



Burgher Association Australia

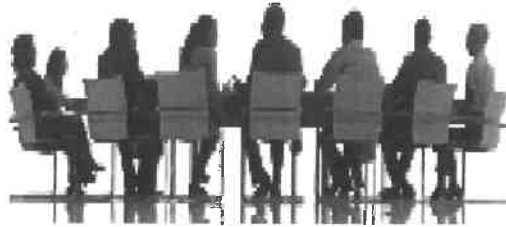
**Spring Edition
September 2023**

Community Newsletter



Postal Address : PO Box 75 Clarinda VIC 3169
Web Site: <http://www.burgherassocn.org.au>

ABN- 28 890 322 651 ~ INC. REG. NO A 0007821F



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Burgher Association Australia Donations Pledge

The Burgher Association Australia Incorporated (BAA) is passionate about supporting the community and is proud to be helping make a difference in the area of health and wellbeing. It is our goal to empower wellbeing and healthy lifestyles across Australia and Sri Lanka. The BAA is pleased to have considered charitable contributions, donations and sponsorships to children's education in Sri Lanka and other charitable donations sponsorship based in Australia

Considering the high cost of living expenses, the BAA General Committee has decided that until such time we are able to bring back the large audiences at our functions, the ticket price will be based on the cost of the function so as not to make a profit.

As such the BAA has taken the view that all sponsorships/donations, excluding the sponsorships of children in their education via the DBU in Sri Lanka, will not take place until further notice. Accordingly the BAA has just announced following the October 2022 General Meeting (AGM) that for the current year donations and sponsorships will be granted only to the following.

Sponsorship of Education to children via the Dutch Burgher Union of Sri Lanka for up to 25 children doing year 11 and 12

We will review again annually the position to set up a budget for new/continued sponsorship to be adopted in the following year.

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

Desmond and June Stewart – Carrum Downs, Vic

Gerard and Trvoy Ragell- Pakenham, Vic

Michael and Mrs Karyn Beven - Boronia, Vic

Maureen Koch – Dandenong, Vic

Mrs Sheila Solomons – Rowville VIC





The Burgher Association of Australia Centre is available for private hire (**Dances, Birthday parties, Anniversaries etc**). The BAA Centre is located within a short walk from Clayton railway station. The hall is licensed to hold 150 people. Tables and chairs for this number of attendees are provided. There is usually plenty of parking across the road and a few spaces on the property. Disabled access via ramps is available to both the front and rear doors and a disabled parking space is available. There is also a 'horseshoe' driveway permitting the dropping off of attendees under cover.

Commercial kitchen facilities are available including stainless steel splash walls, a commercial glass washer, dishwasher, stove, oven, hot water boiler, large freezer, refrigerator, and a bain-marie. There also is an alfresco area at the back that can be used for making the famous Sri Lankan Hoppers, BBQs or other activity that requires a shielded outdoor space. There are multiple reverse-cycle heating and cooling units servicing the main hall and kitchen. There are separate male, female and disabled toilets. More pictures are available on our website <http://burgherassocn.org.au/baa-centre/>

How to make a booking: Call The BAA Centre on 0423 844 101 to enquire whether the date, you wish to hire the hall for is available. If you are a member of the BAA, the price of hiring the Centre costs \$350 per day. Non-members \$400 per day. Minimum booking is 5 hours (\$300). Hours of operation Friday/Saturday 11AM to 12 Midnight, other days 10AM to 10PM. All bookings require a bond of \$250 that is refunded if the centre is handed back to management clean and undamaged. (\$2000 for age 21+ and under). A payment of \$100.00 will be deducted from the Security Fee deposit for cleaning of the premises, for the next day's Events. **Hiring Agreement**. NB: To book the hall, payment has to be made via the BAA Bank Account – details available on request. Depending on whether you are a member or non-member the full fee plus the deposit of \$250 must be paid to secure the date booked.



**What's
Happening
At the BAA**



17 September 2023

High Tea

BAA Community Hall - 358 Haughton Road, Clayton 3169

12.00 noon - 5.00pm

15 October 2023

Hopper Lunch

BAA Community Hall - 358 Haughton Road, Clayton 3169

12.00 noon - 5.00pm

29th October 2023

Cultural Lunch

BAA Community Hall - 358 Haughton Road, Clayton 3169

12.00 noon - 5.00pm

26 November 2023

Members & Friends Christmas Party

BAA Community Hall - 358 Haughton Road, Clayton 3169

12.00 noon - 5.00pm

Please note this Newsletter is also available on the Burgher Association Australia website <http://www.burgherassocn.org.au> and may be downloaded in PDF Format

HOPPER LUNCH



Sunday 15TH October 2023

Come and join us at

THE BAA

358 Haughton Road, Clayton

**Catch up with friends and enjoy a fantastic afternoon
With delicious food, music, and dancing**

12.00 noon to 5.00 pm

\$ 20 .00 pp - BYO

Contact

Hermann & Carol Loos 0417 391 120

Hans De Zilwa 0419 292 939

Elaine Jansz 0417 570 405

Rita Van Geyzel 0419 887 982

Terry & Helen Backhouse 0429 987 300 or 0438 373 007

Rev. John & Annette Blaze 0400 401 804 or 0429 523 773

Annesley Caspersz 0450 803 153

Adrian Harris 0407 838 189

Sharneez Backhouse 0434 105 221



BURGHER ASSOCIATION (AUSTRALIA)

INCORPORATED
358 Haughton Road, Clayton 3168

Postal Address
P.O. Box 75, Clarinda, Victoria 3169

FOUNDED 2nd February 1980
Registration No. A 7821
A.B.N. 28 890 322 651

Whilst consolidating our cultural and ethnic ties with the Victorian Governments Multicultural Festivals and Events Program Grants and, also strengthening our community focus and commitment, the Burgher Association Australia Inc wishes to thank its loyal supporters for the part they played in the fundraising events held by the Burgher Association Australia over the past few years.

In view thereof, the President and Committee of The Burgher Association Australia Inc. cordially invites you to partake in a Cultural Lunch Celebrations as our guest, however to be eligible you must be able to bring with you as a guest a person who has migrated to Australia from Sri Lanka within the past eighteen (18) months. This is to ensure that we try to give all assistance and beliefs possible to the new migrants who have chosen to live in this Multicultural Society we live in today in Australia.

Where: Burgher Association Community House
358 Haughton Road
Clayton Vic 3168

Date: 29th October 2023

Numbers are limited to each event and you must be able to bring with you a new migrant who has chosen to live in Australia within the past eighteen (18) months:

Time: 12pm

RSVP: no later than 9th October 2023

Please remember to bring this letter on the day for entrance into the venue.

