

Dr R L Hayman – a life dedicated to the education of Ceylonese

“An Institution is the lengthened shadow of a man”



by
**Thiru
Arumugam**

Early days

Rollo Lenden Hayman MA, DPhil (Oxon), MBE, was born on 14 December 1902 in the London suburb of Clapham. He was the son of William Hayman, a General Practitioner. The family later moved to Bournemouth on the south coast of England. Their beautiful house was right on the edge of a cliff overlooking the sea, in fact, the street was named Boscombe Overcliff Drive. Dr Hayman became the founding father of St. Thomas College, Gurutalawa.

Hayman started his schooling at Wychwood Preparatory School in Bournemouth and in 1914, he was admitted to Sherbourne School in Dorset,



• **Dr R L Hayman**

not far from Bournemouth. This is a private school founded in 1550 and is in the top one per cent of all UK schools. Alan Turing studied here a few years after Hayman. Turing is considered to be the father of Artificial Intelligence and during World War II, he worked at Bletchley Park, the site for British codebreakers, and his Turing Machine cracked the German codes and ciphers and as a result it is estimated that the war in Western Europe was shortened by two years with the saving of 14 million lives.

About 1919, Hayman was admitted to the University of Oxford to read Physics. When he graduated, he decided to continue studying in Oxford and obtained the Phd Physics, his particular field was radiation. Although there was an offer of a Post-Doctoral Fellowship, he decided on a teaching career and trained as a Teacher in North London for Ministry in the Anglican Church.

Meanwhile, K C McPherson, who was the Warden of St Thomas College, Mount Lavinia, from 1926 to 1930, when he was on holiday in 1928 visited Keble College, Oxford where he was educated. He was looking for suitable recruits to join the staff of St

Thomas College and he persuaded Dr Hayman, Rev. A J Foster, Rev. J G Elliot and William Thomas Keble to join St Thomas College. Keble College, Oxford, founded in 1870, was named after W T Keble's great-uncle, John Keble. In 1938, W T Keble founded St Thomas Preparatory School in Kollupitiya. This was the first Prep School in Ceylon and was modelled on a typical private Primary School in England. In 1942, during World War II, the Navy commandeered the School premises and Keble moved to Bandarawela and founded the St Thomas Prep School there. He was also a writer and author of several books, including the travel book “Ceylon Beaten Track.”

When Dr Hayman told his parents that he was going to Ceylon they were initially against it, saying that they had spent a lot on his education and it may well be wasted. Dr Hayman contacted the SPG (Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts) and they told him that Ceylon was working its way to independence and needed good teachers to produce the men who could lead the country. As Dr Hayman said “To this end anything I could teach in England would be equally useful and acceptable in Ceylon. So, in the end my parents rather unwillingly allowed me to follow my wishes.”

Mutwal

St Thomas College was founded in Mutwal in 1851 by Bishop James Chapman. He was an old boy and Master at Eton College, Windsor, and graduated from Kings College, Cambridge. Eton College is arguably the most prestigious private school in England and Bishop Chapman wanted to model St Thomas College along the lines of his former school. It is believed that both schools have the same motto “Esto Perpetua” (Be thou forever). Boys in the highest classes at St Thomas were treated more like undergraduates than schoolboys and were addressed as ‘Mister’. The Curriculum was complex and included the study of Xenophon (a historian and student of Socrates), Cicero (a great Roman prose stylist), Grotius (a 17th century author of theological works), Butler’s Analogy (the full title is “Analogy of Religion Natural and Revealed to the Constitution and Course of Nature”), Aristotle, Mental Philosophy, and Greek Testament. It is not surprising that Warden Baly said of his students “Were it not that their Latin Composition is deficient, they would be on a level with the average Oxford Undergraduates in their second year.”

Mount Lavinia

In the early part of the twentieth century there

was an increasing problem of coal dust from ships coaling in the adjacent Colombo harbour. The whole Mutwal school compound was covered in a layer of coal dust. In 1918, the decision was made to move to the more salubrious climate of Mount Lavinia. Dr Hayman arrived in Mount Lavinia in 1929, just over a decade after the school moved from Mutwal. It was believed that he was the first Assistant Master in any school in Ceylon who had a Doctorate, and that too from Oxford. He started teaching Physics and Mathematics with great enthusiasm.

