



AUSTRALIA SRI LANKA ASSOCIATION INC NEWSLETTER

Coming Soon

- ASLA Golden Jubilee Dinner Dance on 31st of August
- Founder Member's Get Together (to be advised)
- Participation in the Multicultural Festival

Inside this issue:

President's Message	2-3
ASLA Committee 2024 & Calendar of Events	4
ASLA AGM & Curry Lunch	5
ASLA Food & Cultural Festival	6-7
Projects	8-9
Sinhala & Tamil New Year Festival	10
ASLA Presidents Over The Years	11
First Sri Lankan Immigrants	12& 13
Kussiamah Sarah	14
ASLA Photos As Time Goes By Fifty Years Young	15-19

Dear ASLA Members, Families and Friends

This year we are celebrating 50 wonderful years of the Australia Sri Lanka Association. This is a true milestone for the association and an anniversary to be very proud of.

The ASLA Committee have had a very busy and eventful anniversary year so far. Commencing with the AGM and Curry Lunch in January. Then, on a beautiful day in February a large crowd enjoyed the Annual Food and Cultural Festival. It is hard to believe the Food Festival is now in its eleventh year.

In April the committee was working quietly behind the scenes with the 50th Year Stroke Project, which involved loading a container with beds and medical equipment for Stroke Patients, ready for shipment to Sri Lanka. The project was in collaboration with the Sri Lanka Consulate and the Rotary Club.

ASLA's next exciting event will be the 50th Golden Jubilee Dinner Dance on the 31st of August, with the exciting Corinne, direct from Sri Lanka. Our local group ASHRA will provide music. All the details will be coming soon. As tickets are sure to sell fast, be sure not to miss this exciting gala occasion.

ASLA is also planning a possible Founder Member get together later in the year. Watch out for details soon.

Features in this edition include:

A message from the 2024 president of ASLA, Mrs Nishani Seneviratne. The message highlights the history and some of the exciting ASLA events over the past 50 years. Not forgetting the people who made this all possible. ASLA has been proud to be involved with 50th anniversary projects. The president outlines projects that ASLA is involved with in this 50th year and a vision for the future of ASLA.

We take a trip down memory lane with photos from ASLA events in years gone by. **Would you have any photos from the beginnings of ASLA in 1974 up until the 1990's. We would love to see them and they could be included in the next edition.**

There are highlights from the Food & Cultural Festival. Kussiamah Sarah entertains with yet another delicious recipe and lighthearted tale to warm us on these cold nights.

Also included is an article with surprising facts about the first Sri Lankan Immigrants to Australia.

We hope you join us and celebrate ASLA's 50th Anniversary this year.

Editor



ASLA Celebrates 50 Fabulous Years in 2024!



A Message From The President

ASLA was started by a few Sri Lankan migrants who made their home in Adelaide in the year 1974. Most of them were Sri Lankan (then known as Ceylonese) professionals from all ethnic and religious backgrounds i.e., Burgher, Sinhala, Tamil and Muslim communities. Sri Lankan community was very small at the time, however the pioneers of ASLA were a proud bunch of Sri Lankans who integrated very well with the rest of the communities in SA.

Our founder members ventured into developing professional and social associations with likeminded people in SA and engaged in activities that promoted our distinct cultural values, beliefs etc. One of the most effective and successful ways of achieving that objective was through cultural programs such as 'food and entertainment events' that attracted many non-Sri Lankans.

The founding members of the first Executive Committee were.

Dr. Lucien Keegal (President)
Dr. Chinti Wijesinghe (Vice President)
Mr Radley Claessen (Secretary)
Dr. Fred Perera (Treasurer)

Other pioneering members included Thilak and Dawn Goonasekera, Dr Risien Bartholomeusz, Irwin Herft, the Walles family, Everard and Caryl Walker, Suzette Jansen, the Farouque family, Alex and Chandani Lokuge, Peggy and Warwick de Kretser, the Pinchers, the Karunaratnes and the Paivas. Later many other enthusiastic families joined ASLA.