Yours faithfully

Carol Loos
Carol Loos
Customer Relations Manager
Burgher Association Australia Inc
0407391120/ 039 8274455
gracecloos@yahoo.com.au



CHRISTMAS LUNCHEON

Sunday 26TH November 2023

Come join with us to Celebrate Christmas at

THE BAA

358 Houghton Road, Clayton

12.00 noon to 5.00 pm

\$35.00 pp - BYO

**Meet up with friends and celebrate Christmas with
fellowship, music, and dancing.**

Caterer: Cha's Cabin

**Glazed Leg of Ham, Roast Turkey, Roast Pork,
Roast Chicken, Roast potatoes including vegies,
Coleslaw, tossed Salad, Seafood Salad,
Bread Rolls and Butter**

**Dessert: Strawberry and Ice Cream
And a delicious piece of Christmas Cake**

Contact

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No one believes seniors . . . everyone thinks they are senile.

An elderly couple was celebrating their sixtieth anniversary. The couple had married as childhood sweethearts and had moved back to their old neighbourhood after they retired. Holding hands, they walked back to their old school. It was not locked, so they entered, and found the old desk they'd shared, where Jerry had carved, I love you, Sally.



On their way back home, a bag of money fell out of an armoured car, practically landing at their feet. Sally quickly picked it up and, not sure what to do with it, they took it home. There, she counted the money - fifty thousand dollars!

Jerry said, "we've got to give it back".

Sally said, "Finders keepers". She put the money back in the bag and hid it in their attic.

The next day, two police officers were canvassing the neighbourhood looking for the money and knocked on their door. "Pardon me, did either of you find a bag that fell out of an armoured car yesterday?"

Sally said, "No".

Jerry said, "She's lying. She hid it up in the attic".

Sally said, "Don't believe him, he's getting senile".

The agents turned to Jerry and began to question him.

One said: "Tell us the story from the beginning".

Jerry said, "Well, when Sally and I were walking home from school yesterday".

The first police officer turned to his partner and said " We're out a here!"

*Life is a journey of sweetness and sorrow,
Of yesterday's memories and hopes for tomorrow,
Of pathways we choose and detours we face,
With patience and humour, courage, and grace,
Of joys that we've shared and people we've met
Who have touched us in ways we will never forget.
With patience and humour, courage, and grace*



The Burgher Association Australia does not necessarily endorse contributor's views, nor is it responsible for the accuracy and the authenticity of the material published in this Newsletter.

Value of a perch in Galle Fort increased to Rs. 22mn Over 100 buildings have been purchased by foreigners

Daily Mirror

More than one hundred buildings, located within the Galle Fort, have been purchased by foreigners, increasing the value of one perch to Rs 22 million, the Galle Heritage Foundation said.

With this development, the population within the fort, which used to be around three thousand, has decreased to around one thousand.

According to the foundation, some foreigners who have purchased property are facing many problems due to the fraudulent sale of the land and buildings by brokers.

It was also said that due to the high price of one perch in Galle Fort, there is a decrease in the arrival of new investors.

An official of the foundation said that there are about 450 buildings in the fort that are run by government institutions, and more than 100 of them have been purchased by foreigners to run tourism business.

These buildings are of archaeological value belonging to the Dutch and English eras. (Unawatuna D.G Sugathapala)

**A friend suggested
putting horse manure
on my strawberries...
I'm never doing that
again, I'm going back
to whipped cream.**

MEMORIES ARE MADE OF THESE

The postman's bell, still a welcome ring



The old General Post Office, Colombo

Today we live in a digitally dominated world. We communicate using various gadgets of technology. Over the past six months, zoom chats have become vital for corporate executives and schoolchildren. Two hundred years ago, the island of Ceylon was experiencing a new dimension of communication – the use of letters sent and received through postal service.

As children, hearing the postman's bell was a moment of delight to receive a birthday card or letter, and checking out the new stamps on the envelope. The postman attired in khaki uniform, riding his black Raleigh bicycle was a welcome friend. He was a messenger who delivered good news, and at times, he delivered bad news of someone's death, often through a telegram. In fact, the ringing of his cycle bell was the same for good or bad news.

During festive occasions the postman would be treated with sweets and tea in appreciation of his service throughout the year. Collecting stamps was a common practice, and some developed this into a serious hobby. The old General Post Office in Fort, adjacent to the opulent President's House was a magnificent building. It was the heart of our nation's communication in that era. I remember going to this massive white imposing building with my father. It was always a busy place. Another venue we loved to visit during our school holidays was the small post office in Nuwara Eliya town. A postcard would be dispatched to a friend in Colombo just for fun. This

beautiful Tudor-style building with red bricks was apparently built in 1894. It is one of the most beautiful colonial buildings from vintage Ceylon.

Communication has evolved over the centuries. Our ancient kings used horse-mounted riders to deliver messages. These messengers travelled in relays at times, often covering long distances, taking days to reach their destination. They were given an escort depending on the importance of the scroll being taken. Pigeons may also have been used, but there is not much evidence to endorse this method.

The postal service in England can be traced back to 1660. The first established form of postal service in Ceylon could be traced back to 1789 when the Dutch had taken control of our maritime provinces. They set up post offices in Colombo, Galle, Jaffna and Mannar. These were important coastal trading centres and postal stations operated mainly for the expatriate community who received letters via ships.

During this era, bullock carts and horse drawn carts were used to transfer parcels. In 1796, they introduced mail runners. They were robust men who carried letters in leather pouches and went on foot to deliver them. These men were given spears to protect them from the wild animals they would encounter as they passed thickets of forested areas.

Postal records indicate that by 1798, an officer named Captain Kennedy was appointed as a competent postal authority. At this early stage, there were 160 postal deliverymen in active service. By 1815, the British had gained control of Ceylon and began to structure the Postal and Telecommunication service, realizing the value of the postal service for business and the welfare of the people. Mr. E. Bletterman was the first Postmaster General of Ceylon.

A significant milestone was achieved in 1832 when Ceylon became the first country in Asia to have special mail carriages. These horse-drawn mail carriages connected various villages. With the advent of the first rail service from Colombo to Ambepussa in 1865, mail could be transported by train which improved delivery time.

By 1914, most mainline trains had a T.P.O. wagon – a travelling post office. Since then Sri Lanka Railways has successfully engaged in carrying parcels and letters across the island, linking railway stations and rural post offices. One of the first mail baskets painted in red, used for the ‘rail-mail’ service is

kept on display at the Postal Head Office Museum. The night mail trains remain a vital link in the postal spectrum.

