



*Celebrating 30th Anniversary*



**PAST RAILWAY SOCIETY  
OF  
CEYLON-CANADA CHAPTER**



*Our Lady of Good Health Parish*  
131 Birchmount Road, Scarborough,  
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Toronto-Canada

*26th. Nov. 2022*



[www.pastrailwaysociety.ca](http://www.pastrailwaysociety.ca)



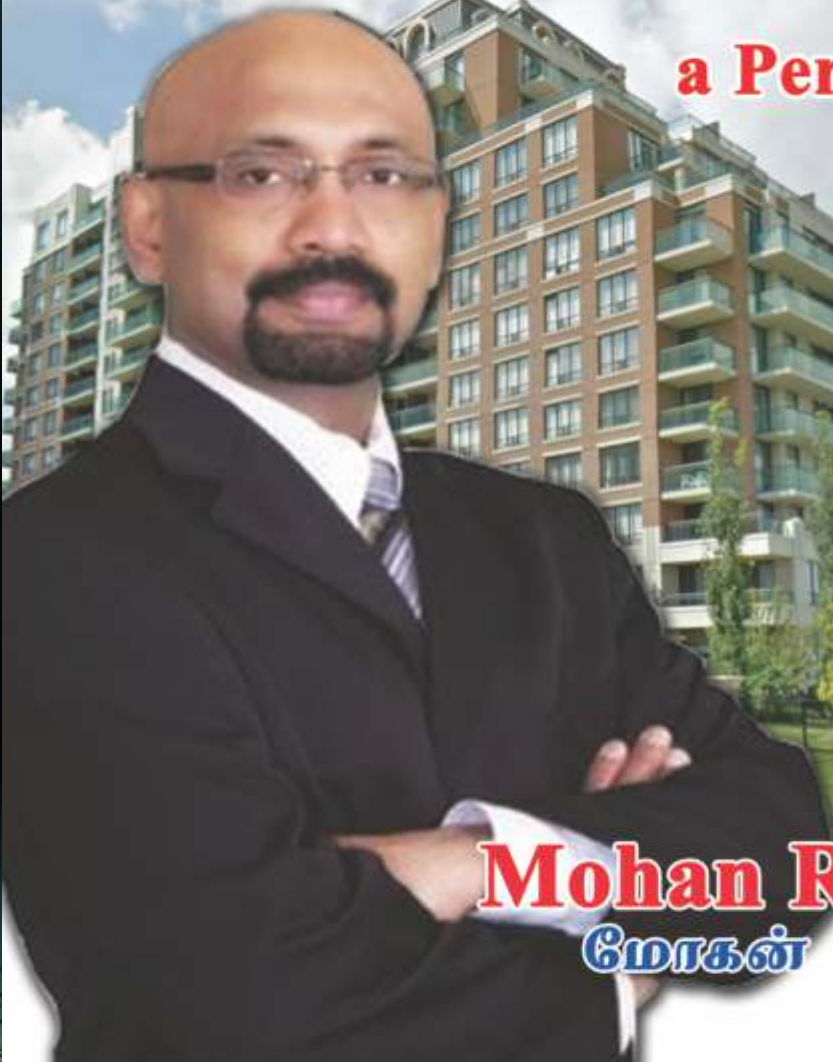
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## Message from the President.....

When I was in the Sri Lanka Government railway as the General Secretary of the railway Institute, I have written several messages to the railway souvenirs and magazines. But as a retired railway man living abroad, I am delighted to write this message on the occasion of celebrating the 30th anniversary, a signifying event in the history of the Past Railway Society of Ceylon, Canada Chapter.

We have had capable Presidents in the past whose dedication, hard work and foresight resulted in the strength of our organization. On reaching 30 years, our organization started in 1992 with only the retired ex Sri Lanka Government employees as members, but with the association of their family members, we have grown into a formidable organization.

We must count ourselves fortunate that we are members of an organization which brings us together, in the spirit of railway and camaraderie. Many of us who had to absorb the “cultural shock” saw in the Past Railway Society of Ceylon, Canada Chapter a heaven to bolster our spirit of cultural heritage in a strange land. A spirit we have inherited from Sri Lanka Government Railway.

The members of the Executive Committee are continuing to show great interest and enthusiasm in the growth of the organization and are looking ways and means to improve educational, cultural activities and to promote voluntarism among the youth.

In conclusion I say a big thank you and show my gratitude to all the members and their families for electing me unanimously as the President to serve this important event of the history of the organization.

*Nava Karunaratnarajah*  
President



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PRIME MINISTER • PREMIER MINISTRE

November 26, 2022

Dear Friends:

I am pleased to extend my warmest greetings to everyone marking the 30th Anniversary of the Past Railway Society of Ceylon – Canada Chapter.



Since it was founded in 1992, the Past Railway Society of Ceylon – Canada Chapter has offered a wide array of programs and services aimed at supporting the well-being of retired railway staff and their families as well as the wider community. This milestone offers a wonderful opportunity to reflect upon your organization's proud history, to celebrate its many accomplishments, and to set goals for the future.

I would like to thank the members of the Past Railway Society of Ceylon – Canada Chapter, past and present, for their valuable work. You can take pride in knowing that your contributions are greatly appreciated and have enriched the lives of your fellow citizens. Canada is truly a multicultural nation, made stronger and more resilient by our diversity.

Please accept my best wishes for an enjoyable and memorable anniversary and continued success.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, which appears to be 'Justin Trudeau', written over a white background.

