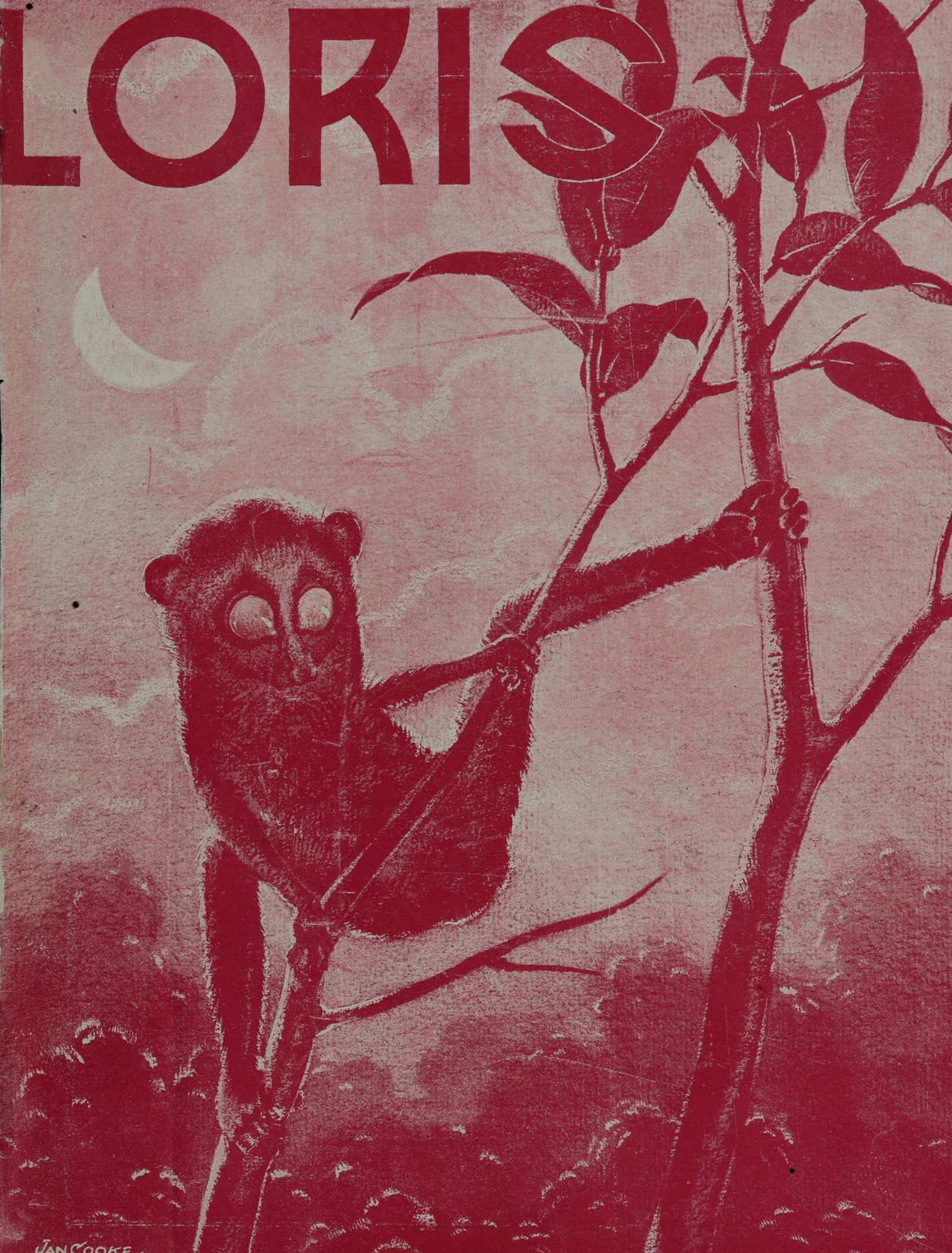
LORIS



A JOURNAL OF CEYLON WILD LIFE Vol. VIII No.—3

A family favourite one minute

all ready for a week-end's pleasure. There's comfort for four and lots of space for lots of luggage—300 lb. of it. That's what you get into this handsome new Husky... and brilliant performance with typical Hillman economy are what you get out of the remarkable new o.h.v. engine!

A business asset the next

with the back seat down, the Husky is turned into a 600 lb. load carrier, ready for a full week's work. And what a worker. The Husky is a long-life car built to the usual high standards of Hillman reliability. It's as tough as they come!

THE DOUBLE DUTY **Hillman Husky**

A ROOTES PRODUCT

White-wall tyres, over-riders and chromium rimfinishers available as extras. Right or left-hand drive available according to market requirements.

Distributors:

GLOBE MOTORS LTD.,

103, Turret Rd. **Tel: 6271** **Colombo 7**

Wild Life Protection Society of Ceylon

FOUNDED 1894

The objects for which the Society was formed were—

"To prevent the elimination of game in Ceylon by destruction of animals for trading purposes, to further the interests of legitimate sport, and to conserve one of the food supplies of the inhabitants."

At the Annual General Meeting held on 30th November, 1945, the Rules were revised, and the objects of the Society now are—

(1) To prevent the progressive destruction of species of wild animals and wherever possible to preserve wild life intact in natural conditions in Ceylon.

(2) To continue the tradition of the Society in furthering the interests of legitimate Sport.

(3) To promote an interest in the life histories of all forms of animal life and to co-operate with other Societies and Institutions which have similar aims and objects.

The Subscription to the Society is Rs. 15 annually, payable on the 1st October.

All members, whose subscriptions are not in arrears, receive a copy of each number of the Society's Magazine, "LORIS," which is issued bi-annually in June and December. Further copies may be had at Rs. 4-50 each, at which price copies are also available to the general public.

Persons wishing to join the Society, or desirous of obtaining further particulars, should apply to the Hony. Secretary and Treasurer, Mr. J. M. Hodgson, Cobo Estate, Badulla.

LORIS

Vol. viii **June, 1959** **No. 3**

CONTENTS

Vol. VIII. No. 3. June, 1959.

LORIS

A JOURNAL OF CEYLON WILD LIFE

Published by the Wild Life Protection Society of Ceylon.

Literary contributions should be sent to the Editor, Mr. R. L. SPITTEL, WYCHERLEY, BULLERS ROAD, COLOMBO.

Articles are invited not only from members of the Society but also from the general public interested in Wild Life.

All manuscripts should be typed with double spacing and on one side of the paper only.

Matters relating to *Membership* and *Subscriptions* should be addressed to MR. J. M. HODGSON, HONY. SECY. & TREASURER, COBO ESTATE, BADULLA.

The Mahaweli Ganga by Canoe—

FROM WERAGAMTOTA TO MAHAGANTOTA, IN MAY, 1956

By W. RAYMOND JACKS

This article, written in 1956, is of particular interest as the entire face of the wild country on the banks of the section of the Mahaweli Ganga so arduously traversed by the author, is now, we understand, being transformed by economic development.

LARGELY on the suggestion of my brother-in-law, Alan Ross, now living in Scotland, who, like myself, has recently retired from planting, I decided to make a trip down the Mahaweli Ganga by canoe starting from Weragamtota. This fine river which figures so often in the chequered history of Ceylon and which is recognizable as Ptolemy's Ganges in his map of the first century A.D. still possesses the great attraction of passing through the wilder parts of the Island. Unlike my brother-in-law, I have not done any big game shooting, but the jungles, tanks and rivers of this beautiful island hold us both in thrall.

Although I took a gun and rod with me, I had no intention of doing any shooting, the purpose of my trip being to observe wild life, have a look at some of the villages and vilas along the banks and take some photographs. Conditions being suitable, I intended covering the 100 miles to the mouth of the river, but, if they were not, to do the Weragamtota-Mahagantota section only and leave the other until later, and this is what has happened.

The canoe in which the trip was made is a Naval Mark 1 of 1947 vintage, such, I believe, as had been used in Commando reconnaissance work in the last war. It is cigar-shaped, 17 feet long, is painted a dull green, has seating accommodation for two, has enclosed compartments fore and aft to which lock-up doors have been added ; buoyancy tanks (as a substitute for the original tubing) run along both sides. Its greatest width, which includes the buoyancy tanks, is 3 feet 2 inches. With cover, paddles, anchor and pole it weighs 142 lbs. Fully loaded with the equipment I took with me it weighed 230 lbs. and with my servant and myself on board 475 lbs. In both ends were added inflated volley-ball bladders with a weight-lifting capacity of 112 lbs. Fully loaded she drew only about 3 inches of water and with us on board only 5 inches.

My servant, Vincent Weerasekara, accompanied me. He has been in my service 17

years. As neither of us had had any canoeing experience and as he is the father of five small boys, I gave him the option of remaining behind, but he was keen to come.

My 12-bore and rod were slung inside the canoe where they were easy of access. In addition I took binoculars, a camera, a pocket compass, Henry's book on Ceylon birds, 6 1-inch-to-the-mile maps, electric torches, a few useful tools, a few medical supplies, a small kettle with its very small stove, methylated spirits, a small home-made filter which we did not use, 2 mosquito nets, 3 ground sheets, a few khaki clothes and spare rubber-soled shoes, cooking utensils, enamel plates and cups, about 18 lbs. of provisions (my chief stand-by was oatmeal, Vincent's rice) and last but not least 2 naval life-belts, a gift from my brother-in-law, which arrived from England only two days before we left.

As a result of references furnished by Alan, I was fortunately able to peruse a manuscript copy of the very interesting journal of Richard Brooke, before leaving. He was Master Attendant, Trincomalee, and examined the navigational possibilities of the Mahaweli Ganga in 1832. Having been assured by one or two men who have done a trip over the Weragamtota—Mahagantota section of the river (I presume in flood time) that I should be unlikely to encounter difficulties of any sort, I did not pay as much attention to Brooke's very accurate description of the river as I should have done, thinking, that through silting and otherwise, the bed of the river had probably undergone material changes in the 124 years which have elapsed since he made his survey. I will mark with an asterisk some of the places of interest mentioned by him which I saw.

I proposed, as far as possible, camping on sand-banks in the river and, as there was no accommodation for any camp furniture in the canoe, to sleep on the ground with a rubber sheet under me. Some forty years ago, over many months, I got quite used to doing this, but on this occasion I found the ground rather hard. We did not light fires at night as I wanted to see game, but I kept my gun handy. We did not take any Paludrine, though I had a stock with me. I was able to obtain a tracing of a navigation map of the lower section of the river through the courtesy of the young Irrigation Officer stationed at Mannampitiya, but not of the section we travelled over.

In the course of the trip I was to find out how very inaccurate the maps I took with me are so far as the river is concerned, and this does not apply only to the river. To mention some discrepancies, the Perumbodaella Rapids marked on the map are non-existent. At this point there is a small outcrop of rock jutting into the river a short way from the left bank and that is all. Again, the Rapids marked as being about 300 yards below where the Dunuwila Oya and Kuda Oya enter the Mahaweli Ganga commence some distance farther down, although there are a few scattered rocks at this point. From the map one would be entitled to imagine the rapids were a purely local condition, whereas rocks and rapids extend without any appreciable break from this point to where the Pitakinda Ela joins the main stream, a distance of some 15 miles. Some elas, islands, footpaths, etc., are incorrectly shown in the maps; some do not even exist, while others which do have been omitted. In reply to a question, a young surveyor informed me that the eastern boundary of the Wasgomuwa Strict Natural Reserve is not properly defined. However, all this will shortly be rectified, as I discovered a small army of surveyors is at work along the whole Mahaweli Ganga boundary of the Reserve busy blocking out land for " middle-class " holdings, or so I was given to understand.

From all I was able to learn, there are a lot of animals in the Reserve; elephants in fair numbers, bears and buffalo very numerous, a number of deer, some leopards and many of the lesser animals. As I proceeded on my way down the river, the thought uppermost in my mind was what is to happen to them all, shut off as they will be from their main water supply, the Mahaweli Ganga.

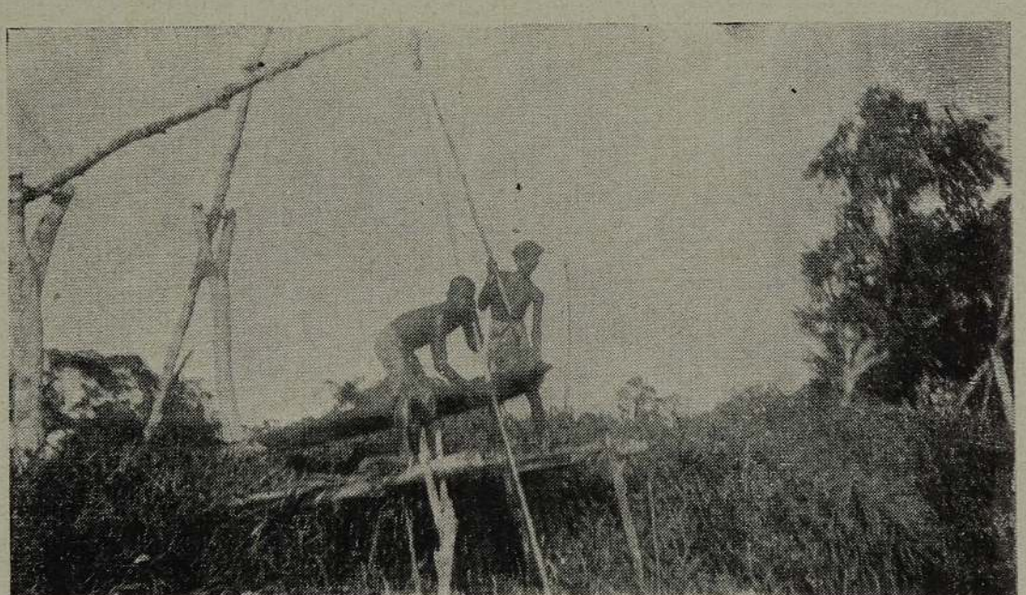
In recent times, there has been some controversy in the press as to whether Sinhalese or Tamils first inhabited this Island after the still earlier inhabitants. Whatever the merits of the various claims may be, one thing we do know, the reptiles, animals and birds have a prior claim over their human counterparts. They were here long before Man came on the scene and they have just as much right to live and be happy as we have. They are quite helpless and cannot speak for themselves. Let us hope the present Government amid their preoccupations will devise a satisfactory and permanent solution to this problem and give them all a square deal.

Except for slight showers on two nights we experienced fine weather but the south-west winds were strong at times.

May 19th.—Starting early, with the canoe fully erected, I drove the 80 miles from my bungalow to the resthouse at Weragamtota and by 8.30 a.m. the canoe was in the river, loaded and ready for the trip. My car was sent back to the bungalow to await a telegram from wherever the trip was destined to end. I took the forward seat and Vincent the aft. To begin with I did all the paddling, but later I changed places with him and we both paddled. I am afraid we kept very bad time, being new to the game, and to people on the banks we must have presented an amusing spectacle. With the river running at about 1½ miles an hour, there was nothing else to be done but paddle (the canoe was not rigged for sailing). As it was, we probably did not exceed 2½ miles per hour.

Although we were continually changing from one side of the river to the other seeking a channel of sufficient depth along which to go, I do not think it would be any exaggeration to say that between the starting point and where we first encountered rapids we had to get out and lead or tow the canoe through shallows, ranging from a few yards to over 200, at least 100 times. The canoe loaded was too heavy to lift more than a few feet at a time, so where the water was very shallow indeed, we had to " hop " her along in stages.

About a mile below Weragamtota a bridge is being constructed across the river and the iron structural work is so low we had some difficulty in passing the canoe underneath it, but with the help of a villager who kindly came to our aid (and under the eyes of a large cabaragoya on the bank), we succeeded in doing so. After some refreshment on a sand-bank, we proceeded and by noon had reached the so-called Perumbodaella Rapids. Up to this point both banks of the river are under cultivation. From here onward paddy and chena gave way to jungle and both banks were heavily treed with occasional patches of " elephant " grass. We saw a number of elephant slides along both banks



R. L. Spittel

Draw-wells of Tobacco Growers on the Mahaweli

and on one sand-bank there were traces of elephants which looked about 3 or 4 days old. Bird life was a little disappointing, but an occasional White-breasted Kingfisher flashed past us and on one bank there were two fine specimens of the Indian White-necked Stork. Swallow-tailed butterflies were much in evidence.

We reached Kindigoda (one of the villages visited by Brooke) and I had a look at the place accompanied by one of the Moor inhabitants. There are about 12 wattle and daub, mana-grass covered, houses amid a few coconut palms. There were various vegetables in the gardens, but I saw no tobacco. On seeing a stranger, the womenfolk disappeared and I saw no children. The man told me there were 20 inhabitants all told, all Moors. He said we might encounter a small herd of elephants about 2 miles farther down the river and should watch the bull carefully as he was a truculent customer. However we did not see them.

After going about 2 miles we saw 2 small children bathing on the edge of the river and followed them up to find a Sinhalese family consisting of a man and his wife and five children living in a wattle and daub house there. He told us about half a mile farther on we should arrive at the mouth of the Kimbulana Oya (marked Barawadena Oya in the plan). The children came into the river to get bits of money I gave them and I was sorry to see one little girl had severe dropsy.

The Oya referred to proved to be dry. Looking up it one could see a massive hill, probably Yelliketiyakande, 2,399 feet. The view up-river was magnificent : heavily timbered banks as far as the eye could see and the hills of Uva in the background.

Camp 1.—We camped on a sand-bank in mid-stream just below the mouth of the Kimbulana Oya, to use the local name. For water to drink I had hoped to find springs and where there were villages obtain supplies from wells, but throughout the trip we had to depend on the rather dirty water of the Mahaweli Ganga itself, which is used by all the people along its banks. However, with one exception, which I will come to later, it was always well-boiled before we drank it. We had done about 10 miles. In the evening we heard the Large Cuckoo-shrike, Pompadour pigeon, "Did-he-do-its" and familiar birds of the garden such as the Tailor Bird, some of the Barbets, etc. While there we heard deer close by, but did not see any.

In the morning while I was sitting on the sand making a few notes and Vincent was preparing breakfast, he suddenly came over to me and pointed up the Kimbulana Oya to an elephant which was coming down. I told him to keep still and a minute later a really magnificent specimen of the tribe slowly and majestically crossed from bank to bank of the Mahaweli Ganga about 150 yards from where we were. He seemed completely oblivious of us and probably had not seen our camp, as the mosquito nets were down. I itched to get my camera and take a photograph of him, but in view of the warning given by the Moor, I thought I had better not attract his attention. This was the only elephant we saw on the trip. As soon as he had reached the opposite bank, Vincent pointed out 3 wild buffaloes which had entered the river just below us and about 100 yards away. They watched us for a short time and then went back into the heavy jungle from which they had emerged. We packed up and resumed our journey about 7.30 a.m. (May 20th). As we were about to leave a flight of duck passed high overhead, but what species I could not see. Vincent had seen a baby crocodile.

May 20th.—After covering a couple of miles, we stopped at a sand-bank at the mouth of the Heen Ganga, which enters the Mahaweli Ganga on its left bank, and had some tea. The Heen Ganga was quite dry. About half a mile farther on we called at Ginnoruwa Village on the right bank. This is, I think, the "Gindarawa Village" Brooke mentions in his Journal. There is a little paddy here, but not much else,

and the paddy is not owned by the inhabitants of the village who number 10. I photographed the leading villager, Kaluhena, who told me his bent back was due to hard work, along with the members of his family outside their wattle and daub, mana-grass-roofed dwelling. They all looked well and cheerful, but money was short as no rain had fallen since November. He took me along, at my request, to see Ginoruwa Wewa. Here I found an aluminium "bungalow" occupied by 3 men, servants of the owner of the main paddy field. The tank was a fairly large one, but was practically dry. In its bed were some lotus plants and 3 jackals. Elephants had destroyed about a quarter acre of paddy. Kaluhena was of the "old school" and I much enjoyed my short visit. He said elephants often came close to their house.

Leaving this cheerful family, we continued our journey and coming to the Beligan Oya which enters the river on the right bank, we made for its muddy mouth to tie up for a cup of tea. Just as we were about to do so a large crocodile dashed across the narrow entrance a few feet in front of us into a large hole on the opposite bank. As it was very muddy I thought we had better let the crocodile have it to himself, so we moved a little lower down.

Our next call was at Hembarawa still on the same bank. As we neared the village I saw a Serpent Eagle and heard the call of a Bay-banded Cuckoo. I found 2 ferry-boats high and dry here. In normal times there is a ferry across to the other bank, where a large settlement scheme is in progress of formation I was told. I took a photograph of villagers and their closely-packed houses in Hembarawa and my guide told me the population was about 200, all Sinhalese. As we were leaving I heard a large Cuckoo-shrike calling to his mate, but I did not see him. We saw several specimens of the Stork-billed Kingfisher before reaching our next camp.

Camp II.—After negotiating many sand-banks, we reached the mouth of the Hettipola, which was dry, and camped on a stretch of sand in the middle of the river; we had only made about 6 miles from our last camp. A most picturesque spot with a lovely view up and down the river. The Uva hills were still visible in the far distance. There were some fine trees on all sides and everything looked very green in spite of the drought. I had a look at the Hettipola Oya, which was strewn with boulders. It looked a likely spot for big game. It was a beautiful evening. Here we saw the curious Malabar Pied Hornbill which we were to see a number of times farther along the river. Bronze-wing pigeon were numerous. We could hear parakeets, Pompadour Pigeon, the Large Cuckoo-shrike and small friends like the Tailor Bird in the surrounding jungle, but not one of them could we see.

May 21st.—While I was having breakfast four large buffalo and a baby one entered the river in our rear and slowly proceeded upstream. We left this camp at 7.45 a.m. and about an hour later passed the mouth of Bogahawewa Ela. It was dry. Ahead of us we saw a Ceylon Fish Owl and he considerately waited for us to catch him up several times before disappearing. At 11 a.m. we reached a small island on which, if I remember rightly, Brooke camped. I stopped and had a look over it. At 11.30 a.m. we passed the mouths of the Dunuwila Oya and Kuda Oya, the former on the left bank and the latter on the right. The Dunuwila Oya forms the southern boundary of the Wasgomuwa Strict Natural Reserve. Both Oyas were dry. Here we saw a Stork-billed Kingfisher and another Fish Owl and shortly after a specimen of the beautiful Three-toed Kingfisher (I have only once seen one before). Here was a raft stuck on a sand-bank, probably owned by the members of a survey party whose camp on the left bank we were to pass an hour or so later. Rocks made their appearance in the river and the canoe struck one, but no damage was done. The river passes through park country here, but this is not very discernible owing to heavy jungle growth along the river banks. After

passing the survey camp mentioned above, the pace of the current increased and we heard the sound of falling water ahead and for the first time encountered rapids. We stopped by a rock in mid-stream to survey the scene. I changed over to the front seat and took the pole ; the current was swift and deep, rocks were numerous, also the stumps of fallen trees were noticeable here and there ; altogether it was a perfect scene, if a trifle alarming to a novice.

We left our rock and saw a line of falling water in the distance ; paddles were of little use in the fast stream and the pole slipped off the rocks, so I told Vincent to hold tight and gave the canoe her head (one is inclined to magnify falls and drops, but the estimates I am about to give are not exaggerated I think). We cleared the first fall beautifully, it was about 2 feet, and then saw about 100 yards ahead another line of falling water ; the drop here must have been not less than 3 to 4 feet. As the canoe plunged over, her nose went right under, but the wave of water did not reach me. It was fortunate the volume of water was so great and there were no obstructions immediately below the fall. In front of us were rocks, but the water was calm and we were just congratulating ourselves on the outcome of this little adventure when a strong gust of wind struck the awning over our heads and the canoe heeled over at an angle of 50 degrees or so, but we both threw our weights into the balance and she righted herself. Shortly after Vincent drew my attention to a large wild buffalo in the river about 100 yards ahead. I got out my camera, but before I could get near enough to take a good photograph of him he plunged into deep water and swam down stream until he rounded a large rock. He then disappeared into the jungle.

After lunching on a mud flat, we proceeded on our way passing rocks and fallen trees, of which there were a lot here. About 4.20 p.m. we found ourselves running into rapids again. We got through the first with some difficulty and then the strong current forced the canoe against two almost submerged rocks, and with the prospect of greater difficulties immediately ahead, I decided to endeavour to turn the canoe and paddle across stream to a spot on the right bank where large trees overhung a small strip of sand. We paddled hard and made it. The bank was steepish, but there were convenient roots to which to anchor the canoe, and on top of the bank there was a flat space, which, when the leaves had been burned off and their ashes scattered over it, was ideal for camping. Up to now mosquitoes had been fairly numerous at night, but ticks and ants had not given trouble. Our mosquito nets erected and a frugal dinner finished, I happened to notice Vincent had left our paddles on the sand-bank by the canoe, so I sent him to bring them. It was fortunate I did so, for, in the morning, the water level had risen 21 inches and the sand bank was submerged.

May 22nd. Camp III.—Our camp was almost opposite the mouth of the Kadabindichcha Ela, which was dry. It was a pretty spot with ancient trees towering above the river along both banks. In the night I had heard the cry of the Little Scops Owl again and again. Its regular beat being for all the world like the ticking of a grandfather clock. The familiar calls of parakeets, barbets, batagoas and the little Tailor Bird were to be heard, and other calls not familiar. We heard spotted deer very close, but did not see them. Behind us in places trees covered with masses of purple and pinkish flowers had been a striking feature. We had covered 26 miles. I was pleased to see the rise in the river level, and, not anticipating rapids for more than a mile or so, hoped to get through. We had some tea, but, as the water level was falling slightly, postponed breakfast, and, in view of our experiences the previous day, dispensed with the awning and donned life-belts. We were soon tied up in rocks amid stream. We went up to our armpits in the strong current and managed to get the canoe

off the rocks and headed towards a small island on the left bank, which with some difficulty we reached. Here we tied up, did a little exploring and found a base-line cut by a survey party running parallel to the river.

As, from all one could see the rapids ahead appeared to be more formidable than those we had hitherto encountered, it seemed advisable to seek a means of getting the canoe transported overland to calmer waters. We partially unloaded the canoe. Vincent got a good fire going in the shelter of the root formation of an enormous Kumbuk tree, of which there were many round about, and we had a substantial meal. I was fascinated with the butterflies, conspicuous among them being the Blue Mormon with his beautiful velvety black and deep blue wings. We had seen a lot of butterflies on the way and I much regretted my knowledge of them was so deficient. Facing us there was a larger island and two very small ones, all well treed. I was to learn later a man had been drowned at this lovely spot a few weeks ago in the strong currents flowing between these islands.

Our meal finished, Vincent went in search of the survey camp, which proved to be only a short distance away. Mr. Mariyadasa, the young surveyor in charge of this section, was most helpful and kind. He told me, higher up, but quite close, a jeep track had been cut through the jungle parallel to the river to connect with Polonnaruwa some 18 miles away. He was one of several officers of the Survey Department who offered me their hospitality and help and I am most indebted to them. Nearly all his staff had left to spend their Buddha Jayanti leave at Polonnaruwa, but of the four who had not gone he kindly lent me three to carry the canoe to a point about 2 miles lower down the river where it was hoped the worst part of the rapids would have been passed. Another man from a camp higher up volunteered to help too, so, except for my gun and rod slung inside it, the canoe was emptied of baggage and all was ready. Mr. Mariyadasa told me bears were numerous and he had come across a fairly large herd of elephants a short distance inland. He had also seen the archaeological ruins on rock formations marked on my map, but had found nothing very impressive.

After a cup of tea he kindly gave me, we set out along the jeep track which was rather rough and uneven. I carried binoculars and camera and a few odds and ends, Vincent our baggage put in a canvas bag, the others the canoe, which had been tied on poles. The carriers, all Sinhalese, young, strong and cheerful, could not understand why I had chosen to journey by river when the roads and a car would have been so much quicker and easier. Survey camps were stationed right along the river as far as Kalinga Nuwara at intervals of anything from a quarter to one or two miles. On the way, men from other camps walked along with us, all bound for Polonnaruwa; among them was an oldish man whose home was near Kalinga. As he knew the area well, he had been engaged by the Survey Department as a "guide". He told me that all along the river there was a succession of rocks and rapids and they got worse instead of better until Kalinga is reached and there they end. This was not good news. At the end of about 2½ miles I paid off the first relay of canoe-carriers. A further 4 men, including a very powerful young man, who carried as far as Kalinga, volunteered to take their place. When I inspected the river at this point, all that the "guide" had said proved to be correct, there were rocks and rapids everywhere. On we went, with occasional rests, through park country mostly, all looking very parched as a result of the drought. We crossed several small elas and vilas not named on the map. The Wasgomuwa Oya was dry and, 2 miles farther on, so was the Moragahakotuwa Ela (not named in the map). Another mile and we were walking through the Kiriebe Villu, also dry. Here I paid off the second relay of carriers, the six men walking with us, including the "guide", undertaking to see us through to Kalinga. The Karapanane Ela, which we

crossed shortly after was dry. In a large unnamed vila a mile south of the Nawagaha Ela we saw a short distance away five wild buffalo. They held their ground, but did not interfere with us. The carriers by now were getting very tired and suggested we should find the river feasible, but the "guide" would have none of it. Vincent and several of them went through a survey camp, the surveyor in charge of which very kindly invited me to have tea with him, but I declined as it was necessary for us to get on, and an inspection showed more rocks and rapids than ever. By the light of my 5-battery torch, we crossed the Nawagaha Ela, which was as dry as a bone, and after a further tramp of a mile reached the last survey camp opposite Kalinga Nuwara Island. Here I paid off the last of my valiant, cheerful helpers, wishing them a happy Wesak. They were delighted to have the rewards I gave them, as they had not had their pay. Vincent and I were a bit tired. I had lost sundry patches of skin off my legs, due to sunburn, scraping against the canoe and bumping into rocks, and had a damaged toe-nail and some blisters on both feet. Vincent had a swelling on one leg and blisters on both of his arms as a result of sun and water, but the canoe-carriers had had a much tougher trek than we had. We were told there were rocks in the Kalinga channel, but that they presented no special difficulties, but I did notice that the "guide" looked a little uneasy and he came back after the others had gone, but said nothing. Before the men left I had the canoe put in the river as the path leading to it was rather steep and difficult. The man in charge of the survey camp kindly lent me a chair and offered me a camp-bed, but this I declined. It was 8 p.m., so Vincent set about clearing a site and erecting our mosquito nets, etc. We had come about 36 miles, of these, through 5 miles of rocks and rapids in the canoe, and had walked about 9 miles.