Stamps are synonymous with letters. The world's first postage stamp was created by Sir Roland Hill in May 1840. The stamp depicted an image of Queen Victoria. According to records, the first postage stamp in Ceylon was released on April 1, 1857. The use of stamps saw the use of the postal stampers – wooden stamping instruments, which 'cancelled' the new stamps. Wax seals were introduced for larger parcels and official mail.

The first stamp with the word 'Sri Lanka' was released in 1972. The year 1857 was a year of advancement in terms of connectivity. For the first time, Ceylonese were able to send and receive telegrams. This was a welcome move. The first telegraphic lines were installed from Colombo to Galle and Colombo to Kandy. Young men and women were recruited and trained to learn the codes that were belted out on metal instruments, which in turn were encrypted.

Government notices were printed and sent for display on the bulletin boards at the Post Office. It was perhaps a forerunner to social media, in a community sense. The arrival of steam ships was also duly advertised. The steam ships docked at the Colombo Harbour and delivered parcels and letters from London and the Netherlands.

Inside the postal museum, I saw an old poster dated 1929, which announced the visit of the steam ship RMS Osterley, which sailed to Melbourne, Sydney, and New Zealand from Colombo. The local agents were Whittall & Co. Some of the mail delivery steamships that came to Colombo were from Peninsula & Orient, Rolando Lloyds, British-Indian Navigation and Organdies Line of Japan.

As the British administration realized the growing demand for letters and telegrams, they set up the GPO in 1895. At this stage, there were 50 post offices in Ceylon. Familiar in major cities are the bright red 'pill boxes' into which people dropped their letters. These sturdy cast iron boxes have stood for decades and can be spotted across the island, although new ones are also in use. These postal boxes were made in England by two companies – Mc Duvall Steven Ltd and W. T. Allen and Co. I have seen some of these beautiful postal relics in Kandy, Galle and Nuwara Eliya.

Another important postal advancement took place in 1914. The mail delivery service was extended to England via India. Dedicated postal staff

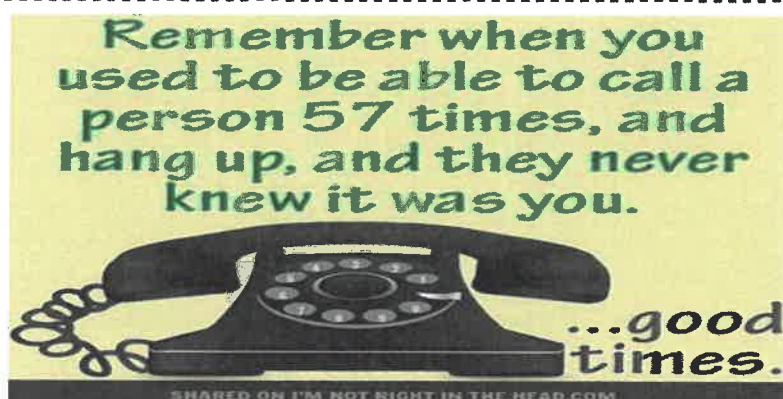
would travel from Colombo to Mannar by train. The next phase was travelling from Talai Mannar to Danashkody (India) by connecting train. Letters were given to a collection centre which in turn dispatched them to London by flight. For the first time mail could be sent from Ceylon to London in seven days. December 1936 was a golden day for communication in Ceylon. The first airmail aircraft (a seaplane) of the Indo-Ceylon Flight Service touched down in Colombo, bearing the first airmail letter to one Mr. Ameresinghe of Dehiwela.

In the golden era of telecommunication, it was the Postal Service that introduced telephones to Ceylon. In 1938 undersea telegraph cables were successfully laid (direct lines) from Colombo to the Port of Aden, Seychelles and Penang (Malaysia). The early telephones were given to post offices, hospitals and police stations as a priority. People had to visit the local Post Office and request for a phone call. It was only in 1970 that mechanical auto phone exchanges enhanced our phone networks.

Today there are almost 640 main post offices in Sri Lanka. They sell nearly 300 million stamps annually. Around 400 staff sort our letters at the Central Mail Exchange (CME) in Colombo, working around the clock. Many would think we rely totally on email, but postal services are still in demand. A visit to the CME shows how many letters are sorted and dispatched. Over the past few years, there is an increase in foreign parcels coming to the country as Sri Lankans have resorted to online shopping.

Remote islands such as Delft have a post office, where mail is delivered regularly by boat. Another good service is the payment of pensions to retired persons via the post office. During the long Covid-19 quarantine curfew postmen played a vital role in delivering medicine to patients, which is very commendable. Sri Lanka Post has come a long way over the past 200 years. [Dishan Joseph--Features-Daily News](#)

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While shopping in at the store, two nuns happened to pass by the beer cooler:

One nun said to the other. "Wouldn't a nice cool beer or two tastes wonderful on a hot summer evening?" The second nun answered. "Indeed, it would Sister, but I wouldn't feel comfortable buying beer as I am certain that it would cause a scene at the checkout counter."

"I can handle that without a problem." She replied as she picked up a six-pack and headed for the checkout. The cashier had a surprised look on his face when the two nuns arrived with a six-pack of beer.

"We use beer for washing our hair." The nun said. "A shampoo, of sorts, if you will."

Without blinking an eye, the cashier reached under the counter, pulled out a packet of pretzel sticks and placed them in the bag with the beer. He then looked the nun straight in the eye, smiled and said. "The curlers are on the house. "

I am not sure where I got this article from. It may be from a friend or the internet. I though it's quite interesting and decided to share it with you. Rita

Are You a Keeper?

I grew up with practical parents. A mother, God love her, who washed aluminium foil after she cooked in it, then reused it. She was the original recycle queen before they had a name for it. A father who was happier getting old shoes fixed than buying new ones.

Their marriage was good, their dreams focused. Their best friends lived barely a wave away. I can see them now, Dad in trousers, tee shirt and a hat and Mum in a housedress, lawn mower in one hand, and dishtowel in the other. It was the time for fixing things. A curtain rod, the kitchen radio, screen door, the oven door, the hem in a dress. Things we keep.

It was a way of life, and sometimes it made me crazy. All that re-fixing, eating, renewing, I wanted just once to be wasteful. Waste meant affluence. Throwing things away meant you knew there'd always be more.

