for the past decade. Casualties on both sides have been horrendous, civil wars being the most evil and destructive of all wars. The Jaffna peninsula is controlled by the Tamil Tiger separatists and no trains, buses or other transport can travel direct from the Sinhalese areas to the Tamil areas. The eight-hour car journey in 1955 now takes fourteen days and involves a risky boat trip, exit from one army command, a walk through minefields, then entry into the other army command with the ever present risk of injury and death. This is followed by running, hiding and worrying until Anuradhapura is reached and a bus or train boarded for the balance of the journey. The Dutch fort in Jaffna was the command headquarters of the Sri Lankan (Sinhala) command. The beautiful Dutch Church is irretrievably damaged and most of the beautiful old Dutch houses have also been destroyed or severely damaged. These great monuments to the Dutch, like the Burghers of Jaffna, will soon be no more. Hopefully, the ramparts and fortifications of the fort at Jaffna, like the beautiful fort at Hammenheil, will remain intact).

Bryan, the schoolboy from Matara

At 9.30 p.m. on Christmas eve there would be the annual carol service in the Dutch Reformed Church at which Protestants of every denomination would join in. After that service, teenagers and younger adults would visit the sick and elderly and entertain them with carols. On New Year's eve night there would be a similar service at 11.15 pm. At midnight, as the New Year arrived, the whole congregation would sing 'From the hallowed belfry tower, hark! resounds the midnight hour'. The church bell would start ringing, joined by the bells of the Methodist and Anglican Churches and the Buddhist temple, pealing out and heralding in the New Year. Everyone would come out on to the streets and rejoice in prayer to God. On New Year's morning, as on Christmas morning, Christians would visit one another and exchange greetings.

During the evenings of the first week in the new year, blackened minstrels would visit the various homes, choosing different homes each night. The massa (leader) was either the District Medical Officer Dr. R.W. Willenberg or Dunstan de Niese the surveyor. Both Dunstan and his son Maurice were brilliant tenors. Maurice was also brilliant on the piano. He would attend the cinema or a concert and on returning home would play on his piano the exact music he had heard and even though he had never heard it before. His younger brother Deryck became a make-up artist for plays and films in Ceylon and later in Australia.

Guy Fawkes day was on 5 November and was celebrated by the young and active, mainly Burgher, boys and girls. We would take a straw effigy around the Fort at night in an open bullock cart. The cart would be accompanied by a motley crew waving fire-brands and shouting 'Behold the traitor Guy Fawkes'. We would pause outside the thatched house of a Sinhalese woman called Boort, (the Sinhalese word for 'navel'), and dance and sing Boorige guy poks (in Boori's house is Guy Fawkes). The reply would arrive with a vocabulary that would have made an army sergeant major blush! Our Guy Fawkes procession ended outside the fort ramparts on the green grass of the esplanade. There we burnt the effigy. Some of us would then finish off at someone's home to sing out the night with the cup that cheers.

Boori and others of her ilk, Burgher as well as Sinhalese, who lived below the poverty line, would visit various Burgher homes once a month and be rewarded with a 'pension' of 25 or 50 cents and a free lunch. On occasion, they also received a piece of cast-off clothing. Beggars were very seldom sent away empty handed and were made welcome for charity was ingrained in both Burgher and Buddhist culture.

House parties in the Burgher homes invariably included party games, charades, singing around the piano and dancing. The *baila* and *cafferinga* dances were especially popular. There would also be the noise of Chinese crackers and fireworks supplemented with eats like patties, love cake, coconut aluwa (toffee), *bolofiodo* (a sweet) and sandwiches. Whisky was only Rupees six a bottle so that flowed and no one thought of the price.

On some moonlight nights we had picnics on the sea-shore combined with swimming. There was no swimming in the river however because of the crocodiles who would have joined in the picnic with gusto. Occasionally there would be all-day picnics up the river and back in the *padda*-boats that normally transported bricks, sand and cement. These open boats were interesting

even though there was no protection from the hot sun and tropical downpours of rain.

The Dutch fort was the hub of Burgher activities. The fort was built on a promontory, one long arm bounded by the Nilwala Ganga (river), the other arm bounded by the Indian Ocean. Where the arms met and where the river entered the ocean was called Urugasmanhandiya or Watersmeet. It was the ideal spot for fishing from the shore and was the place from where the deep-sea fishermen sailed out in their catamarans (outrigger canoes). The Star Fort was another fort and that housed the Matara library.

About a hundred Burgher families lived in Matara, most of whom were permanent residents, but there were also the Government Servants who were in a transferable service and came and went. There was a time when there were ten Ernst families, most of whom lived in the Fort. Our house was the first 'Ernst' house on the postman's route so any letter for 'Ernst' without a full address was left with us for Dad to re-address. Some Burghers did have power in Matara in the pre-war years but that changed after the war.

The Fort Tennis Club was a regular venue for the Burghers to meet. Love sets were won and lost and romances bloomed. The Phoenix Tennis Club, closer to the ramparts, had two courts and a more varied group of people played there. Then there was the Matara Gymkhana Club at Browne's Hill. This was patronised mainly by the top government officials like the Assistant Government Agent, other top brass and a few wealthy retired planters.

The main transport for short distances was the buggy cart, the hackery, the bullock cart and the palanquin. No Burgher would drive any of these or even taxis, buses, trucks or steer boats. This was considered infra dig (below one's dignity) and for the lower members of society. It was very different with the engine drivers, guards and station-masters of the railway who were mostly Burghers and had status in the community. It is very different today when Burghers are bus and truck drivers and motor mechanics.

The buggy carters had interesting names like Haramanis, Tynis, Babappu, Singho Appu, Hini Appu and Mendis Appu. There were plenty of Burgher lawyers, doctors, clergy, teachers, clerks, surveyors, police (all ranks), military, air pilots, harbour pilots, lighthouse keepers, engineers, health inspectors and planters. A great number of Burghers filled positions of power and authority.

Matara also produced three sets of Burgher twins, Hulbert and Steward Dickman, Bryan and Noel Ernst, Neville and Sidney Ferdinand. Another pair, who were not twins, were the Ferdinand brothers with the 's' added. They visited Matara on their motorcycles, Ivor riding BSA CY 102 and Rodney riding Jawa CN 1850.

When political independence drew near, the Matara Burgher Association was formed with the object of protecting the political and economic future of the Burghers. One good thing was that it brought all the Burghers together and no longer did Burghers think of themselves, and of others, as Dutch Burghers, Portuguese Burghers, Batticoola Burghers, Dematagoda Burghers or MicoBurghers. That was a good thing for we were all Burghers and equally threatened.

World War II

The author, the civilian student

Ceylon, being a part of the British Empire, immediately became involved in World War II. There was no conscription and the war with Hitler in Europe had little effect in Ceylon. The younger British 'planters', mercantile and shop employees and junior bureaucrats joined up and left to go overseas. Trinity lost her British school teachers. Ceylonese took the place of the British who had departed and were found to do the jobs just as well. It was constantly brought to our attention that there was a war being fought for the freedom of the world and each and every one of us had to play our part. As a teenager, I was thrilled and excited at the thought of wearing a fancy uniform, shooting down Nazi pilots in the air, and becoming an instant hero. I saw an advertisement for pilots to be trained for the R.A.F and applied. Grandma Ginger wrote to my parents saying she would commit suicide if I joined the Air Force and that stopped my plans for I was only sixteen years old. A year later, my grandmother had the misfortune to be killed by an army truck that did not even stop after the accident. I am glad I did not 'join-up' because, after a long period of training, the majority did not become pilots or air crew. Among friends who successfully joined the R.A.F. were George Ferdinand, Len vanden Driesen, Willie Jenkins and Ridley Bartholomeusz.

Soon after the Japanese bombed Pearl Harbour in a surprise attack, the all-conquering Japanese army was in control of the Dutch East Indies, Indo-China, Malaysia, the Philippines and most of the Pacific rim countries. Singapore fell on 15 February 1942 and Ceylon became the next target.

We were now very much a part of the war. Colombo and Trincomalee were bombed and we waited for the Japanese to invade us. The war was no longer far away. The British wanted as many allies and friends as they could find. Burghers suddenly found they were very much in demand as allies and trusted friends of the British. Burgher boys found they did not have to study, pass examinations and join the public services as clerks. They could instead join the army, wear a dashing khaki uniform with one or more 'pips' on their shoulders, a peaked cap at a jaunty angle, and ride in jeeps and army trucks. They would even be paid and paid well for the honour. It seemed preferable to riding a push-bike, studying for examinations, and living at home with handouts for pocket-money from reluctant parents.

The Burgher girls enjoyed the war even more than the boys. Before the war, not too many Burgher girls went out to work after they had finished school. There were those, and they were not in the majority, who after they left school, trained as teachers, nurses and stenographers. Most Burgher girls, however, were forced to remain at home and occupy themselves with sewing, cooking, visiting and such lady-like activities as piano playing, painting, singing and church activities. The only boys these Burgher girls had contact with were cousins and the friends the brothers brought home.

The war changed all that. Burgher girls were suddenly very much in demand as clerical assistants in the various army, navy and air-force offices. They wore attractive khaki uniforms with jaunty caps or blue and white naval uniforms. They were picked-up from home, driven to work and brought back. They were paid well and they met lots of lonely European servicemen, who were far away from home and desperately in need of female company. The Burgher girls were 'doing the right thing'

when they fraternised for they were told they were helping the war effort and any contrary advice from parents or brothers was easily brushed aside. The world of the Burgher girls had become more cosmopolitan and more exciting. They began to enjoy themselves doing all those things that were not permitted, not possible in the past.

It made it hard for the Burgher boy to continue with his studies. He could not compete with the 'white ants' (as we ungraciously called the European servicemen), the money, the transport, the NAAFI chocolates, the cigarettes and all the other unobtainable 'goodies' the servicemen showered on 'our' girls, their mothers, and the younger children. Cycling to the Fort for my studies in accountancy, peddling against the wind and almost blown off my bicycle on reaching Galle Face, I would study the Burgher girls in their snazzy uniforms when the trucks overtook me. They ignored me. I would next be passed by Burgher boys in khaki uniforms, pips on their shoulders, peaked caps on their heads, confidently riding motor cycles or being driven in army transport. I often wondered whether an extra five years of study and examinations was worth the effort. The war might go on for ever.

Douglas, the army officer

After I finished my education in Colombo, I went home to my parents. My father was a 'planter' or estate superintendent, and I planned to understudy him and eventually become a 'planter' myself. The air-raids on Ceylon in April 1942 and the sudden realisation that the whole world was reeling under the onslaught of the Germans and Japanese, made me seriously consider defending everything we held dear.

Hitler had conquered most of Europe and was only forty kilometres from Moscow. The Japanese had nearly all of the East and were on the doorstep of Ceylon, India and Australia. Our home was crowded with relatives and friends who had fled Colombo after the Easter air-raid. Most of my father's British planter friends had left to join the armed services. There was only one thing a fired-up youth of twenty could do and that was to join up and do his share.

I was commissioned in the 'Ceylon Engineers' in November 1942 and then did a short course at the Technical College in surveying, drafting, map reading, carpentry, motor mechanics and blacksmiths' work followed by a few months in Nuwara Eliya training in water craft and the use of explosives. The Ceylon Engineers was traditionally a European (British) officered unit which had, over time, gradually included Burghers. From the commencement of the war this policy changed and Sinhalese and Muslims officers were commissioned in the unit. Our service was in the field and I spent the next five years in some of the remotest jungle areas of Ceylon. Some other officers were luckier for they lived in town and went home each night.

The 3rd Field Company, of which I was a member, had to work in close consultation with the Public Works Department. We worked on bridges, air strips and water supplies. We constructed the 75 metre span across the Kalu Ganga, the concrete 'monkey bridge' at Kantalai on the Kandy—Trincomalee road, the massive earth dam, reservoir and filtration plant near Kantalai with a pipeline to Trincomalee naval base; and the huge R.A.F. camp at Polgolla, near Kandy, to house the staffs of the South East Asia Command under Lord Louis Mountbatten. That area has now been submerged under the Mahaveli River Scheme. Dave Whatmore (Snr) did all the preliminary surveying for the big dam.

The war situation had now stabilised and plans were being made to push the Japanese back to where they came from. There was a special call for volunteers to join the Royal Engineers and serve overseas. Thirteen officers, and 600 other ranks volunteered. Our work commenced with six months of training in the use of heavy equipment in the jungles of Habarana. We were next used in the construction of airstrips at Katunayake, Kankasanturai, Koggala and the secret airstrip at Hingurathgoda near Minneriya. This last airstrip was huge and was the an air-staging base for operations in the S.E.A.C. theatre of war. There are plans by the present Government to use this deserted airstrip to serve tourists in Sri Lanka's 'Tourist Triangle', which is bounded by Kandy, Anuradhapura, Polonnaruwa and Sigiriya.

My platoon was next given responsibility for constructing Lord Mountbatten's personal secret airfield at Mawatagama, near Kandy. Lord Louis, Lady Edwina and I would sit on empty fuel drums and chat while waiting for flights to and from the Front.

The Japanese surrendered soon after two atomic bombs were dropped on their cities and I was posted to Rangoon in Burma. My next posting was to Singapore and the infamous Changi prison. We became responsible for the transportation of the prisoners of war to hospitals, rest centres, and back to their home countries. The next job was to keep Singapore port working, twenty-fours a day, until it was ready to be handed over to the civilian authorities. Our labourers were the 6000 Japanese prisoners of war. I was next placed in charge of a battalion of war-weary Ghurkas and ordered to take them to a transit camp in India. From there I went to Colombo and was 'demobbed'. My young sister, who had not seen me for five years, burst into anger and tears when she saw my mother put her arms around me and hug the strange man! After the experiences of the war, I could not settle into a routine job and instead left for Australia at the end of 1948.

Leslie, the Burgher girl in Kandy

Until the servicemen arrived in Kandy was a sleepy little town tucked away in the hills of central Ceylon. Leslie grew up in Kandy and describes her experiences of the exciting time when the war came to her town.

Kandy, before the war, was a pleasant and peaceful existence. Dances were few and far between, night clubs were non-existent, and the main attraction was the cinema. It was, however, a gracious existence, where respect for parents and elders was the norm, where we bathed and dressed for dinner, and were served at table by white-coated, dark-skinned servants; where good manners were second nature and rudeness was frowned upon and not tolerated; where we sang songs around the piano and the words were sentimental and about June and moon and soft kisses, where 'ball' meant long frilly gowns for the ladies and dress shirts, black ties, sharkskin jackets and black vicuna trousers for the gentlemen. Dancing was slow and sedate. There was no frenetic jumping around.

Into all this came World War II. In the early part we were not fully aware of the bloodshed and heartbreak in Europe and could not feel deeply or passionately about events so far away. There were inconveniences because things like imported cheeses and chocolates were difficult to find.

After the war came to the East and the Japanese bombed our ports, we began to be infiltrated by British troops. To teenagers like myself it was rather a thrilling adventure. Homesick soldiers, who my mother patriotically entertained, added to the excitement. Sleepy Kandy suddenly became alive with dances, cinema shows and live entertainment to keep up the morale of the troops. The soldiers buzzed around the girls like bees around a honeypot and well-paid jobs became readily available as stenographers, secretaries and clerks in the RAF and NAAFI (Navy, Army and Air Force Institutes). The young Burgher girls, who had languished when they finished school, suddenly found they were much in demand and not only for office work!

If the British troops woke up Kandy, the Americans who followed took her by the throat and shook her violently. There were nattily dressed servicemen everywhere throwing their money around carelessly and dazzling everyone with their overbearing presence. Burly American military policemen whizzed around on their Harley Davidsons and the hotels throbbed to the music of the American dance bands. The jitterbug and the jive took over and the sedate waltz and fox-trot were forgotten. The Yanks had their own cinemas, canteens, dances, and transport. They even had ice cream, chocolates, steaks and lots of other goodies especially flown in from the States. They lacked for nothing other than home cooked meals and female company. To the young girls in Kandy, the war seemed remote and the excitement of the present was very real.

In 1945, after Hitler had been vanquished and the Americans had left Kandy to finish the war with the Japanese, the inevitable consequences slowly emerged. Several disillusioned damsels realised that their 'engagements' were only an excuse for a good time. Only a few Burgher war brides eventually followed their serviceman husbands home to England and America.

The attitude of the man in the street altered dramatically. The troops had swarmed everywhere and had thrown discretion to the four winds. They had fraternised with the locals, made love in the streets, got drunk in the hotels, and generally behaved in a most 'un-European manner'. There had been nothing of that British 'stiff upper lip' of the pre-war British period. Ceylonese had been trained to look up to the British as paragons of everything that was civilised and respectable. After the war the 'white man' would never again be able to lord it over the locals. The veneration, the respect and the fear had gone for ever. The pendulum had swung and the locals now realised that they had been exploited over the years. They now realised they were as good or as bad as the next person and it was of little importance where one came from or the colour of one's skin.

It is indecent, almost immoral, to realise that while other people in other places were suffering untold horror and death, we had such a wonderful time. Kandy, during the war, was the most exciting time of my life. I had a ball.

Ivor and the air raid on Trincomalee

I was a boarder, not yet sixteen, at St Thomas' College, Mount Lavinia. Singapore had surrendered to the Japanese, their carriers were in the Indian ocean, and we expected them at any time. The school was taken over for a hospital and we were sent home to 'await instructions'. I remember Lt. Col. Neil Schokman, father of Maureen Fernando and Michael Schokman, paying a hurried visit home and whispering his concern at the inadequacy of our defences.

My father was soon after transferred to Trincomalee, which had the finest natural harbour in the world, and the aerodrome at the adjacent China Bay.

The railways being an essential service, my father was mobilised but otherwise continued to do his usual work. I still treasure the Services Edition of the Bible, with a message from King George VI issued to my father. Father and mother, two teenage boys and two domestic helpers, took up residence in a Railway Bungalow close to the station. We found a shallow 'I,' shaped trench in the garden and my brother and I dug it deeper until only our heads could be seen when we stood in the trench. We were within a few yards of the railway terminus and a natural target for enemy bombs. However, we were young and gave no thought to danger in the event of an air raid.

The area around our house seemed thick with military installations. The British seemed to have done as much as they could to provide a defence for the railway terminus. There were batteries of light 3.7 inch and heavy 4.5 inch antiaircraft guns, barrage balloons floated above like fat, silver sausages with fins, and military personnel of every nationality and colour filled the streets. The Empire was there with the British, the Indians, the Ceylonese, the East and West Africans, and numerous others we could not identify.

News reached Ceylon that a Catalina flying boat had spotted a Japanese naval squadron heading for Ceylon. The Catalina pilot was shot down and found alive in a P.O.W. camp at war's end. On Easter Sunday, 5 April, 1942 the Japanese bombed Colombo. The Japanese seemed to make their surprise attacks on Christian holidays when their enemy was relaxed and on his day off. Waiting in Trincomalee, we knew it would be our turn next.

Early on 9 April, while my father was away at work, the sirens sounded. My mother, brother, the two domestics, and the dog went into the 'I,' shaped trench. Rodney and I should have kept our heads down, for that was the purpose of the trench, but being curious and not aware of the danger we stood and watched and experienced one of the most exciting episodes of our young lives.

Shortly after the siren sounded, we heard the buzzing sounds of Japanese bombers and their fighter escort. There were about seventy planes flying overhead in formation. They were on their way to knock out the airfield at China Bay. They kept to their course despite the 'boom, boom, bang, bang' of the anti-aircraft batteries. The planes were surrounded by puffs of grey smoke from the light AA guns and black smoke from the heavy AA guns but did not seem to be affected. They were flying above the barrage balloons and out of reach of the guns. Suddenly we saw what looked like large and beautiful silver fish floating down silently in the cloudless morning sky. They were bombs and soon there were the thunderous sound of explosions. We wondered where the RAF 'Hurricanes' were because they had engaged the Japanese 'Zeros' in the raid in Colombo. They arrived late when everything was almost over. (There was a rumour later that the Japanese had sent a few planes to Colombo to engage the 'Hurricanes' and this ploy allowed them to pursue their primary mission undisturbed.) The planes at China Bay were trapped on the airfield and unable to take off. Late in the raid we had the spectacle of a few thrilling dogfights but that was after the enemy had completed their bombing mission.

During the raid a heavy, jagged piece of shrapnel, as big as an arm, fell into the next garden. We don't know what it was or where it came from. We also saw some paper fluttering down and wondered if it was a Japanese leaflet demanding surrender. It wasn't. It was a piece of newspaper that had gone up

and was now floating down again. The other noticeable effect of the raid was the eerie silence when it was over. Trincomalee had many open spaces, much bird life, and was surrounded by the jungle, but the terrible sounds made by the bombs and guns had caused the birds to flee.

Immediately after the 'all-clear' sounded Rodney and I were on our bicycles and on our way to the harbour to see what damage had been caused. The inner harbour was comparatively clear except that a merchant ship was on fire and clearly sinking. The true extent of all the damage could not be seen because Trincomalee harbour consists of a series of deep water bays hidden from the inner harbour shore area.

In the sky was a plume of thick black smoke from the direction of China Bay. There were about fifty huge oil storage tanks hidden in the jungles and a Japanese plane had either been damaged and fallen into one or had committed hara-kari (glorious death for the fatherland by suicide) by diving into one. The flames from this burning tank were so fierce that at night we could read the newspapers standing in the garden.

The British warships had upped anchor and moved out at the first warning for they were defenceless against an air assault. Pearl Harbour, and the sinking of two of Britain's best battleships, including the brand new 'Prince of Wales' off the coast of Malaya, had confirmed that the balance of power had shifted to the air. The warships were not to escape. Thirty-six hours later the Japanese found the cruisers 'Cornwall' and 'Dorsetshire' and sank them. Also sunk at the same time was the aircraft carrier 'Hermes'. The whole of the Indian ocean was now at the mercy of the Japanese carrier fleet but the raids in Ceylon were at the extreme western edge of Japanese conquest. The Japanese fleet decided to return to Singapore. That fleet was destroyed in the Pacific in the latter stages of the war.

When we returned to Trincomalee for our August school holidays we saw the remains of more than one plane in the jungles around Trinco. They were all unrecognisable except for a 'Hurricane' (aeroplane) that had landed on its belly on the beach near Nilaveli.

The aftermath of the Trincomalee raid was unfortunately all too familiar to those who have experienced air raids. Almost directly in front of our house were the hospital trains with the big red crosses on the top and sides. The ambulances soon arrived to fill them up with the casualties. Within a few hours Trincomalee began to empty. The civilians fled where they could. The only way out was the train line so civilians arrived at the station in their thousands with those belongings most precious to them. Few could get on a train, or wait for the next one, so they walked away along the railway line to put as much space as possible between themselves and the horrors of another air attack or invasion. They could have remained. The Japanese never came back.

Within a day, Trinco was almost completely deserted. We too would have to depart. I remember our clothes were with the dhoby (the human washing, drying and ironing machine). We were fortunate that we knew where he lived. Rodney and I cycled there to find it deserted and abandoned. We had to spend some time hunting through everyone's clothes to collect our own. Within a few days all the boutiques and kaddais (small shops selling soap, single cigarettes, sugar, rice, tinned milk, etc.) had closed and there was nothing to eat. Rodney and I, with the Frank family of attractive girls, found our way into a crowded guards van and eventually arrived, after a long weary and disjointed journey at

Uncle Charlie and Aunt Mollie's in Anuradhapura. Then Rodney went to the de Vos 'aunts' in Negombo until Trinity reopened and I went back to Trinco, when events had normalised, eventually returning to St. Thomas' College.

The Garden of Eden

It is a beautiful country. A land of smiling people, beautiful children, humble and courteous villagers, glorious beaches, mist covered mountains and moist tropical jungle. Waving coconut palms, tropical fruit of every description and an ancient Buddhist civilisation. The author of this book will remember its beauty forever. What will not be missed will be the devil dancing ceremonies, the superstitions, the soothsayers and fortune tellers, the post-1956 ethnic and class violence, the discourteous arrogance of the half-educated urbanites, the bribery, the endemic corruption, the new-rich, the power-brokers and the politicians...The ordinary country people of Sri Lanka will remain as they always have been...trusting, gentle, kind, beautiful, simple and friendly. Here are some enduring recollections...

Kandy to Nanu Oya

The train left the Kandy station in the afternoon. I loved train travel. Indeed it was the only form of travel I knew because Dad, as a railway employee, was given six free 'passes' every year. We didn't possess a car then and bus travel meant money. I would sit in that 2nd class railway carriage and see the world go by...The men, naked except for a 'loin-cloth' around the middle, ploughing the fields with buffaloes in readiness for planting; the wet, terraced paddy (rice) fields with the women, their hair protected from the sun, red-ders (cloths) tucked up to the knees, planting stalks of paddy; the school girls in their spotless white dresses, school boys in their white shirts and blue trousers so clean and bright; the many people bathing in wells and streams; the mothers and sisters seated one behind the other searching for 'nits' or head lice, then finding one and crushing it dead between delicate fingers...

The people walking the roads in their colourful sarongs, the carts lazily moving along, bells tinkling, the carter chewing his betel leaf and sending out a red stream of spit periodically, the occasional overcrowded bus on its way with the lucky ones seated, the unlucky standing and the latecomers hanging on the outside, wind blowing in their faces. Pilgrim buses with their devout loads of pilgrims on their way to Siri Pada, the mountain of Adams Peak with its footprint of the Buddha. Sheaves of coconut flowers draped the bus and shouts of sadhu sadhu could be heard.

We had passed Peradeniya and soon reached Gampola. The next stations were Ulapane and Nawalapitiya. The bigger stations were always a hive of activity. It wasn't the stop of 20 seconds of the suburban -Melbourne trains. It was a 10 minute stop for the engine to be fed its quota of coal and water, for goods to be loaded and unloaded, and for the passengers to nourish themselves. There were the men shouting thambili, thambili with their bunches of golden 'king coconuts', other men shouting thay, thay and selling sugared milk tea in glasses (not cups), the baker with his buns, people hawking kokis, kavuns and other sweets...

The stationmaster was in full white drill uniform, a white pith helmet on his head, a dark face with pearly white teeth and almost invariably a Tamil from Jaffna. Eventually there would be the waving of the green flag, the shrill noise of the whistle, the 'tablet' would be given to the engine driver and the train would move again.

The climb really started from Nawalapitiya. It was a steady climb as we passed tea estate after tea estate. Cliffs and waterfalls on one side of the track, the occasional tunnel, lantana bushes, water cascading somewhere, and the occasional precipice on the other side. Tea bushes and tea estates were everywhere. We would go over noisy steel bridges, torrents of water under us, and see cold, covered Indian estate labourers in gunny sacks with baskets tied behind them busily picking the 'two leaves and a bud' on which Sri Lanka's economy depended. They never looked up for they were too busy, too uninterested. There was the man, the kangani, in charge. He didn't work. He had time to look. Why is it that the women always seem to do the work while the men 'supervised'? Occasionally we saw the 'Estate Lines', the rows of tiny houses in which the estate 'labourers' were housed. Little, naked children could be seen, performing what comes naturally, out in the open and without a care in the world. It seemed a world away and I wasn't part of it. It didn't affect my social conscience, my sense of humanity. I was isolated from that life. I had no feelings of social rightness or wrongness at that age and in that age.

Capping the mountains, where the land was very steep, was the original jungle. The train would pass under the aerial runways or chutes carrying cut timber to the factory to be used to fire the boilers to dry the tea. The tea factory itself would appear, silver and shining in the clear rays of the sun, four stories high. It was an impressive sight. We continued on to Watawala, Hatton, and then on to Talawakalle. We passed the 300 foot wispy Devon falls and then the mighty Talawakalle falls. I loved that country, I loved that scenery.

Some years later, in my first job, I was stationed at the Norton Bridge Hydro Electric Scheme. I grew to love those misty landscapes, the mountains with their glistening tea bushes, the waterfalls, the planters with their opulent life style, bungalows and gardens. I learnt, first on a motor bike and later in my first car, to wend my way on narrow twisted roads that were cold and wet, enveloped in fog, on nights without a moon, and often very drunk. The tyres on my 'Mini Minor' car, were replaced after only 5000 kilometres! As the saying goes 'if you could drive (or ride) in Ceylon, you can drive anywhere'. In separate accidents, two of my friends went over precipices and lost their lives. They were eventful days, those days in 1949 and 1950 and I shared them with Alden Claasz, Kingsley Francké, Henry Todd, Conrad Frugniet, Colin Bartholomeusz and many others. Alden had the unenviable task of checking light globes on the path up Adam's Peak and climbed the 1000 metres from the base at Maskeliya every week!

Maradana to Kandy

The train left Maradana station. I was on my way back to school in Kandy. We passed the shunting sheds at Maradana and carried on to Baseline Road and beyond. We passed the big, black engines with steam coming out of their pistons and smoke from their funnels. There was a double track to Polgahawala and we didn't stop until we got there. There were paddy fields on both sides, covered with water and shoots of paddy not yet ripe for threshing. Periodically we saw a thatched house, raised above the low lying land, with a few coconut trees, a jak tree with its heavy fruit hanging off the trunk, a breadfruit tree, some arecanut palms and a vegetable plot. There always seemed to be a brown dog lying in the sun and scratching himself. In the streams and ponds were the lotus mala (flower), and the salvenia plant that had been introduced

during the war to cover the lakes and trick an enemy that never came. It prospered, became a pest and a breeding ground for mosquitos.

Polgahawala brought the cacophony of sound of the vendors selling bulath, thay, vaddai and plantains. Kids ran along shouting thambili, thambili with huge knives in hand ready to cut a hole in the top of the coconut. Then we went on to Rambukkana where the climb to Kadugannawa really began. The engine that had brought us from Colombo went to the back to push and the powerful Garrett engine took over in front to pull the train up the incline. We started the climb and the scenery became wilder with great rocks and boulders strewn everywhere. In between were vines and trees of every description with roots that found a grip in cracks and crevices to support trees over ten metres high. There was lots of colour, lots of untidy creeping vines everywhere. The coconut palms were soon left behind and in their place were talipot palms, arecanut palms, kitul palms and water streaming down the hillsides. On one side was the mountain with moss, ferns and dripping water. On the other side was a magnificent vista. There was Alagolla peak, the Dekanda valley, Sardial's cave Utuwankanda, then Bible Rock and, across the valley, dense jungle on mountains, each wilder and more beautiful than the next. Deep down in a valley were terraced rice fields and thatched houses. The gradient was steep, the track curved and there were occasions when we could see both the front and the rear of the train, the Garrett pulling and the other pushing. We poked our heads out and a bit of carbon from the engine smoke would get into an eye...We went through tunnels and the carriage filled with smoke and the smell of burning sulphur. We went over mountain streams filled with rushing water and, as the train went around 'Sensation Rock', we looked directly down to the valley hundreds of metres below. It was a thrilling sight, much like the film 'von Ryan's Express' that starred Frank Sinatra and Trevor Howard. In time we levelled out, we saw Dawson's tower, the end of the climb, and Kadugannawa. The Kandyan kingdom could not be conquered by the Portuguese and Dutch. The British were successful only because of the evil deeds of a feudal king and the anger of the nobles. Our Garrett engine was uncoupled, the usual engine took over in front and we continued on to Peradeniya Junction and Kandy. On the way I got the beautiful smell of ripe durians. Everyone else hated it for it reminded them of rotten eggs, sulphur and the after effects of an egg and cashew nut buriyani. To me, it was the taste of thick creamy ice-cream.

We had returned to Kandy, the Perahera, the hundred elephants, the Kandyan dancers with their bells, bangles and clappers, the coconut oil and charcoal lamps, the Kandyan chiefs who looked so much like overfed, tubby Russian dolls in their regalia, and the carnival at Bogambara. It was the week of the carnival that gave us extra excitement in the Perahera term for it was the opportunity to watch adult things. There were the 'Bombay belly dancers' in transparent clothes exciting their audiences, 'Gunboat Jack' on his motorcycle riding through a ring of fire, fortune-telling, the devil dancing ceremonies, the devil dancers and the trance-like individual with the devil in her...the jellabies, the alfas, the Kandy jaggery, and the crowds of people everywhere. It wasn't until I went back to Sri Lanka on holiday in 1977 and after an absence of fifteen years that I realised the religious significance of the Perahera and its importance to the people of Sri Lanka. It is indeed a stupendous spectacle, ancient and feudal and must be seen at night in all its glory.

Colombo to Kadugannawa

It was 1940. Dad had bought his first motor car and was very proud of it. It was a second-hand Ford of about 8 HP, not very powerful by the standards of today but it was 'wheels' to my father. After a few months learning to drive, the big day arrived when we were to go on a holiday. We were going to Kadugannawa to Uncle Neil Schokman and Auntie Gladys. For days before, the tyres were checked and fresh air put in them, the water levels in the radiator and battery were checked and rechecked, the oil level received similar attention, a spare fan belt, extra oil and petrol coupons were collected (there was a war on and petrol was rationed). The spare tyre was bolted to the outside at the rear, trunks with clothes in them were tied behind the spare wheel, and off we went. My brother Ivor and I were in the rear seat. It was an enormously exciting experience for fifteen year olds (and for my parents).

We proceeded carefully, avoiding chooks, children and the occasional other vehicle. Dad blew the horn regularly for that was and still is the custom in Sri Lanka. We overtook the slow-moving bullock-carts with care—and then we came to Kegalla and the climb. The car did its best. Dad changed down frequently and gave it everything. The Kadugannawa pass has a number of hairpin bends but none more hazardous than the tunnel blasted through a huge rock. Just as we were approaching this tunnel, the most difficult and tricky part of the trip, there were calls of 'stop, stop, water' or something similar. Dad was -completely put-off and had to stop, thinking it was a warning of danger ahead. He became very angry when he discovered that it was only some kids trying to sell him water to top-up the radiator. We got back in the car but could not get enough speed in first gear to take that hairpin bend through the rock. We had to get down and walk while Dad drove the car through the tunnel and stopped on the flat further on. The holiday was great-sweet smelling flowers, ferns of many kinds, mango, jak and breadfruit trees, coffee bushes, pepper vines, cold nights and a mass of vegetation too varied to remember. It was the tropics, we were kids, and the surroundings teemed with insects, animals and plants. We didn't have to be rich or important or powerful to be happy. It was a glorious childhood.

Colombo to Matara

It was 1948, the war was over and I had a motor-cycle. I began with an ex-army 500 c.c. BSA and then changed to a new 250 c.c. Czech lawa' on which I became Ceylon's motor cycle champion in that class. I had a lot of fun as I rode through the countryside or took part in the races of the 'Ceylon Motor Cycle Club', a fellowship which, for no good reason I know, seemed to consist mostly of Burghers. One week-end, brother Ivor and I decided on a 320 km return ride to Galle and Matara, just for the fun of it. The road ran along the sea coast, with the train track usually between the road and the sea, and was overhung with coconut trees almost the entire way. In places the road was drenched with the spray from the waves. The Lena or squirrel was, everywhere. Lovely, friendly animals about 15-20 cm long, they were a favourite pet for children. This was the south-west, the coastal wet zone of Ceylon, the most densely populated area. It was an area that teemed with life of every sort. Thatched, mud brick houses were to be seen everywhere, complete with the mangy brown dogs' lying in the sun scratching themselves. The fisher folk lived, with their nets and the catamarans that are the means to their livelihood, close to the beach. The road had alternate sections of light and shade as we travelled through the coconut plantation

Up above, from coconut palm to coconut palm, were ropes. The toddy tapper, who tapped the coconut flower for its milk to convert to toddy and then to arrack, went from tree to tree along those ropes. He did not have to shin down and shin up again. When he did shin up a tree, he used a round rope of coconut fibre wrapped around his ankles, an impossible feat to someone who didn't know how the rope worked.

We passed Beruwela, a Muslim village where people wore the fez. There were lizards that changed colour as they remained motionless hoping we had not seen them, squirrels were everywhere, as were minah birds, parrots, kabaragoyas, pigeons, crows, woodpeckers, plovers, teal, snipe, other colourful birds, the orchid gloriosa superba, snakes and the occasional deadly cobra. Adams Peak was in the distance. In almost every garden were trees of papaw, Jak fruit, breadfruit, mango, plantain (banana), clumps of bamboo, some mangosteen, nutmeg and cinnamon. There were always children around and people always seemed to be bathing. The bridges were narrow so we took extra care when crossing other traffic, especially buses and lorries (trucks). The people in Balapitiya and the villages around were known for their aggressiveness so we took special care not to cause an accident. In due course we arrived at Galle, that most Dutch of all Sri Lanka's towns. The ancient Fort with its Church, houses, godowns and streets had many families we would have liked to know better. The next morning we departed for Matara, another Dutch fortress town with its quota of Dutch Burgher families. It was good to have friends and to be welcomed by so many people.

The Pettah in Colombo

The Pettah was a special place. It epitomised everything eastern in Sri Lanka. It is about a kilometre inland from the Fort, the commercial area in Colombo. The Pettah contained the 'native' shops, i.e. the Indian merchants who traded in goods mostly manufactured in the East. The Burghers regularly shopped in the Pettah but it was not quite the right place to shop. The upper-class thing to do was to shop in the Fort at Millers and Cargills. The Pettah had the exciting shops with the names of Carwallios, Paivas, Hassims, Zitans, Jezimas, Abdul Rahims and F.X. Pereira. The Ladies liked those shops and the attention. The owners were good salesmen and knew their customers. 'Lady is coming here long time so special price' they would say as a chair was brought out and a bottle of Vimto or OBW (Orange Barley Water) was courteously offered and gratefully accepted.

Parking was almost impossible so it was a long, dusty walk along streets that had no shade, no trees and no verandahs. Continually accosted by beggars, hawkers, street vendors, pickpockets and sundry unsavoury characters, the Pettah had its own special odours, smells that made it an Eastern market, an emporium with smells that belonged nowhere else...the smells of rotting onions, rotten fruit, rotting vegetables, stale food, uncleared refuse of every description, human sweat, animal dung, dried fish, dead fish, incense, spices...it was all there, everyday and everywhere.

Yet it was an exciting place. There were shops that stocked things that no one else had. Whether buttons or bows, silks or crepes—and those special favourites, fireworks. The 'Fireworks Palace', opposite the Fort railway station, was my favourite. I loved to buy and take home to light and watch rocketing rockets, golden rains, battas, catherine wheels, chinese crackers, sparklers, balloons and even the 'firework boxes with 100 pieces'. Up and off they went with bangs and coloured lights with the occasional choos Bombay (fizzer). On two of my visits I bought the whole stock, once for a Sun-

day School Christmas party and again on a visit in 1977 when we gave a party for our Sri Lankan friends as a 'thank you' for their tremendous hospitality. My grandchildren will miss that joy because, in our over regulated society here in Victoria, fireworks are banned. How different Christmas and New Year's eve was in the old days in the old country.

THE INDEPENDENT NATION

1948 and political independence

Independence for Ceylon came quietly and without bloodshed or struggle (Bloodshed and struggle came to Ceylon **after** independence and after the exodus of the Burghers). Independence could be traced directly to the war with Hitler in Europe, joined with another war in Asia. A raw-material hungry Japan decided the time was opportune to conquer and enslave the people of south and south-east Asia. World War II was ultimately won but the greatest Empire the world had ever known, the Empire on which the sun never set, exhausted itself in defending her possessions. Britain was forced to let her colonies go free so she could rest and lick her wounds. Britain had exhausted her treasury, was tired of fighting and no longer capable or interesting in ruling vast numbers of people of every colour, race and creed. Those nations in turn were convinced they could do a better job themselves.

The (British) Soulbury Commission of 1944 had recommended that Ceylon should have internal self-government. When the war ended, however, the Attlee Labour government decided that Ceylon should have full independence within the Commonwealth. Churchill, wartime Prime Minister but by then Leader of the Opposition, disagreed and said that he had not been made First Minister of His Majesty's Government to preside over the liquidation of the British Empire.

The British are a tidy people and instead of picking up their bat and walking away, they preferred to hand over a tidy house. They found in Ceylon a group like themselves who would look after the house, the contents and the structure. The transfer was almost a private affair with power transferred to an oligarchy, an elite of a few upper-middle class, low-country Sinhalese families of the Goigama and Karava castes.

These Ceylonese leaders had been educated in English at the prestige denominational Christian schools by British, Burgher, Sinhalese and Tamil teachers who had themselves been products of the same education system. Many of these Ceylonese were more English than the English. Local education had often been followed by a spell at Oxford, Cambridge or the Inns of Court. This rural aristocracy had then returned to Ceylon to supervise family land-holdings in a rural and semi-feudal society. 'England returned' Sinhalese (and Tamils) often took to law and politics. Family connections gave them power and prestige and rural constituencies assured them of a solid following. The British knew they could depend on these 'Brown Sahibs' to look after the interests of the British capitalists, the 'White Sahibs', because they were capitalists themselves. British interests could rule through them for they modelled themselves on the English.

'Independence day', 4th February 1948, was heralded in Colombo with the pealing of church and temple bells, flags, pandals (flower bedecked arches over the roads), fire crackers, bands, parades, and decorations. The Duke of Gloucester, brother of King George VI, formally handed over a document granting independence to Ceylon's Parliament (the former State Council) at a ceremony held at the newly-constructed 'Independence Hall'. The powerful and the influential were present, both white and brown. Dressed in morning suits and top hats, sherwanis (the newly discovered formal dress for politicians), swords, medals, army, navy and air force uniforms, dark civilian suits; ladies in loose morning dresses complete with hats, gloves fanning themselves...They waited the momentous moment. Many of the ladies were graceful in their colourful sarees. There were no sarongs, no 'cloth and jackets' and no one in the Ariya Sinhala costume except for S.W.R.D. Bandaranaike, the Leader of the House and a future Prime Minister. A few Tamils did wear the yeti (a loose one-piece garment rather like a Roman toga) but the Sinhalese had not yet decided on a 'national dress'. The sherwani was an Indian 'ring in' and only an interim measure. The 'ordinary people' were nowhere to be seen.

In the provincial capitals, the Government Agents of the elite C.C.S (Ceylon Civil Service), resplendent in white uniforms, complete with medals and helmets crowned with feathers, took the salutes of marching police, cadets, scouts, guides, nurses and anyone else who was a government employee and wore a uniform.

To the peasants in the rural areas, independence came and passed without much fanfare. Power passed peacefully from a foreign King, a Parliament in London, and a visible white minority to people who looked very much like the peasant but were very different to him. The new rulers were white men in disguise for they spoke English, did not worship where the brown man worshipped, were autocratic, educated in foreign ways and, when they spoke, spoke haughtily and expected immediate obedience. These new rulers were Ceylonese and he was a Sinhalese. He, the rural villager, would have to wait another ten years for the benefits from 'Independence'. The Tamils, villagers and townspeople, continue to wait to rule themselves.

Burghers were very much in evidence at the Independence ceremony. They came in their capacity as Judges and secretaries to Judges, high-ranking bureaucrats, police and army officers and in other influential service roles. The older Burghers were ambivalent about the transfer of power from the British to the 'natives' (ironically older Burghers had not thought of themselves as 'natives' for the word had come to mean an oriental person with a dark skin). They remembered past British attitudes when working-class British, members of the master race, had lorded it over them. Older Burghers also remembered that they had once lorded it over the 'natives' so they were worried about the attitudes of the educated Sinhalese who would now take charge.

Young Burghers were enthusiastic about 'independence'. They thought of themselves as Ceylonese, very much a part of the indigenous people and now able to compete on an equal footing for the top jobs in the bureaucracy, commerce, the plantations and the professions. Most of these positions had been reserved for them British in the past and barred to their fathers in the past. The 'glass ceiling' was to be removed. High status, well paid, very visible and influential jobs could now become theirs. To most Burghers, independence made little difference. The majority were professionals, not tertiary educated, had few contacts with Europeans and were in

with peers who were Sinhalese, Tamils and Moors. Within a few years their experienced British bosses would be replaced by highly qualified but often inexperienced Ceylonese. Many would find the adjustment difficult.

Those who had been elected to the previous State Council continued in office until fresh elections were held. R.L. Brohier, a prominent Burgher and author of many books on Ceylon's past glories, was Secretary of the Delimitation Commission and drew up the electoral boundaries. D.S. Senanayake, acknowledged leader of the country, formed the UNP or United National Party, (which was christened the Uncle Nephew Party), and was elected to govern. The only serious opposition parties were the Communists but they were divided into three factions who opposed one another more than they did the capitalist UNP.

One Burgher (he did not think of himself as a Burgher), stood for election. He was Pieter Keuneman, leader of the Communist party. Keuneman, in his early thirties and son of a Justice of the Supreme Court, had read English at Cambridge where he had been President of the Union. A handsome man with a pleasing personality and a gentle speaker, though unable to speak Sinhalese, he had made a commitment to help the working poor. The author took time to listen to his election speeches in Colombo. He spoke in English and every paragraph was repeated in Sinhala by a translator standing at his side. He was heckled and abused but persisted and was duly elected as the 3rd member for the multi-member Colombo Central seat. A truly remarkable achievement and one not emulated by any other Burgher. The previous time a Burgher had stood for election was in 1931 and on that occasion he had lost his deposit. (Pieter Keuneman's brother, Arthur, and family migrated to Melbourne and Arthur was one of the early Presidents of the Australia Ceylon Fellowship).

The new Constitution provided for the Governor-General to nominate six members to represent 'unrepresented interests'. This arrangement was to cater for Burghers and Europeans who could not expect to be elected on a territorially based franchise in multi-ethnic Ceylon. 'represented' was not defined and fifteen years later neither Burghers nor Europeans were represented in Parliament. There was also provision for one Burgher to be nominated to the Senate, unkindly called a grazing ground for aged warriors and party hacks, and a retired Burgher bureaucrat, Sir Eric Jansz, went in there.

G.A.H. Willé, Burgher representative since 1924 in the Legislative Council and its successor, the State Council, retired. E.F.N. Gratiaen Q.C. and Rosslyn Koch took his place in the House of Representatives. G.A.H. Willé's grandson, Ian, migrated to Melbourne with his father, mother and sister Gillian in 1957 and is in the Australian Diplomatic Service.

The new style of government necessitated the creation of a special class of bureaucrat. D.S. Senanayake, the incoming Prime Minister, selected the 'Permanent Secretaries' from the ranks of the Civil Service with the help of the all-powerful bureaucrat, Sir A.G. Ranasinghe. Two of the Permanent Secretaries were British and one was a Burgher, A.E. Christoffeisz.