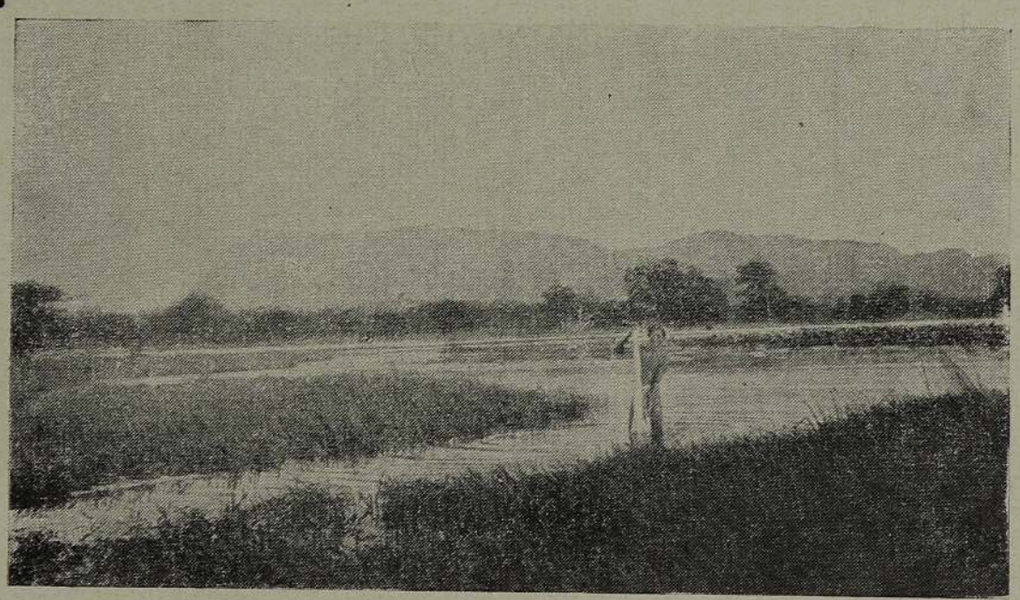
Camp IV.—We camped just above the river below the survey camp. It was a rather dirty spot. I heard big splashes several times during the night in a little backwater a few yards from where we slept. Probably crocodiles, but we did not see any. Mosquitoes and ants were numerous.

May 23rd.—I had intended going over to the island opposite to see such ruins as exist, but the survey people, who had recently been over, assured me a few stones and ancient bricks were all that remained, so, as the crossing was not an easy one, I did not go. I do not know the history of Kalinga Nuwara, but princes of the Kalinga Dynasty sat on the Sinhalese throne in the 12th century and Magha, the Kalinga invader, who despoiled so many Buddhist temples, reigned at Polonnaruwa from 1215 to 1236 A.D. It doubtless dates back to that period.

We had seen few monkeys, but wanderoos were plentiful round this camp. After breakfast we packed up and resumed our journey at 7.30 a.m. As a precaution we did not erect the awning and we both wore life-belts. I also had my camera and binoculars, which I usually kept beside me in the canoe, locked in the forward compartment and had the door put on the rear compartment, but it was not locked. As I could see a lot of rocks and some stumps of fallen trees in the channel, I thought conditions might not be so easy as had been made out. After we had proceeded about 150 yards, Vincent pointed out a wild buffalo on the island opposite. The wind raised ripples on the surface of the water which made it difficult to spot submerged rocks and stumps. We crossed over to the far bank, encountering some rough patches on the way, as conditions seemed easier there, and for a time all went well. After passing a small island we got into a fierce current and moved fast. Suddenly, without any warning, the canoe struck a submerged rock and turned turtle throwing us both head-down into the river.

It happened so quickly that we neither of us quite realized what had occurred until we bobbed up to the surface like a pair of corks. While we had been heading for the river bottom,

the canoe described a half-circle over us and began to go stern-first down the river. On rising to the surface, I discovered that Vincent and myself had somehow changed places under water and I was relieved to find him holding on to the buoyancy-tank casing of the canoe, which I managed to get a grip on (my hat was still on my head !). Away we went for perhaps 80 yards, narrowly missing some nasty rocks on the way, the canoe then piled up on another rock where the water was not quite so deep and we managed to turn her over. While this operation was in progress, Vincent felt something touch his feet, it was a " grip " we had in the canoe filled with our knives, forks, plates, etc., so he promptly hooked it with a foot and brought it up. Only a thermos flask containing tea was missing. The canoe righted, we scrambled into her and floated down stream. We could see our two paddles careering ahead, but soon lost sight of them. Using the pole, which was still attached to the slings on the side of the canoe, as a paddle, not very successfully, I endeavoured to catch the paddles up, but without success. As we approached a sand-bank Vincent pointed out a wild buffalo on the left bank, so I got out my camera and snapped him as he entered the water. Here we picked up a piece of drift-wood to serve as a second paddle and we made better progress. After covering 2½ miles (we had left the rapids behind us) we brought the canoe to rest on a sand-bank, but Vincent spotted the paddles floating down stream in the distance, so we did another spurt and, the water being shallow now as the river had broadened out, he got out and after a long chase secured both much to our joy. Another sand-bank loomed up with clean dry sharp sand, so we landed, removed all equipment and stores, bailed out the canoe, which had a fair quantity of water in her, but was not leaking, had some chocolate (biscuits were spoilt) and spread things out to dry. We could not make tea as all the matches were soaked, so we had to go without drinks. However, I had imbibed a quantity of river water when the canoe had upset and Vincent had had his share.



R. L. Spittel

Gunner's Quoin across Manampitiya Lagoon.

I discovered my camera had some water in it and my binoculars quite a lot. A much-valued watch, which very fortunately had been prevented from falling out of my breast pocket by some currency notes, showed signs of dampness, so it was opened and put out to dry along with the other things (it has gone well ever since). We had lost the canoe anchor, various small fittings of no value, gun-cleaning kit, the thermos flask already mentioned, a pair of pliers, and Vincent lost cts. 60 and this was all, thanks to the compartment doors being closed. It was fortunate we had no awning up and had life-belts on, as swimming is not one of my accomplishments and Vincent is very far from being an expert, I imagine. It

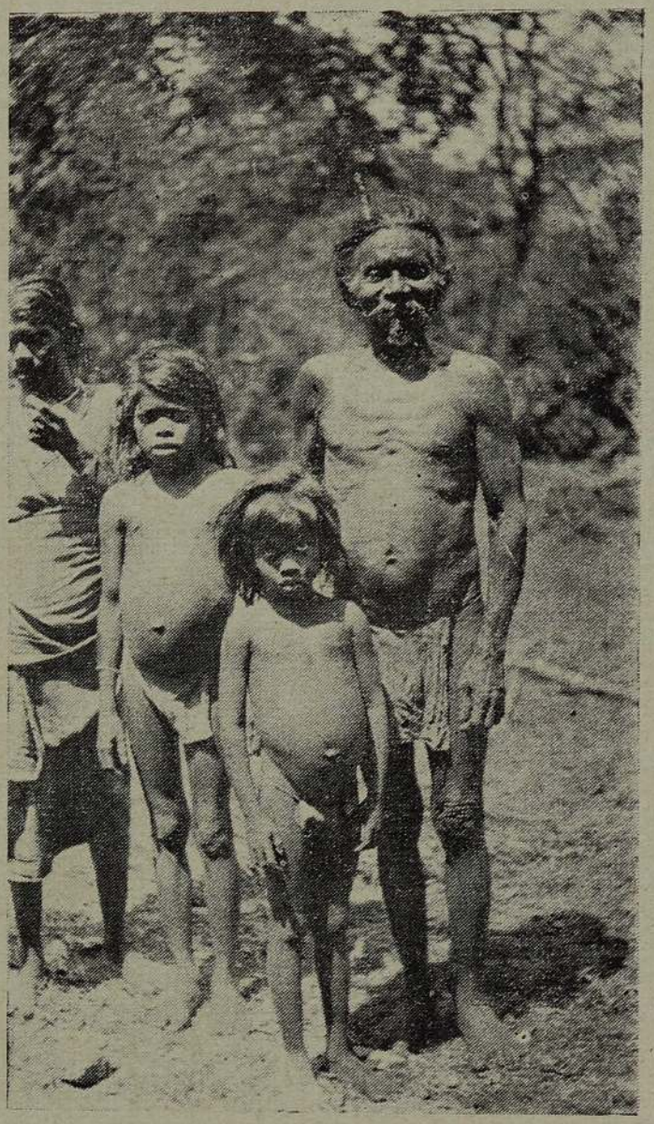
was also very fortunate the canoe capsized in deep water or we might have bumped our heads on rocks.

At 1 p.m. we resumed our journey. We were soon off Dastota, where there is a ferry. The banks were still ribboned with jungle and there were many fine trees, but on both sides of the river there are tobacco and other fields right down to Mahagantota, a distance of about 6 miles. The inhabitants were mostly Moors, of Moplah ancestry I believe ; one man we hailed and spoke to was of wonderful physique and I fancy most of them are. We passed many bullock-worked water elevators, with which they irrigate their land with water drawn from the river. The buckets used appeared to be of leather, but we did not stop to examine them closely. For some time Gunner's Quoin had been in view. Richard Brooke scaled this 1,750-foot hill with difficulty on his way up the river in 1832. He did not, however, mention the caves and their frescos near the summit and lower down, where presumably the large fraternity of monks lived who were mainly supported by the Queen of Vikrama Bahu 1 in the 12th century when her son Gaja Bahu 11 was reigning at Polonnaruwa. It is an interesting spot, once the home of a Vedda community, and I have been up it several times.

The left arm of the river which encircles the large island above the Mannampitiya Bridge was dry but there was quite a lot of water in the right arm which we proceeded along. We tied up half a mile above the bridge on the right bank at about 4.30 p.m. and I sent Vincent to the Irrigation Office near the bridge to bring a servant who had been awaiting us there for two days with a change of clothes and some provisions. On his return, we camped and the following morning I telegraphed for my car. Mosquitoes were bad, and non-biting red ants abundant and defying mosquito nets kept crawling over us during the night.

May 24th.—It had been a very interesting trip. I hope to do the lower section of the river when conditions are somewhat easier. The car came at 4.30 p.m. and I drove through a Polonnaruwa gay with Buddha Jayanthi festivities and reached my bungalow at 7.30 p.m. My gun and rod fortunately remained in their slings when the canoe overturned, so they were undamaged. The framework of the canoe was bent in one or two places and the outer canvas suffered slight damage, but she stood up well to the buffeting she had.

An expert canoeist would doubtless have made a much better job of things than we did;



R. L. Spittel

Veddas of Gunner's Quoin in 1920

but, unless he had had previous experience of the river under similar conditions, it is probable than even he would have been tied in knots at times with the numerous rocks above water and submerged, the stumps of fallen trees, currents criss-crossing in all directions, with suction in places, such as we encountered at the worst spots in the rapids.

Wilpattu and Yala—

IN OCTOBER, 1958

By VALERIE JONES

WILPATTU

LAST October I visited both Wilpattu and Yala, and besides enjoying a lovely holiday it was interesting to compare the two Parks at the same time of year. On the whole I think Yala is best in the wet weather, while at Wilpattu very little game is to be seen save at the drier periods.

Of the four of us who arrived at Wilpattu, Mary, my sister-in-law, had never been before, but Deidre and David had come on a somewhat disastrous trip in February, and I was as much surprised as delighted that they were so keen to come again. On that occasion everywhere had been flooded, and it took two jeep trips and four hours to get ourselves and luggage from the main road to Maradanmuduwa bungalow. When we finally got there and went out for a short round, we got stuck with water in the engine at Kokare Villu, and David joined the tracker in the wet, dark, 8-mile walk back to fetch help, pursued, so he tells us, by buffaloes of enormous size! This time, however, we were later than we intended only because we stopped at the gate to see "Kalu", the bear cub belonging to the Game Guard. It is a fascinating little black bundle of a creature, running about all day quite freely, and coming when called, just like a dog.

After tea we piled into "Jemima", my elderly but hard-working jeep, and set out on our first tour. The vegetation was very dry, for there had been no rain for a long time, and it looked strange to see the grass burnt to a dusty gold round the full blue waters of the villus.

Between Kumbuk Villu and Kokare we had our first piece of luck : a leopard walking down the road in front of us. Pausing for an instant to look behind him, he slipped away into the jungle, and though we stopped and looked about hopefully he obviously had no intention of playing up to the cameras.

Much more obliging was a bear we saw the following day. We were nearing Kumbuk Villu, at 4 p.m., when Mulhamy, the watcher, spotted the bear snuffling round the base of a solitary tree, out in the open. This was well within range of a 75 mm lens (8 mm cine), and I was very excited at the chance to film a bear in a really good light. When the bear had eaten all the fruit he could find on the ground, he cast an envious eye up at the laden branches, and then, rather ponderously, set about climbing the tree. Since it was a very small tree, and he was a very big bear, we expected momentarily to hear a crack, and see him deposited abruptly on his ample rear, especially when he started doing acrobatics. It was the berries at the very end of the branches that he wanted, and hooking one stout hind leg through a convenient fork, he leaned out precariously, pulling the clusters to him with his fore-paws, and all the while grunting and grumbling with the exertion. After some 15 minutes he clambered down sedately, and shook

himself all over, like a great dog. After carefully inspecting the ground to make sure nothing had been overlooked, he sauntered off to try another tree, on the edge on the jungle. This can't have been very productive, for in a few minutes he climbed down once more. This time he set off purposefully through the bushes in our direction, and a little later crossed the road behind the jeep, and was lost to view. For half an hour we had been able to watch him going about his business peacefully, unaware of our presence.

This was really the highlight of the whole trip, but a visit to Kudapatessa early one morning ran it very close.

The mist was still on the ground when we drove through the first villu, and above, a Darter, perched in the silver branches of a dead tree, made a picture with the pale delicacy of a Chinese print. The jungle rang with the sweet song of Shamas, and the clear notes of the Black-headed Oriole. On the sandy road tracks of leopard and bear ran everywhere, some clear and crisp, probably only dating from the previous night. Shafts of pale sunlight glanced through the leaves above us, dappling the ground with leopard skin patterns of light and shade. Now and again we surprised a handsome Jungle cock scratching among the dead leaves, sometimes timidly accompanied by a dowdy little brown hen. We were just coming out into the open at Kudapatessa when our driver announced, in a hoarse whisper, that he could see "a baby tiger"! Not unnaturally astonished, we regarded him and our surroundings anxiously. However, we were not destined to make zoological history, for the animal lying under a bush beside the road, and surveying us with regal calm, was a beautiful leopard. In a moment he rose and strolled away, his splendid coat looking almost orange and black in the sunshine as he brushed through the dark green undergrowth.

The rest of that pleasant morning we spent at Maradanmuduwa, on the bund or up in the machan. From that exalted position we watched a pair of Greyheaded Fishing Eagles circling leisurely over the tank, fishing in an inefficient fashion. They never seemed to catch anything, and spent a lot of time simply sitting in the trees calling mournfully to each other. A clan of Grey Langurs played about on the hard-baked mud at the tank's edge. The youngsters romped lightheartedly, leaping up and down over fallen branches and each other, under the disapproving eye of a surly old grandfather and an anxious mother, who kept a tight hold on her small baby, which showed a strong disposition to join the game.

As the morning grew hotter the herd of deer that live near the bungalow wandered down to drink at their favourite place, by the end of the bund. A couple of pigs having a good wallow had stirred the water to a sort of mud cocktail, but the deer seemed to like it that way!

Suddenly we noticed that David, who had wandered off down the bund, was watching something with interest, so we made our way over to join him. He pointed out a pair of little red Barking Deer, who, more timid than their larger relatives, prefer to drink at the small pools behind the bund. They picked their way through the trees, passing closely enough for us to admire their glossy coats, and see how the bright chestnut shaded into brown on the silky muzzles and delicate legs. All the game we saw looked in excellent condition, thanks, no doubt, to the abundance of water. We were sorry not to see any elephants, though there were plenty of signs of them and we heard them feeding every night.

On our last morning the weather broke, and we woke to the steady drumming of rain on the roof. In the middle of the morning it looked a bit brighter, so we risked going out for a quick round. We were rewarded by seeing some sambhur, the first of the whole trip, and by meeting a very wet and dishevelled Hawk Eagle making an elaborate toilet. He paid no attention whatever when I filmed him from a distance of 200 feet, so engrossed was he

in getting each feather in exactly the proper place.

On our way out we stopped to say goodbye to Kalu, who obligingly descended from a neighbouring tree, and accepted a piece of barley sugar as a parting present. This was taken most politely between rubbery lips, and then put on the palm of one paw, and licked assiduously. Just as we finally drove away we added a Pied crested Cuckoo to our list of birds. The list lacked several species I had anticipated seeing : Indian Pittas, for instance, were absent, although quite a few of the migrant waders had arrived. We actually identified 76 species, including our cuckoo !

YALA

A fortnight later old Jemima was once more on the road. Colombo had been extremely wet for the previous few weeks, and all four members of the party had been watching the weather, especially Phyllis and Dennis who were making their first trip. It was, therefore, with great satisfaction that we drove down to Yala over dry and dusty roads, under a cloudless sapphire sky. A little rain had fallen not long since, just enough to make the plains green.

We reached Yala bungalow at half-past three, having seen a surprising amount of game for the time of day. Large herds of deer were out on the plains, and we met two elephants on the roadside, and spotted a third in that favourite place beyond the Gonalabbe lagoon.

The Menik Ganga was very low. The bungalow reach had a staff of three crocodiles, at least one of whom seemed always to be on duty.

After we had unpacked and had tea, we drove over to Buttuwa, where we met that well known elephant " Buttawa Bill ", right in the middle of the road. We stopped, politely, to await his pleasure ; and when he had moved over towards the pool, edged our way past, Yusoof (the watcher) happily assuring us that this is " a good elephant ".

Despite the dry weather, there were certainly larger quantities of game than at Wilpattu. By the end of that first evening we had some really big herds of deer, two sounders of pig and several lone boars, half a dozen sambhur, and four elephants. We considered ourselves lucky to see the elephants, for the herds had not yet migrated back into the Park, and only the few bachelors who seldom move out were in residence. It was hard not to keep reminiscing about occasions when we had seen large herds.

The nights were much warmer than at Wilpattu, where we had been glad of our blankets, and it was annoying to find we could not do without the mosquito nets, which had not been needed at Maradanmuduwa. Our first night was very noisy : a leopard, possibly the one that lives between the bungalow and the dunes, was " sawing " in the thickets below the lawn, and the monkeys were protesting bitterly until the early hours of the morning, seconded now and then by the resonant call of a sambhur.

We went for an early run to Jamburagala next morning. We saw no big game, but it was lovely up on the great rock, with the swaying sea of tree-tops stretching away on one hand, and blue ocean on the other, calm as milk, out of which rises the slim white pencil of the Little Basses lighthouse. We returned for breakfast, which we had outside under the big tree overlooking the river, where we had all our meals except dinner.

That evening we visited some of the samll water-holes, and were on the way back from Wemal Kema when a fine leopard crossed the road in front of us, with the light of the setting sun full on him.

The following afternoon we went over to Katugamuwa tank, in the hope of getting some shots of crocodiles. Our hopes were fully justified : I have never seen so many crocodiles. Dennis counted 105 before giving up the job as impossible ! There was an impressive array of them on the shore when we arrived, and though they immediately launched themselves

into the tank, by dint of waiting both Dennis and Alan managed to take some pictures.

On our way back we noticed an appalling smell, which proved to be the remains of a deer, quite near the track. Nothing much was left of the animal except a few bones and the antlers.

Visiting Katugamuwa again the next morning, we found a very strange thing. We were hastening past the kill we had noticed the day before, when Alan pulled up sharply, saying "Look!". Only a few feet away from the kill lay a dead leopard. We approached as closely as we could bear to do, for the smell was terrible. Putrefaction had set in, the body being swollen and the fur coming away on the belly and shoulder. It looked quite a small animal, and I learned later it was 5½ feet long. It must have been dead for more than one night, which puzzled us considerably, for we had searched that spot when looking for the kill, only 14 hours previously, and seen no sign of the leopard. There are trees round the place, but very little undergrowth, and we can hardly believe we missed so large and conspicuous an object, so close to the road. Yet how else can we explain the sudden appearance of a long-dead animal? When we passed it two days later, the body had deflated. I should be interested to know if someone with the necessary knowledge could say how long the leopard had been dead, and suggest an explanation.

We arrived at Katugamuwa just in time to witness our reptilian filmstars at breakfast. Dozens of crocodiles were busy fishing, lunging half out of the water, and throwing their heads up to gulp down the catch. A lot of little terns were doing a brisk business, following the silver spray of minnows that leapt out in front of the hunters' blunt snouts. Phyllis and Dennis found the family of monkeys which had been friendly the previous day, now quite unfriendly. One old fellow actually started throwing things, which seemed a definite hint to withdraw! A family with three babies, who lived near Yala, seldom failed to put in an appearance whenever we went out.

At Wilpattu there were very few peafowl, and we saw none with full-grown tails; but at Yala they seemed more plentiful than ever before, and some of the cocks boasted magnificent tails. Morning and evening their calls echoed over the river, a sound that will always remind me of Yala. One sociable bird always came to roost on a tree near the bungalow, his long tail elegantly draped out over the river.

We were delighted when we got to Buttawa and found an elephant drinking at the rock pool beside the bungalow. He was not "Bill", but another old acquaintance. On Uraniya plain we saw a herd of 11 sambhur on the sand dunes, and a little further on met a hind who regarded us with a positively insulting lack of curiosity. She was much more interested in getting at some succulent young leaves on top of a bush, standing on her hind legs like a goat. We saw two more elephants as we drove back to Yala in the glow of a glorious sunset: behind the black outline of Akasa Cetiya the sky flamed in a bonfire of pink and orange.

Early next morning we went to Tissa, to buy a few things for another two days stay in the Park. We also wanted to have a look at a tank on the Kirindi-Tissa road, where we had noticed a mass of birds. The tank was very low. There were tremendous numbers of pelicans and Painted Storks, some fishing and others preening themselves on the edge of the tank. They showed no fear of the jeep, but when we got out they began to take off in great squadrons.

The next day the river rose a bit. We saw the sand-banks submerge one by one, and in no time at all a lot of little wading birds arrived to fish in the newly made shallows. Soon the news spread to the kingfishers, and the pair of Pied ones, whom we had scarcely seen so far, were now seldom out of sight. They were joined by two White-breasted kingfishers, and by one of the big Stork-billed species. The water had been very brackish, and it was most

interesting to see how soon the animals realised it was fresh and drinkable. Some toque monkeys ventured down the opposite bank to sample it, and in the afternoon a sounder of 9 pig came to drink and stayed to wallow. But the most interesting customer, unfortunately, we missed: a bear came down just opposite the bungalow at 5 p.m. while we were out.

On our last night I was awakened by a curious scratching noise. Thinking it might be a bear at an ant hill, I woke Alan, and taking a torch we crept to the end of the verandah. Alan pressed the button, and in the beam of light we saw, no bear, but a large porcupine! In the morning we tried to discover what it had been eating, and came to the conclusion it had been sampling the concrete pipes stored in the compound, no doubt under the misguided impression that they were ivory!

Our week at Yala had come to an end with sad rapidity.

REMINISCENCES OF ENGLEBRECHT

By L. M. W. WILKINS

BEING one of a now very nearly extinct species of *Homo Sapiens* known as "the merry men of Uva" I was able to spend my holidays at Yala and Butawa and consequently was fortunate in being able to get to know Englebrecht the Boer prisoner who refused to be repatriated to South Africa, some said owing to his having a very fierce wife who used to give him periodical hidings. She must have been "some lass". He used to travel in a small replica of a Voortreckers' Cape Cart and was very proud of the perfect condition of his bulls and their freedom from sore necks due to nice smooth pegs the size of wickets on both sides of the bulls' necks, so that the sawing action when crossing rough surfaces, such as dried elephant tracks, was prevented. He was accompanied by two faithful friends, a great big ugly pariah dog named Nero and a grey Langur monkey whose name was Appuhamy. Though they were the best of friends their master used to get them to stage shamfights followed by Appuhamy doing "jockey" on Nero galloping round the open space in front of the Camp. This item on the programme came to an end by the "jockey" leaning forward and biting his mount's ear resulting in a violent buck-jump which unseated the rider. He knowing what to expect in the way of retaliation bounded out of danger onto the Cape Cart hood and then looked down chattering and grinning at the now riderless "horse". Friendly relations were soon re-established.

One of the worst mistakes Englebrecht ever made was taking a herd of his goats from his Hambantota headquarters to Yala for a change of grazing or browsing. Leopards soon found out about this and the goats disappeared at an alarming rate till there was only one left and the wretched creature, a bag of nerves, refused to leave the bungalow verandah and had to be hand-fed. One evening Englebrecht had got back and was cleaning his gun with the last of the goats close behind him when there was a yell—a leopard had the goat by the throat. In a moment Englebrecht got a cartridge in and blew the leopard's brains out. Soon after this he had to do another bit of shooting at close quarters as he heard spotted deer sending out alarm signals on the flat below the bungalow. He loaded a gun, rushed down to where the deer were running round in circles and found a doe butting at a python which was coiled round her fawn. He had to push the frantic mother to one side to enable him to hold the muzzle of his gun to the python's head and pull the trigger, but it was too late as the poor little deer was a bag of broken bones.

Yet another close range shot with the rifle I had given him took place on the old Palatupana

road. An elephant had bent a tree over and before ducking to go under it Englebrecht looked up into the eyes of a leopard in the act of preparing to spring onto him. He put a bullet through the beast's brain and when the watchers and he examined the body they found he was in the last stages of starvation and death from old age, as his teeth and claws were mere stumps and his stomach had been empty for many days.

Owners of cattle near Palatupana had been complaining to him about young beasts being killed and eaten, and one man said he thought a bear was the culprit as he had seen a black animal going away from a hill, so Englebrecht decided to sit up over the next partly eaten calf the owner had found. In due course at dusk he waited behind a hide and soon saw an animal which certainly was black but too small for a bear. As usual he made a perfect shot and found he had killed a black leopard, one of the very few ever known in Ceylon.

I got to know Englebrecht so well he actually came to dinner and one night at Yala while tucking into some lovely fresh prawns he said, " Where did you get these, Mr. Veelkins ?" to which I replied, " I have brought a net and caught these myself in the backwater at the mouth of the river." He gasped, " Don't do that again as there are many dangerous crocodiles there and they can take a man easily. I will show you some tomorrow at noon ", and he did. Several big broad crocs, bigger than their tank cousins, were sun bathing. He went on to say that on one of his walks up the right bank of the Menik Ganga he found he was approaching an appalling stink so overpowering he had to make a detour to get round to windward, and found the cause of it all was a dead crocodile which had been flattened obviously by an elephant. By going down into the river-bed he found what had happened. An elephant had started a bath in a deep pool and a croc had seized his trunk. The elephant had then pulled the crocodile out and stamped on him, after which he had pulled the corpse up the bank and gone on with the flattening out process, flinging the remains on top of thorn bushes. It would have been an interesting and unusual form of retaliation and murder to have witnessed.

The A.G.A. Hambantota was waited on by a deputation of drivers of salt carts whose complaint was about an elephant which used to follow a string of carts along the Kirinda road and start pushing the last one from behind in playful imitation of the C.G.R. going up the Kadugannawa incline. Knowing that this elephant was perfectly harmless Englebrecht was very disgusted when he got an order (or " directive " as it would be called now) to shoot him, so there was nothing for it but to follow the next lot of salt carts and await developments. Sure enough he came out of a jungle path and started pushing and was so intent on carrying out his self-imposed task he took no notice of Englebrecht who had to slap him on the rump to get him to turn round and present a behind the ear shot which needless to say dropped him in his tracks.

Periodically the A.G.A. came on official visits to Yala and Englebrecht met him at Bootuwa. On one of these inspections he was accompanied by the Kachcheri Mudaliyar in perfect white costume and neat white turban. As several cow buffaloes had new calves Englebrecht said crossing the big open plain would be dangerous and suggested going round by road; but, Oh, No, the visitors knew better and started out into the open. Awaiting developments Englebrecht and his men kept some distance away but did not have long to wait before the fun began. They heard angry snorts and then galloping hooves, and so had to rush forward to see what was happening. Fortunately there are several Malithung (Mustard) trees scattered about. The A.G.A. shot up one and the Kachcheri Mudaliyar up another, with furious cow buffaloes standing round both. These had to be tactfully " stood " away and the Government officials gently helped back to earth once more, and then Englebrecht told me he said, " Oh Mudaliyar, I never knew you could climb trees so well."

A MEMORABLE WEEK-END

By LILLITH
In the Times

BACK after a most enjoyable trip to Tanamalwila. It feels so good to get away occasionally from the routine of running a house and contending with the hawkers, the bakers and other trouble makers and for a day or two let others care for you.

Tanamalwila resthouse is a modest, other-worldly place and I sincerely hope the powers that be keep it so. It is tucked away off the main road, in the midst of scrub jungle and it is not uncommon, according to the resthouse-keeper, to hear of an evening the trumpeting of a lone elephant in the vicinity.

We reached Tanamalwila in the late afternoon. There were four of us, Mr. and Mrs. H., two very good friends of ours, my husband and I. We had a picnic lunch at a place called Weligatta near Ambalantota, rested a while in the shade of a great-grandfatherly tamarind tree and then drove on to Tanamalwila. We had, of course, taken the precaution of booking two rooms at the resthouse for ourselves. That meant, from a somewhat selfish point of view, that we had the resthouse all to ourselves since there are only two rooms in it. But that was not to be.

Let me first tell you about what we did before things started happening that almost ruined our holiday. My husband and H. went down to the river that flows behind the resthouse for a bath.

We had early dinner that day and since it was a warm night sat out in the garden talking of inconsequential things and longing Monday would never come. It was past 10.30 when we finally went to bed.

I must have been asleep for an hour or so when I was metaphorically flung out of bed by the insistent and staccato blast of a car horn. A car-load of people had obviously arrived at the resthouse and they were announcing to the world in general and the resthouse-keeper in particular the joyous fact of their arrival. There were two women and three men in the car . . . I am sorry, I mean two ladies and three gentlemen. They kept the car engine running and the lights trained straight onto our room. The resthouse-keeper was a little late in answering their call; so on went the trumpet again and to hell with anyone asleep in the resthouse.

When the poor resthouse-keeper appeared he was ordered by one of the gentlemen to provide rooms for all of them. The gentlemen were politely told that no rooms were available. Well, they wanted dinner then. And while the dinner was being prepared our ladies and gentlemen disported themselves on the armchairs in the verandah, kept strolling in and out of the bathroom attached to our room which, unfortunately, had a door opening to the verandah, and one of the gentlemen even made sure for himself that the rooms were really occupied by peeping into our room. All this while they kept on, for our benefit, a loud and lively discourse on shoes and ships and sealing wax and such important things.

I knew Mr. and Mrs. H., too, were enjoying the company of these gallant ladies and gentlemen as much as we were. I saw the light being turned on in their room too. Poor H., he had driven the whole day and was looking forward so eagerly to a good night's rest.

Our company finally sat down to dinner. Now it was my turn to peep out and, believe me, they were real ladies and gentlemen these, in expensive looking sarees and corduroy trousers. They were loudly critical of the dinner served them and, I felt, quite rightly too. Just because we told the resthouse-keeper that we enjoyed the wholesome country rice, the wild-boar curry, the fried fish and the pol-sambol that was no reason for him to serve the same to these ladies and gentlemen. They deserved better.