The Rt. Hon. Justin P. J. Trudeau, P.C., M.P.  
Prime Minister of Canada





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## TESTIMONIALS

*Esra Para is a unique giver, a one of a kind real estate broker. Homelife is very fortunate to have a member who is actively involved in helping so many others in the community. We are proud to be associated with him and having him part of our member network. With sincere appreciation, we wish to congratulate Esra on his goodwill work and for being an exemplary Homelife member.*

*Mr. Andrew Cimmerman, Founder & CEO of Homelife International*

*Esra is one of over 450 Real Estate Representatives/Brokers working for my brokerage Homelife Superstars Real Estate Ltd in Toronto, Brampton and Mississauga. Esra brings a lot of energy and enthusiasm to the job and is always willing to help his fellow realtors. Esra's honesty, integrity, excellent service combined with dedication, commitment and sheer hard work have been the key to his continued success. Congratulations Esra!*

*Mr. Paul Randhawa Broker of Record - Homelife Superstars Real Estate Ltd*

*Articulate, persuasive, ability to deal effectively with people from all walks of life this in a nutshell is how I would describe Esra. His professionalism and continued commitment to clients is known to lawyers and clients alike. Best wishes.*

*Thelma Williams, Barrister & Solicitor*

*Within few days he was able to find a home that we liked and negotiated a good price and the closing date, which was important to us. He was able to arrange the mortgage, home inspector and the lawyer and made our life easy in finding the right house. He was very flexible with his timings and made himself available to suit our convenience. We saw in him a lively personality, knowledgeable and good negotiating skills. Esra had a good understanding of our needs. We are pleased with his service and will not hesitate to recommend him to anyone.*

*Dennis J. Rice & Sylvia Rice*

*House was listed and sold within a week, for 100% of asking price after multiple offers!!!! Service was excellent and professional, always available to answer questions or concerns. For first time sellers it is a very smooth and comfortable process. Thanks Esra.*

*Frank and Trudy Mohammed*



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*I am pleased to congratulate the members of the*

**PAST RAILWAY SOCIETY OF CEYLON  
CANADA CHAPTER**

*on the occasion of this organization's*

**30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary**

*Over the years, the commitment of the members of  
the Past Railway Society of Ceylon, Canada Chapter has helped to  
make your community and our province a better place.*

*Congratulations again, and I wish you  
many more years of success.*

Legislative Building, Toronto  
November 26, 2022

**Doug Ford  
Premier**





November 17, 2022

Past Railway Society of Ceylon – Canada Chapter  
4 Felan Cres.  
Etobicoke, ON  
M9V 3A3

Congratulations to the Past Railway Society of Ceylon – Canada Chapter on its 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary!

I am pleased to hear about the hard work that members do welcoming newcomers to Canada, while also providing an opportunity for the Sri Lankan community to come together and share memories of the old country and this historic rail line.

It is organizations like yours which prove invaluable for so many people who arrive in a new place like Canada without a network to draw upon. The growth of your organization speaks volumes to the dedication of its volunteers and the quality of services which it provides. Congratulations again, and my best wishes on another 30 years of success.

Yours Sincerely,

Terry Dowdall, Member of Parliament  
Simcoe—Grey

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**Dr. Kirsty Duncan**

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November 16, 2022

Hello and warm wishes:

It gives me great honour to write this message for the Past Railway Society of Ceylon – Canada Chapter. As the Member of Parliament for Etobicoke North, I have had the great privilege of supporting the Past Railway Society of Ceylon – Canada Chapter. The group is extremely active in our local area and has a wonderful reputation that strives to help make our community a better place.

The Past Railway Society of Ceylon – Canada Chapter has served the community for the past 30 years and provides a variety of programs including well being of retired railway staff and their families.

As the Past Railway Society of Ceylon – Canada Chapter continues to provide their worthwhile services, I will show my wholehearted support.

Sincerely,

Dr. Kirsty Duncan  
Member of Parliament  
Etobicoke North





## Message from Patron.....

It is with immense pleasure that I am sending this message for the 30th anniversary magazine of our association which was started by nine of us in the year 1990 as the association of the past railway employees of Sri Lanka Today most of the pioneers are not amongst us, We elected Mr. Navaratnarajah as the first president who put his heart and soul to bring it to a successful one. It is one of the pioneer associations in Canada and has set examples for other Members gather at least thrice yearly Our Christmas parties are attended by families and friends of our members about three hundred. All Sri Lanka railway employees who pay a visit to Canada are welcome by our association with a lunch or dinner

Our present president Mr. Karunaratnarajah and treasurer Mr. Baskaran has toiled hard to regain its form We recognize their hard work with gratitude

Long live the association. My heartiest wishes

**Rajah Balendra**





## Message from the secretary.....

It is with great pride and joy that we the Past Railway Society of Ceylon, Canada Chapter celebrate the completion of 30 years since inspection. It has been a long journey, in the course of which our senior members shared many happy moments. I am happy to say that the next generation of the past Sri Lanka railway employees in Canada is now showing a great interest and holding some key positions in the organization.

The summer event took place in July combined with the Canada Day celebration. Everyone enjoyed to the fullest with a real show of hospitality not forgetting the verities of food and drinks provided by one and all in the railway spirit.

It is with deep sorrow that we record the recent demise of Mr.Arulanandam, Mr.Venayagaratnam, Mrs. Tharanai Kathirgamanathan and Mrs.Maheswary Balasunderam who had been active members of our association. We condole with the members of their families and friends. I express my sincere thanks to the President for his enthusiastic dedication, the Executive Committee member, and volunteers for the valuable services rendered and to all members, their families and well wishers for their active participation which made it possible to complete another successful year.

*Thulasi Raganathan*  
Hon. Secretary





## Message from the Treasurer.....

I would like to thank the members for allowing me to take this opportunity to serve the Past Railway society of Ceylon, Canada Chapter as the treasurer and the technical support officer in the railway spirit that I inherited from my father late Mr. Sivasambo. Though I was a member since 2016, I became more involved with this organization since elected as the assistant treasurer in 2018 and as the host conducted virtual meetings during the time of COVID19 when we could not have meetings in-person.

I am impressed by the organization's constitution, policies, procedures and hospitable railway spirited members. It is a non-profit organization that serves for the betterment and well-being of its members and the community.

In order to achieve our goals we need to collect funds to carry on these activities. We need to organize more fund-raising events in future. We the Past Railway Society of Ceylon, Canada Chapter, are kindly requesting your extended support to make every event a success.