The first ASLA 'dinner-dance' was held at the Enfield Town Hall (does not exist anymore). ASLA's heydays were in the 80's and 90's when the Christmas and New Year celebrations used to draw about 300 attendees. The meeting-place was the Marion Bowling Club, and later, the Railway Social Club at Keswick. Tilak and Dawn Goonasekera were the organisers.

ASLA also played an active role in promoting Sri Lankan Cricket and participating at the opening ceremony of the Migrant Museum, just to name a few.

During this period current active members like Dr. Colin Fernando and Manel, Professor Justin La Brooy and Nirmala, Dr. Michael Roberts and Shona, Alex and Dr. Chandani Lokuge, Dr Bruce and Suramyia Kennedy, Dr. Dylan and Dr Kelly Bartholomeusz, Maureen Fernando, Moira and Stan Djukanovic, Susila and Balan Sanders and Ashley Moldrich also joined ASLA.

In later years, when more and more members joined ASLA, including Australians and ASLA became truly multicultural, and the founders decided to register ASLA as an Incorporated Body.

Since its inception in 1974, ASLA has grown and become an organization fit for the 21st century. At present, ASLA has developed capacity and expertise to hold significant community oriented events on a grand scale, attracting thousands of people from all diverse backgrounds. Our past Presidents, Committee members and Volunteers have kept pace with the fast growing Sri Lankan community in Adelaide.

ASLA is very proud to be the oldest Sri Lankan organization in Adelaide and this year, we have reached a significant milestone as we celebrate of Golden Jubilee as an organisation.

As the President of the Golden Jubilee year, I commended the Founding Members of ASLA for all their efforts and contributions to ASLA over the years and for all their achievements at our 11th Food and Cultural Festival on the 25th of February 2024 at Fullarton Park. My team will be consulting Dr Charitha Perera, Dr Colin Fernando, Professor Justin La Brooy, Dr Michael Roberts, Dr Dylan Bartholomuesz and Mr Palitha Wijesuriya for their wisdom and guidance when ASLA plans its 50th Anniversary celebrations.

In this Golden Jubilee Year, I would like to pay our tribute and gratitude to the immediate leaders before me - Lisa Wijesinghe, Nazli Farook, Ganga Gamage, Anuruddha Mediwake, Ajith Seneviratne, Manoj Ranasoma and Lourdes Jayasuriya - not forgetting those who preceded them, all of whom have contributed to the growth and success of ASLA over the years.

A Message From The President, Cont...

ASLA has completed several 'Sri Lankan and Australian Projects' in the past. In our 50th year, ASLA has collaborated for the first time with the Rotary Club to equip five Stroke Units in Sri Lankan hospitals with the help of our Sri Lankan Consulate. In addition, we also have provided support for the medical needs of a Sri Lankan patient with liver disease. We also plan to donate some of the profits from our proposed dinner-dance towards a Mental Health Project in Sri Lanka.

ASLA participated in the Traditional Sri Lankan Games at the Sri Lankan New Year Celebrations as part of our 50th Anniversary celebrations to support other Sri Lankan organisations. We are considering the possibility of a small get-together to recognize our Founder Members towards the end of this year 2024. We are also considering participating again in the Multicultural Festival at Victoria Square towards the end of this year.

As in the previous five decades, the major topic at the AGM was the future of ASLA. In this year of ASLA's Golden Jubilee, we will continue to explore as to how we should keep ASLA's objectives and goals alive and relevant to our changing times and needs of the community at large. And we will commit ourselves to assure its continuity as an organisation to make our Motherland and our Founder Members truly proud.

As the President in this 50th year my priorities would be:

- a) To slightly alter the objectives of ASLA to suit the present needs of our times and to foster better recognition of the increased Sri Lankan community in SA contributing to the growth of the state as a truly multicultural organisation within Australia.
- b) To promote Sri Lanka as a magnificent Tourist destination for non-Sri Lankans in SA for their holidays, thereby contributing to the economy of Sri Lanka which is undergoing many challenges.
- c) In my opinion, we project Sri Lanka as a country with many 'needs.' However, there is much more that ASLA can do to assist our country, such as identify investment opportunities for projects in Sri Lanka, perhaps in collaboration with the corporate sector in Sri Lanka, help our new migrants to secure good positions here in the private sector in line with their professional standings, help international students who do well to get skills and experience upon completion of their studies etc.
- d) This involves having more non- Sri Lankans at decision making levels participating in ASLA events as invitees.
- e) To do this the events we organise should be of such quality that members could be proud to invite their non-Sri Lankan friends to come along.
- f) Encourage young and not so young people with new ideas, wisdom, and enthusiasm and support them to stimulate interest in the Association.
- g) Promote ASLA among Australians with Sri Lankan links to join ASLA as members.