But then my mother died, and on that clear summer's night, in the warmth of the hospital room, I was struck with the pain of learning that sometimes there isn't any more.

Sometimes, what we care about most gets all used up and goes away,

never to return. So, while we have it, it's best we love it, and care for it, and fix it when it's broken. And heal it when it's sick.

This is true. For marriage and old cars, and children with bad report cards, and dogs with bad hips, and aging parents, and grandparents. We keep them because they are worth it, because we are worth it. Some things we keep. Like a best friend that moved away or a classmate we grew up with.

There are just some things that make life important, like people we know who are special - And so, we keep them close!

Good friends are like stars!! You don't always see them, but you know they are always there. Keep them close!

Cowardly Dads

Two kids are arguing over whose father is the biggest coward.

The first one says," My dad is so scared that when lightning strikes my dad slides underneath our bed."

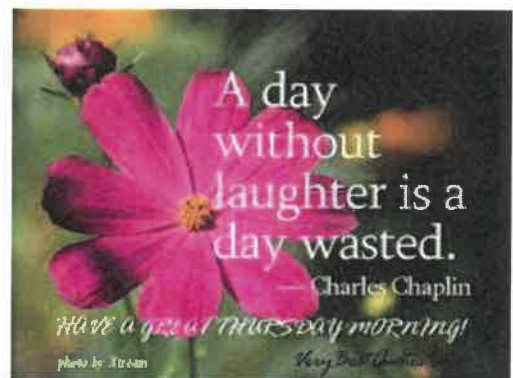
The second kid says," That's nothing; my dad is so scared that when mummy works nightshift my dad sleeps with the woman next door".

Hospital regulations require a wheelchair for patients being discharged. However, while working as a student nurse, I found one elderly gentleman already dressed and sitting on the bed with a suitcase at his feet, who insisted he didn't need my help to leave the hospital.

After a chat about rules being rules, he reluctantly let me wheel him to the elevator.

On the way down I asked him if his wife was meeting him.

'I don't know,' he said. 'She's still upstairs in the bathroom changing out of her hospital gown.'



Colonial gems of Ratnapura-BY MAHIL WIJESINGHE



The colonial period Rest House on a hillock

Source: Sunday observer

Ratnapura, known as Minipura or the City of Gems is my adopted hometown. After the lapse of a year, I am back in Ratnapura to explore the city and get a glimpse of the culture, history, and life of the people in the region.

Long ago, Sinbad, the sailor, reached the island of Serendib and travelled inland to a town through an archway studded with dazzling emeralds, topaz and sapphires. It was a fabulous city where beautiful women were adorned in the most expensive jewellery, studded with rubies and cat's eye. It was Minipura or the City of Gems, nestling on the banks of the Kalu Ganga. Sri Lanka's gems are said to be the best in the world. This is why King Solomon is supposed to have searched the island for jewels that would win the heart of Queen Sheba.

However, since the beginning of the 16th century, the country was invaded, first, by the Portuguese, then the Dutch and finally by the British. All these European colonial rulers' ambition was to establish a trading settlement in the country.

The British introduced coffee as a plantation crop in the mid-1830s. While the plantation agriculture fashioned by the British still prevails, three crops, tea, rubber, and coconut – formed the foundations of the economy. The British dominated the tea trade and had a stronghold in rubber from the 1880s until sometime after Independence.

In the 1900s, the British planters moved inland and established tea and rubber plantations in and around Ratnapura where they were able to get a better climatic atmosphere in the mist-laden mountain ranges, for these agricultural crops. Hence, the city of Ratnapura became a hub of colonial planters in the South-Western region of the island, known as Sabaragamuwa. Ratnapura can boast of being close to quite a few colonial landmark structures. Visiting these heritage icons is a good way to entertain yourself and exercise while enriching your understanding of their glorious past. Here are a few historically significant structures within the radius of a kilometre from the Ratnapura city, perfect for sightseeing and exploring.

Clock tower

Any visitor to Ratnapura would not miss the colonial clock tower. Located in the heart of the city, this British built clock tower was once a magnificent landmark. This

elaborately moulded clock tower was erected by the British at the end of World War I, 1914-1918, to commemorate their men from the Ratnapura district who sacrificed their lives to the war. The names of the War Heroes are depicted on the stone plaque that stands beneath the tower.

Of the clock towers in cities around the country, the Ratnapura clock tower is one of the oldest, having been opened in 1918. Today, the clock tower remains a famous landmark, ticking away the seconds, and depicting the accurate time to the city dwellers, in their rush to beat the time.

A few yards from the clock tower is a Dutch Fort on a small hillock which dominates the congested landscape of the township. A stone flight of steps leads to the façade, which has the year G.R.1817 engraved on the top of an arched entrance.

According to historical notes, this was when the British captured the bastion from the Dutch. A fort had been originally built by the Portuguese in the 15th century, which had been demolished by King Rajasingha II of the Kandyan Kingdom; subsequently, the Dutch built a new fort atop a hill. Although, the Old Dutch buildings remain inside the fort, currently they have been renovated and are used as government offices and gem museums.

The stone rampart could still be seen in some places with evidence of restoration, while the elegant Dutch building, close to the fort serves as the Police Station of Ratnapura.

Tombstone memorial

Another fascinating colonial landmark in the town is a tombstone memorial of S.T. Carthigasen, a renowned district engineer who worked in Ratnapura, and sacrificed his life during a rescue mission in the town in the 1913 floods. The colonial government and the officers of his department erected this monolith memorial along the Colombo-Ratnapura main highway in October 1913, near the place where he drowned.

While reading the book, 'The life and times of D.R. Wijewardene', I came across the name, S.T.Carthigasen. He was a contemporary of D.R. Wijewardene, the founder of the Lake House Group of Newspapers. They were Ceylonese students at Cambridge University during their student days.

It is impossible to miss the Baptist Church on the Colombo-Ratnapura Road just outside the Carthigasen memorial as a landmark. No matter how hectic the traffic, driving past, the cream-coloured small building with its beautiful architecture and surrounding lush greenery grabs your attention. The church initially built by the Portuguese has been there all through the colonial period and the town has grown around it.

Some of the other landmarks are St. Luke's School, begun in 1848, which claims to be the oldest school in Ratnapura, Ferguson High School, another of the oldest schools started by the British on the top of a hillock overlooking the city, St. Aloysius Church on Church Street and St. Aloysius School, adjoining the church.

Finally, we sight the typical colonial mansion, the Rest House of Ratnapura. The long and winding ride under a canopy of greenery leads to this magnificent colonial edifice, atop the hill that dominates Ratnapura, and is a great way to get a bird's eye view of the city.