It was one o'clock when our distinguished company finally left and by that time my husband was in a mood to add 5 to the murder tally for the year. H. and his wife came out of their room, too, to wish the ladies and gentlemen who

had just departed a pleasant journey's end under some culvert.

What a relief it was the next morning to have for company the courteous resthouse-keeper and his two assistants and the birds that frequent the bushes near the resthouse. The whole day we had peace and quiet. The water in the river was limpid and cool and that night we had only the sounds of the scrub to lull us. How gentle those little animals were . . .

Some Birds of East Africa

By C. E. NORRIS, F.Z.S.

THE first bird I saw upon leaving the Nairobi airport building was a Black-shouldered kite ; it resembled our Ceylon species but later I found it belong to a different race. Black and white Fiscal Shrikes perched on fence posts waiting to swoop down into the grass after insects. Pied crows were to be seen scavenging around the outskirts of the city ; after the drab Colombo crows they seemed gay with their white breasts and backs, they are about the size of the black crow found in Ceylon.

After this promising start, I found myself quite bewildered in trying to identify birds I saw in the garden of the house at which we were staying. Doves stalked about the lawn, lovely highly coloured sunbirds hovered over the flowers and strange flycatchers swooped out of trees. All the time new bird calls could be heard.

I found myself in a whirl trying to memorise so much that was new to me ; there was only one solution to overcome this frightful feeling of frustration and that was to obtain a bird book as soon as possible. At the first opportunity I hunted around in Nairobi but could find nothing except two large volumes, which were much too heavy to carry about in one's pocket. There was nothing to be done to ease my mental strain but to buy these books, which I found very helpful indeed. Unfortunately, there has been a tendency to split species into numerous sub-species, making identification, in the field difficult.

I found myself in sympathy with the " lumpers", and opposed to the " splitters " in this work of taxonomy of the birds of East Africa.

The next move was to pay a visit to the Coryndon Museum, to study skins and specimens ; after an hour or two browsing I began to feel better, but still there was much to be done before I could recognise what I saw in the field.

The doves, I saw on the lawn, I now knew to be ringed-necked and red-eyed, the sunbirds were Bronzy sunbirds with elongated, central tail feathers and, the flycatcher, a White-eyed flycatcher.

A flock of smallfish birds with long tails and a heavy flight flew across the garden into a tree. They reminded me of a party of " seven-sisters " but, I knew they were not Babblers. In the tree they crept about amongst the branches like mice, giving me a clue to their identity. They were a flock of Colys or Mousebirds. An African pied wagtail was always around the house, in fact they are in nearly every village, or wherever there is human habitation.

Coming across a bird which one instantly recognises is like meeting a friend, whom one has not seen for some time. I felt this way when I came upon a Bulbul, whose call was just the same as our Ceylon birds. The only difference is that instead of the vent being red it is lemon-yellow. I found this bulbul is called the dark-capped, whereas the yellow-vented would be more appropriate.

As we travelled up-country large flocks of Whydahs or Widow-birds were to be seen in the grass-lands. The males were in full plumage

with their long flowing, black tails. These tails appeared too heavy for the bird to fly properly. Their nuptial flight was a flip-up from the grass fanning their tails at the sombre, little females. I was not fortunate in seeing the lovely paradise Whydah, which must be a gorgeous bird. Little is known about the breeding habits of these birds beyond that they are parasitical upon certain of the Weaver birds.

Sitting motionless on telegraph poles were to be seen Jackal, or Augur buzzards recognisable by their black heads, white under-parts and chestnut tails. In company with these buzzards I noticed an occasional long-crested Hawk Eagle ; a black bird with a long, Cockatoo-like crest flopping about in the wind. On the roadside, I saw a pipit with a yellow breast and a black gorget across the upper breast, this was the Yellow-throated longclaw. Fiscal Shrikes were common and could be seen sitting on posts and stumps. A Secretary-bird was next seen stalking through the grass. These long-legged hawks are strange-looking birds standing nearly three feet high. They are generally grey in colour, with a long crest and elongated central tail feathers. When taking off they require a considerable run before they become air-borne ; they run along with their wings outstretched reminding me of a model airplane taking off. Often they will run rather than fly, looking somewhat ludicrous.

Lake Naivasha is a wonderful bird sanctuary at which more than 370 different species have been recorded. Unfortunately I was not able to make a visit here, but from a distance could see the Flamingoes making the water's edge appear like pink sand.

The Starlings were one of the families that impressed me during my visit as they are strikingly colourful with shot-purples and greens, giving a lovely irridescent sheen to their upper plumage. At Amboseli, the Superb starling were extremely tame, so they were popular with visitors from the photographic point of view. They hopped around under one's chair and the tea-table looking for crumbs. I noticed the various species appeared to be local in their distribution, each area having its own, with little or no intermingling. The Red-winged starlings at Thompson's Falls were a gorgeous sight as they flew across the face of the cascading water to their nests in the cliffs.

Huge flocks of Wattled starlings came to a communal roost in Amboseli ; as it was not the breeding season the males did not have their strange wattle adornments. These flocks reminded me of Mynahs coming in to roost, they kept up a similar chatter until after dark.

On the edge of an up-country forest I was lucky to see a Trogon, which, I did not think was so striking as the one found in Ceylon. It lacked the white stripe across the breast and the fine vermiculations on the wings. In the same piece of forest I came across the Silver-cheeked hornbill, a large black and white bird with a prominent white casque on the upper mandible ; in some ways it reminded me of our Pied hornbill but was a bird of heavier appearance. Hornbills are a feature of East Africa, being represented by 20 species to be found in all types of country. The Ground hornbill looks more like a hen turkey, except that it is black in colour. These large birds, generally, will be found in small parties, slowly making their way across the plains in search of insects. Many of the smaller species, I noticed, were to be found feeding on the ground.

In the arid areas of Ceylon, especially around the coast, large flocks of Finch-larks are commonly seen. In East Africa these little birds are called Sparrow-larks and have very similar habits being found on most of the grass-covered plains.

Courses are fairly common but are a different species to the one found in Ceylon. I frequently came across the Two-banded courser and found one nest, or more correctly, an egg deposited in a scrape.

The East African counterpart of the " Did-he-do-it " Red-wattled lapwing is the Crowned lapwing which has very similiar habits and is just as noisy. This bird is recognisable by its

black head with a white band encircling the crown. The Blacksmith plover is another common plover found around the edges of swamps, it has received its name from its call which sounds like a hammer tapping on an anvil.

Black-winged stilts of the same species as are resident in Ceylon were fairly common around the edge of open water. I also came across a number of migratory waders which visit Ceylon in the north-east monsoon, such as : Common sandpipers, Little stints, Wood sandpipers, Marsh sandpipers, and Green sandpipers. When I left Africa in October, these birds were just beginning to arrive from their winter quarters. I did not see any migratory duck, such as : Mallard, Gargeney, Pintail, Shoveller or Wigeon, but I was lucky in finding a few resident Hottentot teal, Yellow-billed and Red-billed ducks. I was disappointed at not seeing the White-faced tree-duck, a relative of the " Whistler".

Egyptian geese were fairly common on open water and I came upon one or two family parties with their fluffy, little goslings. Spur-winged geese were found at Amboseli in small numbers. The African counterpart of our Black-necked stork is the Saddle-bill stork ; an impressive bird with a red and black bill, upon which is a bright yellow saddle. Its habits seemed very similiar to the Black-necked stork.

Egrets were found in most of the damp areas and around open water. They were helpful in indicating the whereabouts of the larger animals in the bush, as they could be seen perched on their backs or wheeling around above a rhino or herd of buffalo.

The African Jacana, I found quite common on water that was overgrown with aquatic plants. It lacks the long flowing tail of the Ceylon species and is a deep maroon brown with a golden collar. It is an attractive bird as it gracefully walks over the leaves of the water plants.

Large flocks of Guinea fowl both helmeted and vulturine were often encountered on the tracks through the bush. The Helmeted guinea fowl is the species domesticated with the annoying call resembling a rusty water-pump in need of oil. Francolins of various species are common and Sand-grouse will be seen flighting in large numbers to water in the early morning and evening. I came across a brood of sand-grouse chicks in the middle of the Serengetti plains ; the chicks are not covered in down but have a soft, quill-like covering which is quite rough to touch.

I had previously only seen ostriches in Zoos, so was thrilled when we came upon them in the bush. The males are impressive birds looking somewhat unclothed with their naked pink legs. The female is more sombrely clad being rather drab when seen in the company of her mate.

I had the good fortune to hear a cock booming one morning and mistook the noise for a lion roaring, but realised there were no grunts at the end with which the lion finishes. When disturbed, the Ostrich runs with long rhythmic strides, covering the ground at an incredible speed.

Vultures are closely associated with Africa and will be seen circling around on the look out for death. The vulture is generally considered a revolting bird, merely, I suppose, because it lives on carrion, but it is a very useful bird clearing up the dead carcases of animals. It is not like the hyena which will start its meal on a still living animal. The large Lappet-faced vulture always makes sure of getting the major share before allowing the smaller white-backed a look in. Marabou storks, close relations of the Adjutant stork, are also scavengers. They are strange-looking birds with their external crop which dangles down in front of their breasts like a pink coloured pouch.

Weaver birds are a large family well represented ; their nests will be seen hanging like decorations from flat-topped Acacia trees. The Buffalo weaver makes a formidable nest out of the thorny branches of " wait-a-bit " thorns. In Amboseli the Golden weavers regularly

visited the camp-staff cook house after the spilt maize meal, the floor was covered with these little birds giving the impression of a golden carpet. Tiny, little Fire-finches visited a bird bath in hundreds, enjoying the shower both from a small fountain. The African hoopoe is much darker in colour than the one found in Ceylon. Its crest is russet brown instead of the pink of our bird.

Space, I regret, will not allow me to describe all the birds we saw during our trip, as the country is a paradise for the bird watcher, always presenting something new and fascinating. By the end of our stay I found my frustration had left me, only to be replaced by a longing to see more of the fascinations Africa has to offer, not only in the field of birds but with the animals as well.

THE BLUE-TAILED BEE-EATER

By E. B. WIKRAMANAYAKE

IN June, 1955, when Major W. W. A. Phillips, His Excellency Philip Crowe and I were looking for nesting birds round Pottuvil in the Eastern Province we came across a small flock of Blue-tailed Bee-eaters which should by rights have been in India at that time of the year. They settled on a tree and Major Phillips examined them carefully through his binoculars. There was no mistaking their identity. Writing in Spolia Zeylanica (vol. 28, page 109) Major Phillips, referring to this incident and a previous encounter with the Blue-tailed Bee-eater in May, 1952, at Komari Kalapu also close to Pottuvil, says, " So now we have two authentic records of small numbers of these Bee-eaters occurring in Ceylon at the time when, normally, they should have been nesting in India. The birds may have been non-breeding loiterers but this explanation does not seem very convincing as, in the first case (i.e. at Komari Kalapu) the birds appeared to be in full plumage and, in the second, there were 17 to 20 gathered in a loose flock. The possibility that the birds were nesting or about to nest cannot be ruled out as our stay in the district was of such short duration that we were unable to make any further observation. It is possible that the species may be found, occasionally, to remain to nest in Ceylon."

There are three varieties of Bee-eater to be found in Ceylon. Two of them, the Common Indian Bee-eater and the Chestnut-headed Bee-eater are resident. The Blue-tailed Bee-eater is a migrant from India. It comes to Ceylon in

Blue-tailed Bee-eater

August and September and leaves by the end of April.

The Blue-tailed Bee-eater is too familiar a bird to need detailed description. It is a slim green bird about the size of a bulbul with a long tail. A black streak runs from the nostril through the eye to the ear coverts. The chin is pale yellow and the throat chestnut shading on the breast into green which again passes into blue in the vent and lower tail coverts. The bill and legs are black.

The Blue-tailed Bee-eater is found all over India up to the foot of the Himalayas. In Burma and Siam too it is resident. In Malaya, as in Ceylon, it is a regular winter visitor. On arrival in this country the Blue-tailed Bee-eater spreads all over the low-country ascending to about 5,000 feet. It is fond of the open country and is frequently found hawking for insects over stretches of water. Its prey consists of beetles, dragon flies and other insects which it captures and kills by repeatedly striking it against whatever object the bird is seated on. These Bee-eaters have communal roosting places where they congregate in large numbers and the same roosting place is used year after year. The ordinary call of this bird is a soft and musical "pirrip pirrip" by which it may easily be identified.

The Blue-tailed has not been known to breed in Ceylon. Hume in his "Nests and Eggs of Indian Birds" gives the following account of its nidification. "Like all the rest of the family it breeds in holes in banks and lays usually four or five eggs. The holes are rarely less than four feet deep and I have known them to extend to seven feet. In diameter they vary from 2 to 2½ inches. At the far extremity a rounded chamber, as a rule not less than 6 inches in diameter, is hollowed out for the eggs and at times this chamber has a thin lining of grass and feathers which I have never yet met with in the nests of other species." The eggs are white, highly glossed and very spherical ovals averaging 0.88 by 0·76 inches.

In view of Mr. Phillips' observations, the discovery of the nest of the Blue-tailed Bee-eater will be awaited with interest.

A SUNBIRD'S NEST

By V. M. FERNANDO

THE village in which I am living, (Telawala) is also a good place for the study of birds. There are many kinds of birds in this well-wooded village, which is in the outskirts of Moratuwa.

Of the many kinds of birds found in this village, the Sunbirds (in Sinhalese called Mal-sutikka) are very welcome visitors to our garden. They are attracted by flowers, spiders and other insects. They pierce the flowers with their long beaks and suck the nectar. They visit the eaves of our house and catch the spiders and other insects which form a part of their diet. Hovering in front of beautiful flowers and cobwebs, or flicking their wings when settled, they are delightful little birds to watch. The males are very pugnacious and continually chase other sunbirds.

There are two varieties of Sunbirds visiting our garden. They differ in size and colour. One pair with long beaks, and another pair smaller in size than the former with short beaks. It was this latter pair that decided to build a nest just three feet away from a window of our house.

I watched the hen at work building the nest. She brought fine fibres, small flakes of papery bark and moss. All these were bound with cobwebs to form a pear-shaped structure. The inside of the nest was lined with fine cotton and feathers to make it very comfortable for the young ones. It was a very attractive rainproof cradle. It was hanging from a leaf about seven feet from the ground. After the finishing touches were given, the hen laid two eggs.

At the start I was dubious whether the leaf

Sunbird's Nest

could hold the nest, till the young left it. I feared that either the leaf would die and fall with the nest or that the nest would fall by its own weight.

My fears proved to be correct ; but it did not happen the way I anticipated. It was a crow that did it. The crows are a nuisance to the fruit-grower, poultry farmers and to small birds and frogs.

On Sunday morning I was getting ready to go to church. I was combing my hair near the window very close to the nest of the Sunbirds. Through the curtain I saw something fall. I looked through the window and saw a crow perched on the near-by fence staring at me with guilty eyes. I looked down. What a pitiful sight. The crow's evil job was done. The nest lay on the ground with an egg beside it. A turkey hen, who happened to be feeding there was bending curiously over the nest and pecking at it. I shouted and drove the turkey away. I asked my cousin to go out quickly and get the nest. He picked it up and said that one egg was slightly broken and another unharmed.

I now had to face a difficult problem : to put back the nest for the Sunbirds to return. The hen realising the loss of her nest flew from tree to tree nearby raising pitiful cries. I took a piece of cloth, tied it round the nest taking care not to damage it further, and suspended it from a hook on the roof of our house, only two feet away from the original position of the nest. I placed both eggs in the nest and watched well concealed.

After a while the hen returned to the nest, but instead of sitting on the eggs she began sucking the broken one for sometime. She flew away and returned at intervals to suck what was left of the egg. The next day I examined the nest. There was not a trace of the damaged egg, but the other egg was there.

That egg, as I write, is still rotting in the nest. The hen refuses to have anything to do with it. Both birds visit daily the tree on which the nest was built. While hunting for food they fly to the nest and take a look at the rotting egg. Strange are the ways of nature.

"ALL MOD CONS."

By R. C. WALL

THE events in the following article are certainly well known to lots of keen bird-watchers, but, judging from several of my friends, I feel sure that there are also many such people to whom they will be new.

I fastened a small wooden box to one of the pillars on the verandah of our bungalow and a pair of magpie Robins at once decided that that was just what they were looking for as a most desirable residence.

We have breakfast on the verandah every morning and someone is always sitting there, writing or chatting, but the robins got quite used to us and took very little notice. They continued to fly backwards and forwards building their nest.

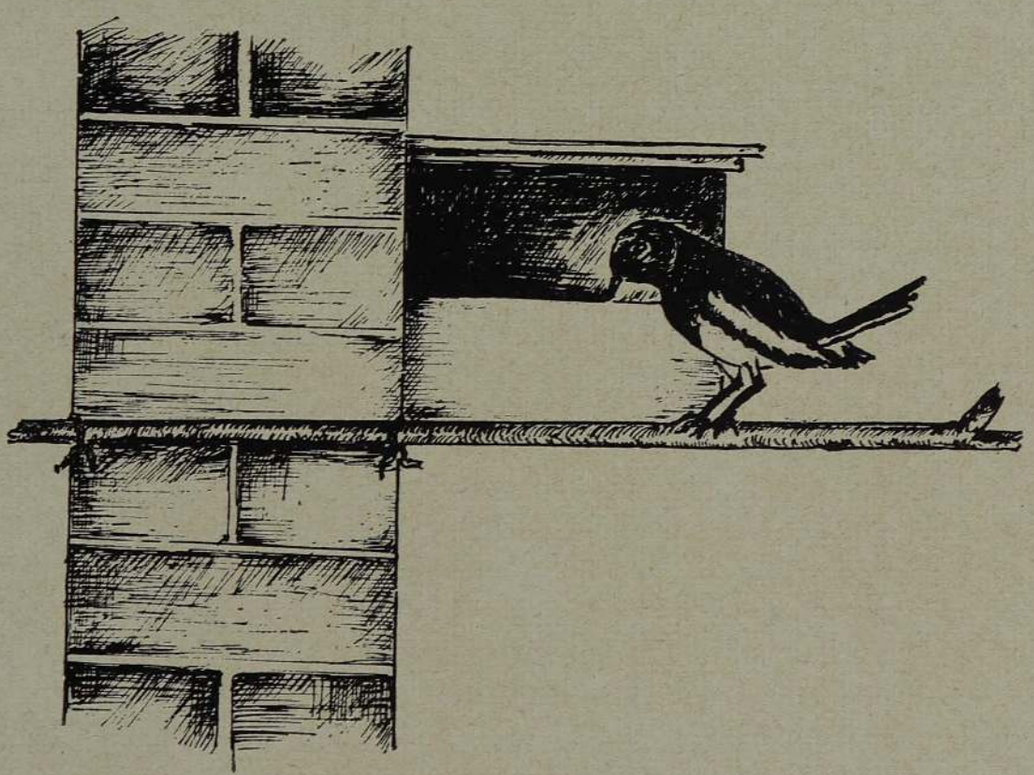
There is a cement bird-table on the edge of the verandah, which always has bits of bread and other tit-bits on it for birds. When the robins appeared, to encourage them to stay near, we put all the caterpillars we could find and a small amount of the dogs' meat on it. The robins loved this ("cooked worm"?) and, in the intervals of collecting building materials, came down to feed within a couple of feet of people sitting on the verandah. They would even come onto the breakfast table while we were sitting there and feed from a saucer.

Eventually the nest was ready and the eggs laid. The hen sat quietly on her eggs and kept an eye on us on the verandah but never budged, except when she flew off for short periods to feed. The cock sat nearly all the time on the top of the lightning conductor and sang at the top of his voice.

In due course we noticed that the eggs had obviously hatched. Both parents flew to the nest entrance with gradually increasing sizes of food. A caterpillar, moth, tadpole, small frog, cricket, grasshopper worm or some other luscious juicy "eat," such as bits of the "cooked worm."

We could not see into the bottom of the box, but we noticed that from shortly after the time they first started feeding the babies, both parents flew off from the nest every now and then with a small capsule which they dropped on the lawn. "What tidy little birds" we thought, and it was only later, when the youngsters were able to stand up and turn round in the nest and could be clearly seen in it, that we realised how very tidy they were.

One of the parents would come along with a huge caterpillar, alight on the landing stick which I had fastened there for that purpose, and look round at the three babies. They would all have their mouths wide open and be shrieking their heads off. The parent would select one and shove the caterpillar into its



Magpie Robin at Nesting Box

mouth. The baby would swallow it and immediately turn round, cock its tiny half-inch tail in the air, present its rear to the parent and produce a capsule, which the parent at once extracted and flew off with and dropped well away from the nest.

It was only now and then that this happened. Most of the times that the parents brought along a beakful of food, they merely fed the babies and then flew off for more.

I could not make out whether the parents themselves decided when "baby should be potted," or if there was some difference in the baby's shriek which indicated that it was "ready for it." I did notice that it was always a particularly large and juicy caterpillar which was given when the "mod. cons." were to be brought into action.

Holiday in the Maldives

The Maldivians have the Richest Gift of All—Ability to Enjoy Life to Its Fullest

By RODNEY JONKLAAS
In Sunday Times

I COUNT myself lucky—yet I'm not rich, I've no Cadillac and I live in Dehiwela, not Colombo 7. But I've been twice to the Maldives, perhaps the smallest and least-known nation in the world, made up of 2,000 odd coral islands. And I have swum and skin-dived in the world's most fabulous waters.

If you are lucky enough to be a guest of the Maldivian Government, (and you don't have to flourish banknotes, influence or political prowess in their faces to be one) you will, after our harbour workers have condescended to load your ship, leave Colombo and head South for Malé, the capital, about 400 miles away.

Apart from occasional shoals of porpoises (and if you are very lucky, a whale) and myriads of flying-fish, you see nothing but sea during the 40 plus hours after Colombo sinks in the horizon and a host of emerald islets denote the Maldives. Your ship will not be a large one, but your sailor hosts the nicest possible, and your fellow-passengers, usually Maldivians, a charming lot.

Pray too, that your trip there will be in fine weather and in a placid sea, as it was at the end of November, when our little ship's bow-waves were about the largest ones we saw in the expanse of Indian Ocean we journeyed through. For if the sea is rough you are in for a lively time of it, even if you have rocked and rolled in Ceylon. And if you are a poor sailor you are in for a strong dose of hell! And hell and high-water is what most Ceylonese face when they go to and from the Maldives. The Maldivians? They are almost born sailors. A sea-sick Maldivian is a rare one indeed.

Assuming that you have had a nice journey all along, imagine yourself on the bows of a small ship looking into the crystal water that surrounds the Maldives and wondering at the flying-fish as they swim away from the ship, taxi to the surface swiftly, and then leave the water like shiny dragon-flies. In front of you are many islands, so many that you are tired of counting them. The ship chugs her way cautiously towards one that has many buildings, and in a few minutes you have skirted Funadu, a cute little one-house 4-acre island and enter Malé's anchorage. More accurately, you have successfully negotiated the main navigable gap in the atoll of Malé."

An atoll is a chain of several coral islands linked by submarine coral formations of various depths : it is usually round or oval-shaped and

within the chain the sea is termed a lagoon—outside is the ocean whose greater depths are, for the most part uncharted. Having wondered years ago at the immensity of Puttalam lagoon, I myself was feeling a little silly inside Malé lagoon which had an average depth of 60 fathoms and a radius of, say, 40 miles.

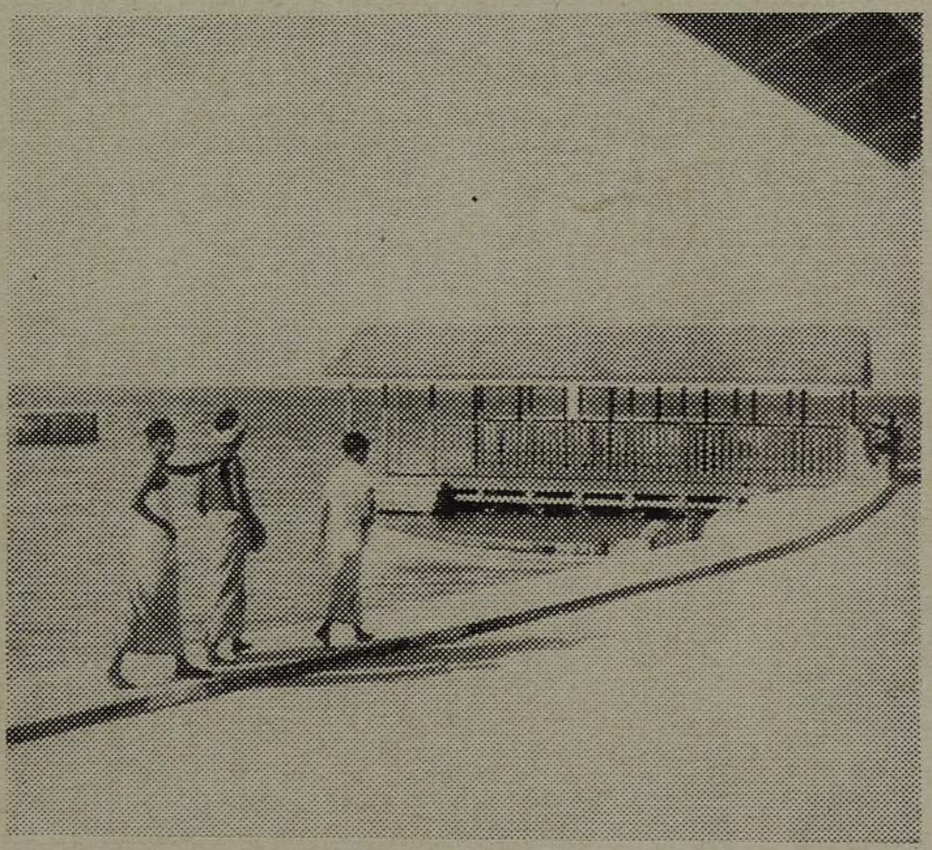
No sooner has your ship dropped anchor, at a safe distance of more than ¼ mile from Malé harbour entrance, than Cynthia, a diminutive inboard-powered launch, is by her side to greet you with doctor and Customs personnel and other government officials. This must sound like a dream too good to be true to the skippers of the host of ships queuing outside Colombo harbour for weeks on end. Formalities take no more than 10 minutes, after which you are free to do what you please. If you are like me, you will grab your fins and mask and leap over the side into my more familiar element, the fantastic undersea kingdom.

Malé harbour is Nature's swimming pool of crysral water averaging 6 ft. in depth, 100 yards in width and about a half mile in length. The breakwater was built by hand with lumps of coral and less than 20 ft. from its edge, on the outside, the reef drops steeply down to over 100 ft. Take any chunk of reef outside Malé, or from any island for that matter, and it will make our much-vaunted Hikkaduwa resemble a submarine waste-land in comparison. It is like trying to compare a lush tropical rain-forest with an overgrown chena. But of that later.

The tiny but stout and beautiful jetty is less than a stone's throw from the Customs building where your possessions are not ransacked, yet efficiently examined, and then you enter an archway, prepared to see the town. You rush headlong into a neat, well-grown flower garden where crotons, frangipani, oleanders, even grasses thrive and lend fragrance and colour to the capital.

The buildings in Malé are modest, neat, unpretentious and serve their purpose. One is astonished at the cleanliness of the roads, of the entire island as a whole, for on this speck of coral less than 2 square miles in area some 9,000 people live, love, learn and labour. They even dance now, and see movies, they feast and wed, and a few fade away and die, but they never get drunk, and almost never fight or make a commotion in public.

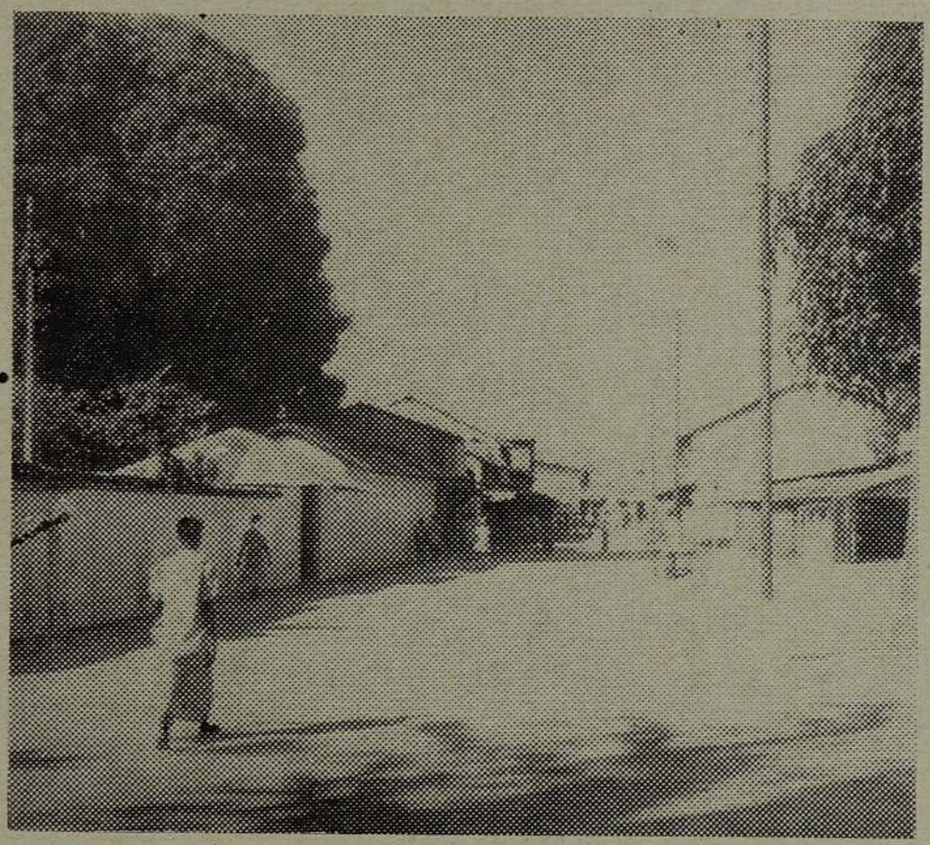
The wise ones who govern Malé must surely know those famous last lines of "Trees"—"For only God can make a tree." In spite of every disadvantage as regards water supply, soil and manure, Malé is lush with mango, bread-fruit, margosa, coconut and ornamentals. The Maldivians treasure and cherish trees and would



R. Jonklaas

Jetty at Malé

rather cut their own arms off than a big tree. My mind goes back a year or two to a sight I saw in Colombo Fort ; the graceful branches of ornamentals which had taken years to grow and beautify the city, shade her hot streets, ruthlessly chopped off—to deprive crows of roosting places. The Maldivians are obviously more far-sighted. They spare the trees and shoot the crows. I was delightfully astonished to see not one during my stay there, and to obtain tree-ripe gold mangoes in the heart of Malé town for next to nothing.