I wish you all the best and a Happy New Year 2023.

**Baskaran Sivasambo**

Treasurer,



## Life and Lessons from a Railway Station Master



Mr. Vinayagamoorthy Velupillai was more than a Railway Station Master, he was a treasured father, grandfather, husband, and more. His devotion to his family was unmistakable and his role as a Railway Station Master allowed him to teach us lessons through his work and life experiences.

Our father was always on a lifelong journey of learning. He would read all the time and when we asked curious questions, he would patiently talk to us about the subject. He'd research and let us know more information and he and our grandfather embedded the love and value of education from the beginning. His occupation and traveling were a good match with time to allow him to continuously read and learn. He was an avid collector of newspaper clippings and even those would be used as a reference in teaching moments. We remember sitting around the table at dinner and talking about so many different things, which opened our minds up to the world.

Our father was also a strong believer and practitioner of Yoga. He practiced daily from his younger days and would do his daily routines well into the days prior to falling ill and passing. He instilled the love of the practice with his children and grandchildren as well. He was ahead of his times as we all know how the western world has now embraced the eastern world practice of Yoga. He was a quiet and still man and the practice of Yoga helped him to focus, destress, and come to peace with whatever might be happening.

As a Railway Station Master, he had many opportunities to take us with him and the family had many travels. We had many memories in railway cars, especially at night where we could sit and talk for hours. One of the best times of our lives was when we lived in Hattan Railway Quarters. There was so much to see and learn that was different than our home in Jaffna. We embraced the experience and many others as travel allowed us to see and experience other parts of the country. As children, the gift of experience and learning in the moment is not one to be forgotten.

The most important and memorable part of our father was his kindness and generosity. He showed his kindness in his travels as a Railway Station Master and as he encountered people in everyday life. He was a kind father and he taught us family values and the importance of remaining close to one another. My four sisters, brother, and I connect daily, and our children are all very close. The love he taught us has expanded to generations and will continue for many more.

Losing our father was difficult and we miss him deeply. He will always be with us in our hearts and the lessons he left us will be with us and passed down from generation to generation.

Subajothy Vinayagamoorthy

Eldest Daughter



**Message from the  
Hony. President of the Retired Railway  
and  
Works & Signals Technical Officers'  
& Engineers' Association.**



It is indeed a great privilege and a pleasure to be able to send this message of felicitation to the President, all the members and their families of the Past Railway Society of Ceylon – Canada Chapter on the occasion of commemorating the 30th. Anniversary. It is a great achievement to have been able to establish a society of distinguished retired Railway-men of the Ceylon Government Railway in the faraway nation of Canada and a greater accomplishment to have been able to maintain same so efficiently and successfully for nearly three decades. It speaks volumes and illustrates so vividly the sheer guts and the determination of those retired Railway- men from this island nation who ventured so bravely and successfully and made their home in Canada and paved the way for so many more of their grades to follow suit. 'Bravo' to all of you gentlemen.

As your colleagues, peers and comrades here in Sri Lanka, we are very happy and delighted to know that you all are a very united family of ex-railway officers, living happily with your families and carrying on the age old traditions and customs of the CGR in a faraway freezing land. It is a wonderful feeling and brings forth a great sense of nostalgia to be aware that all of you are there doing extremely well and that glowing flame of brotherhood, camaraderie and respect still kindles within all of us, though we are separated by the vast expanse of oceans.

So it is with great joy and happiness that we congratulate you all and your lovely families and extend our sincere best wishes on this day of the 30 th. Anniversary. We also extend our warmest wishes for a very happy future and pray that success will be all yours in your future endeavours.

May God bless you all.

G.G.A.Gunasekera  
Hony. President





## RAILWAY LIFE BY RAILWAYMAN ,S DAUGHTER

I am proud and happy to say that I belong to a railway family.

I was born as the eldest when my father was working at Haputhale an upcountry station close to beautiful Bandarawela. We were living in railway bungalow designated to FPL located at top of railway land surrounded by green forest.

A very cool place always with heavy showers and covered by mist.

In early days I didn't know and cannot express what my father was. But after few years I came to know that my father is working in Railway department looking after rail track. If I recollect past days remembered my father go outside often wearing raincoats , jerseys ,boots, caps etc even at night time. My mother and I sleep alone at bungalow. I didn't feel loneliness as I was a little kid. My mother was very careful not to notice that father will not return in night time. Early morning I can see father goes for work as usual but I didn't know at what time he came back.

Railway workers always come to our bungalow to accompany my father for emergencies such as earth & rock slips, washaways and derailments. Once in a week we used to visit Bandarawela town by train for shopping. My grand parents come to see us with home made sweets and spend few days at Haputhale. Our bungalow land was with lot of vegetables like potatoes ,carrot ,cabbage ,cauliflower and tomatoes. Beautiful flowers were grown around the bungalow by mother.

I started my kindergarten schooling at Haputhale and can remember the place was at a location close to railway track. In the meantime I was very lucky to have my younger brother there.

My father completed his due period at Haputhale after six years we shifted to sacred Kandy and commenced our primary education there. I can remember I go school with my younger brother. Kandy is a very beautiful and historical city. We used to walk around Kandy lake and worship lord Buddha's tooth relic. We were happy there as my father is often with us as had no emergencies compared with Haputhale. Within three or four years time we again went on transfer to Hatton with my father's

promotion. It is an uncongenial station with adverse weather. We left Kandy school turning down father's request to stay and continue our studies in Kandy. We all came to Hatton leaving super schools and admitted to Hatton schools. Again my father worked hard like Haputhale day and night. But he provided everything we need for our studies. I was big enough to remember everything there. I was very lucky and it is my parents countless dedication that I passed 5th year scholarship ranked first in the district and qualified to enter any school. So we decided to leave Hatton and came to father's home town at Gampaha. This is the end of twelve years unbroken period of living together in railway bungalows. After that we used to go and spend with father in school vacations. Ultimately because of my parents commitment I entered to university of Moratuwa and obtained honours degree in electrical engineering and currently working as an electrical engineer in Sri Lanka Army.

