



NEWSLETTER

October 2015

Issue No 32

ASSOCIATION OF PAST EMPLOYEES OF SINGER

80, Nawam Mawatha, Colombo 2

FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK

This is the fourth and final issue of our Newsletter for the current year.

PS: SPECIAL REQUEST TO MEMBERS

Please refrain from sending articles such as 'Quotations and Proverbs' as the Newsletter is not intended to publish such articles which are NOT ORIGINALS from members. Thank you for your co-operation.

We could be reasonably happy that we have been able to publish four issues as promised. This was possible due to unreserved co-operation received from a few members who sent us articles for publication on a regular basis. I am quite confident we could improve on this if more members decide to spend a little bit of their spare time to recall past experiences and incidents and put them on paper for the reading pleasure of the membership.

We could also improve the format and the quality of articles and would therefore request suggestions from members. Any lapses or shortcomings on our part could also be highlighted and we would certainly give serious thought to your contributions. Your written suggestions for improving the newsletter could be sent to me by post or handed over at the forthcoming Annual General Meeting.

SCHOLARSHIP FUND



Recipients of the Scholarships
with their mothers



Awaiting the award
of scholarships



A parent addressing
the parents and students



Mr. Nissar our Treasurer handing over
the first instalment to the acting Principal

SCHOLARSHIP FUND

It was yet another memorable day in the events planned for the current year. The day was 13th July 2015 when four committee members comprising of the President Mr. Bertie Fernando, Mr. Nissar our Treasurer, Mrs. Sunethra Vidanage and self visited Stanley Tilakaratne Primary School in Mirihana, Nugegoda to donate the first instalment of Rs-500/- x 12 each to 12 Grade V students of the school.

The school which conducts classes up to Grade V has a student population of about 800. The majority of them are from poor families where the parents find it difficult to keep the home fires burning. The responsibility of selecting the 12 deserving students was entrusted to the Actg. Principal Mrs Eranga Perera who, after evaluating the financial status of parents had selected 12 bright students from the poorest of poor families whose parents could not afford to provide the basic needs of their children.

The day's program commenced with the Actg. Principal and Vice Principal welcoming us and taking us to the school hall which was neatly arranged for this special event. The parents of the 12 students were also present. After a brief address by the Actg. Principal who said that the offer of these scholarships was a meritorious act which is commendable and should serve as an example for other Organizations too. She assured us that she would personally investigate and ensure that the parents would use the money exclusively for the needs of the students to enable them to continue their studies without any hindrance.

The President in reply said that one of the objectives of our Association is "to help less fortunate people of our country", and that we are assisting a few students of the school with that objective in mind. He further said that our Association would make every effort to help more students in the future as well. The President also said that any of the students who were assisted today do well in the 5th Standard Scholarship Examination and obtain high marks to go to a National School, the Association could assist them further in their higher studies. This, he said with the intention of encouraging these students to do well in the Scholarship Examination they will be sitting soon.

G.C. Wasalathanthri

THE FATHER. SON AND GHOST

When Sugunasinghe Pathirana was recruited to assist Office Manager T.S. Nooramith, I was happy with the thought that I could be relieved of part of my SSL duties. Sugunasinghe proved his mettle and as time went on, even became the President of the branch union. He left Chatham Street office to take up appointment as Managing Salesman Panadura after Haniffa, and thereafter I lost contact with him.

Readers will remember Avant Garde security company Chairman Nissanka Senadhipathi who was in the news recently in connection with running a floating armoury at the Galle harbour. A short man with a sunken neck, Nissanka had a chin that kept saying, "to hell with you" in a language all its own and a petulant mouth. This dynamic ex-Major of the Commando Regiment never missed a pistol firing competition and ensured that his presence was felt in this, his pet event, at the Panaluwa and Welisara firing ranges. He was so pistol-crazy that he even carried his 9mm service pistol in his hand when walking about in his office until I put an end to it explaining that it was malarkey.