R. Jonklaas

A Maldivian Street

One is struck by the atmosphere of peace and tranquillity that is so characteristic of Malé ; though there are eating-houses and hotels their radios do not blare out frenziedly. There are crowds of people all over but they do not yell, gesticulate and jabber, even if foreigners pass through the bazaar area. Minding one's business is a virtue that is well displayed here. Even in the fish-market, where piles of plump Bonito and superb dark Wahoo (Seer-like oceanic Mackerel) are displayed for sale at ridiculously cheap rates, there is no hubbub.

The numerous government offices, power-house, trading establishments and administration centre are in neat, unpretentious buildings, a few of them two-storied. The Sultan's Palace dominates the scenery, and its tower, where flies the colourful Maldivian flag, is the tallest structure in the Island. The main traders are Borahs from Bombay and central India, and one finds them a very agreeable and hospitable lot. In spite of their having been here for many years, they still welcome visitors from abroad and crave news of the outside world, of their friends and relatives in Ceylon. I found that being nice to them was amply repaid by their extreme hospitality and generosity. I was a favoured guest of theirs and enjoyed meals, gifts and sea-shells and visits to dance halls and picture shows to my heart's content.

It is only in the last few years, under the new Government, that the former harsh lot of the womenfolk has been relaxed. Now the many girls and women one sees there are modestly and cleanly clad, but seldom, if ever, veiled. Relaxed too are the former regulations about public dancing, displays and movies ; in Malé today anyone can see 16 mm. (and soon 35 mm. cinemascope) movies in about 5 different halls ; although, admittedly they are cramped and stuffy.

I saw at least two dance shows in my brief four days there, and although the space, scope and material were limited, I was astonished to learn that the Kathakali and Bharatha Natyam actions, together with popular Hindustani rhythms had been learnt there from movies or gramophone records in less than 2 years !

Animals are rare in the Maldives ; there are *no dogs* at all, so that one malady the sorely-pressed medical authorities can forget is rabies. There are *no crows* on Malé, and the domestic chickens, goats and odd head of cattle (I never saw these) are kept in pens by order of the Government. Stray cattle or goats on the highways of Malé will never be a problem to traffic or city-cleaners ; and on this tiny important coral speck there are at least 12 motor vehicles, innumerable bicycles and a few light motor-cycles. There are even two taxis which carry theatregoers and dance hall addicts to and from their destinations every evening !

The few Ceylonese who live in Malé are obliged to reside in the Government guesthouse, an immaculate and comfortable 4-roomed bungalow in the heart of Malé, shaded by dense mango trees. Food, furniture and all possible comforts are afforded these hardy emigrants from Ceylon who work for the Maldivian Government on contracts. But I found that without exception they are a disgruntled lot and seldom last the full period of their contract there. Apart from the rigours of travel to and from Malé, especially during the South West Monsoon, and in makeshift ship accommodation, life in Malé is seldom social and exciting enough for our more sophisticated folk. Most of all they miss the soft muddy earth that is their home.

For in Malé, or in any other island of the 2,000, there is *no mud*, there are *no hills, rivers and streams* and no one knows what a swamp is. The roads of Malé are gleaming white coral sand, and in spite of the lush trees which shade them from both sides, there is no litter of dead leaves to be seen anywhere. The bazaar in Malé you will find quaint, if you are interested in knick-knacks, sea-shells, maldive fish and a few vegetables like breadfruit, limes, drumsticks and chillies. The fish market simply overflows with fat gleaming bonitos and seer each afternoon ; and they cost something ridiculously low in our estimation.

More than anything else, as you wend your way back to the ship that will carry you back the 400 odd miles to Ceylon, you will wonder at the contentment and cheerfulness of the Maldivians as a race. In them you will see the joy of living reflected in the happy faces of merchants and maidens, lawmen and labourers, officials and urchins. They are not a rich race by most standards, they are not unduly endowed with Nature's bounties, and what little they have in life would seem impossible to live with according to our standards. But they have the richest gift of all mankind—the ability to live in harmony with each other and enjoy life to its fullest.

If you are a skin-diver, and you *should* be one if you visit the Maldives, the first thing to strike you will be the very immensity of the underwater scenery. It is striking enough in Ceylon, in clear water, where you feel shrimplike in a blue-green underwater world, feeble, helpless as compared to the fishes which swim around you.

But in the Maldives this feeling of your own puniness is vastly increased for the water is much deeper, infinitely clearer, far more densely populated with marine life.

The Maldive Islands are built up of pure coral and the entire group consists of several chains of islands, or atolls. Each atoll is surrounded by the immensity of the blue Indian Ocean and encloses a lagoon. At intervals in the coralline chain are deep gaps through which the swift tides flow with terrifying power. Each island is a fortress of coral, living and dead, on which sand and trees form a green crown of tropical lushness.

If the island is at the periphery of the atoll, there will be a seaward and leeward side to it. The abrupt drop of the coral wall into the depths of the sea is something astounding.

Outside the coral wall of each island you swim in an unearthly blue void where the underwater visibility averages 150 ft. in bright sunlight. Suddenly there is a kaleidoscopic precipice ahead of you alive with a galaxy of

tropical fishes, and even if you are a hardened Reefcomber from Ceylon, I warrant you will gasp in sheer disbelief.

All at once you get a form of submarine claustrophobia as you feel yourself floating in blue space, suspended over a vast jungle of coral which drops perpendicularly into nothingness, or faint white sand.

It takes some time to recover from this preliminary feeling and later on, especially if you are spearfishing or photographing underwater, you take the clarity for granted. But after a short respite on land, you get back in and the same old "going to fall any moment" feeling comes over you.

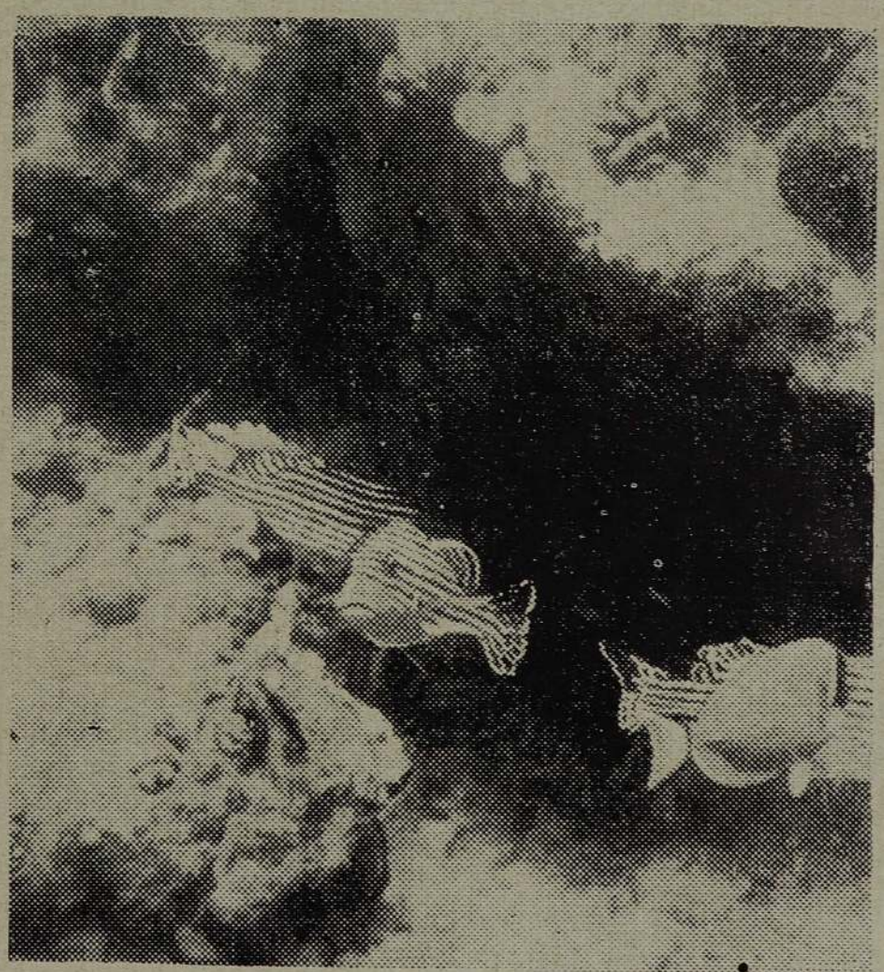
Not only I, but even Dr. Hans Hans, the most widely travelled skin-diver in history, is emphatic that in the Maldivian reefs swim the world's most gorgeous coral fishes. Normally, the average marine coral fish of small size far outshines even the most brilliant of freshwater fishes, but here in the Maldives, fishes which evoke gasps of delight from fanciers in Ceylon are drab in comparison with some extra-special artistic effects of Mother Nature.

The bizarre and rightly-named Conspicuous Trigger-fish is a constant sight all over the corals—in Ceylon it is a rare sight indeed. The freshwater Neon Tetra has its marine counterpart swimming in shoals of thousands, each as large as a sardine, and ten times as brilliant as a neon, only it does not, strictly speaking, belong to the same family. Yellows, mauves, reds and greens predominate.

At least one Goatfish, a Surgeonfish, a Trumpet-fish, and a Sea-Angel are all-gamboge in colour; it seems to be a fashion in these waters. But beating them all is the Spiny Butterfly-fish (*Pygoplites diacanthus*) which puts any other fish in the world to shame. Fantastically patterned, it sports semi-circles and stripes of blue, mauve, gold, pink—I cannot remember what else.

I brought back three specimens alive with me last trip, a triumph of skin-diving effort in the vast coral jungles I hunted them in, and as I write this they are swimming gaily in my tanks and a host of fish-lovers visit me to view them.

The spearfisherman's dreams all come true in the Maldives; there are simply too many fishes and a good many of them are just too large and too powerful for the average underwater gunner. Over the edge of the reef you stand every chance of losing a gun after hitting even an average-sized game-fish. And who would waste time with Surgeons, Thicklips, Rabbit-fishes and other tame game when there is an endless parade of Fighting-fish and Sharks to thrill your very soul? And deeper down, if you can go even half-way, you can encounter Giant Wrasse, Red



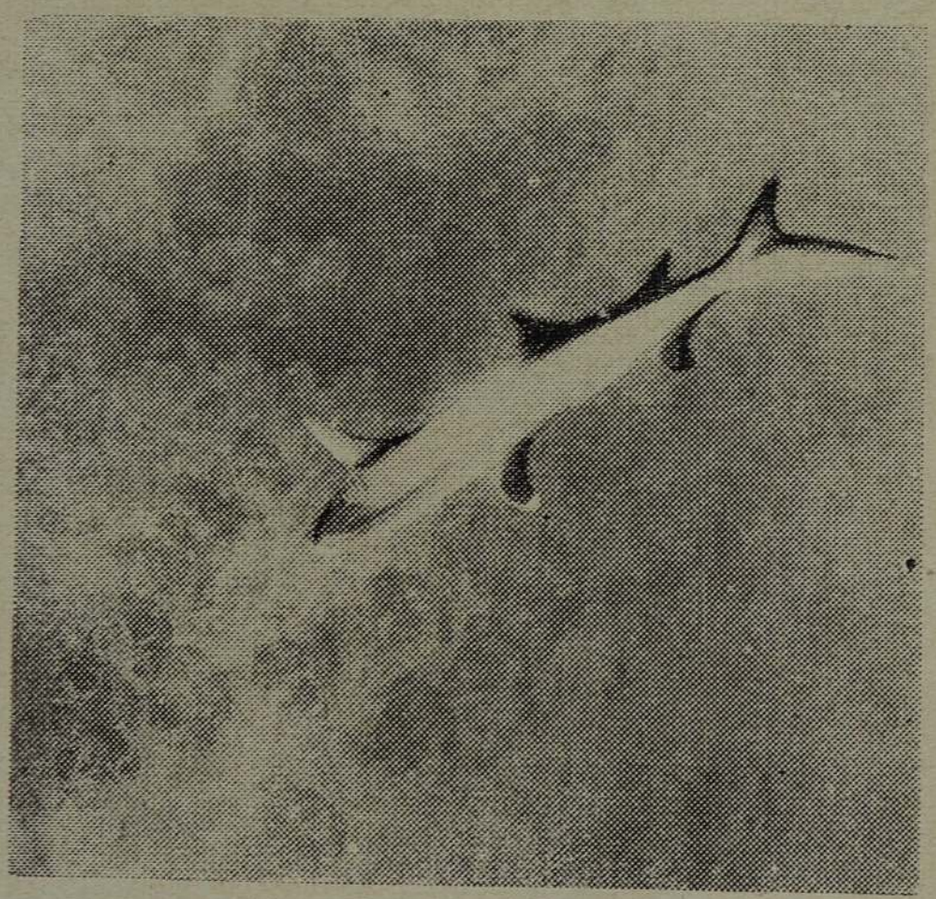
R. Jonklaas

Striped Thicklips and Blue Surgeonfish lurk in cave 6 ft. deep

Coral Cod, Grouper, and Rosy Snappers of worthy size.

Close to the shallow edges of the islands, especially at the entrances to Male harbour, shoals of fine Blue Caranx or Horse-mackerel hunt the baitfish which shelter in the shallows. They come past in arrogant and gleaming shoals, sometimes in twos and threes, often in scores. Wonderful sport on a spear-gun or a lure, and in Ceylon waters a prize—but our fastidious and fish-happy Maldivians prefer Tuna and Bonito instead.

On the seaward side of any island, for example Malés, there is a relatively flat surf-swept stretch of hard coral between the shore and the precipice. Provided the tidal current is not too compelling, there is a paradise for fishgunner or photographer. Big caranxes and sharks form the dominant game here.



R. Jonklaas

'Lord, what Sharks!'

I will never forget the morning on which I hunted caranx here and never got one ; it was so clear you could see the 40-pounders well over 100 feet away ; by the time they were ten feet away, they had sized you up sufficiently intelligently to swerve just that extra foot or so before you pull the trigger. Moreover, the attendant sharks (there were never less than six in sight simultaneously) were not conducive towards concentration on other fishes . . .

You really see fish in the Maldives with an aqualung ; once you can breathe and swim down below the 50-ft. mark in comfort you begin to see things ; mere goggling and holding your breath gave you but tantalising glimpses. There are the immense Hump-headed Wrasse dressed in drab olive-green, but oh, so majestic. They circle warily round you with their tiny piggy-eyes sizing you up all the time ; and you can never get in closer than ten feet.

There are always sharks deep down, but if there are dead or wounded fish about, there are droves of them. And the deeper you go, way past the indigo sea-fan zone and on the white coral dust slopes 150 feet down that fade into still greater depths—the sharks are frightening.

There are three species of sharks you meet there ; the tame Whitefins that swim trustingly and stupidly within range of spearguns and meet sad fates, the swift and timid Blackfins that never get in closer than 20 feet or grow very large ; and finally, the long-finned Grays which are the most numerous, inquisitive and grow largest. I will never forget the morning I spent with Mike Wilson off Funadu Island feeding sharks with wounded and bleeding Unicornfishes for his ever-hungry cameras.

We were 70 feet down in the sea-fan zone. The sharks

were round us all the time but when they smelt the blood they lost their fear of us and came into camera range in spite of the popping of flash-bulbs and the shirring of Mike's Beaulieu.

Apart from one almost biting my finned feet off, mistaking them for the bait everything went well. Then we went into a magic Aladdin's cave 90 feet down and sat like submarine cave-men in a crazy dream, blowing immense bubbles that formed quicksilver on the cave ceiling and before our feet another bloody bait.

Then we saw sharks—Lord, what sharks! Big, sleek ten-footers, they slid menacingly over the edge of the cave and nosed out the bait in as sinister a manner as we dreamt only in horror-dreams. We swam up out of that strangely fascinating den, a little paler and very subdued.

In the intervals between shark encounter, you have time to see the magnificent Gray Tuna that are so common in the Maldives. They swim past with supercilious looks and displaying their wicked teeth—large silvery cylinders of speed and power. The Rock-cod are more easily viewed with a lung on and also the great Triggers, the superb Rosy Snappers and the multitudinous other fishes that make the seas of the Maldives a carnival of colour and movement.

And then, as your air-supply runs out, you reluctantly move upwards, towards the edge of the precipice you can see above you, where the smaller fish flit and hover, where the rays of the sun shoot down towards you, where there is the warmth and wind of the world above.

Whether you are a novice or an expert, a professional or amateur in the world of skin-diving there is one feeling you share with me—that you will be back, as soon as you can, into this Last Outpost of the Ocean in the far-away unspoilt, wind-kissed Maldives.

The Seychelles

Land of the Coco de Mer, the Black Parrot and the Giant Tortoise

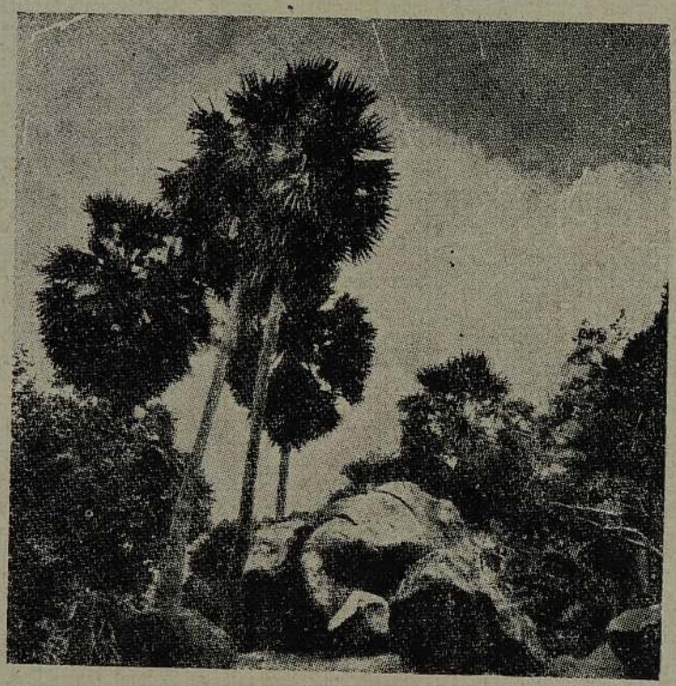
From *Stanvac Magazine*

THE Seychelles are a group of islands "a thousand miles from anywhere" in the middle of the Indian Ocean. They are surely one of the most beautiful and certainly the most remote of earthly paradises. The only way to arrive there is by sea from Mombasa or Bombay from where one ship a month sails for these islands. From the start they present a fascinating picture to the visitor. His boat arrives at sunrise, anchoring not far from the main island of Mahé. All around him the silhouettes of mountain-tops are set against the dawn. It is said that the Seychelles are the peaks of a mountain range that belonged to a once vast continent which stretched as far as Madagascar and the Channel of Mozambique. Sometime in the remote past, this great mass of land sank beneath the ocean, leaving only the tips of its highest mountains to peer above the waves.

The existence of the islands almost remained a secret to the world until the sixteenth century, when the Portuguese discovered them while they were busy establishing their empire in the East. At first they were haunted by pirates who made a living preying upon the treasure galleons which passed along the shipping routes nearby. By the eighteenth century Portugal had been superceded by Britain and France in the East. The French were the first to lay claim to the Islands, naming them after the French Minister of Finance, the Compte de Sechelles. In 1768, the islands of Mahé and Praslin were occupied by them. They had visions of establishing a spice industry to rival that of the Dutch in the

East Indies. The importance of the Seychelles increased with the growth of the slave trade in East Africa, and they became a convenient stopping place for ships bound from Madagascar to the Orient. Then came the Napoleonic Wars and the Treaty of Paris in 1814 when the islands were formally ceded to the British Crown by the French Government. The Seychelles are now a colony of Great Britain and have their own government.

In a setting so remote one expects to find the unusual, and one is not disappointed in the Seychelles. In the Vallee de Mai on the island of Praslin grows the COCO DE MER, relic of a



Coco de Mer

preglacial age, and this is the only place in the world where it grows wild. Long ago, before the existence of the Seychelles was known, the people of India were familiar with the nut of the coco de mer as they were often washed ashore along the coast. Not knowing its place of origin, many believed that it grew on a tree under the sea, hence the name, " nut of the sea". Legend ascribes to coco de mer the powers of rejuvenation. Even today, inhabitants of the Seychelles believe it to be endowed with medicinal qualities. The tree itself is quite as remarkable as the tales which have grown around it. Attaining a height of over one hundred feet, it requires more than a century to reach full maturity. From its top spray gigantic fronds, twenty feet in length, strong enough to wall a house. Its fruit is the largest of any plant in the world. These nuts, consisting of two giant kernels each as large as a watermelon take seven years to ripen. For many years the care of the valley has been in the hands of a family called " Adam". Also unique to the islands are the famous BLACK PARROT, treasured by pirates of bygone days, and the GIANT LAND TORTOISE, a monster sometimes attaining the height of three feet, weighing as much as three hundred and fifty pounds, and often living five or six times the span of human life.

The fame of the Seychelles as a holiday resort is slowly spreading. Here in the remoteness of the Indian Ocean, man can forget the turmoil of our present-day world.

What has the Seychelles to offer? Among the islands are vast, untouched reserves of big game fish of every description. For a few rupees the angler may hire a boat to take him to the hunting grounds where he can exhaust himself reeling in monsters of the deep, and a day's catch weighing a thousand pounds is not unusual.

Outside the inner ring of granite islands are small coral atolls, paradise for the skin diver, where he may swim in safety from marauding sharks. Though most of these islands are privately owned, the management is usually more than willing to co-operate.

The beach at Beau Vallon is claimed to be amongst the most beautiful in the world. Fringed along its two-mile length with the coconut palm, its sand is fine and white, stretching down into water of transparent green and blue. Swimming is possible at all tides and in all seasons; for here on the equator, there is little change of temperature. The islands are always cooled by the monsoon winds, and during the last months of the year, when the north-east

monsoon blows, there is excellent surfing. The islands have none of the pests associated with the tropics. They are free from poisonous snakes, malaria, large spiders, and insects in general. Towering into the sky behind the beaches are the peaks of the Morne Seychelloise and Trois Freres which rise to a height of some three thousand feet. Here are wonderful walkways and magnificent views and, for the intrepid, perhaps some rock climbing up the granitic cliffs. Beau Vallon Beach is on the island of Mahé on which is also Victoria, capital of the Seychelles. The only hotels are situated on this island.

The inhabitants are, for the most part, Creoles. These people are of mixed blood, descendants of the early French settlers and the negros. Their language, "Creole", is perhaps best described as a French patois, and they easily understand modern French, but the universality of English is also applicable here.

The main industry of the Seychelles is the coconut, and roughly five thousand tons of copra are exported every year. The inhabitants are skilled in working tortoise shell, and present visitors with a large selection of ornaments, cigarette cases, picture frames, and ashtrays, all of which are exquisitely carved and polished. Of unusual interest are the bowls they make from the double shell of the coco de mer. The leaves of the palm tree are used to make baskets and hats. Shells, of which an infinite variety are to be found on the beaches, are used to make buttons, necklaces, and many other kinds of jewelry. At one time a considerable amount of guano was exported, but now most of the high-grade deposits have been exhausted. It is said that during the last Ice Age all the sea birds of Europe found refuge in the Seychelles. The beaches are littered with pumice stone, which was cast ashore after the titanic explosion of 1883 when the East Indian island of Krakatoa disappeared in a volcanic upheaval unequalled in historic times. Old people of the islands still remember the many tidal waves it set in motion and the auroral sunsets that coloured the heavens for months afterward.

The Creoles have evolved their own tradition in cooking, and most of their dishes are highly spiced. Among the outstanding specialities are "tek-tek" soup, made from shellfish; small curried octopi; green turtle steak; the local fruit-eating flying fox cooked in red wine; sea birds' eggs; and palmiste salad, made from the young shoots of the wild palm.

The Seychelles islands lie four degrees south of the Equator, about six hundred miles north-east of Madagascar and a thousand miles south-west of Bombay.

If you love the simple pleasures that make life worth living, if you love to fish and swim and lie in the sun, if you love the unspoiled romance of a tropical island and the breath of an ocean breeze, and if you hate the hurly-burly of the trodden ways, then you belong in this paradise called the Seychelles, these "pearls of the Indian Ocean".

FLYING CROOKED

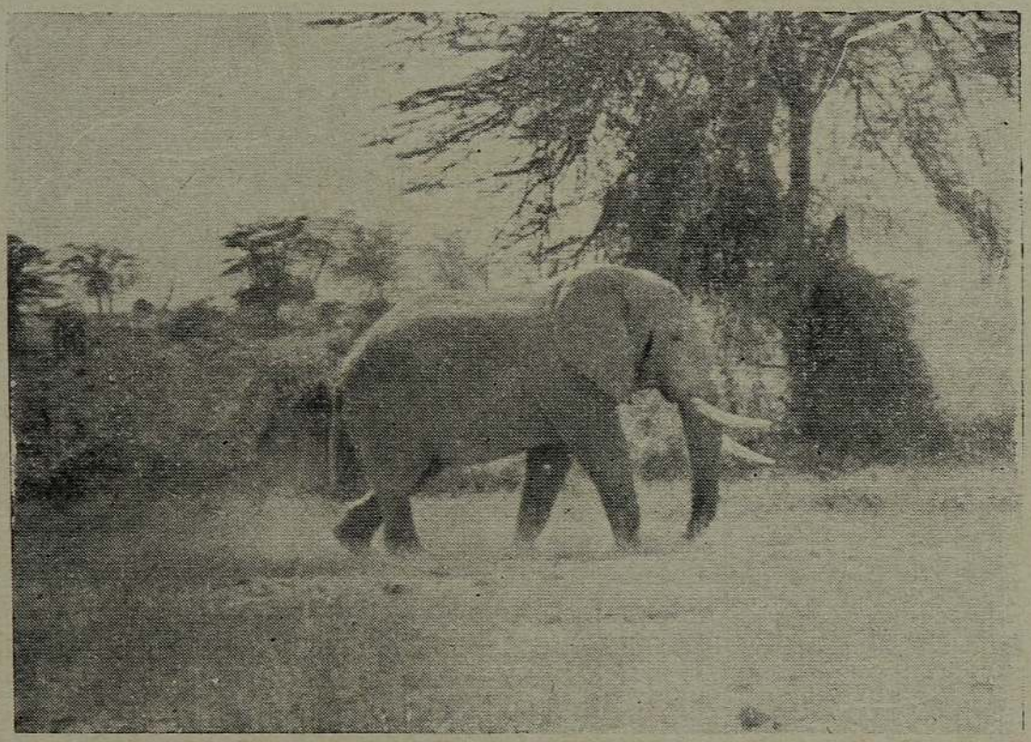
The butterfly, the cabbage-white,
(His honest idiocy of flight)
Will never now, it is too late,
Master the art of flying straight,
Yet has—who knows as well as I?
A just sense of how not to fly:
He lurches here and here by guess.
And God and hope and hopelessness,
Even the acrobatic swift
Has not the flying crooked gift.

ROBERT GRAVES.

Memories of our African Safari

By PATSY NORRIS

SITTING in the Land Rover, spinning along the long, straight African red-earth road to Voi my spirits were soaring, and I was wondering how the African bush would compare with our Ceylon jungles. At last our dream was a reality, and we were in Kenya and off on safari to the Royal Tsavo (East and West) National Park, Amboseli Royal National Reserve, and then on to Tanganyika to Ngorongoro Crater, and Seronera in the Serengetti National Park.



Patsy Norris

' The sight of the first African Elephant was a moment to remember '

Our appetites had already been whetted by having been in the Nairobi Royal National Park, and, as every mile sped by, our excitement increased. The sight of our first African Elephant, in Tsavo East, was a superb moment to remember, as he stood in the scrub bush, with his gigantic ears gently flapping, and his long gleaming ivory shining in the sun. Every inch of him a majestic monarch, though certainly not one to take liberties with, as a demonstration of a charge by him is an awe-inspiring sight, with his enormous ears outspread, his head thrown back and his trunk held up on high, the whole attitude increasing his already tall height. Very different from our Ceylon Elephant who, when he demonstrates curls his trunk down towards his mouth and, being slightly smaller in stature, is not the impressive sight of the African. Our excitement knew no bounds when we saw our first huge, herd of these magnificent beasts in Amboseli. They were in a thicket of the flat-topped thorn, or " fever " trees, some stretching their trunks up to strip the bark from the trees. A few tiny babies playing around their legs, every now and then being gently chivvied by mama or auntie. When swimming in the Warden's pool in his garden at Amboseli, we watched two elephants quietly walking past about 20 yards away, with the snow-capped mountain of Kilimanjaro in the background making a picture always to be remembered.

Tsavo West gave us our first encounter with Hippo at the famous Mzima Springs. This lovely palm-studded oasis of crystal clear, blue-green water, over which on a platform erected specially for the purpose, one can film and photograph these big lumbering creatures at play or, lazily swimming, often with a calf at heel. To look down through the wonderfully clear water, and to film a mother and calf swimming under water gave me a great thrill. It was here, too, we saw the only crocodile in our four months in East Africa, lying sunning himself on the opposite bank ; he played nicely for us by

waking up and slithering down into the water.

The lythe, fleet-footed Cheetah was an animal we were longing to see, and one glorious early morning we came upon two who were enjoying a freshly killed young water-buck for breakfast. At first, only one was at the kill, the other seemed slightly nervous, standing a little apart and eyeing us somewhat suspiciously. But gradually he became more reassured and, much to our joy, decided to come up and join in the feast, which gave us a wonderful opportunity for filming. Again, on another occasion, we were able to watch a pair starting out and deploying for a hunt, though, unfortunately, we were not able to witness more than the start.

It was in Tsavo East where we made our first acquaintance with Rhino, which, to us, was an exciting moment. He was standing in fairly open country near a small bush, I think probably trying to make out what strange creature we were. We swung off the track towards him, bumping over the uneven ground, in the hopes of getting nearer for photography. But he had evidently decided whatever we were we were not nice to know, so with a snort, head up and tail erect he trotted off and disappeared into some thicker bush nearby. A few days later in an isolated part of the Park, we experienced being chased by a Rhino! We were driving along a track doing, I suppose, roughly between 15 and 20 miles per hour, when we heard a noise we could not identify. The Warden, who was driving, said " Rhino " and we promptly looked to left and right to see nothing. I then looked behind through the back window and all I could see was a large rump and jaunty tail sticking up in the air! A Rhino was pounding down behind us, so close his horn must have been right under our tow-bar, as his head, shoulders, and half his back were not even visible! We had probably disturbed him when he was quietly snoozing behind a bush close to the track.