Two brothers are doing hotel management and surveying degrees. Father also became an engineer and recently retired from railway.

I always thanks to Lord Buddha and God as achieved our goals and parents expectations because of my fathers dedicated service to railway. Now also we have lot of railway friends island wide and overseas. Without any hesitation proudly I can say I belong to a railway family.

When I went back to my parents history I came to know my father at his young ages met my mother at Galoya Junction. Fortunately she also from a railway family.

I have met hundreds of railway uncles and their families throughout the life. They are more than our relations and always helped and gave instructions for good future. Some of them are like our parents. Today they are invited for every important functions in our life.

Railwaymen have very good qualities ,they are united as an one family not only in Sri Lanka but also in other countries. They have no ethnic , religious, cast or job differences.

Finally I have to remind some of our railway uncles and family members passed away and wish them rest in peace.

Thank you all.

**Captain Radhika Wansadaya**

Bsc in Electrical Engineering(UOM), MIESL





**PAST RAILWAY SOCIETY OF CEYLON - CANADA CHAPTER.**  
**Non Profit Organization**

**Reg. No.: 5027247**

**President:** Nava Karunaratnarajah P.No:647 302 9863 **Secretary:** Thulasi Ragnathan P.No:416 2926432 **Treasurer:** Kathirkamanathan P.No:647 336 1945

**Working committee ( 2022 - 2023 )**

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<b>President</b>	:	Mr. Nava Karunantharajah
<b>Vice President</b>	:	Mrs. Manohari .B Mr. Sundaralingham
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**Youth Committee Members:**

- 
- 

Miss. Rachel Remislar  
Miss. Samantha Remislar  
Miss. Acshithaa Pirabakaran  
Miss. Athisha Pirabaaran  
Master. Arun Kumar  
Miss. Priya Kumar







## A look back at the living in SL Railway circle.....



My husband Nava Karu was stationed at the historical city of Anuradhapura, in Sri Lanka Government Railway when we got married. A few days after the marriage I went to live with him in Anuradhapura at the railway bungalow. On arrival at Anuradhapura railway station, we had a grand reception from the railway staff, their families and his friends from other Government Departments. I was able to see his popularity there. We were taken in a procession to his bungalow with Kandian Dancers leading the way and girls singing “Jeyamangala Geetha”. That was a memorable event of my life.

As Anuradhapura was a Railway District Head quarters, there were various sub- divisions and hundreds of railway quarters. It was called Railway Town. There was always lots of fun, unity and harmony. People were very hospitable and always ready to help one another. My husband was the General Secretary of the Railway Institute and there was always some kind of entertainment. Institute was even patronized by VIPs like Members of Parliament of NCP, Government Agent and heads of other Departments in Anuradhapura.

From Anuradhapura we moved out on transfers to many other stations. Where ever we went there were lots of fun and unity among the Railway staff and families. Railway spirit prevailed everywhere. My husband daily leaves home to work at 6.45am, and it was interesting to watch that, there are days he goes on a pump trolley on the rail track with four of his workers for rail track inspection. You can see them going as if they are going on a Mercedes Benz converter. It was dangerous to go on the track facing the oncoming train. I was told there had been accidents and some have been even fatal. During weekends he goes to out stations and campout in the jungles with his bosses and the workers for track repairs. They really enjoyed it and it was work with pleasure for him. They really enjoyed the company of each other. Some days he comes home very late after work as if he is coming after a party or something. There days he goes in the motor trolley with the District Engineer for track inspection.

In 1979 he went to Saudi Arabia and worked in the Saudiarabian Railway for seven years. On his return, he was happy to serve again in the SRI Lanka Government Railway and stationed at Trincomalee. At that time there was civil disturbance in the country. There were continues bombing and shelling in our area; hundreds and thousands of innocent people died. My two children escaped death twice. We were always in fear of death. My husband was once hurt in the shelling and thanks to late Mr. B.B.Perera then acting District Engineer who allowed my husband to rest until he could get back to work. My husband retired prematurely and we left the railway with heavy hearts. He was sad to leave the railway as there were four members from his family worked in the railway at one time including his father was a station master.

We were reluctantly compelled to leave the shores of the beautiful county Sri Lanka in 1990, but the memories of the “Railway Life” will never fade away. Now we are in the greatest country in World Canada, that gives equal rights and equal opportunities to all. My husband continues to receive top awards for his community services in this country.

**Pathmaleela Karu**



## புகையிரதமும் வாழ்க்கைப் பயணமும்



பத்து வயதில் அனபுச்சகோதரனின் கைபிடித்து கல்விப்பயணம் அறியா வயதில் தொடங்கிய நீண்ட புகையிரதப்பயணம் பிரபலநகரில் பிரபலமான மகளிர்கல்லூரியில் கற்கும் வாய்ப்பும் குழந்தையின் குதூகலமும் படிப்பில் காட்டிய ஆர்வமும் புகையிரதஊழியராய் வாழ்ந்து மறைந்த தகப்பனாரின் ஞாபகம் தந்தது பிஞ்சு மனதில் படாந்த ஆறமுடியாத துயரம் தந்தையின் நண்பர்கள் தந்தது அளவில்லாப் பாசம் கூடவே வந்தனர் கல்கியும் ஜெயகாந்தனும் சாண்டில்யனும் புத்தகங்களில் கண்ட கதாபாத்திரங்கள் கனவில் வந்ததும் நிஜம் மனதில் நிலையாய்ப் பதிந்தன வழியோரத்துக் காட்சிகளும்