On Nissanka's invitation I visited his office at Bangala junction, Etul Kotte in 2007 to do a security report on the Royal Colombo Golf Links just before he took over its security functions. The club has as its emblem, a large crow painted on its verandah wall which whenever I see, I remember our member Sarath Chandra Rajapakse nicknamed *Kakka* 034 cmi, 103 Nissanka was not in office but a person who introduced himself as Jaya Pathirana saw to all my needs and comfort. Pathirana, a tall, fair 62 year old was a gregarious sunny fellow with pianist's fingers, and a great conversationalist. While I was watching seated, he strode Nissanka's office room like Shakespears colossus. He told me that he was a retired BOC Manager, that his family is from Hiriyala in Galle, that he resides with his elder son at Dehiwala and that his younger son Sugunasinghe was at SSL. He proudly stressed that both sons were at Lake House and doing well. It was very clear to me at that stage that I was speaking to Sugunasinghe's father.

Nearly three years later at Lake House, I met Sugunasinghe, who even as I write, is an English proof reader. During the height of the dengue epidemic Suguna presented me a mosquito repellent that he had invented out of three empty curd pots. It was effective, and I carried the invention in the 'Daily News', the 'Dinamina' and Lake House weekly 'Arogya'. During cow chats Suguna would often reminisce about SSL personalities such as Nooramith, Gamini de Silva, Wasalathanthri, Abey Suriya, the famous S's Sandya, Sriyani and Subadra, Mala, Vijitha, Gunasoma, Nicholas — whoever came to mind. Peon Dickman who drops in at Lake House now and then too had interesting SSL stories to relate. Sugunasinghe introduced me to his brother Ranjith who was attached to the Daily News advertising department. Both unlike Jaya Pathirana were dark, short and lean.

One day I mentioned to Sugunasinghe my meeting his father and the right royal treatment he accorded me. I filled him in with all that Pathirana had told me. Sugunasinghe was very attentive, now and then widening his large eyes and finally replied that all details relayed to me by Pathirana were correct to the letter. But when he continued that his father never ever knew Nissanka Senadhipathi, was not a banker but a clerk at the Timber Corporation and also that he is bed-ridden for the past four years, matters were complicated and I was totally lost. In a separate confrontation, Ranjith too confirmed what Sugunasinghe had said.

A couple of months later I had the opportunity of visiting Sugunasinghe's father at the Nawaloka hospital I was anxious to get to the bottom of the misticue surrounding the Pathiranas. But the patient there was not the man at the Bangala junction office. Who then was Pathirana? He definitely was not a ghost although even still, Europe is haunted by the anti-Semitism ghost.

Sent By T.V. Perera

MEDICAL & HEALTH CARE PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION

The fifth Medical & Health Care presentation was held on 13th September 2015 at the Lions Club premises, Nugegoda expertly delivered by an eminent and highly qualified Doctor Mrs. Dinithi Fernando, MBBS, MD, MRCP, Specialist Physician & Senior Lecturer in the Physiology Department, Faculty of Medicine, University of Colombo.

The subject she chose for this presentation was 'Battling Memory Loss', most appropriate for members of our Association. Age is no respecter of an individual's position or status in society. Kings, Queens, Presidents and Prime Ministers as well as the ordinary human beings, rich or poor are treated alike. With the advancing age, every person faces numerous illnesses and ailments and one such common disease is mild memory loss (amnesia). Mild memory loss, she explained, tends to increase with age. Some people with amnesia have difficulty forming new memories. Others cannot recall facts and past experiences. Memory loss, she said is a normal part of ageing. No treatment is necessary for mild memory loss, but diseases such as Alzheimer or Dementia will need examination and treatment by Specialist doctor, Psychiatrist or Neurologist.

Continuing, she said that mild memory loss can be corrected to a certain extent by taking regular exercises, interacting with your family members and friends, following a disciplined sleep pattern of going to bed early and awaking early etc. She added that laughing too helps you to correct mild memory loss. "You don't stop laughing when you grow old, You grow old when you stop laughing" — Bernard Shaw. In conclusion of the presentation, the learned doctor requested the participants to ask questions, not only with regard to memory loss, but any other disease or ailment which needs clarification, explanation or advice.