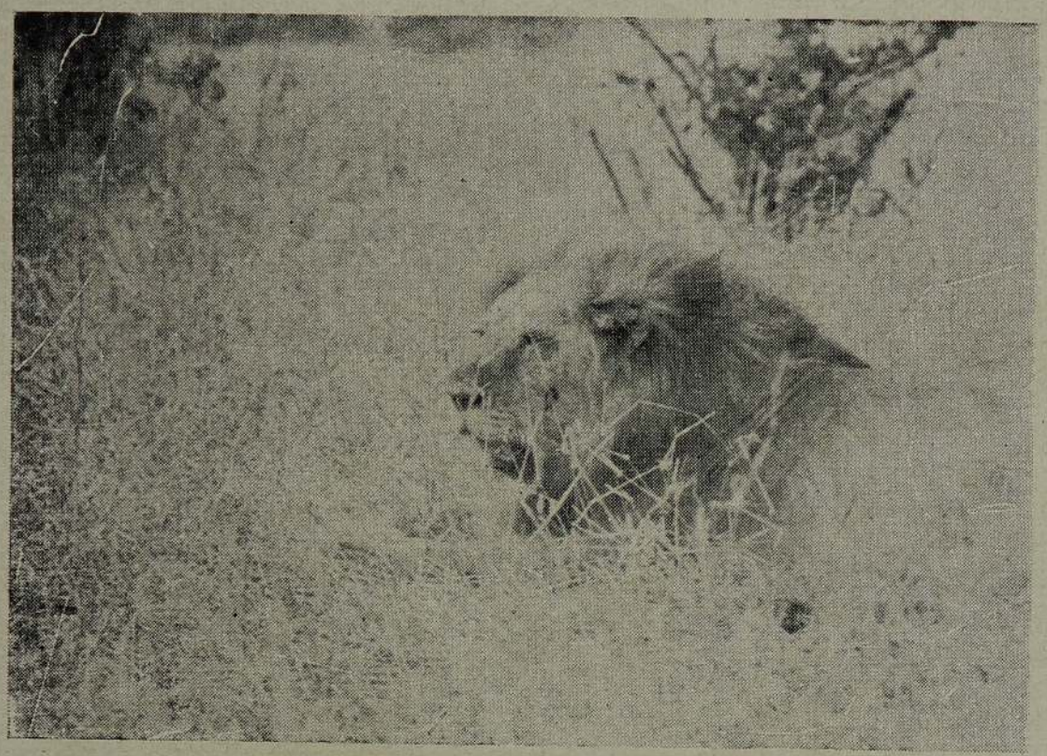
We had wonderful luck one evening when returning from being out all day, coming up the track towards us was a Ratel, or Honey Badger, a nocturnal animal very rarely seen, and, for his size, one of the fiercest of animals. He continued on up the track with his coat bristling, to within a few feet of the front of the Land Rover which we had stopped, before he turned and scuttled off into the bush.

It was in Amboseli where I lost my heart to the adorable, and fascinating little Bat-eared Foxes. These enchanting little creatures, with their enormous big ears and bright, perky little faces, live in holes or burrows in the ground. We spent most of the early part of a morning sitting by their holes waiting for them to gain confidence to come up and let us film them. Our patience was rewarded as we managed to get some good shots, both " still " and cine.

Giraffe, browsing off the tops of small trees and bushes, their long necks stretched and their prehensile lips nibbling off the young shoots, or gazing down at us with their big, long-lashed, dewy eyes, and their supercilious look, fascinated us. We gurgled with laughter at their ungainly movement when cantering, if one can call it that, with their tails curled over their rumps.

In Amboseli one day we came upon one which had been pulled down by a lioness, but which had, luckily for her, planted a forceful kick with one of her strong hind legs, on the nose of the lioness, and had managed to get away, not much the worse for the encounter except for a slight limp. But leaving a somewhat dazed looking lioness with a large patch of skin taken off the bridge of her nose, lying under a bush in the shade!

Of all the beauty and wonderfulness that was around us, it is to the Lions that goes the greatest part of our hearts. These superbly graceful, majestic animals have a quality that tugs at one's heart giving them first place in it, anyway to us. And I shall never forget the enchantment of our first acquaintance with them. Exactly four hours after landing at Nairobi Airport, we were in the Nairobi Royal National Park with the Director, in his big Buick station wagon stopped beside three



Patsy Norris

'Of all the beauty and wonder that was around us it is to the lions that goes the greatest part of our hearts'

lionesses and a young lion, who were lying dozing in the evening sun, like big cats. We sat and watched them, utterly fascinated, astounded at their being completely unconcerned over us, in spite of us being almost within reaching distance. The young lion was inquisitive, as lions are by nature, and he evidently decided we were worth investigating; so he got up and started patting the tyres with his paws. It was then we decided his inquisitiveness might lead to greater things and it was better to move off.

One morning at Seronera, in the Serengetti National Park in Tanganyika, we had the incredible luck to watch three lionesses setting out and deploying for a kill. We sat in the Land Rover utterly enthralled, filming when we could. They worked as a team, the leader gradually working the quarry, in this instance three Topi, up towards where the other two lionesses were sitting watching, a certain distance apart. They then gradually moved nearer, slowly closing the distance, and then the leader made her charge. But luck was against her; as she was actually in her charge she caught sight of one of the Park's vehicles on a track a bit further up, which made her stop dead and give up the chase, and then one by one they filed passed us back to where the rest of the pride was waiting in the shade. This was a pride of ten in which there were two small cubs, and mama was one of the huntresses.

That evening we came upon the same pride again, and watched, though were not able to film, mama kill a small Thomson's Gazelle which she lugged back for her cubs, stopping on the way to lay the carcase down and rest after her exertions. As she was resting the other two lionesses thought they would have a share of the spoils. But their attempt was foiled and they were chased off by a snarling, infuriated mother guarding the supper for her two hungry little cubs.

Both, in Seronera and Amboseli, lions were round and through the camps nearly every night, and we used to just revel at the sound of their "singing" or roaring, as we lay in bed.

One glorious night, in a remote part of Tsavo East, we spent sleeping out under the stars. Sitting, eating our supper beside a blazing fire, this our only light, and glad of the warmth as it was quite cold, was, to us, sheer heaven. During the night we awoke to the sound of lions roaring in the near distance. This was most awe-inspiring as it was the first time we had heard it. We also had a moment of qualms when we heard a strange, rustling noise coming from between our two, low camp beds and immediately thought of Safari Ants! Our torch revealed

Patsy Norris

'We spent the night sleeping under the stars'

sure enough, a long column of big black ants which we hastily tried to stem and turn, luckily with success. The next morning the Warden, who was with us, told us that they were Soldier Ants, and not the dreaded "siafu". During breakfast, we saw a Rhino not far away, offering the possibility of some good photography. So into the Land Rover we scrambled and set off towards him. We stopped the car, and the Warden then proceeded to call him up by imitating their calls. This had the most wonderful effect, and he came ambling up to within 12 feet of the car, giving us the most splendid opportunity for close up photography. At that close range he must have caught the scent of the dreaded human, and with a snort he wheeled round and jauntily trotted off to a safer distance, again to turn round and have a look at us.

At Ngorongoro Crater in the Serengetti National Park, up at around 8,000 feet where the Safari Lodge is situated overlooking the stupendous, breath-taking view of the Crater, with the floor about 2,000 feet below, it seemed strange to find a herd of Elephant and a large herd of very fine Buffalo.

The Serengetti National Park in Tanganyika, is famous for its fantastically large concentrations of plains game, Wildebeeste and Zebra, especially in the migration seasons.

We had the most wonderful luck while we were at Seronera, to be taken up by Micheal Grzimek in his plane in which he was carrying out an aerial survey of the game concentration, and in which, recently, he so tragically crashed to his death, caused by a Vulture hitting the plane. This was a chance for us to do some aerial photography of these fantastic concentrations. The plane was a Dornier, single engine, and had stalling speed of 18 miles per hour, enabling one to fly at a very low altitude. Micheal took us up for an hour's flight, a most thrilling and wonderful experience and one I would not have missed for the world. To fly over the bush and see the utterly unbelievable concentrations of Wildebeeste, is a scene to remain in our memories for always.

It was at Seronera where we saw our first Eland. These wonderful, big Antelope, are, unfortunately, so shy we were never able to get within filming distance of them, but which had us enthralled just watching them. To begin with we were quite dazed by all the different Antelope we saw, and our minds in a whirl trying to remember all the different

species, but gradually we got them sorted out and by the end felt quite familiar with so many of them.

Our first view of Ostriches was a thrill, the cock birds with their black and white plumage and bright pink legs in the breeding season, reminded us of ballet dancers with long, cold red legs, as they bounced along with their great long strides; the hen birds, being slightly smaller and brown, looking rather drab in comparison.

Our four months spent almost entirely in the National Parks, sped by all too fast, and it was with very great sadness that we had to leave.

Our hearts indeed, have been left behind in the African bush, and our greatest wish is that we have only said "Kwaheri" for a short time to it, and our many friends, there, both human and animal, and that before long we may be able to say "Jambo" once more.

Cameras and Binoculars for the Naturalist

By D. L. EBBELS

THERE must be many enthusiastic watchers of the wild who feel they would like to take a closer look at the inhabitants of the wilderness or who would like to keep some record of what they see. It is to those who are for the first time considering the purchase of binoculars or a camera, and who are undecided and perhaps somewhat bewildered by the number of makes and models on the market, that this article is principally addressed.

Binoculars are probably the most essential piece of a wild life watcher's optical equipment, and at first sight it is natural to suppose that a high degree of magnification is desirable. However, for general purposes this is not always an advantage. A magnification of more than × 10 has several disadvantages, in that to get a reasonable brightness value, the diameter of the objective (front) lens has to be very large. This makes the binocular heavy, and it is also practically impossible to hold it steady enough for comfortable and detailed viewing. The most useful instrument for a naturalist is one that is light, has a moderate magnification (about ×6 or ×8), a high brightness value, and is easy to manipulate. In the latter respect, a centre focussing wheel, that operates both the eyepieces simultaneously is, I feel, much superior to the separate focussing of each eyepiece in turn. Those models with centre focussing usually have one eyepiece adjustable for the convenience of people whose eyesight is not uniform.

Marked on most binoculars are two numbers with the multiplication sign between them, such as "6 × 30". The former number is the degree of magnification, and the latter is the diameter in millimetres of the objective lens. If the former is divided into the latter, the brightness value of 5 is arrived at. Thus a 7 × 50 binocular with a brightness value of about 7 would give a brighter image under the same light conditions than one of 6 × 30.

Nearly all models now produced have coated lenses and prisms. The advantage of this coating (usually magnesium fluoride), which gives the characteristic bluish "bloom" to the glass, is to diminish loss of light by reflection from the surfaces of the lenses and prisms. When a ray of light strikes an uncoated glass surface, a small proportion of the light (depending on the refractive index of the glass) is reflected. The remaining 94 or 95% which enters the glass again suffers a similar loss on its emergence and this is repeated at each successive glass-air surface, so that the light which eventually forms the image in a system having eight such surfaces is only some 60% of that which reached the objective. If these surfaces were coated, the light loss would be cut down to only about 15% and thus would

allow 85% of the light to pass through and form a brighter image.

Contrary to when buying a camera, it is not really so much more preferable to buy a new binocular than a second-hand one, since they are of a more robust construction, with not so much mechanism to go wrong. However, one should be careful, and a model by one of the famous manufacturers, such as Leitz, Zeiss, Ross, Hensoldt, etc., is to be preferred. There

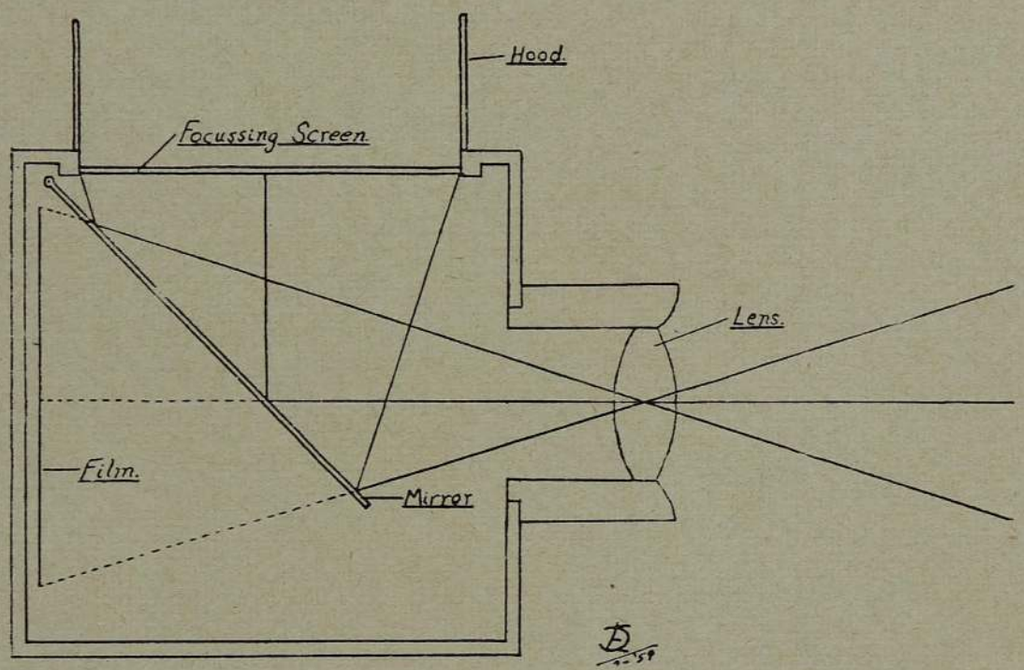


Diagram of the basic principles of the Single Lens Reflex. The mirror automatically flips up at the moment of exposure.

are other excellent and rather less expensive glasses on the market, however, including some of Japanese origin which are available in Colombo at a remarkably low price, though they are inclined to be rather heavy.

The following points, which should be kept in mind when purchasing a second-hand instrument, may be of interest. Examine the binocular and see that it has been kept clean and has no obvious signs of rough handling or optical defects. The outsides of the lens mounts may look worn, but can easily be re-blackened. Next, the lenses should be most carefully scrutinized for scratches—which will usually only occur on the outside surfaces—and for signs of fungal attack. The latter is especially prevalent in the tropics, and a bad attack may ruin the lenses. It is easiest to examine the lenses by looking through them from the wrong end, when any dirt or dust on the inner surfaces can more easily be seen. If there is fungus on a lens it will appear as a patch of translucent, branching mycelium, and if not checked at a very early stage, will etch the soft optical glass and mar the definition. Keep any optical instrument in a dry place—preferably in a desiccator—and have them overhauled by a *reliable* optician every few years. Better not have them overhauled at all than give them to other than a first-class dealer.

The attitude of those who wish to make a photographic record of what they see can be of two sorts. Firstly that of the naturalist-photographer, and secondly that of the photographer-naturalist. They differ in considering either photography or natural history of paramount importance. The former will merely wish to obtain a satisfactory record of what he sees, but for the latter it will be the picture that is all important. And while one will be content with good pictures of not much larger than full plate size, the other will want to make exhibition prints of a size which, for the best results, will demand a negative size of not smaller than $2\frac{1}{4} \times 2\frac{1}{4}$ inches.

I do not think there is any doubt that those cameras having through-the-lens focussing and viewing systems are the most suited to wild life photography; though of course much good work can be done with the precision miniatures

such as the Leica and the Contax, and also with the twin-lens reflexes such as the Rolleiflex.

The cameras having through-the-lens viewing and focussing systems are of two main types; (*a*) those where the picture may be composed and focussed on a ground-glass screen at the rear of the camera and which usually employ plates or cut film, and (*b*) those of the single-lens reflex type, usually employing the smaller kinds of roll film, and where the image is deflected by means of a mirror onto a focussing screen at the top of the camera. Cameras of type (*a*) are mostly of the field camera class, being very bulky, heavy, and rather unwieldy. All disadvantages for the naturalist who may have to transport his camera for miles over difficult terrain. Type (*b*) cameras are mainly quite small and are extraordinarily versatile. The Hasselblad, Exakta, and the Edixa Reflex are representative of this type.

These cameras have one enormous advantage over those employing different viewing and image-forming systems in that they are entirely free from parallax,—i.e. what one sees in the viewfinder, be the subject at 2 inches or infinity, will be exactly what is recorded on the film. Incidentally, when operating from inside a hide, these cameras have another advantage in that the hole in the hide wall need be only large enough to admit the camera lens, whereas with other cameras it must be large enough to enable the viewfinder to get a clear picture of the subject also. The objection that may be brought against the visual focussing camera is that this focussing is rather slow and is not as positive as focussing with the aid of a split-image rangefinder. I do not think, though, that this outweighs the advantages. One other thing that may be found a nuisance when working with very shy subjects at close range, is that nearly all the single-lens reflexes (excepting the Hasselblad) are fitted with focal-plane shutters, which are apt to be rather noisy.

For successful nature photography, a camera having interchangeable lenses is almost essential for the best results. There are many advantages that accrue from being able to use lenses of various focal lengths. Firstly one can include as much or as little of the subject as desired without changing one's view-point. Secondly the actual size of the image of an object on the film can be varied, and thirdly, the relative proportions of the objects in the picture can be controlled within quite wide limits by the choice of a suitable lens *and* viewpoint. Also a removable lens is most useful when photographing very small objects, such as insects, since by interposing extension tubes between the lens and camera body, the image of the subject may be magnified considerably.

It is emphatically better to purchase a camera new than second-hand (and even more so with a cine-camera). New cameras, however, especially those suitable for wild life photography, are inclined to be most expensive. When purchasing a camera second-hand, my remarks under binoculars will apply in the main. There are also other points to check, such as examining the bellows for signs of wear, particularly at the corners and where they adjoin the camera body. The shutter is difficult to check without taking a trial film. It should be tried at all speeds, and the negatives should be carefully examined, for scratches as well as for exposure. If the shutter is of the focal plane type, the edges of the negative should be checked for cut-off—a fading away of the picture towards one side of the negative, indicating uneven exposure. If the shutter is faulty this may happen at the higher speeds.

There is a great satisfaction in photographing wild life, large or small, and a good picture of an animal can be more life-like and a better record than some portion of its anatomy returned from the taxidermist.

They're Nice Creatures with Nasty Habits

By MADELEINE TILL

(In "Saanich Peninsula and Gulf Islands Review", December, 1958)

I HAVE always been one to make haste slowly. After 12 years my curiosity finally overcame me. A few months ago I borrowed a Who's Who, and learned all I wanted to know about the connections, background and habits of my friends. The Blue Book told me that they own the aristocratic title of Sciurus Hudsonicus, *alias* the Red Squirrel, Pine Squirrel or Chickaree. I did my snooping in H. E. Anthony's Field Book of North American Mammals.

The squirrels are distributed over most of forested North America with slight variations in size, colour and pelage (fur, to you and me). The species known as the Vancouver Red Squirrel is found on Vancouver Island, the coast regions of British Columbia and as far north as Sitka.

They are omniverous little beasts and feed on nuts, seeds, buds, berries, some insects and animal food as birds' eggs and fledglings. Chickarees are forest squirrels and are not found out of timbered areas. They are active throughout the year and do not hibernate. If winter weather temporarily drives them into shelter, they come out with the return of sunshine. As they store up food in times of abundance for the winter season, it is thought that the chickaree may be an important reforestation agent because of this habit, since the seeds which the animals fail to dig up will sprout under favourable conditions. (Unlike the ancient family Elephas Gigas, they have rotten memories).

Red squirrels are diurnal and do not move about at night. They have several distinctive calls, a harsh, scolding continuous chatter, or whicker, when an enemy is in sight, and a loud call, not continuous, but given once or twice and repeated at intervals when the squirrel is not greatly excited. The home nest is usually in a tree cavity, a decayed hollow or an old woodpecker's nest, or is built of twigs and leaves upon some convenient crotch in the limb. Chikarees are good swimmers and have been known to cross bodies of water a mile in extent.

Mr. Anthony goes on to say that the unquenchable curiosity of these squirrels makes them a conspicuous mammal. Upon the appearance of a man or dog they begin a violent harangue and scold and chatter for long periods of time. Instead of being shy and secretive like most wild mammals, they attract attention and seem to feel that nothing on the ground will be able to catch them in the trees.

During our first summer here I noticed a squirrel drinking water from the bird bath. A friend told me of their weakness for apple cores. Not only did I give them apple cores but peanuts as well. The good news was flashed along the grapevine and soon we discovered there were two squirrels. I regret to state that their table manners would bar them from mingling with the elite. To try and keep the peace we had to fix two shelves on adjacent fir trees growing beside the workshop. Two brown bundles of wickedness would sit on their haunches nibbling at their rations, and cast withering glances at each other, their bodies quivering with rage. Invariably one would finish first. There would be a flying leap across, and then a glorious free-for-all.

One morning after a night of rain and high winds, we awoke to find the aforementioned trees sprawled against the roof of the workshop. We could not tolerate such indolence, and eventually, after much toil and trouble, they were removed. The squirrels' shelves were fastened to the side of the workshop, below the eaves. Now they had both shelter and security. Could they possibly ask for more? I'm telling

you, the twisters don't stop at murder to satisfy their appetites.

One year, we had three chickarees, whom we called Erica, Bully and Baby Snooks. Snooks was the sleek brown rascal who stole the fledglings from a nest in the rose bush. I hated all squirrels after this and decided to banish them. Their peanuts and apples were stopped, but they followed me round the garden, and looked at me with puzzled faces. Oh well, I thought after a day or two, one can't alter nature. Cats eat squirrels who eat birds who eat worms who eat . . . Well anyway, the squirrels were re-instated.

Some years ago they spent the winter in the woodshed. At the sound of my step two brown heads would pop up from opposite ends of the shed. I would throw them food, and when they weren't looking, I would guiltily collect a load from the centre of the pile. When summer came we found the nests. They were composed of fibre from sacks, paper, dogs' hairs, cotton wool and sweepings from the vacuum cleaner.

One day I heard a clamorous chorus of robins out at the back. The squirrel was climbing down a tree with a young robin in his mouth. I hurled cones and twigs at him until he dropped the bird. It was unharmed. The other baby birds probably leaned over too far in order to watch the fun, and they all fell out of the nest. We lined a pot with straw and suspended it from a branch. They must have enjoyed their first air trip, because they all jumped out again. They were half-grown birds, and we decided they would be safe tucked into some long grass near the vegetable garden, where the mother found them. We watched their progress from day to day.

The Skipper can testify that squirrels are definitely carnivorous. Bully was puttering around on the ground one morning, hunting for nuts which might have fallen from the shelves. Presently he came upon a shoe. He must have thought it was a funny kind of nut and wondered what was inside it, because he stopped and pondered for a moment. I watched the pantomime from the kitchen. The Skipper stood very still and waited to see what the dear little creature would do. Bully crawled cautiously up the shoe, and . . . fee-fi-fo-fum he smelled the blood of an Englishman! Suddenly the air was rent with loud cries, the Skipper broke into a wild dance, whirling like a dervish, and shook his leg violently . . . Bully had bitten his ankle.

We have two squirrels now, one is so tame that sometimes she sits on the back steps and waits for me, then scampers across to her perch and takes the nuts from my hand, while the other streaks away and hides until I have gone. They come from the woods at my call, which resembles the cry of a pileated woodpecker. In Ceylon, the chipmunks, tiny creatures with three dark stripes down their backs, have a similar call. The chickarees usually answer with a stream of high, scolding chatter, which might mean "How dare you address the Sciurus Hudsonicus in an outlandish tongue?" But they come. The way to a squirrel's heart is through his stomach. They are really not very different from Unohoo, are they, girls?

BIRDS AT WALDEN POND

An abode without birds is like meat without seasoning; but such, *Thoreau* said, was not his abode at Walden Pond. "I was not only nearer to some of those birds which commonly frequent the garden and orchard, but those wilder and more thrilling songsters of the forest which never, or rarely, surrounded a villager. I found myself suddenly neighbour to the birds, not by having imprisoned one, but having caged myself near them."

DOGS AND COCKROACHES

By DR. LUCIAN DE ZILWA, M.D.

NOT many people are aware of the great risk run by dogs killing or eating cockroaches. My first experience of a death was when a pedigreed fox terrier bitch, apparently in the pink of condition, began to vomit blood just after a hearty lunch, and died within half an hour. I thought she had a gastric ulcer which had eroded a blood vessel ; but, on the lining of the gullet I found a tumour like a cherry, which I cut open, and found to be full of worms. There was another cyst which had ruptured. I sent the oesophagus, trachaea and lungs to the Veterinary Research Institute, and was told it was a case of *Spirocerca infection*, which Professor Mc Gaughey had investigated, and proved to be conveyed through cockroaches.

My second case was that of a bitch one year old, who was in purdah. A plate of food had been placed in the kennel at 8 p.m. I went to the kennel half an hour later, and found the plate empty, but the dog had just died, the body being quite warm. The general opinion was that she must have been bitten by a snake. I sent the carcass to the Veterinary Research Institute for a post-mortem, and they reported that death was due to rupture of the aorta, the chest being full of blood. No cause was stated, but no doubt it was Spirocerca.

I have just had the third case, a spirited fox terrier ten months old. Until noon on Thursday, March 12, he was full of life and play, and he ate his food. At tea time, as usual, he came to me and put his fore paws on my knees. Immediately his head fell backwards, and he was unconscious. In five minutes he recovered and walked away, obviously ill. The explanation, as I discovered later by a post-mortem, was that at the moment he put his paws on my lap, his right carotid artery ruptured just above its origin from the common carotid, and therefore the brain was suddenly and momentarily deprived of blood. It was a slow leakage of blood into the tissues, and caused a swelling on the right side of the neck, which I could not understand. He ate his food that night but was very quiet.

Next morning, thinking his unconsciousness had been a reflex nervous condition due to worms, I gave him two drams of Antepar. He would not eat anything, but he drank water. There being no result he was given an ounce of castor oil at 3 p.m. At five he was spoon fed with an egg beaten up, and again at night. I had him in my bedroom, and he kept groaning at intervals. I thought it was " stomach-ache " but it was pain in the neck, due to increased tension of bleeding into an enclosed space.

He was taken to the veterinary hospital in the morning. He stopped groaning, and we thought the medicine was wonderful, but in reality the neck-pain was relieved by the tension being diminished through the imprisoned blood having tracked downwards along the artery and begun to pour freely into the chest cavity. Now a new symptom puzzled me. He refused to lie down, even when placed on a cushion. He stood for hours. I spoon-fed him with a beaten egg at 8 p.m. I left him standing, with no response of a wagging tail on being spoken to. I came back half an hour later to give him medicine. He was lying down, dead.

On Sunday morning I did the post-mortem. With the fixed idea of a " stomach-ache", I opened the abdomen. All the organs were normal, but absolutely " bloodless". I opened the chest, and there was all the blood, in serum and in clots. The lump in the neck was an extravasation of blood. There can be no doubt that the root cause was Spirocerca.

The Past History of the Gal Oya Valley

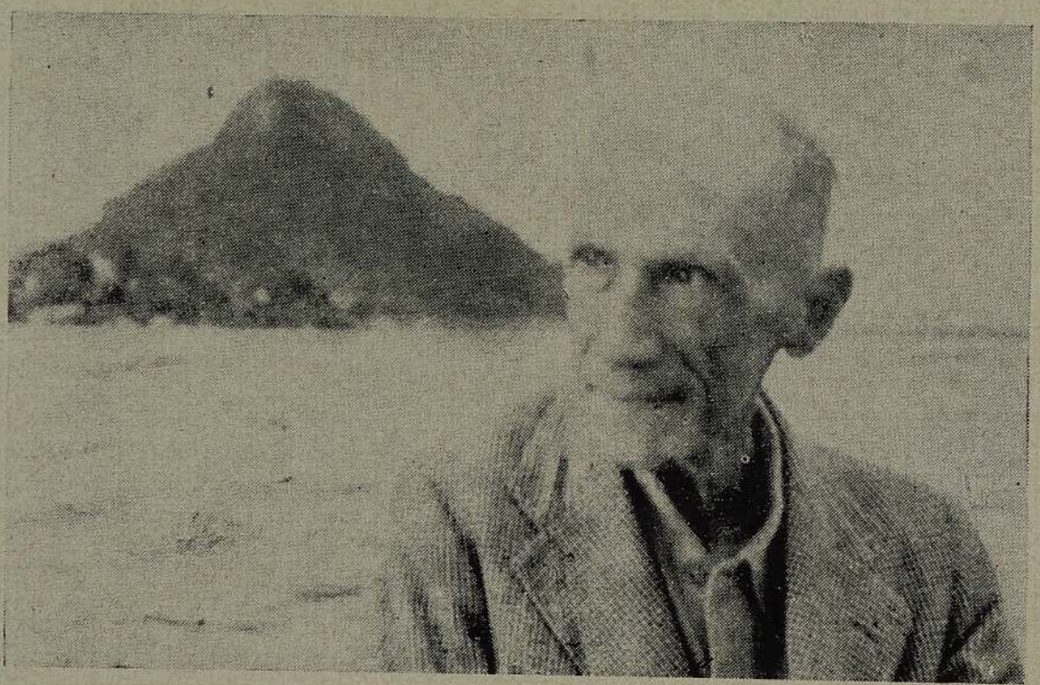
THE COASTAL BELT AREA

By Dr. ROMAN W. SZECHOWYCZ

Chief Forest Officer, Gal Oya Development Board.

THE coastal belt of the Gal Oya Valley presents a picture of green, red and white. The green would be the paddy fields, the red colour would represent the people who work these fields, dressed mostly in bright red trousers, the working dress of the Muslims, and the white would be the snow-white birds (egrets, etc.) which invariably are seen feeding in these fields.

Even a realist and business-minded person seeing this scenery will admit that this combination of colours matches beautifully and that this scenery if one has time to stop and observe, has the wonderful ability to bring Man closer to Mother Nature, and peace even to the most disturbed mind.



R. W. Szechowycz

The first Collector of 'Tales of Old' in the Gal Oya Valley, Dr. R. L. Spittel, and the Inginiyagala Rock—the Symbol of the Gal Oya Scheme. His life dream has been to better the living conditions of the Veddahs and other dwellers of the Valley

This area is populated by Tamils and Muslims and its history is connected closely with the history of the Muslim population of Ceylon.

Somewhere in the 5th century A.D. this area witnessed a bloody struggle between two Tamil clans, the Mukkuwars and Thimilars, traces of which are preserved in names of many places, such as in Santhurukondan ("he killed his enemy") where it is said that the Thamilars' chieftain was killed by Mukkuwars: in Vantharamoolai ("Corner to rest") where Mukkuwars rested after the battle: and in Panchankerney a historical iron tree is still to be seen on which tree, the wife (Pattu) of the Thimilars chieftain was hanged.

During the struggle the Muslim population supported the Mukkuwars and as reward, the settlement Eravur (about 8 miles to the north of Batticaloa) was given to them.

The question as to when the Ceylon Muslims immigrated to Ceylon is a subject of much speculation, but it is an indisputable fact that the Arabs arrived in the Island as they had done in all other parts of Asia and Africa long before Mohammed proclaimed his faith. According to one belief the Moors of Ceylon (the name "Moor" was given to them by Portuguese, who found them very similar in appearance to the Moors of Morocco) were Arabs driven from

Arabia by Mohammed as a punishment for their cowardice at the battle of Chod. According to another, they fled from Arabia in the 8th century from the tyranny of the Kalif Abual Melek Ben Merivan—who forced them to accept the Muslim faith. The Dutch authorities have maintained that the Moors of Ceylon are of Malabar origin and were subsequently converted to the Muslim faith and that the coastal Muslims arrived in Ceylon somewhere in the 14th century.