நான்கு மணிப் புகையிரதம் காதல் வாகனமாகும் மெதுவாகப் பயணித்ததால் அப்பெயரும் பொருத்தமாகும் படித்துக் களைத்த மாணவருக்கு உறக்கத்தின் உறைவிடம் உழைத்துக் களைத்த உழைப்பாளிகளின் அயதிக்கு மருந்தாகும் எத்தனையோ பயணிகளின் எண்ணில்லா கனவுகளின் வாகனம் வாழ்க்கையில் ஒன்றித்துப் பயணம் தொடங்கிய சிலரும் பந்தம் இரயில்சினேகிதமாய் முடிந்து போன பலரும் காலங்கள் கடந்து போனாலும் மறையாத எண்ணங்களும் கேட்காது கிடைத்த நட்புகள் தந்தது ஏகாந்தம் வாழ்க்கையின் இடைவிடாக் கேள்வியிடமிருந்து தற்காலிகச் சுதந்திரம்

வாழ்க்கைப்பயணமும் புகையிரதப்பயணமும் ஓர் கடலில் சங்கமம் இரண்டுமே இலக்கை நோக்கியும் நோக்காமலும் முடிந்து போகும் வாழ்வில் சில உறவுகள் இரயில்சினேகிதங்களாய் கடந்து போகும் புகையிரதம் இடையில் நிற்பதுபோல் வாழ்வும் தடைகளை எதிர்நோக்கும் இரயிலும் வாழ்வும் எதிர்பாராத் திருப்பத்தில் தடம்புரளும் பழுது பார்த்தால் மீண்டும் தொடரும் பயணம் திருத்தாது போனால் கண்ணை மூடிடும் சோகம் அண்டம் முழுவதும் நில்லாது ஓடிடும் புகையிரதம் தரும் வாழ்க்கைப் பயணத்தில் வெற்றிகொண்டிடும் தைரியம் புகையிரதப்பயணமும் வாழ்க்கைப்பயணமும் எதிர்பாராது கிடைத்த வரமாகும்.



**2004 Sri Lanka tsunami train .....**



## The Resurrection of a Canadian Giant by Gamini C. Edirisinghe

Sri Lanka Railway's M<sub>2</sub> Class locomotives are fondly called "Canadian Giants" by adoring rail enthusiasts and the general public alike. Easily identifiable by their blue and dark blue livery with yellow trim lines, the deep, resonant two stroke throb of their diesel engines and the lyrical chimes of the Air-pressured horns, they arrived in Sri Lanka (then Ceylon) in 1954, under the Colombo Plan Aid Programme and were named after 10 Canadian provinces and two cities. These gentle giants were the pride of the fleet of Diesel locomotives which the Sri Lanka Railways possessed at that period of time, which was in fact the initial period of the Railway's dieselization programme. These locomotives were immediately utilized to haul the long distance express passenger trains plying along the nation's railway network and provided an efficient and a speedier service to the rail commuters over a very long period.

On that fateful day of 26<sup>th</sup> December 2004, one of these 'Canadian Giants', M<sub>2</sub> 591 'Manitoba' was hauling a long distance passenger train from Colombo to Matara, when at about 9.40 am, the infamous 'Tsunami' waves struck the south western coast of Sri Lanka. The ill fated train was stopped at a signal when the four feet high first wave came and covered the train up to the floor level for a few minutes and then receded. After some time came the thirty feet high second wave which just carried the train towards land flattening tall coconut trees, houses and everything that was on the way submerging the whole area with mud and water for a considerable time. When the water receded the 'Canadian Giant' 591 and the train carriages were lying on their side covered by the mud and debris. About 1500 lives were lost at this site alone out of a total loss of about 35000 due to Tsunami.

Recovery operations were completed in about a week's time and the 'Giant' was re-railed and towed to the Railway workshops at Ratmalana for extensive repairs that took a considerable time.

After completion of repairs M<sub>2</sub> 591, was put back into service and several years later worked the identical train again from Colombo to Matara on the same day to commemorate the fateful incident that took place in 2004. It was like the Phoenix rising out of the ashes.

The fleet of M<sub>2</sub> Class diesel locomotives continued to provide an efficient and a remarkable service to the Sri Lanka Railways for over five decades, plying along the nation's rail network hauling the popular long distance fast passenger trains, sights that were a joy and happiness to the commuters as well as the people residing all along the vicinity of the rail tracks.

These 'Canadian Giants' were gradually taken off the roster and are no more in service except for

*(photos- credit to original owners).*



## ODE TO SRI LANKA RAILWAY

O'er one fifty-seven years ago, on 27th. December, a bright sunny morning,  
An 'Iron Horse' hauled coaches bedecked fittingly and streamers flowing. Colombo to Ambepussa, on rails of steel, well-oiled wheels swiftly rolling....

History was made, the Railway of Ceylon, announced its dawning. British planters funded, their engineers eagerly rose to the task at hand, Extensions to Kandy, Matale in the central hills, thro' Balana pass and mountainous land.

Winding along narrow ledges, thro' tunnels, o'er bridges like a serpent on sand, Seeking its prey, the railway built, around hills, o'er valleys like a maiden's band.

Vast plantations of tea, lovingly nurtured by the British on slopes of Uva hills, Beckoned the railway, transport the produce, a way to fill their tills. More tunnels drilled, viaducts built, engineering feats so marvelous that it fills, One's heart with wonder and joy, the railway reached Badulla, sans any ills. Along the coast, beside sun kissed beaches, on flat terrain to Southern Matara town, Then o'er rolling terrain, thro' green paddies, coconut palms, without a frown. Passing kingdoms so ancient, thick jungles, villages, and towns, to the Northern crown, thence to the East, Batti and Trinco and Northwest to Puttalam further down.

Narrower gauge said to be ideal, laid thro' rugged terrain of the Kelani Valley, Thro' estates of rubber, 'City of Gems' to Opanayake, a terminus so hilly. Nanu-oya to Ragala, 'Uda Pussellawa Railway' too, added on to the tally, The burden to nurture, a composite network, the future generation will carry.

From North to South, West to East and over the Central hills the Railway was there, For the British, hauling tea, rubber, spices, and goods from everywhere. People of this island nation, safer, speedier transport mode for a small fare, Horse drawn carts, fuel guzzling cars and trucks compete, could not dare.