I acknowledge that changing for a new era or for a new way of working and thinking is hard. Hence, I court everyone's input, help and support to achieve this with my team. We need to take the plunge now for a change as we must and look forward to a more vibrant future ahead of us.

In the meantime, keep smiling and stay safe.

Nishani Seneviratne
President of ASLA 2024 (Golden Jubilee Year)

The ASLA Committee for 2024

President, Nishani Seneviratne
Vice President, Manoj Ranasoma
Secretary, Vinoba Ambigapathy
Treasurer, Chamith Kotte,

Committee members:

Nazli Farook
Lourdes Jayasuriya
Nishantha Jayawardena
Madu Punchihewa
Nirosha Mahasigha
Ajith Seneviratne
Senuri Jayasuriya
Chandani Jayawardena
Deepal Punchihewa
Sudeep Priyaviraj



ASLA 50TH ANNIVERSARY CALENDAR 2024

ASLA AGM & CURRY LUNCH
14TH OF FEBRUARY 2024

ASLA FOOD & CULTURAL FESTIVAL
25TH OF FEBRUARY 2024

CONTAINER LOADING DAY FOR
THE STROKE PROJECT
23RD OF MARCH 2024

ASLA PARTICIPATION IN SINHALESE &
TAMIL NEW YEAR'S DAY
14TH OF APRIL 2024

DINNER DANCE
31ST OF AUGUST 2024

RECOGNITION OF THE PIONEERS OF
ASLA BY JUNIORS, DATE TBC

MULTICULTURAL FESTIVAL AT VICTORIA SQUARE, DATE TBC

ASLA AGM & Curry Lunch

The outgoing President, Lourdes Jayasuriya warmly welcomed members to the meeting. She commented that 2023 had been a very successful year. Functions organised by the ASLA Committee included the AGM and Curry Lunch, the Food and Cultural Festival in February and the Cultural Lunch in October. Proceeds from the Cultural Lunch Raffle were donated to Catherine House.

In November ASLA was involved for the first time at the Annual Multicultural Festival at Victoria Square. The Committee had a food stall representing Sri Lanka with sweet and savoury Hoppers.

Lourdes thanked the entire committee for their support and the guidance given to her to carry out the role. Moira Djukanovic thanked Lourdes for all her hard work as President and for the great job she had done.

The new committee was duly elected and Dr Colin Fernando warmly welcomed the new president, Mrs Nishani Seneviratne and asked her to introduce the committee for 2024. Nishani Seneviratne thanked ASLA members for appointing her and she looked forward to the year ahead.

The AGM was followed by a delicious curry lunch.



ASLA Food and Cultural Festival 2024



The 12th Annual Food & Cultural Festival was held on a beautiful day in February, celebrating ASLA's 50th Anniversary. Hundreds of people attended the fabulous event, mingling with friends and family in the sunshine. The crowd enjoyed a wide variety of delicious Sri Lankan food, including Sri Lankan traditional sweets. There was also a stall of cultural attire which was available to try on and textiles and traditional clothing for sale. Those attending soaked up the atmosphere with dancing displays by Sihala Kala Rangayathanaya and music by Thanua.



The event was graced by the Mayor of Unley, Mr Michael Hewitson, Dr Charitha Perera, Honorary Consul of Sri-Lanka, Hon Vincent Tarzia MP, Hon Emily Bourke MLC and Hon Jing Lee MLC and leaders of all Sri Lankan organisations. There was also participation from other community organisations, including Rotary Club. There was also an exciting media coverage by Lakahda and Community TV CeyFlix.