The Ceylon Moors are most probably descendants of Arab sailors, merchants, adventurers and pirates who were for a long time masters of the Eastern trade and who inter-married with the local inhabitants of this Island.

Just before the arrival of the Portuguese to Ceylon (1505 A.D.) the influence of Muslims in Ceylon's internal affairs was slowly but steadily increasing. This is not surprising as they were an ambitious, courageous and adventurous people while the indigenous Sinhalese were cultivators wedded to the soil and governed by the restrictions of Buddhism.

The arrival of the Portuguese, themselves born traders and adventurers, checked the expansion of the Moors, many of them left the West of Ceylon and re-settled in the East coast increasing the population of the area now within the authority of the Gal Oya Development Board.

Referring to Muslims, Tennent (" Ceylon," page 609) writes :

> "The appearance of the Portuguese in Ceylon at this critical period, served not only to check the career of the Moors, but to extinguish the independence of the native princes : and looking to the facility with which the former had previously superseded the Malabars and were fast acquiring an ascendancy over the Sinhalese chiefs, it is not an unreasonable conjecture, but for this timely appearance of a Christian power in the Island of Ceylon, instead of possession of the British crown, might at the present day have been a Mohammedan kingdom under the rule of some Arabian adventurer."

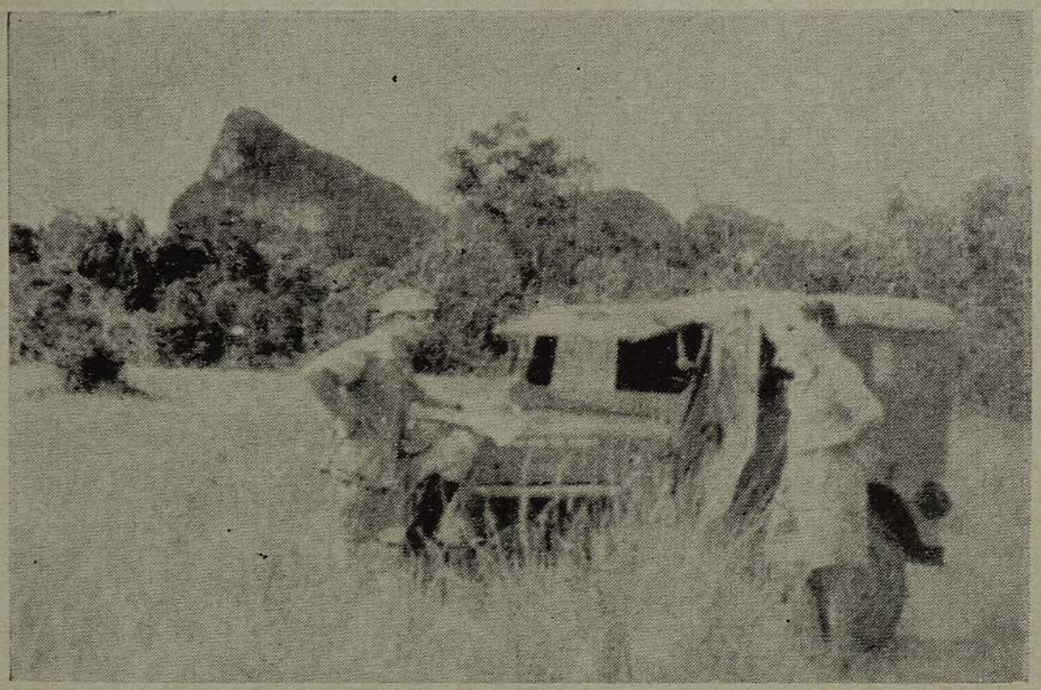
This is a matter of conjecture. But, seeing the fate of such countries as Malaya, Pakistan, Indonesia, etc., where the Muslim religion had suppressed all previous faiths and cultures, there is every reason to believe that Ceylon would not have been an exception. Future historians will have to solve the question whether the present independence of Ceylon is only the result of previous occupation of this Island by a foreign power.

The inclination towards such an interpretation already exists. Dr. C. C. Mendis in his article " Is 1505 the dividing line in the Ceylon History ?" writes :

> " The chief result of the arrival of Portuguese in Ceylon was that South Indian expansion ceased to threaten this island and the growing Muslim influence received a set-back from which it never recovered. Had the Portuguese not come to this island, Ceylon might have become a portion of South India or like Java come under the sway of the Muslims."

It is believed that many Muslims of this area are converted Tamils and in the past they very often have married the Tamil girls. Both Tamils and Muslims in the area have indentical customs except those connected with religious rites, but Muslims, though Tamil-speaking, are not " Tamil conscious," thus creating a separate community. For religious purposes they use the Arabic script. The Sinhalese call them " Marakkala minissu " (Mariners) thus recalling their old profession. The other name often used by Sinhalese is " Sambankariar." The Tamils call them " Sonaher," most probably due to the fact that Ceylon Muslims are " Soonni " (supporters of the Omar's line to the Caliphate.)

The Tamil population of this area belongs mostly to three clans : the Vellars who constitute about half the Tamil population (the name originated from the Tamil word " Velanmai " which means paddy cultivators which most of them are) ; the Mukkuwars which according to the tradition arrived in Jaffna from India somewhere in the 4th century and due to tribal rivalry in the north moved into the Eastern



R. W. Szechowycz

'Friar's Hood', the highest hill in the Eastern Province is within the area of authority of the Gal Oya Board. Author on inspection

Province, where joining the Muslims they fought the Thimilars ; and the Karawas who are the best fishermen of the coastal belt.

Many of the settlements in the coastal belt at a time when road transport was still undeveloped were of importance to the area ; some of them have a most interesting past. A few of them are listed below :

Arugam Bay.—A seaport of the past with a safe anchorage for eight months only. Lost importance completely when access roads were constructed. The closeness of the Panama intermediate zone makes this spot a holiday resort for sportsmen.

Akkaraipattu is a Muslim settlement surrounded by smiling paddy fields. It is of quite recent origin and it gained importance after the D.R.O's office come into existence. A strange incident occurred there in 1951 which is worth recording. One morning a Muslim woman went out of her house to fetch water from the well and saw an animal. Believing that it was a cow, she threw a stick at it. When she discovered that it was a large leopard, she shouted out and the leopard, probably more frightened than her, took shelter in the house, the door of which was immediately closed. The Police were summoned and one of the constables climbed on the roof and made an opening in the cadjan to look inside. The leopard jumped at him and was able to reach his hand which was badly injured. The leopard was subsequently shot by the Police and the constable sent to hospital. At present, after the development started, I doubt if there are still leopards in the vicinity of this town.

Batticaloa.—Its original name " Madakalapu " (muddy lagoon) indicates that the harbour in this lagoon was never very deep. The lagoon is famous for its singing fish. The island on which the old Dutch fort was built was called " Puliyantivu " or " Island of Tamarind." So named probably after many tamarind trees that may have been there at the time. The name " Batticaloa " was given it by the Dutch in 16th century.

Eravur is a Muslim settlement awarded to them by the Tamil clan of Mukkuwars.

Kattankudi is one of the oldest Muslim settlements 3 miles to the south of Batticaloa. According to tradition it was a Muslim settlement even before Muslims have settled at Eravur. Named after a Vedda (Kattan).

Kallar.—" Kottai-kallar " lies in the north and " Periya-kallar " in the south of the

lagoon. It may have once been a port and the ruins of a Dutch fort can still be seen. The lagoon is crossed by a causeway. It is populated by Tamils.

Kalmunai is populated both by Tamils and Muslims. It gained importance when the Gal Oya Scheme started. The Tamil name for this town is " Pandiruppu." As there is a town in the coast of India named " Pandina," many believe that the first settlers to this area came from this Indian town. There is an ancient temple " Thirovpathy Aman " where an annual fire-walking ceremony is conducted. It is believed that this temple was built by a Pandia Saint.

Karaitivu lies 27 miles to the south of Batticaloa where the road to Amparai-Inginiyagala branches. There is an ancient Konnai Aman temple. The name " Karaitivu " is derived from "Kar-kattan"-tiu " which means waiting for the rain clouds for cultivation. Mr. Swamy Vipulanandar, the organiser of the Rama Krishna Mission Schools in Ceylon was born in this place. It is populated by Tamils.

Kattangithurai.—Two miles from Kalmunai town has a ferry across the Batticaloa lagoon joining Kalmunai with Chavalakadai. A Dutch official Mr. Burman is said to have built paddy stores at this place and so given origin to its name as " Kittanki", meaning paddy collection in Tamil.

Mandur is a village on the shores of the lagoon and lying south of Batticaloa. It is named after " Mandu " trees growing there. It has the ancient temple of God Sri Skandan. The annual fire-walking ceremony takes place on the full moon day of July. It is a Tamil village. In the past the lagoon was famous for its man-eating crocodiles and Tennent when making his " Cross Country " journey in the middle of the last century has reported to have seen them in thousands. Somewhere in 1949, a very large specimen was captured on a hook (using as bait beef on the hook which was tied to a large number of small strings so that the crocodile couldn't bite them, as the strings sank between its teeth). At present occasionally small specimens can be seen very rarely.

Malwatte is a settlement 4 miles from Amparai. It is said that this village was once a Royal Garden. The present town of Amparai sprang up only after the commencement of the Gal Oya Scheme. The name " Amparai " is however a misnomer. Old documents used the name " Ambare " and so it is named even at present by Muslims and Tamils.

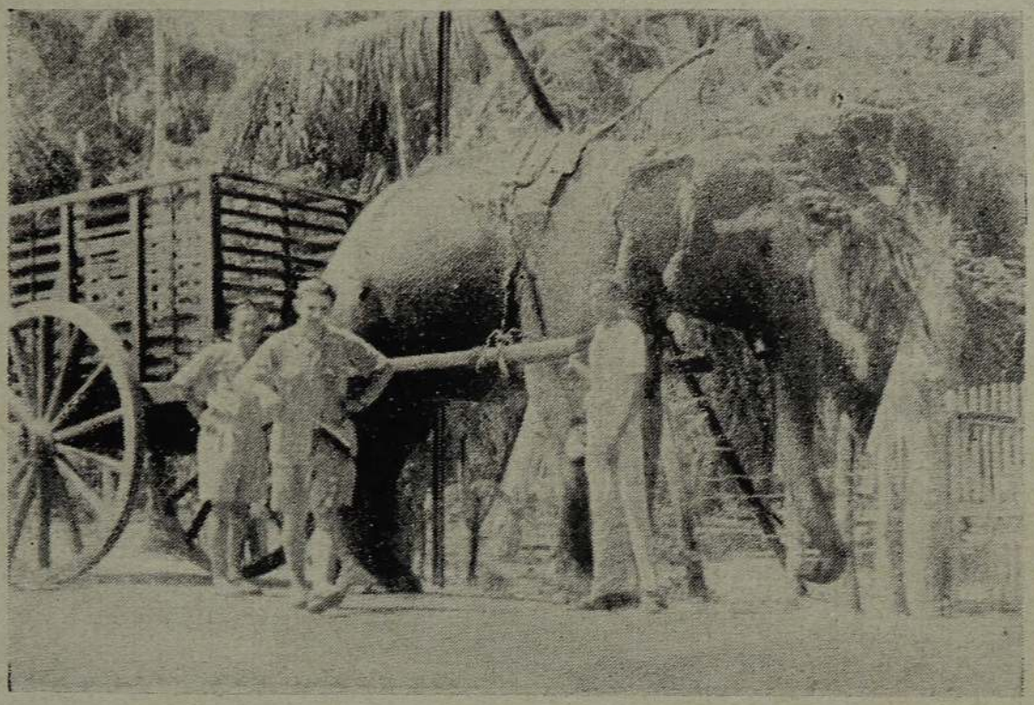
Nadukadu is an area close to Malwatte. The name is said to have originated from a Tamil proverb which says that with time a "Nadu" (fertile land) turns into " Kadu " (jungle). This area has most probably met with this fate which until recently was covered with thorny jungle.

Palukamam is a village 16 miles to the south of Batticaloa with a sacred temple where annually a fire-walking ceremony is conducted on the day of the new moon in August. It is populated with Tamils and it is believed that in the past, this was the residence of Kandyan Chieftains.

Panchankerney is a settlement where the historical iron tree from which the wife of a Thimilars' chieftain was hanged exists.

Panama.—" Panamapattu " was a part of the Uva Kingdom till the middle of the 18th century when it was handed over by Sinhalese king to the Dutch. The belief exists that the Sinhalese kings have travelled to the East coast across the present watershed of the Senanayake Samudra. A tomb of a king's horse (which died during one of such journeys) is seen closer to the village Alupitiya and it is believed that one king had killed a man-eating crocodile in the Gal Oya river.

Sammanthurai was once a Tamil settlement which within living memory changed completely into a Muslim settlement. The name originated most probably from the fact that



R. W. Szechowycz

Coconuts, etc., in the Coastal Belt are often transported in 'Elephant Carts'.

there was in existence a ferry across the now completely silted lagoon. " Sampan " means Muslim, " Thurai " means port.

Santhurukondan (He killed his enemy).—According to tradition, the name originated from the fact that the Thimilar chieftain was killed at this place by the Mukkuwars and Muslims in a battle. It has a Tamil population.

Thampilovil is a Tamil settlement with an ancient temple. Tradition has it that Kannakai, when she was driven out of Seethawake resided here and built a temple.

Tirukkovil is a Tamil settlement with a temple from which the place gets its name. (" Tirukovil " means " Temple turned "). It is said that this temple was initially facing the north and had on its own turned, and is now facing the sea.

Vantharamoolai.—" A corner to rest." According to tradition, the name originated from the fact that the Mukkuwars rested there, after the battle with the Thimilars. It is populated by Tamils.

I have attempted in this cursory review to put before the reader some data from my notes recorded in the course of my duties and from information I have gathered talking to people of this area. No claim is made whatsoever that this review is a perfect one, but is given rather to encourage others to pay more attention to tales of old and to collect local traditions and data of the past often hidden in names of places, villages, etc.

Attempts of this nature will not only serve as a fruitful and interesting hobby, but will also help to unveil events in our ancient history now hidden by the passage of time.

MONGOLIAN WILD HORSE

The Mongolian Horse is the last species of the true wild horse surviving in the world. At one time, it roamed the plains of Central Asia in vast numbers, but today there remain but a few small herds located in certain areas of the Mongolian Desert. There may be more of these horses in captivity than living in the wild today. With a view to adding to what is known about the species, the conditions in which it lives, its behaviour and rate of reproduction, it is planned to keep a precise record of each individual animal in captivity, in which every detail would be noted (such as breeding, span of life, etc.). The record would be established on the lines of the European Bison Pedigree Book.

International Bulletin.

Elephant Noosing

By S. V. O. SOMANADER,
Adapted from an article in The Sunday Times

THE Times carried an interesting story of how Seeni Panikkan, Irakkamam's "elder-leader of elephant-catchers," captured, with his assistants, a young elephant during an effort to chase away a herd of 67 elephants that has been causing much damage to the sugar plantation in the Gal-Oya Valley.

S. V. O. Somanader

Seeni Panikkan

I have known Seeni Panikkan for many years, and some time ago. I had an interesting chat with him about the art of noosing elephants.

More than 70 years old now and of medium height, this gaunt shikari told me that he had over 50 years experience in elephant-noosing, and he believed that he held the highest record in Ceylon for the number of elephants noosed by any single person.

I asked him how many elephants he had noosed in all? "Not less than 400," was the reply. "I noosed my first elephant off Amparai Tank when I was barely 18 years old." He showed me his dwarfed thumb which was once bitten by an enraged elephant during a thrilling noosing adventure.

"What training did you receive before you noosed the first one at so young an age?" I inquired.

"During my early teens," he said, "I used to accompany the older panikkans of my generation, but they drove me away as I was too young. But so keen was the thrill of elephant-noosing that I followed them on the sly, and helped them in small ways."

During his best days he earned quite a lot of money, as the demand for elephants for export and even for local work was very great. The Mudalali who employed him and his assistants, paid them at the rate of Rs. 50, or more, per cubit of height, so that a young elephant standing six feet at the shoulder brought them Rs. 300.

During certain seasons, they noosed five or six elephants every month, so that sometimes their monthly income averaged over Rs. 1,000.

"That is the gross income," he explained, "After deducting what we had spent on equipment, food and other necessities, the nett earnings had to be divided between me and the other members of the party, about a dozen or more."

"Do you depend on elephant-noosing for your sole income?" I asked.

"No," he replied, "we cannot afford to do that. The occupation is seasonal. Besides, we may not always meet with success. I am a paddy cultivator and supplement my income

by noosing elephants. That has helped me not only to keep clear of debt, but to buy more land. My father-in-law, brother-in-law and many other relatives such as my assistant, Kalendar Lebbe, are all agriculturist-panikkans like myself. The noosing art runs in our veins."

Our conversation now turned to the manner in which wild elephants were noosed. The equipment these brave men carried was so simple that it would put to shame a modern sportsman armed with rifles. Apart from simple food consisting of rice and dried fish (not to mention the inevitable betel chew with sliced arecanuts), a gun, and some cartridges, their only other paraphernalia consisted of a rope made of deer-hide, which alone would stand the strain of noosing such strong and heavy beasts.

He showed me a specimen of the rope, and subsequently I was able to watch the men making one out of long, thin strands cut from deer-skin. The completed rope was about 25 feet long, with a large knot at one end and a slip-noose at the other. The noosers also carried spare ropes to tie the animal after capture, or to use it if the original rope gave way.

"It's great fun to watch a party of elephant-noosers at work," said Seeni Panikkan. "When approaching a herd we are careful to keep on the right side of the wind. We ascertain this by throwing up soft sand or dry leaves, or ash we always carry in a bag. But Panikkans can smell elephants.

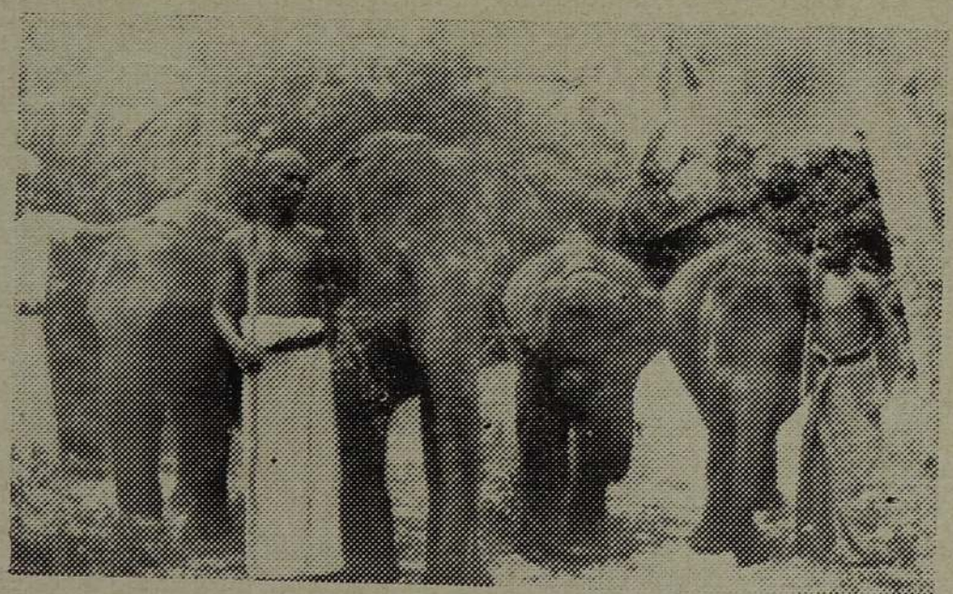
"About 10 to 15 of us first lie in ambush alongside a path on which we know elephants go to their water-hole or tank. As soon as a herd is sighted we alarm the beasts by shouting. If it is at night, we surprise them by suddenly revealing our lighted torches of coconut leaves.

"As soon as the herd stampedes the most daring and experienced of us follow one of the younger beasts we have marked and quickly slip the noose over its hind leg and wind the other end of the rope round a nearby tree or some other support such as a stout ant-hill. The trapped animal brought up short by the sudden jerk, falls on its head. This gives an opportunity to my assistants to fasten their ropes round the other legs and also the neck and so finally secure it.

"Then the job of driving it to the village begins. Two men in front tease the animal by shouting and dancing and waving a cloth before its face. The beast attempts to charge the men, who run in the direction they want it to go. By such manoeuvres the village border is reached, and the animal is tied to a tree for the night. The next morning it is marched into the village where it is starved for two or three days. There it receives gentle treatment and gets used to the presence of people. In this way, several elephants of various sizes and ages are brought into the village for training."

"How long does it take to domesticate a captured wild elephant?" I asked.

"That depends," he said, "on the trainer and his pupil. It may last from three to six



S. V. O. Somanader

Captured Wild Elephants

months. But it is possible for the trainer to mount the beast within a week of its capture, provided the trunk is first secured.

" We coax it to take food, and after repeated handling, mounting may begin. Of course, the goad is all-important for prodding the restive animal into good behaviour ; also the stern voice of a man who stands at its flank and makes it obey orders. The next step is to teach the animal to fetch its own food, the trainer riding it, goad in hand. There is one thing one should always remember : like buffaloes, elephants are fond of lying in water and splashing, and wallowing in it. So they are taken to the nearest river or lagoon to be bathed.

" How are elephants trained for heavy work ?"

" That must be done gradually and tactfully. First, the beast should be urged to carry weights, and then to carry or roll timber, or to pile up big logs ; to place in position heavy stones, in the construction of irrigation and other works. After this, they can be trained to uproot forest trees for clearing the jungle for agriculture, or to pull carts laden with coconuts and other heavy produce. Elephants are very sensitive animals. There have been instances when irritated beasts would rather suffer death than submit to the humiliation of being harnassed between the shafts of a cart."

" One word more. How true is it that you Panikkans are superstitious and employ ' priests ' to propitiate demons in charge of elephants ? "

" Who told you that ?" Seeni Panikkan asked with a good-humoured smile. " That is not true of us Moslems. We may say prayers to invoke Allah's aid ; and fearing human enemies who may thwart us, we keep our starting-time a secret. Sometimes, we set out in the wrong direction to dupe our ill-wishers ; or, after packing our necessaries, we may start out in our bullock carts, pretending to carry paddy or other produce for trading in a neighbouring village. We don't adopt devil-worship."

" Don't you resort to charms, astrology, or propitiary offerings at all ?"

" The Moslem Panikkans may go to the ' Parisari ' or ' Lebbe ' with betel, arecanuts, silver coins and so forth to consult the Koran regarding a suitable time and date for our adventure. He may promise success, or advise us not to go, and name another date. If four or five elephants are caught in the same season within a short space of time, we may have a feast. A goat is killed, and a thank-offering (' the Anai-Mahuluthu ') of five rupees is given to the mosque by the Panikkan, in praise of Allah.

And that's that !"

Attempts to Scare Away Elephants Result in their Capture

Wild elephants who have been ravaging the Gal Oya Board's sugar plantations (damage assessed at Rs. 2 million) are still on the offensive.

Four elephants were captured out of the herd of about 90. Three captured animals were handed over to the Zoo. One animal died a few days after capture. The veterinary surgeon reported that death was due to exhaustion and shock.

Of the four captured one was trapped by Elapata Dissawe and his men from Sabaragamuwa, while the other three were noosed by the famed panikkans of Irrakamam, 26 of whom were engaged for the purpose. Another elephant, the fifth one about 6 feet in height, was captured by three panikkans, and was tied down at Galmadu a few miles off Amparai.

The capture of the elephants in the sugar plantation has served a dual purpose. The Zoo authorities had made an application for a permit to capture six animals. They have now been given three animals.

The last animal caught too has been offered to the Zoo at a nominal rate of Rs. 2,500.

Elapata Dissawe and his men who were in the

Valley on the assignment of primarily chasing away the animals to a distant area, were there three weeks and then left the Valley.

The Board proposes to engage the Panikkans for some time until the animals have been completely driven to a distant area from which they would be unable to return easily. They have been instructed to scare and frighten the animals that enter the farm from the North.

Of the herd of about 90 elephants that were originally destroying the sugar plantation there was a tenacious trio of animals who were determined to stay in the farm at all costs ! The Board insisted that none of the animals were to be shot but must be coerced out by tactful means.

The panikkans are faced with a difficult problem in that they have to adhere to the very letter of the instructions of the Board and also get the animals out of the farm. They have also to cause the least harm to the crops.

The Board has another fear in that, when the animals are completely driven out of the plantation, they would be forced to turn to the paddy crops that adjoin the farm. There are no jungle reservations or national parks for them to go to.

The elephants have turned aggressive. An elephant attacked a man on a bicycle during daylight and smashed his cycle.

A few days later an elephant captured by panikkans was left tied up at the place of capture. When the men returned in the morning, to their consternation they found the animal had been taken away by the herd. The entire herd comes back for the operation " release !" This type of rescue is not uncommon.

Sunday Observer,
April, 1959.

GAL OYA ELEPHANTS

The Elephants Return in Greater Numbers

A large herd of elephants has encroached on the newly-planted sugar-cane area of the Gal Oya Development Board, Amparai. Efforts to drive them away so far have proved futile.

The elephants in the Valley who are being ousted by man have now found an ideal homing ground, so much so that the first two or three animals noticed at the beginning of the year have swelled today to this magnificent herd, including cows and calves.

It appears they are determined to make it their permanent home. They are now quite accustomed to man and cannot be scared away by fires, shouting, crackers or even rocket fireworks.

About three months ago a few lone elephants started trickling into the plantation at various points and damaging the crop. Preventive measures by the watchers—the beating of old tins, shouts and fires—all failed, and the number of the animals began to increase gradually.

The Board thereupon directed its wild life officers to assist the watchers in driving out the herd.

Two weeks ago, an animal calved within the plantation. Part of the herd remained in the plantation until the baby elephant was strong enough to cross the Gal Oya.

The Chief Forest Officer of the Board has decided that the animals cannot be confined to the National Park within the area of the Gal Oya Board. It is very limited in space. He proposes proclaiming another sanctuary area as a National Park.

He is of opinion that the elephants who lived in this Sanctuary, viz., the Mahakandiya reservation, are now driven out by unauthorised cultivators and cattle breeders.

The Board also obtained the assistance of Elapata Disawe (from the Sabaragamuwa Province) who is well-versed in elephant lore. The Disawe is now in the Valley with a team of his expert elephant men. They are now organising a drive to force the herd to a distant forest area.

Two young elephants have been captured in an effort to chase away a herd of 67 animals that have ravaged the Gal Oya Board's sugar plantation for the past few months and caused an estimated damage of over two lakhs.

The first animal, 5 ft. 3 ins. tall, was noosed by "panikkars", the traditional catchers from Irrakkamam, a village in the Gal Oya Valley. They were led by Seeni Panikkar, elder leader of the elephant-catchers.

The second animal which was 6 ft. 6 ins. tall, was captured by Mr. Sam Elapatha and his men.

The animals were caught when sections of this herd were leaving the plantation in the early hours of the morning after feeding on it at night.

Five Elephants were Captured Last Year

Five elephants were captured on permits issued by the authorities in 1958. Of this number two died after capture.

This information was given by Senator M. W. H. de Silva, Leader of the Senate, in reply to a question by Senator E. B. Wikramanayake.

Senator Wikremanayake asked :

(1) (*a*) How many permits for the capture of elephants were issued in the year 1958 ?

(*b*) What are the names of the persons to whom these permits were issued ?

(*c*) What are the names of the persons who carried out the capture of these elephants ?

(*d*) What are the qualifications for carrying out the capture of elephants ?

(2) (*a*) How many elephants were captured on permits during the year 1958 ?

(*b*) For what purposes were these elephants captured ?

(*c*) What is the present location of these captured elephants ?

(3) (*a*) Where did the capture of these elephants take place ?

(*b*) How were they transported from their place of capture to their present location ?

(*c*) How many elephants died after capture and what was the cause of their death ?

Senator M. W. H. de Silva replying, said four permits were issued in 1958 to capture elephants. Permits to capture two elephants each were issued to Kelaniya Raja Maha Vihare, Lankatilleke Temple, Mahiyangana Temple and Mr. P. G. Mapitigama.

The names of the persons who carried out the capture of the elephants were for Kelaniya Raja Maha Vihare—Mr. W. M Piyasena ; for Mahiyangana and Lankatilleke Temples—Mr. Premadasa Jayatunge and Mr. G. P. Mapitigama.

The Minister said the elephants were captured in connection with religious festivities in temples. The elephants were with Mr. R. L. Perera at Delgoda and Mr. P. G. Mapitigama at Morawatte Walawe, Ruanwella. The elephants were captured in the Puttalam and Kurunegala Districts.

Replying to a supplementary question by Senator Wikremanayake, the Leader said Mr. G. P. Mapitigama was a trainer of elephants and it was not unusual to issue permits for the capture of elephants for temples.

Daily News.

2nd April, 1959.

A Lonely Watcher at Monkey Bridge Lives in Fear of Elephants

Thirty-two year old John Singho, the watcher at the ex-Naval Ammunition Depot at Monkey Bridge leads a life of perpetual fear. He is the lonely sentinel at the 500-acre block which was once buzzling with activity. Then the British Admiralty used the Depot as an explosive store. John Singho now guards the belongings of the Forest Department which has taken over the Depot.

In the isolated stretch of jungle on the Trincomalee-Kandy Road John Singho lives with his wife, Jasolin (26 years) and his son (3 years) in a hut built by the British Navy, since November, 1957.

When he accepted his appointment as watcher John Singho was ignorant of the fact that even when the Depot was brightly lit, heavily guarded and the living quarters were occupied by Naval employees with their families, the elephants roamed in the area freely, broke up the barbed wire fences and entered the premises.

Encountering elephants has now become a regular feature in his day to day life.

At night he hears them pulling down his plantain trees and eating up his vegetable plants. Often he comes out at night and prods them with a "pandam" (torch). Normally the elephants run away when the pandam which has a long handle is stretched out towards them.

But to his surprise one night the elephant would not retreat. For nearly 30 minutes he tried his old trick of stretching out the pandam towards the elephant, but instead of retreating the elephant tried to snatch the pandam from him.

Eventually burnt in several places it roared away.

Incidentally the elephants at Monkey Bridge are not afraid of crackers and turn furious at the sight of an electric torch.

Sunday Observer.

15 Monks at Elephant's "Funeral"

Fifteen bhikkhus participated in the "pansakula ceremony" at the funeral of "Sella", the elephant which ran amok at Godagama and died as a result of a gunshot injury.

The body of the elephant was dressed in white.

A large gathering was present at the burial.

Mr. D. R. A. Jayasinghe, owner of the elephant, was seen weeping while the animal was buried. "It's Sella's fate. No one could have prevented it," he said.