British departed, nation was free, running the Railway passed on to the local gen, Sinhala, Tamil, Burgher, Muslim, and Malay, all versatile with paper and pen. Skilled in all fields, dedicated to the core, one aim to serve island's women and men, with humility, civility, and courtesy, all been one family of Railway men.

Such was the unity, people loved the Railway, most travelling by train all along, Such was the punctuality, along the routes, they set their clocks, to the toot of the horn. Such was the popularity, all longed to greet a Railway man, early in the morn, such was the love and dedication; the sound of a passing train was medley and song.

The 'Golden Era' was Rempala's, nary a question, about his insight and his might, Steam to Diesel, 'Ruhuna Kumari', 'Quadrata Menke' and 'Yale Devi', his maidens by right. Color Lights, Trains on time, disciplined workers who with set targets in their sight, Made the CGR/SLR, one special beacon, which always was bright with a golden light.

Alas! the glorious past is forever gone, the true dedicated Railwaymen hard to find, The top is heavy, workers hard to find, for the few who are there 'tis a hard grind. No one sets the clocks, men of different grades are strangers and of different mind, Each on pursuit of personal goals, wary of the other and without a word so kind.

This time for all to be together, to strain sinew and muscle, and make things work, Awake from your slumber, give of your best, toil to the utmost, and never shirk. Railway is your source of income, and the commuter is the client who always lurk, amongst you, waiting impatiently to enjoy the service you provide, sans any smirk. My earnest wish is that a genius will take the helm and turn things around, And all the men of Railway, devoid of strife, work with minds so sound. Regain the glory of the past, with will, vim and vigor acquired and newly found, 'Cos, the Railway of Sri Lanka will always be, that one precious gem in the mound.

*Lasantha Wijesuriya.*

**Retd. Chief Inspector Permanent Way, SLR.**



## MEMORABLE DAYS OF MY LIFE AS A RAILWAYMAN.



Ceylon Government Railways was one among the largest departments with many thousand employees. Britishers who invaded Sri Lanka during World War two constructed the Railway network in Sri Lanka. ventured to do this to transport their produce like tea and rubber from the hill country into Colombo. Construction of Railway started in the year 1864. As an officer in charge of maintenance and construction of track I really adored the standard of engineering those had in those days. It was a marvelous piece of engineering as even today those tourists who visit Sri Lanka never fail to travel by train to up country to see the railway infrastructure in addition to seeing the scenic beauty. Special mention should be made about the seven ARC bridge at Ella. Railway first ventured its service to Kandy in the year 1895, then to Nawalapitiya, Nanuoya and then to Badulla. Train service on the southern, northern and Eastern lines commenced later.

I joined the Railway department and the year 1957 as a special apprentice and was posted in different units to learn work. In 1957 December on the Christmas eve Sri Lanka experienced very heavy rainfall. All reservoirs in the country got breached unable to contain the inflow of flood water. This damaged and washed away the whole railway network. I was asked to travel to Anuradhapura to assist in the recovery operations. On my way to Anuradhapura by road on Puttalam road I saw carcasses of buffalo's hanging on the branches of trees. At Anuradhapura I noticed the raging flood water rose to the upstairs. From there to Pollonaruwa to attend recovery at Manampitiya bridge. This was my first memorable experience. Returning to Colombo I was ordered to travel to Paranthan to cover up duties as an assistant. In 1958 Paranthan was considered as an uncongenial station. After living in Colombo, I found it very difficult to adjust as there was not even a place to have my meals. At this point I even thought of leaving the job. The passage of time I got adjusted to living at Paranthan. After the completion of two years, I was posted to Talaimannar. This was a better place as the Indo Ceylon ferry service was in operation where I spent my evenings in the boat. From Talaimannar I went to Nawalapitiya. Nawalapitiya was a very busy place in the upper district. Working in the upper district is very unique as you will be compelled to work under varied climatic conditions, I should say that I gained a lot of exciting memorable experiences while working in the upper District. I saw track getting carried down by earth slips. At one incident I saw a school, a Dispensary and the railway track slipping down into the raven. A train passed this spot a few seconds ahead,

A new station was built at Nawalapitiya and the yard has to be modified to suit the new station. At this point it was planned to eliminate the level crossing at Salem bridge end to accommodate an overhead bridge. To accommodate this the existing track has to be lowered by twenty-one feet. I feel happy that I was also a participant in this project. Specially this whole operation was done under traffic. This was another memorable experience gained lot of confidence. The most memorable one was recovering the track for traffic between Vavuniya and Jaffna, a length of 90 miles. This was done in one month assisted by officers and men from Mankulam, Pranthan and Jaffna. Credit goes to those men who worked so hard to accomplish this project.

S. Kanthasamy.  
Retired Chief Inspector .

# SRI LANKAN RAILWAY

formerly

# CEYLON GOVERNMENT RAILWAYS



The thought of constructing a railway line by the British rulers in Ceylon was conceived in the 1850's. Service commenced in the year 1864 on the Main line from Colombo to Ambepussa, a distance of 54 km. It was built chiefly to transport tea and coffee from the hill country. The line from Colombo to Kandy which commenced in 1857 took 25 years to build and was completed in 1882, The line to Badulla completed in 1924 is considered to be one of the finest train journeys in the world with beautiful scenery and feats of engineering.

More railway lines came under construction concurrently in the 20th century. The Northern line to Jaffna was opened in 1914 and the Trincomalee, Batticaloa lines were completed in 1928. Line from Colombo to Puttalam was opened in 1925 thereby making a total of 1453 km (about 902.85 mi) of railway lines in Sri Lanka. The network consisted of: Main line to Badulla, Coast Line to Matara,

Mannar Line, Batticaloa Line, Trincomalee line, Matale Line and Kelani Valley narrow gauge Line.