He also started a long stream of donations to the College. His father was a well-to-do General



• *STC Mount Lavinia Swimming Pool donated by Dr Hayman in 1933 (Courtsey: Sanjeeve De Silva).*

Practitioner and built up a portfolio of investments in British stocks and shares which Dr Hayman inherited. This provided Dr Hayman with a steady income stream. He built and donated a set of Fives Courts in 1931. This was the first school in the country to have Fives Courts. In 1933 he built and donated a full-size swimming pool, complete with filtration plant and diving boards. This was the first school in the country to have a swimming pool. He also became the swimming and diving instructor. He also started Scouting in the school. In 1935 he was appointed Sub-Warden of the school.

In the new site in Mount Lavinia, the school had embarked on a substantial building program in the 1920s. The buildings included the chapel, classrooms and dormitories. The cost of these buildings was financed by borrowings and the issue of debentures with interest rates of 6 percent and in the 1930s the school was finding it difficult to meet the loan repayments. In 1930 R S de Saram was appointed as

the Warden. He was the first old boy and Ceylonese to be the Warden. He also had studied at Keble College, Oxford and won an Oxford Blue for Boxing.

The new Sub-Warden was a pillar of strength to the Warden during this difficult financial period, giving substantial donations to the school. As Warden de Saram said “What Dr Hayman has given to the school nobody knows. He gave us our Swimming Pool – everybody knows that. But he has given a great deal more which nobody knows about. It may be seriously doubted whether he knows himself. He does not let his left hand know what his right hand gives.”

Hayman purchased the house named “Thalassa”, the Greek word for sea, on the beach adjacent to the College and gave it to the College for use primarily as an Office. The combination of de Saram and Hayman at the helm of the school has been described as “a rare blend of Homer and Einstein!” In April 1942 the School suffered a major setback. The Military inspected the place and gave the School just five days to vacate the premises as they wanted to use it as a Military Hospital. It was decided to break up the School, which had 700 students, into four sections and have classes at St Paul’s Girls School, Milagiriya, sharing the premises with the girls; at Girls High School, Mount Lavinia sharing the premises; at Kingswood College, Kandy, again sharing the premises. The fourth premises was to start a new school at Gurutalawa.

Gurutalawa

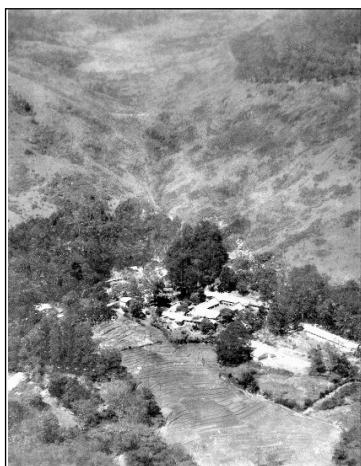
Mr and Mrs Leslie de Saram owned a farm of about 35 acres in a little village called Gurutalawa about five miles from Welimada. Leslie, an old Royalist, was a cousin of Warden de Saram. When they heard that St Thomas College was short of accommodation, they promptly donated the entire Farm to the College, lock, stock and barrel, even including the livestock. There was only one condition attached to the donation, agriculture should be a part of the school curriculum. It was a very generous donation and they even refused to allow their names to be mentioned on the plaque commemorating the donation, it merely says “from two well-wishers”.

The only buildings in the Farm were the Manager’s Bungalow, some out-houses, sheds and servants quarters. Dr Hayman was appointed the Headmaster of the school in April 1942 and he had to prepare the place to accommodate about 50 students. For Dr Hayman, it was a heaven sent opportunity. He had virtually a clean sheet of paper on which to fashion out a school according to his liking. In the long term, he wanted to fashion it after Gordonstoun, the famous school in Scotland where the Duke of Edinburgh and the Prince of Wales studied, which had an emphasis on outdoor life and inculcation of the spirit of adventure. Hayman followed the policy of Gordonstoun which was “We believe that by offering our students a diverse range of experiences and opportunities which go beyond the classroom and

which will challenge and stimulate them physically, emotionally and intellectually, they will develop the qualities and attributes they will need to survive and thrive in a changing world and leave school ready to make a real difference in the world.”