TO A CAGED LEOPARD

O leopard, leopard, pause in your pace and turn,
Your pace and turn and rest your spotted bars
From flickering to and fro in yellow burn
So tirelessly! What moon, what ghost of stars
Is stirring in your ancient memory-mind?
How can we comfort you who once were free?
Is your old valley bleeding on the wind,
Or do the grasslands rustling like a sea
Present themselves to you as paradise?
Swish and flick your serpent-tail and swing
On padded paws, O ragged heart of ice
Who once were beautiful, a splendid thing,
All elegance, blood-hot, possessive, proud
You were, a dagger blade with evil eyes,
A rolly-poly clown when time allowed
And cubs were fed, a harlequin of lies
With fangs and claws. O leopard, leopard, heart
Of Africa, no seeking captives sleep:
We in our chains of lust and fear depart,
You pace and turn while jungle cities weep.

HJALMAR THESEN.
in *The Poetry Review.*

The Lure Fishermen of Mannar

By RODNEY JONKLAAS
In Sunday Times, Nov., 1958

When in 1956, I was assigned by the Department of Fisheries, to study the lure fishermen of Mannar, my immediate reaction was one of elation. To me, and every other amateur angler, a "lure" meant some form of artificial bait that would attract a predatory fish. I was anxiously awaiting the examination of what I hoped were fabulous inventions that were bringing in five to six hundred pounds of fish per trip—so the report said.

But soon I learnt that what were termed "lures" were in reality man-made underwater submarine obstructions which attracted fishes to shelter in and around them.

The sea off the north of Mannar island is calm for a greater part of the year. Only during the North East Monsoon is it choppy due to the wind, but there is no surf, no swell; and there are no rocks or reefs, as in the south. The water is never really clear, the bottom is sandy with an overlying layer of soft mud, and the few underwater obstructions there are, soon become favourite haunts of a great many species of fishes.

The skilful and painstaking Tamil and Muslim fishermen of the North, and also their migrant Indian brethren, learnt many years ago to place suitable obstacles underwater to attract fish. Then they surrounded the areas with nets and reaped rich harvests. The same sort of thing is done on a much smaller scale in the Negombo lagoon.

My main task was to advise on the settlement of a dispute. Apparently the shore-net (beach-seine) big-shots resented the lure-fishermen, claiming that they not only caught up most of the fish that would otherwise have come closer inshore and been caught by seine, but also caused damage to nets with the lures themselves.

So, a few days later, I found myself in a "vallam", complete with all my spearfishing gear, being rowed out to sea to investigate the lures. In our team were two vallams, and two nets—about twenty men. At least twelve of them were reportedly keen skin-divers. I found myself in very distinguished company.

With careful and surreptitious glances at landmarks, our two dug-outs arrived at a minute wooden float some three miles out at sea. They told me that the exact positions of these floats were jealously guarded secrets. It was not uncommon for rival lure-fishing teams to poach on lures put down by others, or for jealous employees of the shore-seine Mudalalis to remove the floats altogether so that the lures would be hard to find. The visibility of the water even so far out was relatively poor; anywhere down south, and in calm weather, it would be much clearer so far out at sea.

Not a ripple stirred the sea, however, as I donned fins and mask and slipped over the edge, prepared to dive deep to see the bottom. To my surprise the bottom was less than twenty feet down and faintly visible. Then I saw the lure; it was a riot of fish, Gray Bream, Red Snappers, Moonfish, small Caranxes, Groupers. Rabbit-fish and Thicklips thronged about it. The lure itself consisted of several acacia trees anchored to the bottom with trunks and larger branches well inter-locked. It was a perfect haven for fishes, a miniature ship-wreck or wooden reef, and in a shallow expanse of sea with no rocks or natural reefs, little wonder that it was so popular!

There was nothing worthy of a speargun, so I grabbed my handspear, but the men bade me wait till they had surrounded the area with the nets. So I contented myself by having an underwater view of the skilful and complicated operations that would eventually yield a bumper catch.

With careful attention to wind and prevailing currents, the two nets were laid parallel to each

other with the lure in the centre, then joined at their two ends to form a large cylinder. Then the divers went over the side in a joyous, jabbering throng and to see them in action was indeed an experience. No fins, no masks—only their loincloths, and they could make circles round any skin-diver I knew (most of all myself). They kicked their way down and even in that murky water their eyes could distinguish the two ends of the net. They would join them hurriedly and temporarily and so gradually construct a gigantic purse, trapping the fishes inside it.

Whilst working underwater they would utter croaking and moaning sounds which sounded very much like large Caranxes (parau) in distress. This they said was the exact sound they wished to make ; such an alarm sound would not only frighten the smaller Caranxes and make them dash headlong into the meshes of the net, but also warn sharks and rays of their presence. I watched, horrified as they would swim semi-blindly over large Sting-rays lying on the bottom and lashing out with their tails in alarm. Miraculously none were hurt by the poisonous barbs.

Back to my spear ; Although it felt like killing fish in an aquarium since none could escape from the net, my conscience was somewhat less guilty because I was using a barbless handspear at frightened fish, and not a gun at tame ones ! Moreover, the men themselves implored of me to destroy the large Groupers (they called them kalavan—meaning " rogues ") which preyed on the smaller caranxes round about.

Down I went in a maelstrom of fish—and there were the Groupers, as complacent as ever, gobbling frantic caranxes which came their way or actually pulling them out of the net meshes. These Groupers knew all about nets ; they knew too, that at the last moment, they could creep under the massive acacia trunks and escape—the Gray Bream were just as smart and were not unduly excited.

In the maze of branches and tree-trunks and holding my breath the while, I found it an unusual spearfishing experience with only a barbless lance. I wounded several Groupers till I got my first—a 30-pounder. But I knew that I would eventually get the wounded ones too and so I did, until none were left. The fishermen were delighted.

By now the net had drawn very close to the lure ; and before my eyes, the divers achieved a miracle of avoiding the snags and branches of the lure, yet joining the net above it and so getting nearly all the less crafty fishes who were too stupid and panicky to creeep deep under the branches. As the fatal meshes joined one by one, the net cleared the lure and then passed it, and in the clearing water with occasional wounded fish, scales and other debris, I saw the crafty Bream and the Snappers, Thicklips and a few Spade-fish swim out of their sanctuary. You could almost hear their sighs of relief !

Back to the boat and to witness the cod-end (" bag " or " madiya ") being emptied ; amidst loud shouts and chants a magnificent cascade of fishes tumbled into the boat-hulls. Thousands of Caranxes, large Moonfish, a huge Skate or two, Thicklips and an occasional Snapper—at least 500 lb. of prime fish, not one smaller than 6 inches. It was a magnificent and perfect method of fishing, and straightaway I knew where my recommendations would centre.

On shore I checked the catches of lure-fishermen as against the shore-seines. The comparison was worthwhile ; whereas the shore seines engulfed all the smaller types of poor eating value, as well as fry of fishes which would have grown larger, the lure-fishermen produced far better results and more varied catches of sizable fishes. Far from the lure-fishermen lessening the catches of the shore-seines, it appeared to me as just the opposite ; what fishes would have grown to live round a lure fell foul of the tiny meshes of the shore-seines for here there are no restrictions on size of mesh.

Back in Colombo I made my report, and as my recommendations went down in writing my mind flew back to the calm, sunny waters off Pesalai and I re-lived once more those magic moments, where in a bottle-green world of fishes and skin-diving aces, I watched the drama of the lure-net unfold before my eyes.

But I had not reckoned with politicians and red tape who jointly smother, octopus-like, the fishing industry of this fair land. My recommendations were shelved, like all recommendations and to this day the same bitter rivalry continues. More and more shore-nets scour the sea-bottom and more and more fry are killed each season. My only hope is that the lure-fishermen are still permitted to ply their skilful trade for fewer types of fishing anywhere in the world can vie with this for skill, recourcefulness and conservation mindedness.

Postscript

There is a sad postscript to this article. Two years later Mr. Rodney Jonklaas went to Mannar armed with an underwater camera to make a photographic record of what he saw during the previous visit. He was dismayed to learn from the Divisional Inspector of Fisheries that the unique method of fishing described in this article had to be abandoned over a year ago because of the influx of dynamiters.

There is reason to believe that some persons encouraged the dynamiters to blast the lures and so put the divers out of business.

Mr. Jonklaas writes: " Perhaps you know as well as I do that the new regulations pertaining to explosives have served only to raise the price of dynamite in the black market from sixty-five cents per stick to Rs. 1·25. Illicit dynamiting of fish is on the increase."

A PLEA FOR THE PROTECTION OF THE DUGONG

By J. A. DE SILVA, *Warden of Wild Life.*

DUGONGS and Manatees are representatives of a group of herbivorous aquatic mammals known as the Sirenia, an indication of their supposed mermaid-like appearance. They are from the same parental stock as the elephant and are believed to have been once terrestrial mammals that have taken to life in the sea in the course of time.

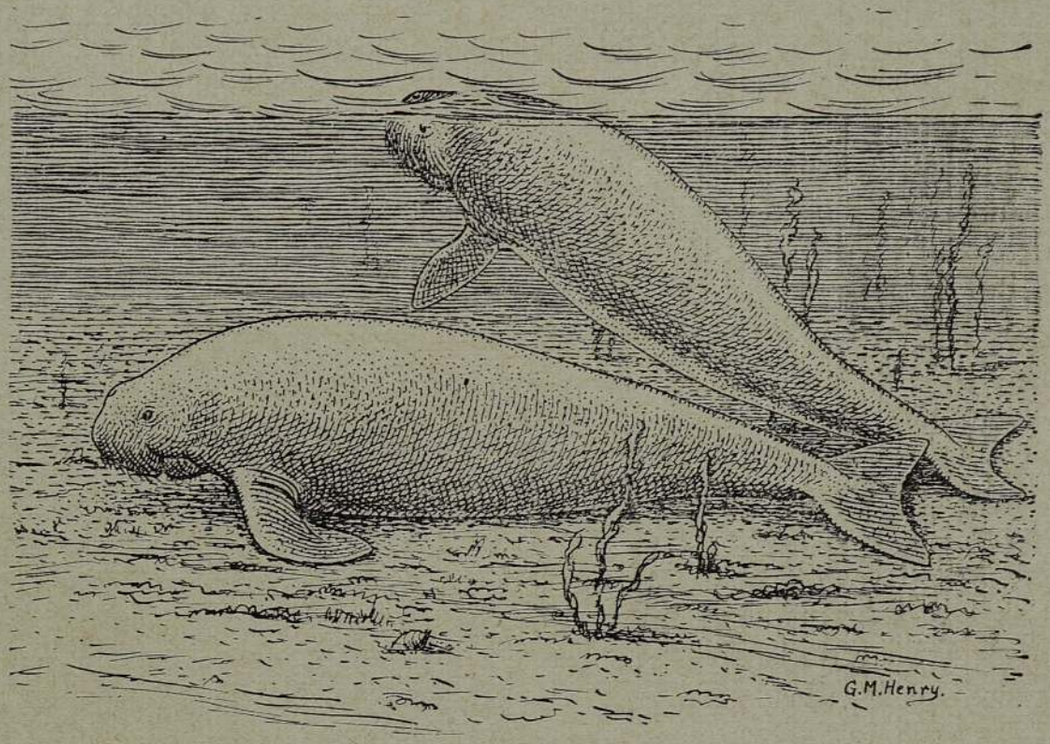
The Dugong (*Halicore Dugong*), a term derived from its Malayan name Duyong, occurs among the islands and along the coasts of the Red Sea and further south along the East coast of Africa, the islands of Madagascar and of Mauritius, the Indian and Ceylon shores of the Gulf of Mannar, the Andaman Islands and the islands of the Malayan region as far east as the northern shores of Australia. In Indian waters, Jerdon notes the occurrence of the dugong in salt water inlets of South Malabar and the Konkan coast. Writing of the distribution of the dugong on the coast of Ceylon, Emerson Tennent says that they were found in large numbers from the Bay of Calpentyn on the west coast as far north as Adam's Bridge.

At present dugongs are found only along the northern coast of Ceylon between Mannar and Jaffna and on the stretch of coast in the vicinity of the Pearl Banks.

Dugongs which 20 years ago were so common in the coast of Madagascar and the neighbouring islands are now much more restricted in their distribution and are found only in groups of 4 or 5 individuals. Dugongs were hunted on a large scale in the Arabian coast for their flesh and they are almost extinct there.

Dugong flesh is held in much esteem by the Coast Moors in Ceylon and a dugong fetches on an average between fifty to sixty rupees. They are caught by the fishermen in the Gulf of Mannar in wide-meshed nets and many of them are sent to Jaffna and Colombo for the

sale of their meat. In the Gulf of Mannar, dugongs feed exclusively on the green sea grasses (Phanerogams) which almost to the exclusion of sea weeds grow very abundantly in the shallows along the coasts and round the islands in the gulf. However, the stomach contents of an animal, on examination, contained large masses of marine algae. This change of diet may be due to the reported change in the habits of the dugong in the Gulf of Mannar where they no longer appear to frequent the shallows in their accustomed herds. Dugongs, unlike the manatees, are essentially marine animals or, more correctly, they form part of the coastal fauna. They do not swim up the rivers but keep to the shallow bays, inlets, and estuaries along the coast, visiting their marine pastures at flood tide and going out with the ebb.



Dugongs feeding on submarine pastures

These animals are slow moving and slow breeders which make them all the more vulnerable. They are killed in large numbers in the North West coast between Kalpitiya and Mannar and their numbers are rapidly dwindling, so that some measure of protection should be given them, at least during a part of the year. I recommend that the dugong be absolutely protected under the Fauna and Flora Protection Act in that it is unique, rare, localised, a slow breeder, defenceless and easily killed when caught accidentally in nets. The animal provides nothing which is of special economic value to this country so that a complete prohibition on the killing of the dugong could not have severe repercussions on the local fish industry as the supply is both precarious and of no great quality. An effective system of prohibition might be adequate protection for the species and prevent its extinction from the Ceylon seas.

Note by R. L. Spittel

TALKING to Mr. C. Ludekens, Government Agent of Mannar, a few months ago regarding the number of dugongs caught in his province, he kindly undertook to obtain the necessary information through his various headmen.

This report was sent by the Divisional Fisheries Inspector to the Warden of Wild Life. A copy was sent to me by the Government Agent, Mannar, with the comment : " I consider that it is time somebody took up the case for protecting dugongs from further slaughter."

Discussing this matter with Mr. J. A. de Silva, Warden of Wild Life, he informed me that, as the dugong, though a creature of the sea, is a mammal it came within his sphere. It

therefore seems that in this matter there will have to be co-operation between the Wild Life and Fisheries Departments. That action, at least to control the capture of dugongs, is urgently necessary there can be no doubt, as the following figures submitted by six headmen show:

	No. of dugongs caught in 1958
Marrichchakaddai ..	.. 6
Silavatturai	.. 50
Vankalai	.. 80
Talaimannar	.. 40
Vellankulam	.. 100
Illapaikadavai and Pandimunai	.. 25
	301

These figures are approximate as no accurate data were kept from the beginning of the year to which they refer. But they do show that the destruction of dugongs continues at an alarming rate, and that some sort of restriction should be imposed.

Recently 6 dugongs, young and old, were killed when a coral reef near Mannar was blasted with dynamite. The Vankalai headman reported that 17 dugongs were caught in a single day.

Obviously it is high time that the Warden of Wild Life, with the co-operation of the Fisheries Department, and of Government Agents through their headmen, made a determined effort to obtain an accurate census of dugongs killed annually.

COBRA

Swiftly steals the hooded death,
Hissing vengeance with its breath:
Swiftly in the jungle gloom
Moves the dreaded snake of doom.

Terror where the natives tread
On the jungle paths so dread:
Terror in each gloomy glade
Sunk in solemn jungle shade.

In some Eden realm of old
Did the cobra power hold:
Did some anguish, did some blight
Turn its life from light to night?

By some hidden Power unknown
Thus has dreaded cobra grown,
Ever destined on the ground
Fear and death to spread around?

ARTHUR STROVER,
in *The Poetry Review.*

MINUTES OF THE SIXTY-FIFTH ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING HELD AT THE '80' CLUB, TORRINGTON PLACE, COLOMBO, AT 6 P.M., SATURDAY, 14th FEBRUARY, 1959.

Present.—74 members and guests.

The Honorary Secretary informed the meeting that Dr. R. L. Spittel had requested to be excused from presiding at the meeting owing to ill-health so, in the absence of the Vice-Presidents he wished, with unanimous support of the meeting, to invite Mr. R. S. V. Poulier to take the chair.

Letters regretting their inability to attend were received from:—
H.E. The Governor-General, Messrs. D. B. Ellapola, Gorton Coombe, David Ebbels, I. D. Wollen and Col. R. C. Wall.

The meeting was requested to rise in the customary manner as a mark of respect for those members who had died in the past year.

1. The Notice calling the meeting was read.

2. The minutes of the Half-yearly General Meeting held on 13th September, 1958, were duly confirmed.

3. PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS

The Chairman, **Mr. R. S. V. Poulier,** said he was sure that everyone was very happy to see Dr. R. L. Spittel present at the meeting after his recent illness; the Society owed him a deep debt of gratitude for the work he had done, not only as President for the past year but also as the Editor of "Loris" for many, many years; and during the 1930's when as President and otherwise he carried the heat and burden of giving publicity to the objects of the Society.

He said that it had been customary for the President in presenting the Annual Report and accounts to refer to subjects which had been discussed in Committee or in the Fauna and Flora Advisory Committee or whenever two or three of them are gathered together.

He particularly emphasized that the remarks he proposed to make were entirely independent of the views of the Wild Life Committee which was then sitting and said that anything said by him should not be interpreted as an attempt to anticipate the Committee's final recommendations which he had not seen; any resemblance to items in that Committee's report, when it does come out, would be (as the authors say) purely fortuitous or coincidental.

He continued:—

"We are grateful to the Honorary Secretary, Mr. C. E. Norris, for many references in his report to his recent travels in Africa and the several points which can be adopted for use in our country. In particular I would like to refer to:

(1) the estimated loss of revenue from poaching;

(2) the high cost of licences—very much too high for Ceylon, where evasion of taking out any licence at all is bound to result.

(3) That visitors enter all National Parks at their own risks and that the Guides are not escorts entirely responsible for the safety of visitors; and

(4) the necessity to control the number of visitors to the parks as this type of commercialisation of Wild Life can have a detrimental effect on the animals themselves in that they are likely to change their habits."

Mr. Poulier then referred to the remarks of the Honorary Secretary upon the shooting of the Lahugalla tusker; he mentioned the information available to the Wild Life Department and explained how necessary it was for members who had information, to convey it to the Wild Life Department as early as possible and, if necessary, under confidential cover.

Mr. Poulier then went on to say:—

(*a*) "Experience has shown that the existing buffer zones to National Parks and Strict Natural Reserves; namely Intermediate Zones and Sanctuaries, were in many places much too narrow; they should have minimum width of 7 miles in order that illicit shooters should not be able to penetrate into National Parks, shoot there, and carry away the carcasses within one night.

(*b*) This same subject of minimum width should be kept in mind in the laying out of the proposed Elephant Corridors; an added factor in the case of these elephant corridors is that wild elephants cannot be regimented and must have space to wander sideways in the course of their migrations.

(*c*) In the interests of the prevention of siltation as well as of Wild Life, it is essential that the catchment areas of all large tanks should be declared National Parks or Sanctuaries or other protected areas, as has been done at Gal Oya.

(*d*) As you are all aware the Wild Life Department has over a number of years maintained records of the causes of death of elephants. A careful analysis of these figures makes it clear that one must inevitably choose between the extinction of the wild elephant in Ceylon on the one hand and the prohibition of the shooting of elephants in defence of crops (or in alleged defence of crops) on the other; or to put it more simply, it is necessary by legislation to stop the shooting of elephants in defence of crops (as in India). We have a full realisation of what this means to the villager and therefore commend the payment of *full* compensation for crop losses; at present the question of resultant destitution of the cultivator is an important factor in the assessment of the losses; I strongly urge that this question of destitution be not considered, but the loss be assessed in full and paid direct to the cultivator. On a matter of pure economics I should perhaps add that a Ceylon elephant secures top price in World Markets for its intelligence and docility; the elephant is worth perhaps Rs. 10,000 while the damaged crop of paddy or chena will scarcely exceed Rs. 300 in value.

(*e*) The protection of the DUGONG has been under discussion for some years owing to some hesitancy whether the protection should be *complete* or whether it should be only partial with the prescription of a "closed" season. I have a note on the Dugong which I shall read later with a personal note from Dr. Spittel.

(*f*) I have often urged that in those parts of Ceylon where there is danger from elephants and bears, the provision of sanctuaries has become entirely ineffective both as a sanctuary and as a buffer zone; examples are the sanctuary which is alleged to protect the National Park in Wilpattu. There every villager walks in the sanctuary with a gun in his hand and claims that the gun is essential for self-defence against bears and elephants; and it is not possible to attach a watcher or guard to each of the hundreds of villagers who walk in the sanctuaries; in practice they shoot what they like and detection is extremely rare. The only solution is to prescribe that, in those sanctuaries which are situated on Crown Land, a special permit be issued by the Wild Life Department to those persons who must use these sanctuaries. I have certain misgivings that the issue of such permits might be used for oppression and this will have to be specially guarded against."

Mr. Poulier then referred to a number of other matters in which our Society had been interested for many years, giving details of each subject:—

(1) That the power of arrest of offenders of Wild Life Laws (without warrant) should be conferred on certain officers of the Wild Life Department.

(2) That in exchange for the large areas excised from VEDIKACHI and from WASGAMUWA, and the extents taken from the WILPATTU Reserves for the MAHAWILACHIYA Scheme, we should urgently press for:

(*a*) protection of the LAHUGALA areas;

(*b*) expansion of the RUHUNA and WILPATTU blocks of reserves;

(*c*) a new National Park—NORTH or SOUTH of WELIKANDE on the Polonnaruwa-Valaichenai Road;

(*d*) reserves of those parts not required by man along the Mahaweli Basin;

(i) for protection of the swamp elephant; and

(ii) the setting apart of two or three special areas to be used for grazing of domestic animals in such a way that wild animals can use the same land for pasture. This principle of wild animals using the same grazing ground as domesticated animals, exists even now in the case of wild and domestic buffaloes in the remoter parts of Ceylon. Historically too it is on record that in the areas beyond those cultivated round Anuradhapura and Polonnaruwa, this practice existed of domestic and wild animals living in fairly close association.

(3) That there should be a Wild Life School to train both Minor staff and Middle Grade staff much on the lines of the Forestry School; until the scheme was put up as an entirely Wild Life Scheme, the Forestry School could possibly perform this training with some alteration to its present curriculum.

"In regard to senior Supervisory staff we have urged a preference for sending out officers from Ceylon for training, rather than getting experts from abroad who spend far too much time picking up the complications of conditions here."

Mr. Poulier urged that we should benefit from the recent development of the Fairey Rotordyne type of Helicopters which carried 48 passengers (and the improved model of which can carry 60 passengers) and which have been used in local air services in England. His suggestion was that these helicopters could transport tourists from Colombo to a spot within 5 miles of the National Parks of Ruhuna and Wilpattu from where the "passengers" could be transported in

Landrovers or Jeeps to the National Parks. The 5-mile limit was prescribed in order not to disturb Wild Life in the National Parks. When not used for tourist work, they could (at a lesser charge) be used for transport of local residents to the National Parks. He had no doubt that such a venture would be a commercial success.

Mr. Poulier continued:—

"I would like to record for historical reasons:

1. The increase in numbers and in tameness of Peafowl, particularly in Yala and Wilpattu. In Yala the peafowl upset the rubbish bin of the bungalow to pick out grains of rice, while in both National Parks, photographers who delighted to get pictures of individual peafowl dancing, are now not contented unless they have two or three dancing birds in the same picture.

2. The large increase in Wild Life in the Eastern Province owing to the recall of guns and the difficulty in getting cartridges after the unfortunate communal disturbances of May-June, 1958."

3. The observations of all members will be gratefully received in regard to the new and fascinating sport of underwater fishing; there have been recent allegations that the stock of available fish will be exhausted through over-fishing as is said to have occurred round the coast of Italy and other parts of the Mediterranean. I trust it will be a long time before the necessity arises (as in the case of overshooting in the jungles) for the prescription of "closed" seasons and the demarcation of the sanctuaries for fish—as in the case of Hikkaduwa.

We should continue to urge on the Wild Life Department and the Ministry of Lands and Land Development.—

(*a*) The aquisition of more Jeeps and Landrovers to give the staff mobility in the interests of preventing poaching.

(*b*) The necessity to improve many of the roads, as good roads and rapid transport are now recognized as the keys to proper protection.

(*c*) The construction of more houses for visitors, but built outside the National Parks. On Sundays and holidays the present accommodation in the National Parks can be filled 4 or 5 times over; bookings have now to be made months ahead. We commend detached cottages of one or two rooms each and one or two common dining rooms in order to accommodate the very different types of visitors—some noisy, some musical and some quiet.

In order to meet some of these requests two new Kings Strand Aluminium huts have been erected, one at Katagamuwa and the other at Palutupana.

The round aluminium huts at Palutupana are to be set up on new foundations; the lay-out will be of horseshoe shape with a common sitting room; and each of the six huts will have a lavatory, complete with key.

Rs. 125,000 have been provided in this year's estimates for 4 cottages of 2 rooms each at Amaduwa, with central kitchen and common dining room. As you are all aware, Amaduwa is situated by the sea and the road to it branches off a little beyond the turn of the Palutupana bungalow and the Wild Life Offices.

The Public Works Department propose to use any savings for similar structures at Hunuwilegama (for Wilpattu).

(*d*) We were keen that the staff of the Wild Life Department should have more comfortable quarters and facilities to enable their families (children in particular) to have adequate medical facilities and schooling; the "schooling" part of it is yet a far-away dream. In regard to houses, new ones have been built for the staff at Makalanmaduwa, Kattakandalkulam, Kudawilachiya, (for protection against the new colonists) and north of the Mahawilachiya Scheme, for protection against poachers coming along the Arripu Road.

Among the achievements of the Wild Life Department during the past year I am happy to record:

(1) that the Buttawa Tank has been successfully repaired at a cost of Rs. 8,000; older members may recall that the Society once attempted, without success, to reconstruct the spill of this tank.

(2) The cutting of a 15 ft. wide Jeep road from Buttawa Tank to Gonagala, a distance of about 2½ miles: this is to be extended to Jamburagala and will (like the Uraniya—Siyambalagaswala Road) be another by-pass section which will enable a one-way traffic system to be developed one day to carry the ever-increasing traffic of the Ruhuna National Park.

(3) The Wild Life Department has induced the Department of Irrigation to improve and deepen Diganewewa (north of Yala) and Nabadagaswewa in block No. 2.

Also in Wilpattu to deepen and improve Moragollawewa and Mallimaduwawewa".

MR. POULIER then read a plea for the **protection of the Dugong** submitted by MR. J. A. DE SILVA, the Warden, and a Note by DR. R. L. SPITTEL which appear on pages 173-175.

Mr. Poulier then invited a member to propose the adoption of the Report and Accounts so that these could be exposed for criticism.

MR. EDMUND DE ZILVA proposed the adoption of the Statement of Accounts.

DR. C. W. A. DE SILVA seconded.

MR. A. Mc. N. WILSON, queried the cost of printing "Loris", as he considered this was costing more than the Society could afford. The statement in respect of Christmas Cards and Car Badges were showing expenditure as greater than income. He was of the opinion all stocks, such as ties, Car Badges, Stationery, "Loris" and Christmas Cards should be shown under Assets in the balance sheet, to obtain a truer position. Also, subscriptions which are overdue should be shown as likely to be procured to enable an accurate form of budgeting as possible. He hoped, in future, a clearer position of the Accounts will be given to members.

MR. HODGSON replied, stating he would implement Mr. Wilson's suggestions.

The Report and Accounts were duly unanimously adopted.

4. Election of **Office-bearers for the year 1958-59**:—

President: C. E. Norris—Proposed from the Chair.

Vice-Presidents:

D. B. Ellapola, Gorton Coombe — Proposed by J. M. Hodgson, Seconded by D. A. Perera

General Committee:

Aloy H. Perera, Sam Elapatha Dissawa, C. A. Maartensz, W. W. Beling — Proposed by Dr. Brito Mutunayagam, Seconded by J. M. Hodgson

R. S. V. Poulier, S. J. Kadirgamer, D. Ebbels, C. F. Dunbar-Jonklaas — Proposed by Aloy H. Perera, Seconded by C. A. Maartensz

A. H. T. Molamure — Proposed by S. A. Elapatha Dissawa, Seconded by Dr. Brito Mutunayagam

Under Rule 6.—

Dr. R. L. Spittel
Senator E. B. Wickramanayake, Q.C.
Dr. Brito Mutunayagam

Hony. Secretary and Treasurer:

J. M. Hodgson—Proposed by S. A. Elapatha Dissawa, Seconded by A. Mc. N. Wilson

Editor of Loris:

Dr. R. L. Spittel—Proposed from the chair.

Hony. Auditor:

Mr. Noel de Costa—Proposed from the chair

The Office-bearers having been duly proposed and seconded were then elected unanimously.

5. The President called for suggestings as to the **venue of the Half-yearly General Meeting** to be held in 1959.

MR. D. A. PERERA suggested Bandarawela but subsequently withdrew the suggestion.

MR. J. M. HODGSON suggested Nuwara Eliya be again considered, but later withdrew his suggestion.

MR. H. I. WANIGASEKERA seconded by MR. DANIEL suggested Kurunegala.

MR. ALOY H. PERERA and MR. A. MC N. WILSON supported this proposal.

MR. R. S. V. POULIER seconded by MR. C. A. MAARTENSZ suggested Kandy. After these two proposals had been put to the meeting, the majority vote was in favour of Kurunegala.

MR. H. I. WANIGASEKERA informed the meeting the Kurunegala Sports Club would be very pleased to allow the meeting to be held in their Club House and he was sure he could arrange accommodation for members wishing to stay the night.

6. As there was no other business of which due notice has been given the meeting terminated at 7.20 p.m. with a hearty vote of thanks to the Chair.

After the meeting Mr. C. E. Norris showed an excellent **Film of African Wild Life** taken on his recent visit to the National Parks of Africa. It was accompanied by a running commentary which was much appreciated.

Cobo,
Badulla.

J. MANSERGH HODGSON,
Honorary Secretary.

Snips

FOREIGN

Travellers' Tales of Man-eating Plants

Scattered throughout the world there are at least 450 different varieties of carnivorous plants which live on the flesh of creatures they trap. Most are tropical and semi-tropical, but there are 11 different types that live and thrive in a relatively cold climate.

The small varieties are, of course, interesting, but it is the large man-eating types that one reads about in the literature of many countries—especially the more primitive ones—that capture the imagination with lurid visions of ghastly, sucking, enfolding death.