The colonial rooms are large and elegant in style. The place is a charming sight, with its spacious veranda and wooded garden.



The arched entrance of the Dutch Fort



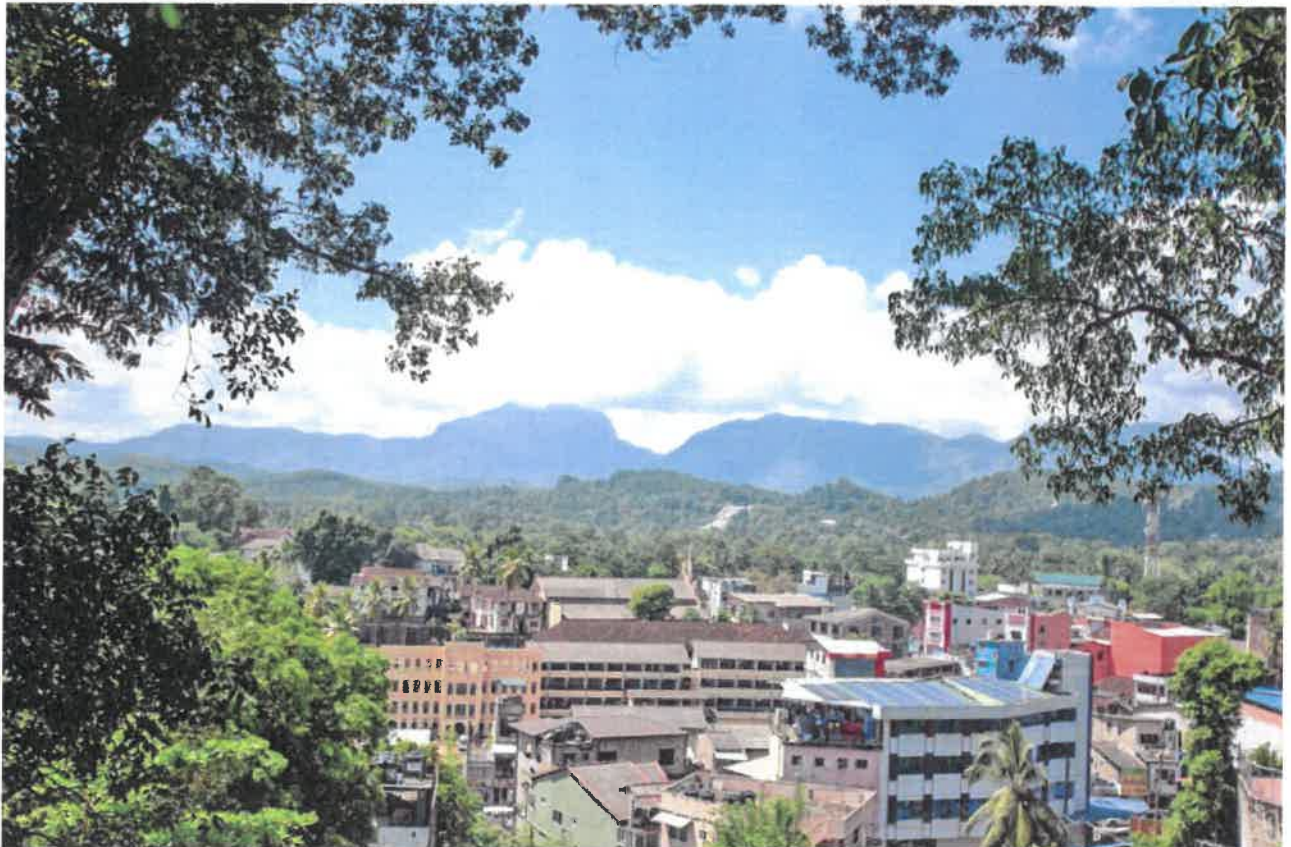
The tombstone of engineer S.T. Carthigasen



The Baptist Church surrounded by greenery



The century-old clock tower in the heart of the town



A bird's eye view of the Ratnapura town

No dictionary has been able to adequately explain the difference between:

“COMPLETE” and “FINISHED”

However, in a recent linguistic conference held in London, England, and attended by some of the best linguists in the world, Samsundar Balgobin, a Guyanese, was the clear winner.

His final challenge was this: “some say there is no difference between COMPLETE and FINISHED. Please explain the difference between COMPLETE and FINISHED in a way that is easy to understand.”

Here is his astute answer:

“When you marry the right woman, you are COMPLETE. But, when you marry the wrong woman, you are FINISHED. And when the right one catches you with the wrong one, you are COMPLETELY FINISHED!”

He won a trip to travel around the world in style and a case of 25-year-old Eldorado rum for his answer.

Courtesy: Internet



Religious Legends and Natural Wonders Near the Dead Sea – by Dr. Gamini Kariyawasam

Between the sky and the sea, the mountain range towards Jerusalem is golden in colour from the distance as the sun sets. The area is covered by the vast sea and a quiet plain covered with fog, which makes the human mind drowsy. A closer inspection of the milky rock that rises from place to place in the sun shows that it is a water table made of salt.

Some time ago, when I was working in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, I had to go to Jordan for some official work. That’s how I pictured the Dead Sea, a wonderful creation of nature that I saw there.

This academic article was prepared using the wealth of knowledge extracted from the views that caught my eye, the information I heard, and the reference to academic documents.

The Dead Sea, renowned for its unique characteristics, historical significance, and religious legends, captivates visitors with its stunning landscapes and mystical allure.



Situated at the lowest point on Earth, this remarkable body of water holds a prominent place in the hearts of believers from different religious backgrounds. This article delves into the religious legends associated with the Dead Sea and explores its natural wonders.

The Dead Sea is so named because it is devoid of aquatic life and plants. The Dead Sea is located 70 km from Amman, the capital of Jordan. In the Masada area, which is about 70 km away. Considered to be the lowest point on Earth, the Dead Sea was formed 400 meters below mean sea level. This vast pool of water extends to the Judean Mountains in the west and Mount Moab in the east.

AD Herod the Great, ruler of ancient Judea (modern day Palestine) in the 3rd century BC, built his mountain fortress on the high ground of Masada beyond the Dead Sea. It was in the ancient Nebula Mountains that the Old Testament was written down by future generations. It is also reported that Cleopatra regularly visited this place in the past to polish her golden body from the hot springs located near the Dead Sea and to enjoy the beauty and frenzy of the Dead Sea.