Gurutalawa was an unique school and ultimately had outdoor activities not generally found in other schools in Ceylon such as long distance hiking, horse riding, bird watching, involvement in the farm activities and so on. A typical hike was the day trip to World’s End. We would set off at daybreak with a packed lunch of corned beef sandwiches and follow Dr Hayman for about two or three miles on the road to Borallanda.

At that time the road ended here and we would follow a climbing track of about seven miles to Ohiya railway station. From Ohiya there was a stiff climb along a bridle path for about a mile through a forest where leopards had been spotted, to the undulating hills of Horton Plains which has an elevation up to 7000 feet.



• *Aerial view of STC Gurutalawa nestling in the hills, (Courtesy: STCG62 website)*

It is difficult to imagine what sort of stupidity caused the Government to plant potatoes later in these beautiful plains in the 1960s. Fortunately it was abandoned. It was designated a National Park in 1988. The path would continue on the Plains, passing streams stocked with trout and the Rest House which was at that time accessible only on foot or horseback, and reach World’s End after about four miles. World’s End is so called because there is a sheer drop of 3000 feet (900 m) to Nonpareil tea estate down below.

On a clear day from World’s End there is a beautiful view of southern Ceylon and the Indian Ocean 50 miles (80 km) away. About two years ago, a Dutch honeymooner standing at World’s End stepped backwards to take a photo of his bride and fell over. He fell 130 feet and was entangled in a tree. He was rescued by troops and a helicopter and winched to safety. He was fortunate to have only minor injuries and was the first person to survive a fall from World’s End.

After having our packed lunch at World’s End we would walk back to Gurutalawa, an easier walk because it was downhill most of the way. We had to hurry to reach school before dark. The total distance

walked in a day was about 30 miles (nearly 50 km) in mountainous terrain.

Dr Hayman’s immediate problem at Gurutalawa was to prepare temporary accommodation and classrooms for about 50 students. He also started building a small swimming pool at his own expense. The school started functioning and over the next four years permanent buildings for dormitories, classrooms, dining hall and the chapel were built. The Architect was Shirley D’Alwis who went on to design the University of Peradeniya.

Mary Rudd was a member of the Nursing Staff of the Military Hospital which occupied the Mount Lavinia premises. She had come to Diyatalawa with some Army Officers and they hiked the five miles over the patnas to visit Gurutalawa. The first time Dr Hayman met Mary, he had to remove the leeches which had got attached to her feet during the hike. Towards the end of 1945, Dr Hayman went to England on furlough and he and Mary got married there. C H Davidson was appointed Headmaster of Gurutalawa in Dr Hayman’s absence. When Dr Hayman returned from leave, he was asked to act in Mount Lavinia for Warden de Saram who was on long leave, and Dr Hayman returned to Gurutalawa only at the beginning of 1948, after an absence of two years, and remained the Headmaster of Gurutalawa until he retired in 1963.

The first thing that he started on after his return was to enlarge the swimming pool into a full size swimming pool. A state of the art filtration plant was added and diving boards installed. All this was done at his own expense. Dr Hayman was the swimming coach and instructor. Allan Smith learned his diving as a student in St Thomas and later went on to represent Ceylon in Diving in the Olympics.

Mary, with her medical training, was the Matron of the six-bed sickroom. In the evenings she would dole out medicines to the boys who were sick. The main item was a foul tasting flu mixture which was purchased in bulk in one gallon size bottles. She would also apply dressings to the cuts and bruises sustained by the boys.

The writer started his school career at St Thomas College at the age of six years in 1942, when classes were being held at St Paul’s Girl School, Milagiriya. After two years of study there, my father was transferred to Bandarawela. We went off to meet Headmaster W T Keble at St Thomas Prep. School in Bandarawela to ask for admission as a day boy. I was summoned into his Office for an interview. I went in, an eight -year old quaking in his shoes at the prospect of being interviewed by an Englishman. He must have been satisfied with whatever answers I mumbled because a place was offered. By the end of 1945, I had reached the highest class in the Prep. School and it was time to join the school in Gurutalawa in the lowest class there.