One of the earliest political acts of the new Government was to pass a 'Citizenship Act'. It effectively denied citizenship to the Tamil estate labourers, one million of them, who had been brought as indentured labour by the British tea planters over the past century. The Act made sure that all the upcountry electorates, some now with even less than 3000 electors, would be safe for the Kandyan Sinhalese. A tenth of Ceylon's population and half of Ceylon's Tamil-speaking population was disenfranchised,

made stateless and lost the right to vote. It was the first of many acts of officialdom that reversed the disadvantages caused to the Sinhalese by foreign intrusions and influences. The Act made sure that the Sinhalese majority would continue to remain the majority for the foreseeable future and reduced the Tamil-speaking population from 22% to 11% (1963 census). The Ceylon Tamil elected representatives did nothing to prevent the Act being passed.

Of all the evils of the colonial system, perhaps the worst was the movement of unskilled labour from one part of the Empire to another with no guarantee of free repatriation. Images of Sri Lanka through American Eyes, a collection of writings by American visitors compiled by H.A.I. Goonetilleke in 1976, records a 1915 description of estate labour by Dr Victor Heiser.

These primitive Dravidians of Madras, coal black with Caucasian features, ignorant, superstitious, and servile, unresponsive, uninterested, only five percent literate, entirely lacking in ambition, and docile. They are willing workers, but depressing to look at because of their blank countenances. There was hardly a smile in the entire race...because the Tamils had a superstitious fear of light, no windows were built into the barrack-like 'lines' in which they lived. Each family had two rooms, in one they slept and in the other cooked on the floor. Smoke and dirt were everywhere...The coolies lines were not equipped with latrines. Every planter believed it futile to build any because he was convinced the Tamils could never be induced to use them.(p. 274-279).

The situation has not changed. British planters created, and allowed to continue, this unequal world of plantation managers living in opulent style, lords of all they surveyed, with workers living in conditions unfit for human beings. The situation did not change with independence. In 1960 the author was witness to a shocking exhibition of verbal abuse of these inoffensive, docile people by a Burgher plantation manager.

Ceylon society remained deeply divided between the 10% who were the English-educated elite and the other 90% who could not aspire to national leadership roles because of their lack of an education in English. The population continued to grow at an amazing 2.8% each year. No land was available in the fertile low country, the Kandyan villages were hemmed in by the tea estates, and a Sinhala-educated landless peasantry was demanding land and work but finding neither. The Government began clearing the forests of the Eastern province and the north central areas to create rice lands for the landless. These areas bordered those claimed by the Tamils as their traditional homelands and caused rumblings in the minority Ceylon Tamil community.

S.W.R.D. Bandaranaike was Minister of Home Affairs and Leader of the House in the first UNP Government. His ancestors had benefited greatly from contacts with the Dutch and British. The Dias-Bandaranaiques were westernised Anglican Christians and friends and confidants of the colonial rulers. 'S.W.R.D' had been at Oxford and taken a leadership role in student politics there. His father was Sir Solomon Dias Bandaranaike, a man of considerable influence, and had christened his son 'West Ridgeway' after the Governor at the time. S.W.R.D. was an excellent orator in both Sinhala and English and soon became influential in Ceylon politics. He changed his dress from a western suit to a simple white costume, became a Buddhist, married into the Radala caste of the Kandyan aristocracy and emerged as the spokesman for the rural Sinhalese.

Bandaranaike recognised that the ruling U.N.P. was not doing enough for the non-English speaking, rural Buddhist country people and that the U.N.P power base prevented it from rectifying that wrong. Too much power continued to remain with the old Goigama caste land-owning elite and the new-rich Karava caste in the low country. The latter had grown wealthy from supplying stores, transport and materials, mostly at exorbitant prices, to the British during the war. This group continued to manipulate power to create and retain their wealth. The political beneficiaries of power in the 1950s were still the minorities, that is the English educated, the Christians, the people in the towns, the Tamil bureaucrats, the professionals, the Burghers and the British and Indian businessmen.

In 1951 Bandaranaike resigned from the United National Party and with others of his Sinhala Maha Sabha party crossed the floor to become Leader of the Opposition. His party stressed the interests of the Sinhalese Buddhist rural people. They were opposed by the urban English-educated non-Buddhist intelligentsia.

Sri Lanka is a rural country where 80% of the people depend on agriculture for their livelihood and where the English language is not spoken. People in the small towns and the villages that surround them are influenced by their own intelligentsia who are the Sinhala-language school teachers, the Bikkhus (Buddhist priests) and the Vedaralas (indigenous physicians). These village leaders were not a part of the post-independence power structure, were resentful of the power wielded by their English speaking, non-Buddhist, westernised urban countrymen and considered themselves ignored and marginalised. Bandaranaike recognised their frustration and became the spokesman for this group. He used language, religion and ethnicity to influence them in opposition to the traditional village leaders, the Headmen, village elders and traders. It was this group that became the force that resulted in the social revolution of 1956 and changed a 'westernised' Ceylon into an easternised' Sri Lanka.

The old westernised elite had become so comfortable with political power that they did not envisage that they might lose power some day. There were few signs that people in the towns were aware of the discontent in the Sinhala Buddhist rural areas. The westernised elite read the English language media, socialised only with people of similar interests and thought of farmers, Buddhist priests, village school teachers and indigenous physicians as persons of little intellect, no importance and no power. They were very wrong.

Burghers were part of the non-Buddhist, westernised, urban group and were particularly noticeable because they were fairer skinned, looked different, dressed differently and offensively (Burgher girls wore skirts and exposed their legs whereas village women wore jacket and blouse or a saree which, though it left their waist bare, covered the lower part of the body to the ankles). Burgher men too often wore uniforms and were in government-appointed positions of power with authority to say 'yes' and 'no' and to be helpful or unhelpful. They had administrative power for they were the police inspectors, excise and customs inspectors, superintendents of estates, surveyors, magistrates, proctors, doctors, clerks in the law courts, the hospitals, the kachcheri (government business headquarters), the bank, the post office, the railway station, and so on. Their spoken Sinhala was too often inadequate and many did speak it offensively. Bikkhus thought of them as foreigners, unbelievers, disrespectful and offensive to tolerant-Buddhists to whom religion was a private affair. Sinhala-language teachers knew Burghers would never be their pupils and would not give them the respect due to scholars in accordance with Eastern culture. The vedarala (ayurvedic

or native physician) knew Westerners scorned his brews, concoctions and smelly plasters.

It is interesting that, thirty years after the cultural revolution of 1956, the official school uniform is a white shirt and navy-blue short trousers for boys and a white frock for girls. Most Sinhalese women now wear a skirt and blouse or a frock (dress), as the Burghers did, and the graceful saree is reserved for special occasions. The use of the frock as the everyday working attire is very noticeable.

Elements of the rural Sinhala-Buddhists had become a powerful force when in 1956 the nation had celebrated the 2500th anniversary of Buddhism but they did not expect to achieve more than a group of seats that could perhaps influence the Government.

Bandaranaike's political party formed a coalition with one of the parties of the left and an electoral pact with the other anti-UNP parties. In the 1956 election the new MEP party, with him as its leader, was swept into power. It was indeed a social revolution. The westernised anglicised professional commercial political elite was defeated and replaced by a Parliament consisting of, and representing, a rural Sinhala-Buddhist semi-professional leadership of militant Bikkhus (Sri Lanka's equivalent of Iran's Mullahs), village school teachers, indigenous medicine men and other small-town leaders. They had previously been shut out of power because Christianity and an education in English had not been available to them and had passed them by in the one hundred and fifty years of British rule. It was a return to the time before the British had arrived and probably even before the Dutch had arrived.

The changed power relationships were felt almost immediately in the villages and small towns. Police could no longer effectively maintain law and order. There was now the local Member of Parliament to be reckoned with. He advised, encouraged and ordered the Inspector who was to be harassed, warned, let-off or punished for he, the M.P., was the peoples' elected representative. The M.P. knew what was best for the people. He would decide. The police no longer had the authority to caution, summon or arrest supporters of the ruling party whatever lawless acts were performed. There was continuous interference and increasing lawlessness, continuous interference with the bureaucrats and Public Servants. Gone were the days when a British Inspector-General of Police had said 'Give me Burgher sub-Inspectors and Malay policemen and I will guarantee no crimes will remain unpunished'.

The new MEP government had been elected on the slogan that Sinhala would be the only official language coupled with the demand that Buddhism was to be the religion of the Nation. There were many factions in the new government and each had a different list of demands, alleged wrongs that had to be righted immediately. Every demand required immediate satisfaction. The Bikkhus wanted Buddhism made the official religion **NOW**, the teachers in Sinhalese wanted only Sinhala to be taught in schools **NOW**. Other languages, and that included English, was to be banished from **NOW**. The practice of Christianity, (and that was mainly directed at the Catholics who are a tenth of Sri Lanka's population and the majority in many coastal areas), to be hindered in every way possible from **NOW**. The pendulum had swung from one extreme to the other. The leftist group in the Government wanted the commerce of the country nationalised **NOW** and this meant that the State should 'nationalise' or own and operate transport, banks, insurance companies, petroleum and the import and export trade. These new amateurs in politics were convinced that all that was nec-

essary was to pass an Act of Parliament and the change would be law and become effective **NOW**.

Bandaranaike was the only person with administrative experience and he had great difficulty in controlling his followers. Every leftist party, whether in the Government or in the Opposition, had their own workers' unions so each struck work and caused chaos independently and regularly. Bandaranaike called this period a 'time of transition' and attempted to satisfy all his supporters. He said to every pressure group what they wanted to hear. The country staggered from one crisis to another and finally Bandaranaike was assassinated by a Bikkhu (Buddhist priest) who considered the Prime Minister wasn't moving fast enough on the changes.

After further difficulties and two elections the widow of the assassinated Prime Minister became leader of a new government. (It is a peculiarity of south Asian countries that widows and daughters succeed their fathers and husbands!) An inexperienced swollen bureaucracy was created to administer the numerous controls and regulations that stifled every private members productive enterprise. The special quality that members of this bureaucracy had over other Sri Lankans was that they were recommended for their jobs by Government M.Ps, were Buddhists and spoke, read and wrote in Sinhala. They were SOB's, (Sinhala only Buddhists) and therefore 100% Sri Lankans.

Christian schools were expropriated, Sundays were made working days and the phases of the moon (Buddhist holy days) were substituted as rest days. Children were to be taught in their 'mother tongue' but could not choose English as their 'mother tongue' and first language.

Burghers would be taught in English for a transition period but only if there were sufficient Burgher children to make up a full class. This decision, more than any other, alienated the Burghers and other English speakers and caused their exodus from Ceylon.

The country had numerous official holidays, the majority being Christian holy days. Instead of reducing the Christian holidays, the Government declared additional holidays for Buddhists, Hindus and Muslims so that half the year became non-working days! It was a 'Socialist Government' and the government had promised 'full employment' and, in consequence, every person who had a job felt very secure...and the militant unions would make sure the job was never lost. Severe foreign currency shortages banned Sri Lankans from leaving the country, importing books, fruits, sweets, clothes, motor vehicles and most of the other necessities of civilised 20th century life. Sri Lanka became increasingly isolated from the rest of the World. It was similar to Myanmar (Burma), the other Therava Buddhist country. Mrs Bandaranaike's term of office was a tragedy for the country.

Burghers had to stand by and watch these changes. They were a part of the westernised minority marginalised by the upheavals. They were disadvantaged in their work, social and family life. They were not able to live their lives as they had done in the past. They became increasingly depressed, networks were broken and they feared for their future. They pondered on a life that changed every day to their disadvantage. The majority were in the public services and faced the full impact of the changes.

The window of opportunity was Australia but the restrictive immigration policy only permitted the European-looking Burghers to pass through the eye of that needle. Some Dutch Burghers had migrated to other countries in the past one hundred years, mostly to England, while others had left to work in Malaya, Singapore, Fiji, India and Africa. A mass migration had never occurred because Burghers had always thought of

Ceylon as their home. Ceylon was where they were born, where they lived and where they were buried. Burghers felt comfortable with their Sinhalese and Tamil neighbours. No other country would give them the warm comfortable feeling of belonging. Whatever they thought of the other religious and ethnic groups, their personal relationships with most individual Sinhalese, Tamils, Moors and Malays, Buddhists, Hindus, Muslims and other Christians had always been cordial and mutually respectful. In the past generation many Burghers had married Christians of other communities and knew that there were cultural differences but that the differences were no greater than class differences within the Burgher community itself.

Some Dutch Burghers had connections with the English through education or family and many more were 'anglophiles' and so they left for England. Many Burghers applied but were refused entry to Australia, or had a family member refused entry, or did not apply because of the indignity of a refusal. Many left for England, Canada, New Zealand and the USA where there were no restrictions on entry because of the colour of one's skin.

Burgher Reactions to the 'Sinhala only' language policy

Volume XLV, January 1955, of the DBUJ reported that the Dutch Burgher Union, the Burgher Association, the Burgher Education Fund and the Burgher Recreation Club went in deputation to the then Prime Minister, Sir John Kotalawala, to place before him Burgher concerns about the anticipated difficulties in the proposed change in the schools' medium of instruction from English to Sinhala and Tamil. (This was before the elections that brought the S.W.R.D. Bandaranaike Government into power). The delegation was led by Senator R.S.V. Poulter, retired Judge A.E. Keuneman and retired bureaucrat L.L.Hunter, C.C.S. Before the delegation could report back, the political situation polarised into a demand for Sinhala only. Language now became the major political issue in the country and the views of the Burghers, as a very minor segment of the nation and with no political influence, were of no interest in the war between the United National Party (UNP), the MEP, (a combination of the Sri Lanka Freedom Party [SLFP] and left-wing groups) and the Tamils. The report of the 'Commission on Buddhism', and the demand for Buddhism to be made the national religion (with State support for priests and temples), further marginalised the non-Buddhists. The pace of change, radical change, had quickened.

DBUJ Volume XLVII (April–July 1957) reported the watershed in the future aspirations of the Burgher community. This is an extract from DBU President Poulter's speech:

A fortnight after our last AGM there was a political upheaval of almost revolutionary proportions when the UNP was defeated by the MEP. Though the language issue...is quoted as the...cause of the defeat, there are real issues deeper and more far reaching...which indicate we have not yet gone all the way towards formation of a workers and peasants Government...I propose to avoid politics...and examine only the social effects upon us of political decisions over which we have hardly any control.

The Sinhala Only Bill was passed on 15th June 1956. The Prime Minister reassured the Burgher community on the continuance of English as their medium of instruction in schools, and the position of Burghers now in the, Public Service and those who will enter it in future. The P.M. wanted to fix a

date like 1967 when these special arrangements would cease but we persuaded him that such...would induce a sense of frustration in the younger members of the community. The extremists...exhibited a pronounced hostility towards the Tamil and English languages....There is talk of...the acceptance of fundamental rights for all minorities, untrammelled use of their mother tongue in education and in communication with Government and on road notices....I urge you to read what Dr Mendis has to say on 'The objectives of Sinhalese Communalism'. He sees a wide gulf between the English educated and English Press on the one side and the Sinhala educated and Sinhala Press on the other side. The latter are impatient with what they regard as the slow pace of the present Government in carrying out reforms which they demand...they think doctors oppose Ayurveda (local herbal medical practitioners) in their own interests, Lawyers oppose language change for their own convenience and advantage, and they look upon those who sympathise with the Tamil language or emphasise the need for English, as enemies of the Sinhalese race and their language...The disadvantages flowing from the 'Sinhala only' Act were not directed against us but were the unhappy concomitant of the evolution of two seemingly irreconcilable sections of the population [the Sinhalese educated and the English educated] added to fears, mostly genuine, of the ultimate dominance or ultimate extinction of the Sinhalese...language. We were only incidentally drawn into the vortex of the language contention (pp.53-55).

DBUJ Volume XLVIII, October 1958, has the President's, Aubrey Martensz speech, read by R.S.V. Poulter, at the 50th Annual General Meeting held on 29 March. This is an extract:

We must realise that as a community, who claim this country as the land of our birth, we must seek to fit ourselves into the pattern of life, without surrendering our cultural and moral outlook, which during the last two years has changed, and will continue to change with alarming rapidity until the people have had time to settle down, emotionalism moderates, and the current confusion of ideas becomes clarified...We might...continue to live our lives elsewhere but cannot afford to remain still and uncompromising in our attitude of mind...make a supreme effort to conquer any feelings of dislike and distaste for the new thinking that is so vigorously translated into action...we must remember that thirty or thirty-five years ago the boot was on the other foot (pp.95-96).

The 50th Annual General Meeting was followed by a social gathering graced by the presence of the Prime Minister Mr S.W.R.D. Bandaranaike, the Ambassador for The Netherlands, and the High Commissioner for Australia in Ceylon. (It would appear that the DBU Committee took care to invite the rulers of the present, the past, and the future of the community)

The President of the DBU that year was the former Ceylon High Commissioner to Australia, but he was unable to attend, due to ill health, and Mr Poulter deputised. This is another extract from the President's speech:

Our readiness to conform should in turn receive reciprocity in approach....we have for several years past recognised the need to adapt ourselves to the nascent aspirations of the majority of our fellow countrymen...in return...we should be allowed to foster our own cultural and social ideals...in the country where we have been, for the last century and a half, citizens by right (p. 93)

The Prime Minister replied:

Your Dutch ancestors had a claim to the regard of all peoples for they safeguarded the Netherlands, the lower lands, from encroachment of the sea. When European nations were possessing other countries the achievements of Holland were not surpassed. Her period in Ceylon is remembered for her law, her architecture and yourselves. Your history...is a record of adaptation...for hardly had you begun to feel settled...than you had to start afresh under your British rulers. You did adapt...but after another 150 years what new future opens for you? The people...do appreciate your community and your services in the past. In the political sphere there was Charles Ambrose Lorenz and George Wille...the future will...have some difficulties for you are...a European group...No interference...is intended in your customs and way of life but you have to prove yourselves good and true citizens (p. 94).

Volume XLIX reported Mr. R.S.V. Poulter's 1959 Presidential address:

The rapidity of recent changes...is prompted by political pressures...social revolution is taking place, sometimes not peacefully...It has a clear political fringe...confused with issues of religion, language and education. It is explained away as 'will of the people'...features of this period of transition are growing in discipline, large numbers of strikes, and unusually high crime and murder rates.

I wish to place on record our horror at the communal riots between the Tamils and Sinhalese in May/June 1958. Bus services have been nationalised, followed by the Paddy Lands Act, the State Plantations Corporations Act, the Conciliation Boards Act, the Port Cargo Nationalisation Act, repeal of the 'Stay-in-Strikes' Act, and the taxing of religious and charitable Institutions. Soon to come are the Courts Language Bill and the Rent Restriction Act. A Select Committee has been appointed to amend the Constitution. A committee is considering whether to continue with appointed members for racial minority groups and their conclusions are not encouraging.

We, as a community always endeavoured to find common points which hold us together but people not kindly disposed towards us frequently point to subjects that divide us. The latest division arose, in the 1920s and we were unhappily split on the issue of A and B class Burghers...all of us regret the resultant cleavage. Since then attempts were made to create other cleavages between what were called Cinnamon Gardens Burghers and other Burghers, and they still try to separate the richer from the poorer Burghers. Today, another cleavage is being attempted, and that is between those who wish to migrate to Australia (or cannot for one reason or another) and those who have decided to stay in Ceylon. The Union's attitude is that emigration is a private and personal matter and Union funds cannot be set aside for this purpose. It is necessary to keep in mind that the numbers migrating will always be small compared to the numbers who will stay on (pp. 89-93).

Dr Eric. S. Brohier was the President in 1960 and 1961. Volumes L (1960) and LI (1961) report his comments on the gloom that had descended on the community.

[In 1960] For some years now the winds have been contrary...as a people and community we have been rowing against storm and wind and tide...what of the future? We cannot tell in the least how political developments may affect us'

and whether we shall enjoy a time of more stable government or whether things will become even more difficult. Our membership statistics show a confirming decline...one hears and reads of emigration...we are keenly affected by it as a community, as a Union and in our families. The majority of us have been made to feel this scattering of our people and the consequent separation and break-up of families (pp. 52-53).

[In 1961]. One practical result of our present troubles is that our community is being dispersed and our families are broken up as a result of emigration. This has been no less pronounced this year and our good wishes and fervent hopes go out to all those who wish to make new homes elsewhere. Their departure not only makes our community smaller but casts a heavier burden on those remaining...Our survival involves not only the need for our daily bread but also our racial distinctiveness. We are of the West in origin, in our communal history, in our social habits, our culture, and in our hopes for the future. The desire to migrate to lands where we can freely use the English language and thereby find suitable employment is a natural one. We have lived amicably with all communities and does not this entitle us to sympathetic consideration from other citizens? But we have of late been faced with considerable difficulty for the new Exchange Regulations limit considerably the funds emigrants can take out of the country. We joined with the other Burgher organisations in making representations to the Government...and we hope some justice will be done. The time has long passed when the spokesman for a minority can sway the vote of a Parliamentary majority, as in the days of Charles Lorenz and George Wall, but we must remember that posterity will pass judgement on us for any inaction. (pp. 46-47).

In the same issue was this comment:

Interest in emigration to Australia seems to have increased in tempo to judge from the widespread enthusiasm devoted to the subject in Burgher circles. The figures show...that in the past eight years 1732 Burghers and Euro-Ceylonese of a possible 46,000 have migrated to Australia...the figures do not indicate the extent of the prevalent desire to quit, for while many apply to go, only some are chosen...a new tribalism and an increasing intolerance have made them feel they will be happier elsewhere.(pp. 50-52).

The President, Dr.V.H.L.Anthonisz, in Volume LII, July–December 1962, said:

In the political atmosphere which has enveloped us over the recent years, the consideration and respect which we as Burghers have enjoyed in this Country is beginning to wane and we are being quietly but surely elbowed out...The `Sinhala Only Bill' places us at a disadvantage and...calls upon us to relegates, English to an inferior position and to adopt Sinhala as an expedient...The rights assured us by the Constitution are therefore in danger of being over- looked and...with the establishment of the contemplated Republic, the representation we Burghers now enjoy in the Legislature will be eliminated. We have no further voice in the affairs of this Island of our birth. (pp. 27-28).

The editorial in DBU Journal Volume LVII, 1967, had this to say about the Burghers:

Deprived of old status, placed in keen competition with other races who outnumber them a thousand to one, and bereft of capable leadership, the small community came to be a puzzled body of people, families were disintegrated

by migration and a fatal sense of defeatism enveloped the community which earlier had all the evidence of vigorous growth. Membership of the Union which stood at 600 in 1943 is now only 190. Weary of changes the new era had brought, members grew timid and faint hearted. (p.1).

The leaders of the community appointed to represent the Burghers after independence were:

House of Representatives:

E.F.N. Gratiaen Q.C.; Rosslyn Koch; J.A. Martensz; Dr V.R. Schokman; Dr E.S. Brohier; R.S.V. Poulter; T.V.K. Carron; V. Jonklaas. Q.C;

Senate:

Sir Eric Jansz; L.L. Hunter; F.C.W. van Geyzel; R.S.V. Poulter; E.C.T. La Brooy.
A new constitution abolished the category of 'appointed member' in 1972.

A review of post-1956 political changes

Many of the post-1956 changes were necessary but it was unfortunate that they were accomplished with so much haste, bitterness and anger. Sri Lanka was a plural society and every community considered they had a right to co-existence and a part in the country's future. With hindsight, it would appear that when Sri Lanka, a plural society, rejected English as the national language it rejected the solution and created the problem. The language issue has become so polarised that no Government can expect to be re-elected unless it stresses the supremacy of the Sinhalese people, the Sinhala language and the unique place of Buddhism. A recent report has stated that the Government has declared English as a 'link' language but what that means is unclear.

The Australia-Ceylon Fellowship Newsletter of April 1993, quoting a speech by a Government party M.P. in the Sri Lankan Parliament, said:

The human cost of war since July 1983 is as follows: 30,000 civilians of all communities dead, 8000 made limbless, 600,000 made refugees. A further 200,000 displaced persons living with relatives and friends, 170,000 in India and another 200,000 outside South Asia. US\$500 million on 'defence' expenditure, 5500 service people and police killed and 7700 desertions. 100,000 have lost their employment in the Jaffna District.

These numbers are from a Government source so they are probably understated. The desertions from the armed forces is closer to 27,700 and deaths exclude the J.V.P. uprisings in the 1980s.

The emphasis on the divisions in Sri Lanka's plural society, stress on cultural rather than economic issues, and the enormous increase in the educated young (the population increased by 2.4 million or 31% in the ten years between 1953 and 1963), have resulted in an angry young society, periodic violence and a stagnant economy.

Suzette Jansen in *The Reluctant Emigrant* describes her personal experience of the 1983 communal riots in Colombo.

Some incident in the north of the country had resulted in the deaths of some of the government troops who had been sent to maintain law and order. When the bodies were brought [to Colombo] for burial...an angry crowd grew violent...Leelawathie came with the news that trouble was brewing...I could see a mob armed with staves and rods moving determinedly in the direction of Maya

Avenue [where she lived]...The police had exploded tear gas...to disperse the mob...When I was in the CWE shop, the mob marched into the building and I could hear the sound of glass being smashed and shelves being broken. A man in the shop reassured me 'They are destroying only Tamil shops'. When I came out I saw to my horror fire blazing a short distance away and damage and, destruction on every side...The roads were packed with traffic, people fleeing from the angry hordes...As I walked a short distance home, one of the rioters inquired, 'Madam, are you a Sinhalese or Tamil'. I replied 'No, I am a Burgher' and walked swiftly home. Yes, I was one of the much maligned Burgher Community...My anxious mother and Leelawathie were standing outside our house watching the crowds engaged in smashing whatever was within reach. Leelawathie had some gory tales to relate...Thus began the violence that was to escalate into a full scale war that has still not ended. We heard from my sister that the mob had marched down Rosemead Place [the equivalent of Toorak in Melbourne] attacking the houses of Tamil residents. It [the mob] had stopped outside her house, poised to begin, but a neighbour had shouted 'That is a Sinhalese home' and the crowd had gone on its way (pp• 61-63).

Sri Lanka's major export, sadly, is now its people who leave for menial jobs in the Middle East, Singapore and the developing economies of other south-east Asian nations. The fastest growth industry in Sri Lanka in recent year has been private and official security. Walls and gates grow higher and higher as the middle class is eliminated and the gap between the rich and poor grows wider.

The growth in the security forces has been enormous. The Navy was commanded by a Commodore and is now commanded by a full Admiral. The Army was commanded by a Brigadier and is now commanded by a number of Generals. The Inspector General of Police had three Deputies to assist him. He is now supported by twenty six Deputies! The growth in security is followed closely by the growth in employment in the public sector. No longer is there any shame in appealing to foreigners for gifts...indeed it is Lankan Governments adept at badgering foreign Governments for hand- outs. New infrastructure developments are invariably the gift of some foreign donor. Too many changes in Sri Lanka have resulted from talk and too few from action. The hope of every elected Government in the land of the lotus flower is the wish that more and more tourists will visit the land of sun and surf and be waited on by obedient, docile, servile Sri Lankans.

The politics of division in the age of transition have made political assassination a common and acceptable form of gaining and holding power. Even the media's reporting is subject to political manipulation. The list of prominent people assassinated and listed here exclude the 40,000-60,000 killed in the war with the JVP (terrorist Pol Pot type youth uprisings) and the war with the Tamil Tigers.

The assassinations that made the headlines included Prime Minister Bandaranaike in 1959, the Mayor of Jaffna in 1975, many moderate Tamil leaders in Madras in 1983, Vijaya Kumaranatunga in 1988(film-star husband of 1995 President Chandrika Kumaranatunga and son-in-law of both former Prime Ministers S.W.R.D. and Mrs. Sirimavo Bandaraflaika), Senior Minister Ranjan Wijeratne in 1990, General Kobekaduwa and Admiral Fernando in 1991, Rajiv Gandhi, Prime Minister of India in 1991, Athulathmudali in 1993, President Premadasa in 1993 and Gamin Dissanayake and fifty others in 1994. The first Sinhalese-Tamil language deaths occurred in 1958

followed by further rioting and deaths in 1977, 1983, 1985, 1990 and through to 1995. There were hundreds (thousands?) of assassinations in the first JVP insurrection in 1971 with that group planning a Pol-Pot type regime. The second JVP insurrection was in the mid 1980s and murder may have been officially sanctioned. Unbelievable atrocities were committed by those in authority using professional killers. Assassination became commonplace and many police, politicians, bodyguards, government officials and innocent people were killed or not heard from again. This period left a trail of bitterness that continues to this day. The pace has quickened, the killings continue. Presidents and Ministers are compelled to educate their children overseas. Politics and political power are risky adventures.

The Sinhalese are an attractive and delightful people. Easy-going and friendly, quick to smile, gentle, courteous, happy, kind and helpful. Unfortunately assassinations and murders continue. This is inexplicable because of the importance the people and the Government place on the Buddhist philosophy of love, peace, gentleness and the sacredness of life. Even the taking of a life by the breaking of an egg is frowned upon. The Buddha sought freedom from anxiety, freedom from pain, freedom from desire and passion. He prescribed a system whereby his disciples could control their desires and be free of all ties and all hurts. Officially Buddhism is at the centre of political and social life in Sri Lanka so it is difficult to understand the sudden and horrible outbreaks of communal and class violence.

Elections are now held every seven years and one of the peculiarities of politics in Sri Lanka is the near certainty that the government in office will be rejected and the Opposition installed. Governments therefore attempt, by various devices, to delay the next election. States of emergency are declared, new constitutions are created and amended, newly elected members are forced into signing pledges of loyalty and undated letters of resignation and new positions are created that cannot be abolished when Governments are defeated at the polls. When every other device fails hit squads' and assassinations become the final solution.

When a new Government takes power, it promptly commences an inquiry into the scandals of the previous administration. Governments are all-powerful in Sri Lanka and have considerable impact on even the most minor activities. Retribution is an ongoing activity. A further consequence of the short span of political power is the encouragement of the get-rich-quick attitude. Corruption has become institutionalised. Graft and violence are now part of everyday life in Sri Lanka.

Another peculiarity of Sri Lankan politics is the personal and family reward system. The present President appointed her mother as the Prime Minister. Her mother, when Prime Minister of a previous administration, appointed a close relative as the Governor-General. This custom of family patronage is well entrenched in Sri Lanka's politics. Sir John Kotalawala, a Prime Minister in the early 1950s, when told that as the Prime Minister he should not appoint a girl friend to an official position retorted 'But that is why I became Prime Minister'

Ceylon abolished the Senate, became 'Sri Lanka' and a Republic in 1972, altered the electoral system and introduced an executive Presidential form of government. Those changes took place after the mass migration of the Burghers in the 1960s. The present government has stated it intends to revert to a cabinet-style government

The dominant position of the 'Sinhalese only Buddhists' (SOBs) has been achieved progressively by:

- Dis-enfranchisement of the Indian Tamils.
- Abolition of the Senate.
- Alienation of the Burghers, Tamils and other English-speakers on the language issue.
- Emergence of political parties stressing language, caste and religion.
- Declaring that Buddhism and the Sinhala language applied to the entire country.
- Tamil rejection of their anglicised leadership, followed by alienation of the high caste Hindu Tamil leadership and its replacement by an uncompromising lower caste militant terrorist Tamil 'Tiger' leadership (in opposition to the Sinhala 'Lion' leadership).
- Enforcement of political discipline by a system of slates of candidates followed by the grant of executive power to most of the government party M.Ps.
- Continued support of the majority Sinhalese by the Moors (Muslims) who are 7% of the population. (but note the news item below).
- Concentration of total power in the political leadership. M.Ps have administrative control over public servants. Government controls the media and every major aspect of socio-economic life.
- Continued discrimination in educational and job opportunities with political, ethnic, language and religious minorities being the targets.
- Political assassination as an effective tool to stifle opposition or to remain in power.

Muslim political support is important to every Government for it gives legitimacy to the Sinhalese. The Muslims (Moors) have been major beneficiaries of Sri Lanka's political independence. They were 7% of the population and quickly allied themselves with the majority Sinhalese, embraced Sinhala as their mother tongue, discarded Tamil, became economically wealthy from their dominance in the gem trade and took advantage of educational opportunities.

The Island newspaper of 19 June 1994 reported:

The President of the All Ceylon Buddhist Congress wants the government to prohibit the use of loudspeakers in mosques island-wide. He points out that it undermines and disturbs the Buddhist cultural environment in both urban and rural areas. He adds that the sound of Islam heard five times a day over loudspeakers tend to make Buddhists believe that Sri Lanka is no more a Buddhist country and produces psychologically devastating effects on non-Muslims. (ACF Newsletter Volume 37 number 5 p. 23).

Other ethnic minorities continue to be marginalised, neutralised and excluded from political positions of power but have not been discriminated against in other respects. Burghers and members of other minority communities are not restricted in employment, business, sport, religion, or in speaking, reading and writing their languages. Minority ethnic groups who have mastered the Sinhala language and have adapted to the majority culture are not excluded from positions of trust and responsibility and continue as bureaucrats, diplomats and in the armed forces except in security-sensitive positions. Members of minority communities are prominent in major business and commercial organisations. Burghers who have adapted have survived and prospered.

Religion, language, ethnicity and caste became politically important after the marginalisation of the minority pre-1956 anglicised elite and the accession to power of the rural-based Sinhala Buddhist intelligentsia. Minority ethnic and religious groups have to content themselves with the left-overs. No Government today can govern or expect re-election unless it takes into account language, religion, ethnicity and caste. Political power continues to be dominated by the Sinhala Buddhist majority and will remain with that group as long as cultural, as opposed to economic issues, dominate politics. The issues that divide are deeply embedded in the plural society that is Sri Lanka today. Burghers in Sri Lanka know that democracy, a fragile institution, can only flourish when there are people prepared to put rights and privileges second to duty and obligation to the nation and the people.

The alienation of the Burghers by the Sinhalese after 1956, and the demise of the community, has parallels with the birth of the community in 1802. Between 1796 and 1807 the British, the new rulers, replaced the Dutch language with English, told the Dutch descendants that they could either stay and become part of the new British colonial society or leave the country. There were restrictions imposed on the sale and removal of property. This restriction forced about 900 families to remain in Ceylon and adapt to a subordinate position in the new society. Those 'Dutch descendants' who remained, adapted and prospered.

A similar situation arose when Ceylon became a fully independent country and Sinhala replaced English as the nation's language. The Burghers were again subordinated and marginalised. Onerous restrictions were again placed on the transfer of the proceeds of property, personal possessions and pensions. The Burghers once again had to adapt or depart. About half the Burgher community departed and the other half remained behind. The Burghers who remained in Sri Lanka, although different to the majority communities in language, religion and ethnic customs, are adapting to the majority culture because only those who adapt can survive. They were indeed the 'people in between'.

The candle that burned brightly at the end

Like a candle that burns most brightly before its light is extinguished, the Burghers in the decade after 1948 reached their highest point in brilliance and influence in the social life and power structure of Ceylon. Earlier, they had been the steel frame on which the British had depended, but in a subordinate capacity.

From the 1930s, as the higher administrative posts became available to the Ceylonese, the Burghers began to fill them, as did many Sinhalese and Tamils. The younger, English-educated Burghers, who had welcomed independence, were ready willing and able to compete on equal terms with the other communities in the pursuit of leadership positions. The following list is not exhaustive but indicates the extent to which many Burghers were ready to fill the higher administrative posts:

Sir Herbert Eric Jansz was Chairman of the Public Service Board. A E (Eric) Christoffelsz, R.S.V.Poulier, and D.G.L. (Douglas) Misso were appointed Heads of Ministries. L.L.Hunter and N.E.Ernst were specially recalled from retirement by the first Prime Minister, D.S.Senanayake, to be Government Agents of the most populated and important provinces, the Western and Central.

Other members of the elite Civil Service who filled the top administrative posts were R.Y. (Rex) Daniel, W.J.A (Bert) van Langenberg, C.J. (Cedric) Oorloff,

(Rutger) Paulusz, N.J.L. (Neville) Jansz, R.L. (Reggie) Arnolda, M.L.D. (Max) Caspersz, O.R. (Raine) Wright, Anton Mc Heyzer and Ellis Greiner.

In the 1949 open, competitive examination for an intake of ten cadets for the C.C.S. (Ceylon Civil Service) three Burghers were successful. I.L. (Ivor) Ferdinands as placed first, D. M. A. (Donald) Speldewinde was placed fourth and Caryl Ludekens was placed tenth. In a subsequent year D.G. (David) Loos and Travice Ludowyk were successful in the open competitive examinations.

In the open competitive examinations for the newly formed 'Overseas Service', R.C. van der Gert, W. Woutersz and Ziegelaar were successful. In the late 1980s Rodney van der Gert was appointed Head of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Wilhelm Woutersz became Sri Lanka's Ambassador to China, (appointments where 'SOB' or ethnicity, religion and caste were not critical to the 'new' Sri Lanka and therefore unlikely to offend the Sinhala Buddhist majority).

Aubrey Martensz was Ceylon's first High Commissioner in Australia. Neville Jansz, a member of the C.C.S., followed later. The author was the first to pass the accountancy examinations in Ceylon and was promptly offered jobs by the Public Service Board in the Taxation Department and the Government Accountants' Service! In the judicial and legal service M.C. Sansoni was a Puisne Judge (and later became Chief Justice), E.F.N. (Noel) Gratiaen was Attorney-General and very soon after was elevated to the Supreme Court Bench. O.L. de Kretser was a District Court Judge and later a Judge of the Supreme Court; Douglas Janszé was Crown Counsel and later Attorney-General, Percy Colin-Thomé was a Crown Counsel and later a Supreme Court Judge; Arthur Keuneman was a Crown Counsel, migrated to Melbourne and became a Parliamentary Draughtsman.

In the medical sphere, L.G. (Louis) Blaze, H.E. (Eric) Schokman and E.S. (Eric) Brohier reached the highest levels of the Medical Department. Noel Bartholomeusz and L.D.C. Austin were eminent surgeons, T.R. Jansen was a noted eye specialist and Colonel-in-chief of the Ceylon Medical Corps. The younger Burgher doctors in the medical department were too numerous to list here. Ben Chapman of Sydney has given me a list of eighty-six names though this writer will only list the first nineteen, those from A to D. They included Douglas Arndt, Harry Aldons, Noel Baptist, Professor J.R. Blaze, Mervyn Bartholomeusz, Terrence Chapman, Ben Chapman, Rex de Bond, Urban de la Motte, Percy de Zilwa, Cyril Deutrom, Carl de Niese, Elmo Dabrera, Maureen de Zilwa, Arthur de Bruin, Herbert Dirckze, Ian Dirckze, Douglas de Zilwa and Corinne de Zoysa. (This list of Sri Lanka qualified Burgher medical practitioners is incomplete because Arthur Anderson, Larry Foenander and many other medical practitioners who now practice in Melbourne were not included.)

In the Police department Wilhelm Leembruggen, Cecil Wambeek, Richard Arndt and Gerard Leembruggen became Deputy Inspector Generals of Police. There were many other Burghers, too many to record, in the higher echelons of the Police Force. G.V.F. Wille was Commissioner of Prisons with C.P. (Clarence) Brohier as his deputy. Reginald Crowe was the superintendent at Jaffna.

R.G. Leembruggen was Director of Public Works, F.C. Speldewinde had won the 'Bayliss prize' and was in the Public Works Department, Stanley Fernando and Neil Schokman had retired as Colonels of the Ceylon Engineers, and B.R. (Russell) Heyn became Army Commander. Commander Carl Ohlmus, Victor Hunter, and many others were in the Navy. Malcolm Wright had been awarded a scholarship to Oxford and later returned to work in the Forest Department. Willie Wambeek was Deputy

Director in the Motor Transport Department and Elmar Maartenstyn had joined the Ministry of Commerce, later becoming Ceylon's Trade Commissioner in Sydney and finally Executive Director of the Tea Board.

The Income Tax department had C.A (Cecil) Speldewinde as Commissioner and Cecil van Langenberg and Hans Lourensz as deputies. Other Burghers the author remembers were assessors Allan Driberg and Pat Solomons.

At the highest levels of the railway administration were Allan Demmer, Thomas Eugene Jansz, Trevor Jansz, Edgar Jansz, Rupert Jansz, Arthur Piachaud, Mervyn Greve, de Jong, Hubert Dirckze and many others.

Political independence also gave many opportunities to Ceylonese to take over executive roles in the business sector that had been barred because of the 'European glass ceiling'. (Our parents knew the Europeans were there, we knew they were there, we could see them there but we could not join them there.)

Ivor Ferdinands became Managing Director of Mackwoods Estates and Agencies; Vernon Kelly, Malcolm Wright, Percy Ernst and the author were Executives at the Shell Petroleum Company. Among the many Burghers who became managers of estates were R.H.L. (Hal) Brohier, R.L. (Lucien) Brohier and P.Ondaatje.

Burghers were active in every sport. Duncan White, the only winner of an Olympic medal (and at thirty-two years of age!). Other Olympic contestants were Eddie Gray (boxing) and Norman Smith (diving).

Malcolm Wright captained Ceylon in rugby football. The other Burghers in the teams were Hugh and Fred Aldons, F.A.C.Roeloffsz, L.E.Ephraums, A.B. van Twest, A.E.R.Mc Heyzer, I. La Brooy, F.Kellar, R. de Zylwa, A. Driberg, B.C.Henricus, H.M.Christoffelsz, J and G. Weinman, E. Matthysz, E.R.Christoffelsz, H.E.V.Metzeling, F. Kretlszheim, D.Ephraums and D.Frank. The Havelock Sports Club, a team consisting of fourteen Burghers and one other, were the rugby champions in both 1951 and 1952.

Malcolm Spittel, Hugh Aldons, Vernon Prins and Michael Tissera captained Ceylon at cricket. Among others who represented Ceylon at cricket were Bobby Schoorman, Pat Mc Carthy, Rennie Solomons, E.B. Nathanielsz, Vivian de Kretser, Robert de Kretser, Ernie Kelaart, Russel and David Heyn, Phil Kelly and Darrel Lieversz. A.E. Christoffelsz was President of the Ceylon Cricket Association and Trevor Jansz was Secretary and a member of the Cricket Board of Control. Trevor Jansz was later elected a life member of the Colombo Colts Cricket Club. Rupert Ferdinands represented Ceylon in Davis Cup tennis.

Three Burghers represented Ceylon at the international level in three sports. Basil Henricus in boxing, athletics and rugby, Hugh Aldons in cricket, rugby and hockey, and Bob Bartels in cricket, hockey and soccer.

Burghers in the media included the famous cartoonist, Aubrey Collette and journalists Frank Ondaatje, Eustace Rulach, Neville de la Motte, Willie van der Straaten, S.P.Foenander, Maureen Milhuisen, Hector Ephraums, Dick van Cuylenburg, Kett Joachim, Jan Modder, Stan Oorloff, Carl Poulter, Rex Jansen, Russell Raymond, Con rad Barrow, Tred Clarke and Ramsay Ziegelaar.

Among the Burgher authors were L.E.Blaze and B.R.Blaze, E.F.C.Ludowyk, Maureen Milhuisen and Deloraine Brohier. Burgher educationalists are too numerous to record but L.E.Blaze, founder of Kingswood College and Cyril Jansz the founder of St. John's College Panadura, were of special importance. At the University, E.O.E. Pereira was Professor of Engineering, E.F.C.Ludowyk and H.A.Passe were Profes-

sors of English, Eric Balmond was Registrar, and W.J.F. La Brooy was Dean of the Faculty of Arts.

Many Burgher women were outstanding beauties. Maureen Hingert was 'Miss - Ceylon' and runner-up in the 'Miss World' competition. Jennifer La Brooy was 'Miss Ceylon' and Verna Koch was runner-up. Many women with Burgher mothers or Burgher ancestors continue to win beauty contests for both 'Miss' and 'Mrs Sri Lanka'.

There was an important difference between the successes of the Burghers and the successes of the British. The British were successful because the 'glass ceiling' protected them. The Burghers had no 'glass ceiling' to protect them. They succeeded in open competition. The other ethnic communities knew that many new jobs and opportunities would become available to them if the Burghers were not there to compete for them. To disadvantage the Burghers, to level the playing field, the rules had to be changed. The 'Sinhala Only' rule did just that. It is not surprising that when the Burghers decided to leave, a large number of the western-educated indigenous people were glad to see them go.

Burghers who remained behind

There were 42,000 Ceylonese who classified themselves as Burghers or Eurasians in the 1946 census and they were 0.6% of the population of 8.1 million. By the time of the 1963 census, Burghers and Eurasians had increased to 46,050 but were now only 0.43% of the total population of 10.6 million. In the Sri Lankan 1981 census it was reported that Burghers and Eurasians were now 38,000 and only 0.26% of the population. Today, fourteen years later, the Burghers would be an even more insignificant minority.

Where have all the Burghers and Eurasians gone? The conclusion is obvious. More than half of the 1946 Burghers, their children and their grandchildren are no longer in Sri Lanka. It is probable that between 35,000 and 50,000 Sri Lankan Burghers and Eurasians who would have remained in Sri Lanka if the political situation had not altered now live in other parts of the world with children and grandchildren. Those who left and those who remained behind are rapidly assimilating into other ethnic groups.

In 1988, two Burgher friends visited Sri Lanka and lived with Sinhalese school friends. The children of these Sinhalese friends had not heard of Burghers (Lansi), and did not know that such people had once lived in Sri Lanka as part of the multi-ethnic fabric of pre-1956 society! A similar experience occurred when the author met Sri Lankan Sinhalese post-graduate students in Halls Gap in 1993. They were surprised that I was a former Sri Lankan. None of them had heard of the Burghers but one knew of a Lansi (Sinhala word for a Burgher). None of them were aware of the Burgher community or its contribution to the Sri Lanka of the past.

There remain a few hundred 'Dutch' Burghers and some thousands of ethnic 'Burghers' in Sri Lanka, many of whom have married other ethnic Sri Lankans. They have adapted to life in the majority Sinhala-Buddhist culture, continue to be disinterested in politics and very few are in the bureaucracy. There are no official impediments to their competing with members of other communities but, not being Sinhalese Buddhists, they appear to be excluded from positions sensitive to Buddhists

and Sinhala culture. The author interviewed five Burghers who had decided to remain in Sri Lanka.