During my trip to Jordan, I had the opportunity to see the huge mountains stretching across the Dead Sea from afar. My colleague who was with me at that time told me that there is a group of caves in which documents of historical and archeological importance have been preserved. It was K. who was working as Sri Lankan ambassador in Jordan at that time who participated with me in this trip. Mr. Marimuthu. In order to learn more about the ancient cave, I later studied books and internet articles about the Dead Sea.

In investigating those facts, research article presented by Mr. W. A. S Perera on the internet, caught my attention. He makes a credible effort to confirm the conclusion that Buddhism was prevalent in the land of Sunaparanta near the Dead Sea and that the Blessed One was there at the invitation of Punna Bhikkhu.

He further emphasizes that it is mentioned in the Punnovada Sutra of the Majjhima Nikaya, that Punna Bhikkhu took permission from the Buddha and went to Sunaparanta to spread the Dharma.

At his invitation, later the Blessed One visited the Makulakarama in the land of Sunaparanta, which was built near the Dead Sea in what is now known as Mecca. B.C. It is mentioned in the book Panchasudaniya written by Rev. Buddhaghosa Maha Sthavira in the 5th century.

It is important to pay special attention to the fact that Re. Buddhaghosa wrote the Panchasudaniya about one and a half centuries before Muhammad was born in the world and that Muhammad was born in Mecca 1100 years after the Blessed One was raised to Makulakaram. The article also highlights that the meaning of the term Mahamat is Mahamati or the one endowed with wisdom and intelligence in the Pali texts.

It is appropriate to compare the Buddhist scriptures 'Suna' Sunaparanta with the ancient biblical place name 'Sanai'. In the hills of the village of Qumran, about 20

miles from Jerusalem, northwest of the Dead Sea, there were hidden some unnoticed rock caves.

Due to a certain coincidence, that cave came to the attention of the world. A desert-dwelling Bedouin herdsman was following a stray sheep along the mountain slopes when he threw a stone at the entrance of one of these caves. The boy heard some echoing sound from that direction. Intrigued, he was tempted to enter the cave. Inside, he was amazed to see earthen pots sealed with lids. Thinking that there were treasures in the clay pots, the shepherd broke the seals of one of the clay pots and opened the lid. He saw thick animal skins, rolled up and placed in clay pots. Although there were none of the treasures Shepherd expected, the find helped confirm the century's biggest archaeological sensation.

Word of mouth brought historians to this place. In 1947, Dr. John Trevor, an archaeologist, started research here for the first time. He observed that these pottery vessels contained a type of archaic writing, the tanned standard scrolls of animals. Archaeologists managed to find nearly a thousand fragments of documents in eleven caves near the Dead Sea.



According to archaeologist Mr. William Albright, this writing extends back to the 1st century BC. These tracts are considered to be a collection of Jewish Old Testament writings written in Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek.

Mr. Perera has emphasized in his research academic article that Buddhism was widespread in the countries around the Dead Sea at that time. Information about certain Buddhist teachings, customs, and values mentioned in the papers found in the caves on the shores of the Dead Sea seem to confirm that opinion. One such text mentioned in a paper found in the Dead Sea Stone Cave is said to have the following meaning. 'Avoid all evil deeds – engage in all good deeds'.



Two thousand years ago, desert trekkers flocked to the Dead Sea to rest. Famous religious monasteries were born here at that time. The holy pond where Jesus was baptized was also located here. Archaeologists have shown that the sands of time have covered the valley around the Dead Sea with extremely intriguing, ancient information. All the ancient scrolls found in the caves on the edge of the Dead Sea have not yet been translated and published.

After all, these are published, more information will be revealed about the spread of Buddhism in the area around the Dead Sea, as well as the origin of Christianity and

Islam. From that information, religious harmony will be revealed to the world at that time, which will be firmly established in the believers of the three religions.

Geologists who have observed the creation of the Dead Sea have stated that the Dead Sea was born at the point where the Earth's surface sank when the Asian continent moved eastward and the African continent moved westward during the Miocene period.

The bottom of the Dead Sea is constantly sinking. Scientists have calculated that this subsidence is continuing at 13 inches per year.

Magnesium, sodium, potassium, sulphur, chlorine, iodine, calcium, etc., many minerals that are very important for humans are mixed in the Dead Sea water.

A type of mud with a highly volatile Dead Sea chemical composition can be found on the sea floor.

Scientific research has revealed that this mud contains a special power to cure diseases.

Dead Sea mud is also important as an excellent natural medicine that can be found in the growth of decaying cells in the human skin, preserving the colour of the body and curing various skin diseases.

Dead sea water and mud are used as well-known prophylactic to boost immunity and relieve muscle pain.

Sea breezes contain large amounts of Bromium.

This bromium-infused sea breeze is extremely helpful in relieving stress and invigorating the nervous system.

We also got to see several factories that produce various cosmetics from the mud of the Dead Sea. Tourists flock to this area in large numbers to experience the healing power of the Dead Sea mud, it is a common sight to see the dark black mud spread all over their bodies and sunbathe.

Some bathe in the Dead Sea, while others float on the Dead Sea and read a book. Here you can see more tourists riding camels and enjoying the sea breeze.

The effects of ultraviolet rays that are harmful to the body are thinning in this area, the factors that improve the environment with oxygen gas that is beneficial for human existence will undoubtedly cause this area to become a major tourist beach in the near future.

The Dead Sea's religious legends, archaeological discoveries, and natural wonders make it a captivating and enchanting destination. The legends associated with Cleopatra and Buddhism add layers of historical and cultural significance to the area. The discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls provides valuable insights.



And Then:

Earl and Bubba are quietly sitting in a boat fishing, chewing tobacco and drinking beer when suddenly Bubba says, "Think I'm gonna divorce the wife - she ain't spoke to me in over 2 months."

Earl spits overboard, takes a long, slow sip of beer and says, "Better think it overwomen like that are hard to find."

Apparently, this is a true story.

Outside Bristol Zoo, in England, there is a car park for 150 cars and 8 coaches. It was manned by a very pleasant attendant with a ticket machine charging cars £1 and coaches £5.

This parking attendant worked there solid for all of 25 years. Then one day, he just didn't turn up for work.

"Oh well", said Bristol Zoo Management - "we'd better phone up the City Council and get them to send a new parking attendant."

"Err no", said the Council, "that car park is your responsibility".

"Err no", said Bristol Zoo Management, "the attendant was employed by the City Council, wasn't he?".

"Err NO!"