A barrage of interesting and entertaining questions followed, which the doctor answered, to their satisfaction. The day's programme concluded with President Mr. Bertie Fernando proposing a Vote of thanks to the guest lecturer and Ms. Sunethra Vidanage presenting her with a gift as a token of appreciation.

A sumptuous lunch provided by the Association was partaken by all the members who really enjoyed this memorable event

G.C. Wasalathanthri



Dr. Dinithi Fernando, the guest lecturer at the Lion's Club received by Gamini & his wife



Welcome speech by the President



Health conscious members attentively listening to the lecturer



Facial expressions indicate the keenness to control Memory Loss

FORTHCOMING EVENTS - YEAR 2015

SING-A-LONG Musical Evening - Saturday 21st November — Lions Secretariat Hall
ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING - Sunday 13th December — Sea View Hotel

Singer Chairman who would not harm a fly ...

One of the minor problems that I encountered in Sri Lanka is the presence of an abundance of flies. They dash all over and around you causing considerable irritation. To overcome this problem, I purchased fly swatters from Arpico and placed these all over the house including one in my office. I used these quite often and became quite an expert in fly swatting. I hardly missed when I swung it at a fly whether stationary or flying.

One day I was having a meeting with the Chairman Mr. Hemaka Amarasuriya at my office in Piliyandala. A fly was bothering us darting across our faces and sometimes landing on the table and other times on our person. I fetched my swatter and was about to do the needful when the Chairman stopped me. He said "let it live". In deference to the wishes of the Chairman I put the swatter away and continued with the meeting being duly harassed by the fly.

After the Chairman left I thought to myself that here is a caring man who would not even harm a fly
Sent by Ananda M.N. Perera

ONE DAY OUTING - 23rd August 2015



The one day outing for members, their spouses and children was held as planned on Sunday 23rd August 2015. Even though 34 members confirmed their participation only 29 made it to Penthouse Island Resort in Dampe, Piliyandala. This is very disappointing as we had made arrangements for Lunch etc for 40 packs. A wastage of Association funds. However those who were present thoroughly enjoyed the day out of their homes, leaving aside the Sunday household responsibilities for another enjoyable day with old friends

BIRTHDAY

We wish "HAPPY BIRTHDAY" to the following members who will be celebrating their birthday in the months of October and November. If there are any omissions please let us know, to amend our records.

October

Beeta Rajanayagam	2nd
M.M.M. Yusuf	2nd
Lucky de Chickera	4th
Gamini de Silva	6th
Jaminda Mendis	8th
Keerthi Abeywickrema	22nd
Edwin Joshua	23rd
S.R. Fernando	24th
Damayanthi Perera	25th
Maya Gangodage	27th
Yarnuna Perera	31st

November

Ranjith Liyanage	1st
Ajith Aponso	4th
Indika Gunawardena	6th
Jayantha Samarakoon	9th
Anton Nelson	10th
Rohan Goonetilake	11th
W.L.D.S. Wijetunge	16th
Jude M. Joseph	18th
D. Wijendra	19th
Tilak Galabada	22nd
M.H.M. Nuhmaan	30th
Ranjith Udugoda	30th



BEDLAM AT KITULGALA By T.V. Perera

**තොටුපොළ අයිතේ - කවුද අත වනන්නේ
කවුද අත වනන්නේ - තොටුපල අයිතේ**

Victor Ratnayake's esoteric song chorused by a group of SIC excursionists led by accordion player Lawrence Marthinu and serphina maestro Mahinda Tillekeratne, on seeing a canoe being paddled in the Maskeliya Oya — a tributary of the Kelani Ganga — reverberated in the air. The boatman unexpectedly rowed back ashore and the delighted group took turns in canoeing on this broad stretch of the river's serpentine course.