Fred was twenty-four years old in 1956 and his father was a leader of the Burgher community. Fred was assistant manager of a tea plantation, not married, spoke Sinhala fluently and enjoyed the open air life with its independence and responsibilities. All members of Fred's wife's family, except for her, migrated to Australia in the 1950s. As a result of the departure of the British after 1948, and the exit of most of the educated English-speaking elite between 1958 and 1965, many opportunities were created for those who remained. Fred soon found himself promoted from managing a tea plantation to managing the Colombo office of the agency that managed a group of plantations. In due course he, and certain Sinhalese and Tamils of the pre-1956 elite, purchased a controlling interest in the agency when the British owners decided to sell. The business flourished, a brewery, prawn farm, gem mining, earth moving, jungle clearing and an airline and shipping agency were added. The business was very successful. Fred and Dorothy have never felt the urge or the need to leave Sri Lanka. Their domestic staff consist of five full-time helpers and a gardener and person to wash and iron clothes. They have close friends in every ethnic group, identical life styles and all of them converse in English both at home and at work. Their two children are married to ethnic Sinhalese and live in Sri Lanka. None of them have been directly affected by violence. They do not feel marginalised and say instead that there is considerable goodwill towards Burghers from other ethnic communities with a similar socio-economic background. The other communities see them as neutral, fair-minded and disinterested in politics and political issues. They were deeply concerned at the 1983 ethnic riots, the burning and looting of innocent people, and the Pol Pot type strikes, murders and counter-murders of the JVP (Revolutionary Party) between 1972 and 1989. Fred loves the jungle, originally from big-game hunting but more recently as a photographer of wild life.

Fred and Dorothy's daughter was educated in English in an international (private school) in Sri Lanka and at a university in Australia and she said:

I feel safe in Sri Lanka because I am surrounded by caring people and life is comfortable and easy. However, I also like the Australian outdoor life style and the relaxed attitude but the weather, the routine, the sameness of everyday life depresses me. I would be afraid to walk the streets after dark but would have no such fears in Sri Lanka. I wish to educate my children in Sri Lanka and I wish them to be fluent in Sinhala. I consider myself fortunate that I grew up in Sri Lanka.

Another Dutch Burgher, who is a leader of the Burgher community in Sri Lanka and responsible for considerable social work among the poorest Burghers said:

I have had quite a climb in my life. I started as a typist-clerk and today I am Executive Chairman of one company and Managing Director of another. I have travelled overseas on over 95 occasions. I have always had job satisfaction, which I may not have experienced if I had migrated and had to start again in another country.

Both his son and his daughter are married to Sinhalese and the family is completely committed to Sri Lanka and absorbed in the Sri Lankan way of life. His son, a double qualified accountant, won both a prize in his accountancy examinations and swimming medals in the Asian championships. The Burgher father ended his letter with:

We are in the throes of another election and the killings and the wanton damage at the meetings have surpassed every other election. We are concerned for our children and our grandchildren.

Another Burgher family, with a teenage son and daughter, a mother in a government instrumentality and a father in a business organisation, are not interested in migrating. Sri Lanka is their home, they are part of Sri Lanka's multi-ethnic society, are reasonably comfortable and accepted in Sri Lanka. Their children have been educated in Sinhala and, because opportunities are available equally to all citizens, will compete on equal terms with other Sri Lankans in almost every aspect of life. They say the Burghers have not been ill-treated or discriminated against in any way and Burghers do obtain satisfactory jobs due to their superior knowledge of English. They are not involved in ethnic strife and have never felt threatened.

Maureen Milhuisen was a Burgher school girl at the time Ceylon became independent in 1948. Some decades later, she described how her family had wrestled with earlier anxieties:

I've been trying for decades to figure out the ethnic composition of my family and it is the most extraordinary mosaic; a mixture of races creating a complex being! To me, a Burgher, this fascination with my own roots is unending and absorbing. Research into my family antecedents began in 1949. Up to that time I cannot remember that we regarded ourselves as in any way different to others. We never discussed our 'background' for we were too busy living. Then in 1949 a shadow seemed to lean over our extended family. I began to hear talk of 'Australia' and 'emigration'...and then I began to hear of places like Stuttgart and Munich, Amsterdam and the Loire valley in France because we were preparing genealogies. We were delving deep into our past. We delved deep into musty tomes in dusty record rooms of crypts, churches, the offices of Registrars of births, marriages and deaths, old forgotten letters, papers yellowed with age and in old fashioned chests that hadn't been opened for years. We began to think about our romantic past and our adventurous ancestors. Our loyalty to our newly independent Lanka was seriously threatened back in 1949! The older folk were muttering that their 'way of life' was being threatened and that it was the season for us to migrate once again. Proving ancestors had come from Europe was a requisite for Australian emigration so we resurrected from their slumber a strange medley of folk, the Milhuisens, van Dorts, Mullers, Campbells, Renaux, De Oliveras and we learned that they had developed close connections with De Silvas, Daniels, Fernandos and Pereras, and left behind hundreds and hundreds of descendants. Suddenly I realised what an ethnic mixture I was, a mixture that was unique, and beautiful, delightful and variegated. The island of Lanka was my home. I had no gama (ancestral village) and my only gama was the suburb where I lived. I was simply a 'Burgher'. I had inherited a rich culture from both East and West, from Germany and France, Holland, Portugal and Sri Lanka. It was my Lankan heritage that thrilled me to the old tales, the legends, the history and the glorious Island heritage and this made me free and receptive and sympathetic to the world. I decided I did not want to exchange it for any other in the whole wide world.

Maureen Milhuisen, now Maureen Seneviratne, and married to a Sinhalese, said recently:

The Burghers...are quite rare in Sri Lanka though their influence is still very strong and many 'light' Tamils and Sinhalese [have] Burgher mothers and grandmothers...I am a Sri Lankan, (rather than Burgher or anything else) and I would not have missed being a Sri Lankan for all the world.

Maureen is a proud Sri Lankan citizen and her ethnicity has been merged with her nationality. She has assimilated completely.

Among the Burghers who remained behind are a few who are part of the wealthy elite. They have considerable wealth but less influence and minimal power. Successful in plantation management, shipping, petroleum, and a host of other enterprises that were the monopoly of the British are Johann Leembruggen, retired Chairman of Mackwoods; Scott Dircksze, Chairman of George Steuarts; Reggie Poulier, former Head of Carson Cumberbatch and Michael Mack, Head of Aitken Spence. Mervyn Andriesz is a wealthy businessman, Fred Pereira is a neuro-surgeon, Maurice Walbeoff is a lawyer and Harold Speldewinde is Chairman and Managing Director of two shipping enterprises. David Bartholomeusz, Hector de Witt and Nigel Austin are in business and Deloraine Brohier writes and advises the Government on tourism. The children are being absorbed into the multi-ethnic society, or are migrating. The period when the Burghers were a community, a separate ethnic group, appear to be over.

The losers in the Burgher diaspora

There were many losers from the forced exodus, the diaspora of the Burghers. Families were broken-up. Many were parted from their children, their parents or their grandchildren. Faithful family retainers lost their homes and livelihood and were forced back to a gama to live a life of enforced idleness. Sri Lanka is culturally an Eastern society where the old are venerated and respected. Children have this instilled into them at an early age. Australia, on the contrary, was a young, almost 'frontier' society where youth held sway. The change in the attitudes of children and grandchildren was traumatic for many of the older Burghers.

There were five categories of Burghers who were the victims of the diaspora. The first group were the older, retired Burghers like Colin and Gladys in chapter 8 who could not accept the sudden changes and upheavals in Sri Lanka and moved to the promised land, Australia. The promised land was hard, friendless and strange. They were trapped. They did not wish to stay but they were now too poor and too proud to go back...but returning would have had its own problems for friends had left and the world had moved on. They had migrated to Australia too late to adjust. They were in the way of the younger generation and the young had their own problems.

The second group were those who were old and retired and had decided to remain in Sri Lanka. Many were widows, widowers or unmarried females. Deprived of grandchildren, children, nephews and nieces who had left for the promised land, they had to depend on strangers. Their social group shrank and wherever they went, whoever they met, the talk was always about leaving. The young, the next generation, were not around to visit, to help and to comfort them in sickness and in death. These Burghers gradually drifted into an old age without someone to love and someone to be loved by. There was only one way for it to end. As the author's wife's grandmother

said at the time we were leaving 'Very soon there will only be the cemetery coolies (labourers) to see me buried'. Those were very sad days when we left our loved ones.

The third group followed their families, their children and grandchildren. In the process they lost the other part of their 'family', their neighbours and their social contacts. After they arrived they were trapped in a new land with little money, little freedom and children and grandchildren who always seemed busy. They lost their freedom and their privacy. They grew disillusioned. Iris' experience in chapter 8 typifies the dilemma of the older migrant.

There was the fourth group and these were those who would have liked to have migrated but either did not have the money or had married Sri Lankans from non-Burgher ethnic groups. Their Burgher friends and relations who were already in the promised land repeatedly encouraged them with 'come, come, come' but when they applied they were refused entry. They kept re-applying but were never passed. They were forced to live a sort of half life, continually hoping that the magic letter granting permission to enter Australia would arrive one day. Over time they learned to accept the reality of the situation and made the best of it. They adjusted to life in Sri Lanka and even became defensive when Sri Lanka was criticised. They are the Burghers who will remain, often against their will, in Sri Lanka.

The fifth group, the last group, are the very poor Burghers. They had been 'looked after' by richer and better educated Burghers and relatives. Genteel beggars, they went from home to home in the expectation of a hand-out. As they grew older, they were joined by other Burghers whose relatives had migrated and who were now reduced to begging. This group exist in a precarious manner and survive from day-to-day. They have lost everything, including their self respect. They often do not know when their next meal will be, where it will come from and where they will sleep that night.

Averil Bartholomeusz, an honorary charity worker in Colombo, distributes some of the funds collected by the 'Eighty Club' of Victoria for destitute Colombo Burghers: The writer had a discussion with her. My questions Q and her answers A are given below. Names have been disguised.

Q Could you tell me something about the Burghers who come to you for help?

A I'll start with Mr Corteling. He is a heart patient and has no place to live. He comes to me, I give him the money for medicines but we cannot afford to give him money for food. However, he has to live so he borrows money at exorbitant interest and the next time we give him money it goes to pay the interest on his debts. In consequence, he has nothing to live on and has to borrow again.

Then there is Mr Frugtneit. He had three daughters but has now lost two of them. There is a Mr Kronenberg. He lives in Katunayake. He met with an accident and lost his wife. The wife left a three year old boy and the doctor said the child should have a medicine that can be bought only at Millers or Cargills for Rs92.30 (\$2.70) a tin. We gave him two tins and the child got better. However, he did not have the money to buy more and hasn't come to us again because he knows there are so many more who are worse off. The child has now died. He now lives with his daughter-in-law who has been given a hut to live in by her mother-in-law.

Then there are the Hesses. The father was working as a security guard but fell sick and lost that job. He has been in and out of work since then. His last job was as a gardener and then he got ill again. His eldest daughter Lydia is a heart patient.

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Q How old is Lydia?

A Eighteen

Q Eighteen and she is a heart patient?

A From the time she was a child she had a heart problem and could not go to school or do anything active. Thanks to a friend in Australia who sent us some money, she has recovered sufficiently to learn hairdressing. This gives her some pocket money and her daughter can now attend school.

Q Eighteen, a child at school, education is free so why should they have to pay?

A Rupees 100 has to be given for tuition to do her O levels. She is so far behind in her Maths, Sinhala and English that we have to pay for some tuition. This is about Rs500 a month (A\$15). We give her Rs12 every time she comes to see us. Her mother was a Miss Blazé and does domestic work. Now Lydia is somewhat better in health, she is able to work and receives Rs 30 (less than \$1) a day plus breakfast.

Q So some Burghers are now servants and are glad to have those jobs?

A Yes. They are very glad. Mrs Jansz and (husband) Norman have two small children. They said 'we are good Burghers and, however poor we become, we must educate our children even if we have to starve doing it'. Their little boy goes to St. Peter's school. I don't know how they will pay the fees because St. Peter's is not a free school. Lillian is searching for domestic work but cannot get a position because she can't leave the child at home and no one will give her domestic work if she takes her child with her. Another one who is looking for domestic work is Jill Schokman. She is a planter's daughter but has fallen on bad times and is looking for a job, any job.

Q How has she fallen on bad days?

A She had a cafe, her husband died, and she lost the business due to mismanagement. She has no income whatsoever now.

Q Now, Mr Corteling and others, what did their fathers do in their time?

A That I cannot say. They are in their 70's. Corteling was a car driver and he said he did very well at one time. He worked for Mr Jackson but when they left (the country) he could not get another job.

Q What happened to his children?

A One is married and living in Malwatugoda. He has a large family, so we cannot do anything for him.

Q Are they married to Sinhalese?

A Yes, Sinhalese.

Q The Burghers, what sort of houses do they live in?

A Well now Mrs Colomb has a place put up by her husband free but the others up any way.

Q Do a lot of them live on verandahs and in the open?

A Yes.

Q Do they have beds?

A No. They sleep on mats and they don't even have a change of clothes. Tina Hingert goes to school and has only the school clothes on her back. When she returns from school, she immediately washes the uniform and wears it again the 'next day. I have been able to get shoes and a uniform for her. They come to see me on Sunday mornings and the measure and fit the children as best I can.

Q Do any of our people sleep in the open?

A Mrs Bastiansz and her children slept on the beach until recently but now have a cadjan (coconut leaf) shed to sleep in.

Q Do these Burghers speak English?

A Only in the house.

Q You did say that they learn in Sinhala but can they read and write in Sinhala well?

A No. Not well, very poorly.

Q Do they read magazines or English books?

A No, no

Q Do the Burghers wear sarongs or trouser and shirt?

A Always trouser and shirt.

Q And the women?

A They are always in a frock.

Q Don't they ever wear a saree?

A No, never.

Q How much is a loaf of bread?

A Rs4.50 (13c).

Q And beef?

A Rs 80 (\$2.30) a kilo.

Q A plantain (banana)?

A Rs2.50 (7c).

Q So the Rs500 the 'Eighty Club' send each month cannot buy much?

A No. They can't eat meat.

Q Do some die?

A Yes.

Q If you had the money, how many more could you help?

A Oh hundreds...there is Mrs Modder, and Mrs Matthysz, who has a little boy...



The interview went on and on. It was all very depressing for it described life at the bottom of the pile in the crowded Third World at the end of the 20th century. There is no safety net and no pension for the old, the sick, the disabled or the unemployed.

Sinhala is the language of government and politics and only a few Burghers have gained adequate fluency to read and write the national language. There are therefore very few Burghers in the public sector or in small businesses. There are no Burghers in politics. Most Burghers are now unskilled, semi-skilled or part of the large body of the unemployed. The Central Bank Governor reported in 1991 that the Burghers were now the poorest ethnic community in Sri Lanka (DBU Journal Volume LXV).

The business sector did not abandon English and continues to use it both within the business and with all customers other than the government. On account of their relative fluency in English, Burghers tend to be employed as clerks in the private sector, in banks and in the larger commercial organisations.

The majority of the Burghers now look and live like their Sinhalese compatriots, are Christians but now Asians in an Asian country. The Burghers are assimilating rapidly and the process should be completed within the next generation. Most of the poor and lower middle-class Burghers have already adapted to the Sinhala culture and life style, speak Sinhala outside the home, and dress, eat, socialise with and marry into the other urban communities. The everyday language spoken in the home is a mixture of Sinhala and English.

8

THE EXODUS

Australia's policy on Burgher immigration

Australian government policy treated the Burghers as a mixed race. Permanent residence was governed by the 'Immigration Restriction Act of 1901' which restricted permanent settlement to Europeans. Some Dutch Burghers settled in Australia before World War II and these included the Arndt, de Vos, Brohier, Albrecht, Foenander and Toussaint families in Perth and Rev de Boer Leembruggen in Melbourne. Those early Burgher migrants have been completely absorbed and have no contact with the post-war Burgher migrants.

The post-war exodus started in 1947 with the fear of independence and grew steadily. It was fuelled, for example, by Sir John Kotalawala's comment (he later became Prime Minister), 'they were civil servants and after Independence they will be our servants', and Bandaranaike (before he became Prime Minister) 'They can burgher (bugger) off to Australia'. Others in authority were not slow to repeat these remarks and echo the sentiments.

In 1958, Prime Minister Bandaranaike, at the 50th anniversary of the Dutch Burgher Union, said:

The future will doubtless have some difficulties...for you are really a European group...though with your roots deeply sunk in the soil of the country...No interference is intended...in your customs and way of life *but...you have to prove yourselves good and true citizens.*

Australian immigration policy in the years following World War II was informal in that intending migrants only had to be British subjects, produce a photograph and have some documentation to show that they were of predominantly European descent and suitable as migrants. That situation did not last long because Australians returning by boat from Europe, and immigration officials at Fremantle, commented adversely on the Asian or dark colour of some of the immigrants. Certain Burghers were even refused entry on arrival at Fremantle. In 1950 the Australian Government advised Colombo that, in addition to a history of European descent, the applicant must be racially European, look European in appearance and habits, must be accustomed to a European way of life and of a type who would be readily absorbed into the Australian community. The official Canberra file 433/16/1 of 1 June 1950 stated:

Colour is indeed the vital factor. Prospective immigrants must be judged not against the background of Colombo but against the background of Australia.

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The criterion is that they must not appear unusually dark skinned in Australia rather than whether they are unusually light skinned in Ceylon.

This subjective assessment made it difficult for the High Commission in Colombo because Burghers varied in skin colour. The husband, the wife and the children often varied in colour so if only one was 'Asian looking' the whole family were rejected. No reasons for refusal were ever given. In April 1951, reference 50/5/5836, the Australian Government again tightened the entry requirements:

They must be 75% or more of European origin, must be fully European in outlook and upbringing and must tend to be European rather than non-European in appearance.

Official policy on Burgher migration was resolved by 1956 and thereafter there were few differences and few instructions from Canberra to the High Commissioner in Colombo. The 1964 Cabinet papers, recently made available under the '30 year rule', reveal changes in the mixed-race migration policy. The Canberra Times of 3 January 1995 reported:

Sir Hurbert (Opperman), the Minister for Immigration had success with his attempts to sort out the mess involved in the policy on admission of mixed-race persons...The mixed race policy with its need to analyse racial origin had been difficult to administer consistently and humanely...because of the sensitive field of such inquiries and assessments and by the necessity on the ground of appearance to treat differently individual members of the one family group...The mixed-race policy had applied to areas with substantial concentration of people of mixed-race such as the Burgher community of Ceylon, Anglo-Indians and Dutch Indonesians. New criteria were needed but would still be consistent with the need to maintain social homogeneity but would be based on humanitarian considerations or special qualifications or the potential contribution to Australia's economic, social and cultural progress.

The Prime Minister's Department in its notes on the submission said:

Care should be taken to emphasise that in approving the minister's proposal, it is not intended to approve a new policy, but only a new method of achieving the same policy. In other words, this is not a licence to approve the immigration of a substantially increased number of persons of mixed race.

Cabinet approved the submission but made the observation 'such changes should be made administratively (and) without public announcement'.

The change brought a quick response in Colombo where the High Commission wrote to the Department of Immigration on 29 January 1965:

Within a few days (when) it was observed that after genealogies or other evidence of racial antecedents...were no longer necessary, the word undoubtedly spread like wildfire, not only among the Burghers and other mixed race communities, but also beyond. As a result 600 application forms were sought...and the rush has not died down.

Official numbers for Burgher immigrants refer to families and in the year to 30 Jun 1957, a year for which official numbers are available, 125 landing permits were issued for 260 individuals. Ten years later, in the year to 30 June 1967, the High Commissioner reported that 1015 persons had applied to migrate and 332 had been approved

Only one in every three applications had been successful in 1967 and it is probable that of the 332 who were successful in 1967 some families had unsuccessfully applied previously.

The arrivals up to mid-1966, (6540 in number), would generally be the 'Dutch Burghers'. The arrivals after mid-1966 and before 1972, (4452 in number), would consist of Dutch Burghers, Burghers, Burghers married to Sinhalese and Tamils and other persons with special skills in demand in Australia.

Arrivals between 1947-49 and mid 1965

1947_49	167	1950	256	1951	338	1952	473
1953	393	1954	213	1955	240	1956	265
1957	260	1958	423	1959	412	1960	345
1961	307	1962	557	1963	421	1964	569
1965	400	1966	456				

Arrivals in each financial year between mid-1965 and mid-1972

1967	402	1968	663	1969	919	1970	979
1971	972	1972	817				

Using the 1967 migrants as typical of the successful/unsuccessful ratio of 1:3, it could be assumed that 33,000 applied because 11,000 were successful. This may not be correct because many Burghers were approved on the first application (especially in the early years) and some Burghers were initially rejected but approved on a subsequent application. Others applied but were repeatedly rejected until after 1971.

It is not possible to state with certainty the number of Burghers and other Sri Lankans who applied, were refused, kept reapplying but were not successful (or were successful after 1971). The author's estimate is that between 22,000 and 28,000 Ceylonese applied for permanent residence in Australia between 1957 and 1971. Only 9091 'Sri Lankan born persons' were recorded in the 1971 Australian census. The rejection rate may have been higher in the earlier years and lower in later years because Australia gradually relaxed its policy on the entry of mixed-race and non-European peoples.

The 1991 census recorded 37,263 Sri Lankans born persons in Australia, an increase of 67% on the 1986 numbers. In April 1995 the Minister of Immigration, at the launch of the book *Community Profiles, 1991 census, Sri Lankans born* book said that there were now 70,000 persons in Australia with at least one parent born in Sri Lanka. The great Burgher exodus took place prior to the early-1970s and not many Burghers migrated to Australia after 1972.

Readers who wish to know more about the migration of Ceylonese/Sri Lankan (not Burghers only) are referred to the book *Links between Sri Lanka and Australia* (Government Press, Colombo, 1988) by a former Sri Lankans High Commissioner to Australia, Dr Weerasooria. The book is a Sinhalese Sri Lankan semi-official history published when the author was the High Commissioner. As an Australian with permanent resident status and family connections to the political elite in Sri Lanka, the

author's diplomatic appointment resulted in Sri Lanka's citizenship law being amended to permit dual citizenship.

A number of Sri Lankans have subsequently availed themselves of dual citizenship. The advantages include permanent residence status in both countries; free education in the English language at primary, secondary and tertiary level in Australia, unfettered access to generous health and social welfare systems, insurance against political uncertainties in Sri Lanka and the ability to transfer the proceeds of business and asset sales from Sri Lanka to countries where Sri Lanka does not have jurisdiction.

Burghers exchanged their Ceylonese/Sri Lankan citizenship for Australian citizenship at the earliest possible opportunity. Australia was their country, they were here to stay, to assimilate, to integrate, to contribute their talents, to become Australians. Both feet were firmly planted in Australia. Weerasooria's book devotes only a small segment to Burgher migrants and their links between Sri Lanka and Australia. Burghers were the early migrants and their number and experiences deserved more expert analysis.

Academics on Burghers, migration and assimilation

The earliest academic study on the Ceylonese in Australia was by D. Cox in 1975 for the Henderson inquiry into poverty. It was published in the section *Chinese and Ceylonese in Australia*. Here are extracts:

Because of Australia's immigration policies only the Burghers, those of European ancestry, were admitted so all arrivals up to about 1967 were Burghers. At that time [1967] policies were somewhat relaxed and some non-Burghers have been arriving since then (p.122). [Among the] Ceylonese [are] a large proportion with tertiary education...this reflect[s] a narrow immigration policy...ensure[s] that the Ceylonese in Australia have excellent leadership potential and high income levels. It can be assumed that the standards attained by the Australian born will be even higher because of the emphasis on higher education....A very low proportion stated 'no religion' and [there was] fairly equal distribution between Catholic and Protestant. Most Ceylonese see themselves as belonging to one or other of the established Australian Churches and there has not been the need to develop ethnic religious institutions...Welfare needs are minimal among their people...Major difficulties have been in achieving recognition of qualifications...They have no difficulty in utilising community facilities (p. 123). Welfare needs...are likely to be less, either because of the high standard of those who arrive and their determination to succeed or because of the significant welfare role played by the family group (p. 124).

That report, the first official report on the Burgher community in Australia, gives the reasons why so many Australians think of Burghers as among their 'best' migrants. D. Storer, writing in 1985 in *Ethnic family values in Australia*, said:

In Australia today, the Burghers represent the largest Sri Lankan community, yet in their country of origin they are the smallest community. This group has chosen to emigrate because of the pressures, psychological, political and economic, encountered since independence. (p.230) Indiscriminate use of the term 'Burgher' has been a constant complaint of the community. Many believe that

it cannot be applied to Eurasians of mixed Portuguese and English descent as the term is essentially Dutch. From the Burgher point of view, they are the descendants in the male line from the original settlers of the Dutch East India Trading Company. This description stresses their legitimacy as well as proud ancestry, traced back to the respectable Dutch Burgher class of the upper and middle classes....

Few Burgher families can claim pure European descent...English is the mother tongue of the Burghers, and they have always tended to be extremely loyal to the British Empire. Burghers are Christians...which has enhanced their 'Europeanness'...Once part of the English-speaking, English-educated elite, the Burghers have, in a sense, always formed their own caste group, with the same endogamous marriage patterns of most caste groups on the island. Their identity problem has been compounded by the lack of a traditional culture of their own, their values have always been strictly Western and particularly Eng-lish...their identity problem...began at the time of the British takeover from the Dutch...instigated by the English whose traditions and life-style the Burghers came to identify and imitate.

...The British lumped the Burghers and Eurasians together in official censuses and in their thinking. This assumption, bitterly resented...tended to con-fuse their identity with that of the steadily increasing Eurasian community...From the Burgher viewpoint, 'Eurasian' meant offspring result-ing from illicit and de facto relationships...Generally speaking, the term 'Burgher' held the connotations of respectability, [an] 'Englishness' and 'elite-ness' based on an English education and subsequent entry into the privileged professions or upper levels of the army and civil services. 'Eurasian' on the other hand, came to imply lower socio-economic standing and many of the negative stereotyped images associated with mixed-blood marriages (p. 231).

The Burghers were the first community to emigrate from Sri Lanka in size-able numbers following [political] independence...they possessed a strong sense of colonialism. In many cases, they had become so completely assimi-lated with British values that life...became difficult...so they chose to settle in English-speaking countries, such as the United Kingdom and Australia...They were no longer going to enjoy the power and privilege that many had under British rule. As a totally anglicised urban minority, they were the first to suffer a loss of status and wealth...Many Western-educated Sinhalese who achieved power strongly disliked the Burghers for the airs and graces they were accused of giving themselves at the expense of the 'natives' and for the patronage they had enjoyed for so long.

Many [Burghers] believed that, in terms of skin colour (where their mixed birth was usually obvious) and place of birth, they were definitely Ceylonese, but their acceptance of this was tinged with regret at British refusal to accept them as equals. Clearly the long combination of historical forces that had favoured them for so long was at an end.

A second wave of Burgher emigration was to occur when the Western-edu-cated Sinhalese politicians were no longer dominant in the 1960s and a more ethnic nationalism emerged with an emphasis on Sinhala...language and cul-ture.

Australia provided an attractive solution, as an English-speaking Christian nation with a British heritage, where their natural talents could be utilised...Given the Western, and particularly English, influences in their back-

grounds, they experience relatively few problems in adjusting their patterns of family life to Australia. This has been facilitated by their lack of a traditional culture and their familiarity with English law...Inter-ethnic marriages with the Australian community have occurred in increasing numbers...Problems for the community do not appear to lie in the area of adjusting to an Australian life-style but perhaps are founded in how they may be received by those members of the host community, who tend to see them as 'Asian' (pp. 230-233).

Tania de Jong, of Monash University's Faculty of Arts, researched the Melbourne Burghers in 1982. Here are some extracts from her paper *Complexities of the Sri Lanka Migrants in Australia*:

Being products of Colonialism in deed and in fact, they were similar in their culture, especially in their kinship and family ties, their Christian philosophy of life, their rituals, their sport and leisure interests and their English language (p. 69).

Sri Lanka inculcated an art of hospitality that it was considered right and proper to even go so far as to feign politeness and courtesy towards strangers, however impossible they may prove to be, so when Sri Lankans encounter Australian forthrightness to the point of brashness they find it difficult to cope with. This results in tension and unhappiness as well as magnified and misconstrued self-pity. These are tied closely to conflicting values with distinct East-ern/frontier western values and connotations (p. 71).

Adapting to another system in which the scale of values is emphasised differently is a complex process for most migrants. Besides this factor, the major-ity of Sri Lankans, while being from upper or middle-class family backgrounds (lower middle-class too), on migrating to Australia find themselves largely belonging to the working class. This they find particularly hard to accept (p.81).

Anne Pereira, of La Trobe University's Department of History, interviewed fifteen Burgher women in Melbourne in 1991. This is an extract from her Honours thesis *have no regrets!* Successful Migrant women; Self-perceptions of Ceylonese Burgher women 1947-1964:

Here then were a group of women who did not feel like migrants because they fitted in so well...their outstanding feature was their well-defined sense of self, their 'Burgher' self...they fitted into the Australian way of life quite eas-ily...They didn't really feel like a migrant. Therefore success to them meant fit. I achieve more. I am not a migrant....They [these Burgher women] were successful not only because they fitted in so well as migrants but more significantly because success also meant the solution and culmination of a fundamental dilemma of identity and location faced by the Burgher ethnic community which was rooted in European colonial racial superiority and sought ultimate European identity finally finding a home, a place of belonging in Australia. Burgher ethnicity predisposed success as migrants to Australia (pp. 6-7).

Anne Pereira (pp. 9-10), quoting Michael Roberts in *People in between Volume 1*, who in turn quoted Michelle Forster's research on Burgher migrants in the late 1940s and early 1950s, indicated that a number of Burgher families who migrated in the 1940s and 1950s sought to sever their Ceylonese identity, claiming Dutch, German or French nationality (Pereira probably means ethnicity). My research has revealed

small number of early migrants (Misso, Kelly, Joseph, Crozier) who claimed that they found it difficult, almost impossible, to identify with the common Australian perception of 'Asian' in the mono-cultural Australia of the 1940s, 1950s and early 1960s. It is also borne out by the disparity of 1084, or 10%, between the 10,175 persons who arrived from Ceylon before the 1971 census and the 9091 persons who admitted, in that census, to have been born in Ceylon. It is improbable that the 10% consisted only of 'British Subject' passport holders and Ceylon citizens who had arrived in Australia between 1947 and 1971 but were dead or absent on census night. The negative perception of Asians and the drift to anarchy in Ceylon could have encouraged some Burghers to disown their Ceylon birth in the census returns.

For his doctorate in philosophy from the Australian National University Canberra, S.K.Pinnawala researched Sri Lankans in Melbourne. His thesis 'Sri Lankans in Melbourne: Factors influencing patterns of Ethnicity' (1984) divided emigrants into three categories: The first category were those who had arrived before 1965, were mainly Dutch Burghers, had an anglophile culture, a European identity and were critical of Sri Lanka. They associated in Australia only with other Dutch Burghers and left Sri Lanka because of the fear of local domination and loss of status. He called these ex-Sri Lankans 'ethnic assimilationists' (pp. 78,103-7).

Pinnawala described the other Burghers, the Sri Lankan nationals who arrived after the mid-1960s and before the early 1970s, as 'ethnic integrationists'. These ex-Sri Lankans had a westernised culture, were mainly non-Dutch Burghers but also included Sinhalese and Tamil Christians. This category of migrants were dissatisfied with the Sinhalese Buddhist revival, wished to retain their original culture with some adjustment for Australian conditions, felt sentimental and favourable towards the country of their birth, mixed with other Sri Lankans and thought of themselves as Sri Lankans in Australia (pp.79,103-4,107-10).

The third category were mainly those who migrated after 1971. Mainly Sinhalese Buddhists and Hindu Tamils, they had migrated for economic reasons, were strongly favourable towards Sri Lanka but critical of its politics (Tamils only), socialised only in their own ethnic group, had no ideology as to their future involvement in the cultural and political issues in Australia and remained Sri Lankans in a foreign land. Pinnawala makes various statements about the first group, the 'ethnic integrationist', but provides no evidence in support of his conclusions. Here are some of them:

- The Sinhalese Buddhist revival in the late 1950s and its crusade against non-Buddhists in subsequent years seems to have been the primary reason behind Sri Lankan migration since then up to the 1970s (p. 78).
- ethnic assimilationists would invariably remark that they had been kicked out of the country by 'Sinhalese Buddhist mobs who were out to get them' (p. 109).
- Non-Dutch Burghers managed to come [to Australia] during this period through falsification of evidence and favours from authorities at the right places (p. 91).
- I was told by several informants of incidents where Dutch Burghers have written to Sri Lanka asking their relations who are darker in complexion not to visit them in Australia because this would be a problem if the neighbours were to find out about them (p. 106).

Pinnawala describes the Dutch Burghers as 'ethnic assimilationists', pro-Australia and anti-Sri Lanka, with a desire to be absorbed, to become fully Australian, to assim-

ilate and to shed their Sri Lankan nationality (pp.104-107). The gulf between the English-educated, Christian, westernised Burghers and the Buddhist, Sinhala-educated, oriental anti-western Sinhalese is revealed by Dr. Pinnawala who does not and cannot appreciate or understand this attitude. He is unable to even contemplate and will never understand, how any patriotic Sri Lankan could or would wish to abandon the SOB (Sinhala, oriental Buddhist) culture which, to him, is the best in the world. His conclusions reveal the gulf between the Sinhalese Buddhists and others, a gulf that has grown wider and more uncompromising with successive Sri Lankan Government policies in the past forty years.

Pinnawala, for a researcher, appears to have been singularly uninformed and ignorant of the reasons why the Burghers had left homeland, family, friends and possessions in mid-life to start life afresh in a strange land. Religion was a factor but only an irritant. The Burghers were deprived of the right to educate their children in their mother tongue, English. It was the English speaking Ceylonese who migrated. The change from English to Sinhala, the change that gave people like Pinnawala a prestigious teaching opportunity at an University, was what made it impossible for the great majority of that generation of Burghers to retain their employment, to plan their long-term future and to educate their children in a country where they would not be discriminated against on account of language, ethnicity, religion and/or caste. These 'ethnic assimilationists' had been full citizens of Sri Lanka but had been deprived of the use of their language in the work place and in the education of their children, their schools had been taken over and they had been subjected to petty discrimination because of their small numbers, their visibility and lack of political power. These 'ethnic assimilationists' were also ashamed, distressed and angry at the intolerance, communal violence and discrimination practiced by the majority community after 1956. It is not surprising that these Burghers wished to disassociate themselves from their - former homeland for most of them thought of themselves as political refugees.

The earliest and greatest number of migrants to this country were ethnic Burghers. Pinnawala's research could have been second-hand and hearsay and could be due to difficulties in identifying Dutch Burghers, (most of whom had already melted into the majority Australian community by the mid 1980s). Pinnawala's difficulties may have been increased because English is the medium of communication in Australia. Pinnawala also stated:

It is difficult to explain this concentration of Sri Lankan immigrants in...[the - State of] Victoria. Such concentrations are not typical among immigrants in this country (p. 85).

Most first year students of sociology would be aware that when people migrate, they tend to migrate to places where they have friends and help in finding employment! They do concentrate!

The award of a Ph.D. for this research elevated Dr. Pinnaw to the level of an expert on Sri Lankans in Australia. He is the author of the segment on Sri Lankans in James Jupp's monumental work *The Australian People*. Too many post-1956 Sinhala ' Buddhist writers appear similarly uninformed and this could arise from Pinnawala's statement about his own people:

Because of this belief of Indo-Aryan origin, which is very strong among Sinhalese, they consider themselves superior to other ethnic communities, especially to Tamils (p. 41).

Pinnawala concludes the article in *The Australian People* with these words: 'Because of their proficiency in English and high level of education, Sri Lankans have achieved prominence in the professions' [in Australia]. He follows this statement with the names of four Sinhalese and two Tamils and then concludes with the statement 'Prominent Burghers included Oscar Foenander, who was a pioneer in the study of industrial relations' (p. 808).

Pinnawala's 'Oscar' was not a Burgher. He was Orwell Foenander whose Burgher father arrived in 1863, married an Australian and died in 1922. Orwell was born in Australia in 1891, married an Australian, was a Professor at Melbourne University, lived all his life in Australia and died in his 90s! How long does Pinnawala expect migrants and their children to reside in a country before losing their ethnic label and becoming 'ethnic Australians'? Orwell Foenander, like others born in Australia, was a 'dclinked' Australian and not a 'Burgher'. Could this thinking be the reason why the post-1956 dominant Sinhala culture thought of the Burghers as interlopers, foreigners and not true Sri Lankans, even though these minorities had been part of Ceylon's society for hundreds of years?

Pinnawala could have selected Dr. Dennis Bartholomeusz or Dr. David de Kretser from Monash, Dr. Michael van Langenberg from Sydney or one of the many ex-Burgher academics at other Australian Universities if he had decided to confine his one prominent Burgher to a person with a doctorate and employed at an Australian University. Children of Burghers, unlike most other ethnic Sri Lankans, do not think of themselves as Burghers and/or Sri Lankans. They are Australians.

Another Sinhalese academic, Dr. Yasmine Gooneratne, a Professor of English at Macquarie University, N.S.W., exhibits the dislike (can it be envy?) referred to earlier by D. Storer when he said:

Many Western-educated Sinhalese who achieved power strongly disliked the Burghers for the airs and graces they were accused of giving themselves at the expense of the natives and for the patronage they had enjoyed for so long.

Dr. Gooneratne in her 329 page book *A Change of Skies*, published as a work of fiction, devotes a few pages, all uncomplimentary, to her Burgher characters. Here is an example:

Mrs Wilhelmina Breudher collects blue and white Delft china...'They remind me of home' she says...and her husband is a genealogist. He has, in fact, published a book called *Australians! meet your Ancestors!* which Bharat [the Sinhalese husband of her character] got out of the Southern Cross library, hoping it would have something to say, based on the Breudher's experiences in their early years here, on the subject of Asians settling in Australia. But oddly enough, there is no mention at all of Sri Lanka (or indeed of any other Asian country) in the book. In fact, Bharat says; Mr Breudher gives the impression, quite unconsciously, of course that Australia's 'Dutch' Burgher families set sail from Amsterdam in the seventeenth century and arrived in Perth in 1947, dropping overboard in the course of their journey three whole centuries of their history in Asia. According to Bharat, the genealogies in Mr. Breudher's book are a mixture of imagination and wishful thinking. 'To credit them, you'd have to believe the Burghers could trace their family trees back to the time they lived in them'. 'Well, imagination must have been a useful thing to have in those days, machan', Dasa said. 'It was the 1940s after all—they'd have had to work

out ways to circumvent the White Australia Policy if they'd had any hopes of burghering off to Australia'. (pp. 204-6).

Dr. Gooneratne expressed her thanks 'to the journalistic writings of Carl Muller and the verse and genealogical researches of the late Benjamin Blaise' (p. 328). Apparently unwilling to expose deep-seated prejudices in a book of non-fiction, they are expressed through the mouths of stereotyped characters in a work of fiction. This is the Sinhalese, western-educated member of the 'more English than the English' Dias-Bandaranaïke family who proudly published her own family genealogy in the book *Relative Merits*; the Bandaranaïke family. Dr. Gooneratne also got it wrong when her character 'Jean' said:

Mrs Jansz in the Colombo Ladies League will be interested to know that Australia may have been discovered by one of her ancestors-Abel Tasman Jansz...isn't it curious that they arrived here, built nothing and vanished with-out a trace (p. 177).

Abel Tasman and Janszoon (son of Jansz) were two different persons. The Dutch were explorers and traders and left many traces of their visits around the coasts of this part of the world. World maps of the mid 17th century show Australia as 'New Hol-land' and the Dutch even named the islands and headlands of Groote Eylandt, Dirk Hartog; Leeuwin, Rottnest, Maatsuyker and Schouten among others. Janszoon's voy-age was in 1606 when he discovered New Guinea and the coasts of North-West Aus-tralia. That voyage was followed by Hartogszoon and Houtman in 1616 and the remarkable voyage of Tasman in 1642 which took him to Tasmania and New Zealand. The Dutch certainly did not build anything but they did not vanish without a trace.

The book *Relative Merits; the Bandaranaïke family* by Dr. Gooneratne, records how that Sinhalese family obtained and retained more benefits from the colonial rul-ers than any Burgher family—benefits that have enabled the Dias-Bandaranaïkes to perpetuate their dominance even today in post-colonial independent Sri Lanka.

Dr. Gooneratne also uses Carl Muller's humorous but fictional (Muller calls it 'factional') book *The Jam Fruit Tree* (1993) in teaching post-colonial literatures in English. It will presumably give her students the impression many educated Sinhalese would like to perpetuate about their competitors of colonial times, the Burghers. Many western-educated Sinhalese will not admit "the pioneering achievements of the Burghers in modernising Ceylon and particularly dislike the Dutch Burghers for their supposed exclusiveness and ancestral pride. These Sinhalese, the *apey anduwa* (our government, our people) variety prefer to characterise the middle-class urban Burgh-ers as oversexed extroverts with loose morals, periodically drunk and disorderly and disinterested in academic and cultural pursuits. The Burghers are portrayed as the antithesis of the shy, gentle, moral, disciplined, kind and trusting Sinhalese. Muller, a Burgher himself, has given academics and journalists the opportunity to turn fiction into fact.

Muller's book is an exaggerated account of Colombo's urban middle-class society in the early 1930s. Living in Sri Lanka, and understandingly reluctant to antagonise' today's majority community, he chose the defenceless Burghers instead. Muller's books are not literary masterpieces of Burgher English but could be portrayed as such by a person who resents Burgher 'airs and graces'. Burghers were an extroverted community with the ability to laugh at themselves. Michael Ondaatje's book *Running in the Family* is another example of Burgher humour. Sadly, other ethnic groups in Sri

Lanka did not appear to have the ability to see, write about and laugh at themselves as many Burghers do.

Chitra Ranawake, a Sinhalese journalist, reviewing Deloraine Brohier's book *Alice de Boer and the pioneer Burgher women doctors in the Sri Lanka Daily News* was more complimentary of the Burghers when she said:

The 19th century Burgher community were Sri Lanka's great modernisers, leading the way on many issues...The book...shows that Burgher women were intellectually advanced and were successful in combating conservative Victorian attitudes to women. They asserted their rights to equality in education and employment inspiring women of other ethnic groups to follow their example (p.11).

Some modern Sri Lankan academic writers, with an auditor's 20/20 hindsight, selectively ignore the achievements and magnify the faults of the colonial period. They attribute the successes of the Burghers to favouritism but that is too convenient. The Burghers were pioneers right up to the time they migrated. Post-independence academic research publications about Sri Lanka too often hark back to a glorious past and blame current problems on 'centuries of foreign domination'. This reason seems suspiciously like an excuse after fifty years of political independence, communal and class violence, ethnic hatred, economic stagnation and cultural overindulgence.

Making fun of the 'Dutch' Burghers, the only Burghers who kept a personal, private record of their attitudes and activities (in the DBU Journals), has given non-Dutch Burghers the opportunity to castigate the 'DBU Burghers' for their inter-ethnic and intra-ethnic attitudes. Socially predetermined discriminatory attitudes towards people who were different because of colour, ethnicity, class, caste and/or religious beliefs was thought of as right, proper and the norm in most parts of the world, Ceylon included, right up to the mid-20th century. While those attitudes are no longer officially or socially acceptable in the Western world, they have gained added respectability in the new Sri Lanka where they flourish publicly and privately. *The People Inbetween*. Volume 1. (Roberts, M. et al, 1989) reveals the extent of those attitudes and the socio-religious-cultural Sinhala Buddhist ethos that stigmatised Burghers as foreigners, impure, unclean, social outsiders and outcasts.

Two well researched and balanced articles on the Burghers by ethnic Sinhalese are Tissa Fernando's *The Burghers of Ceylon* (pp. 61-78) in *The Blending of Races: Marginality and Identity in World Perspective* edited by Noel. P. Gist and A.G. Dworkin (1972) and Vijaya Samaraweera's *The Evolution of a Plural Society in Sri Lanka: A Survey*. (pp. 86-119) edited by K.M. de Silva (1963).

How the Burghers adjusted and assimilated

Burghers experienced many administrative and personal difficulties in their exodus. Unlike the Anglo-Indians and even the Australians of the immediate post-war years, Burghers had always thought of Ceylon as 'home'. At no time did they ever think of some other country as 'home'. The ancestors of the Burghers had lived in Ceylon for hundreds of years, intermarried with the other communities and made Ceylon their home. Their preferred choice was to remain in Sri Lanka but after the departure of the British, and especially after the election in 1956 of a Sinhala-Buddhist government that downgraded English to the status of a foreign language and effectively closed the

education system and the public services to Burghers, the middle-class English-speaking Burghers desperately wished to exit the land of their birth.

The first hurdle to overcome was to find a country that would accept them. Many Dutch Burghers had relatives or connections with people in the United Kingdom and left for that country. Many Burghers and other Ceylonese also migrated to the U.K after 1947 until that escape route was closed in the late 1960s. It is probable that the number of Burghers who eventually settled in the UK was about a third of those who came to Australia.

The greatest number of Burgher migrants settled in Melbourne. It could be said that Melbourne is the capital city of the ex-Burgher community. In no other city and in no other country are there so many ex-Burghers and only in Melbourne do the Burghers have so many social institutions and so much interaction among themselves. This book could only have been written in Melbourne for that is where the Burghers have continued as a community.

Australia was the country most preferred by those Burghers who did not have family connections in other countries. Australia was a sport loving country (and the Burghers are a sport loving people), there were plenty of jobs, the climate was pleasant and conditions for resettling migrants were better organised than in Canada, the USA, the UK, New Zealand and South Africa. There were no quotas, the cost of transfer was less and, after the pioneers had settled in, chain migration helped later migrants assimilate. The big hurdle was the 'White Australia' policy and though many Burghers applied before the mid-1960s, few were chosen. It was a decade or two before the trickle of the 1940s and early 1950s became the flood of the mid-1960s and early 1970s. They were reluctant immigrants.