Sitting in his villa in Spain, is a bloke who had been taking the car park fees, estimated at £400 per day at Bristol Zoo for the last 25 years. Assuming 7 days a week, this amounts to just over £3.6 million.

Fantastic...

Love lasts forever

It's the World Cup Final, and a man makes his way to his seat right next to the pitch. He sits down, noticing that the seat next to him is empty. He leans over and asks his neighbour if someone will be sitting there. 'No,' says the neighbour. 'The seat is empty.' 'This is incredible,' said the man. 'Who in their right mind would have a seat like this for the Final and not use it?' The neighbour says, 'Well actually the seat belongs to me. I was supposed to come with my wife, but she passed away. This is the first World Cup Final we haven't been to together since we got married.' 'Oh, I'm so sorry to hear that. That's terrible... But couldn't you find someone else, a friend, relative or even a neighbour to take her seat?' The man shakes his head. 'No,' he says. 'They're all at her funeral.'

Racing a bear

Two campers are walking through the woods when a huge brown bear suddenly appears in the clearing about 50 feet in front of them. The bear sees the campers and begins to head toward them. The first guy drops his backpack, digs out a pair of sneakers, and frantically begins to put them on. The second guy says, 'What are you doing? Sneakers won't help you outrun that bear.' 'I don't need to outrun the bear,' the first guy says. 'I just need to outrun you.'



Too Old to Date

The neighbours thought it was odd, but 93-year-old Morton was dating again. Could he really be chasing one of his neighbours?

One Monday morning Morton woke up with a funny feeling that something important happened last night. It was during breakfast, that Morton finally remembered what it was. He had proposed to his date Greta. But what she answered he just couldn't seem to remember. He thought it best to ring her up. So, Morton picked up the phone and dialled. "Hi Greta", said Morton, "I have a funny question for you, do you remember last night when I proposed?" "Oh my gosh" gushed Greta, "I'm so glad you called, I knew I said yes to somebody, but I just couldn't recall who it was!"

Kotmale Dam and Reservoir. Renamed: Kothmale Gamini Dissanayake Reservoir – By Dr Harold Gunatillake



There are about 30,000 reservoirs in Sri Lanka of which the majority were built from the 3rd century BC to the 12th century. These were mainly constructed in the dry zone area—the Northern and Eastern part of the land an area of about 40,000 sq. kilometres (where almost all the tanks are located), These reservoirs were essential in these areas to collect rainwater from the streams for irrigation purposes.



Close up view

During the present century, such reservoirs with a dam were constructed to collect the streaming water not only for irrigation purposes but with the objective of generating hydropower. Kotmale Dam construction with a view to generating hydropower began in August 1979, and ceremoniously opened in February 1985 and was renamed the Gamini Dissanayake Reservoir on 11 April 2003 following a request by the then Prime Minister Ranil Wickremasinghe.



View of the Dam from Tea Bush deck

This power station is unique as it was built underground and located at the Atabage mountain range. It has the capability of generating approximately about 67 MW turbines and providing power to the national grid. This is the second-largest hydroelectric power station in Sri Lanka.

The hydro reservoir capacity is 174 million cubic meters. The net head of the project is 190m. Best panoramic view of the Dam from the Ramboda Oak Ray Tea Bush Deck.

LEST! YOU DID NOT KNOW? – By Charles Schokman



Have you ever wondered where the month of August got its name from? August, the eighth month of our calendar year, was named in honour of the Roman emperor, Augustus Caesar.

The original Roman calendar, which consisted of ten months, began with March, and ended with December. However, during the reign of Julius Caesar, changes were made to the Roman calendar in order to align it with the solar year. These changes included the introduction of two new months, July and August. After Julius Caesar's assassination in 44 BC, his adopted son and heir, Gaius Octavius, came to power. Octavius later changed his name to Augustus Caesar, officially becoming the first Roman emperor.

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Courtesy of New Life News Magazine

OBITUARIES

(E & O.E.)

(AUGUST 2023)

PATHIRANA, Belle Prema, wife of Goda Karunasena, mother of Vijay Karunassena, mother-in-law of Himalee Karunaseena, grandmother of Dr's Danika Karunasena, Kumudu Rajapakse, Tharinda Adikari and Kalpa Adikari, in Melbourne on, July 29, 2023, aged 93 years. (Contributed)

RAVINDRAN, Beatrice Irangani, (23.08.1931 – 27.07.2023) in Adelaide. (Adelaide Advertiser, 1.8.2023)

SURESAN, Shanthi (née RAMAKRISHNAN), in Sydney. (Tamil Thakaval Obituaries)

BARTHOLOMEUSZ Wayne Derek, husband of Mary, on July 30, 2023. (West Australian, 5.8.2023)

GEDDES, Mary Margaret(21.12.1920 – 02.08.2023), wife of Reginald James (dec), mother of Christopher James. (Sydney Morning Herald, 5.8.2023)

NILES, Dr Daniel Premaseelan, (05.04.1937 – 03.08.2023), husband of the late Sherina Niles, father of Damayanthi, Radhika and Dharman, father-in-law of Richard Hopkins and Sohini Roy, grandfather of Anders and Meera, great grandfather of four, in the UK. (Contributed)

THAMBAPILLAI, Loganathan (Logan), husband of Thayani, father of Logika and Tharmilan, father-in-law of Ananthan, grandfather of Himyni and Annika. Son of the late Thambapillai and Ammanipillai, son-in-law of late Rasiah and Annapuranana, brother of Sivapakiayam (Can), Thavamani (Can), late Patyhmanathan (Aust), Aputhamani (Can), Yoganathan (Aust) and Sivasothi (SL), brother-in-law of the late Ranjithadevi (SL), Rajinidevi (SL), late Ravindrani (SL), late Shanthini (Fr), Sothini (UK) and Kethesan (Fr), in Sydney. (Tamil Thakaval Obituaries)

GOONEWARDENE, Victorine (née De ALMEIDA) wife of, mother of Dr Tyrone Goonewardene, Rozanne Ghai and Natasha Jafferjee, mother-in-law of Vinay Ghai and Mufaddal Jafferjee, grandmother of Arun, Saurav (dec), Isvari, Karishva, Rayyan and Armaan. Daughter of Laurie and Gladys De Almeida, sister of Linus, Merril, Angela, Didacus and Rexie (all dec), in London, UK, on 27th April 2022, aged 86. (Daily News, 5.8.2023)

GARNIER, Geoff, husband of the late Veera, father of Suzanne and Gavin, father-in-law of Nalin Samarawickrema and Geraldine Garnier, grandfather of Jason and Joel. (Daily Mirror, 8.8.2023)