Presently the Sri Lanka Railway network consists of 1508 km of Broad Gauge 5' 6" wide and narrow Gauge 2' 6" wide tracks. Although the British established the railway system in the island, the Golden years of the system are considered to be from 1955 to 1990 under the management of Mr. B.D. Rampala who upgraded all major railway stations outside Colombo. He launched express trains with more comfort for passengers. Until the year 1953 steam locomotives performed the journeys following which Diesel locomotives were imported by him to facilitate faster and more efficient travel.

The Golden Years however, declined with the advent of faster road transport of goods by lorries and trucks and improved bus transport for the people. A 10 year development strategy was therefore launched by the government in the year 2010 during which railway tracks were upgraded to handle speeds of 100km (about 62.14 mi)/hour. The Coast Line track severely damaged by the Tsunami was repaired and the line is now being extended to Kataragama to serve the people of Hambantota and other cities in its path.

Special services are provided today for tourists with the introduction of air-conditioned coaches on Express and Intercity trains. Approximately 396 trains including 67 long distance and Intercity trains carry 3.72 million passengers per day.

The Department of railways in Sri Lanka is divided into 10 Sub departments and 3 units. Heads of departments report to the General Manager of Railways as the Head. The Way and Works department, a major component of the system in which I was employed as a Senior Draughtsperson designs the layout of tracks, maintains the lines, designs and constructs railway stations and quarters for employees in remote locations along the lines.

Although it has been 46 years since I left employment at the Railway to migrate to Canada I reminisce the good times and my co-workers, several of whom are no more and wish the Sri Lanka Railway progress, efficiency and service to the people of Sri Lanka and all tourists and others who help the country rise up to be a developed nation of the world in the near future.

**Carlo Lionel Dissanayake**

(Dates and figures adapted from other sources)







### **Message from P.Gnananandan.....**

I cannot believe that it has been thirty years since this Association formed. It has really flourished from strength to strength. Over the years, I can see how the strong bonds in the Sri Lankan community have been kept together by the dedication and hard work of the Past Railway Society of Ceylon, Canada Chapter. Regular events throughout the year allow us, to all come together and allow our families to have those special shared experiences. This is something that future generations can really benefit from.

I wish your association the very best in all its future endeavors and please accept my sincere best wishes for the memorable anniversary and convey my sincere regards to your membership.

**Retried District Engineer - CGR**



## Some words about our father late Mr. Annalingam S.S (Station Superintendent) and the privileges we enjoyed with C.G.R.

I am Thulasi Ragnathan nee Annalingam and my brothers Muraleetharan and Muhunthan are proud to say we are the children of Mr. Annalingam. In 1943, our father joined the Ceylon Government Railway as a clerical staff at the Marudana Control Station. Thereafter he served in Anuradhapura and Nawalapitiya for 5 years. In 1955 he was transferred to Peradeniya.

In 1956 he married Miss. Throwpathy Devi Daughter of Mr. Namasivayam Head Guard in C.G.R. In 1956 he was promoted as Station master (S.M) and served back in Nawalapitiya. 1957 to 1969 he worked at the stations Kochikade, Mathavachi, Kodkamam and Malapalla.

Year 1969 was a special and exciting year for Mr. Annalingam and family. He got transferred to Katunayake station. Here Mr. Annalingam got the chance to express his potential in administration, leadership and stress handling. Pope John Paul visited Ceylon, landed at Katunayake international Airport. Thousands of people gathered at the railway station, to accommodate all these people, management did lots of construction at the station, hired more employees, and High securities. Our father handled this overwhelming situation gracefully with success. The management appreciated his effort and promoted him to Special class with transfer to control station Maruthana in 1970.

Considering children's education Mr. Annalingam left the family in Jaffna in 1970 and continued to work at Colombo Fort. In 1976 my father was promoted as C.S.M (chief station master) and transferred to KKS-Kankesanthrai control station. He got into more higher responsibilities. He has to manage a variety of employee duties and scheduling ..... I remember he was mentioning that handling guards and Engineers are really challenging. However with his patience and friendly manner he handled all the situations successfully. In 1983 Mr. Annalingam promoted as S.S (station superintendent) and transferred to Trincomalee, there in 1984 he retired after 41 years of wonderful railway journey.

We are very privileged to be in the Railway family. We enjoyed and learned the lifestyles from Railway parties such as welcome, farewell, Christmas and New Year. I would say we children have adopted all these entertaining skills from the railway environment, which has given us lots of outgoing experiences, opportunities to learn and play a lot of games such as Chess, Carom Badminton. We played these games with railway families.

We enjoyed lots of holidays, vacations by traveling by train all over Ceylon in a special class, first class and in domestic Airlines Air Ceylon flight with a railway 1st class pass while most of the others in Ceylon didn't know about vacations.

"Udarata menike" took us to hill countries in an observation salon. Most of the local people don't know about this facility in C.G.R, only tourists enjoyed it. The facilities we enjoyed with Ceylon Government Railway were incredible. I am lacking words to express all of them.

After my father moved to Canada in 1991 he engaged in all the activities organized by the Past Railway Society in Canada. Our father never failed to take his wife, our mother to all the occasions. He made all the children and grandchildren participate in activities. As a violin teacher, I got opportunities to perform in all the events and all the grandchildren showed their talents.

My father made a lot of railway friends, they became our friends too. Mr. Balendra Uncle, Brother Kathirkamanathan, Late Mr. Sithamparanathan, Clifford Uncle and many others.

After our father passed away in 2014 we children continued to participate in the past C.G.R events in Canada. Because of the interest I showed in the organization the railway Society elected me as the Secretary for the Past Railway Society of Ceylon-Canada Chapter and my brother Muhunthan was assigned as Auditor.

I thank the current organization for giving me the opportunity to bring our memories of our father and the privileges we had with Ceylon Government Railway.....





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## ஆரோக்கியமாக வாழச் சீல வழிகள்.

முக்கியமாக சரியான முறையில் தோப்புக்கரணம் போட்டால் சுகமாக வாழலாம்.

எப்படிச் சரியான முறையில் தோப்புக்கரணம் போடுவது?