The need to leave Ceylon became desperate after the 1956 language policy and the communal riots of 1958. The difficulties of leaving and resettling are described in this part of the book. The Burghers were a middle-class people and resettlement was difficult. There was the hardship of saving funds to pay for passages, the foreign currency restrictions, the costs of resettlement, the first months and years in a strange land, the parting from loved ones, (and that included not only close relatives but also included faithful domestic helpers and Sinhalese and Tamil friends and neighbours). There was the nagging hope that the life they loved might, by some miracle, return to the Ceylon they knew and loved.

There were the physical problems of departure, the red tape and the eventual leaving, and then the arrival in a new land, the realisation that a somebody was now a nobody, every street and face was foreign, the high cost of living, the difficulties with travel, the tasteless food, the accent, the struggle to be accepted, the loneliness and the stereotyping as an 'Asian' migrant (a very negative image in the 1950s and 1960s).

The positives eventually displaced the negatives. They were the Burgher love of sport, the ability to speak English and to speak it well, the concept that money was for spending and not for saving (a Burgher tradition), that life was for living, (another Burgher tradition), paid work was a chore and necessary (but not the reason for living) and week-ends were sacred. Burghers quickly adapted.

In this Chapter more than forty male and females of different ages and social groups relate their experiences. They include housewives and mothers, teacher clerks, typists, technicians, telephonists, engineers, accountants, plantation manager policemen, bureaucrats and retirees; Burghers, Dutch Burghers and Eurasian, married and unmarried, early pioneers and later arrivals. The author has included his

experiences. The Burghers were ordinary people affected by extraordinary circumstances and coping as best they could with unknown and unexpected experiences. Men, women and children, each had to cope with their own individual problems. Each learned to cope in a different way. Most survived the uprooting from their native soil and the replanting in a foreign land. They did not always make the correct decisions. Some fared better than others. The great majority assimilated and assimilated well.

The Burghers were fortunate. They were fluent in English, they played cricket, rugby, hockey and netball and took to Aussie-rules football. They were educated, comfortable in town life, aspired to safe and steady employment rather than high income and insecurity and were gregarious...so most of them joined the State and Commonwealth Public services, the State Instrumentalities and the large commercial organisations. They remained in these jobs until they retired. Risks were what other people took. Economic security and the education of their children were the primary focus of the first generation of Burgher migrants. Entrepreneurial activities were left to the next generation, the Australian children.

Australia changed considerably between the first arrivals in 1947 and the more recent arrivals in the 1970s. Jobs became more difficult, society changed from Anglo-monocultural to multi-cultural (there are migrants from 140 countries in Australia today), and Australians became more accepting of pluralism but not necessarily more tolerant. The previous uniformity became a complex and exciting variety.

Most Burghers did not achieve their maximum potential in their chosen professions and occupations. This was mainly due to the delayed adjustment to work in Australia at ages that varied from late 30s to late 50s. Their Australian children will not have this disadvantage. Those who had least to lose in leaving Sri Lanka were relatively the most successful in acculturating the products of the consumer society. Those Burghers who had positions of authority and responsibility in their native land were the migrants who found it most difficult to adjust to Australia.

Departures and arrivals in the 1940s

Clarice and her husband were among the earliest Burgher migrants to Melbourne. They were interested in moving to Australia even before Ceylon became independent as there was considerable disquiet among Burghers at the impending changes to the Constitution. George van der Hoeven had even founded a Burgher Resettlement League. Formal migration procedures were not in place and there was no requirement for genealogies, proof of European descent, guarantee of accommodation or a promise of permanent settlement. The newly-appointed Australian Trade Commissioner, Mr Frost, told them to have their passports ready and depart quickly.

Clarice, husband Bertie, and son Tony, then twelve, boarded the Radnic, a cargo boat that had European refugees (displaced persons) and was on its way to Australia. They had no cabins and bunked down on mattresses in one of the holds. There were other Burghers leaving on the same boat. Richard Ferdinands and wife and the Sage family disembarked at Fremantle. The Kronenburg, Collette, Senn and Pereira families came further. Clarice and family were going to Sydney but the ship's captain decided that Melbourne was far enough. The luggage was unloaded, the women and children sat on the wharf, and the men marched off in search of accommodation. In due course they came back, got taxis and booked into the Victoria Hotel in Little Col-

lins street. Their room was for only one night. That was all the hotel would allow them and it was too expensive for an extended stay anyway.

That was 2 February 1948. The next day they tramped around St. Kilda and found a room. The family stayed in rented rooms for five years. Australians did not know who or what these Ceylonese were. It took a little time to be accepted but once the Aussie landladies got to know a Ceylonese they were happy to welcome others. Clarice's first landlady said 'This is the first time I have met Ceylonese. They are lovely people. My home is open to your kind of people. Please tell them all'.

Australian food was monotonous. Steak, eggs, lamb, cabbage and peas. Rice was only available for Asian students. When the Authorities knew they ate rice they were granted a permit for forty-four pounds of rice every three months. Finding work was no problem and both Clarice and her husband quickly found jobs. Clarice said that a politician said later that the Public Service was 'infested with Ceylonese'.

Tony, when I interviewed them, was in his late 50s and unemployed because technology has made his job as a printer redundant. He commented:

Those days if you walked into your Boss' office and said you were leaving, he sat you down, asked you why you wanted to leave, if you were unhappy, how could he help and so on. He did not want you to leave. Today it is very different. You don't resign. You are suddenly called and retrenched. If you walk into your Boss and say you want to leave, the Boss will point you in the direction of the Pay office and tell you to pick up your pay on the way out.

Neither Clarice nor Tony had problems concerning colour. All that the Australians knew about Ceylon was that tea came from there. Clarice knew a few early Ceylonese migrants who did not wish to admit to being from Asia (Australians had a prejudice against Asians). A Da Silva she knew said he was Brazilian and another with an English name and a Ceylon accent said he was a Canadian (but not English because there were too many English migrants in Melbourne). Australians told Clarice that they loved her accent, up and down and so clear. The Australian speech was the opposite. There were problems with the vowels. The mouth was often kept closed and the words mumbled. There was the occasion when an office friend said 'Today is pie day' (pay day) to which Clarice replied in all innocence 'Not for me. I have brought my sandwiches'.

Clarice used a political contact to move into an unfinished house that was officially complete and bought it (with the usual mortgage) when the opportunity arose. At the time they moved in there were no lights, no ceiling, no cooker and various other work had not been done. There was a chronic shortage of building materials. For many months they had to use a primus stove, candles, a pit toilet and mud was everywhere. When leaving the house, shoes had to be removed and put back on when a dry patch was reached further up the road.

Clarice says the Burghers are good at socialising and are a hospitable people. The Australians, on the contrary, do not invite friends to their homes. She likes the multicultural Australia of the 1990s and says it would have been very uninteresting if Australia had continued to be the monocultural society it was in the 1950s. Clarice has many non-Burgher friends, mainly from Italian or Greek backgrounds.

Clarice's good friends are Burghers and when she eventually dies, she expects that 99% of the people at her funeral will be Burghers. She and her son said the decision to leave Ceylon and migrate to Australia was '100% right'. They have no regrets. Clarice

said 'Thank God for my home, my peace of mind, the absence of fear, and security in my old age'.



In Ceylon, Arthur was a clerk and Adelaide a teacher. Mr Frost, the Australian Trade Commissioner, said they would have no difficulty in finding suitable jobs as Australia needed people. Photographs and genealogies had to be produced at the interview. They decided on Melbourne because they had heard that there were plenty of white-collar jobs available. They were in their early thirties with a child aged two and a half years. Arthur arrived in 1948, six months ahead of his wife and child, found a job and bought a house and when Adelaide arrived with her mother and baby they moved in. Arthur then joined the State Electricity Commission (S.E.C) because it was a government job and pensionable. Many Burghers joined the Board of Works (M.M.B.W) and the S.E.C. at that time because they were expanding and known as Safe, Easy and Comfortable places to work.

Neighbours were helpful, especially in emergencies. The butcher, greengrocer and grocer arrived weekly, and the baker daily. Milk was delivered every day in a horse-drawn cart and the bottles and money were left out overnight. They had a gas copper and an ice chest. Adelaide's mother must have experienced a sharp contrast to life in Ceylon where she had three domestic helpers and a chauffeur.

Australians took a while to understand Adelaide's accent and she had similar difficulties in understanding them. It took time to understand words like 'chook' (chicken) and 'crook' (not feeling the best) and 'hi yah goin' (how are you today). Adelaide did not have feelings of loneliness or insecurity even though she had only one Burgher friend. There were ten jobs for every female who wanted one and in due course Adelaide worked as a school librarian and found school children were not as quiet and disciplined as in Ceylon. If asked where they came from, and few got that involved, they would say they came from Ceylon and their grandparents had gone there from Europe. Arthur would never refer to 'Ceylon' as 'Sri Lanka'. Many Dutch Burgher migrants thought of Ceylon and Sri Lanka as two different countries with one evoking pleasant and the other unpleasant memories.

Adelaide has no regrets about migrating. They came for the sake of their children and it was a 100% right decision. She supports multiculturalism but wishes migrants would leave their animosities behind them when they arrive and remember they are now in Australia.



The High Commissioner painted a rosy picture about clerical jobs so Godfrey and May decided to migrate to Melbourne. They had difficulties with genealogies and May remembers the travels to Kotahena, Kandy and other places to fill in the gaps. Godfrey was eligible for a Ceylon pension and was thirty-seven when he arrived early in 1948 with May and a daughter of fifteen months. May said their second child was the first Burgher child to be born in Australia. They found lodgings in the suburb of Mentone with the relatives of an Australian they made friends with on the voyage out.

Godfrey found work in the suburb of Footscray. It was a very long trek from Mentone to Footscray so, when Godfrey heard that one of his employer's new houses were for sale, he bought one it with a loan. A few months later Godfrey sat for the

State public service examination, joined the public works department, and stayed there until he retired.

May was twenty-five when she migrated. She had worked in a blue and white uniform as a cipher clerk in the Royal Navy office in Ceylon and enjoyed the carefree well-paid job. Life in Australia was to be very different. She did not go out to work. She cooked and washed and ironed and mothered successive generations of children, grandchildren and great grandchildren. Life did become a little easier when her mother came to live with her in the 1960s and she was able to work part-time at a fast-food outlet. That ceased when her mother died. I asked May when they were first able to save and she smiled. Godfrey spent his time socialising with mates at work and after work so life was always a struggle and May took each day as it came. It was all rather different to her life as a child with a father who was a chartered accountant and in a home with many domestic helpers.

They never owned a car in Australia, did not visit or have visitors as it was not an Australian custom and any socialising was at church or at work. At the time they arrived, people knew that they came from somewhere overseas but were not interested in where it was. They accepted the situation of unmade roads, the rough neighbourhood and the pressure on public facilities caused by an expanding population.

They were fortunate that, instead of a toilet near the back fence, they had sewerage from an ex-army camp behind their house. As May looks back on events in Sri Lanka, she is satisfied. They came for the sake of their children and it was the right decision.



Lorraine's family epitomised the dilemma of many Dutch Burgher parents in the immediate post-war period. They loved Ceylon and the Burgher life style but were fearful of being swamped by militant Sinhala Buddhist nationalism and its effect on their lives and life styles. Parents were prepared to make every sacrifice to preserve their European Burgher style of living, even the ultimate sacrifice of flight.

Lorraine was under seventeen when she arrived in Melbourne. She hated leaving her friends and social group. She lived in Colpetty, had just started her first job, and was going to parties. Her parents were afraid that their daughters (there were three of them) would become romantically involved with Sinhalese or Tamils or mixed Burghers so they decided the family had to migrate. Lorraine, her mother, two sisters and a cousin arrived in 1949 while her father remained behind to work until he retired with a pension in 1954.

Lorraine was the usual conservative Burgher girl. She would not join her work-mates in visits to the pubs or to places of public entertainment. She missed the Ceylon climate, the easy open air life and the uncomplicated Burgher society. Australia in the 1940's was rougher, more dispersed and very isolated. Lorraine remembers Australia as an all-white country where a dark person would be stared at until he was out of sight.

Lorraine married an Australian and her children have married Australians. Lorraine and her sisters have minimum contact with the Burgher community and none at all with the Sri Lankan community. They have assimilated completely.



Everard had been at the Royal Navy wireless station in Negombo and Peggy had been a typist at Lord Mountbatten's South-East Asia Command Headquarters. They

decided to migrate shortly after marriage. Prospects for jobs in England were limited whereas jobs in Melbourne were plentiful. No guarantee of accommodation was necessary but proof of European descent had to be provided in addition to photographs and the all important interview. They arrived in Melbourne in 1949. Everard lost a week searching for a job similar to the one he had in Ceylon and then took a job as a telephone technician. They lived at a boarding house in St Kilda Road but had to move when Peggy fell pregnant. Boarding houses did not allow babies and as Everard had no money to buy or rent a home, or part of a home, he took a job with the State Electricity Commission at Morwell because a house was provided.

Everard and Peggy migrated because of the changes brought about by independence in 1948. They felt that they were 'neither fish, flesh nor fowl' and realised that Burghers would be too different to the other communities to assimilate in the future Ceylon. To Peggy it was important that her children should feel they belonged completely to one race, nation and culture. In Ceylon they would never have had that feeling as the Burghers had become such a mixture that there was confusion as to who they really were. Peggy was aware of this 'people-in-between' feeling because she had encountered it at Lord Mountbatten's Headquarters where there were separate toilets for 'Asians and 'Europeans' and Peggy was expected to use the toilet for Asians whereas she had always thought of herself as European.

Everyday life was very hard in Norwell. One thousand Commission (government housing) homes were being constructed in a town that had five hundred houses. All the houses looked alike. There was a pan toilet at the end of the back 'garden', no hot water service, no floor coverings, no light fittings, no footpaths, no gardens, no parks, no made roads, no fences, no drains, no public or private telephones and no trees anywhere. All the neighbours went out to work and Everard cycled five kilometres to his work. It was lonely and isolated but they were young and optimistic. Shopping was a three mile walk, later made harder by having to push two children in a pram. Peggy's second child was born in a taxi in the hospital grounds. She walked into the Bush Nursing Hospital holding up the clamp attached to her end of the umbilical cord which had just been severed.

Three years later the construction phase was halted and Everard was forced to return to Melbourne. They bought a home in an outer suburb with the help of three mortgages. A Burgher relation mortgaged her home to provide the third mortgage, the Bank provided the first mortgage and solicitors funds provided the second mortgage. Forty per cent of Everard's salary went towards repaying those mortgages and after tax and superannuation had been deducted there wasn't much left for rates, transport and food. Transport was a bicycle or a train. Annual tax refunds bought the big ticket items. The saving of the childrens' endowment monies provided the funds for the first car, but that was much later.

Everard remembers the day the bank manager, without prior warning or consultation, doubled repayments on one of the mortgages, spoke roughly and treated them as nobodies. Other Burghers will remember those occasional incidents when people in authority assumed that all new-Australians did not understand English and would better understand English if it was spoken loudly and aggressively.

Their friends were mainly family and other Burghers. They found Australians friendly but not intimate. Australians did not invite one home or become really friendly. They were friendly at work, while shopping or at church, but it did not go further. Friendships between neighbours did not continue after moving house. Peggy

found certain social customs confusing such as 'bring a plate', BYOG (bring your own grog) and 'tea' meant 'dinner'. It was a very lonely life and they missed their extended families very much.

Because they did all the housework, they became a close-knit family. It was very different to Ceylon where Peggy's mother supervised the home while the domestic helpers did the work. Her mother would watch, order, control and correct the domestics but not actually do the work. Housework was the responsibility of the domestic staff. Peggy's father married late in life and was not close to his children. They were respectful, but not close to him. Children were brought up by their ayah (nanny) and ate their meals separately. It was more satisfying in Australia where children grew up with constant parental contact, attention and love.

Peggy and Everard are not interested in Ceylon or in anything about Ceylon. After forty-five years, and with all the children married to Australians or in Europe, their interests are elsewhere.

They favour the multicultural Australia of today and hope that the majority culture will not be swamped by the variety and stridence of other ethnic influences. They worry at Australia's growing foreign debt and have a fear that Australians may end up working for foreign capitalists. They are opposed to Australia's 'win at all cost' attitude in sport and the preoccupation with drink, sport and gambling. They also disapprove the 'free lunch' attitude and the demand for rights without corresponding responsibilities.

Departures and arrivals in the 1950s

Beatrice arrived in 1952. She was twenty-six and unmarried. Her father and brother had arrived in 1949. Work in the Department of External Affairs in Ceylon had become increasingly difficult as it changed from English into Sinhalese. All of Beatrice's education had been in English and she could not read or write Sinhala. Beatrice started out in a St Kilda boarding house and later moved to a Middle Park sleep-out with its own cooking facilities.

Within a week, Beatrice found herself a job with the Commonwealth Public Service. Beatrice was amazed at the laziness of the average public servant and how they occupied the day avoiding work and responsibility. The C.E.S was the worst in this regard. All Ceylonese seemed to join the Public Service on arrival and the supervisors loved the Ceylonese because they did not complain and worked well. Burgher English was often also superior to the English of Australian clerks. Beatrice never had problems with her accent because she was careful to slow her speech. She had no feelings of insecurity and experienced no dishonesty or mistrust in her dealings with strangers. There was one unsettling period when a male clerk kept repeating 'You shouldn't be doing this job. You have taken the job of an Australian. Go back home where you came from'. The other clerks could hear but did nothing.

Beatrice married an Australian and they have no social contacts with non-family Burghers. Beatrice never refers to her old country as 'Sri Lanka'. It is 'Ceylon' a will always be 'Ceylon of happy memories'. Beatrice looks Australian and has never had anyone show interest in where she came from. She is completely satisfied with decision to migrate but has lingering doubts about the decision to come to Australia instead of going to England. She misses the wonderful tropical fruit and the fresh *seer fish* (barramundi) of Ceylon.

Beatrice favours multiculturalism because Melbourne was dull when she arrived. he Australians are now more tolerant, more cultured and the food is far more inter-sting. She wishes all migrants would forget old hatreds and tensions and remember they are Australians.



Elvera had been on a holiday to Australia in 1951 and had decided at that time that Australia would be a good country to live in. There was the problem of gaining admittance for those were the days of the 'White Australia' policy. Elvera's family did not have the docedents to prove that they were of at least 75% 'European descent' so on their return to Ceylon her mother began the process of researching their roots. She spent many months in churches and cemeteries in the Wolvendaal, Kotahena and Dematagoda areas pouring over entries in church registers, searching for tombstones and reading the inscriptions and gradually built up the family tree from past deaths, births and marriages. With the help of Mr. D.V.Altendorff the documents were even-tually completed, authenticated and submitted to the Australian authorities. Elvera continued her story:

Arriving in Australia in the early 50s was an experience. We were more fortunate than those who had migrated in the 40s because they had organised some social life. A cousin gave us accommodation for a while and then we moved into a 'Guest House'. Rice was still on ration but as the Australians were not rice eaters we had the use of their rations. When we tried to obtain rental accommodation we were often told that no pets and no children were allowed. I could understand the reluctance to have pets but what was one to do with children? Rationing eventually finished in the mid-50s. In those days there were no electric blankets, no central heating, no television and ice-chests took the place of refrigerators. Life may have been more difficult but it was safer and more fun. We did not lock our rear door and everything worked on the 'honour' system. We left our money on the kitchen table and the milkman, the ice-man, the baker and the dry-cleaner would call, leave their goods and pay them-selves. It always worked well. There were hardships but they went unnoticed. There must have been a criminal element but it did not touch our lives.

Elvera remembers being told, in her youth, that the Paternotts were French Huguenots who had arrived in Ceylon in the 1840s. Her grandfather had told her that the original arrival was a pirate with the name 'Paternought' who changed it to 'Paternott to make it more difficult for the Authorities and easier on himself and his peers! Many Australian Burghers with non anglo-saxon names and unfamiliar spellings have doing the same! Elvera continued:

The original Paternought (Paternott) married a Miss Metzeling and they had two sons and a daughter. The only Paternott I have ever spoken to, other than members of our family, was a woman who worked at Foy's in Melbourne. She said she was from Belgium and believed her family were also French Hugue-nots. In 1994, while on a holiday in Canada, I met a family who said their best friends were a family in Belgied with the name Paternott.

Dad's mother was a Nicollé. The original Nicolle had arrived in Ceylon in the early 1800s, was Flemish in origin, but with roots in Jersey. The Nicollés were a large family with four boys and four girls. One son never married, two other boys did not have sons and it was left to a single son to carry on the

name. The family continue to live in Sri Lanka although one son was attached I to the United Nations Organisation and spends half his life in Geneva and the other half in Sri Lanka.

My mother was a Marties. I think they were Portuguese originally for the family goes back some centuries in Ceylon. They were reputed to have been very rich and a street in Dematagoda was named after the family. The males liked their liquor and eventually drank their inheritance away. My Grandfather was certainly not rich. Med told me that her paternal grandmother was a Catholic as were almost all the Portuguese descendants. One night she became very ill and was not expected to survive the night so her son was sent to summon the Priest to administer the last rites. The Priest refused to come making the excuse that it was wet and he did not have a horse and cart. My great grand-mother was a tough old bird. She recovered, promptly changed her religious denomination, became an Anglican and from that day the family have been Anglicans.

Mum's mother's parents were Irish with the name Weaver. He was in the Mounted Police and arrived in Ceylon in 1885 with a wife and three children, the youngest of whom was my grandmother, then a year old. When the parents went on home leave the children were placed in the care of St. Margaret's con-vent. The parents died when on leave and no relatives ever claimed the children. They remained at St. Margaret's Convent, Polwatte and the nuns educated and cared for them.



Independence in 1948 opened up the very senior jobs, both in the public and private sectors, to qualified Ceylonese. The British who remained behind changed their previous Raj mentality and became normal courteous people. Vernon benefited from 'independence' and the white man's changed attitude. It had been very different in the previous generation. Maureen's father had been an assistant manager on a tea estate and had developed a strained heart due to climbing the hills where the tea was grown. He was not a European so his British boss refused him a horse and he had to quit his job.

The elections in 1956 resulted in a reverse form of discrimination when Burghers, who were not of the majority religion and language group, were again discriminated against. The power of the Buddhist priests and the violence resulting from the language changes made Vernon and Maureen decide that Ceylon was fast changing to their disadvantage. Maureen would have preferred to have delayed their departure because the children were very young but the curfew and communal violence of 1958, when Vernon was mobilised and Maureen was very afraid, made them decide that their departure should not be delayed.

Vernon was thirty-six and Maureen twenty-seven and they had two pre-school children. They arrived in 1958 with Maureen's parents, walked off the boat and into the vacant house in Sydney's eastern suburbs that Maureen's parents had bought on a visit a year earlier. That same afternoon the furniture arrived and Vernon's car was cleared ten days later. They brought all their possessions and £40,000 between the families. Those were the days before Ceylon brought in the increasingly stringent foreign currency controls.

Vernon was a civil engineer and within a week had six interviews and five job offers. Then, when walking past the offices of the Sydney Water Board, he enquired

wether a job was available. A selection board was assembled immediately, he was interviewed, offered a job, and accepted. Within a few months however, Vernon found the slow pace of work in the Public Service frustrating and moved to the private sector where he remained until retirement. He also found the 'she'll be right' attitude frustrating. Australians were friendly and easy to work with but were far too easy-going and poor workmanship was a problem.

Maureen soon missed her ayah very much and felt very tied down to the children, especially because they seemed to be always sick. She also had enormous difficulties living in a house with three generations of one family. Maureen had no close friends to confide in and no privacy. Her mother was very possessive and continued to grumble about life in Australia and the wonderful life she had in past years. In a few years they moved into their own home and everything got much better.

They developed firm friendships through attendance at church and learned to talk more slowly. Australians could not place their accent or reconcile Maureen's fair skin with a tropical country close to the equator. Their main social contacts in the early years were with other Burghers. In latter years their social group has expanded and, while Vernon says he has more Australian than Burgher friends, Maureen said her friends are mainly Burghers with a few good Australian friends. They say the decision to come to Australia in 1958 was correct in very respect.

They are concerned with the deteriorating moral and ethical standards in Australia and at attempts to destroy the family as the main unit of a stable society. They support multiculturalism as long as migrants are not a burden on society and modify their social customs to satisfy the majority culture. They wish the Government would deport migrants who bring their political hatreds with them. They enjoyed the 1960s anglo-monoculture but accept the changes in Australian society. Australians are more tolerant, easy-going, relaxed and with less inhibitions than Burghers but Australians are also more selfish, less family oriented and less prepared to give of their time and money to the family.



Phyllis and Mervyn arrived in Melbourne in 1959 where they had many friends. Mervyn was forty-six, Phyllis was forty, and they had no children. Genealogies were necessary but a guarantee of accommodation was not required. They brought their full quota of £10,000. They had been engaged on and off for many years but for rea-sons best known to her father he had refused to sanction marriage claiming Mervyn could not support his daughter in the manner to which she had been accustomed. Phyllis' parents had migrated earlier to Sydney and were living with her married sis-ter.

Mervyn was an assistant manager on a tea estate and was convinced that, because of his age and as he had gone into plantation management late in life, he would never be the manager of a tea or rubber plantation. He was ready to migrate and chance his future elsewhere. He found that in Australia his age and experience of tea growing were a liability so he found a temporary job in the Commonwealth public service. It was a long way away and meant a very early start and a late finish. Mervyn remained in that job, was admitted to the superannuation fund nine years later, and eventually retired.

Phyllis' father had been a senior bureaucrat and she had been used to a life of lux-ury. Her experience of paid work was minimal. In Melbourne, Phyllis enjoyed work-

ing as an accounting machine operator, her fellow workers were supportive and she only quit four years later to look after her sick mother. Three years later she was ready to work again but discovered that her age was against her and only temporary work was available.

Phyllis got herself a job on a production line. The change was startling. The people, the language and the whole atmosphere overwhelmed her. She was ready for new experiences but this change was too startling. The temporary job lasted three months and then Phyllis stayed home. Soon re-employed, but in a very noisy and dirty section, she quit after a few months and finally realised that her age was a major handicap and from then on she had only the occasional part-time job. She decided on a boarder to help pay the bills.

Phyllis remembers her suburb in the early days. There were no big shopping centres and the strip shopping centre catered to all her needs. She knew every shopkeeper and was friendly with many of them. She felt she was a person and not just one face in a sea of faces. She never had the feeling that she was cheated by anyone she had to deal with on a commercial basis. Phyllis had to learn to cook, to buy cuts of meat and to learn the names and uses of many new things that are familiar to Australians. She had brought a steel trunk with the precious curry powders, chilli powders, cinnamon, nutmeg and cloves with her. They had decided not to bring all their furniture and only brought crockery, cutlery and some antique furniture. There was only one other Burgher family in her suburb in the early days but the numbers have since grown and she feels very comfortable with them because of a shared background. Phyllis has a number of good Australian friends from her thirty-five year membership of the same church. Phyllis looked back and compared her life in Ceylon with her life in Australia:

I was well educated in that male-dominated society but there was so much we could not do. Our social position prevented us from doing manual work. We took our life for granted and did not think of ourselves as privileged. After I married Mervyn and lived on the tea plantation I would decide, with the help of the cook, what the meals were to be that day and I would then unlock the pantry. The cook would take out the rice and other foodstuffs that were necessary and I would then lock the pantry. That was my major housekeeping task. I was protected from contact with the workers. I had no contact with shopkeepers and the servants did the marketing. I spent my day in lady-like activities and there was never any rush to do anything. The difference between the Europeans and the others was sad. Our Eurasian friends, and even some of the Burghers, suffered a lot of pain from the [racist] attitudes of the Europeans. Mervyn was not ambitious but a lot of things he witnessed used to get under his skin.

Referring to Australia, Phyllis said:

I have not had much contact with highly educated older Australians. My contacts have been mostly with the working class and some seem more educated than others. I admire the dignity of labour here and never felt degraded in doing honest manual work. I do miss my domestics when I think about it which isn't often. Our generation treated their domestics much better than our parents' generation did. It is unfortunate that in Ceylon the butchers, baker

electricians and the other trades are not given the same social recognition as here.

On the future Australia, Phyllis had these comments:

Australians have been conditioned by their past. They have struggled and persevered and worked hard to achieve their goals but now they have become lazy. They have had things easy with no invasions, no serious political strife, no real poverty, an excellent climate and plenty of food and shelter. This has made them vulnerable to competition from Asia. Keating is right for Australia. He is a strong person and not afraid to do what he thinks is right. We will become a Republic and we are a part of South-East Asia and must expect more migration of South-East Asians. We will become like the USA, a polyglot of peoples.

Phyllis, a committed Christian, supports multiculturalism and includes in it every race, colour and creed. She says the decision to migrate to Australia was 'not wrong'.



Leslie had family in Melbourne and Jack had been advised that jobs were difficult to find in England so Jack, Leslie and her mother arrived in Melbourne in 1959. Jack was fifty-six and Leslie was thirty and they had two children aged five and one.

In Ceylon the household had consisted of her mother, an ayah for each child, a cook and a gardener. There was also a chauffeur for Jackie's police car. Leslie had been a teacher before marriage, had witnessed the introduction of the three language streams in the kindergarten and saw the way it made strangers of three communities that had earlier been one. She migrated to safeguard her children's educational opportunities.

Jack was a senior officer in the police and had witnessed innocent people being slaughtered in the streets in the 1958 riots. Being privy to classified information, he surmised that Ceylon would become a violent and divided society. He had enjoyed work as a policeman because it was unpredictable and full of surprises. Over the years he had pacified the warring castes and creeds in their disputes over land and property and administered rough justice when that became necessary. There were periodic fights among the villagers and these sometimes resulted in stabbings, fights and murders. Jack, as a Burgher, had an advantage because Burghers were seen as outsiders, neutral, impartial and not susceptible to bribes.

Jack's subordinates would have been horrified at his work. Jack kept being told he was over qualified wherever he applied for a job. After much trying, he found a job in Port Melbourne packing soap-powders. He would get out of bed at 4.30 a.m. and take the tram to work. The foul language and the rough behaviour depressed him. He moved to a minor job in the public service, then became a security guard, then worked in a hat factory and finally collected trolleys at a Safeway supermarket. Jack continued working until he was in his eighties. He was the old fashioned Burgher husband who believed the man should be the breadwinner and it was his duty, and his alone, to provide for his family. He considered it a personal shame if his wife had to work. Jack was always a welcome guest because he could tell tales of his experiences in the police, hunting, fishing, outstation life, politicians, planters, villagers and village life. He remained interested in new experiences and travelled extensively around Aus-tralia by any and every means that became available. He usually had only a map and a backpack for company and made friends while he travelled.

Leslie quickly found full-time teaching work and only resigned when her mother grew too old to manage the home. She then had a number of part-time jobs working from home and made sure she was home when the children returned from school. She was happy to do any kind of work and that included letter-drops and cleaning. Leslie realised that if her domestic staff in Ceylon knew the type of work she was doing in Australia they would be horrified. There was a dignity in manual labour here that was unacceptable in Ceylon because manual labour was not supposed to be part of educated middle-class life. In her first week as a teacher, Leslie shed tears because of the pupils' insolence and naughtiness. It was so different to Ceylon where teachers were treated with reverence. She soon learned to assert her authority and then it became easier. She was shocked at the standard of English in Australian schools when compared to Colombo schools.

They built a house in Waltham, an outer suburb. Their builder was honest, became a friend and even allowed them to live in the house rent free until their loan came through. They had no car, trains were few and far between, and they did a lot of walking. There were no difficulties with shopkeepers or neighbours, all of whom were kind and helpful. Neighbours even helped with concreting, carpentry and landscaping. They felt part of the community, experienced no discrimination and Australians seemed to love their accent with its musical up and down lilt.

There were differences of course. In Ceylon they socialised with an interesting, well-read and educated group of people and discussed a variety of topics. Here the conversation was mostly about the price of vegetables, family squabbles, and the everyday hassles of food, clothes and school. People here did not seem to know or care about the world away from the suburb. Homes were small and very different to the large homes with spacious gardens to which they had been accustomed. Leslie's sister, who lived in Ashburton, told her not to build in Eltham because people got lost there! People in Ceylon seemed to work harder and take more pride in their work but here they seemed to do only what was absolutely necessary and the Australians seemed to work better when working for themselves. Leslie never considered a business of her own because that was not the Burgher tradition. Burghers in Ceylon did not go in business. Business was left to the Tamils, Indians and Muslims.

Leslie was glad that independence came to Ceylon in 1948 because she and Jack had experienced examples of the misplaced British attitude of superiority. The elections in 1956 changed life for the Burghers and they had to leave if they wished to continue to speak English, be Christians and maintain their European way of life. Leslie said:

We lived in an era that has gone for ever for us and for them. I am glad that I was part of that era and experienced it. In Sri Lanka today there is no peace and so much violence. I have great sorrow because I find both Sinhalese and Tamils charming people. At every level, and in the humblest homes, people were friendly, gentle, kind and hospitable. They were an easy going and lovely people and I loved them. I also have to say that our parents generation were bigoted in regard to race, colour and religion. Australia will continue a wonderful country, if its people do not ruin it. The Aussies don't know how lucky they are. I came here to achieve a happy, stable environment in which to bring up my children and that is what I have so I can say that our decision to migrate here was 100% right. I don't regret losing the life we had there. We adapted to life here and found it fulfilling and rewarding. Multiculturalism is good for Australia which

was stodgy and its food and cultural activities stifling. The presence of migrants from every land has made Australia an exciting place. The acceptance of Aborigines has improved and past wrongs are being righted.

Departures and arrivals in the 1960s (including the UK)

Edgar decided to migrate because his employer, the government railways, decreed in 1959 that he had to read, write and speak the Sinhala language, pass examinations and would get no more promotions until he had done so. He and his wife decided to migrate instead. They only brought their foreign currency allowance of £400.

Edgar and Carol were thirty-one and twenty-six in 1962 and had no children. Edgar had a university degree and was a professional civil engineer. Australia had a credit squeeze on at that time and he could not find work for over two months. He then took a teaching job and eventually found the right professional job in local gov-ernment where he remained until retirement thirty years later. Carol had been a pri-mary school teacher and found work on the production line in a factory. Edgar's parents were allowed entry in 1966 on the condition that their son would support them for the first ten years so Carol gave up her job to have a baby and to manage a home that now had three generations living in it.

Edgar found that the chief difference in engineering work was that in Ceylon a hundred men with picks and shovels would shift earth while in Australia the job would be done by one bulldozer and a driver. Engineers were equally conscientious in both countries.

Edgar and Carol said they could easily have gone back. They were lonely and unhappy. The right job then arrived, Edgar found he was accepted at work by his peers and had an excellent boss who treated him like a son and a friend. Within three years they were happy and settled. The loneliness, insecurity and unhappiness van-ished and with both working they saved money. The arrival of their daughter com-pleted the successful resettlement process.

During the 'White Australia' period they had difficulties explaining who they were and where they came from. Other family members arrived later as part of the chain migration process but two sisters were rejected and migrated to New Zealand instead.

They have a few good Australian friends from work, church and family and their daughter married an Australian. They have no regrets about leaving Ceylon. They regret they did not migrate to Britain because Burghers were comfortable with Eng-lish customs and institutions and the British were familiar with people from their col-onies. Australian social attitudes on colour and ethnicity have changed considerably since 1962 but Edgar clearly remembers Labour leader and former Immigration Min-ister Caldwell's remark about the Asians when he said 'They live on the smell of an oily rag and breed like flies'. This was untrue in both respects as regards the Burghers. Edgar takes satisfaction in the thought that Caldwell's family later married into the Burgher community.



The original ancestor of Justin (Joe) Ebert was George Godfried Ebert. He arrived in Ceylon in 1720 from Brandenburg in Germany to work for the V.O.C. in the rapidly expanding spice market and married Rebecca Hulo. Joe Ebert became an expert in

marine law, passionately interested in photography and recognised internationally for both portrait and pictorial photography. He became an influential layman in the Catholic church and Chief Appraiser in the Ceylon Customs. His wife Mona (Mon-ica), had a dress-making school in Colombo. Joe had observed that since the end of British rule a definite prejudice against the Burghers had developed with regard to education, religion and employment. There was general envy at the successes of the Burghers and a strong desire to change the rules so that the Burghers would be disad-vantaged and handicapped. Late in 1961 the Ebert family decided that they had had enough, severed their 250 year connection with Ceylon and sailed to the UK.

In London, Joe worked with an Import and Export organisation. Their daughter Margot developed a career managing a fashion boutique. Margot's husband Sinclair Schokman was a produce broker and travelled abroad extensively. In due course they bought a complex of holiday bungalows and moved to Cornwall to manage them.

Rawdon, their eldest son, had been at St. Peter's College, Aquinas University and in charge of quality control at Ceylon Tobacco Co. He joined Unilever in U.K., obtained a diploma in meat sciences and eventually managed a work-force of 300 per-sons. Rawdon's son, Martin, graduated with an honours degree in engineering from Cambridge, was a double 'blue' in golf and captained Cambridge on a tour to the U.S.A. His ambition was to develop a career in golf course design and he has realised that ambition, successfully designing golf courses near Kandy, in Britain, Northern Ireland and Holland. Martin married a Spanish lawyer, Ana Alonso Pelayo, and they live in West Sussex.

Michael, the younger son, joined the retail chain of Debenhams and eighteen months later was deputy store manager. At 29 years of age, he was their youngest Store Director. Three years later he was director of the largest store in the group. Some years later, ambition satisfied, he retired and now spends his time on the golf course. Their three children are studying business management at Aston University, reading law at Christ College Cambridge or in secondary school.

No longer do they feel discriminated against. The Eberts compete with everyone else on an equal basis. They could not have achieved this in Sri Lanka. Their neigh-bours, friends and peers do not envy their achievements as they would if they had remained in Sri Lanka. They are glad they left Ceylon.



Hillary and Mary also left Ceylon in 1962 and they too migrated to the United Kingdom because Hillary would be able to complete his professional examinations there and because family members were resident in the U.K. Hillary soon realised that though in Ceylon he had been officially classified as an engineer, he had in reality been an administrator and was not a working professional engineer.

Hillary and Mary left Ceylon because of the change from English to the Sinhala language. They could not work in that language and so there was no future for them. There was also the frightening experience when, during the ethnic and language riot in 1958, they were threatened by a mob of gun-carrying Sinhalese because they were sheltering Tamils.

The Burghers in the UK did not have the hectic social life they seem to have Melbourne. They are spread out and the weather was often not conducive to travel. The British never asked questions about their colour or where they came from, being used to people of many colours. Hilary and Mary did not have the 'chip on the shoul-

der' about colour that people who migrated to Australia in the 1950s and 1960s seem to have.

They are opposed to the entry of uneducated, difficult to assimilate, crude and aggressive ghetto-type people as migrants because their experiences in Britain suggest such people do not assimilate into mainstream society. They said that differences in colour, racial origin and creed were relatively unimportant but migrants should be sufficiently educated to meet host country standards. Intolerance and prejudice should be left behind in the old countries.



The author of this book was thirty-four and an ambitious and successful manager employed by a large multi-national company. My employer had sent me to Europe for specialised training and then Persis and I went on a continental holiday. We arrived in Marseille in mid-1958 to board ship and found a letter awaiting us. It was from Persis' father, who was a retired medical Government practitioner and administrator and now the President of The Colombo Red Cross Society. This is what the letter said:

There are terrible Dernala-Sinhala (Tamil-Sinhalese) riots. They have been the worst disturbances since the Muslim-Sinhalese riots of 1915. Royal College has been made into a camp for Tamil refugees and the Red Cross is very involved with distributing food and medicines.

I was also an Officer in the Volunteer Naval Reserve. When our ship docked in Colombo, a Naval Officer arrived on board and instructed me to report for active duty immediately. I went home, changed into uniform and four hours later was patrolling the densely populated suburbs of Colombo North in an armed jeep, a loaded pistol on my hip and ready to shoot anyone who broke the curfew, looted shops or caused any kind of disturbance. I did not know it then but my life had changed for ever. In a few years I would be leaving the land of my birth, the good life and all I loved, to start life in another country.

That was the 1958 'emergency'. In the years that followed there were strikes, language and communal riots, more emergencies, more disturbances and every time I had to go back into uniform. I loaded and unloaded ships (it was said that Ceylon lived a 'ship to mouth' existence in respect of essential foodstuffs), escorted Hindu processions through Buddhist areas, kept warring Sinhalese and Tamils apart in sensitive areas like Trincomalee and the Pettah, guarded strategic installations and helped keep the peace at increasingly frequent intervals. I was a Burgher, could act with impartiality, and confident my senior officers, who were all Ceylonese (and not Sinhalese, Tamils and Burghers), would support me. It was all part of what Prime Minister Bandaranaike called 'the age of transition'.

I had completed my accountancy examinations at just the right time to benefit from Ceylon's independence and the departure of the British rulers. The world seemed a great place and I was young, ambitious and very confident. I enjoyed my work, the authority and responsibility and the inter-action with my peers. I had interests outside work and these gave me ample scope for community involvement. I was on the Board of the governing body for my profession, on the committee of the Dutch Burgher Union, treasurer of the Dutch Reformed Churches in Ceylon, a Deacon of my local church, a Freemason, and an officer in the Volunteer Naval Reserve. I

enjoyed the responsibilities, the interaction with people and the feeling that I was part of a changing society and could influence those changes. I had not thought of himself as a Burgher, except when socialising with relations, for I was first and foremost a Ceylonese and the ethnic and religious background of my peers was of little interest to me. I worked in the City in air-conditioned comfort, lived in Colombo 7, the most desirable suburb, was a Chartered Accountant, a Chartered Secretary, a member of the Institute of Cost and Works Accountants and an associate member of the British Institute of Management. Every year on Ceylon's 'Independence Day' parade, in full uniform and with the Navy band piping and dredming, I led the Volunteer Naval Force contingent past the saluting dais on Galle Face. I would order 'eyes right' and salute the Governor General with unsheathed sword. My ancestors had been in Ceylon for over two hundred years, this was my country and my home and I was proud to call myself a 'Ceylonese'.

From 1956 onwards each day's newspaper reported some new annoyance, some change to a rule or custom that the Burghers had been used to, some major or petty proclamation that pushed the English-educated, non-Buddhist urban dwellers away from the centre and closer and closer to the margin. I began to feel that Ceylon's borders had shrunk and that I was now outside those borders and no longer welcome as a citizen. The changes were not specifically aimed at the Burghers but the Burghers were adversely affected by every change. There was not one thing I could do about it because the English-educated Burghers were a tiny minority with no political influence.

In September 1959 the Prime Minister was assassinated and I was the officer-in-charge of the Honour Guard that, in slow time and with arms reversed, escorted the funeral cortege to the dead Prime Minister's family mausoleum at Horagolla. The assassination resulted in the declaration of another state of emergency.

I did not want to leave Ceylon but by early 1960 I had decided that I had to make a new life in another country before I was much older. The decision made me unhappy. My employers had invested heavily in me and had received little back, especially because I was so frequently mobilised. I felt I would be deserting my country, family, church, profession, community and friends. Persis was happy, surrounded by family, and occupied in various social, church and community organisations. She did not lack for money, friends or the other comforts of the Colombo 7 elite. She did not want to leave. She was happy.

The assassinated Prime Minister was succeeded by an interim government that lurched from crisis to crisis. Persis' father was a member of Parliament nominated to represent Burgher interests and he was constantly under pressure while he decided what was best for the country and the Burghers. That interim government was succeeded by another that lasted only a few months.

In July 1960 Mrs. Bandaranaike, wife of the assassinated Prime Minister, was elected Prime Minister of a new government. Mrs Bandaranaike's government was a socialist left-wing coalition and planned to 'nationalise' (read expropriate) the oil companies, the banks, the insurance industry, the import and export businesses, rented houses, large houses, tea plantations and rubber plantations. The government also announced it would establish government monopolies for food distribution, transport and a host of other basic services.

All these administrative decisions were separate to the Sinhala only language policy which would ensure more jobs for Sinhalese speakers. The new policy of positive

discrimination would result in less opportunities and less jobs for the English-educated and the minority Tamils and Burghers. These minority communities had looked to the government sector for security of employment and opportunities for upward nobility but with the `Sinhala only' language policy, opportunities in the public sector would not be available to the non-Sinhala-speaking minorities. Nationalisation of the private sector would make sure that the non-Sinhala speakers would have even less opportunities in the shrinking non-government sector. The economic cake was not going to grow larger. The majority ethnic group was to receive a bigger slice and the minority ethnic groups a smaller slice of job opportunities. Social changes were placed ahead of economic improvement. It seemed a terrible waste of talent for a country that was short on economic skills but it was democracy at work. Every citi-zen had the vote and this was the majority speaking through its elected representatives.

We applied to the Australian High Commission in September 1960 and were approved the next month. Before we could leave the foreign exchange regulations were changed and our exit allowance of £10,000 was reduced to £400! The Exchange Controller next reduced our allowance to NIL because he ruled that we had already used our quota of foreign currency when we went to Europe in 1957. These administrative decisions, which kept changing, were what made me most angry for they forced me to become dishonest, an attitude encouraged by the pettiness and meanness of the new bureaucrats, sometimes former colleagues and 'friends'. They seemed determined to cause the maximum hardship and inconvenience to departing Burghers. We decided to delay our departure but the Australian High Commissioner said we should leave as early as possible. My parents had migrated some years earlier and the High Commissioner wrote:

In view of your qualifications, the amount of money you take is not important...we approve your application on the basis that your parents produce evidence that fifty pounds will be at your disposal upon arrival in Sydney.

As it turned out, he was very wrong. We decided that to minimise spending money in Australia we should take our furniture, linen, cutlery, in fact, everything. We even packed spices, garden implements and bought goods we thought we might be able to sell in Australia. At a combined auction with friends who were migrating to England we sold off everything we would not need. I remember that our surplus eighteen vases, seven coffee sets and six tea sets were sold that day! One way of life was coming to a close, another was to begin.

Mrs Bandaranaike's government was desperately short of foreign exchange and had banned the importation of motor vehicles, drugs, clothes, food, drink and various other imported items. All imports were on permits so an enormous Sinhala-speaking bureaucracy was being formed to cater for this 'public service'. Imports were to be replaced by locally manufactured goods and, in due course, many items were produced locally but the quality was often poor because many import substitutes were produced in government factories and in a monopoly market. The 1960s and 1970s were the period when communism and state enterprises were going to replace the evils of capitalism. It did not work out that way. The container for shipping our possessions was built in our garden. Everything was wrapped and stacked under the supervision of Customs officials. There were lists for the customs, the insurers, the packers, the shippers and the Australian authorities,

all laboriously hand-written. The container was finally closed, sealed, lifted by a crane and taken away. We would not see it again for more than a year. The Ceylon government certainly expected us to perform miracles on our foreign currency ship-board allowance of seven pounds!