The Food & Cultural Festival event grows in popularity every year. Thanks to all who attended and enjoyed such a wonderful day. Our thanks also go to the stall holders, entertainers and to the committee and volunteers whose hard work helped the make the day such a success.



Making Kokkis





Early ASLA Members
Peggy & Warwick De Kretser
with ASLA President, Nishani Seneviratne



A 50th Year Project by ASLA

In April the 'Stroke Project' was completed by the Australia Sri Lanka Association in collaboration with Sri Lanka Consulate, Adelaide and Rotary Club.

Those involved in the project loaded a 40 foot container with 55 plus Stroke Patient beds and other medical equipment. The equipment will be sent to Sri Lanka and donated to benefit five Stroke Units in Sri Lanka.



The Team hard at work loading the Container



ASLA 50TH ANNIVERSARY PROJECT TO DONATE FUNDS RAISED FROM ASLA FOOD & CULTURAL FESTIVAL

Jagath Mahagamage
Dr. Rela institution
Chennai.

President,
ASLA.

I thanked you for supporting me to raise funds at your ASLA food festival to facilitate liver transplant of my brother in law.

Thank you,

Thamara Medawatte



SINHALESE & TAMIL NEW YEAR'S FESTIVAL 14TH OF APRIL 2024

On the 14th of April this year, the Sinhalese and Tamil Community in South Australia celebrated New Year's Day.

ASLA participated in the New Year celebrations and sponsored a game



ADELAIDE SRI LANKA BUDDHIST VIHARA INCORPORATED

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Advisor and Chief Incumbent Ven. Udagabbala Sumedha Thero, BA, MA

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Dear Nishani,

On behalf of the ASBV Management Committee, I would like to extend our sincere thanks for your generous sponsorship and support for the 2024 Sri Lankan New Year Festival which successfully concluded at Norwood International High School oval last Sunday. With your support, we were able to run a successful and beautiful event, thank you so much for it.

We hope you will extend your continued support for our future activities as well.

Thank you once again, and May the Triple Gem Bless You.

With much appreciation,

Ajith Lal Sumanasekara

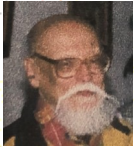
President

Adelaide Sri Lanka Buddhist Vihara

ASLA PRESIDENTS OVER THE YEARS

Editor's Note: My apologies, as this list may not be exhaustive. Sadly, I was not able to source photos of Mr Keegal and Mr Herft. If any ASLA members could help with photos, please let me know and I can ensure that they appear in the next newsletter.

Dr Lucien Keegal
ASLA's first president



Dr Risien Bartholomeusz

Mr Irwin Herft



Mr Radley Claessen



Dr Gordon Walles



Mr Everard Walker



Dr Michael Roberts



Miss Suzette Jansen



Mr Hamid Farouque



Mr Alex Lokuge



Mrs Nazli Farouque



Miss Genevieve Walles
(now Pelekani)

Mrs Nishani Senevirante
Current President, 2024



Dr Bruce Kennedy

Mr Geoff Walles



Mr SK Visvanathan

Ms Lisa Steicke-Wijesinghe



Mr Nazli Farook

Mrs Ganga Gamage



Mr Anuruddha Mediwake

Mr Ajith Seneviratne



Mrs Maureen Fernando

Mrs Suramy Kennedy



Mr Manoj Ranasoma

Mrs Lourdes Jayasuriya



First recorded Sri Lankan immigrants to Australia: Drum Major O'Deen and his family

Chandani Panditharatne

When Australia was a Penal Colony of the British kingdom, convicts banished from Sri Lanka (Ceylon) too were sent here. The first convicts from Ceylon to arrive in Australia apparently drew considerable attention from the press. Australia's first newspaper - The Sydney Gazette and New South Wales Advertiser, gave a prominent place to record the landing of the first 'convicts' from Ceylon - Drum Major O'Dean and his young family, in February 1816. O'Dean arrived in Australia as a 'convict' but his wife and three children landed in Australia as free settlers.



This is the first recorded arrival of a Ceylonese (Sri Lankans) to the continent of Australia. The arrival of these first migrants took place in February 1816, when the SS Kangaroo brought Drum Major O'Dean, his wife and three children to

Australian shores. O'Dean and his family were banished to the Penal Colony of Australia by the British Governor of Ceylon, Robert Brownrigg.