I joined Gurutalawa as a ten-year old Boarder in January 1946 in the lowest class, the Lower Fourth (Year 6). C H Davidson was the Headmaster and his nickname was 'Poeta' because of his love for Latin poetry. Mrs S J Anandanayagam was the Form Mistress. Her husband was later the Warden in Mount Lavinia from 1970 to 1977. There were about 20 boys in the class and a total of just over 100 boys in the whole school.

When I returned to school for the second term after the Easter holidays, I found that I was the only boy in the class. Even the Form Mistress had disappeared! What had happened was that Mount Lavinia had re-opened after the premises were handed back by the Military to the school and the rest of the class had opted to go to Mount Lavinia. I soon received a summons to see 'Poeta' in his Office. He told me that it was uneconomical to run a class

for one student and that he had seen my report for the previous term and that it was satisfactory and he was therefore giving me a mid-year promotion to the Upper Fourth class. I had no choice in the matter, but it was initially a struggle to catch up with the year's work that I had skipped over.

A few weeks later, a new boy turned up in the class, his name was V Tharumaratnam and everybody soon called him 'Tharu'. His parents, who were of Ceylonese origin, were in Malaya but he was sent to Ceylon for his schooling because of the situation in Malaya. A few months later one of our lessons was interrupted by a messenger from the school Office handing over a telegram to the Master. The Master read it, then looked up and said "Tharumaratnam, I am sorry to tell you that your father has been killed". Tharu cried for a few minutes, then dried his tears and said "Well, I suppose that's that. But I have to get on with my own life." An amazing example of his resilience and strength of character for a thirteen year old, which he went on to exhibit over the rest of his life.

What had happened was this was the time of the peak of the post-war Communist insurgency in Malaya. The insurgents had kidnapped the staff of the Rubber Estate where Tharu's father was employed and

demanded ransoms for their return from the British estate owners. The owners paid the ransoms for the British staff but not for the others. Whereupon the insurgents executed the non-British staff.

A few weeks later the Bursar informed Dr Hayman that the monthly remittance of Tharu's school fees (about Rs 50) from Malaya had ceased coming after his father's death. Dr Hayman told the Bursar to give the matter some more time. Shortly afterwards, Tharu's school fees started coming in, but from a Ceylon source. Later when the Malayan remittances re-started, the payments from the Ceylon source stopped. Years later it was discovered that the Ceylon payments were from Dr Hayman, without any requirement of repayment.

One day a foreigner was spotted visiting Dr Hayman in the school Office. One of the boys identified the visitor from a newspaper picture and asked Dr Hayman in the class the next day whether it was Sir Ivor Jennings, the Vice Chancellor of the University of Ceylon who visited him. He said "Yes, it was, and it is the third time he has come to see me. Each time he tried to persuade me to join the University as Professor of Physics and each time I gave him the same answer: that I find it far more challenging to mould boys into young men of character than lecture to undergraduates."

Dr Hayman tried to make his Physics and Maths classes as interesting as possible. One day he was teaching an abstruse topic in Advanced Maths which yours truly was finding difficult to understand. He spotted this and asked me

whether I had difficulty in following him. I nodded sheepishly. Just then the bell rang for the end of the class and he said simply: "Leave it with me". The next day he gave me two pages of notes in his own handwriting and said that if I read the notes I would understand the topic. Such was the nature of the man. Present day teachers would probably canvass private tuition!