A further complication then arose. There was an attempted *coup d'etat* by certain police, army and navy officers and I was again mobilised. When I applied to resign the Queen's Commission, the authorities replied that I could not resign while on active service and could apply when the emergency was over. After much running around and pleading with many people, I was eventually granted unofficial permission to leave with the understanding that my letter of resignation would be retained and for-warded to the Governor-General after the emergency was over. That 'emergency' lasted until May 1963 and I was fortunate to escape when I did.

The Income Tax Authorities were another hurdle. Ceylon at that time had the infamous Kaldor system of income tax, expenditure tax and wealth tax. The income tax was onerous and the expenditure tax was supposed to force people to save. I had no use for savings, which would be placed in a 'blocked Rupee Bank account' and could not be operated by a non-resident, so I decided to pay the maximum expenditure tax as if all our income and wealth had been spent. I would then, perhaps, ille-gally remit our funds overseas. Additional to these taxes was the 'wealth tax' which was 2.5% of a taxpayer's total assets, whether houses, cars, jewellery or everything else one owned. The system made the rich poorer, the poor remained poor and the bureaucracy grew larger. It was a distinct disincentive for creating wealth and employment. It was an excellent incentive for high earners to leave Ceylon. I often pondered why politicians and bureaucrats made mountains of paper as a substitute for mountains of decisions!

I clearly remember the two Tamil Income Tax assessors and their look of disbelief as they scrutinised my tax file. They could not understand how anyone earning as I did and paying so much in income tax, expenditure tax and wealth tax could give it all away and leave. Eventually I did get my 'tax clearance certificate' and this enabled us to obtain Reserve Bank approval to pay for our passages. The Tamil assessors have probably also migrated by now. It was 'an age of transition' indeed.

Further aggravation was the Sinhala-only bureaucracy of stupid and unhelpful people, their numerous rules and regulations, the permits, their abject fear of doing 'something wrong', their tactics of delay and their inability to make any decision, the crowded offices, the dusty files, the perspiration, the sweaty atmosphere, the eternal waiting and waiting only to return the next day, the relaxed air of inefficiency... What kept me going was the hope that it had to end eventually, the ship would arrive, and we would leave it all behind. Right up to the last moment I did not know if there would be some complication and I would be prevented from embarking because of some complication with my Navy Commission.

We finally left Ceylon early in 1962. All we had was seven pounds between us. Not a very large sum of money to start life in a new country. I had advanced money to a number of Burghers who wished to migrate to Australia and who did not have sufficient money. The condition of the loans was that they would be repaid in Australia in instalments. Some of those Burghers did return their loans, others returned a portion and many did not. These loans did, however, help thirty-six poor Burghers exit Ceylon.

Fremantle looked bleak and uninviting and the Customs and Immigration inspections were routine. We joined a tour of Perth and almost missed boarding the ship because we were told to re-group in 'Hoi Street' and could not find it. Much later we realised it was 'Hay Street' (and not High Street). That was our first brush with Australian English. There were to be many more.

Andrew welcomed us in Melbourne. Aged seventeen, he had arrived in 1960 on a holiday, saw the Australian girls, decided he could not leave them, applied to stay permanently, became a citizen in 1962, and was in the last Vietnam draft. I remember Andrew's girl friend had purple hair and a Beehive hair style with rolls and rolls of hair going ever higher and higher until they ended six or eight inches above her head!

In Sydney we were met by Vernon and Maureen who had guaranteed our accommodation. I had written, in advance, to say that the first thing I wished to do was to buy a new car. Vernon had some of our money, enough for a deposit, so within an hour I had bought a Ford 'Falcon' for delivery the same day. I had no job and no assets but a finance company was prepared to take the business risk that I would repay the loan with interest over time. I began to realise why Australia was pressing ahead while Ceylon was stagnating and even going backwards. Someone in Sydney was prepared to make a commercial decision that I was a good commercial risk and by that decision Australians were employed making selling and financing the sale of that car. Other Australians would book-keep the money, service and repair the car and I too would make my contribution because I would be gainfully employed.

How different to Ceylon where none of this happened, except to the very rich. The result was that cars were not made, not sold, not repaired, roads were not built, people were without work and wealth was not created. No work also meant no revenue to tax and no redistribution to the disadvantaged. A vicious circle indeed.

I did not search for work immediately and instead drove to Brisbane. We remember dinner at Taree that first night when we ordered T-bone steaks. Two huge T-bone steaks arrived with all the trimmings. We looked at those huge portions and thought we would never get through them. Not much later we had. If this was going to be the standard size meal in Australia, it was going to be rather different to the standard size meal in Ceylon. Driving in Australia was very different to driving in Ceylon. Australia is a huge country. The roads were empty and well surfaced, animals were in enclosed paddocks and drivers kept rigidly to the rules. We felt safe and relaxed and enjoyed the privacy, the green bush, golden paddocks, the sea, the beaches, the headlands and the absence of people to gawk at us.

In a subsequent trip that Christmas we left Sydney at 4 am and arrived in Brisbane, after an uneventful drive, a distance of 500 miles or 800 kilometres, at 6 pm the same day. When Persis wrote to her mother in Ceylon about the trip, her mother thought the '500' was meant to be '50' because 500 miles in one day would have been impossible in Ceylon! With the narrow curved roads, the absence of centre lines and warning signs, the stray dogs, children, chickens, bullock carts, the infamous buses and indifferent pedestrians, a day trip of 50 miles seemed much more plausible to her!

For lunch on our travels we usually enjoyed the famous Aussie pie (after we learnt to ask for it as 'poy'). Someone then told me that 'poys' were made from equal quantities of rabbit and horse or a mix of one rabbit and one horse! That made me switch to pasties! There were other misunderstandings as we wrestled to understand Australian English. When I did not understand what was said, I would say politely 'I beg

your pardon'. The reply was `Begors' (I beg yours) which I did not understand and so would reply beg your pardon'. The reply was of course Begors', and so we would go on like two roosters crowing! Everyone knows about the expression `How yer going' and the Ceylonese answer 'by bus' (or train or other). It was only a friendly Aussie greeting inquiring after one's health. There was confusion about the 'no standing', which meant 'no parking', and the 'do not walk' which meant 'do not start walking'. I heard of two Ceylonese who, when half way across a street, saw the flashing 'do not walk' sign and froze where they were in the middle of the pedestrian crossing. Traffic continued to rush past while Aussie drivers greeted them with the famous four letter word. The other common greeting that confused many was the greeting 'How yar going te die' (how are you today) and the Ceylonese answer 'I'm not going to die'.

Advertising signs were a puzzle. One large sign I passed every day said 'next to me I love BVD'. I puzzled over that for weeks until I discovered it meant 'on my chest I love to have the BVD brand singlet'. At the bus-stop was a notice love 2GB for breakfast'. I studied that for a few days and then asked Persis if we could have 2GB for breakfast. Neither of us knew what it was but decided it had to be a breakfast cereal. Persis searched the supermarket and even asked for it in her sing-song accent but to no avail. Desperate, she asked her neighbour who told her that 2GB was a radio station!

There were the other little travails. Persis thought she could not buy milk unless she handed in an empty bottle. Beef was 'beef' in Ceylon and you gratefully accepted what you were given, complete -with fat, bones, flies and offal and the butcher's thumb to charge you a bit more for a bit less. Here she had to learn the cuts and ask for 'top-side' or 'rump' or whatever. It took us some time before we realised that what was said in advertisements was not always true, was usually exaggerated and it was a case of 'buyer beware'.

A pleasure we discovered was the picnic, and the eating of food in public places. In Ceylon this was not fun because of the crowd that stood around and watched. Another discovery was the joy of water, the pool, the beach and the sea. Ceylonese did not wear beach togs unless they had perfect figures and then it was a 'sea bath' in the 'hot sun'. Here everyone of every age and with every type of figure happily dis-robed in public and enjoyed the water and the sun. I did not need an Aussie tan...that had come at birth.

The other great joy was children. Without the help of ayahs, we looked after ours and shared many happy experiences. Men, who in Ceylon would not have been seen in public with their children without a retinue of domestics in attendance, found the joys of close parenting far surpassed the joys of club life. An added bonus was the privacy of the home. No watching eyes, no keys. We could relax and be ourselves. All Burghers learned, children included, to be self-sufficient and to clean up as they went. Persis did miss the domestic help but not as much as she thought. The ability to do everything without help did surprise visitors from the old country.

When Persis' mother arrived on a visit a few years later she wanted to know why we did not `get a man to look after the garden'. Persis gave her the answer of expense to which she replied 'but the people in the opposite house have a gardener and there he is cutting the grass'. Persis looked out and there was our bare-bodied neighbour cutting the grass. Her mother assumed that the neighbour was the hired help because in Ceylon, Europeans did not go around performing physical work. It was 'not the

done thing'. The English-speaking elite followed this example and had to come to Australia to discover the joys of working with one's hands at carpentry, gardening, house painting, toy repairs and the nederous chores of keeping a house in good order. After some time, one could even relax, place one's mind in neutral, and enjoy the experience. `HOZ' friends and neighbours were wonderful in showing how it could be done. They helped and instructed. Great mates, the Hussies.

There were other major adjustments we had to make. We had arrived at the height of the 1962 credit squeeze and a job was not easy to find. I had no experience in searching for work. I applied for about forty jobs in Sydney and was called for seven interviews. At those interviews I was usually told that I was too highly qualified, did not have Australian experience, and they would 'let you know' (which they seldom did). Accountants were not the 'gods' they were in Ceylon, for that honour belonged to the medical profession. I also discovered that, while in Ceylon I had been 'a tall fair gentleman', in Australia I was 'a short dark man', or a WOG with an accent! This was the reversal of in built prejudices. It was not a pleasant experience.

Then one day I was selected for a very well-paid job through a firm of management consultants. I found the job very difficult because in Ceylon I had had many staff to fetch and carry and was in reality an administrator with few accounting or clerical skills. I had never operated an adding machine or a calculator, could not think fast in pounds, shillings and pence, and did not know Australian law or income-tax. I did not know where streets were or even the general location of suburbs. I must have appeared stupid and dim-witted to others. I lasted three months. The Big Boss sum-moned me one Friday afternoon, handed him a cheque, and told me not to come back on Monday. Then we went across to the pub, had drinks (I already knew the custom of shouting my round) and parted with the advice that I had a lot to learn about Australian business methods and should aim lower. The Boss was right but it was a harsh lesson. That was the low point of my Australian work experience but it taught me never to worry too much about unemployment or the loss of a job for another one would be around the corner if I tried hard enough.

My next job was in a small business that could not understand why they never seemed to have enough money to pay their bills. I brought their books up-to-date in two days and gave them the unpleasant news that they could not pay their bills because they had no money, were losing more money every day, and should be in liq-uidation. They did not like that but on reflection decided to make me their general manager on my accountant's salary.

That seemed unreasonable. I then had my first experience of racial discrimination when the Chairman said 'As an Indian who has newly arrived in this country you should consider yourself very fortunate to be offered this opportunity'. My other experience of racial discrimination was at the Commonwealth Employment Service when I finally decided to register for work: The clerk, an Australian of about fifty years of age, refused to register me as an accountant and said he would register me as a clerk. That man's antipathy to educated Asians was very obvious.

A couple of experiences of that kind leave a scar that never seem to heal. That attitude tended to make me aggressive and defensive. Australia was a very different country in the 1960s. Those attitudes are seldom encountered today. The prejudiced, mono-cultural society of the 1960s changed so much that in the early 1980s I was elected President of the Institute of Internal Auditors. The influence of non-British migrants has resulted in enormous changes in Australian society and social attitudes.

Australia had changed from an insular, mono-cultural society into a diverse, multi-cultural society in only twenty-five years. Ceylon, sadly, has gone in the opposite direction in the same period.

The economic situation was also very different in the 1960s. There was a shortage of many manufactured goods and it was almost impossible for a moderately managed business not to make a profit. Unfilled demand (the after-effects of the war) and the steady influx of migrants created a ready market for even shoddy goods. The 1962 work situation is exemplified by this story: A newly-arrived migrant wanted to be a panel-beater but had never done panel-beating before. He applied for an experienced panel-beater's job, was successful, and started work. He had to be fired the same after-noon. The next day he started panel-beating at another place. That boss fired him at the end of the first day. In his third job he lasted two days. He persevered and at the end of two weeks he was an experienced panel beater. It could only happen in Aus-tralia and only in the 1960s.

The adjusting to Australia took a few years but they were happy years for they were years free of the strife and uncertainty of Ceylon. We built a house, started a family and the jobs got better.



Persis' story is rather different. She was thirty-one at the time she left Ceylon. She did not want to leave and only left because she was a loyal wife, her husband was deter-mined to leave and she realised that Rodney would become increasingly unhappy if they remained in Ceylon. Persis' father had died a few months earlier, she was close to her mother, she did not have children, had excellent domestic help, was involved in many charitable and community activities, had a diploma in pianoforte, taught music, spent a lot of time entertaining and being entertained and did not lack for anything. She could not think of one good reason for leaving.

During her first two years Persis was ready to pack her bags and return home to Ceylon at any time. I did not make things easy. I was the old fashioned Burgher hus-band who would not even consider that his wife go out to work. I worked long hours and Persis was lonely, missed her domestic help (mainly for the companionship because they had become close friends), found the cooking and washing difficult, did not know what to do with herself and found there was a lot of time with nothing to do.

She realised she could not sit back and wait for things to happen and had to learn to do things for herself. She kept up a steady stream of correspondence with her mother who sent out recipes, karapincha (curry) leaves and cooking instructions and gradually Persis developed culinary skills. She discovered that food preparation could be very rewarding. Unknown to me, she took a course in typing, a friend found her a job, she became busy and was no longer lonely. I had to accept the changed situation.

Persis did not have any difficulty with her accent. Settling into the community was easy and none would believe that she was from Asia. A year later her first child was born and using the money she had saved from her job, she went home to mother. She quickly settled into the relaxed, gracious life style to which she had been accustomed with an ayah for her son and without the chores of cooking, washing, ironing and clearing up. Persis returned in eight months and a year later had a daughter. After that she was too busy to be lonely any more. I was the usual Burgher husband who only looked after the garden and the car and kept the children occupied at week-ends.

Home and family became Persis' full-time occupation. She became involved in school activities, taught music, sold Avon cosmetics, distributed advertising material and became the usual Australian mother where everything that was not screaming for attention was in arrears. There were also children's dancing and music classes, drop-ping and picking-up and homework. The usual, very average Australian suburban middle-class existence. After the children started high school, Persis worked full-time.

Persis still thinks of Ceylon as home even though she has been in Australia for more than half her life. She regrets the absence of gracious living, the lack of interest in the poor and needy and the general disinterest in others due to a lack of spare time. She thinks of Australia as a country where it is very easy to be selfish, where the softer and more gentle ways of life are missing, where people are always in a hurry, where roughness seems a virtue and where the accumulation of possessions and personal security are paramount. Persis was disappointed that, for example, in the early years many of her invitations to coffee or meals were not reciprocated and that it does not seem possible to develop the depth of friendships that were common in Ceylon. Her friends are Burghers with a few good non-Burgher friends.

Persis visualises Australia in the future as a multi-cultural society where those who strive will reap the rewards. Sadly, it is improbable that these will be the Anglo-Aus-tralians who, too often, take life for granted and are easily satisfied. The philosophy appears to be 'Today is today and the government can look after tomorrow'. Migrants, she says, should assimilate, realise they are not in their old countries and must make efforts not to be too different by, for example, wearing veils and building temples. She is sad that in Sri Lanka the different races, language and religious groups are emphasising differences rather than similarities. Persis no longer wishes to return to Ceylon, now Sri Lanka.



Neil and Eleanor, then thirty-four and thirty-two, arrived in Melbourne in 1962 where they had relatives and where, they had been told, jobs were easy to find. They had three children aged seven, five and three. Neil had been in the police and found that after 1956 it became increasingly difficult to maintain law and order. There was continual interference from politicians who kept instructing him on what he should do and what he could not do. His written reports had to be written in Sinhala, a lan-guage he could speak but could not write or read. He began to sense anger in the edu-cated Sinhalese Buddhist's attitude towards Burghers. A few of his constables who used to write their reports in English began to write their reports in Sinhala. This made him feel he was losing his authority and the respect of his subordinates for he was being marginalised. As their children were soon going to feel the impact of the language changes, they decided it was time to migrate.

It was difficult living in a small flat in a city after they had been used to a large house in the country with ayahs, domestic help, a gardener and a police chauffeur. They had arrived with three hundred pounds and, as Neil's pension in Ceylon would not be remitted until after he had taken Australian citizenship, they realised they were now poor and had to find work quickly. It took them about three years to become financially comfortable and twelve years before they were able to buy their own home.

Neil joined the Prisons Service at a youth training centre. The inmates were dirty, had bad teeth, bad personal habits, lacked discipline, were not interesting in learning

and were treated as criminals. Some months later, Neil found work as a cost clerk with a motor manufacturer. The work was simple, he went to TAFE, learned the theory of costing, remained there for twenty-five years and then retired.

Eleanor's mother arrived in 1963 and then Eleanor went out to work. The work and the supervisors were very similar to those she had worked with in Ceylon and she remained in the same job until she retired.

On a visit to Sri Lanka in the 1990s they realised that some people were antagonistic to the Burghers who had migrated. They sensed a feeling of envy coupled with the expression *ape anduwa* (this is our government).

Neil is a sport loving social person with a wide network and has many non-Burgher friends because of his interests in cricket, lodge, school and work. Australians are excellent neighbours, tend to keep to themselves, have smaller social groups and have less to talk about because of the sameness of their experiences. He is disappointed at the lack of manners, discipline, respect for public property and smaller vocabularies of the average Australian. Parents do not seem to have as much influence on their children as parents in Ceylon and peer group pressure is stronger. Their children have married into the Australian community. They have no regrets about the migration experience and are glad their children will not have to make that difficult decision.



Trevor and Inez's main reason for migrating was to give their children an English education. Trevor had been refused permanent residence twice, first when he as a bachelor and then again after they were married. Trevor was forty-three and their children were ten and twelve. From 1966 onwards no genealogies were necessary but a letter of accommodation was necessary. Trevor had mechanical engineering qualifications and twenty-five years of work experience. They arrived in Melbourne in 1966 where Inez had family.

Trevor joined the State department of public works and remained there until he retired. The first two hours at work on a Monday morning were spent discussing Saturday's football. The tea-break followed and actual work did not exceed four hours in a day. Target dates were very flexible. What was not done on one day could be put off for another day. Trevor's practical experience made the work very easy and he found he could get through a week's work in two or three days. Fellow workers did not have his practical experience and struggled to comprehend what was required. Designers made many mistakes but the inspectors in the field, with their practical experience rectified the poor quality design work. Trevor's previous practical experience as an apprentice, foreman, designer and engineer made his job easy and comfortable. It was all very different to Ceylon where he worked ten hours a day, was on continuous call but had a car and chauffeur to compensate.

They were able to bring £150 each and had to leave behind Trevor's superannuation and the proceeds from the sale of their house. They bought their house in Australia with two mortgages in a predominantly non-English-speaking area. They found they could trust people but could not save until after the children began working.

Trevor did not have a problem explaining who he was and where he came from. Most people thought he was Indian and he didn't bother to enlighten them. He knew Burghers who pretended to be something else because they were ashamed to say they came from Asia. Trevor's social life does not revolve around Burghers. He lives too far

from most old friends, is involved with his family and sport (bridge, golf and cricket), does not drink, smoke or gamble and accepts that not everyone is born equal or has equal opportunities in life. In Ceylon he had experience of English engineers who knew little, did little but had the salary packages to which he could never aspire. He knew an English railway engine driver whose only experience, prior to arriving in Ceylon, was driving a road roller! Trevor had few expectations other than for an easy life and he achieved it in Australia.

Both their children graduated before they were twenty-one and one of them even had a double degree at that age. They do not favour the entry of migrants who expect special favours, and wish migrants would not bring their hatreds with them (and here they include Sinhalese and Tamils in Australia). They ponder on the future of Australia with the murders, commercial dishonesty, violence, robberies, aimless social chatter, the drinking and the massive increase in the balance of payments deficit. As an unpaid teacher of English to non-English speaking migrants, Trevor knows about and is concerned at the widespread fraud by work-care and welfare claimants.



Ivor and Audrey, aged forty-three and forty-one, arrived in Melbourne in 1969 with their two children aged twelve and eight. They had relatives and friends in Melbourne. Ivor had a degree in economics, had been a member of the elite Ceylon Civil Service and later Managing Director of a plantation agency company employing over one hundred persons in Colombo and in excess of ten thousand workers on their tea and rubber plantations.

They had delayed their exit from Ceylon for as long as they could. Ivor enjoyed his work and the responsibilities that went with it. They had a large circle of friends of all communities and did not feel discriminated against in any way. They were concerned about the education of their children and their future prospects in a country where the dominant culture was Sinhala Buddhist. They had learnt to cope with the complexities of doing business in a country where there was a huge bureaucracy administering the controls on, food, imports, exports, funds transfers and a host of other restrictions. Power and influence were centralised in the political establishment who wielded it for the benefit of supporters only.

Ivor fell seriously sick and came close to death. He recovered and decided that the family had to migrate because, should he have died or been incapable of working, the family would have been trapped in Sri Lanka for ever. Ivor had not had much opportunity to accumulate wealth and any wealth he had could not have been taken out of Ceylon anyway. Audrey had no experience of paid employment so if the family were to migrate it would have to be soon so that the parents could re-establish themselves in Australia. Their children may not have been able to have a tertiary education in Ceylon due to the communal quotas on education that were introduced by the Government, would lose their command of the English language and would be subject to severe reductions in their opportunities. The children would have to compete in a society with major structural unemployment. Employment, such as it was, would be mainly clerical and manual and those who were not of the majority community could be discriminated against.

Ivor applied for work where his knowledge of economics and administrative experience would be relevant. His age and lack of local experience were against him. He then decided that he had no choice but to start at the bottom in some secure job

and work his way up. He sat for the State clerical examination and was placed twelfth in a field of over two hundred. This was remarkable considering his age and minimal knowledge of Australia. He remembers the first department where he had to waste his day playing table-tennis because his daily work quota, set by precedent and his peers, was completed in less than two hours.

Ivor and Audrey migrated for the sake of their children so they rented a house in an area zoned to Melbourne's most highly rated State school and settled into a quiet, uneventful routine. Work was not a challenge and Ivor, an employee who told his supervisors what they should know rather than what they wanted to hear, proceeded slowly up the grades until he reached that invisible glass ceiling that did not allow first generation Asian migrants to proceed further.

Ivor found it convenient to adapt to the Australian work ethic. His prior knowledge of English, familiarity with British institutions, the roles of government departments and the bureaucratic maze were an advantage. There were also differences. In Ceylon the written word was sacred and included correct grammar, logic and presentation. Here correspondence was mostly by form letters, telephone conversations and verbal discussions. Taking minutes was important as was the quoting of precedents and files went up and up the chain of command. Australia was a rich country and costs did not seem important. Intra-state and inter-state telephoning and travel were common. Australians were familiar with Sri Lankans in the public service and Ivor did not have to explain who he was, where he came from or what he did. There were no minor staff and he had to learn to do his own filing, calculating, making tea and waiting in a queue for typing. He signed attendance books and took his breaks at set times. There were always rules to be followed. There he had been, a very large fish in a small pool and here he was a very little fish in an ocean. He peers were often half his age. Unlike in Ceylon, where one could judge the status of an individual from his external appearance, people dressed and looked alike in Australia for it was a predominantly middle-class society. Ivor commented:

We came because it was a watershed for our community. We could either stay and be absorbed into a culture that was not ours or migrate and whatever the initial difficulties ensure that our children and their children were soon absorbed into a familiar culture and language. We could assimilate completely in one generation. I benefited from Ceylon's independence and the departure of the British because the Ceylonese elite, the English-educated 10%, started to fill those jobs. My parents' generation could not aspire to those positions. They were always in subordinate positions. They were shut out by the 'colonial glass ceiling' because they were not British. The departure of the British gave us the opportunity to take their jobs in the business and mercantile sectors.

The election of a new government in 1956 changed the dominant position of the 10% who were English educated and English speaking. We had far too big a share of the cake and the Sinhala educated had to have their fair share of that cake. We realised that the 10% could no longer reserve for them and their children the large share of the cake they had in the past. They would have to compete with the full 100% and, in a country with a large population, scanty resources and chronic unemployment, it was going to be difficult to divide resources equitably between the competing ethnic, religious and language groups.

I miss the loss of contact with former school and work friends because they are scattered in other towns and other countries. We are now in a country where all are equal, some more equal than others perhaps, but the decision to migrate was right.

Ivor said this about Australia, his adopted country:

Seventeen million people in this vast continent in a part of the world with great numbers of Indonesians, Chinese and Indo-Chinese will require the greatest possible goodwill in dealings with our Asian neighbours. In Australia we should, both in the short and long term, have English as a bonding language and that includes English as the language in the home. We should discourage pockets of communities that remain outside the general Australian community. We need a reasonable mix of people from other countries and other cultures but I don't support multi-culturalism in perpetuity as I wish all migrants to assimilate. I do not support an anglo-celtic monoculture either. We are developing our own culture, close to the earlier British culture but made up of many races and drawing on the diversity of all our citizens. I admire the forthrightness and self-confidence of the Australians and their ability to work with their hands. They face personal tragedy stoically. However, they are so used to the good things that they complain too easily, even when a train is late. This is different to the Sri Lankans who are devastated by personal tragedy, cannot fix anything with their hands but accept public incompetence stoically.

Departures and arrivals in the 1970s

Ernest and Geraldine, forty and thirty-three, were sponsored by relatives and arrived in 1971 with two children aged ten and six. Neither had serious difficulties in obtaining jobs. Ernest had been a clerk in Sri Lanka and joined the public service where he remained until he retired. Geraldine got work at an old persons' home and continues to work there.

They both became very depressed with their difficulties in the resettlement process and frequently thought of going back. The family had mumps, measles and chicken pox in the first year and there were many occasions in the years that followed when all they had was two dollars until pay day. The arrival of their parents compounded their difficulties. The first seven years were very hard. They were accustomed to difficulty because Ernest's father retired when there were still five young children at home. In Ceylon, they had no paid domestic help and did for themselves on a very limited income. The other members of Ernest's family had either migrated earlier or followed later. The family home could not be sold because Mrs Bandaranaike had promised free houses to the poor (and 99% of Sri Lankans were poor) so the one per cent who had money were not prepared to buy a house except at a give-away price. The house, when eventually sold, was used to pay for their air fares. They migrated because they could not work in Sinhala, could not teach their children Sinhala and so their children could not learn Sinhala. Ernest said that the Burghers did not benefit from any of the Sinhalese governments. There were shortages of every kind and young Burghers were discriminated against and could not get jobs because of the 'Sinhala only' policy. However, he remembers the Sinhalese with affection, their friendliness and relaxed attitude to life, whatever their circumstances. Neigh-

bours were often one's most intimate friends. It was so very different to Melbourne where people were always in a hurry and disinterested. However Australians did not probe or delve into a person's past and everyone, even neighbours, minded their own business. They were a great help when one was sick or in need of assistance. They made good acquaintances.

Their children are married to Anglo-Australians. Ernest says the Burghers make the worst business people in the world as they are not hard, mean and tough. They are disturbed at the corruption, dishonesty and criminal activities of many of the migrant groups from Asia and the divisions caused by religion and ethnicity.



Valerie and Lyle, aged thirty-four and forty-one, arrived in 1972. They did not wish to migrate and put off the decision as long as they could. The change to Sinhala, the shortages of daily necessities, the never-ending queues for every essential item and especially the adverse effect on their daughter at school forced them to make the decision.

They were clerks in Ceylon. Lyle remained without a job for three months in Australia because he was not prepared to take a job that involved physical work. He eventually joined the Public Service and remained there until he retired. Lyle had major difficulties in adjusting to his new environment and was ready to return home in the early years. Valerie was very different. She quickly found a factory job, changed two years later to another and eventually became the manager. Valerie realised that, while it was class and family background that gave one the opportunities in the old country, it was initiative, brains and hard work that ensured success in her new country and especially in the private sector.

They rented in an area zoned to a state school with a good reputation and settled down to coping with their altered circumstances. They had no car so public transport greatly reduced their social opportunities. Valerie would come home from work, drop her handbag on the table and start cooking dinner. Three and a half years later, with both working, they had saved enough for a deposit and bought their own home. Their church group and the parents of their daughter's school friends were helpful and friendly. Valerie had no feelings of insecurity or loneliness. Lyle continued to experience loneliness, the weather was depressing and public transport a burden.

Lyle says they were naive and too trusting. Australians were really acquaintances and friendships ended when the mutual interest ended. This was different to the Burghers who retained old friendships through life.

They have no regrets at leaving Sri Lanka. They have been back and feel sad for those who remained behind. Their friends are poorer and have drifted lower in the social structure. Sri Lanka hospitality remained unequalled, even when their host could not afford the magnificent meal. Lyle and Valerie realise that they would also have drifted lower if they had remained behind. The middle-class were vanishing and whilst there were a few who were very rich the vast majority were very poor. They continue to miss the tropical sunshine and even weather of Sri Lanka. Their daughter is now a medical specialist married to an Anglo-Australian medical specialist. Ethnic quotas to the universities would have made it impossible for her to have achieved a medical degree in Sri Lanka. Lyle and Valerie's migration has been vindicated. The adjustments, hardships and sacrifices were worthwhile



Mervyn was fifty-one and Bona thirty-five when they arrived in Melbourne in 1974 with three 'teenage' children. Mervyn had been Ceylon's trade representative in Sydney in the late 1950s and early 1960s. Their first mistake was to migrate to Melbourne. It was a deliberate decision so that Bona could maintain close contact with the other members of her family already resident in Melbourne. The second mistake was not to have migrated when they were younger. The third mistake was that Mervyn accepted a higher paid job (from which he was retrenched a year later), when he could have taken a less well paid, but secure, job in the Victorian public service for he had passed the entrance examination. Mervyn subsequently held a variety of jobs, in which his talents were not used and for which he was not suited, and was finally retired at sixty-five. Mervyn had migrated during an economic downturn, his age was against him, and the adjustment downwards in social and economic terms effectively ended the creative part of his working life. Mervyn said that nothing would have shifted him from Ceylon were it not for the children's future. In Sri Lanka he experienced no discrimination at work, had excellent relationships with all communities and felt he could make a contribution to the new Sri Lanka. His brother's family have remained there and are doing well. Mervyn did not realise his personal expectations and classified his own migration as a failure. The children have successfully integrated and Bona said her expectations have been realised.

Yona had not had to work before arrival in Australia. Unskilled and a female, she was fortunate in obtaining a clerical job immediately. Five years later she was retrenched but found another clerical job immediately and continued with them for another ten years. Finally retrenched in the 1989 downturn, she has not found paid work since. When she did work, she quickly adjusted to the routine of returning at 5.50 p.m, cooking a meal, dinner on the table at 7.00 p.m. and then the other chores. Only the weekends were for relaxed living.

They had arrived with the standard allowance of £150 each, (which by then was treated by the Sri Lanka government as a 'loan' of foreign currency and to be repaid even though it was their own money and not the Government's!). Life was difficult, they deliberately put off the purchase of a car until Mervyn needed one for his work and instead rented close to the children's school. As Burghers they had been conditioned not to borrow and not to lend so it was some years before they purchased a house and that was only after the children had completed their secondary schooling. Mervyn said:

It was only reasonable that after Ceylon achieved self-rule the Sinhalese, who were the majority community, should have power and positions in proportion to their numbers. The Tamils have never accepted that the pre-1956 situation will never return where the Tamils, the Burghers and the Catholics, (all of whom had power and positions disproportionate to their numbers), should give up some part of their power. Burghers accepted the situation and either adjusted or migrated voluntarily. The Tamils are being forced to accept post-1956 changes but at great cost to themselves and the country.



Monica was a Dutch Burgher who finished her education at Methodist College, Colombo and married a Tamil soon after she left school. Monica's mother found Chris charming and never did have reservations about him as a son-in-law but her

father was upset and referred to Chris as 'a native'. By using this expression, he meant that Chris was coloured, inferior, and unsuitable.

Monica's father's attitude was not uncommon. The author knew a Burgher grandmother who instructed her children do not want waggery hopper (dark in colour) grandchildren'. Another grandfather, when advised that his grand daughter wanted to marry a Sinhalese, said 'How can you do such a thing when you know that our serv-ants are Sinhalese'.

The same prejudiced attitudes prevailed in the other communities where there would have been angry, hurtful remarks such as 'If you want a flirt, you must get a Burgher skirt' which meant Burgher girls had low morals, too much freedom, and were not suitable as marriage partners. Additionally, they brought no dowry (a marriage settlement of property) for that was not the Burgher custom. To conservative Sinhalese Buddhists and Hindu Tamils; the openness and relaxed urban lifestyle of the Burghers was something they could not comprehend. Monica's father soon changed his attitude as he began to know Chris better and his intended son-in-law ceased to be 'a Tamil' and instead became a person, an individual. Similar adjustments were made by Sinhalese and Tamil parents after they became better acquainted with their Burgher sons and daughters-in-law.

Chris was a naval officer and they had a house in the Dockyard area at Trincomalee. Navy life consisted of parties, dinners, and meeting lots of nice, important people. A few years later they returned to Colombo so their sons, Christopher and Michael, could attend their father's old school. Chris next joined civilian life and sailed the seas in the merchant navy. Monica decided they should migrate to Australia but Chris was not enthusiastic. Chris knew he could find a job easily but what could Monica do? She could cook and sew and look after a family but had no experience of clerical work. She could host large parties and had even cooked for up to fifty people but that would not be much of a recommendation for a job in Australia! She loved home and cooking and did not believe in a retinue of 'servants'. She had even shocked her neighbours by getting on her hands and knees and polishing the red cement floors.

They flew out at the end of December 1976. Carnegie was quiet with few people in the streets and so very different to Colombo with its variety and noise. They lived with Monica's cousins, the Bartholomeuszs, and next rented a comfortable two bed-room flat. They immediately missed the spacious Ceylon homes and large gardens. Chris quickly found a suitable job and the boys went to the local high school where the grounds were very small compared to the spacious ovals at St. Thomas' College. The folk at the Methodist church were friendly and helpful. Monica could sew so she decided to become a machinist. She practiced for thirty minutes on Ishbel Poppenbeek's machine and found a job in an exclusive mens' wear factory where she mended the various industrial machines. Life became very hectic with both Monica and Chris working and the long days were not long enough to finish everything that had to be done. Chris became an excellent shopper, handyman and gardener and Monica did the cooking and housework. They moved into their own 70 year old timber home seven months later. Monica's mother came out from England to visit, liked it and never returned. Everybody was overjoyed to have her in the house for the house became a home during the day.

Monica decided she needed security of tenure so she joined the Commonwealth clerical service as a base grade clerk. She grew restless and decided that she had to study if she was to go higher and graduate to more interesting and rewarding jobs.

She enrolled at Chisholm Institute, often studied late into the night, and completed her Higher School Certificate. With this piece of paper, Monica next enrolled at uni-versity, continued to study regularly and late at night and five years later had her B.A. with double majors. All Monica's family were of help and she knew she could not have done it by herself.

Chris and Monica continue to lead an active social life, take on many community commitments, Monica continues to cook and they entertain regularly. The family have survived and prospered. Monica said she is sure she would never have achieved what she has achieved if she had remained in Sri Lanka. She is glad the family emigrated to Australia when they did.

The 1980s and the arrival of an older immigrant

Iris, now aged seventy-three, was sixty-two when she and Oswald arrived in 1984. They had applied to migrate in 1968 but had been refused permission. They kept re-applying and being refused on six separate occasions. Eventually a married daughter was successfully sponsored by her sister-in-law in Australia under the 'family re-union' category and arrived in 1971. This opened the entry gates and over the ensuing years the rest of the family progressively obtained permission and arrived for permanent residence in Australia.

Iris and Oswald and the last unmarried son finally arrived to live with one of their daughters. Their fares were paid by a married daughter resident in the United States. Iris and Oswald had no pension and no income and were completely dependent on their children. They cooked and baby-sat while their children went to work. They were not eligible for an Australian pension or benefit of any kind during their first ten years because a condition of their entry was that the daughter who had sponsored them would guarantee their upkeep.

The weather and the crowded, cramped living conditions were uncomfortable and Oswald found it particularly depressing. Life in the latter years of Mrs Bandaranaike's government had become chaotic with shortages of every kind and fears of confiscation and nationalisation but it also gave the urban Sri Lankans a feeling of companionship in adversity and a feeling of 'togetherness'. In Sri Lanka he could stand at the front gate and make friendly conversation with the passing crowd. Oswald was a member of an established community in Sri Lanka and found he could not transfer this to his Australian surroundings. Oswald would stand outside his gate in Melbourne in the hope of a friendly greeting but busy, preoccupied people rushed past without any sign of recognition or interest. It was often cold, wet or windy and his body had been used to warmth, sunshine and perspiration. If he stayed indoors, as he often had to, there were the children and their noisy television programs. Oswald had to spend a lot of time in his bedroom. There was little he could do to help around the house and to feel wanted and important. He spent a lot of time in the garden instead.

Iris adjusted better. She was grandma, mother, cook and used to managing a house and a family of six children. She was needed, wanted and appreciated. She was busy. A year later their pensions began to be remitted from Sri Lanka and with the bachelor son now in employment they moved into their own accommodation. Life was becoming easier. Thirty months later Oswald was placed on an invalid pension, died two months later and Iris receives a widow's pension. Iris has moved into a granny flat at the rear of another daughter's house and has once again become mother-in-law,

mother, grandmother and helper in the home while her daughter and son-in-law go to work. She stays at home to look after her grandchildren. Her social interaction is her church group. Iris misses former friends, the social interaction of Colombo where people live close together, know what everyone else is doing, and where there is a strong community feeling of belonging. Iris knows she is much better off financially in Australia but is sad when she looks back to the past and all the changes in her life. She said:

I miss my former social life and my friends of a lifetime. I feel I am a nobody, no one misses me. The material comforts are not sufficient compensation. I know I am better off financially and I have my family around me but I was too old and too set in my ways to move so late in my life.

The 1990s and the end of the previous generation

Frederick, (he was known to friends as Ceddie), had been in the Ceylon Government Railway and Enid had been a school teacher. They had both been born at the turn of the century. Their children were married and financially independent. During the war, Frederick had the honour of driving the special train that travelled non-stop from Colombo-to Kandy and back every week day when Lord Mountbatten had his South-East Asia Command headquarters in Kandy. Queen Elizabeth visited independent Ceylon in 1954 and Frederick, promoted from driver of big black steam locomotives to Inspector, was the officer-in-charge of the train that took the Royal party around. He had been honoured with a handshake and a medal from the Queen. It was a satisfying reward for years of dedicated service and Frederick and Enid therefore thought of colonial Ceylon as home, a wonderful place, and a society in which they had a position of some importance. They assumed others would be aware of this situation.

They both retired in 1955 and looked forward to a safe, secure and comfortable retirement in familiar surroundings and in the company of family and friends. They were typical middle-class Burghers of pre-war colonial Ceylon. They were products of the hey-day of the Burghers, the late 19th and early 20th centuries, when being a Burgher entitled one to a reasonable education, a steady if unexciting job, a social position, marriage and eventual retirement in a static society untroubled by violent change. Frederick was a second generation railwayman whose father had died when Frederick was eight. He married Enid and they had been socialised to accept the status-quo, that Burghers were inferior to the British, superior to certain other classes of Burghers, socially superior to most Sinhalese and Tamils and very definitely superior to the non-Christian, non-English speaking others. Their speech, social manners and social relationships reflected this social conditioning. They were Burghers, Christian, English speaking and considered themselves as 'Europeans'. In a colonial society where race, colour, class and religion were all important and where social etiquette was conditioned by tradition, language, history and culture of the rulers, they knew their place and expected every one else to know theirs.

They were surprised, shaken and completely demoralised by the victory of the Bandaranaike government in 1956 and the hate and anger shown by the Sinhala-educated Buddhists towards the English educated, the Christians and 'foreigners' among whom were included the Lanai (Burghers). The violent communal riots of 1958, when innocent, law-abiding people were tortured and killed because they were a different

ethnic group, spoke a different language and worshipped a different god, negated any hope of a safe, comfortable and dignified retirement. There were many incidents when Sinhalese, who had been courteous, helpful and respectful in the past, changed in their attitudes towards older and poorer Burghers and treated them with disrespect bordering on contempt. This situation became intolerable and Frederick and Enid decided they had no choice but to flee. They left in 1959 and arrived in Brisbane when they were both sixty years of age and when Australians were thinking of retiring from work. They did not have many assets because, like all good Burghers, had invested in their childrens' education and spent whatever was left. They had not put aside any-thing for future eventualities because Frederick knew he would have a pension when he retired.

In Brisbane, they soon began eating into their small capital as they realised that their Ceylon Government pensions would not be sufficient to live on. They had to find paid employment but this was an impossibility at their age. They then decided that they had to buy themselves work so they borrowed money and bought a 'mixed business'. With no experience, no skills and insufficient capital, they were soon working long hours to pay off the loan with nothing left over for themselves.

Three years later they gave up the struggle and walked out and two years later Frederick died. They had lost their savings and their pride. Australia had been a bitter disappointment. They thought Australia would compensate them for the disappointments of the final years in Ceylon but they had not realised that if they had to get used to a changing world it was perhaps, better to adjust to the country they knew best.

Enid lived another thirty years. She moved into a retirement home and helped in opportunity shops, civilian widows' organisations and church groups. She looked forward to a patties or a pan-roll, stringhoppers, hoppers and other Sri Lank food specialities. She missed the spicy Sri-Lankan food, old and young Burgher company, intelligent and well-read companions and she hated being dependent. It took her some time to realise that this was old age in a foreign land in a changed world. With-out friends and with little money, without servants or compatible companions to talk to and with family that too often seemed too busy except for quick visits, she had become the lonely migrant with memories of a past and no home to call her own.

Enid died in her mid-nineties. There were a hundred people at her funeral and this was unusual for someone who, in her final years, had been confined to a wheel chair. Some people were at her funeral because they were relations, others came because they were friends of her children and others were present because they remembered her as their schoolteacher, drama teacher, music teacher or sewing teacher. An Australian who was there remarked:

You Burghers amaze me. You are an astonishingly supportive community. I was most impressed at the way your community, old and young, come together, stay together and support one another in good times and in bad.

The diaspora of two Burgher families

Burgher families were often related with 'connections' marrying 'connections'. Family names re-appear in successive generations. My mother's first husband was her first cousin, My father's second wife was his brother's sister-in-law and my wife's parents

were first cousins. Marriages to close relatives were not common in my generation, the last generation of the Burghers. Our family records show marriages to:

Bolthouder, Hesse, Daniels, Marcus, Jobsz, Ebert, Poulter, Roosmalecocq, Livera, Kellar, Thiedeman, Buultjens, Demmer, Kellens Beling, Meier, van Cuylenberg, Wendt, Loos, Joseph, van Geyzel, Walters, vanden Driesen, Hepponstall, Smith, Toussaint, Newman, Lourensz, Meynert, La Brooy, Grego, Foenander, Schokman, Fretz, Perera, Andree, Brittain, Jansz, Raffel, de la Harpe, Crozier, MacQueen, Mack, Speldewinde, Rode, Brohier, Conderlag, Deutrom, Dircksze, Daniel, Ginger, Perkins, Rutnam, van Dort, Albrecht and Chapman among others. It was said that the whole Burgher community was 'inter-connected' and that was, perhaps, why families were so interested in a new member's antecedents! The author was not surprised to discover that there was a Brohier/Ferdinand marriage much earlier than his own. Isabella Ferdinand, who was born in Colombo on 14 July 1759, married in the Wolvendaal Church on 23 February 1778 John (Jean) Brohier who was born in the Island of Jersey on 6 January 1752. Exactly one hundred and eighty four years and five generations later another Ferdinands/Brohier combination arrived in Sydney to start a new life in a new country.

The author decided to follow the diaspora of the grandchildren of our grandparents and find out where they were and what had happened to them. In less than 50 years descendants of these two very average Burgher middle-class families had scattered to every part of Australia and many other parts of the world. Other Burgher families would have experienced similar one-way odysseys. A wedding, anniversary or funeral would be very different today to what it would have been fifty years ago in Colombo at our homes, churches and the final resting place, Kanatte cemetery.

The dictionary defines 'diaspora' as 'A dispersion of a people of common national origin or beliefs'. Burghers, a socially gregarious people, have had to make adjustments. Burgher children in Ceylon lived in a small, relatively uncrowded world. Cousins grew-up together, played together, met at church, birthday parties, Christmas and sporting events...and at funerals, christenings and marriages. The extended family was a close social unit. In our new homelands, cousins meet infrequently and seldom have the opportunity to become close friends. They do not live in the same suburb or attend the same schools, clubs and churches. We live in cities with millions of others and where distance is measured in time and not in kilometres.

The travel odyssey of the Burghers becomes noticeable when scanning the death, marriage and birth notices in the newsletters of the various Sri Lankan social organisations. It is especially noticeable when scanning the 'obituaries'. The name of the deceased is often followed by the names of close family members with the words 'Syd', 'S.L.', 'Can', 'Calif', 'Bris', 'Kuwait', in brackets. Chris Lawton, editor of the ACF newsletter, told me that this section is the most read...but back to my family diaspora.

My mother was an only child so I had no cousins on that side of my family. My father was the thirteenth child in a family of fourteen. In my early 'teens I realised I had a total of over forty first cousins, that number seemed more than sufficient and from then on I did not own up to second and third cousins. I continue to be faced with this problem of too many relations and 'connections'. When I first arrived in Melbourne thirty years ago, I was one of two named 'Ferdinands' in the telephone directory. Today I am one of forty-one and there are others. For example, our son has an unlisted number.

Grandpa Ferdinands died in 1908 and Grandma Henrietta became the Head of her very large family. We were all duty bound to visit her on 27th December, her birthday. The extended family arrived in rickshaws, by bus, train and tram. A very few even arrived in motor cars but the majority walked.