BULNER, Norah Audrey, daughter of late Stanley Bulner and late Norah Bulner, sister of late Blanche, Patricia (UK), Norma, Reggie (Australia), sister-in-law of late Anton, late Ivor, late Joe (UK), late Gordon, Beryl (Australia). (Daily News, 9.8.2023)

DASSANAYAKE, Dona Ranjani Olive, (19.10.1931- 06.08.2023), wife of Lloyd (dec), mother of Dilum & Stephen, grandmother of Alex, Diyon & Liyara. (Sydney Morning Herald, 10.8.2023)

ASIRVADHAM, Ivan, (09.08.1949 – 04.08.2023), husband of Borgia, father of Brian and Alfred, father-in-law of Radhika, grandfather of Anik, brother of Vathsala, Raja and Premila, brother-in-law of Chris, Felicia, Nicholas, Eben, Claudia, Herald, Jenifer and Mirrando. (Adelaide Advertiser, 12.8.2023)

DE SILVA, Clinton Ferminian (24.12.1939 – 11.08.2023), husband of Florence, father of Rozanna (dec) and Olivia, father in law of John Risvanis, grandfather of James, Charli, Hugo, Luca, Basil and Jade, in Melbourne (Contributed)

PAULUSZ, Edna Josephine 'Alya', (08.03.1939 – 12.07.2023), mother of Sonje and Yvette (dec.), grandmother of Nyssa and Cooper. (Brisbane Courier Mail, 14.8.2023)

CHANDRASEKAR, Sathya Narayanan (19.10.1980 – 08.08.2023) husband of Melanie, father, son, son-in-law, brother. (Brisbane Courier Mail, 12.8.2023)

MOLDRICH, Maureen May (Née THICKETT), Dearly loved wife of the late Ashley Moldrich. Loving daughter of her late parents Florence and Bert Thickett. Kathleen and Stanley Bailey. Baby sister Margaret Rose (dec), aged 91 years. (West Australian, 17.8.2023)

WEBSTER, Mervyn, husband of Sheila, father of Gordon, Norman and Gillian, father-in-law of Michelle, Virginia and Jeremy, brother-in-law of late George and of Marie and Valerie, grandfather of

Tamara, Nigel, Tiffany, Brittany and Hamish, great grandfather of Silas, in Sri Lanka at the age of 99 on the 10th of August 2023. (Daily News 19.8.2023)

HERFT, Yvonne Marvis, (Née WHITE),13.8.1931 - 15.8.2023, wife of Anselm (dec),mother of Maxine, Daisy, Harold (dec), Jack, Cedric and Tarnia, mother-in-law of Charlie, Christie (dec), Cleone, Yvonne, Dianne and Roderick, grandmother of Craig, Shannon, Amanda, Jared, Rebecca, Esther, Jadon and Kaine. (West Australian, 21.8.2023)

PERERA, Bernadette Joyce Victoria (née D'Silva) 08.12.1946 – 15.08.2023, in Melbourne (Melbourne Age, 25.8.2023)

BULNER, Michael (Mykie), husband of Coreen (née Hardy), father of Dean and Tara, in Brisbane. (Contributed)

ABRAHAMS, Sydney Owen, (11.05.1927 – 18.08.2023), loved husband of Evelyn (dec), father of Gregory, Jocelyn and Glenys. (Brisbane Courier Mail, 26.8.2023)

DIAS BANDARANAIKE, Lakshmi (née JAYASUNDARA).wife of the late Felix Dias Bandaranaike, mother of Christine. mother in law of Avindra Rodrigo, grandmother of Chalya and Jaana. Sister of late Manel de Alwis, Nissanka (Noj) Jayasundera, Malkanthie Wikramanayaka, and Indrani Hewitt, in Sri Lanka. (Daily News 26.8.2023)

STAVE, John, husband of Kumari, father of late Jakola, Angelo, Nicola (Australia), Jessica, Jacquiline, Camy and Shervon, father-in-law of Stella, Chamika (Aust), Suresh and Rohan, grandfather of Dorian, Ethan (Aust), Hayden, Nathan (Aust), Brandan (Aust), Sophia, Callan and Calliope. Son of the late Tony and Gertrude Stave, brother of Arlene (Aust), Susan (Aust), Felician, Ingrid and Gereard, brother-in-law of Keiran (Austr, Travis (Aust), late Luckshmi.(Daily News, 26.8.202

GONAWELA, Florence Mary (née MARTINSTYNE), wife of late James Gonawela,, sister of Noble, late Dora, Percy, Henry, Villie, Gordon, mother of Christopher, Andrew, Mervin, Aubrey, Patrick and Mark,on 23rd August, 2023. (Sunday Observer, 27.8.2023)

ST JOHN, Stella (née DAVID), wife of the late Rodney St John, mother of David and Ajit, mother-in-law of Samantha, in Melbourne, on August 15, 2023). (Internet Resources& Contributed)

LISK, Errol, husband of Myrtle, in the UK. (Contributed)

NADARAJAH, Vanniyasingm Srikantha "Nada", husband of the late Sunetra Nadarajah, father of Kanishka and Upekha, grandfather to Elora, Reuben, Leona and Isabella. (Elanka News)

MYLVAGANAM, Thangamalar, (30.11.1933 – 26.08.2023) Tamil Thakaval Obitusries

SIRITUNGA, Sumith, (December 1st 1944 – July 26th 2023) husband of Christine, father of Mahen father-in-law of Upeaka and grandfather of Joshua, Johan & Shemaiah, in Melbourne. Funeral July 31st 2023 at 2.30pm at Bunurong Memorial Park (Chapel – Cirrus)

TAMBIMUTTU (nee Vanderwall), April, Carol, (April 9th 1952 – August 16th 2023) passed away peacefully surrounded by her loving family at home. Daughter of Charles and Doreen Vanderwall, Dearly loved wife of Stafford, Mother of Tammy, Tania and Shaun. Sister of Jeannette, Brian (dec,) and Rayburn, Grandmother of Aaron, Trent, Hayden and Jackson. Great Grandmother of Matthew, Zayn, Zoe and Heidi. Requiem Mass for the repose of the soul of April Carol Tambimuttu will be offered at St Joseph's Catholic Church corner Buckingham Avenue & St James Avenue, Springvale on Tuesday 29th August 2023, commencing at 12.00pm. The cortege will then travel to Springvale Botanical Cemetery 600 Princess Highway Springvale for a burial service at 2.00pm.

Note: Spelling of most names as taken from newspapers

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