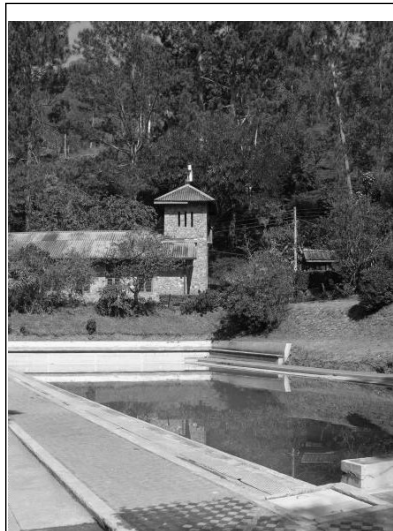
In December 1949, a few days after my 14th birthday, I sat for the Senior School Certificate examination, the predecessor to the GCE 'O' Levels.



• Dr Hayman at Buckingham Palace after receiving his MBE. Mrs Hayman is on the left and his sister on the right. (Courtesy: Charmaine Tharumaratnam)

As this was the highest class at Gurutalawa, the next step was to move to the associated College in Mount Lavinia to the College Form which was the University Entrance class. All the boys in our class who were proceeding for further studies were looking forward to this because of the prestige of being in the College Form, which included graduating from shorts to long trousers!

A few days before the end of term, I received an unexpected summons from Dr Hayman to see him in the Office. He asked me whether I realised that I



• **STC Gurutalawa Swimming Pool donated by Dr Hayman in 1953 with the Chapel in the background (Courtesy: STCG62 Website)**

could not sit for the University Entrance exam in two years' time because the minimum age of entry to the University was 17 years. He suggested that instead of marking time for an extra year in the College Form, I could stay back in Gurutalawa for an extra year. He said that while I would nominally be a member of the Upper Sixth

class (Year 10), whenever he had an off period and he was free, he would give me tuition on a one-to-one basis in Physics and Maths at 'A' Level standard. I thanked him for the generous offer and gave the valid excuse that my father was on transfer orders to proceed to Colombo and that he was already looking for a house to rent near the Mount Lavinia school so that I could study there as a day boy. He accepted that and allowed me to proceed to the College Form. That was my last contact with Dr Hayman as a student.

Dr Hayman continued to teach Physics and Maths at Gurutalawa, but the writing was on the wall. The medium of school education switched to Sinhala and Tamil. There were insufficient students for an English stream at Gurutalawa. He made a valiant effort by studying Sinhala to 'O' Level standard, but did not feel confident to teach in the Sinhala medium. His usefulness as a school teacher in Ceylon was over. He had always intended to live his retirement years in Ceylon, but now that he had to retire early, he decided to go back to England and teach there for a few more years. His last Prize Day speech as a Headmaster was in 1962 when he said "A school is

not merely concerned with the attainment of success in the scholastic and sporting fields. One of its most important tasks is to prepare boys to take their place in life, when they leave school. Not only must it do this by inculcating a spirit of toughness and determination, but also by teaching them the art of gracious living ... It was not merely by a display of courtesy that a man was to be made ... but rather it was by his whole approach to life that a man would prove his mettle."

Dr Hayman retired on 14th March 1963 and returned to his home in Bournemouth. He and Mary did not have any children and he considered the Thomian schoolboys as his children and that is why he donated so lavishly to the College from his inherited wealth. The first 21 years, the golden years of Gurutalawa, were over. The school has continued to flourish and expand since then and last year celebrated its 75th anniversary.

Retirement days

The UK New Year's Honours list of 1964 included the award of an MBE to Dr Hayman for services to education in Ceylon. He decided to attend the investiture personally and went to Buckingham Palace accompanied by Mary and his sister. The awards were given out by the Duke of Edinburgh to the 150 recipients. Dr Hayman was surprised to find that the Duke had done his homework and spoke to many of the award recipients. He asked Dr Hayman whether he was still teaching in UK and how his former school was getting on. Dr Hayman considered this day the most memorable day of his life..

Dr Hayman continued to teach for a few more years at a local school in Bournemouth. He made a few visits to Ceylon after he retired. In 1970 he visited Gurutalawa to open the new Hayman Science Laboratory, to the cost of which he had contributed generously. The plinth in the building states simply "To spend and be spent in the service of others is his greatest privilege".