I remember the year when a 'group' photograph was taken. It was similar to the group photographs that were common in the early 1930s. Older readers would remember how, when a 'government servant' was about to leave an out-station town on transfer to another 'posting', his peers and subordinates used the occasion to hon-our him with a 'farewell photograph'. A copy of the photograph would appear in the Sunday Observer or Timea with a caption rather similar to: Farewell to esteemed Poat Master Mr. Emmanuel and Mrs. Savundranayagam from their devoted ataff and asso-ciatea at Anuradhapura on the occasion of their transfer to Maradankadawela. Often the names of every person in the photograph were also printed. On this occasion our photographer made us stand still, (the children were told 'not to fidget'), the uncles and aunts were placed on chairs, the older cousins stood behind them, the youngest children sat in front on the ground and the not-so-young children stood on benches at the rear. The photographer settled us, covered the camera and his face with a cloth, held one hand up high with the trigger, called out 'ready' so we stopped breathing and did not move, whipped off the lens cover and squeezed the trigger. He took one half of the picture, then readjusted his aim and repeated the process with the other half. The two halves were later joined together and made into one long photograph. Cousin Charles and I appeared at both ends of that photograph. We stood on the bench at one end and, after that half had been completed, dropped down, scampered around the back and jumped on the bench at the other end.

My formative years were spent in Borella with cousins, many of whom were about my age. We played together, fought together, went to school together, and grew up together. The first cousin to leave the nest was George Ferdinands. He became a ship's engineer and left in 1945. After wandering around the world, he met Pauline, a Cana-dian on holiday in London, married her and raised a family in Vancouver, Canada. In 1958, elder brother Maurice, wife Iona, and four children followed. Their sister Eileen married Doug Fernando and moved to Melbourne where Doug had emigrated in 1948. The son of Eileen's elder sister, Noreen, eventually migrated to England.

Cousin Druzylle, husband Sydney, and their two daughters migrated to Perth in the late 1940s. Evangeline is a psychiatrist in Perth and Noelleen is active in church and civic affairs in Melbourne. She was recently arrested in connection with a 'Grand Prix' protest at Albert Park. Richard and wife Maisie arrived in Perth in 1948. Their six children, all married to Australians, are scattered around the big state of Western Australia. Verna and Ivan Andree (we remember him as leader of the 'Millionaires Band' of bygone days), arrived in Perth in 1964 with their four children. All the chil-dren are married, one to another Burgher, Gary von Bergheim, one to a 'Dutch' Aus-tralian, and the others to Anglo-Australians. Cousin Merle and husband Eustace Conderlag arrived in Perth in 1967. Merle continued to create exotic hats until hats went out of fashion and then took to painting ceramics. Now in her 80s, she continues to fashion beautiful hand-painted plates, tea and dinner sets.

Cecil Ferdinands arrived in 1948 and, on a coach holiday, met and fell in love with Grace the daughter of an Australian dairy farmer. The three of them went on holiday to Ceylon some years later where they had difficulty adjusting to the meat, the flies, the poverty and the dirt. Grace, now a widow, has returned to live in Penola, South

Australia. Brother Brian left Ceylon in 1948 and lives in Melbourne as do his children Desiree and Trevor. Brian was the organiser of all-day picnics for the very early Burgher migrants to Melbourne. They were packed into furniture vans for the drive to the bush. Carmen and Hubert Dirckze arrived in Sydney in 1958 where Hubert became a design engineer with the government. Daughters Jill and Denise live in Sydney. Doreen Rutnam followed her sister to Sydney in 1975. Her son Brian is in the N.S.W. public service and daughters Sonia and Romaine live in Canberra. Bianca and Ben Chapman followed in 1972. Ben is a specialist anaesthetist, daughter Maryse Raneri is a housewife and Veronica is a solicitor. Ronald was the only Ferdinands who did not migrate. His widow Maureen nee Ingram remains in Sri Lanka. Their son, John, is a lecturer in mathematics at Calvin College in Michigan, USA.

Eric and Dagmar Ferdinands migrated to Brisbane in 1957. Cousin May is also in Brisbane. Christine, daughter of aunt Noel and uncle Mac, lives in England. Ian de la Harpe married Conny and left Ceylon in 1957 for what was then British North Borneo and is now Sabah. He had an interest in astronomy. They have three children, all in Sabah. Celia and husband Captain Gerry van Reyk arrived in Sydney in 1962 where he joined the Australian Army. Christopher their eldest son is a train-ing officer with the Customs department. Geoffrey, after a spell in the army, now builds houses. Paul is a freelance actor and writer of books on euthanasia and the care of H.I.V./A.I.D.S. patients. David, with a Ph.D. in pathology, is a research scientist.

Charles Speldewinde son of my favourite Aunt Mollie, with Christine and son Geoffrey, migrated to Hobart where Charles had accepted a job as a sewerage and waterworks engineer. Charles subsequently joined the National Capital Development Commission in Canberra where he was awarded an M.B.E. in 1966, the first Cey-lonese and Burgher to be so honoured. Their three sons, all married to Anglo-Aus-tralians, live in N.S.W. Geoffrey is a medical specialist, Keith is in information technology and Russell works in the Tax Office in addition to managing a 'crowd control' business. Brother Byron and wife Peggy followed in 1963. Byron went into the 'hospitality industry', eventually becoming manager of a five-star hotel in Can-berra. Peggy is in the Public Service, daughter Penny is a nurse married to a Newcas-tle solicitor. Of their sons, Tony graduated and is now back-packing, John is self-employed in Brisbane and the other two sons are in the Public Service in Canberra. Boungest brother, Wilhelm, arrived in Hobart in 1955 to complete his education. He next took on 'the white man's burden' and became a patrol officer in pre-independent Papua/New Guinea. He married Gaye Zimitat, a teacher from Ipswich in Queensland and they remain in the Public Service, one looking after Aboriginal affairs and the other in the office of the Prime Minister and Cabinet. Daughter Robyn was an army officer and then joined the Commonwealth Police. Their son Michael is in computing and banking.

Uncle Christie and Aunty Ivy Ferdinands migrated to Brisbane in 1956 where 'the weather was warmer and there were all those tropical fruits'. Daughter Christobel, husband Rex Brechman-Toussaint, and a family of five migrated with them. The chil-dren, now adults, have children and grandchildren of their own. They live in Brisbane except for Jacqueline who lives with her army husband in Hobart.. The next genera-tion, the grandchildren, are migrating...They have moved to Melbourne, Dalby, Gladstone, and the outer suburbs of Brisbane. Cousin Leslie and husband Val Albrecht arrived in Brisbane in 1956. They moved to Wodonga some years later and now live in Canberra. Val is an accountant and Leslie is in the Public Service. Daugh-

Ter Valerie is a speech pathologist, married and in Sydney. Paul, a television and electrotechnics technician, is married and lives in Albury. Randolph is an accountant with the electricity and water authority and Jeffrey is a horticulturist at the Canberra University. Like most of the others, they are married to Australians.

My step-brother's children, Doris vander Straaten and children Trudy, Mark, Paul and Alison are in Sydney as is Doris' brother Trevor Schokman, wife Ursula, and their three children. Norma, married to Canadian Barry Hyndman, lives with children Clint, Daniel and Larva in Rosebud, Victoria.

Brother Ivor and family joined us in Melbourne in the late 1970s. Both their sons are married and live in Melbourne. Johann married Barbra, a 'German' Australian but Hans decided to stick with tradition and married Honoring de Zilwa. Our son Stuart lives near Melbourne with Marijke and their children Rosalie and Maxwell. Daughter Suzanne married Mark Banfield and they live in London with their children, Thomas and Cameron. A similar pattern emerges in the Brohier family. Uncle Henry de Boer, who did not return to Ceylon after World War I, joined the Colonial Medical Service and worked in East Africa. His sister, Dr. Alice de Boer, provided a home for Charles and John, her nephews, during the years their parents were in Africa. The children lived all their lives in Africa and England and now live in Gnosall in the Midlands of England. The next generation, who have had no contact with Sri Lanka, live in various parts of the United Kingdom. The medical tradition continues with the children.

Sister Phyllis and husband Cecil Wambeek are in Melbourne, surrounded by son Keith, daughter Tamara, and their families. Erica La Brooy migrated to Adelaide. Her children have settled in Melbourne, New South Wales and North Queensland. Sister Delcia Caspersz, husband Max, and family remain in Colombo. Cousins Rose Toussitsaint, Kathleen Lourenz and husbands arrived in Melbourne in 1948. Their children, now married, live in various Melbourne suburbs in this metropolis of 3.7 million people. Sheila Speldewinde, nee Brohier, lives in Perth and her daughter Angela lives in Bunbury, W.A. Her sister, Cynthia Anthonisz, remains in Sri Lanka but her eldest daughter, Shanti, migrated to Melbourne and lives in Broadmeadows with her family.

Uncle Edwin Speldewinde was an early arrival in Melbourne and was followed in stages by son Maurice, daughter Ruth, and married daughters Anthea Helsham and Cynthia Wambeek. Cousin Johann Woutersz lives with wife Arleen in Melbourne but their three daughters, all married, are interstate or overseas. Brother Deryck and family live in Sydney. They have a big, burly policeman son and a daughter, both in Sydney. Lucien Brohier is in Melbourne where his children are also resident. Bvette Hermon is in Wellington, New Zealand and Deloraine Brohier remains in Colombo. Douglas Arndt is in Gosford, N.S.W, George is in Melbourne, Richard's widow and children are in Sydney. Frederick, a ship's engineer, married and lived in Grimsby, England.

It has been quite a diaspora. It started in 1945 "With cousin George and has not ended. Branches of this Ferdinands/Brohier family live in Hobart, Melbourne, Albury, Canberra, Nowra, Sydney, Gosford, Newcastle, Brisbane, Dalby, Gladstone, Perth, Bunbury and Penola in Australia; Wellington in New Zealand; Sabah in North Malaysia; Grimsby, Gnosall and Dulwich in the United Kingdom; Michigan in the USA; Vancouver in Canada; and in Bambalapitiya, Wellawatte and Dehiwala in Sri Lanka. They have scattered to Australia, New Zealand, Asia, Europe and North

America within a forty year period. This is probably fairly typical of the last generation of the Burghers.

Prime Minister Bandaranaike did advise the Burghers to 'burgher off to Australia'.

Would we have achieved as much if we had not taken his advice and remained in Sri Lanka? How many of our children would have been unemployed? Would some children have been forced to consider domestic service as maids and ayahs in the Middle East and Singapore? How many of the grandchildren would have been working in uninteresting, servile occupations on the fringe of the post-1956 Sri Lankan society? How would the violence, the religious fanaticism, the dirt, the noise, the poverty and the bureaucratic red-tape have affected our very visible middle-class children and their children?

HAVE THE BURGHERS ASSIMILATED?

Sri Lankan migrants in Melbourne

Most non-Sri Lankans assume that the Sri Lankans in Melbourne are one community and a homogeneous group. This confuses and sometimes irritates individual ex-Sri Lankans because they belong to many ethnic groups, many religious and language groups and vary in skin colour from black to shades of brown, olive and the white of Anglo-Australians.

A second source of misunderstanding results from Australians assuming, on casual acquaintance, that the island of Ceylon, later re-named Sri Lanka, is a part of India and Sri Lankans are Indians because of geography and some similarity in accent.

A third irritant is the Australian habit of referring to Asians as a homogenous group of people when no other continent has such a variety of peoples and cultures. Sri Lankans are from south Asia and are not South East Asians. Burghers think of themselves as descendants of Europeans.

When Sri Lanka gained its independence in 1948 there were two major social classes. About 10% were westernised, English-speaking and held positions of power and influence. The other 90% were non-English speaking; mainly rural and had no access to the power structure. The elections in 1956 brought to power a government that reversed the previous advantages enjoyed by the minority ethnic, religious and language groups in favour of the Buddhist Sinhala-speaking majority.

The first community to be marginalised were the English-speaking Burghers. Many Dutch Burghers were able to satisfy the 'White Australia' immigration policy and arrived in Australia between 1947 and 1965. Many of them soon assimilated into the Australian Anglo-Celtic community, took Australian citizenship and showed little interest in Sri Lanka or later arrivals from Sri Lanka. A relaxing of the White Australia policy in late 1965 permitted a further wave of Burgher migration. Non-Burghers who were not professionals or not married to Burghers were not allowed permanent entry, except in exceptional instances, prior to the mid 1960s. These migrants are taking longer to assimilate and are today's 'movers and shakers' in the original 'Ceylonese' organisations in Melbourne.

The repeal of the 'White Australia' policy in 1972 allowed every Sri Lankan ethnic group to settle in Australia so other, mostly English-speaking Christian Tamil and Sinhalese, migrated. The reasons varied but included the wish to escape from a strife-torn third-world country with a third-world economy to a country in the industrial-

ised first-world with an expanding first-world economy. Australia has generous social security system that supports the unemployed, the sick, the old and the disabled without discrimination on the grounds of ethnicity, religious affiliation, language or previous residence. These newer migrants were not, except for some Tamils, political refugees. They arrived in Australia for economic reasons. These economic migrants often retain their Sri Lankan citizenship or take dual citizenship, and are actively involved in the ethnic cultural organisations. Many intend to return to Sri Lanka when they have achieved their goals. They retain interests in both countries.

Attempts to form one umbrella-type organisation for all Sri Lankan migrants continue to fail because of the plural nature of society in Sri Lanka and the history of ethnic division. A few officials are attempting to convert the original 'Ceylonese' social organisations into organisations more representative of post-1972 arrivals. These attempts continue to fail because Sri Lankans in Melbourne, as in Sri Lanka, are divided by ethnicity, language, religion, class and even caste. Most Burghers are not interested in associating with non-English speaking Sri-Lankans and avoid organisations controlled by Sinhalese and Tamils. The Sri Lankan High Commission is encouraging Sri Lankan community organisations to become spokespersons for government policy and the conduit to the Australian media. Non-Sinhalese Sri-Lankan migrants do not support this one-sided presentation of events in Sri Lanka.

Burghers do not think of themselves as on the margins of Australian society. They do not see themselves, in the political sense, as Sri Lankans. They have assimilated into mainstream (Australian) society. Politically conscious Burghers are already active in the wider community. They leave the leadership of Sri Lankan ethnic organisations to those who have not integrated and who feel marginalised in the wider Australian community. Burghers have contested federal, state and municipal elections on more than one occasion and one of them, Fred van Buren, was elected to the Victorian Legislative Council.

Sri Lankan social organisations in Melbourne

J.Cramer, writing in *The American minority community* (Thos.Y.Crowell, New York 1971) had this statement in the preface to his book:

Members of minority groups have no choice about the status that is imposed upon them...Excluded from full participation in dominant institutions, minorities are always at a disadvantage. There is always the potential for conflict inherent in their relative powerlessness. They accept the rules of the game and the goals but they are rarely given the chance to play, let alone to win. Yet they continue to live, and perhaps to hope, while lacking many of the opportunities most members of the dominant group take for granted. Within their own communities, minorities more or less effectively, come to terms with the deprivation and derogation they must endure. Their accommodation is perforce a costly one, but one that permits them to retain the sense of humanity denied them in the larger society.

I am indebted to Victor Felder, the resident authority on events in Sri Lanka and historian of Sri Lankan migrant activities in Australia for his listing of Sri Lankan organisations in Melbourne. Victor maintains a store of information about Sri Lanka and

his efforts were recognised by the Sri Lankan Government with the medal and sash of the Rajana, the highest honour that can be awarded to the citizen of a foreign country.

Academic sociologists are amazed at the number of organisations that cater for the multi-ethnic ex-Sri Lankans for there are over one hundred and twenty Sri Lankan organisations in Melbourne alone. Melbourne has 60% of Burgher migrants and Australia has more ex-Burghers than any other country. The author has no idea of the number of Burghers in Melbourne today because most ex-Dutch Burghers, many Burghers and almost every one of their children and grandchildren have cut ties with the Sri Lankan community organisations and have completely integrated into main-stream Australian society.

Nineteen of these organisations cater for the 'Old Boys' of various schools, eleven for 'Old Girls' and another thirty for various interest and work-related groups such as medical practitioners, engineers, lawyers, freemasons, planters and armed forces personnel. The 'Old School' and work-related organisations are gathering places for the pre-1956 English-speaking elite of the Christian private schools. This elite take pride in their non-racial, secular, English-speaking origins. Organisations formed after the mid 1970s are generally communal and language based, have a younger membership and reflect the communal and religious divisions that convulsed Sri Lanka after the language and ethnic riots in 1958.

Twenty-seven social, but not school or work related, associations have between 400 and 1200 members each. Memberships often overlap. These organisations have dances, publish newsletters, conduct raffles, have special events and hold regular social get-togethers. Elections to the governing bodies have been keenly contested and acrimonious for this was where budding leaders staked their claims to represent the community. Interest in the 'Burgher' organisations founded in the 1960s is waning as older Burghers cease to take an active interest. There are associations for special interest groups such as religion, broadcasting, fund-raising, ethnic newspapers and language study. Sri Lankan organisations are patronised by both newly arrived migrants of all ages and long-time resident migrants now advanced in age. Younger adults are not members and tend to socialise in hotels, pubs and clubs with other young Australians. The common complaint of the migrant generation is that the Australian generation is not interested in their heritage and the old country. The answer from the young, confirmed at interviews, is that it is the parents who are Sri Lankan, and they, the younger generation, are Australian.

The Ceylon Welfare Organisation (CWO), the Australia Ceylon Fellowship (ACF), the Burgher Association (BA) and The Eighty Club now cater primarily for Burgher 'senior citizens'. The Silver Fawn Club in Brisbane and the Burgher Welfare League in Perth perform a similar role. Elderly non-Burgher, Christian ex-Sri Lankans are beginning to appear at the social functions of the original Burgher-sponsored organisations and this reflects the changing pattern of Sri Lankan migration into Australia. The change is reflected in the elections to the governing bodies.

The CWO is a friendship group that was originally formed by Burgher Catholics in the 1970s. It performs a community social role bringing together a group of people with common interests, but mainly the remnants of the Burghers. The CWO, with 1000 members, has no restrictions other than that persons should be over 65 years of age. A regular 'Day Care Centre' is held in Noble Park, a suburb central to where many Burghers live. Every fortnight about 150 elderly Sri Lankans, but mainly

Burghers because of the restrictions on age, meet, greet and socialise. Each person contributes \$2, has an excellent meal, the fellowship of friends from other suburbs in a city of almost three million people and the interest and care of a group of helpers who, since inception, have prepared the premises, cooked the meals, provided the entertainment, served the meals and cleared the hall. The CWO also holds socials and day excursions every quarter and a Christmas party attended by more than 600 members. The great majority of elderly Sri Lankans receive the Government aged pension but miss the companionship of people with similar experiences and memories. Organisations like the CWO, ACF, BA, ASLFA and ASLWG meet a very real need for companionship. Many elderly Burgher Sri Lankans join many of these organisations and benefit from the dedicated efforts of the honorary workers and management committees. The late Shelton Schokman, founder of the ASLWG (the 'Guild'), was an active worker in the ex-Sri Lankan social, religious and friendship groups in the Springvale district. When he died, close to a thousand people attended the funeral services to honour this pioneer Christian social worker.

The ACF was the first organisation in Melbourne to cater for Ceylonese migrants. It was founded in 1957 and looked after the Burgher community's social interests and re-settlement difficulties. It welcomed to its membership everyone, even Australians. The ACF was originally a homogeneous group reflecting pre-1956 Ceylonese. In its early days it celebrated the Queen's birthday but not Ceylon's Independence day. Over the years, as Dutch Burgher migration declined, membership became increasingly non-Dutch Burgher and representation on the management of the Fellowship reflected the ethnic backgrounds of its active members. Celebration of the Queen's birthday ceased and Sri Lanka's independence day took its place. The focus and emphasis has changed to reflect the current non-discriminatory Australian migration policy. The ACF continues as the premier Sri Lankan, but not Burgher, organisation. Pinnawala, in his thesis on *Sri Lankans in Melbourne: Factors influencing ethnicity*, wrote:

They, the 'ethnic assimilationists', [Pinnawala's word for Dutch Burgher migrants who arrived before 1966, intended to integrate into Australian society and become Australian] look more like Australians in appearance than the rest of Sri Lankans and their identity is European...their involvement in...associations is sporadic in nature...a form of spectator participation rather than real involvement...They are not the driving force behind these associations. One of the most important changes...was the change of ethnic composition of the Australian Ceylon Fellowship which was, until the 1970s, the bastion of the ethnic assimilationists. Because of the influence of 'ethnic integrationists' [Pinnawala's word for westernised, Christian Sinhalese, Tamil and Burgher migrants who wished to be both Sri Lankans and Australians], it had to abandon its early assimilationist ideology. Today its secretary is a Sinhalese, an ethnic integrationist, something that was not possible in the early days because 'natives' [does he mean Australians or dark-skinned Sri Lankans?] were not welcome (pp. 122, 133-134).

Members of the ACF in the 1970s would have strongly refuted Pinnawala's remarks. All migrants from Sri Lanka, whatever their ethnicity, were welcomed for they shared the same misfortunes, the same hopes.

As a general guide, the Dutch Burghers are today no longer interested in social organisations that represent all Sri Lankans and especially those who arrived after the

1970s. The original Dutch Burgher migrants, if alive, are in their sixties, seventies and eighties and their children and grandchildren have fully integrated into mainstream Australian society. Many Burghers, Sinhalese and Tamils are similarly disinterested in the, so called, 'Sri Lankan organisations' because, too often, they represent a Sinhala only Sri-Lanka. The ZZZ Multicultural Radio broadcasting service is an example of an organisation representing the Sri Lanka of today. It claims to be a Sinhala (lan-guage) community program but its news items, both in Sinhala and English, are Sri Lankan Government versions of events. Its target audience is the post 1970s Sinhala-speaking Buddhist migrant. Pinnawala, writing in *The Australian People: An Encyclopedia of the Nation*, edited by J. Jupp, stated:

Ethnic organisation has expanded with the arrival of more Sinhalese and Tamils, but much of this has been on a communal and not a Sri Lankan basis. Sri Lankan associations, with the support of the High Commission, have been founded throughout Australia, but these are largely confined to Sinhalese and non-Sri Lankan sympathisers. Burgher associations remain active in Melbourne but are patronised mainly by the older generation (p. 808).

A Burgher-focused organisation is the Eighty Club of Victoria. Its sole purpose is collecting funds for poor Burghers in Sri Lanka. This is done through subscriptions, food-fairs and socials. Collections are remitted to the DBU for distribution to Burghers and Burgher organisations in Colombo who in turn distribute it to needy 'pensioners'.

The Burgher Association of Australia is another charitable organisation supported by Burghers. It actively collects and remits monies to the R.L.Spittel (St.Nikolaas) Memorial Home for aged Burgher women and the Dr & Mrs Eric Brohier (Dutch Reformed Church) Memorial Home for aged Burgher men. The Burghers in Sri Lanka, who fifty years ago were probably the most affluent community in Ceylon, are officially classified as the poorest community in Sri Lanka today. Older Burghers in Australia are conscious of those Burghers 'who couldn't get away' because of poverty, age or ineligibility.

Two other organisations represent mainly Burgher social, cultural and resettlement interests. These are the 'Australia Sri Lanka Friendship Association' in the northern suburbs and the 'Australia Sri Lanka Welfare Guild' in the Dandenong/Oakleigh area, known colloquially as Lansiwatte (Sinhala for 'Burgher-town') because of the number of Burghers who live there.

Somewhat similar organisations cater primarily for Sinhalese, Tamil and Moorinterests; Buddhist, Hindu, Muslim and Catholic interests; and combinations of language, religion and ethnic interests. The Sri Lankan community in Melbourne consists of a number of ethnic, cultural, social, linguistic and religious groups. There are many separate 'communities'. Some strands unite but more strands divide.

Sinhalese and Tamil migrants think of themselves as 'ethnic Australians' and seek election and representation on the Ethnic Communities Councils and Boards. These organisations are the official channels for the mainly non-English speaking migrant communities to meet and lobby government officials, politicians and Governments. Burghers have not become involved in this process for they think of themselves as part of mainstream Australian society and closer to the dominant culture than any other.

Elderly Burghers socialise

The Australian children and grandchildren of this, the last generation of the Burghers, are fascinated at the way the older Burghers discuss food, its preparation, its ingredients, the old times, the differences between society today and the society they knew and the relationships or 'connections' between Burgher families. They look on fascinated, startled and uncomprehending at the conversation of their elders...the connections, the loud laughter, the interruptions, the fellowship. When an elderly Burgher meets them, almost the first hesitant probing question is often Now, can you tell me, who is your father? The next question...and your mother, who is she?... The questions continue with do you know so and so? The probing continues until the family and the relationships, the 'connections', have been established. The elderly Burgher then utters the word aarrh in a satisfied manner. The connection has been made and he/she is now satisfied...that piece of the Burgher community jig-saw has been slotted into its correct spot! It is the small-town mentality, the sense of belonging, the closeness that transcends divisions of class, religious affiliation, age and gender. It is the close-ness of a minority group that has shared institutions, gone to the same schools, played sport together, worshipped together and inter-married.

The author has recorded for posterity the conversation of a group of elderly Burghers, friends of long standing. The conversations were accompanied by periodic bouts of laughter, disbelief, banter and loud conversation. It took place before and during a mid-day meal. Names have been changed.

Anne: There is this fantastic ad. on 3ZZZ radio Sunday mornings by Paradise [a Sinhalese-owned Asian food store]. (Anne sings the advertisement in Sin-hala). I must go there and if I don't buy anything, I must buy that tape. Oh Lauren, it is fantastic. You must listen to it.

Judith: Is that Thornbury place a business? I was there one day when they had this hot malu (fish) curry and he had all these menus so I got one off him. I happened to go there again the next day and would you believe it he did not have any anywhere.

John: He had big stuffed chillies also. He gives the menu so you know what he has the next time. There were also stuffed malu miris (sweet chillies filled with either fish or beef).

Anne: That must be the place Eric goes to, there is also a place in Brunswick.

John: Brunswick or Brunswick Street? Sigiriya [a restaurant serving Sinhalese food]. Did you enjoy it?

Lauren: Oh, it was not all that much, up to a point it was but the other place was full and we waited...they took so long...we must go some day and take the boys, I told Sharon. There are lots of things, now Saturdays and Sundays, lamprais, five fifty each mind you.

Anne: That's a lot. We offered Eric at four dollars each but Mary said they couldn't afford it because he eats three or four so it is an expensive meal.

Russell: Oh yes, Oh yes

Vanessa: Frankly to me that is reasonable, you can't get any take-away meal for four dollars.

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Anne: Yes, but they are quite happy if they have rice, some parippu and they have a tof curry and that is a lovely meal.

Vanessa: If you go anywhere and try to get a take-away meal you can try but you cannot get anything for four dollars.

Anne: I agree, but they seldom go take-away anyway.

Lauren: But Ben told me the last stuffed godambas I got for him were fish and he loves godambas but I promised him...Thursdays this chap brings to Paradise for two fifty but you'll have had them, they are a larger size.

Vanessa: but Astrid's are very nice, large pieces of meat and they are really full and about this size (Vanessa shapes her hands to show the size).

Lauren: But this women at Galle Face [a Sri Lankan restaurant in Melbourne], she has everything every day there.

Anne: you should...

Russell: But where do you get your stuff? Most of these people at CWO get their stuff somewhere there.

Lauren: But that is the other end...at Dandenong

Anne: But I have been to Morels sometimes and...

Vanessa: But everything comes from Hindustan so Hindustan is the cheaper [Echoes] yes, yes.

Vanessa: But Morels is much more reasonable, now those market places, that's in Highbury Road I went there once and you see a lot...now the hopper mix...

Anne: but a lot of the people who come to CWO that is 3/4 the way, really 7/8 the way...

Pauline: Hindustan, I went with Carol one day, it is bewildering...

John: The other person said the car parking area was useless, very difficult (Echoes) ah yes, ah yes.

Peter: But we parked behind...

John: But that is all built-up now. The car-park is not big enough for the people that want to come.

Susan: Last week Phyl had this pol kiri badung. It was different from the way I usually make it. I rang her later and asked her.

The conversation then moves on to the next 'Food Fair', in which most of them are involved.

Vanessa: There were so many complaints last year...

John: But there are these helpers...

Vanessa: Yes, she has all these helpers but they have to start earlier...Oh gosh, she's a prima donna,...I know we are not very accommodating, Anyway, because she is doing it you have to pay pooja to her and everything. You cannot even offer suggestions she says 'no, it is just right'.

Russell: I have volunteered but no one has asked me. I won't go. No point in men going, they can't do anything.

John: Then there was this young Samuel fellow. She was so rude, all he wanted was to help. He has this shop in Richmond. We went there once. Very pleasant, lovely fellow...His father is a retired lawyer.

(The discussion moves on to the police, speeding, getting tickets. Then a discussion about an acquaintance who has found a female friend. A conversation that results in a lot of laughter around the table).

Anne: That's how Rosemary met with her accident. She didn't see where she was going.

Russell: Her cousin was my first girl. She used to wear these short skirts and play tennis. I used to watch. Didn't do anything, didn't know. Just used to get gooseflesh. She used to go to school in a rickshaw. I used to cycle by the side. Sometimes I would hold the rickshaw with one hand and the rickshaw-man would get very upset because he was now pulling me also. Never touched her. This was the old days before we knew what to do with our hands, (Guffaws of laughter) that came later. This must have been the 40s. No, it was the late 30s.

Lauren: Did I tell you of Matthew's visit to Sri Lanka. He was really touched. He could not understand how people can be so content without any of the material things. They were so kind and happy. In this tiny little place [referring to a house]...really, you can't compare what we have here and what they have there. They are such happy people. They asked him to come back again and they gave him a meal and when he was leaving with Mona's driver they said to the driver 'now take the master carefully back home. Drive very carefully'. Matthew came and said 'what beautiful people'.

Anne: No, these are not lychees, they are rambutans.

June: You can get mangosteens at Preston market. But custard apples are in now but a bit pricey. Four fifty a kilo.

Russell: Our children could not believe that we used to have hoppers every morning. They could eat hoppers morning, noon and night.

June: But you cannot believe that we ate four meals every day. The men even came back home for lunch...and it was rice every day. And what did the women do, most often a sleep in the afternoon.

John: When I was young I did not have two cents to rub together but I did my studies. I had no trouble. I just carried on. But in this country they just put out their hand and expect the government to put something in it. Not like our beggars. Here they don't ask, they demand everything for free.

Anne: At that CWO Christmas party Dorothy was looking like death warmed up but I saw her recently and she is looking much better. She went to Jenny Craig.

June: I have one for \$54 a month, anybody interested?

Vanessa: Useless, you put it on even more later on. Yesterday, they all got up and went for seconds anyway so they can't be serious about their weight.

Russell: I wish our children could have had the same sort of life when they were growing up. Here everything is done before, so regular. There, every days omething different happened, some new crazy thing and we would laugh...never any fear of danger. Kids didn't get lost or stolen...always some-one knew you, your parents...school friendships last through life.

John: My friends...at Probus, amazed I have friends from school and I play golf with them. The other thing that they cannot understand is the trust between Burghers. We trust completely. Won't ever think of taking advantage or lying or trying to trick.

Gerry: We lived in a very old-fashioned way. Complete trust, absolute honesty.

Carl: Now more movement in society. John said the people at Probus don't have friends from school. Often even the school isn't there. Our friendships must be like the war-time friendships in the trenches.

Gerry: Now my [Australian] children have lost their school friends, don't even know where they are. I asked her once about her bridesmaids. She doesn't know where they are. Even the school has gone, isn't there.

Russell: I like pappadams when they are fried. I hate them from the microwave. I remember seeing this man in Ceylon, standing in a pit with this pole in his hand pounding away at some mixture. He was in the blazing hot sun, sweat pouring down as he pounded and pounded away. He was black and shiny. You know what he was pounding? It was the first stage of the pappadam mixture.

Carl: That's exactly how they make wine but they probably wear boots there.

Russell: 'Untouched by hand' was a favourite ad. in the old days but that was because they used their feet! Things went off so quickly those days and when you bought food in the evening that was made in the morning it had that rancid or puskala taste. I became so used to it that when I eat malu pahans (fish inbread rolls) and coconut aluwa (toffee) here I get rather disappointed when it does not have that puskala (rancid) taste because food went off quickly there. I must say our systems got so used to coping with every kind of germ that I just never get stomach upsets and food poisoning.

Gerry: [a retired medical practitioner]. This place is sometimes too hygienic. Children's stomachs don't get the chance to develop the anti-bodies so we have to get a course in antibiotics for most things.

Carl: We didn't have mouldy cheeses but we had our rancid food and coconut was famous for that. Pauline is very fussy about her curry powders.

Pauline: The Indian stuff is not the same. They put a lot of saffron and add curd. The Ceylon stuff is real, it has the carapincha and all those other special things.

John: That must be the secret, the whole basis of the flavour in the food. [Ech-oes] Oh yes, oh yes.

Russell: Its like saying French and German food is the same when there can't be two things so different.

John: I get upset when people think Indian food and Ceylon food is the same. It is very different. It's the best food in the world.



Reported below is a conversation at the CWO 'Bring and Buy' sale:

Noel: At Dandenong, opposite 'Serendib' there is this Tamil place. You know the 'Food City'? You pass it, then the Post Office and there is this park. They have thosai.

Adrian: That's good. The Burghers don't know how to make thosai. That is a Tamil thing. Where do you get your curry-stuffs?

Christine: At Clayton, at Bandula's. He has everything, this Asian shop. His wife, she is a sweet girl, my gosh, so nice with the smile. It is better than... They have cottamalli, all that kind of seeds and stuff.

Adrian: Do they have mallum leaves?

Christine: For that you have to go to the Vietnamese shops at Springvale. There you can get kankun, gotukola, kalunubatu, niviti, muleunanna... thambala.

Olga: You can get murungas at Bandulas but in tins, not so good, from Hong Kong. Rampe, all you can get.

Adrian: I miss my ambul plantains.

Olga: Yes, here you can get like the anamalus but you don't get the variety of plantains we have there. Now, what is your name?

Adrian: Adrian van Granberg.

Olga: I am also a van Granberg. Now this William Granberg, what is he?

Adrian: No, he is not related, but his wife is..

Olga: Now she is a Thiedeman.

Adrian: No, she is a Wittensleger. Her mother was a Thiedeman. She is now a van Granberg.

[general understanding, then sounds of aarrh and smiles all round. The connection has been made and everyone feels comfortable. The stranger has been identified, placed correctly in the jig-saw, and tagged for the future].

(Authors note: It all seems so confusing to any non-Burgher listening. It is not surprising that the eyes of the Australian children glaze over when their elders start explaining family relationships. Add into the conversation a few unmarried relatives, some cousins and cousins of cousins, children of the 'second bed', the Sri Lankan custom of addressing adult neighbours and friends as 'uncle' and 'aunty' as a token of respect...and the conversation becomes an obstacle course for even a Rhodes scholar!)

Burghers, as some Australians see them

The author interviewed thirty Australians who had Burgher neighbours, had married the children of Burghers, or worked with Burghers.

These Australians saw the Burghers as friendly, gregarious and sociable (one even said they were ridiculously sociable). There were varied views on whether Burghers were naive, trusting, suspicious or street-smart.

Among the general comments were:

- Happy, open, welcoming, friendly, helpful, wonderful people with a tendency to be over dramatic. A totally non-selfish, warm, generous and accepting group who are not insular and look after others as well as their own.
- They all talk at high speed and high pitch. Hard to follow what they are saying. They keep interrupting each other and talking over each other. All shouting and laughing and screaming. I don't understand what they are saying.
- They talk about Ceylon and what they were doing. I can't get in so I withdraw.
- They have made a contribution to this country. Aspire to positions of power.
- Nine to five workers. Don't bring work home.
- Tend to be misunderstood by Australians because they are so close knit as a community. By getting to know them intimately one forms a very different impression. A pity the Australians mix them up with Indians and Pakistanis and think of them as Asians when they are very different to those people.
- An excitable group, kind, good living, good citizens. Food is very important to them.
- A very happy and social group of people. Talk very excitably. Have an opinion on everything and don't mind an argument. They can have a good discussion.
- A community minded group not occasionally but on a continuing basis.
- Charity minded. Concerned with the poor, lonely and needy and this is an integral part of their social life. Very friendly, easy to talk to and very welcoming. Earned my respect. Very social when you meet them.
- They talk too loud and too fast.
- Very friendly people. Difficult for me to understand how they could come to a country they did not know and trusting people they did not know. I feel safe and comfortable with them. They form very stable relationships.
- I have been married to one for twenty eight years and I am very happy. They are nice people, generally very easily accepted in the community. They accept you for what you are.

This is a summary of how these thirty Australians summed-up their experiences of the last generation of the Burghers:

- Socially conservative and devoted to the immediate family. Considerable attention was devoted to the upbringing of children. One daughter-in-law said that Burgher lives appear to be centred on the home and close family to the point of being suffocating! Parents and grandparents often demanded a standard of excellence that was unrealistic.
- The home, family life, children and grandchildren are major Burgher pre-occupations. Interest in the children continued after they left home. The social and home background of the children's friends was important to Burghers. The extended family remained close.

- Quality and years spent on formal learning were seen as important with children sometimes pushed above their natural ability. Children were expected to aim at becoming 'professionals' and not 'blue collar' workers. Parents tended to bring into conversation that their children were doctors and other professionals. Many thought that a private school education was desirable and made sacrifices to achieve that goal. The majority however achieved their educational goals by residing in suburbs where there were high-quality State schools. The education of boys and girls was seen as equally important.
- Tertiary education had a high priority and Burgher parents were prepared to devote the resources to make it possible. Parents wished their children to have careers, rather than jobs, and success had to be in socially acceptable occupations.
- Very conscious of security of employment. Not entrepreneurs and risk takers. Sought out safe career jobs in the public sector and in large corporations and tended to remain with one employer until retirement.
- Money, or the lack of it, appeared to play an important part in their lives. At the same time, or perhaps because of it, Burghers were conscious of helping the poor and needy. Regular collectors for charities.
- Cautious, trusting and generous but not laid back or easily fooled in commercial dealings. Others saw them as extremely competitive, with a high degree of upmanship, but also a 'giving' kind of people. They were seen as scrupulously honest and expected the other party to behave in a similar manner.
- Strictly moral group who strongly disapproved of sex before marriage and unmarried adults living together. Also realists because they knew it did occur and, when it did, made the best of it. Old fashioned and conservative on current social issues such as euthanasia, AIDS, Aborigines, the Queen, the flag, the Republic and woman's roles in society. (The new generation has very different views however).
- Conscious of social class, some even verging on being snobs but generally middle-class people aspiring to be upper middle-class. They prefer to be fair rather than dark. Sensitive to both accents and skin colour.
- A minority said they were a socially conscious community, probably socialdemocrats, but the majority view was that the Burghers expressed a wide variety of views on social, economic and political issues, welcomed argument and discussion, and mirrored Australian middle-class society in all respects.
- The males appeared to be more highly educated than the women.

The children of the Burghers, the Australians

Twenty-five Burgher children, born in Ceylon, and socialised into the Australian community between 1948 and 1974 had 'question and answer' interviews with the author in 1994. These children were between six months and fifteen years of age at the time they left Ceylon. Their Australian schooling varied from three to thirteen years. The assimilation process was the Australian primary and/or secondary school environment.

Four children are now between 25 and 34 years, sixteen are between 35 and 44 years and five are over 45 years of age. Twenty had arrived prior to 1965 and five after 1965. At the time of their arrival in Australia the females were an average of nine years

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of age. The males averaged six years. Education in Ceylon had been in single-gender private English-language schools. Their schooling in Australia had been in dual-gender State schools or single-gender private schools. The official publication Community Profiles 1991 Census stated:

In 1991 the proportion of Sri-Lanka born persons [not only Burghers] aged 15 years and above who held an educational or occupational qualification was 51.5%, considerably higher than among the total Australian population (38.8%)...Persons with post-secondary qualifications accounted for 27.6% of the Sri Lanka born population, compared with 12.8% of the total Australian population (p.20).

Nineteen of the twenty-five in my sample had a post-secondary education, none who wanted work were without work (two were between jobs), and the sample group represented a spectrum of occupations that would have been envied in Sri Lanka. The list included medical practitioners, accountants, bankers, many school teachers, a microbiologist, an audiologist and a child psychologist, a clerk, a social worker and a personnel manager, public servants, an author, a nurse, a paratrooper and a commodity trader. Two were housewives. None thought of themselves as disadvantaged or discriminated against in any way. Not all felt 100% Australian however. Two, darker in skin colour and not married to Anglo-Australians, remarked 'I am different due to my early (school) experiences' and 'I do feel different due to my formative years in Sri Lanka, my ethnic origin and my different ethical standards'. Ten of the fourteen females did not feel completely Australian. Among their answers were:

- I feel different but not in an inferior way. Each year it becomes easier.
- The migrating experience enriched my life. I don't feel superior, just different due to my upbringing.
- I consider I have superior education, culture and social skills.
- I don't want to be the Aussie that is projected on TV and in the media.
- We are closer as a social group, more sensitive.

The view of the great majority was:

- I see my future here. My partner is an Aussie. I like it here. I can't think of a better place. We are Aussies and our children are dinkum Australians.

The degree of assimilation was largely dependent on age at the time of arrival, the degree of success in achieving social and economic goals and marriage into the dominant Australian culture. Skin colour was a factor but not a dominant factor.

When these children of Burghers were asked whether they felt any special affinity to other Burghers or children of Burghers the answer was a definite 'No'. These children of Burghers have become members of dispersed middle-class communities with no social links to their past. In certain instances, they were not even aware of any Burgher or Sri Lankan names other than those of relatives. Most of them had a latent interest in their roots and intended doing something about it some day. One-third showed no interest whatsoever in Sri Lanka and did not even wish to visit the land of their birth. Three showed a more active interest, two of whom had been back as tourists and one commented:

I found it fascinating. I liked the people, the climate, the beaches, the mountains and the food. Would like to go back and live for two years but working there would be different I suppose.

These Burgher children had mixed experiences at school. Eleven of the twenty-five had no difficulties being accepted but the others had difficulties, especially in primary school, due to skin colour, accent and perceived Asian background. Children with lighter skins, or those who had had all their schooling in Australia, have no recollection of incidents of discrimination or non-acceptance. Those who had most of their primary and/or secondary education in Sri Lanka felt more marginalised. Females felt more marginalised than the males. Among the unusual comments by females were:

- I felt a curiosity, especially at the start. Why aren't you black? Did you ride an elephant in the rice fields?
- They didn't really accept me. I was treated as Asian and there were those racial slurs.
- My accent was different. They treated me as an oddity. Even the teachers treated me as an oddity and couldn't place me.
- They could not understand how I knew to speak English. I didn't make friends at school. I felt different and not accepted.

These children of Burghers were in Australian schools in the 1960s and 1970s and mostly in anglo-Australian suburbs. The majority now do not feel any different to anglo-Australians and have completely absorbed the majority culture. A minority however feel different and a summary of the answers was:

- My parents culture and values are different, we are different to our neighbours and working-class people in our life styles and aspirations, our food is different, our families and family life are different and we look different and we don't respect the Australian craze for accumulating wealth, buying things and showing off.

Very few exhibited any dislike towards other minority ethnic groups and fully accepted the multi-ethnic, multi-cultural Australia. They did not know, and did not care, about a person's background or ethnic origin and made no judgements based on race. A few did say their parents were bigoted in some of their remarks about other ethnic groups. The children said that their parents privately referring to Australians as lazy and work-shy, had spoken with some anger about the paradise that the Australians appeared to have lost because of their laziness and spoke tolerantly of southern European migrants but less tolerantly of South-East Asian migrants. It was interesting that, in my interviews with Burgher parents, those in Chapters 6, 7 and 8, they had said that it was their parents who were bigoted on race and religion! Social concepts are indeed shaped by society and the media.

My other questions helped me ascertain the degree of assimilation, or the identification with the social culture of the dominant group. The majority support Australia in Test cricket with a minority supporting Sri Lanka (mainly because they think of Sri Lanka as the underdog). A majority were religious as children but not as adults, are interested in media coverage of events concerning Sri Lanka (but only in a very general way), could not identify and would not seek products made in Sri Lanka, do not support Sri Lankan charities and are not interested in Sri Lankan social or cultural events.

There was an aversion to socialising with more recent arrivals from Sri Lanka (but not an active animosity). Rather, this was due to disinterest, a feeling of almost aversion, for they have become mainstream Australians. Europe is their preferred travel destination. They see themselves as different to their parents' generation and many said 'I am Australian, it is my parents who were Burghers'.

Three were unmarried, two were divorced, three had married Burghers, ten had married Anglo-Australians, four had married English or New Zealanders and the other three had Latvian, Macedonian or Dutch marriage partners. They resided in 11 municipal areas and 22 suburbs in anglo-Australian middle-class residential neighbourhoods.

These children of Burghers were also products of their home socialisation. There were no entrepreneurs in the sample. They were either professionals or worked in large secure organisations with the government as the preferred employer. They have lost their Sri Lankan accent but have not replaced it with the broad flat Australian drawl. They continue to speak distinctly with well-formed vowels and have merged into the multi-cultural Australia. Like their parents, they remain in the cities and in middle-class suburbs with middle-class aspirations and middle-class neighbours. None of them live in public or private rental housing. They are moral, sober, harmonious, sport-loving, public-spirited and law-abiding. Family and the home are their priority and many take leadership roles in local communities. There is a lingering interest in their roots and ethnicity, especially among the females, who are guardians of family values. They have not lost their love for hot spicy Sri Lankan food. Almost all these children of Burghers, their partners and their children enjoy hot spicy Ceylon food. Food continues at the core of hospitality for these children of the Burghers. There is no anger and no regret that their parents had to emigrate. Their parents have conveyed fond memories of a happy life in old Ceylon, now Sri Lanka.

1995 and a 'Mother's Day' reunion

As I watched my wife preparing the meal, something I had probably never done before, my mind went back to the 'good old days' when we had to have kokies (cooks) or cookies (female) and cooking was a full-time occupation. It was even more time-consuming during my youth, sixty years ago. The kitchen fireplace consisted of three stones, roughly about the same size, on which the pot was placed with the ingredients inside. Bits of wood, often not quite dry, would be placed under them, some twigs added, and the fire lit with a ginipella (lighted stick). Then the long process of getting the fire going would commence. Grandma's cookie had a piece of water pipe, about a foot (30 cm) long, and she would blow and blow while the kitchen filled with smoke from the wet green wood. This type of cooking is exciting when out camping but is a lot of trouble if it has to be done every morning. It was not surprising that the cookie always looked like the firemen on the railway! Things had, of course, changed considerably by the time the author left Ceylon in the 1960s.