In its issue dated 17th February 1816, Sydney Gazette and New South Wales Advertiser reports in its page 1, that Drum Major O'Dean, his wife and three children were convicted of treason to the British King because O'Dean deserted the British army to join the service of the last king of Sri Lanka - King Sri Wickrama Rajasinghe.



Cookery Corner

by

*Kussiamma
Sarah*



We love it when friends drop in unexpectedly for a drink and a chat.

On one such occasion recently, they agreed to stay on for "Pot Luck".

We decided to hustle up an old favourite in this household, CHICKEN RICE. The best poultry for this delicacy is The Prime Boiling Hen. For the benefit of the non-cognoscenti, that is an euphemism for a retired egg-layer who is no longer useful in the barnyard. The meat may be a bit tough, but O what flavour!

We start by disjuncting the chook. That gives us eight pieces. These are parboiled in a pot with a tomato, a stick of celery, an onion and a teaspoon of peppercorns. That gives us some nice chicken stock. Add salt to taste.

In a separate large frying pan we fry 2 rashers of bacon, a small onion-finely chopped and 10 Karapincha leaves with the stem.

Then, in goes a cup of Samba/Basmati rice. Do not over-fry. You are right when the onions acquire a translucent look.

Now, it is time to add all of the lovely prepared chicken stock. Then, just half a teaspoon of Turmeric and stir well. Bring to the boil, and straightaway turn the heat to simmer. Cook the rice gently in the covered pan until all the water has evaporated.

Now, we pay our attention to the eight pieces of chicken. We fry them in a bit of ghee or lard, together with a few bruised cardamoms and a handful of sultanas. By now the whole house is pervaded with a magical aroma. Fry until the chicken pieces have acquired a golden patina.

For the presentation, we use a largish oval platter. We spoon the rice into the platter and create a little bed therein, for the yummy chicken pieces. We garnish with a handful of Panko breadcrumbs and another handful of green peas.

Also, the 2 rashers of bacon that we fried earlier could be laid across the top for a flourish.

We serve all this with a bit of chutney or lime pickle.

Now all we need to do is to get out that bottle of VSOA Arrack, pour ourselves some ample drinks and sit down for the nosh-up. Not bad for Pot Luck, eh?



ASLA As Time Goes By - 50 Year's Young

Reception for the High Commissioner
Dr Weerasooria



Dr Gordon Walles and Mrs
Maryze Walles with Mrs Subi
Selvanayagam



Mr Radley Claessen with
High Commissioner
Dr Weerasooria



A Cluster of Sari Clad Ladies at the Sri Lankan Evening -- among them are Mrs. Deepa Hevanpola and Ms. Savitri Fernando who draped the Kandyan and Indian saris

ASLA New Year's Dance 1993



Former ASLA Treasurer,
Mrs Neita Baldwin

Sri Lankan Evening at the
Royal Commonwealth Society

Caryl and Everard Walker
Grand Prix Ball



Celebrating ASLA's 30th Anniversary at
the Chefs of Tandoori



A bevy of past presidents



Matt and Sherraine Buckling
FAREWELL and THANKYOU—Wishing you both the very best for the future—Please keep in touch

Seated (L-R) Suranga Samaratne, Bruce Kennedy, Shama Roberts, Michael Roberts, Matt Buckling, Sherraine Buckling, David Sargent, Manasa Sargent, Maria Djukanovic, Stan Djukanovic, Viana Nair
Standing (L-R) The Photographers: Shiva Rajaguruvaran, Vignesh Venkatesan, Sri Vaidyanathan, Corina Pereira, Shirley Gyi, Fizza Marikar, Pat Janszema.

ASLA As Time Goes By - 50 Year's Young



ASLA held many functions at Australian National Railway's Terminus Club, Keswick. Dinner Dances, Quiz Nights and the annual Christmas Party and BBQ.