In 1978 Dr and Mrs Hayman visited Gurutalawa from January to April. On their return trip to England they stopped over in Ibadan, Nigeria as guests of his former pupil, V Tharumaratnam. Dr Hayman had been Tharu's Guardian when he was a schoolboy. Tharu's son, Biran recollects that the highlight of their visit was "to see the Oba (King) of Ife. After meeting the King (a man in his 40's), he was given a tour of the palace and noticed several women ranging in age from 90 to early 20's, it was explained to Dr Hayman that these were all of the King's wives which was in the order of 70 to 80 in number. When Dr Hayman inquired why the King had so many wives, it was explained that it was customary for the King not only to marry multiple wives to establish his status, but he was also required to inherit and look after the wives of his dead father as well. Not sure how Dr Hayman or Mrs Hayman both Christians, personally felt about this, as they did not show it, but

seemed quite fascinated about this custom at the time.”

Dr Hayman’s final visit to Gurutalawa was in early 1983 to open the Keble Dormitory, the cost of which had been met by Dr Hayman. The Income Tax Department promptly slapped on a charge of Gift Tax. It was an irony which appealed to his considerable wit.

Dr Hayman had not been very well during his last visit to Gurutalawa in March 1983 and in the first week of May there was news that Dr Hayman was terminally ill in a Nursing Home in Bournemouth. Tharumaratnam and I were residing in London at that time and we promptly motored down with our wives to Bournemouth to see him. When we went there, the Nurse told us that he was very tired and weak and we should go in two at a time and spend not more than five minutes with him. Tharu and I went in first and he spoke to us and thanked us for coming. Our wives then went in, and not recognising them as our wives, he told them excitedly “Did you see those two boys who just went out. We did not have many boys like them afterwards”. It certainly made the day for the two ‘boys’ even though they were in their fifties!

Dr Hayman passed away peacefully a few days later on 07 May 1983 at the age of 81 years. His funeral was on 12 May in Bournemouth and the

funeral service prior to burial was by Right Revd. Lakshman Wickremasinghe, an old boy of Gurutalawa and Keble College, Oxford and uncle of present Prime Minister Ranil Wickremesinghe. The opening sentence of Dr Hayman’s last will was “I direct that my funeral shall be of the cheapest kind consistent with decency and no expensive memorial stone should be erected.”

Mary Hayman lived on in Bournemouth for another 25 years. She made two more trips to Ceylon. In 1987 she opened the R S de Saram Memorial Library and in 1992 she was the Chief Guest at Gurutalawa’s 50th Anniversary Dinner. She passed away in Bournemouth on 17 November 2008, aged 94 years. In her will she left a substantial bequest to the College which formed the nucleus of the “Hayman Foundation” which was for fundraising for future school buildings.

Prof C C De Silva, an old boy and eminent Paediatrician and Member of the Board of Governors of the College had this to say about Dr Hayman “No single man has done so much or given so generously both materially and intellectually to St Thomas College, or to any other school for that matter in Ceylon, at any time in her long history. I think I can pronounce that as an indisputable, incontrovertible, statement of fact”.

Important notice to our contributors

The Ceylankan is a quarterly publication that is looked forward to both here in Australia and worldwide. The Editor is constantly on the lookout for literary contributions from our members and others. Contributions are given careful consideration with a view to publication when received.

While original, previously unpublished articles are preferred, submissions relating to the culture, history and heritage of Ceylon/Sri Lanka in keeping with the ideals of the CSA and are of a non-racial, non-political, non-religious and non-controversial nature are always welcome too.

New writers with a passion for Sri Lankan culture and heritage are welcome. You don’t have to be a professional writer – even contributions from someone who has not previously put pen to paper will equally receive our careful attention.

Who knows, an enormous treasure of hidden literary talent with recollections of life in the Motherland – the people, the places events and other memories that you can share, from whatever era, pre- Colonial, post-Colonial to modern. Your fascinating story waiting to be written may be very story that our worldwide readership is waiting to enjoy.

To facilitate design/layout, submit your articles with very little or no formatting as possible – no indents at the start of paragraphs and no double spacing between lines; no space after full stops. Always use percent or per cent but never %. Where applicable, contributors are also asked to annotate bibliographical references, both for copyright purposes and to assist with further research by other members. Photographs to accompany your article, in colour or monotone, are welcome. They must be of a high resolution and in JPEG format.