- 1) காலையும், மாலையும் உண்ட உணவின் சமிபாட்டின் பின்னரே தோப்புக்கரணம் போடலாம்.
- 2) நன்றாக நிமிர்ந்து நின்று இடது கையால் வலது காதினைப் பிடிக்கவும். வலது கையினால் இடது காதினைப் பிடிக்கவும்.
- 3) அப்படியே கீழே இருக்கவேண்டும். அதாவது உங்களுடைய இடுப்பு எலும்பு குதிக்காலில் படும்படி இருந்து மெதுவாக குந்தி இருந்து பின்பு..... மெதுவாக எழும்ப வேண்டும்.
- 4) கீழே இருக்கும் பொழுது உங்களுடைய மூச்சுக்காற்றை வெளியே விடவேண்டும்.
- 5) இதனால் மூச்சு (சுவாசம்) சீராக இயங்கும்.
- 6) முதலில் மூன்று தடவை செய்து, அதன் பின்பு எத்தனை முறையாவது செய்யலாம். எத்தனை செய்வீர்களோ அத்தனை தடவைக்கும் பலன் அதிகரிக்கும்.
- 7) உடலில் உள்ள 72,000 நரம்புகளும் சரியாகச் செயற்படும். இதனால் உடல் வலுவேறி நன்றாகச் செயற்படும். காலைக் கடன் செய்வது இலேசாக இருக்கும்.
- 8) இது ஒரு யோகாசனப் பயிற்சியே.

## தியானம்.

தியானம் என்பது மனதை ஒரு நிலைப்படுத்தி இறைவனை அடைவதாகும். தியானம் தினமும் செய்தால் சுகல சௌபாக்கியங்களையும் கூடிய விரைவில் பெறலாம். நோய் பிணிகள் யாவும் உங்களை ஆட்கொள்ள முடியாது. தியானம் செய்தால் மனிதன் முழுமை அடைகின்றான். பிரபஞ்ச சக்தி உங்களுடைய உடலில் உட்பிரவேசித்து நோயற்ற சுகமான வாழ்க்கையை நடாத்தலாம். உங்களுடைய சுகல விடயங்களையும் இறைவன் உங்களோடு இருந்து, வழிநடத்தி, வாழ்க்கையை வெற்றி அடையச் செய்வான். “ சுமமா இரு சொல் அற ”.

## தியானம் செய்வது எப்படி?

தியானம் யாரும் செய்யலாம். வயது எல்லை இல்லை. எந்த இடத்திலும் செய்யலாம். எவ்வளவு நேரமும் செய்யலாம். யாருடைய உதவியும் தேவை இல்லை. நீங்களே குரு - சீடன்.

அமைதியான இடத்தில் மாத்திரம் அல்ல, எந்த இடத்திலும் செய்யலாம். ஆறுதலாக இருக்கும் பொழுதும் செய்யலாம். சைவ உணவோ - அசைவ உணவோ சாப்பிட்டும் செய்யலாம். உணவு வரையறை இல்லை.

உணவு அருந்த முன்பும் செய்யலாம். உணவு அருந்திய பின்பும் செய்யலாம். சுத்தமாக இருந்தால் போதும். முடிந்தால் வடக்குத் திசையை நோக்கி உட்காருங்கள்.

ஒரு நிமிட தியானம், பத்து நிமிட தியானம், நூறு நிமிட தியானம், ஆயிரம் நிமிட தியானம் என முடிந்த மட்டும் தொடரலாம். ஆனால் மனதை அலைய விடாமல் சுவாசத்தில் நிறுத்தி வைக்க முயற்சி செய்யுங்கள். முயற்சி திருவினை ஆக்கும்.

தியானம் செய்து முடிந்த பின்பு இரண்டு கைகளையும் ஒன்றுடன் ஒன்று உரசி சூடான பின்பு முகத்திற் கண்களுக்கு நேரே கொண்டு வந்து - அதன் பின்பு கண்களால் இரண்டு கைகளையும் பார்த்து

“இறைவா இன்று எனக்கு நல்ல வாழ்க்கையைக் கொடு நான் ஆரோக்கியமாக இருக்கின்றேன். ஆனந்தமாக இருக்கின்றேன்” என்று வணங்கலாம் . தியானம் முடிவுற்றது.....நன்றி

**சி.சு. கந்தையா**  
(யோகா ஆசிரியர்)



# Memories.....



Narrow gauge train on the Kelani Valley line at Kuruwita



# Memories.....



Memories.....

# Canada Day 2022



*Happy Canada Day*  
2022 July 1st,  
**Past Railway Society of Ceylon**  
Canada Day celebration will be held on  
Friday, July 01, 2022  
at the shelter at the Kids Water Park at  
100 Silver Springs Blvd  
Scarborough, ON - M1W 2L2  
at 10:00 AM followed by Canada Day celebration  
and is expected to last approximately until 4:00 PM.  
**Snacks and Lunch will be served  
As Free**  
Members and their families are cordially invited





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3268 Finch Ave. East (Warden/Finch)  
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[www.pastrailwaysociety.ca](http://www.pastrailwaysociety.ca)

## **Our Sincere Appreciation**

We have taken immense pride and pleasure in celebrating the 30 th anniversary of the Past Railway Society of Ceylon Canada Chapter.

Our warm and whole-hearted thanks to the guests of honour who have graced the occasion with their presence.

All invited guests and audience for their enthusiastic company.....

Each and every sponsor for the adverts and all the

Well wishers who helped us in many forms to organize this event....

All those who gave congratulatory message and articles to the souvenir,

Our Lady of Good health Parish for giving us the venue.....

To Amutheesan, for making this souvenir a memorable one.....

All performers who delighted us with their renditions, their parents and Gurus...

To Nantha Caters for the delicious food....

All volunteers who have helped us in many ways.

And everyone else who have helped us in many ways to make

This anniversary celebration a successful and memorable event.

## **Happy New Year - 2023**





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