ASLA hosted the Sri Lankan Cricket team on three occasion. The first was a BBQ held at the Terminus Club

New Year's Eve
 Richmond Rd, Keswick
 Thursday, December 31
 7.30pm to lam
 Australia Sri Lanka Association's New Year's Eve dance in the Australian National Railways hall. Admission of \$15 for members, \$12 for members' children and \$20 for non-members includes entree, rice and curry, sweets, coffee, prizes and surprises. Raffles. Bookings: 263 5772. Musical fund-raiser.



When the Terminus Club closed, ASLA held Christmas parties at various Community Centres, including Eastwood, Marion and Burnside.

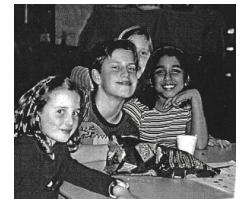
Advertiser (Port Adelaide, SA: 1984 - 2011) / Wed 6 May 1992 / Page 20 / Advertising

Sri Lanka to Australia
 1 Richmond Rd, Keswick
 Saturday, May 9, 5.30pm
 Australia Sri Lanka Association evening. With special guest Her Excellency Dame Roma Mitchell. Glimpses of the history and culture of Australia and Sri Lanka through dramatic presentation complete with song, dance and music. Buffet dinner of specialties from both countries. All welcome. At ANR Club. Adults \$5, children (under 14) \$2. Inquiries: 338 1259.

Visit by Sri Lankan Ambassador to Australia, K Balapatabendi at Ahaara Restaurant in 2006. Seen with ASLA President Geoff Walles



ASLA hosted a number of Family Nights. The Bollywood Night, Sari Sari Night and the Calypso Night just to name a few

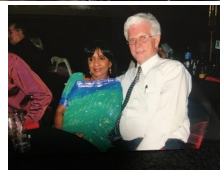


Quiz Night

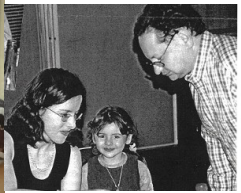




We all enjoyed a touch of Glitz and Glamour at the Formal Balls held at Norwood Town Hall



Spring Dinners at Regency & Fernilee Lodge

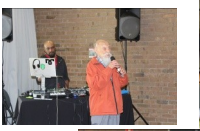


Above - 2nd from left former ASLA Secretary, Mrs Susila Sanders and partly obscured Mr Balan Sanders with friends



ASLA As Time Goes By 50 Year's Young

ASLA Reunion Lunch



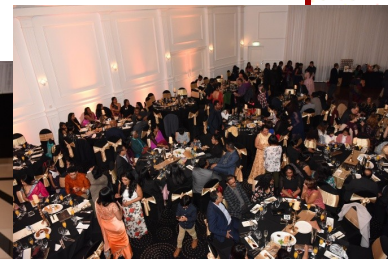
ASLA Christmas Party 2016



ASLA All Stars v Ceylon Aces Cricket Tournament 2016



ASLA Winter Ball 2016

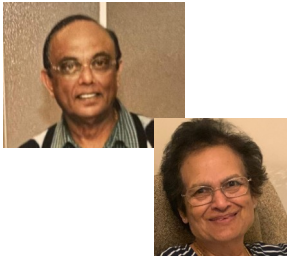


2019 AGM
A sing a long with Dr Colin Fernando



Spring Ball 2021





ASLA Spring Ball 2019



ASLA Cultural Lunch



The ASLA Food & Cultural Festival is in it's 11th year. Here are some highlights from over the years



ASLA Newsletter contributions

The ASLA Committee welcomes contributions from members including feedback, stories of interest, photos of past functions, celebrations and anecdotes. Articles must be submitted to the committee for consideration prior to publication. If you have an article that you would like to submit for publication in the next newsletter, please email ASLA Committee at ASLANewsletter@aslasea.com

Contact Details

The Committee keeps a database of members' contact details and financial status. This assists us in ensuring that newsletters, flyers and other publications reach members and in sending out subscription notices in the future.

Your assistance in keeping ASLA updated with any changes to your contact details (eg email address, postal address, and telephone number) will be most appreciated.

Keeping up to date with ASLA

Keep up to date with all things ASLA at our website

<https://www.facebook.com/ASLA13/>