While every effort will be made to print material that is relevant and correct, we cannot take responsibility for errors. If any errors of fact are found, the Editor would appreciate if any such inaccuracies be brought to his attention as early as possible.



BOOK REVIEWS

"A Tale of Three Buddhas and Other Writings"

by Tissa Devendra

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plus postage.

REVIEWED by Thiru Arumugam

Tissa Devendra was born in 1929 and is the son of D T Devendra who was a Head Master and Archaeologist. As his father moved around from school to school, Tissa studied in several schools including Ananda College. He entered the University of Ceylon in Colombo and graduated with a degree in English and French in 1952. He later obtained a post-graduate degree from the University of Cambridge. He joined Government Service in 1953 as a District Land Officer and this was the beginning of a 40-year career in Public Service including spells as the Government Agent in Matara, Trincomalee and Jaffna. In March 2017 he was awarded the National Honour title of Deshamanya for highly meritorious service to the nation. He is the President of the Colombo Chapter of the Ceylon Society of Australia since 2013.

As he moved around working in different parts of Ceylon, he collected information and anecdotes which formed the basis of articles and stories that he wrote. He is the author of several books and his book *"Tales from the Provinces"* was short listed for the Gratien Prize in 1998. The Gratien Prize, funded by Michael Ondaatje, is awarded annually for the best work of literary writing in English by a resident of Sri Lanka. Tissa's latest book *"A Tale of Three Buddhas and Other Writings"* is a collection of articles, letters to the Editor, book reviews, tributes and a poem. Tissa says that *"These writings range from fascinating snippets of Sri Lanka's history to personal reminiscences of our recent past and other ephemeral odds and ends that intrigued me."* Presumably, most, if not all of the items have been previously published, but details of previous publication have not been included. This information would have been of added interest to the reader.

In the Acknowledgements section of the book, Tissa thanks the Editors of newspapers who published his articles and he also thanks Doug Jones, the Editor of this Journal. Over the years this Journal has published about 15 articles by or about Tissa. These range from *"The Felsianes Link"* in the July 2000 issue which is an article by Tissa

about his maternal grandfather from Mutwal, Lloyd Felsianes, who ran away to sea from school in 1876 as a cabin boy at the age of 16 years; to the article titled *"Something rich and very strange"* in the May/June 2017 issue. The latter article is an extract from Tissa's book titled *"Quest for Shangri-La: Stories and Diversions"*.

The 'Articles' section of the book includes 23 articles by Tissa on a wide variety of topics. The lead article *"A Tale of Three Buddhas"* which is the title of the book, is about three ancient miniature statues of the Buddha recovered in Trincomalee District when he was the Government Agent there in the 1970s. The first two were about ten inches high, one carved from soap stone and the other from crystal. They had been recovered by the Police from an alleged vandaliser of an ancient temple. The third statue was found in an ant hill by a villager. This sedentary Buddha statue was only four inches high but had been carved in granite with extreme precision. As Government Agent, Tissa represented in the District every Government Department, and the statues were duly handed over to the Archaeological Department.

The subjects of other articles in this section range from the last King of Kandy to a requiem for the demise of the wooden ballot box used in general elections, now replaced by plastic see-through containers. Other items in this section include articles previously published in this Journal such as *'Hats Ahoy'* (May 2014 issue), an interesting survey of headgear in Ceylon ranging from the hats of white cloth in the days of the Kandyan kingdom, through to the khaki solar topees of the British colonial days to the baseball caps worn back to front by today's young swingers; and *'Hoppers, Bone Setters, Botanists and the Weed'* (November 2015 issue) a fascinating article about the contribution made by migrants from Kerala to Ceylon when people could travel freely between India and Ceylon in British colonial days.