Matches weren't very effective. Too often they did not light when rubbed against the box. There was this story about the tourist who bought a box of matches, struck one, lit his cigarette and threw the box away. A bystander asked him why he had thrown away the box with forty-nine good matches. The reply was 'I was told that in Ceylon only one match lights in every box so I thought I was lucky to find it on my first try'.

In the old country there were no special days for mothers or fathers even though we celebrated on many other days. There was Christmas and New Year, Good Friday and Easter, various 'Saints days' for the Catholics, Sinhalese New Year, Deepavali for the Hindus, Ramazan (breaking of the month of fasting for the Muslims), Wesak (the

celebration of the birth of the Buddha and a festival of lights), Vel (a Hindu procession), Kandy Perahera (parade of the tooth relic), birthdays and anniversaries.

The custom in this family on Mothers Day, and it is not a Burgher custom, is that this mother and grandmother enjoys cooking a slap-up meal for the enjoyment of her family rather than being taken out for a slap-up meal. Her husband is a typical Burgher male so she has a double handicap. He is of minimal help in preparing the meal or laying the table. He may be persuaded to perform the unskilled job of washing-up but this is often not immediately after the guests have left but when he is ready and able and usually long after the left-overs have been put away and the plates have become cold and greasy.

I take off my hat to the Burgher women. The great majority did not know how to cook in Ceylon. They would go into the kitchen to chat to the cook and have her suggest what would be appropriate for the next meal. They occasionally made a pudding that was exhibited with great fuss and fanfare at the dinner table with the guests prompted to compliment the hostess. The kitchen was far away, at the rear of the house and near the 'servants quarters'. That all changed in Australia. Here the kitchen is the centre, around which everything else revolves, and the busiest part of the house. Our ladies ('women' in Australia) settled down and became the centre around which everything else revolved in the home. They washed and ironed, operated the taxi service, shopped, cooked, cleaned and cooked again. The purchase of the ingredients became a skilled task and the preparation of the food became a source of pride...and what magnificent meals they prepared.

The Burgher women do their families proud. A look around at the men-folk shows that round protrusion in front that isn't there from a pregnancy, too much beer or too little exercise. It came from the successful concoctions and the urgings of their womenfolk to 'have a little more'. The women have not done too badly either. Many have the placid gait and contented bulge of over-fed, relaxed senior citizens. Reminds me of the old saying 'When I was young, I wanted speed but now I am old, I like my comforts'.

This year, for Mothers Day, Stuart told Persis, 'Mum, this time we would like a plain rice and curry'. It seemed a simple request, rather like going into a cafe and ordering bacon and eggs. It isn't. A simple Sri Lankan meal, even with all the 'mod-cons', is an undertaking. The preparation and actual cooking took five hours, three on Saturday and two on Sunday. Persis said it was 'the meal we would have had for any week-day lunch in Ceylon' so now I know why we had to have a cookie in Colombo! Here is the 'Mothers Day' menu for posterity.

There was meat cooked as a pol-kiri-badun (coconut milk fry), a potato vegetable, a cashew vegetable (cooked without chilli and especially for the two grandchildren aged four and six), thel dala beans (beans cooked with chilli and curry powder and fried in a little oil), dried prawns fried with onion and with plenty of chilli pieces added, cabbage malung (finely chopped cabbage leaves mixed with coconut, onion and maldivian fish), fried pappadams (thin wafer biscuits) and plain white rice. This was followed by baked caramel custard and coffee served with cashew toffee and milk toffee. A very ordinary meal indeed. Is it surprising that so many Burghers of my generation have had heart problems and bypass operations? I realise how central the hot spicy Sri Lankan food is to our family social life when I look at the photographs of our family get-togethers. Food is at the core of Burgher hospitality. The photographs show a table loaded with dishes of hoppers, egg hoppers,

stringhoppers or rice supplemented with bowls of meats, vegetables, seeni-sambol and chutneys. Very prominent are the napkins, beer, wine and soft drinks that accompany the 'hot' Sri Lankan food for with us are our Australian/Dutch and Australian/English descendants! It is fortunate that our family is not as large as in my grandfather's generation for our 'servants' could not have coped! Stuart and Marijke, the lovely Dutch girl he met while backpacking in India, are devotees of South Asian food. They enjoy the creativity of preparing special meals and love Sri Lankan food. After an absence of five years in England, daughter Suzanne and husband Mark will shortly arrive to make their home in Melbourne. She told her mother recently 'Mum, I am placing my order for my first meal. I want stringhoppers, chicken curry, coconut sambol, egg-rulang and mulligatawny'.

All the adults are avid eaters of hoppers, egghoppers and stringhoppers, yellow rice and kiributh, pittu, rotis, plain godambas, egg godambas and stuffed godambas, pilau rice, seeni sambol and pol sambol, lamprais, frikkadels, meat curry, dry-beef curry, fishcurry, prawn curry, chicken curry, egg rulung, mulligatawny, paripoo (lentil) curry, bean curry and potato curry. At Burgher get-togethers they stuff themselves with stuffed-eggs and sandwiches, pan-rolls and patties, potato aluwa, coconut aluwa and cadju toffee; love-cake and Ceylon butter-cake, Christmas cake and (Burgher) wedding cake. On those special occasions when there is a 'professional' Burgher caterer they eat stuffed chillies, stuffed dates, stuffed prunes and foguetes. At food fairs they reach for malu paans, mas paans and stuffed godamba rottis but avoid the greasy kaludodol and musket. They are glad their ancestors went searching for the spices of the East, found them and decided they could not leave them. The children's children are beginning to enjoy their spice-filled heritage.

Have the Burghers assimilated? They have and they haven't, yes and no. We have retained much of our eastern heritage but fused that relaxed lifestyle with the realities of life in the busy, organised and regimented western consumer society. My generation, the older generation, have half-assimilated. The Burghers of my generation continue as the 'people in-between'. Proud and prejudiced? Not any longer, for that was the survival mechanism in that colonial society at that time.

Were the Burghers proud and prejudiced? I think 'yes'. Are the Burghers an extraordinarily versatile, adaptable and successful community? I think 'yes' but you will have to answer these questions for yourself.

10 POSTSCRIPT

Australia evolved into an egalitarian, liberal democratic society because of the manner in which the country was first populated, the influence of the Irish working class migrants, and the physical distance from Europe. The size of the land mass, the harsh terrain and the smallness of the population forced these early migrants to develop into an insular people.

With the widening of immigration policies to permit the entry of people of diverse races, creeds and countries in the past thirty years, Australia has transformed itself from an anglo-celtic mono-cultural society into a multi-cultural society and this has helped make the original migrants more accepting and more tolerant of diversity and cultural pluralism.

The Dutch Burghers, who arrived in Australia during the anglo-celtic period of the early 1960s, were quickly absorbed. Australian culture, language and institutions made a close fit for these anglophiles. Some of these early migrants continued to wish that multi-culturalism was only a first generation phenomenon and that the children of all migrants would absorb the anglo-celtic culture of the majority. The second wave, the Burghers who arrived after the mid-1960s, were part of an increasingly multi-cultural Australia and a community that became increasingly more tolerant and accepting of cultural diversity.

Burghers needed none of the support mechanisms required by those new migrants who could not speak English. Like the migrants from Britain, Ireland and New Zealand, they were comfortable with Australian institutions and the Australian way of life. It was easy to adapt, to conform. They did not have to live in ghettos and, unless they wished to, did not have to give up old practices and social customs. They assimilated and integrated into both multi-cultural Australia and mainstream Australian society. Burghers adapted and were comfortable in their new environment.

Sri Lanka's 'progress' in the past forty years has cured most Burghers of any wish to return. Sri Lanka has a recent history of political domination by a vocal ethnic and religious majority who have little respect for Sri Lanka's plural traditions. While Australia moved from an intolerant mono-cultural society towards a tolerant, multi-cultural society, Sri Lanka has moved from a tolerant multi-cultural society to an intolerant mono-cultural society in which cultural plurality and ethnic, language and religious differences are unpatriotic and suspect. The Burghers have been truly fortu-

nate in their migrations, whether to Australia, the United Kingdom, New Zealand or elsewhere.

Before any Burghers consider returning to the 'Emerald Isle' they should, perhaps, read William Mc Gowan's book *Only man is vile: The tragedy of Sri Lanka*. It is a compelling 1992 account of a society consumed by the implacable hatreds of race and class, political violence and the search for a national identity.

The children of Burgher migrants have been successful in their callings and professions. They are Australians and no longer Burghers and have completely integrated into mainstream Australia. There are too many success stories to record here but a few are public knowledge.

Ex-Burgher names in the media include David de Vos of Channels 2 and 7, Geoff Jansz of Channel 9, Stephen Bartholomeusz, financial editor of the *Age* newspaper, Christopher de Kretser, the publisher of *Sports Weekly* and Keith Potger of the singing group 'The Seekers'.

The Rt. Rev. Roger Herft is the Anglican Bishop of Newcastle, Ian Willé, after a spell as Australia's ambassador in the West Indies, is in charge of the Russian desk at the Department of Foreign Affairs; Tom Blaze was Mayor of Knox Council and Fred van Buren was a member of the Legislative Council of Victoria.

When Victoria last won the Sheffield Shield, Dave Whatmore was captain. Bartholomeusz of Queensland was selected to represent Australia in the Under 18 Rugby Union and Beverley de Zilwa, with the name 'Pinder', became 'Miss Victoria'.

Among the older immigrants Pat Mc Carthy and Malcolm Francké represented their respective States at cricket, R. Poppenbeek represented Victoria at hockey and Malcolm Bulner is an international boxing referee. Malcolm Wright was invited to Sri Lanka to coach school rugby and Dave Whatmore has been appointed to coach the Sri Lanka cricket team. James Buultjens is a member of the Umpires Association of N.S.W. and has officiated at over 150 grade (District) matches. Many other former Burghers continue with their sporting activities and become officials.

Among ex-Burgher public figures in the U.K were Tom Driberg the Independent M.P., journalist Lorenz Ludovici and professional cricketers Laddie Outschoorn, Bob Bartels and Clive Inman. Dan Piachaud represented Cambridge University at cricket.

The medical profession continues to be the preferred choice for the children of Burghers. The author recently met Drs. Colin-Thomé and Pereira at the Austin Hospital and Arthur Anderson has given me a sample list of twenty children of Burghers who practice medicine in Victoria. They are Adrian Anthonisz, Jan Anderson, Russell Auwardt, Caron Chapman, Christopher Dircksze, Nigel Foenander, Melissa Grieve, Graham Jacobs, Janice Kreltzhaim, Christopher Lourensz, Debbie and Paul Marks, Ralph Poppenbeek, Pam Roberts, Pauline Schokman, Graden van Houten, Ralph, Garry and Johan van der Zeil and Beverley Vollenhoven.

Others children of the Burghers are equally busy being housewives and mothers; restaurant chefs and small-business owners; clerks, teachers, lecturers and scientists; information technologists, telecommunications and computer professionals, information processors, systems analysts; medical technicians, paramedics, nurses and welfare workers; accountants, salespersons, graphic designers and commercial artists; engineers, plumbers, carpenters and builders; hair dressers, bankers and managers; advertising account managers and public relations consultants; writers, journalists and in a host of other skilled occupations that would not have been available to them in Sri

Lanka where a stagnant society and ethnically determined educational quotas alter the level playing field into a series of hills and valleys.

The grandchildren of the Burghers, with no knowledge of their great-grandparents and little knowledge of life and times in Ceylon, continue to exhibit the perseverance and versatility of their ancestors. Recent examples known to the author include Matthew Harding, winner of a R.J.Hawke scholarship, who is following his great grandfather C.A.Speldewinde in reading law. Luke, his younger brother, achieved 96% in his V.C.E. and is following his grandfather William Wambeek in reading arts, also at Melbourne University. Hallam Stevens, son of Gillian Stevens nee Willé and great-grandson of G.A.H.Willé, was the outstanding student in year 9 at Ivanhoe Grammar School and winner of the 'Rhodes Award'. Trudy vander Straaten, great-granddaughter of Fred Ginger, was awarded a Sydney Electricity Board cadetship in electrical engineering and a scholarship at the Womens' College at Sydney University. Trudy graduated with first class honours in Physics and was next awarded a Government scholarship to study for her Ph.D. in physics. In 1994, at the age of 26, she presented a paper at the Canberra conference of the Australian Institute of Nuclear Science and Engineering. She has now completed her doctorate.

In a similar fashion, other grandchildren and great-grandchildren are fulfilling the hopes and aspirations of their grandparents who sacrificed their future to give their children the opportunities that were denied them in Sri Lanka.

The children of the Burghers continue to be better educated than the average Australian and the average migrant (Community Profiles: 1991 census pp.4, 18). They remain a middle-class group with middle-class values and live in middle-class communities. They maintain close family ties (p.12) and their life style is private and uncontroversial. Indeed, when on a recent occasion a Burgher 'lawyer' was accused of fraud, the media highlighted the fact that he was a 'Burgher' for that was unusual. Many children of Burghers continue to show a preference for occupations where the old-fashioned ideals of human care and service are important.

It was the compulsory use of the Sinhala language that forced the Burghers to leave jobs, property, relations, friends...indeed everything other than fond memories. Forty years later the wheel has turned full circle, English has been declared an official link language and the people of Sri Lanka clamour to learn English. I am indebted to the CWO newsletter for the poem Now English teacher, token English well (Now I am an Teacher of English and I talk it well). The poem, by 'Kendel', is reproduced below.

*Every day when looking papers
I am very sad
They are telling in the Ceylon
English very bad.*

*Is this ole a humbug, Mister?
Sometimes may be true.
So I want to tell and give you
What and what to do.*

*Olden times when we were children
In the village school
Father tole 'Muss learn the English
Otherwise you fool'.*

*Those days teachers taking trouble,
Taught me English well.
If I do not do the homework
They are giving hell.*

*Nowadays have shramadana
In the sun muss dig
Other times too much of torking
Classes very big.*

*Principal is olways absent
Teachers putting part
Boys are taking S.S.C. and
Only pass in Art.*

*You muss tell Minister to.
Somehow put a rule
Give the English education
Nicely in he school.*

*Then how good, no? Everybody
Learning properly.
Getting jobs and earning money
Happy jus like me.*

*Now I am English teacher
Now I can enjoy
I am doin better job than
Any odder boy.*

*I engage to Burgher lady
Token English well
How to twist an do the Baila
She is goin to tel.*

*Father putting sarong only
Simple village clerk
I am putting trousers also
goin in the park*

*So I'm tellin: without English
Useless you will be
Like buffalo in village
Married to a tree*

The poem epitomises the waste of talent and scarce resources during the Bandaranaike years. Another Bandaranaike, the daughter, is now Sri Lanka's President. The children of leading politicians and the rich and influential, after an expensive education in English at the 'International Schools' in Colombo, continue their education at universities overseas. Changing the medium of instruction in 1956 from English to Sinhala did achieve a purpose. It eliminated the talented English-speaking Burghers and forced them to leave the land of their birth; forced the Tamils to fight for an independent home land; forced the English-speaking elite of every community to migrate...and left in its place a country bereft of modern ideas, split into factions, divided by race, religion, language, class and caste. Where and when will the divisions end? The Burghers, forced to choose whether to stay or to go must thank their God that they were able to make new lives for themselves in new lands that were ready to accept them. Finally freed from petty discrimination, they can now again be themselves—accepted for what they are and what they have to offer. In 1977, a Kandyan Sinhalese friend, a colleague who was at that time in a position of high authority and responsibility, lamented to the author 'What have we done? We have alienated and expelled the Burghers, the most talented people in our nation. Why did we allow this to happen?'

The Burghers were a community who placed a premium on service and caring. They were a people who strove to serve the deprived, the sick and the disadvantaged. Their preferred roles were in teaching, medicine, ministering, nursing, mothering and the caring professions. This concept of service included working in the lower echelons of the bureaucracy, the police, the armed forces and wherever honesty, reliability and fair-play was expected. Burghers did not usually strive for wealth. The Burghers, and their descendants, continue in similar roles in their new homelands.

APPENDIX 1

Burghers, food and recipes

When the last generation of Burghers socialise, which they often do, the men talk about sport, old school days, happy times, other Burghers, careers, work and, more recently, retirement and their ailments. They avoid religion, politics and sex but seem ever ready to discuss almost everything else. The women discuss their children, grandchildren, memories, other Burghers, the 'connections' to still more Burghers and how the young are progressing. They discuss the family, food recipes and the shops where Sri Lankan ingredients, curries and fruits are available. Their chief and absorbing interest appears to be food and its preparation. Food is the centrepiece of Burgher hospitality but its actual consumption is not the subject of much discussion.

In Sri Lanka, food preparation was a chore that was left to the domestic help. Burghers who arrived in the late 1940s and 1950s found the drabness and sameness of Australian food depressing for lamb chop, fried egg, green peas and cabbage were the standard fare. The newly arrived migrants decided that something had to be done to brighten their drab experiences with the Australian cuisine so they developed various ingenious substitutes for the curries, rice and sambols they had been accustomed to eat. The purchase of ingredients and their preparation and communal consumption became the primary Burgher social event of a week-end. Where to buy ingredients and how to cook them became a favourite subject of conversation.

A hot, spicy Sri Lankan food has been the centrepiece of Burgher hospitality from the time of those earliest arrivals. The Burgher hostess may not have cooked a meal before she came to Australia but cooking is now where Burgher women display their creativity. It has become the hallmark of Burgher socialisation in Melbourne. The difference in food is perhaps the greatest difference between the Australians and the Burghers. One could almost sum it up by saying that the Aussies eat their pies with tomato sauce and the Burghers eat theirs with chilli sauce!...No Burgher meal is complete without the last course, the sweet.

A few Sri Lankan, Indian and Chinese shops stocked some spices in the 1950s, 1960s and early 1970s. The arrival in the 1970s of the 'boat people', the enterprising Vietnamese, finally broke the drought and spices, condiments, pickles, curry-leaves and tropical fruits became freely available. The Vietnamese were followed by other East Asian and South-East Asians, including Sri Lankans, who stocked everything that was needed to satisfy the most demanding Burgher palate. Burghers began to prepare food the way it used to be prepared in the 'good old days'.

Burghers have always placed great importance on the preparation and consumption of food. The famous cookery book in Ceylon was *The Daily News Cookery Book* by a Burgher, Miss Hilda Deutrom. It was presented by mothers to their daughters when they married. Daughters, in turn, collected their own special recipes from relations and friends and these were copied into precious exercise books. Burghers talk about food the way Australians talk about football. Burghers seem obsessed with food, what's on the menu for the next meal and the 'eats' at the next social gathering. Adventurous in food, they understand taste and flavours and spend time planning and preparing meals.

Included in this appendix are some very special Burgher recipes for cakes and sweet. A few of the author's favourites have been included. The recipes have come down through the generations. The actual preparation has become easier with the use of modern kitchen appliances. Readers who would like to know more about spicy Burgher and Sri Lankan recipes will find them in Charmaine Solomons' cookery books. Chairmaine is another successful ex-Burgher now living in Australia. Many Australian Burgher mothers present Charmaine's books to their daughters and daughters-in-law!

Foguetes

from Suzette Jansen

(Note that the recipe is in two parts)

Part A—Pastry

Ingredients

250 grams flour
 1/2 teaspoon baking powder
 1/2 teaspoon salt
 50 grams margarine 1 egg yolk
 1/2 cup water
 About 25 four inch pieces of bamboo
 Oil for frying

Method

Sift flour and baking powder and add salt. Mix in the margarine. Beat egg-yolk in a cup and add the water. Add egg mixture into the flour and knead well. Roll out and cut into 4 inch strips. Dust bamboo pieces with flour. Wrap pastry strips around the bamboo pieces. Seal end with water. (a design can be made on the pastry with a fancy pincher). Fry in boiling oil until golden brown. Cool on kitchen paper. Slip pastry cases off the bamboo pieces.

Part B—Preserve

Ingredients

One kilo ash pumpkin
 500 grams sugar

50 grams chopped cashew nuts
Rose water
Colouring
Cut the ash pumpkin into pieces

Method

Remove the outer covering and the seeds of the pumpkin. Grate the white portion of the pumpkin. Pass the grated pumpkin through boiling water, tie in a thin cloth and hang to drip overnight. The next day weigh the pumpkin, add an equal weight of white sugar and place on the fire. Stir constantly. When partly cooked, add the chopped cashew pieces and rose water. Continue cooking until mixture has thickened. Place in a dish and leave until it has cooled completely. When cold, colour and fill the pastry cases.

Sugar coating

Lay the filled pastry cases side by side on a board. Make a sugar syrup by mixing two tablespoons white sugar with two tablespoons water. Cook syrup gently on low heat. Add a few drops of vanilla and colouring. When thickened, pour quickly over the fouguetes. When set, separate the fouguetes and put away in an air-tight container until ready to serve.

Love Cake

from Pauline Moldrich

Ingredients

One pound semolina
Two pounds castor sugar
One pound cashew nuts
One pound butter
One pound pumpkin preserve
16 eggs
1/2 wineglass of rose water
1/2 wineglass bees honey
1/4 teaspoon grated nutmeg
1/4 teaspoon lemon rind
1/4 teaspoon powdered cinnamon
one tablespoon of extra butter

Method

Finely chop the cashew nuts. Chop the pumpkin preserve into small pieces. Heat the semolina in a pan, mix in the extra tablespoon of butter. Beat the sugar and yolks of eggs together in a bowl, then add butter. Add this to the egg mixture and beat again until well mixed. Add the finely chopped cashew nuts, chopped pumpkin preserve, rose water, bees honey, grated nutmeg, grated lemon rind and powdered cinnamon. Mix thoroughly. Finally, add about half the white of egg after the whites have been beaten to a stiff froth. Pour the mixture into flat bottomed baking trays lined with grease paper and bake in a moderate oven of 160°C for approximately 1 3/4 hours until the top is golden brown in colour and the cake has been baked through.

Mango Jelly

from Dorothy Stork of Rosanna

Ingredients

One packet agar-agar powder
One can mango nectar (850 ml)
125 grams sugar

Method

Mix mango nectar with sufficient water to make up one and a half litres. Add agar-agar packet and sugar. Mix well and bring to the boil. Pour into small bowls and leave to set. Decorate with mango slices (if preferred) and leave to cool. Place in refrigerator to cool and serve when chilled.

Milk Toffee

from Cynthia Wambeek

Ingredients

1 can (400 grams) full cream condensed milk
1 cup (250 ml) sugar
1 dessert spoon butter or margarine
1 teaspoon vanilla essence
5 litre bowl, suitable for placing into the microwave

Method

Put the condensed milk and sugar into the bowl. Place in the Microwave oven and cook on high for 15 minutes. Stop and stir every 5 minutes. When consistency is correct, remove dish from oven, add the butter and beat with a wooden spoon for 2-3 minutes. Add essence and then pour mixture into a greased dish and leave to set. About 15 minutes later mark out the pieces. Leave to set before separating squares.

Notes: 1. My microwave oven is 650 watts.

2. Cooking for 15 minutes results in a firm toffee. If you desire a softer toffee, cook for 13-14 minutes.

3. Double quantities can be cooked in a 5 litre bowl.

Potato Aluwa (Fudge)

from Merlin Schrader

Ingredients

2 pounds potatoes
2 pounds sugar
½ tea-cup of milk
1 dessertspoon butter (or margarine)
Essences of almond, vanilla and rosewater
Colouring, pink and green
A board, about 40 cm. square (16x16 inches square)

Method

Put the sugar into a heavy pan. Boil the potatoes; drain, mash the potatoes into the sugar while the potatoes are hot. This will cause the sugar to melt and the mixture to become liquid. Add the milk and butter. Put pan on medium heat, keep stirring. Lower the heat when the mixture starts to thicken. Continue stirring on low heat until mixture starts to crystallise around pan (about half an hour). Take pan off the heat and keep beating until mixture gets to a thick 'balling' consistency. Separate mixture for colouring. Using two buttered soup bowls, divide into three parts with one part in the pan. Put colour and essence into the pans, pink, no colour and green. Pour quantity from pan on to the buttered board. Roll. Repeat with the second quantity and lay on top of the first layer. Roll. Repeat with the third quantity and lay on top of the second layer. Roll. Leave to set. When cool but not yet hard, cut into pieces about 3x3 centimetres square. Put away until ready to serve.

(Note: The reason for using the quantity from the pan first is that the heat from the pan could dry out the mixture).

Coconut toffee

from Persis Ferdinands

Ingredients

1 1/4 pounds sugar (625g)
1/2 cup water (4 ozs), (180 ml)
1/2 pound (250g) desiccated coconut
1 can (400g) full cream condensed milk
1 oz. (30g) butter
2 teaspoons vanilla
Colouring

Method

Put the water and sugar into a saucepan. Place on heat and keep stirring with a wooden spoon until the sugar has dissolved. Add the condensed milk, butter and desiccated coconut. Continue stirring and boiling on a low heat until the mixture thickens. It takes from about 20 or 25 minute for the mixture to reach the 'balling' consistency. Remove pan from heat. Add the flavouring and colouring. Stir well. Pour the mixture into a pan which has been rinsed in cold water. Leave to set. As it becomes harder, mark out the squares into which the toffee will be cut. Leave to cool. When cool, cut into pieces.

Cashew nut Aluwa (fudge)

from Ida Wambeek

This recipe requires patience

Ingredients

200 grams cashews finely vitamised
450 grams sugar

290 PROUD & PREJUDICED

3/4 cup of milk
2 tablespoons of condensed milk
2 teaspoons of rose water
1 teaspoon vanilla essence
50 grams of butter
Pink colouring (optional)

Method

Place all the ingredients except the butter and colouring in a pan and cook over a low flame stirring occasionally until all the sugar has dissolved. Cook slowly, stirring the mixture until it thickens and reaches the 'soft ball' stage. (to test this, pour a teaspoon of the mixture into a cup of cold water and if this mixture can be rolled into a soft ball by using your fingers, then the mixture is ready). An alternative is to use a 'sweet thermometer' in the pan whilst cooking and when the thermometer shows 238°F or 115°C, remove pan from heat. Add the chopped-up butter. Do not stir the butter into the mixture until it has cooled slightly (about two minutes), then stir the butter in and beat the mixture for two to three minutes. (You could use a hand-operated electric beater). The mixture, now a fudge, should turn opaque and thicken.

Turn into a buttered dish, leave to set and when set but still soft, cut into squares. Remove squares when fudge is at room temperature and pack squares away. Note. It takes between 15 to 20 minutes cooking time depending flame temperature. Slow cooking takes longer and produces a soft firm fudge.

Breudher

from Persis Ferdinands

Ingredients

500 grams dough
8 eggs (No. 61)
100 grams sultanas
170 grams sugar
125 grams butter (softened)
1/2 teaspoon soda bicarbonate
One tablespoon milk
Breudher pan

Method

Place dough in a bowl. Add the yolks of egg and beat until the mixture is well beaten. A few air bubbles will appear. Add the sugar, continue beating for a few minutes longer and then add butter. Dissolve the soda bicarbonate in the milk and add this to the mixture. Next mix in half the sultanas. Pour into the special 'breudher pan'. Sprinkle the remaining sultanas on top. Leave the breudher in the sun to rise, covered with a fine cloth. If it is not a sunny day, place in an oven that has first been pre-heated to 100°C and then switched off. Leave in the oven for about an hour.

After the breudher has risen, take the pan out of the oven. Heat the oven to 150°C, place the breudher in the oven and bake for between 35 and 40 minutes. When

cooked, remove from oven and leave breudher in its pan for about five minutes until it has cooled. Turn breudher upside-down and gently jerk it out of the pan. Note: I use a Kenwood mixer using the dough-hook and number 3 speed. The pan is prepared by spraying with 'Pure and Simple' and the dough comes from the local Hot Bread Kitchen. I have a fan forced oven. (*Author's note: 'Breudhers' that are sold commercially in the Sri Lankan community at Christmas and Easter are often not 'the real thing'. They are sold at a competitive price and that forces the seller to reduce the quantity or quality of the ingredients).*

Christmas cake

from Audrey Ferdinands

Ingredients

1/2 pound of semolina
1/2 pound of butter
1/2 pound of sultanas
1/2 pound of raisins
1/4 pound each of cherries, candied peel and pumpkin preserve
1/2 pound of chopped cashew nuts 1/4 pound of sugar
One jar (375 grams) ginger preserve
One jar (375 grams) of chow-chow (Chinese preserved fruit)
12 eggs number 61
One bottle (25 mls) vanilla essence
One bottle (25 mls) almond essence
15 mls Rose water
1/2 teaspoon each of powdered cardamom, nutmeg and cinnamon
1/2 wine glass of brandy

Method

Cut up all the fruit, nuts and preserves into little pieces and place them in a large bottle or bowl. Sprinkle the essences and brandy over them and put away for some days until ready to make the cake. Lightly toast the semolina and mix in the butter and spices. Beat the yolks of the eggs and the sugar together until light and fluffy. Now add the semolina mixture, and then the fruit mixture and mix well. Lastly, fold in the stiffly beaten whites of six eggs. Turn the mixture into flat baking tins which have been lined and bake in an oven at 300°F for one hour. Then reduce to 250°F and bake for a further two hours.

Note: The baking tins should be lined with four folds of newspaper, then a layer of oiled paper or 'glad bake'.

Lamprais

by Rodney Jonklaas

A much loved Burgher food is the lamprais. Too many Sri Lankans claim to make lamprais but what they put together is a packet of rice and curry in an aluminium foil box that is only a 'rice-packet'. It is the meal Sri Lankan take-away food sellers in the Springvale area of Melbourne put together in an attempt to compete on price with Vietnamese take-away food. The concoctions are sold as 'lamprais' to those who don't know what real lamprais taste like. Lamprais are an authentic Dutch Burgher delicacy. The author can do no better than reproduce an extract from an article by his old school-mate, Rodney Jonklaas. It originally appeared in the Air Lanka magazine Serendib in 1983. This summary is from the DBU Journal of 1983.

All kinds of people make all kinds of lamprais...but not one commercial lamprais comes close to the real thing...Lamprais are not mass-produced, assembly-line products. They have character...a friend visiting Ceylon said that of all the foods he had tasted, the lamprais had least turned him on. I asked him 'Did it have a boiled egg, or parts of an egg? He replied 'yes'. I replied, 'You have been eating commercial two-bit hybrid rice-packets'.

Rodney continued:

The real thing? How can I ever pinpoint the best lamprais I have ever eaten over the past five decades? There were times when dried prawns, so essential to blachang, could not be found, then a temporary dearth of maldivian fish (boiled, dried, fermented Bonito Fillets) which are absolutely vital for the seeni-sambol that goes with every mouthful. Cooking bananas or ash plantains simply must be in season and just tender enough to be used in the indefinable dry curry.

Let me try to define a genuine lamprais. Into rice is inserted a small cloth bag of very special spices, boiled in a stock of chicken, pork and beef. With this are two small meat balls, a portion of dry cooked banana curry, seeni sambol, the Indonesian blachang made of crushed dried prawn plus garlic and assorted spices, and a larger than usual helping of a spicy but not torrid curry of diced chicken, pork and beef. The whole mouth-watering heap is lovingly wrapped in lightly scalded tender banana leaves (which should be done over coconut charcoal, wrapped in a parcel with loose ends folded and held in place by pointed ekels or mid-ribs of the coconut palm leaflets. The wrapped lamprais must be kept for a few hours to permit the subtle flavour of the banana leaf to do its magic work. A lamprais is a luncheon and not a dinner...One lamprais would suffice for one Burgher lady, two for an athletic one and two or three for a gentleman.

To even suggest half a boiled egg, aubergine curry or hunks of chicken in a lamprais is to be banished forever from the august circle of Burgher ladies who dominate the lamprais cult. Also, to serve lamprais without banana leaf is utter disaster, and this is why a few lamprais makers in Melbourne, in spite of producing superb lamprais, shed tears of frustration on having to pack them in plastic or foil containers...there is also the essential ingredient of fresh curry-leaf (karapincha) which has a subtle flavour. It will grow only in hot tropical jungles...

How does a visitor find a real lamprais?... Get invited to a Burgher home on lamprais day. Once there, skip the booze and beer and accept a glass of homemade ginger beer. It is considered the drink to go with the lamprais (pp.128-131).

How the hoppers came to breakfast

by Rodney Jonklaas

Here is another piece of literature from the same writer. This is a condensed version from the DBU Journal Volume LXIII 1989 which in turn was reprinted from the 1982 Air Lanka magazine Serendib (pp. 20-22).

The genuine Sri Lankan hopper is at its very best in rural Sri Lanka and absolutely nowhere else. To produce a good hopper in a non-rural area...it is essential to import the true rural ingredients, not only the fine rice-flour that goes to make it, and the milk of a mature coconut fresh squeezed from gratings, but also the country ladies who make them...My childhood was spent in a small suburb of Kandy where...village women make the finest hoppers. I used to wake up quite early in the morning...and...hear the murmurings from near the kitchen and servants quarters, the faint scent of wood-smoke and, ever so tantalising, the unforgettable odour of fresh cooked hoppers.

I took these hoppers for granted, often overslept and devoured them much later than I should have. Were I to re-live my boyhood days, I would leap out of bed and descend on them without so much as a face wash. For hoppers, like fried eggs or a good steak, must be eaten fresh and hot, not just warm.

I learnt this as the years went by, when I was obliged to eat inferior hoppers. A cold, delayed hopper is simply no hopper at all. When served late, its more like a tired and flaccid piece of paper. Oh, it tastes fairly well, but lacks the warmth, crispness and sheer tang of the fresh-cooked tropical pancake that needs no turning or tossing.

Like breads, there are several kinds of hoppers that have no doubt been evolved from the basic type. The ingredients are simple: finely ground rice flour, fresh coconut milk of just the right thickness, and a dash of palm toddy to get the gentle kick of fermentation so vital for a good cereal food. The hopper pan is a deep dish of iron with two handles, one on either side. A coconut shell spoonful of the wet mixture is tossed into it and deft hands see that the pan is kept in motion over a hot wood fire, ensuring that much of the mixture is on the perimeter, being cooked to a crisp brown and wafer thin consistency. A fair amount stays in the centre and remains plump and white. [Jaggery hoppers are brown and the darkening comes from adding jaggery syrup to sweeten the mixture].

In less than two minutes your hopper is ready. The quicker and defter the hands that keep the pan in motion, the more mixture gets brown on the perimeter. This part of the hopper is known as the vaati or crust. I adored crusty vaati aapa and disliked the common ones with thick white centres, but these days I'll settle for anything as long as it is only minutes away from the kitchen and almost too hot to handle.

If you are desperately hungry and want to savour only the taste of the hopper, go ahead; but there are several exciting additions available. The most popular is pol sambol, a simple but renowned preparation of fresh grated coconut, chilli or red pepper powder, chopped small onions, a dash of fresh lime juice and slivers of maldive fish when available. Maldive fish is the hard, dried and fermented fillet of tuna which looks and feels like soft wood. To Sri Lankan

gourmets this is God's gift to fastidious feeders and a really first-class pol sambol must have some of it.

One eats hoppers by hand, of course. To use cutlery on them...is like carving a hot-dog. Tear off conveniently sized bits of hopper or roll it up pancake-wise, dip one end into the sauce and eat away. An average hopper is about six mouthfuls, and takes less than a minute to eat, after which you seize another and so on until satisfied. Healthy, hungry Sri Lankans consider ten minutes of steady progress to be just about right (pp. 35-36).

APPENDIX 2

Burgher names

How the Burghers got their names

Volume VII of the 1914 Journal (pp.37-54) of the Dutch Burgher Union contained an article titled 'Our names: Their origin and significance'. It was written by Mr. R. G. Anthonisz, Government Archivist at the time. These pages are based on that article but have been expanded, summarised and edited.

In early history each individual had only a single name, and that name was generally invented for that individual. As populations increased, several individuals living in a village could have the same name and some method had to be invented to distinguish one individual from another. Often two words were combined and Fred and Erick became Frederick.

Some names became more common in certain areas and it often became possible to identify the village or branch of the tribe from the name. There were no general names as yet to identify persons as belonging to a particular family as a common family name would only be confusing in small communities.

As population increased and people began to travel for trade and commerce, the need to identify strangers became necessary. This was initially met by combining names e.g. Carl and Lota's son could be called Carlot and a daughter Carlotta. There was a further advance when ing was added to the name of a father. Ing, in German, is a young man, and in a more extended sense signifies a descendant. If a child was Lorraine and her father was Metzels she became different from other Metzels by calling herself Lorraine Metzeling.

By the 10th century this type of name became more common. Names were also derived from some individual peculiarity, the names of place or associated objects so if a young man had the name Thomas and his father was Banfield he could distinguish himself from other Banfields by calling himself Thomas the son of Banfield or Thomas Banfield. This was the basis of the family name. Thomas' brother Cameron would become Cameron Banfield. To make the name even more personal, additional names would be added e.g. Thomas Ferdinand Banfield and Cameron John Banfield. This connected the individual to earlier generations of the families. Most Burgher names

from the period of the Dutch occupation of the coasts of Ceylon are Dutch, German, Scandinavian or English in origin and were derived from Teutonic name-stems.

The growth of cities was a further occasion for an expansion of family names. Strangers brought together, whether for trade or for socialising, had a need to distinguish two or more individuals so when there was more than one Maxwell and each had a different trade one would become known as Maxwell the Miller and the other would be known as Maxwell the Tailor or more simply as Maxwell Miller and Max Taylor. Individuals began to be named after the goods they sold, the tools they used, the district or village they originated from, the colour of their hair, some distinguishing mark on their house, or some other peculiarity, so as to distinguish one individual from all others.

In the category of names derived from the father's name were the Scandinavian names Beling, Metzeling, Meurling and Thuring. English names in this category are Browning and Whiting. Dutch names belonging to this category are those ending in sz because the original suffix zoon (son) underwent contraction. Examples are very common and include Jansz (from Janszoon), Claasz, Dirksz, Anthonisz, Martensz, Lourensz and Woutersz. These surnames ending in sz became permanent when an older family name fell into disuse as for example when Johann the son of Wouter of the family Brohier was called by his friends Johann Woutersz. In time he became known generally by this name. Gradually the Brohier name fell into disuse and Woutersz became the family name. The Dutch have more recently eliminated the z or replaced it with an e. Frisian Burgher names are Tadema, Edema, Ferwerda and Flanderka. Similar to these are the English names Anderson, Robinson and Richardson. The Scots prefix is Mac so MacDonald is the son of Donald. The French prefix is fils now corrupted to Fitz as in Fitzgerald. In Wales they placed the word ap between father and son's name. This was later contracted and ap Richard became Prichard and ap Evan became Bevan. Similar Dutch names are de Jong (the young), and Jonklaas (young Claas or Nicolaas). Names derived from Latin include Martinus, Sansoni and Ludovici (Ludovicus).

Any attempt to trace the origin of family names requires a search of history and migrations. The southern part of the Netherlands (the further lands) are now Flemish Belgium and when the first Ferdinand arrived in Ceylon in the early eighteenth century he departed from that part of the Netherlands that is now Flemish Belgium. Ferdinands, originally Ferdinand, became Ferdinandzoon, then Ferdinandz and finally Ferdinands. The name is a common European first name.

In the second category were names derived from places. Many Dutch names have van meaning 'of' or 'from'. Examples are van Buren and van Eersel. Buren is in the Betuwe district of the province of Gelderland and Eersel is a village in the province of North Brabant in south Holland. Marijke van Eersel is therefore Marijke from Eersel. Van Dort is 'from Dort', the ancient name for Dordrecht in south Holland where the Reformed Church synod was held in 1618. Houten is near Utrecht and Cuylenburg is on the Rhine.

Beek is a brook so Kriekenbeek is a brook of wild cherry and Wambeek is a mud locked brook. Berg is a hill or rocky outcrop so Drieberg is three hills, Langenberg is from the long hill, Kalenberg is bare hill and Willenberg is a hill of willows. Berg is a bridge so Leembruggen means bridges of clay and van der Wall is from the rampart.

Names derived from occupations included: de Kretser (carder of wool) Cramer (pedlar) Schneider (tailor), Meier (bailiff), Schumacher (shoemaker), Schokman (taxer or appraiser), Muller (miller), Visser (fisherman) Grenier (grain storekeeper), Poulter (poulterer), Blaze (blower of horn at tournaments), Koch (cook), Wittensleger (a propounder of the law), Prins (prince), de Heer (lord), and de Boer (farmer). Speldewinde is from two words. Spelde (a pin or needle) and winden (to wind). Poulter and Brohier are French Huguenot names.

Names comprising nicknames or personal attributes, included: de Groot (great), de Vry (free), Francke (open hearted), Ernst (earnest), Loos (sly), de Bruin (brown), de Rooy (red), de Wit (white), Grys (grey), de Haan (the cock), de Leeuw (the lion), de Vos (the fox), Falck (falcon), Arend (eagle), Struys (ostrich), de Hoedt (hat), Loten (a sapling), de Ly (lily) and Scharenguivel (scissors combined with guivel or gable).

There were a large number of names in Ceylon derived from the Portuguese and examples are: Silva, de Silva and da Silva (wood), Pereira (pear tree), Oliveira (olive tree), Carvallio (oak tree), Corea (ball), Caldera (cauldron), Boteju (an earthen vessel), Croos/Cruz (cross), Rosairo/Rosario (rosary), Cardoza (an instrument for carding wool) and Almeida (part of a ship). Rodrigo and Fernando are personal names. Fonseka (from fontes, a fountain), Gonsalves (from consolar, to comfort), and Saram (from sarao or meeting for dancing).

Many of these names were taken by Sinhalese families but such names as de Silva, de Sousa, de Zoysa, Gonsalves, Dias, Pereira, Peries, Fonseka, Rodrigo, Fernando and Perera belonged to families that were of Portuguese paternity and were taken by ethnic Sinhalese when converting to Catholicism or when transferring from village to town life. Many ethnic Sinhalese have reverted to their original 'ge' (family) names after independence.

The tendency to misspell and anglicise names also occurred. Werkmeester was sometimes spelt Werkmeister and Gaenger was anglicised to Ginger. Many Ceylon Burgher names are being Australianised to help pronunciation e.g. Scharen uivel is often now spelt 'Scarnivel' and Ohlmus is no longer pronounced 'Holoms' ut is now pronounced '01mus'.

Sometimes the possession of a Dutch surname may not indicate Dutch ancestry and may be because of some other connection such as the emancipated slave of a Dutch owner.

Burgher names from the Dutch period

'Arthur N. Ohnimesz' (a pseudonym for B.R. Blazé) published a list of Burgher names in 1934 in his book *The Lees of Lanka*. Those names are listed below. An asterisk "*" against a name indicates that a genealogy for that name has been published in the DBU Journals. Every genealogical table recorded the year the original ancestor arrived in Ceylon or was married in Ceylon, with the town/district/state/country of departure from Europe together with subsequent births, deaths and marriages up to the time the genealogy was published.

The Dutch Reformed Churches maintained registers of baptisms, marriages and deaths from the date of arrival of the earliest ancestor in Ceylon. The Anglican churches maintained similar records from about the 1860s or 1870s. The Roman Catholic churches did not maintain full or complete records of baptisms, marriages

and deaths until the early 20th century so the genealogies of Catholic families are more difficult to authenticate.

DBU Journal Volume XII (1920) reported that a few family histories of Dutch descendants could not be fully authenticated because of the loss or damage to a few Jaffna, Trincomalee, Batticaloa, Mannar and Kalpitiya church records from the Dutch period.

Individual family genealogies were complete at the time of publication in the Journal but later births, deaths and marriages would, naturally, not be included.

DBU Journal Volume LVIII (Jan–Dec 1968 pp. 53-58) contained a complete list of family genealogies that had been published up to that date. A few genealogies were added later. Genealogies only applied to those individuals named in them.

The author has not included an example of a Burgher family genealogy. Those documents should be of interest only to the immediate family. Sufficient information has been included here to enable interested readers to commence the search for their own family history.

417 (Dutch) Burgher family names

(from *The Lees of Lanka* published by 'Ohnimesz' [B.R.Blazé] in 1934).