We were on our annual excursion and the afternoon of February 4, 1975 saw us at Kitulgala where we stopped to break the tedium of the bus journey, and, for lunch. Sacrificing everything including the many aperitifs on offer, I stole away to where I had noticed a board nailed to a tree which read: 'Location of Bridge on the River Kwai', and down the gravel slope leading to the site, Samuel Perera followed by his wife Chandra rushed to meet me as they would any visitor. Samuel carried a scrap book of paper clippings of the film Bridge on the River Kwai in which, at the age of 12, he played a small role. They escorted me to the location where 19 years after making of the film all that remained to be seen were concreted patches and parts of a girder. The mustard-green river over which the bridge was built flowed below with Uda-handayas, Nala-handayas, Pethiyas and Kossas leaping out of the waters as I listened to Samuel's narration to which I piece part of my research to relate an untold side of a story, now, 40 years later.

It all began when Samuel Speigal had read Pierre Bodes' novel and by chance found Kitulgala, the ideal place for his film. Engineering firms including ICI were engaged to construct the celebrated bridge, POW camps, and the railway line. Since the terrain was rough, elephants were used to haul equipment. Eventually, rising on 50 ft. high trestles the 360 ft. long bridge with four spans and 20 ft wide, became a reality. The KV engine and carriages were transported on huge flat-bed trailers and on site, engineers worked furiously laying the 2000 yds. of track to off-load the trailers as soon as possible.

The film had more than its quota of hoodoos beginning with Assistant Director John Kerrison being killed in a car accident and Director David Lean nearly drowning when he was swept away in a river current. Then the two leading actors Alec Guinness, cast in the role of the British Commander, and Sessue Hayakawa who played the role of the Japanese Commander, threatened to quit. Hayakawa constantly fluffed his lines and his dialogue had to be post-dubbed at the Government Film Unit. The KV engine it was found, had been brought without coal and wood off-cuts from the bridge had to be used. The manner of blowing up the bridge on a split second cue was another area where much of the wrangling took place. Finally British Army sappers who could blow the icing off a birthday cake and still keep the candles in place, were got down for the job. While shooting was on the engine derailed with a couple of carriages and crashed into a generator. Filming of the bridge explosion was to be done in the presence of Prime Minister S.W.R.D. Bandaranaike, but cameraman Freddy Ford was unable to get away out of the explosion in time, and filming had to be stopped until the next morning.

All these set-backs caused not only re-takes but also overshot the \$ 3mn budget to a total of \$ 4mn. All in all the film was one of the greatest and won seven Oscar Awards and many international awards. The initial screen writer Carl Foreman was replaced by Michael Wilson. Both writers worked in secret as they were on the Hollywood blacklist. They received Academy Awards posthumously. The film earned a record \$ 3.6mn in its first release. A memorable feature of the film was the tune whistled by the PoWs — the first strain of the march 'Colonel Bogey' when they enter the camp. It goes :

Hitler — had only — One Big Ball
Goering — had two — But very small
Himmler — had something similar
But Mr. Goebbels — had No balls at all

'Colonel Bogey' is the popular regimental marching tune of the Sri Lanka Light Infantry Regiment. Of all I know, workman Victor whistles the tune to a near perfection.

Returning after over an hour I found that the very air where SIC employees were seemed to smoke and grow Purple. The group was in a fit of fury. The reason? Mahinda Tillekeratne had been taken into police custody for walking on the road in a towel. The employees were miffed and some thought that like what happens to the Mahindas he would be taken apart, limb by limb and scattered in so methodical a manner that it would take a team of forensic experts a very long time to get him together after all the king's horses and all the king's men had failed in their endeavors. But unlike Hayakawa I did not fluff my lines when I said "Encore...Kitulgala Police keep up the good work" and strode to the now deserted river bank where the song re-echoed in my ears

**තොටුපොළ අයිතේ - කවුද අත වනන්නේ
කවුද අත වනන්නේ - තොටුපල අයිතේ**

(The writer is a Journalist/Sub Editor in the 'Daily News')

NEW MEMBERS

We warmly welcome following members who have joined our Association recently.
They are ;

Member No.	Name
214	Mr. Thanuja Samaranyake
215	Mr. Premalal de Silva
216	Mr. E.D. Ariyasena

NEXT NEWSLETTER

We propose to release the next Newsletter in February 26th 2016.
Please therefore, send in your articles for publication to reach us by 25th January 2016 to the below address.

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