The 'Dear Editor' section of the book reproduces 13 letters to newspaper Editors. Tissa says *"I have been an incorrigible writer of Letters to the Editor and include a sampling of epistles on subjects that interested, irritated or appalled me."* The letters include one about the wild horses in Anuradhapura seen by him about fifty years ago and now probably extinct. One assumed that the only wild horses in Ceylon were on the island of Delft, off Jaffna. Another letter is a plea. He says *"The following aide-memoire attempts to expose and finish off this mad proposal to provide a mechanised lift to Sigiriya's summit, actively and incomprehensibly, supported by the Director General/Archaeology"*. One can only imagine how this proposed lift will deface this Rock which is part of our national heritage.

The section of the book dedicated to Book Reviews contains reviews of 16 books that impressed him. Included is a review of John Still's *"Poems in*

Captivity". The poems were written when John Still was a prisoner-of-war in Gallipoli for over three years during World War I. He survived the incarceration to return to Ceylon and write "*The Jungle Tide*" in 1930. Also in this section is a review of Prof Raja C Bandaranayake's book "*Betwixt Isles*", the story of the banishment by the British of Ehelapola without trial and others to Mauritius in 1825. Tissa has this to say about Raja's book "*This is a truly amazing book ... The author has set about his 'crusade' with the meticulous scholarship of a true academic who has shown great courage by venturing into disciplines far removed from his own field of medicine ... It is a clearly written narrative, free of scholarly jargon and a work of monumental research.*" Raja is a Sydney resident and a member of the Ceylon Society of Australia. He gave a talk about his book at a CSA meeting on 15th July 2007. Raja's book was also reviewed by Prof. Colvin Goonaratna in the August 2007 issue of this Journal.

The next section of the book consists of four Tributes; to Sam Wijesinghe who was Secretary General of Ceylon's Parliament, and died three years ago at the age of 93 years; to M B Mathmaluwe who is described as an essayist beyond compare; to Arlin Perera, Principal of Sri Rahula College, Katugastota; and finally a "*rather long account of the rich life of*

'The book is written in impeccable English... It is a pleasure to read with its easy flowing style. It is recommended reading without any hesitation to anyone who has the slightest interest in Ceylon.'
(Thiru Arumugam)

my father, the savant, D T Devendra – whose example inspires all my writing." The last tribute shows how the father encouraged his children by example to read widely and develop inquiring minds. "*He encouraged us to look in directions we had not looked at before, and which still retain their hold on us. He would have been glad that three of his children became published authors, though death deprived him of seeing the late blooming of his youngest daughter.*"

The final section of the book is a poem titled "*On reaching eighty-five*". It was written in 2014 and is dedicated to his grandchildren. The beautiful last verse which resonates with all grandparents, is as follows:

*The sounds of their laughter yet ring in my ears
As do their tantrums and childhood tears ...
While Mama and I grow frail and grey
Our children's children will never fade away.*

In the August 2006 issue of this Journal, Yasmine Gooneratne, formerly Professor of English at Macquarie University, Sydney, wrote a review of Tissa's book "*On Horseshoe Street*". What she wrote about that book applies equally to this book. "*I would very much like to relate some of his 'tales' in this review, but have decided to practice restraint: as with all good stories from the pen of a good writer, they are best savoured on the page. The reader who enters the world of Sri Lanka in the 1950s in the company of such a gifted story-teller as Tissa Devendra is fortunate indeed*".

The book is written in impeccable English as one would expect from an English Honours graduate. It is a pleasure to read with its easy flowing style. It is recommended reading without any hesitation to anyone who has the slightest interest in Ceylon. Those readers who are of a concurrent vintage as the author will come away with a feeling of vague nostalgia for the days that have gone by.



Congratulations and a Warm Welcome to our New Members

NEW MEMBERS

Denzil & Nelun Karunaratne 19/2-10 Hawkesbury Ave Dee Why NSW 2099 • Lalyn & Gayanthri Collure, 13/16-18 Nelson St, Thornleigh NSW 2120.

GIFT SUBSCRIPTIONS

From Hugh Karunanayake, Melbourne VIC to
• **Mahinda Wijesinghe, 100 Mahakurunduwatte Road Talangama South Battaramulla Sri Lanka**
and • **Mr Shamil Peiris 31 Primrose Road, Kandy, Sri Lanka.**



SEND US YOUR RECIPES

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

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