"Albrecht	*Aldons	*Altendorff	*Alois
*Anderson	*Andree,	Andriesen	Andriesz
*Anthonisz	*Armstrong	*Arndt	*Austin
*Auardt			
Baillie	Baines	Balmond	Balthazaar
Baptist	Barber	*Barbut	Barsenbach
Bartels	Barthelot	*Bartholomeusz	*Beekmeyer
*Beling	Bennett	Berenger	Bertus
"Beven	*Bilsborough	*Blazé	Blom
*Bogaars	*Bogstra	Boucher	*Brohier
Bulner	*Bultjens		
*Carron	*Caspersz	*Christoffelsz	*Claasz,
"Claessen	Clementi-Smith	*Colin-Thomé	*Collette
*Colomb	*Conderlag	*Conradi	Cooke
*Cordiner	Corteling	Cramer	*Crowe
*Crozier			
*da Silva	*Daniels	Danielsz	Daviot
*de la Harpe	*de Bruin	*de Moor	de Kretser
*de Boer	de Breard	de Caan	*De Zilwa
de Witt	*de Niese	*de Neys	*de Vos
*de Heer	*de Rooy	*de Hoedt	de Fry
de Haan	*de Jong	*de Jonk	de Vries
Dekker	*Demmer	*de Song	*Deutrom
*Dickman	*Dirckze	*Dornhorst	*Drieberg
Eagar	*Eaton	*Ebell	*Ebert
*Edema	Elders	*Ephraums	*Ernst
*Felsing,	*Ferdinands (Ferdinand)	*Foenander	Franciscus
*Francké	*Fretz	Frewin	*Fryer
*Garnier	*Garvin	*Gauder	*Giessler
Giffening	*Gilles	*Ginger (Gaenger)	Godlieb

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*Gogerley	Grabau	*Gratiaen	*Grenier
*Hasselmeyer	Hay	Henricus	*Hepponstall
*Herft	*Hessé	*Heyn	*Heynsbergh
*Heyzer	Hingert	*Hoffman	*Hole
Holsinger	*Honter	Horan	*Hughes
*Hulft	*Hunter	*Huybertsz	
Ingleton			
Jan	Jansen	*Jansz	Janszé
*Jennings	Jensen	Joachim	Jobsz
*Jonklaas	*Joseph	Juriansz	
Kalé	*Kalenberg	*Keegel	*Keith
*Kelaart	Kellar	Kemp	*Kerfbyl
*Keuneman	Keyt	*Koch	Koelman
Koelmeyer	Koertsz	*Kreltszheim	*Kriekenbeek
Lalmon	*Landsberger	*La Brooy	Le Mercier
*Leembruggen	*Lempfers	*Loftus	*Loos
*Lorensz	*Lorenz	*Lourensz	*Ludekens
*Ludovici	Ludowyke	Lutersz	
*Maartensz	*Mack	Marcus	*Margenout
"Martensteyn	*Martensz	*Martin	Martinus
Mc Heyzer	*Meewald	*Meier	Melder
Mellonius	*Metzeling	*Meurling	*Meynert
Melhuisen,	*Misso	*Modder	*Moldrich
*Mooyaart	*Morgan	*Mottau	*Muller
*Nagel	*Nell	*Nicholas	
*Ohlmus	*Oorloff	*Oppenheimer	Orr
Oudtschoorn,			
Passe	*Paulusz	Peglote	*Perkins
*Piachaud	Pietersz	*Pompeus	*Poppenbeek
*Potger	*Poulier	*Prigge	*Prins
Pritchett			
*Raffel	Rankine	*Raymond	*Redlich
*Reimers	Reyhardt	*Rodé	Roeloffsz
*Runtsdorff	*Roosmalecocq	*Rooy	*Rose
Rudolph	Rulach		
*Sansoni	Sauer	*Scharenguivel	*Schneider
Schofield	*Schokman	Schoorman	*Schrader
Schriver	*Schroter	Schuiling	*Schumacher
*Sela	*Siebel	Siegertsz	*Sissouw
*Smit	*Smith	Soertsz	Solomonsz
*Spar	*Speldewinde	*Spittel	*Sproule
*Staples	Stewart	Steyn	*Stork
Struys	*Swan		
*Thiedeman	*Thomasz	*Thomet/Thomé	*Thuring
*Toussaint	Tranchell		
*Uhlenbeck	Underwood		
van Arkadie	*van Buren	*van Buuren	*van Cuylenberg
*van Dort .	*van Estrop	van Eyck	van Granberg
*van Geyzel	van Hoff	van Huyzen	*van Twest
*van Houten	*van Langenberg	*van Ranzow	van Reyk
*van Rooyen	van Sanden	van Schoonbeek	van Starrex
van Zyl	*van den Driesen	van den Berg	van der Gert
van der Gucht	van der Heyden	van der Hoeven	van der Pooten

van der Say	*van der Spaar *	van der Smagt	*van der Straaten
*van der Wall	van der Wal	*van der Wert	van der Zeil
*Vollenhoven	*von Drieberg	*von Hagt	von Meybrink
*Walbeoff	*Wambeek	*Weinman	*Wendt
*Werkmeister	*Willé	*Willenberg	*Williamsz
*Wittebron	*Wittensleger	*Woutersz	*Wright
Wydeman.			

455 Burgher names from the British period

'Burgher', as an ethnic label, commenced only after the arrival of the British. During the British period the word was extended to refer to the descendants of the Portuguese, British and other Europeans. The word became a generic term to classify the mixed European/Asian community, eventually applying to all or most of the following:

- Portuguese, Dutch, British and other European descendants.
- persons who thought of themselves as 'Burghers'.
- persons who were thought of as 'Burghers' by the Burgher community.
- persons who were thought of as 'Burghers' by the other communities in Sri Lanka.
- Eurasians and unions between British males and Asian females.

'Burgher' eventually became a generic term for those who spoke English, did not think of themselves as belonging to any other ethnic Sri Lankan community, wore western dress, were 'westernised' in their life-style, ate their food with cutlery, had a European name and were Christian. The 'Burgher' community boundaries continually widened during the 150 years of British hegemony but shrank after political independence because it then became socially, politically and economically disadvantageous to be classified as a 'Burgher'.

Certain persons with names in this appendix and of Sri Lankan origin may not have considered themselves 'Burghers' or 'Eurasians' in Sri Lanka. Some names may not be spelled correctly here, in others the spelling of the name may have changed over time, or been 'anglicised', and could have had a Dutch origin.

Abel	Achilles	Adolphus	Adriansz
Alexander	Allen	Allon	Andrews
Aley	Alphonso	Ambrose	Andrado
Aponso	Arendst	Arendtsz	Armitage
Armer	Arnolda	Ashe	Assauw
Atkinson	Atwell	Augustine	
Bagot	Baldsing	Ball	Balmond
Barrow	Bastiaensz	Bayley	Berman
Bernard	Blacker	Blake	Blok
Bocks	Booy	Boulton	Boustead
Bowen	Breckenridge	Brooy	Brown
Buttery	Byrd		
Caldera	Cameron	Campbell	Cannon
Capper	Chapman	Christiansz	Clarke
Cockburn	Cole	Collinson	Coopman
Corfield	Corner	Cowley	Craggs
Crake	Croner	Croos	Crusz

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Crutchley			
D' Silva	D'Witt-Barbut	D'Abrera	D'Olivera
D'Zylva	D'Costa	D'Cruz	Daniel
Davidson	Dawson	de la Zilwa	de la Motte
de Motte	de Ley	de Lisle	de Waas
de Zilva	de Alwis	de Andrado	de Costa
de Fransz	de Kauwe	de Pinto	de Run
de Silva	de Rosairo	de Souza	de Rozairo
de Soysa	de Saram	de Joedt	de Jong
de Silva	de Costa	de Joodt	De Bond
De Lima	De Koning	De Selfa	De Crusze
Dekker	Dender	Denlow	Dias
Dickson	Direckz	Dirksze	Dixon
Dobbs	Dolay	Don Paul	Don
Duckworth	Dunsford	Durrant	
Edwards	Elhart	Elias	Enright
Erfson	Evarts	Ewart	
Faber	Fairweather	Felsianes	Feltham
Ferdinando	Ferdinandus	Fernand	Fernandez
Fernando	Fernands	Ferreira	Flamer-Caldera
Flanderka	Floor	Forbes	Forster
Fox	Francisco	Frank	Fredericks
Friskin	Frugneit	Furlong	
Garth	Geddes	Georgesz	Gerhard
Gerreyn	Gibson	Gonsal	Goodacre
Goodchild	Gomes	Gomesz	Gomez
Graham	Gramberg	Gray	Grebe
Greet	Greeves	Gregory	Grigson
Guinan	Gurney	Greve	Grieve
Hall	Halliday	Hamer	Hamilton
Hannibalsz	Hardy	Harmer	Harpe
Harridence	Harridge	Harris	Hart
Harvie	Hatch	Heliams	Helsham
Henderling	Henry	Hensman	Herman
Hermon	Herrick	Hill	Hindle
Holmes	Hopthan	Houten	
Inch	Ingram	Isaacs	Isaacson,
Jackson	Jacobs	Jacotine	Jenkins
Johnson	Jones	Josef	
Kaule	Kelly	Kennedy	Kenny
Kerkoven	Kern	Kerner	Kiel
Kleyn	Knower	Koertsz	Krasse
Krause	Kronenberg		
La Faber	Lamont	Lawrence	Leonard
Lewis	Lieversz	Lindsay	Livera
Lobendhan	Lobo	Lord	Lucas
Lynch			
Maas	Macky	Maloney	Manricks
Mant	Marks	Marschner	Marshall
Martil	Martinesz	Mason	Mathias
Mathiasz	Mathysz	Matthews	Matthiesz
Mc Carthy	Meares	Miller	Moldrecht
Moreira	Morel	Moreno	Morrison

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Mortier	Mortimer	Moses	Mulholland
Murcott	Murray	Muster	
Nathanielsz	Nazareth	Nelson	Newman
Neydorf	Nicholson	Nicol	Nicollé
Nielson	Nugara		
O'Connor	Ockers	Offen	Ondaatje
Oosthmuller	Orchard	Osborne	Othen
Overlunde	Owen		
Palmer	Pate	Paternott	Patterson
Paul	Peck	Peiris	Peries
Pendegrast	Pereira	Perera	Peter
Peterson	Petronelli	Phoebus	Pinder
Pinto	Plunket	Pollocks	
Rabot	Ragel	Raux	Rayen
Rebeira	Rebera	Reginald	Reid
Reith	Rezel	Richards	Richardson
Roberts	Robertson	Rodrigo	Rodrigoe
Rodriguez	Roofe	Rosayro	Rowlands
Rozairo	Rozayrio	Ruston	
Salgado	Salvador	Schafter	Scheepens
Seilman	Senaris	Senn	Sepion
Serpanchy	Shaw	Shedden	Shoecroft
Sieket	Singanetti	Silva	Simmons
Simmons	Simms	Simon	Simons
Slegers	Slemmerman	Solomons	South
Souza	Speering	Spencer	St. George
St. John	Stanislaus	Stephens	Stephenson
Stonehewer	Stouter	Strange	Stonach
Symons	Syms		
Taylor	Templaar	Thompson	Thurgood
Tilley	Titus	Todd	Tucker
Tyler			
Vincent	Vandergreft	VanderHoff	van Heer
van der Laan	Varney	Vaz	von Bergheim
Vergis			
Wagenaar	Wait	Walker	Wallace
Wallis	Warkus	Weber	Webster
Wells	Whatmore	White	Williams
Wilson	Winn	Winslow	Winter
Wise	Witham	Wolfe	Wyman
Young			
Ziegelaar	Zimsen		

APPENDIX 3

Some early Burgher names

The DBU Journals for 1927 (pp. 80-84), 1928 (pp. 49-52, pp. 90-91, pp. 124-125, pp. 152-155), and 1929 (pp. 102-104, pp. 182-183) contain lists of marriages in Colombo in the period 1700 to 1750. The great majority of the names are of Dutch, German, Belgian and Scandinavian origin but there are also a number of well-known Portuguese names such as Pereira, de Silva, de Sylva, d'Almeda, Perera, de Mist, Theunis, D'Eerbare, Fernandus, Fernando, Rosairo, Pieris, Salgado, Rodrigo, Rodrigues, Rozayro, Lodewykse, Dias, Caldera, Gomes, Correa, Tissera, Francisca, de Costa and Vaas.

DBU Journal Volume X of 1917, (p. 97), contains a list of Burgher marriages in Jaffna between 1843 and 1854. Included among the names are:

Anderson, Adriaansz, Alexander, Augustyn, Bartholomeusz, Beekmeyer, Britto, Brechman, de Hoedt, de Niese, Ebell, Frynsbergh, Grenier, Gratiaen, Garnier, Hanibalsz, Heynsbergh, Hardy, Jansz, Janszjie, Kreltzheim, Kriekenbeek, Koch, Keegel, Leembruggen, Lopez, Melder, Margenout, Maartensz, Martinesz, Moses, Nolan, Peterson, Philipsz, Pietersz, Roelofsz, Slemmerman, Speldewinde, Theile, Toussaint, Thiedeman, Van Zyl, Vandergucht, Vanderhoeven, vander Straaten, Wittebron, and Weber (p. 97).

The DBU Journals for 1908 (pp. 37-40, 85-88), 1909 (pp. 92-95), and 1910 (pp. 158-160), contain lists of some of the founders of families who arrived from Europe and settled in Ceylon during the period of the Dutch administration between 1640 and 1796. There are 134 names and about 85 of the names were still current in the 1960s in Sri Lanka.

Dutch inhabitants in Galle at the time of the capitulation had to sign an undertaking that they would not leave Galle and/or directly or indirectly correspond, aid or assist the enemies of the English. Among the Dutch names are many that were well known in the Burgher community of the 1950s. Some of those names, from the article in DBU Journal Volume XIV 1924 by R.G. Anthonisz, are:

Fretz, van der Spar, de Ly, Roosmale Cocq, Rabinel, van Geyer, Brechman, Kleyn, Booy, Huybertsz, de Vos, Anthonisz, Frobus, Martensz, von Bergheim, Moltrecht, Reyhardt, van Hoven, Deutrom, Poulier, Meyer, Meurling, Vollenhoven, Piertersz,

Baptist, Smitz, de Moor, van Geyzel, Engelbrecht, Aldons, Gratiaen, van den Broek, Cadenski, Hollenbeek, Hingert, Ludovici, Prins, Huybertsz and Buultjens (pp. 5152).

A similar undertaking was signed by the Dutch in Jaffna (DBU Journal XIV 1925) on the capitulation of that town. Here are some of the names.

Williamsz, Kellens, Toussaint, Kats, Verwyk, Driemond, Heynsburgh, Mom, de Niese, Hesler, Keegel, Bartholomeusz, van Hoorn, Gamier, Kwesius, Cadenski, van der Gucht, de Hoedt, de Wolff, Modder, Schneider, van Schoonbeek, de Rooy, Scheffer, Grieve, Otto, Marcus, Dirksz, Kruis, Claasz, Smith, Koch, Schrader, Corteling, Sonnenberg, Specht, de Bondt, de Vos and van de Putt (p.137).

DBU Journal XIV of January 1925 had a list of Dutch 'company servants' who had been granted temporary allowances by the British Government in 1796 in terms of the Capitulation. Among the names are van Dort, Martensz, Andriesz, de Jong, Spoor, van Buuren, Dirksz, Fretz, Aldons, Le Dulx, Woutersz, Loos, Gerhard, van Geyzel, Brinkman, van Hagt, Spittel, Hoffman, Singer, de Vos, Maas, Felsing, Mack, de Run, Kalenberg, Heer and Pompeus (p. 90).

APPENDIX 4

The Dutch census of Jaffna in 1694

The Dutch conquered the last Portuguese stronghold, the fortress of Jaffna, in 1658. A copy of the 1694 census, which excluded the indigenous inhabitants, shows a population of 1062 persons. The census records 131 families, 105 adult males, 118 adult females, 147 sons & 105 daughters, no grandfathers, 14 grandmothers, 15 nurses, 263 male slaves & 295 female slaves.

The inhabitants are classified as Pustis (European born in Europe), Castis or Casties (European born in the East), Mestiza or Mixties (European/Dutch father and Asian mother), Castize or Casties (children of Mestizas), Toepas (child of a Portuguese man and an Asian woman), and Swarte (a Christian native). Non-Christian natives were not enumerated and, of the 1062 persons, 586 lived in the Jaffna fort and 476 lived outside.

The Dutch had arrived as Europeans and Calvinists, but it is apparent that the next generation quickly became mixed and often Catholic. It was only at the higher levels of the administration that Dutch ethnicity and Protestant religious affiliation appear to have been retained in the "early decades of Dutch occupation. The Portuguese names of the castis, mestize and topase wives strongly suggest they were Catholics.

There were thirty-two unmarried soldiers, single women, widowers and widows and the brothers Domingo and Francisco Fernando operated a lodging house. Among the occupations listed were: clergy, surgeon, explosives maker, gunner, watchman, book-keeper, carpenter, soldier, sailmaker, court official, sailor, verger or sexton, crew master, constable, clerk, midwife and merchant.

The number of persons classified as widows and orphans surprised the author but was probably normal for that time and that place. The greatest number of slaves belonged to the predicant or church minister and was followed by the dessave or commander. Not all families had slaves but all families with children did have slaves.

There were sixteen families where both parties were Europeans and these consisted of the families of the administrator or dessave, his senior assistants, and the clergy. There is evidence of numerous marriages between the Dutch and Europeans with Portuguese descendants and Portuguese/Asian mixtures. Four Dutchman had married Asians but no information is given about the Asian wives other than the

words 'with a black wife'. There was also no information about the slaves, other than gender and the number in each household.

Among the sixteen Pustis families (Europeans born in Europe) married to Castis (Europeans born in the East and shown below in italics) were:

Jan van den Briel & Magdalena Verwijck, Hendrick Warnar & Catharina van den Brugge, Dirck Otley & Oetja Wees, Jan van de Bruggen & Maria Pinto, Gerrit Hoving & Anna Boner, Aarnout Mom & Maria Debajro, Hugo Cuyk & Anna Maria Elles, Caspaar Tielensz & Anthonia d'Moninho, Jan van der Brugge & Margareta van den Broeck and Salomen Acquet & Elisabet Latter.

There were fifty-five families where one or both partners were Mestize (half European and shown below in italics). In every instance the woman was a Mestize. Among them were:

Jacob Hum & Susanna Koch, Harmen Roelofsz & Domingo Michielse, Thomas Pietersz & Anthonica Gomes, Jan de Kraan & Maria de Soysa, Willem van den Broecke & Anna De Livera, Jacob Jansen & Christina Jansz, Harmen Lamertsz & Catherina Perera, Andries Pintatus & Magdalena de Croes, Pieter Grootman & Anna Claasz, Rombout Vlamingh & Maria Winter, Aelbert Dircksz & Margareta van Oldenburg, Michiel Bogaart & Francisca de Sosa, Dirck Mauritz & Anthonia d' Andrado, Harman Claasz & Simoa Consalvos, Daniel Commele & Maria Rodrigues, Eldert Jansz & Maria Verwijck, Willem Honter & Anna Rodrigues, Lubbert Gillisz & Maria Gonsalvos, Marten Anthonisz & Christina Hans, Jan Bartholomeusz & Leonora Cabrac.

Twenty four inter- Tupase marriages had occurred between Tupases/Toepasse (half Portuguese and half Asian and shown below in italics). Marriage had also taken place between Tupases and other ethnic mixtures. Examples were:

Philippus d'Rosairo & Francisca d'Livera, Wynand Moors & Antonia de Mel, Jacob Maurisz & Susainca Gonsalvos, Cornelis Jansz & Louysa Rosairo, Pieter d' Craan & Anna de Costa, Thomas Rodrigues & Isabella Chianlio, Christiaan Foesacker & Antonica d'Silva, Pieter Jansz & Margareta Rodrigo, Matthijs van der Voor & Barbora Alfonso, Cornelis Jansz & Louisa Pieris, Thome Rodrigo & Agida Cardosa, Isaacq Gerridtsz & Angela de Rosairo, Anthonie Lego & Magdalena Cabral. Robbert Brinckman married Maria Dias who was described as a 'Sinhalese'.

The copy of the 1694 census of Jaffna was made available by F.C.Speldewinde of Canberra, A.C.T. and translated for the author by Wirm Coté of Melbourne.

APPENDIX 5

The Public Services in the 1860s

Included in a 1947 issue of the DBU Journal is an article by J.R. Toussaint 'Ceylon in the sixties'. There are numerous names that would be of interest to the Burgher community in Australia, the United Kingdom and elsewhere. It was a time when the Burghers almost monopolised the professions and the public services. Mr. Toussaint's article appeared in Volume XXXVI or 1947 on pages 21-24, 54-57, 89-92, 130-132, and in Volume XXXVIII of 1948 on pages 26-30. It would have been interesting to compare the 1860s with the 1960s! Most of the Burghers had migrated or were getting ready to migrate.

The year 1869 saw a large number of Ceylonese holding high appointments in the Civil Service. James Swan was Principal Assistant Colonial Secretary with John Dickson (later Sir John) as his assistant. The de Sarams were well represented. David was District Judge of Kurenegala, Christoffel was D.J. of Kalutara, J.H. was Commissioner of Requests in Colombo, John Abraham was D.J. Kegalle. The Assistant Auditor General was Cornelius Dickman, E.W. de Livera was a cadet and A.H. Roosmalecocq was on leave. Strangely enough, the Tamils were not represented in the Civil Service at that time, an omission which they have more than made up now [1947]. Most of the principal posts in the Clerical Service were filled by Burghers. A.H. Lourensz was Chief Clerk of the Colonial Secretary's office and other familiar names among the staff include R.A. Brohier, who rose to become Assistant Auditor General, Francis Ohlmus, J.P. de Vos, W.S. Christoffelsz and W. Van Cuylenburg. George Wendt was head clerk at the Treasury and had as his assistants John Bevan, E.J. Doebbratsz and S.W. Ide. In the Audit Office, A.R. Ginger held the office of Head Clerk and the remaining staff of twenty-one clerks were composed completely of Burghers bearing the familiar names of Meier, Siebel, Aldons, Loos, Woutersz, Van Cuylenburg, etc.

There were 40 Advocates of the Supreme Court, the most senior was G.W. Edema. Abraham Dias, though an Advocate, was in Holy Orders and Christopher Brito [not a Burgher] preferred the schoolmaster's rod to the Advocate's gown. Colombo had only six Advocates, H.F. Mutukrishna [a Tamil], C.A. Lorenz, M. Coomaraswamy [a Tamil], C.L. Ferdinands, James

Alwis and R.H. Morgan. H.J. Kriekenbeek was clerk to the Deputy Queen's Advocate in Jaffna.

In the Education Department, Dr Barcroft Boake [British] ruled the destinies of the Colombo Academy, John Thiedeman was fourth master, Frederick Dornhorst coming next to him. Others, like Egbert Ludekens, James Jansz and H.R. Fretz were designated teachers. The schools for girls were also staffed for the most part by Burgher ladies, the families represented being Lourensz, Thomasz, Poulter, de Kretser, Jansz and Koelmeyer. The Bishop of Colombo filled the dual office of Visitor and Warden of St. Thomas, College. Francis Henry Pereira...and S.G. Edwards were teachers. There was a Boarding School 'for daughters of native gentlemen' under the direction of the Bishop.

The Post Office, whose staff now number in the hundreds, had a staff of twelve. H.A. de Boer was the Principal clerk and among the others were P.M.de Vos and C.A. Vander Straaten. The Customs Department was equally small with nine clerks, H.A. Kriekenbeek being at the head.

A large array of Burghers filled the ranks of the Medical Service with Dr W.P. Charsley [British] at the head. The three Colonial Surgeons were Dr P.D. Anthonisz, Dr H.Dickman and Dr James Loos. Head Clerk was Henry van Dort while Alfred Grenier, who was later Colonial Storekeeper, was Statistical Clerk. Dr C.A. Kriekenbeek was in charge of the Lunatic Asylum, Richard Andréé presided over the destinies of the General Hospital, Dr F.A. Vander Smagt was his assistant. Dr W.C. Ondaatje was in charge of Hulftsdorp Jail with Dr E.L. Koch assisting him. The profession of nursing was only in its infancy...and was regarded as the exclusive field of married women...

The Railway Department was very small, there being only eleven stations. Marcus Vander Straaten was Station Master of Colombo and Edgar VanderStraaten was Chief Clerk of the Traffic Office. Henry Adolphus Collette was assistant clerk and ended his career as Assistant Superintendent of Police. Most of the Guards were European, with a sprinkling of Burghers. Engine Drivers and Firemen were exclusively European, as were the platelayers.

The Oriental was the principal Bank in Colombo and had twenty-two clerks, all Burghers. Other Banks were the Chartered Mercantile, and the Bank of Madras. Here too the clerks were all Burghers. The Ceylon Observer, the Ceylon Times and the Examiner were the newspapers. The Examiner was edited by C.A. Lorenz with Leopold Ludovici as sub-editor and Francis Beven as Assistant Editor.

The Colombo Municipal Council had only recently been established. Burghers filled four of the elected seats, these being held by C.L. Ferdinands, F.C. Loos, C.A. Lorenz and Dr J.W. Van Geyzel. Samuel Grenier, who had just begun practicing as an Advocate, became the first Secretary.

The Pettah library had G.A. Wille as Secretary and C.A. Lorenz, C.L. Ferdinands, J.S. Driberg and J.A. Van Geyzel as the committee. Cornelius Dickman was its first Secretary. The Roman Catholics also established a library of their own about this time. Among the office-bearers were Joseph Wickwar, Marcus Lewis Van der Straaten and Adrian Van Sanden.

There were eight cricket clubs, an Archery Club, a Shooting Club, a Quoits Club and a Paper Hunt Club. Music was represented by the Philharmonic Society and the Quartette Society. Freemasonry was very popular among the Burghers, most of whom favoured the Sphinx Lodge, among them being Dr

C.A. Kriekenbeek, C.A. Lorenz, C.L. Ferdinands, Samuel Grenier, A.S. Andree and L. Ludovici.

Kalutara was then one of the principal outstations and the Burghers were represented there in almost every profession and calling. The law claimed the Orrs, Thomaszs, Van der Walls and Hepponstalls among others. One of the junior Proctors was Hector Van Cuylenberg who in the process of time was to represent the Community in the Legislative Council and to receive the honour of Knighthood. The teaching profession was represented by Frederick William Van Cuylenberg., Dr Peter Henry Van Cuylenberg was Assistant Colonial Surgeon and Henry Morgan, his brother, held the office of Registrar of Lands. Rev Adrian Poulrier was the Wesleyan Minister. Among the private Surveyors were George Anthony de Hoedt and Peter Frederick Ebert. One of the four shops in town was owned by Herod Jansz. Other names, now almost extinct, were Kerkoven, Koys, Jakey and Sougarsz.

Negombo was also fully representative of the Burghers. There were seven Proctors practicing, of whom may be mentioned E.G. Sisouw, C.W. Kalenberg and J.J. Koertsz. The sub-Collector of Customs was W.E. Gratiaen, father of Dr E.S. and Richard Gratiaen. George Henry Leembruggen was Inspector of Schools and Maria Leembruggen was in charge of the Girls' School. The name of Peter Leembruggen appears as a Surveyor as does that of Peter James Van Langenberg. A coach ran between Colombo and Negombo, taking three and a half hours each way (a distance of thirty-five kilometres). The classification was on a racial basis, Europeans paid eight, and natives four shillings.

Kegalle had Dr A.G. Maartenz as Assistant Colonial Surgeon, Rev G.H. Gomes did the work of S.P.G. Missionary, and two Proctors, Henricus de Livera and Philip de Saram, coped with the work of the Avissawella and Pasyala Courts. The clerk at Avissawella was Francis Frederick Theodore La Brooy.

Head clerk at the Kachcheri at Ratnapura was John Henry Schroter. George Michael Willé was Clerk to the Committee on Minor Roads and among Proctors we find the names Drieberg, De Zilwa, Oorloff and Vandenberg. Dr J.W. Margenout was in medical charge of the district and William Henry Gomes was S.P.G. Minister.

Kandy had Cecil Van Langenberg as Chief Clerk, the other clerks being G.A. Poulrier, J.A. Ebert, E.D. Barthomeusz and C.A.C. Ebert. The Municipality, which had not long been established, had four Wards and the members representing the first two were Advocate C.L. Van de Wall and Advocate James van Langenberg. J.A.Poulrier was Chief Clerk, F.A. Jonklaas was Third Clerk and Charles van Dort was chief inspector. George Wambeek was Secretary to the District Judge and Owen William Cecil Morgan was Deputy Queen's Advocate. Among lawyers we find the names Beven, Eaton, Ferdinands, Siebel, Van Twest, Staples, Pompeus, Andreé and Joseph. The Fiscal's office had John Brooke de Hoedt as Head Clerk. There was an European Superintendent of Police with William Vincent Woutersz as his office Assistant and two Inspectors, Peter Liebert Keegel and John George Maartenz. Archdeacon Mooyart was Church of England Chaplain. The elders of the Church of Scotland (there was no Dutch Reformed Church in Kandy), included R.P. Jansz, George Wambeek, and W.V. Woutersz. The medical care of the District was in the charge of Dr H. Dickman with Dr J.T. Morgan and Dr F.A. Van der Smagt to assist him. The Railway and Telegraph Departments were largely staffed by Burghers, while the office of Registrar of Lands was filled by William Edema, a

senior Advocate. The leading Bank was the Oriental and had on its staff, John Gerard Paulusz, the grandfather of our Government Archivist, who combined banking with stamp-vending. Under 'Physicians' we find the names John Robert Ebert and Francis William Ferdinands. One of the watchmakers was Charles Magnus Cramer. The Editor of the Kandy Herald was John Capper. There were two Masonic Lodges, one confined to Europeans and the other open to Ceylonese as well.

Gampola had only three Proctors, all Burghers. They were Edgar Edema, William Van Dort and C.W. de Hoedt. Dr W.G. Van Dort was Medical Officer of the District. Nuwara Eliya was an insignificant place, the Kachcheri staff consisting of the Assistant Government Agent and three officials. John William Francis Bartholomeusz was a clerk. There were three Proctors, one being James George Bartholomeusz.

Badulla had an Assistant Government Agent. There were two Advocates and seven Proctors, all of whom were Burghers. Among officers of the Public Works Department appears the name of Henry. S. Potger, father of Lady Schneider. Frederick Grenier and his wife were in charge of the Government schools for boys and girls. Dr Frederick Keyt was the District Medical Officer and Rev C.W. de Hoedt looked after the spiritual wants of the Anglicans. Haputale had a Police Court and two Proctors, one of whom was John Van der Wall who came from Kandy.

Galagedera Court had Proctor M.G. Willenberg. Matale had its Kachcheri and Police Court, one of the Proctors being Francis Albert Prins.

The Head Clerk of the Galle Kachcheri was Henry Frederick Jansz who was assisted by Henry Bogaars, Charles William Jansz, Frederick William Booy and two others. The Customs Department was staffed by members of families who, until recent times, were represented in that Department, among them being Joseph, Jansz, Anthonisz, Deutrom and Daviot. The Municipality had Edwin Ludovici as its Secretary and Henry Frederick Jansz represented the Hirimbura Ward. Cyrus Henry Speldewinde was Superintendent of Roads. The Secretary of the District Court was John Henry de Zilwa. He had Charles Benjamin Bogaars and Albert Ernest Jansz working for him. Louis Nell, father of Dr Andreas Nell, was Deputy Queen's Advocate. Among Proctors were the names de Vos, Ludovici, Jansz and Keegel. The Fiscal's office had John Edwin Kellar as Deputy Fiscal while Johannes Everhardus Jansz was Jail Master. The Church of England had Dr G.J.Schrader as Colonial Chaplain. Dr J.K. Clarke was in charge of the Dutch Reformed church.-Consistory elders were John Ursinus Wittensleger and Cyrus Henry Speldewinde. Joseph Richard Anthonisz was Preceptor. The Pilots in the Port of Galle were all Burghers, the Registrar of Lands was J.F. Lorenz, brother of C.A. Lorenz, the Headmaster of the Government Central school was James Edmund Anthonisz, and among the assistant teachers were William Auwardt, Francis Ebenezer de Zilwa and Joseph Richard Anthonisz. Charles Peter Gerard de Vos was Deputy Postmaster General and had four clerks, all Burghers, to assist him. Dr P.D. Anthonisz was medical officer in charge of the District with Dr J.L. van der Straaten to assist him. The Book Club librarian was George Edward Jansz. Three members of the Van der Spaar family represented four of the foreign Consulates and Charles William Perkins was a clerk at the Chartered Mercantile Bank. Sea View Hotel was owned by Reginald Clement Ephraums, there were five Auctioneers with names of Armstrong, Blok, de Zilwa, Baptist and Eaton. Joachim

Barsenbach was the Men's Tailor and William Jansz managed the stage coach. The highest fare was payable by Europeans, next Burghers and natives brought up the rear. The photographer was Adolphus William Andree and the watchmakers were three Flerk brothers.

At Balapitiya the Chief Clerk of the Fiscal's office was Henry Barnes Fontyn. The sub-collector of Customs was Albertus Carolus Anthonisz and Adriaan Van Rooyan was a Notary.

At the Matara Kachcheri, the translator (an unusual job for a Burgher) was William Darley Altendorff and the third Clerk in the Fiscal's office was Henry James Woutersz. Among the Proctors were the familiar names of Buultjens, Altendorff, Keuneman, Jansz, Kellar, Poulier and de Zilwa. Robert Leembruggen, destined to rise much higher, was First teacher at the boys school and his wife performed a similar role at the girls school. The Registrar of Lands was William Louis Ludekens and William Arnold Woutersz was in medical charge of the District. The Dutch Reformed Church Minister was Wilfred Charles Van der Wall, the Elder was Jurgen David B. Keuneman and Deacons were R.A. de Zilwa, C.H.B. Altendorff, G.H. Speldewinde and R.H. Leembruggen. The Wesleyan Mission was in charge of Rev Zacchaeus Nathanielsz.

At Tangalle, James Rudolph Ludovici was clerk of the District Court, John Richard Buultjens was Jailer and William Anthony Claessen was one of only two Proctors.

Hambantota had Eugene Rose as Head Clerk, Superintendent of the salt works was Joseph Lambert Kellar, Arthur Francis Koch was Inspector of Police and the only merchant with a Burgher name was Wilhelmus Dolpheus de Zilwa.

Among the clerks at the Jaffna Kachcheri were Charles Henry Theodore Koch, James Francis Koch and Caspar Henry George Leembruggen. John Henry Toussaint was on the Provincial Road Committee with Charles Strantenberg and the Customs Department had Ferdinand Adolphus Maartensz as First Clerk and Henry Frederick Speldewinde as sub-collector at Kankersanturai. Clerks of Courts were Bernard Edward Grenier, John Loos, and William de Rooy. The chief clerk and 'Interpreter' was Henry James Kriekenbeek. Among the Proctors were the names Anderson, Maartensz, Toussaint, Rulach and Koch. The Survey Department had George Benjamin Capper; Simon John Speldewinde and John Koch were Registrars of Lands, Dr James Loos was Colonial Surgeon and his assistant was Dr Arnold Henry Toussaint. Rev F.C. La Brooy was Colonial Chaplain, and the Dutch Reformed Church Elders were Margenout, Leembruggen, Toussaint, Kriekenbeek and Koch. Brothers John Henry and Bernard Adrian Toussaint had a business as General Merchants, James Peter de Hoedt was Auctioneer, and John Charles Henricus was Editor of the Jaffna Freeman newspaper. The Burghers were active in literary activities. Dr James Loos was Secretary, Francis Toussaint was Treasurer and six of the eight committee members of the Library Committee were Burghers.

The Mannar Kachcheri chief clerk was Patrick de Hoedt, the Sub-collector of Customs was Gerret Leembruggen, Frederick Honter was Secretary of the District Court, William March was a Proctor, John Werkmeister was a clerk in the Public Works Department, Dr John William Claasz was Assistant Colonial Surgeon and the Telegraph Office was manned exclusively by Burghers with the names de Jong, Liversz, Jan and Bulner.

In Anuradhapura the Secretary of the District Court was Henry Charles Brechman. Of the three Proctors, John Justin Christoffelsz and William John Stork were Burghers and the latter later became Deputy Registrar of the Supreme Court.

James Gerret Toussaint was Preventive Officer, John van Zyl sub-Collector and Charles Leembruggen the Landing Waiter at Point Pedro.

In Kurunegala, Charles Barber was Chief Clerk with John Cornelius Ebert as his assistant. James Valentine Daniels was Secretary of the District Court and the other clerks had the family names of Ferdinand, Jobsz and Jansz. William Henry was Deputy Queen's Advocate and two members of the Felsing family were in the Fiscal's Office while a third was a Notary Public.

In Chilaw, Bartholomew Crispeyn was Secretary of the District Court, Bernard van Gunster was Deputy Fiscal, roads were in charge of Frederick Roosmalecoq and Xenophon Daniels was sub-assistant Surveyor. Among the eight Proctors was James Lemphers.

In Puttalam, Samuel Vincent Godlieb was Head Clerk, Michael Alfred Felsing was his Assistant and Francis Robert Bartholomeusz, father of Dr Frank, was clerk to the District Roads Committee. At Kalpitiya, Edmund Edward Godlieb was clerk of the Police Court, Hendrick Lodewyk was Interpreter, Timothy Siegers was native writer. The town had two shops owned by Conrad Arnold Schubert and John Cornelius van Sanden.

The Headquarters of the Eastern Province was Trincomalee. William Jansz was Chief Clerk at the Kachcheri with John Hunter, James Bernard Kahle and John Henry Meerwald assisting. Secretary of the District Court was George Edward Colomb. Two of the three Proctors were Burghers, John George de Vos and William Francis Redlich. The Telegraph office was in charge of Vincent William van Dort.

In Batticaloa, Cornelius Henricus Cadenski was Head Clerk and another with the same family name was Superintendent of Minor Roads. John Roosmalecoq was Sub-collector of Customs, Frederick Struys was clerk to the Deputy Queens Advocate, Thomas Wambeek was clerk in the Fiscal's office and John Lucas Wambeek was the Jailer. At the Bar were Proctors Walter Dionysius Drieberg and Tibertus Roelofsz, in the Survey Department were Henry Hermon de Koning and George William College. The clerk to the Superintending Engineer was Seraphim Outschoorn. The Dispenser of the Friend-in Need Society was Alexander Nimrod Collette.

APPENDIX 6

Freemasonry and the Burghers

The secrecy, fellowship of peers, regalia and ritual of freemasonry combined to make it an institution that had considerable prestige among the elite in Ceylon. Freemasonry was initially practiced by the Europeans and the professional elite and gradually expanded to include Ceylonese professionals and 'planters' of all ethnic groups after World War I. One could not apply to become a member of a lodge, one had to be invited. It was a honour to be asked and only a person who would be comfortable with and bring honour to the Brotherhood, would be invited to join the fraternity. The person who was asked to join did not know, and had no way of finding out, what was expected from him. All he knew was that it was an ancient order of chivalry, an honourable all-male fraternity that did not advertise and where membership was restricted to respected members in society. No person who expressed a wish to join or to obtain some status or benefit would be encouraged or advised to press his application. On the contrary, he would be dissuaded and put-off with a variety of reasons other than the real one.

Freemasonry was a brotherhood of equals who swore to uphold their principles and to assist one another. Membership of a lodge did not come cheap. It took time, money and considerable preparation. To be a Freemason was an important honour for the members of the elite. Catholics and Buddhists, by their own personal beliefs, declined to become Freemasons. Followers of Islam, Christianity, Zoroastrianism and Hinduism find compatibility with freemasonry.

Freemasonry commenced in Ceylon during Dutch times. DBU Journal Volume XXIII of January 1934 has this:

A pamphlet, recently to hand, sets out a list of Dutch Lodges, compiled by the Historical Commission of the Order of Freemasons, under the Grand Lodge of the Netherlands... 'Lodge Fidelity', the oldest Masonic Lodge founded in Ceylon, was opened at Colombo on 20 November 1770, the date of the Warrant, when Dutch affairs in the Island were in the hands of Governor Falck. The Lodge became dormant in 1790. 'Lodge Sincerity' was founded in Galle on 29 November 1772 and also became dormant in 1790. The 'Union Lodge' was

founded in Colombo in 1794 with the colour light green but was dissolved in 1806.

The 1984 Masonic World Guide had this to say about the lodges in Sri Lanka.

The thirteen lodges in Sri Lanka work in complete harmony, and many native-born Ceylonese hold membership. However, numbers are somewhat restricted by religious and income groupings. The low income of many Ceylonese restricts membership to the more affluent who can afford the dues...The lodges are St. George, Duke of Connaught, Orion, Robert Coleridge Scott, St. John's, Nuwara Eliya, Grant, Kurunegala and Adam's Peak (English), Sphinx, Leinster and Dimbula (Irish) and Bonnie Doon (Scottish). There are also the Cryptic Rite and several Chapters including the Rose Croix.

There were Burgher members in almost every lodge. The author decided to restrict his analysis to one lodge, the Kurunegala Lodge No. 3629 E.C, of which he was a member.

A photograph, in the possession of W. Bro. Percy De Zilwa and taken in 1939, shows the lodge members in dinner suits and full regalia. Among the 56 brethren are 32 Burghers, leaders of the community of that day. Kurunegala Lodge then had 32 Burghers, 21 Europeans, one Sinhalese, one Tamil and one Parsee. The Burghers in the photograph are Worshipful Brothers E.W.P.Pritchard, A.L.de Witt, C.G.Schokman, C.M.Jennings, E.L.Keyt, R.L.de B. Brohier, E.F.C.Modder, C.C.Schokman and V.H.L.Anthonisz. The Brothers were E.S.Brohier, L.G.Blaze, C.P.Brohier, L.L.Hunter, J.P.de Vos, J.H.E.de Kretser, P.W.Kaule, C.W.S.Claessen, J.B.Flamerdera, E.A.G.Koch, W.O.Edema, F.W.E.de Vos, C.E.Arndt, V.D.de Vos, N.D.V.Ferdinands, R.Schokman, M.Sansoni, D.B.D'Alwis, W.H.de Kretser, C.A.Speldewinde, S.A.M.Joachim, E.S.de Kretser and C.G.de W. Poulrier.

Fifteen years later, in October 1954, Kurunegala Lodge had increased to 87 Brethren, 52 of whom were Burghers. They included C.M.Jennings, C.E.Arndt, R.L.de B. Brohier, Dr. E. S. Brohier, Dr. L. G. Blaze, C. E. M. Herft, C. P. Brohier, Dr. V.H.L.Anthonisz, C.W.S.Claessen, S.A.M.Joachim, W.H.de Kretser, P.W.Kaule, N.E.Jonklaas, H.K.S.Keyt, E.F.Modder, Dr.E.EE.Kellar, Dr.P. De Zilwa, Dr.T.A.Frewin, Dr.A.S.Outschoorn, F.H.M.Potger, W.C.de Zylva, W.D.Martin, S.E.Spencer, P.D.V.D.Meynert, E.J.W.Solomons, R.Lucien Brohier, C.M.F.Jennings, A.H.Frugtniet, I.C.Meier, T.B.Collette, F.W.R.Jennings, R.D.C.Jonklaas, G.M.Muller, C.M.Koch, W.F.de Zylva, L.V.O.Jonklaas, G.R.W.Martenstyn, E.L.van Langenberg, H.E.W.Solomons, S.G.Jackson, M.S.Flamer-Caldera, D.L.Pate, I.T.B.Jansze and the author.

By 1961, seven years later, most of the Europeans had left Ceylon and the following Burghers had joined Kurunegala Lodge.

Dr.T.L.Blaze, I.W.Rodrigues, M.J.Ondaatje, F.E.Perkins, E.A.Hermon, Dr.P.L.Keegel, C.P.Wambeek, I.R.Nicol, O.N.O.Schokman, L.M.Schokman, G.G.vanden Driesen, G.E.N.Ephraums, C.St.G.Modder, B.F.Stork, J.F.E.Grenier, Dr. J.B.Chapman, Dr. D.T.P.de Zylva, J.A.L.Roosmale-Cocq, Dr.C.O.Foenander, J.Meynert and D.D.B.Hepponstall. The Lodge now consisted of 92 Brethren of whom 65 were Burghers, 9 were Sinhalese, 8 were Tamils, 9 were Europeans and one was a Parsee.

The information that follows was culled from documents lent me by W.Bro. Percy De Zilwa, a member of Kurunegala lodge for over 50 years.

C.M.F.Jennings, A.W. De Zilva, F.J. Roelofs and D.V.Martenstyn were the only 'Burgher' names of members active in Kurunegala Lodge in 1994. The Lodge had 34 members, eight of whom were resident overseas. Members continue to meet every two months. During the 'troubles' in Sri Lanka the curfew made attendance at the usual night meetings very difficult. Kurunegala Lodge overcame this by organising bus transport from the Victoria Masonic Temple in Colombo to Kurunegala for afternoon meetings. During those difficult times all brethren of all Lodges had to be back home before dark. At no time did the Government place restrictions on freemasonry as it was not considered a threat.

In 1964, five Past Masters of Ceylon Lodges met in Melbourne and decided to organise a reunion of Ceylon Masons. They were aware that many of the new arrivals had not joined Lodges in Melbourne and were fully occupied organising jobs, homes and schooling and resolving the difficulties of resettlement in a new country. The reunion was very successful and a 'Ceylon Association of Masons' was formed. They had two objects. The first was to meet and socialise at 'Dinner dances' and general meetings and occasional 'get-togethers' and the second was to act as a referral and recommendation centre for Masons from Sri Lanka who desired admittance to the appropriate ranks and lodges in Melbourne.

Sri Lankans meet, irrespective of ethnicity, in the Ceylon Masons Association in Melbourne. The meetings continue to be popular and their success gives great satisfaction to the founders for it is one of the few institutions where former Sri Lankans meet and socialise, irrespective of their ethnic backgrounds.

In Melbourne, the United Grand Lodge and Chapter have drawn on English, Irish and Scottish Constitutions so there are slight differences in ritual with meetings often exceeding four hours with a greater emphasis placed on correct ritual. Masons usually arrive direct from work so a hot meal is necessary and the South takes longer. Many wives are actively involved as associates in the Masonic Homes and Freemason's Hospital and there are regular 'ladies nights'.

In the old country meetings seldom exceeded two hours, ritual was more relaxed, less formal and, except for banquets on installation nights, took less time. The ladies were not involved with freemasonry in Sri Lanka.

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Proud & Prejudiced

The story of the Burghers of Sri Lanka

Rodney Ferdinands

One of the remarkable aspects of Australia's multicultural society is the smooth and largely conflict-free course of its development. A major contributing factor in this quiet assimilation has been the conscientiousness, guiding ethics and desire for security of the immigrants, both as individuals and as ethnic groups.

The Burghers of Sri Lanka, formerly Ceylon, bear fine testimony to this. Descended from Portuguese, Dutch and British traders and settlers in Ceylon, the Burghers' name, language and culture was formed during British rule, from 1796 until the birth of independent Sri Lanka in 1948.

From the end of World War II until the early 1970s over 10,000 Burghers migrated to Australia and established themselves in similar occupations to those they were employed in at home. With English as their first language, educated in English-style schools and occupying positions of responsibility in Sri Lanka made the Burgher adaptation to Australian life considerably easier than it was for ethnic groups from non-English-speaking countries. However, there were striking differences in the Australian lifestyle, landscape, culture, cuisine and spoken English which demanded much effort and dedication for adaptation and assimilation to occur.

Through historical records, interviews, recollections and anecdotes, this book tells the story of the Burghers before the mass immigration, their exodus to new countries after the war, and their experiences of assimilation in Australia.

Proud and Prejudiced is both a sociological history and a fascinating, informative and personal insight into the heritage of one of the many groups who have influenced Australia's development into the multi-faceted society it is today.

Rodney Ferdinands was born in 1925 in the colony of Ceylon. He was educated in Kandy at Trinity College, became a Chartered Accountant and worked in both government and business organisations. In 1962 he migrated to Australia, continued to work in the field of accounting and financial management and became President of the Institute of Internal Auditors in Victoria in 1982. Returning to study, he graduated from La Trobe University with a BA in Sociology and has been researching and writing the history of the Burgher community for the last three years.



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