Probably the most famous man-eater is the *Devil Tree of Madagascar,* which has reputedly been seen by several travellers on this large and primitive island off the east coast of Southern Africa.

According to reports, the Devil Tree is a type of palm, brown in colour and having long tendril-like arms, something like an octopus. The leaves are hard and spiky and fold inwards.

When one delves a little further back into the reports brought back by early travellers to the island, it is possible to piece together the details of a primitive tribal ceremony carried on by the natives when, during a kind of orgy, a young virgin was periodically sacrificed to the Devil Tree.

What do modern botanists have to say about this man-eating plant? Some say that it probably does exist, and quote examples of the smaller varieties, such as the *Sundew* or *Butterwort.* These two plants catch their food by making themselves into living fly-traps.

Their leaves are covered with small, sticky, sweet-smelling hairs which shine brightly in the sunlight. Insects are attracted by the scent, and as soon as they land on one of the leaves, they become stuck fast. Then the plant curls up its leaves, completely trapping the insect.

Once the plant has the insect in its clutches, it begins to consume it in much the same way as an animal digests its food. When the meal is over, the plant uncurls its leaves and waits for the next unfortunate victim.

Among interesting flesh-eaters of the smaller species is the *Bladderwort.* This plant has small bubbles or bladders on its stem, and grows under water.

When high-speed photographs were taken of small water creatures vanishing near these stems, it was discovered that they were sucked through tiny trap-doors hidden in these bladders.

But perhaps the most interesting and ingenious flesh-eating plant is the *Pitcher Plant.* Each of these tropical monsters is shaped like a big cup, filled with up to two pints of sticky liquid,

flavoured with sweet-smelling nectar which all insects like to drink.

As soon as the insect lands on the rim of the Pitcher Plant it is doomed. It slides down the inside wall of the plant to die in the deadly liquid.

But *even if man-eating plants do not exist,* there are a whole host of equally dangerous and repulsive members of this family. In South America there are poisonous bushes, trees and vines.

There is the *Vampire Tree* of the Argentine, which has a powerful, sleep-inducing perfume that puts its victims to sleep before sucking their blood.

In Venezuela there is the so-called *Tiger-Tree,* which hurls a painful acid at its victims.

In Java there is the *Upas Tree* which gives off a highly poisonous vapour.

Apparently, birds that fly over it fall dead, and fish in nearby streams are also overpowered by the penetrating and deadly vapour. The gum of this tree is used by Javanese hunters for poisoning the tips of their spears and arrows.

So powerful is the poison of the *Manchineel Tree* of Brazil, that stories are told of travellers who have died while resting under its flowers when it is blooming. The poison is contained in the dust falling from the stamens.

There is a plant poison, said to be many thousand times more powerful than arsenic or strychnine, reported from South Africa. The name of this is *Adena.*

Its effect is not only instantaneous but leaves no traces in the body of the victim.

RALPH MIDDLETON,
In *Sunday Times of India.*

Sumatran Rhinoceros

(Copy of letter sent to Mr. Peter Ryhiner by Prof. Dr. H. Hediger, Director of the Zoological Gardens, Zuerich, Switzerland)

As transpires from the magazine *The Burmese Forester* (December, 1958), the serious question as to whether it is indicated or even defensible to catch some pairs of the few remaining Sumatran rhinoceroses, in order to use them for breeding purposes in Zoological Gardens, at present arises in Burma. The Zoos in question are the ones of Rangoon and Basel (Switzerland).

I take the liberty to express my own interpretation of this clash of opinions, for the following reasons :—

(1) In all my books and other publications I have always taken a firm stand for the protection of nature.

(2) I have always taken an interest in the fate of all five species of African and Asian rhinoceroses, both as a Zoologist and as a Zoo director.

(3) Whilst I was Director of the Basel Zoo (1941-1953), I imported the first specimens of Rhinoceros unicornis into Switzerland, which were obtained through Peter R. Ryhiner, and there put up a suitable house for these animals, This pair of rhinoceroses were the first of their kind to propagate in captivity. There have already been two young, one of which has been sold to a North American Zoo. Evidently, conditions for rhinoceros breeding at the Basel Zoo are favourable.

The history of the Sumatran rhinoceros to date proves unequivocally that these animals have been protected most inadequately in their natural habitat. It is most unlikely, in fact it seems to me quite impossible, that a protection of this species should now suddenly become successful. I am firmly of the opinion that in the present situation there is only one sure way left to save this species, namely by capturing a few pairs with great precautions, and breeding them in captivity, the ultimate object being to release again a few specimens in their natural surroundings.

My conclusion that the capture of a few rhinoceros pairs represents the only adequate measure to prevent extinction has not been arrived at lightheartedly, but is based on numerous past experiences. Let me quote only two instances.

The Chinese Milu deer or "Pere David" deer would today without doubt be completely extinct, had not a few specimens been captured and bred successfully in Europe (England).

We in Switzerland, have a vivid example in our own country : The Alpine Ibex had been completely exterminated here in the past century and incidentally, for exactly the same reason which has become fatal to the rhinoceros. Certain parts of its body were considered to be medicinal, and any price was paid for them. Such a superstition usually entailed the rapid and ruthless extermination of the animal species in question. Today Switzerland once again possesses a stock of over 1,200 Alpine ibex in their natural habitat. This success is solely due to the fact that ibex were smuggled into Switzerland from Italy, raised in captivity, bred, and released anew in our mountains. A corresponding course can and in my opinion must—be taken in the case of the Sumatran rhinoceros.

It would of course be a good thing if the animal could be studied more closely in its natural habitat for a while longer, but in my opinion it is too late for that. I doubt, furthermore, whether any such observation could achieve any more than the thorough investigation which Th. Hubback has fully described in the Journal of Mammalogy, vol. 20, as far back as 1939."

W. E. DE ALWIS,
Secretary,
Zoo Advisory Committee.

18th April, 1959.

"Happiness Pills" for Animals

The millions of Americans who continue to depend upon their "happiness pills" every day are now being joined by the nation's farm animals in the wholesale use of tranquillisers.

Scientists have found that tranquillising drugs will transform a ferocious bull into a docile companion ; calves will graciously accept weaning ; ewes will mother orphaned lambs ; and steers will go meekly to slaughter.

"Tranquillisers provide a safe and humane chemical restraint and make our animal and livestock work much easier," said Dr. S. F. Scheidy, president-elect of the American Veterinary Medical Association. "Unlike its reaction to sedatives, the patient remains conscious, alert and responsive".

Dr. Scheidy has pioneered the use of tranquillisers for animals ever since it was discovered that animals react like human beings to the "happiness pills."

Veterinarians also have a new hypodermic "gun" which shoots the drug into animals too fierce to treat by hand.

The gun shoots an aluminium hypodermic syringe which is propelled by carbon dioxide gas. It is accurate up to 150 ft.

When the syringe strikes the animal's flank, it automatically unloads the tranquilliser, then falls off when the animal walks.

Evening Standard, New York.

Rescue of Marooned Animals

ANAESTHETIC DARTS LIKELY TO BE USED

Darts carrying an anaesthetic will probably be used on the larger animals which are to be moved to safety during the flooding of the Kariba lake formed by the closing at the end of last year of the dams for Rhodesia's huge hydro-electric power scheme. Already about 300 animals have been rescued from trees on the temporary islands, but some large game have been stranded and techniques have been worked out for saving them.

The use of "tranquillizers" fired on darts is accepted practice oversea for the safe handling of wild animals and this method is now being considered by the Minister of Irrigation and Lands.

In the ordinary bush the method is not always effective because fast-moving animals may go some distance before the drug takes effect. At Kariba, where the animals are marooned, the dart gun may be the ideal weapon of persuasion.

For some years there has been a great deal of speculation about the probable reactions of the wild animal populations to the man-made flood.

Maps were prepared giving an indication of the areas to be flooded first, of the temporary islands which are to be created, and of the islands which are to be permanent. The Game Department staff equipped with two boats,

patrolled the river Zambezi, slowly driving the animals off the islands towards the higher land. By the end of December a technique had been developed for the capture of the smaller mammals and reptiles.

For the most part the animals were captured by driving them into the water and securing them while swimming—a hazardous occupation for the game rangers, whose courage has captured the imagination of the public.

The animals rescued include bushbuck, klipspringers, duiker, grysbok, ant-bears, warthogs, porcupines, civets, genets, dassies, baboons, monkeys, hares, game birds, night apes, mongoose, and many species of reptiles which have been released on the high ground.

The larger mammals present a very difficult problem. It is not easy, for instance, to persuade a lion, a leopard, a rhinoceros, or an elephant to move if it is of an obstinate turn of mind, but the Game Department are satisfied that they can succeed.

February, 1959. *London Times.*

Stampede in the Heart of Africa

Man's quest for progress has set off a massive migration of wild animals deep in the jungles of Africa.

Thousands of animals—elephants, lions, buffalo, hippos, kudu, antelope, impala, monkeys—are fleeing to high ground before waters backed up by the huge new man-made dam destroy their lush stamping grounds. Herds of elephants, numbering as many as 3,000, have been seen lumbering and trumpeting through the jungle grass towards a new home.

To facilitate the migration, Rhodesian game wardens have taken special steps to help the animals find proper new homes. They even plan a " Noah's Ark " ferry system to transport wild life that does not readily take to the high lands.

The widerspread animal displacement was caused by construction of the 420-foot-high Kariba Dam on the Zambest River, not far from the famous Victoria Falls. The artificial lake produced by the dam—expected to be 175 miles long and 20 miles wide—will inundate 3,500 square miles of jungle paradise rarely penetrated by white man.

The project is also driving more than 50,000 Africans of the Tonga tribe from their homes, but authorities expect no difficulties in moving their primitive natives to new sites elsewhere in the jungles.

The 332-million-dollar dam is designed to industrialize British Central Africa. Holding back four times as much water as does the Hoover Dam in the U.S. the huge Kariba project will provide cheap electricity for Rhodesia's copper mines and growing industries.

United Press International.

Fossil Ancestor of Snail Still Alive—500 Million Years Old

The scientists had anchored off the coast of Peru, and were bringing up specimens of marine life from the sea-bed. It was while they were engaged in this operation that Nature yielded a secret hidden for three hundred million years in the crust of the earth. From a three-mile deep trench in the ocean bed the scientists brought up alive, a small snail-like creature. It was only 1½ inches long, with a conical shell like a dunce-cap. Shortly afterwards they recovered three more of the living fossils.

Dr. John Imbrie, Associate Professor of Geology at Columbia University, identified the creature as *Neopilina,* an organism that was believed to have been extinct for 300 million years. Neopilina has not changed in form for 500 million years and is one of the two oldest living animal links with the past. This was determined by comparison with fossilised remains of Neopilina found in petrified beds that were between 300 and 500 million years old.

Neopilina's ancestors gave rise to the large and familiar group of animals known today as snails, as well as the chitons, and possibly the clams. It is, therefore, the oldest living representative of primitive ancestors of a really successful animal group.

The other oldest living animal link is the *Lingula*, a shell-bearing animal which lives in the shallow seas off Japan. The Neopilina once lived in shallow coastal waters, too, but has retreated to depths of up to 18,000 feet, where the water is close to the freezing point and where pressure is so great that few living forms we know of could survive. The Neopilina had adapted themselves to suit these extreme conditions. Hence their success in living through 500 million years, unchanged in form.

Kruger Park

Mr. Knobel informs us that a large strip of land near the Olifants River has been added to the reserve, and it is hoped that a number of neighbouring farms will be incorporated. A game-census carried out in 1954 indicated that a spectacular increase in the numbers of certain species had taken place : for example, there were 5,500 buffaloes as against 15 in 1902 ; 1,000 elephants instead of 5 in 1905 ; 2,000 giraffes were counted, as against 20 or so when the National Park was founded ; moreover, survival of the latter in South Africa is entirely due to the existence of the Park. Lions are abundant—one per every ten square miles—and their numbers have frequently to be controlled.

International Bulletin.

Elephants of the Addo Bush

The elephants of the Addo Bush National Park seem at last to have grown accustomed to the electric cable-rope and the tramrails fencing off the National Park (Eastern Cape Province) ; they have come to accept it as a natural phenomenon. Their numbers have now reached the 25 mark. Several species of antilope indigenous to this region but which have since disappeared, have recently been reintroduced.

International Bulletin.

Water-holes in National Park

In the Kalahari or Gemsbok National Park, which harbours such a wonderful abundance of wild life, fourteen new water-holes have been bored to provide water for the animals ; this precaution as well as the fencing of the South-West Africa—Union of South Africa borderline will tend to diminish animal migrations. The main road running through the reserve is to be diverted ; it will by-pass the Park, so that the nuisance caused by this encroachment will be eliminated. Over 7,000 tourists visit the National Park each year, and two rest camps have been built for their use.

International Bulletin.

Avian " Wolf Whistles "

NUISANCE ALLEGED BY NEIGHBOURS

John Lutimer, of Cranford House, Esher, Surrey, was summoned at Kingston-upon-Thames under a Surrey County Council by-law by a neighbour, Roy Clifford Blackmore, for alleged keeping between June 1 and July 31 birds of various species which caused a serious nuisance to the residents of the neighbourhood.

Mr. Peter Boydell, for Mr. Blackmore, said that Mr. Luttmer kept an aviary with a number of exotic, colourful, but noisy birds. Apparently one of the most objectionable was an Indian mynah. In the spring of last year the birds began to be a serious nuisance to the neighbours and apparently were worse in the summer months. One bird gave a loud " wolf whistle," screeching noises could be heard, and nearly all day long a bird sang, " All the nice girls love a sailor."

The defendant, who had pleaded Not Guilty, said in evidence that at present he had 22 birds. He formerly had two mynahs but one died about three weeks ago. It was the mynah who sang " All the nice girls."

The Chairman of the Bench, Dr. Stanley Gooding, said : " We find a serious nuisance has been occasioned." He then announced that the penalty would be £2. The Bench allowed 40 guineas costs.

London Times.

Godwits

Both the Bar-tailed and Black-tailed Godwits are rather rare north-east monsoon visitors to Ceylon.

The Bar-tailed Godwit is seen in the lagoons and mud-flats of the Jaffna peninsula, generally, solitary or in twos and threes. They wade in shallow water deeply with its long beak in search of worms, crabs, and other small animals.

The Black-tailed Godwit has been seen in the Jaffna, Mullaitivu and Hambantota districts. It breeds in Europe and Western Asia.

In its breeding plumage the black-tailed godwit is a most striking bird. Nearly as large as a curlew, it has a long straight bill and a black tip to its tail, while its head, neck and breast assume an attractive shade of pinkish-cinnamon. When it takes flight, it displays a conspicuous black-and-white wing pattern, recalling that of the oyster-catcher.

It must not be confused with the Arctic-breeding bar-tailed godwit, which also migrates northwards along our coasts in May and June in its reddish breeding plumage. The bar-tail is rather smaller and has no black-and-white pattern on its wings. Its tail is barred brown and its bill very slightly upcurved.

Wild Nature and Zoo

Birds are the most widely studied of all creatures, and there are hundreds of bird-watchers, but how much do we know about the feeding times and family life of even our common garden birds? How little we know of bird song, their courting and nesting and brooding?

"While the Magpie Robin sang on my left, says Mr. Raffel, "my Shama, for over 20 minutes on my right, sang of love and romance of secret trysts, of hours of squabbles and of glorious reunions after sad partings. I do not say that my Shama is our finest songster. I would like every person in Ceylon to say it. So be sure to listen to a shama as soon as you can. A rare musical treat awaits you."

Very well, Mr. Raffel, I fully agree with you and it makes me happy to be able to say that the shama is our best songster.

Not the least interesting—as it certainly is one of the most controversial—passage in the book is where the writer says—

> "To be emotional is to suffer. I have seen the look of abject despondency on the face of the shama at the Zoo and how his eyes lightened up and a little quiver went through him when I whistled to him and he perked himself up and responded with his song. Birds cold-blooded emotion-less things? Heavens no! Warm-hearted affection holds them in a firm grip as long as they are free celestial things. It is only when in captivity that they approximate to mortal humans with blood less warm and heart so cold".

I hate to debunk this, and other thoughts in a similar strain but it is quite evident that the writer is being carried away by emotion and is looking at things from the human standpoint.

Whatever the animal and whatever the circumstances may be, the wild is a terribly hard and hungry place to live in. Enemies, disease, bad weather, food or water shortage are common occurrences in jungles but not in a well conducted Zoological Garden.

Nature, I regret to have to state, is often cruel and merciless.

A. N. WEINMAN,
in review of D. Raffel's book *In Ruhuna Jungles.*

Man and Dog vs. Leopard

Shepherd Madulatiah, 35, who fought and killed a seven-foot leopard alone in a forest on the outskirts of a village in India, 35 miles from Kurnool, died in the government headquarters hospital. He had been badly mauled by the beast.

Madulatiah, according to reports, was spurred on to fight by the efforts of his faithful dog, which engaged the leopard for a time.

In that brief respite, he was able to pick up a large stone and to smash the animal's head.

The dog, however, survived the fight.

Observer.

Archer Fish

Archer Fish breeds off the Soviet Pacific shores, and also in the Indian Ocean.

While he lives like other fish in the sea, he feeds on insects which live on plants hanging over the water.

He swims close to the surface, watching for his prey. When he sees it on the plant, he swims as close to it as possible, then lifts the front part of his body out of the water and takes quick aim. His dinner falls, washed off the plant by a jet of water from the fish's mouth.

The Archer is a first-class shot. He always hits his target even 6 feet above the surface.

Fish Bites off Part of Steerman's Leg

Joseph Peiris (53) and T. Wilson Silva (35) of Dehiwela, went out fishing at 9 a.m. recently in their outrigger canoe. They fished a couple or more miles out at sea. After six weary hours they set back for home empty handed.

Peiris sat at the stern end of their canoe with his left leg outside the boat on the rudder guiding, and Wilson did the rowing. Suddenly there was a swirl by the boat. A small-sized fish fleeing for safety leapt out of the water by the boat. It was followed by a sleek, long rounded shape. With its jaws gaping open, and rows of white glistening teeth bared, a six-foot seer fish leapt after its prey.

Although it missed the small fry, this seer fish did not go away hungry, Joseph Peiris's left leg lay temptingly out of the boat. And the hungry seer in its leap took part of Joseph's leg away with it.

Joseph Peiris had to undergo an emergency operation at the General Hospital.

Daily News.

Record for Underwater Fishing

Mr. Rodney Jonklaas killed a big grouper underwater off Ambalangoda on Sunday, February 8th, in the course of the Reef-combers' Club Spear-fishing Championships.

This grouper (*Promicrops lanceolatus*) belongs to the same species as the giant ones seen and written about by Mike Wilson, Arthur Clarke and others, especially round the wreck of the sunken dock in Trincomalee.

This fish weighed 135 lbs. and is a record for the largest fish taken underwater in accordance with international underwater spear-fishing rules in Ceylon. It was shot with an Italian spring-gun at a depth of 35 ft. and landed single-handed, after a bitter struggle. It had to be towed ashore a distance of over ¾ mile from where it was encountered fighting all the way.

This species of grouper grows to well over 1,000 lbs. and 12 ft. in length; it is greatly feared in North Australia and the Torres Strait where it has the reputation of attacking pearl-divers and attempting to swallow them whole. This is quite possible in the case of a 1,000-pounder.

Many much bigger ones than that taken by Jonklaas have been shot at but without success off Ceylon. He attempted to take one of about 400 lbs. off Uppuveli in Trincomalee in 1954 but the harpoon merely bounced off its body.

In Ceylon, as far as we are concerned, big groupers are harmless to human beings, and if

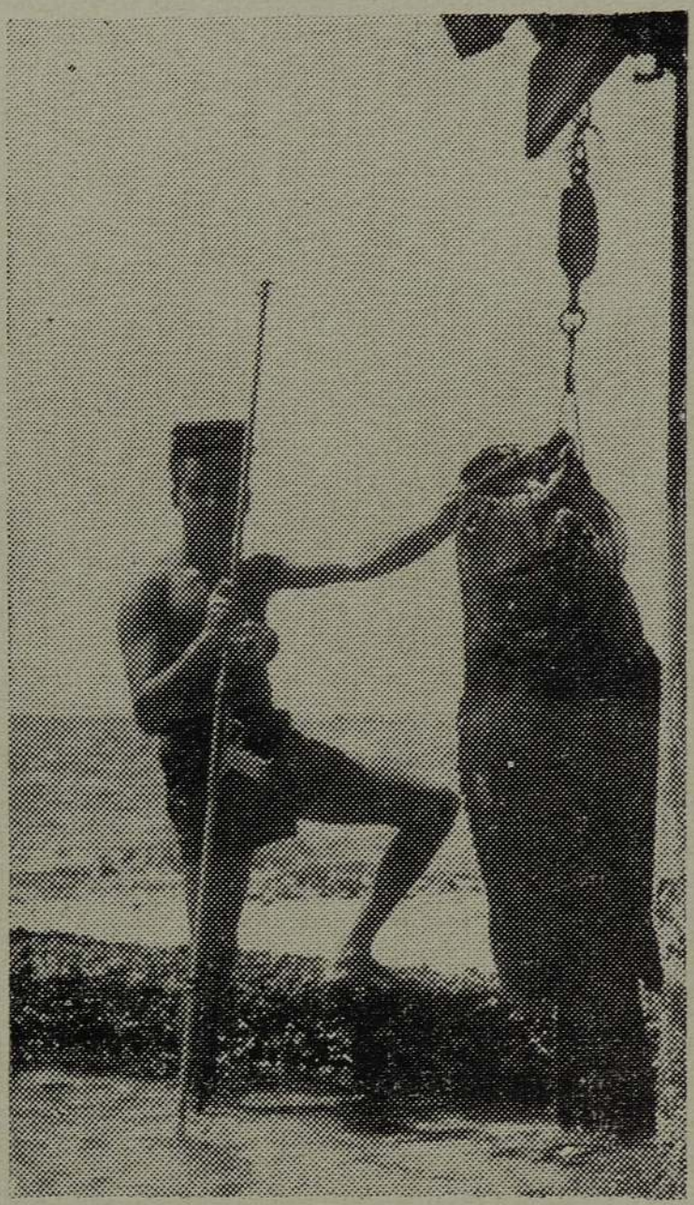
anything are too wary and powerfully built to be taken easily. Only the most powerful guns and strong lines can hold these monsters.

This one was shot in the head, but the brain was untouched, and it was full of fight, almost drowning Jonklaas during the encounter. And there was no one in the area to help until he reached shore an hour later, ¾ mile away.

Needless to state, he was too tired and exhausted to do any more diving or spear-fishing that day !

Record for Pompano

Tony Buxton with a tremendous effort set up an all time national record by taking 15 Pompano in one outing without getting out of the water at Buona Vista, Galle, on the 29th of November. This breaks Rodney Jonklaas' four-year old record of 14 Pompano taken at Bentota 4 years ago. It is also the Club Multiple Game-fish Record. The largest weighed 14½ lbs.—total over 180 lbs. Every fish took his reel out and the constant strain on the wire (500 lbs. breaking strain) finally snapped after he shot the 15th fish. The Record Pompano Catch last season was nine and previous season seven. This shows that at least spear-fishing in Ceylon has no effect on the game-fish population.



R. Jonklaas and his 135 lbs. Grouper

Reef-Combers' Club News

HIKKADUWA AND TRINCOMALEE

Thanks to the enthusiasm and energy expended by Messrs. Jonklaas, Buxton and Greene, our Club has found favour and recognition with the Government Tourist Bureau.

Good news to all those who favour Trincomalee. Nicholson Lodge Club is to be a Tourist Bureau Resthouse with special facilities for skin-diving and spear-fishing. Moreover, the Minister of Trade and Commerce, the Hon. Mr. R. G. Senanayake (himself a keen skin-diver and owner of 3 aqua-lungs) has promised us a Club Room on these premises. Next season there will be speed boats, water-scooters and glass-bottomed boats for the use of visitors, and to Trincomalee and its clear calm waters this is a boon indeed.

Hikkaduwa has materialised in a big way. The Sanctuary boundary extends from the right of the Rock Islets (including them) to the buoy ½ a mile out at sea in the north, an area of some ½ a square mile in all. Since many visitors who are interested in fish and skin-diving do not spear-fish, it is only right that some area must be totally exempted from all forms of fishing. The Bureau has provided enough boats and facilities for spear-fishing parties to operate outside the Sanctuary area. Reef-combers will be afforded one entire room

for changing, storing gear, etc., as a Reef-comber Club Room. This is open to members only and will be for the sole purpose of storing gear, clothes, having showers, etc. It is *not* intended for sleeping or eating in and if you wish to stay there you must book your accommodation in the normal fashion.

In return for this generous act the Committee has agreed to call for a volunteer "Instructor" or "A" Grade member to act as a Duty Member on Sundays. In short, one Reef-comber should be available on Sundays from 8 to 5 p.m. to assist all visiting the Resthouse interested in skin-diving and direct them and also be at the disposal of aquatic operations from the Resthouse. This will mean helping with equipment and gear, indicating to people where they can spear-fish and taking them out if necessary in a boat and generally be of use to anyone interested in underwater and swimming; most of all being at hand in an emergency for life-saving. Tony Buxton and Rodney Jonklaas have borne the brunt of these commitments so far and intend doing so as far as possible but the Club would like more volunteers for this please.

It need hardly be added that it is up to us to see that the Sanctuary Law is enforced, and that any outsiders who dive and swim in the area exercise not only commonsense but caution. The idea of the Sanctuary is to preserve the fish and coral for the benefit of those non-swimmers less lucky and able as we are, to enjoy underwater life. The resident fishes of the Reef are to be tamed and encouraged to multiply and give delight to viewers in the boat and in the water. No more will they be hounded by spears, lines, nets, explosives. The coral too is more sacred than the fishes and if anyone wants souvenir pieces of coral these must never be plucked from the Hikkaduwa area within the Sanctuary.

France has Just About Had It

Roger Madrenas here recently on a short business trip and regretting very much that he didn't bring along his diving gear, says that France has just about "had it" where underwater game is concerned. There are no decent-sized fishes at all to shoot and it is practically impossible to get anything (except small octopus) without Scuba. And taking fish with Scuba is supposed to be prohibited in France. (Thank God for the Monsoon, a sparse diving population and sane Club Regulations in Ceylon).

Drama at the Bazaar

A Walt Disney drama was staged by four animals at the Uggalboda bazaar. A fairly large crowd of people watched the scene.

A snake (*garandiya*) caught a mouse on the roof-top of a tea-kiosk. The struggle between the two ended in both falling on the ground with a thud.

Then a dog which stood nearby bit the tail of the snake. In "pain", the snake unwittingly opened its mouth and thereby let loose the mouse.

The mouse in a desperate attempt to save its life took to its heels. But he could run only a short distance. From one death-trap, he fell into another.

A *talagoya* (monitor lizard) which was hiding near a bush caught the mouse.

The snake hurried into a hole. The dog retired after barking at the hole for some time.

Daily News.

Correspondence

Birds in Dolosbage

Sir,

We are very fortunate in our bird life in this valley of Dolosbage, and during the 2½ years we have been here have counted almost 100 different kinds of birds. Perhaps this is because of the unusual combination of patana covered hills and pockets of very tall jungle. With our average yearly rainfall of 223 inches too, we can claim the damp forest conditions favourable to some birds; in particular Legge's Flowerpecker, which I have seen in the jungle on several occasions, and which Legge says is "as far as we know, essentially a bird of the heavy rainfall districts."

Our most colourful birds include the Ceylon Trogon, Ceylon Blue Magpie, the Ceylon Azure Flycatcher, Black-capped and Yellow-browed Bulbuls, the Common Iora, Ceylon Black-headed Oriole and the Minivets. Perhaps the rarest, or most rarely seen, is the White-headed Starling. I have seen it on several occasions in a neighbouring garden, and friends who lived there confirmed my identification and told me that they have seen as many as six at a time feeding in the fruit trees.

When I return from leave next year, I am hoping to find an expert on bird calls to come and identify a very loud, melodious song which we have heard frequently in a patch of jungle and never been able to track down. It consists of up to nine notes in various combinations and is exceedingly clear and beautiful. It seems most likely (after a lengthy process of elimination involving my three bird books!) to be the Spotted-wing Thrush.

MRS. J. E. STEVENSON.

Nagastenne Group,
Dolosbage, 14th March, 1959.

Shooting Homilies

If a sportsman true you'd me, Listen carefully to me :—

Never, never let your gun
Pointed be at anyone;
That it may unloaded be
Matters not the least to me.

Stop and beaters, oft unseen,
Lurk behind some leafy screen;
Calm and steady always be—
"Never shoot where you can't see."

When a hedge or fence you cross,
Though of time it cause a loss,
From your gun the cartridge take
For the greater safety's sake.

If 'twixt you and neighbouring gun
Bird may fly or beast may run,
Let this maxim e'er be thine:
"Follow not across the line."

You may kill, or you may miss,
But at all times think of this—
"All the pheasants ever bred
Won't repay for one man dead."

Kodak 'Ektachrome' Film means easy-to-take colour pictures for everyone

HERE'S great news for you.....Kodak 'Ektachrome' Film makes colour snaps as easy to take as black and white! And this holds true for owners of box cameras, too!

For bright colour transparencies in sunlight, use 'Ektachrome' Daylight Type Film — Type F Film for indoor or night shots taken with flash. Whatever the time, exciting colour pictures are yours for the taking with amazing Kodak 'Ektachrome' Film. Available from your Kodak dealer in sizes 120, 620, 135.

Ektachrome Film is now processed in Ceylon.

Send your exposed film to *your* Kodak dealer or to

MILLERS LIMITED

Sole Wholesale Distributors in Ceylon for

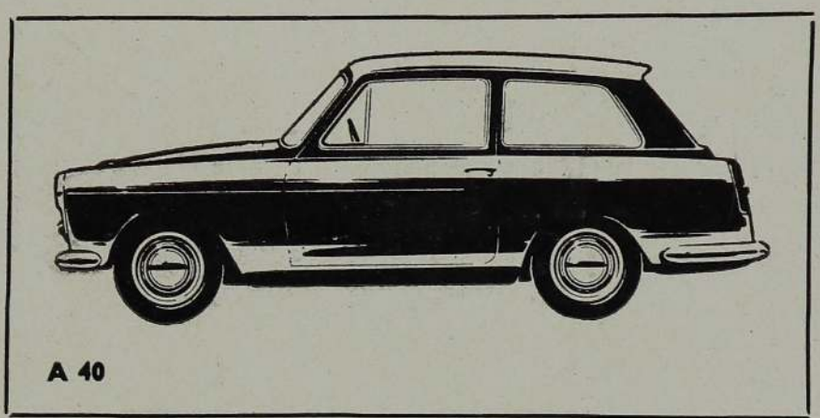
Kodak Limited, London.

746, Galle Road, Bambalapitiya.

Getting about seeing

CEYLON'S JUNGLE HERITAGE !

TOUR IN AN



A 40

AUSTIN

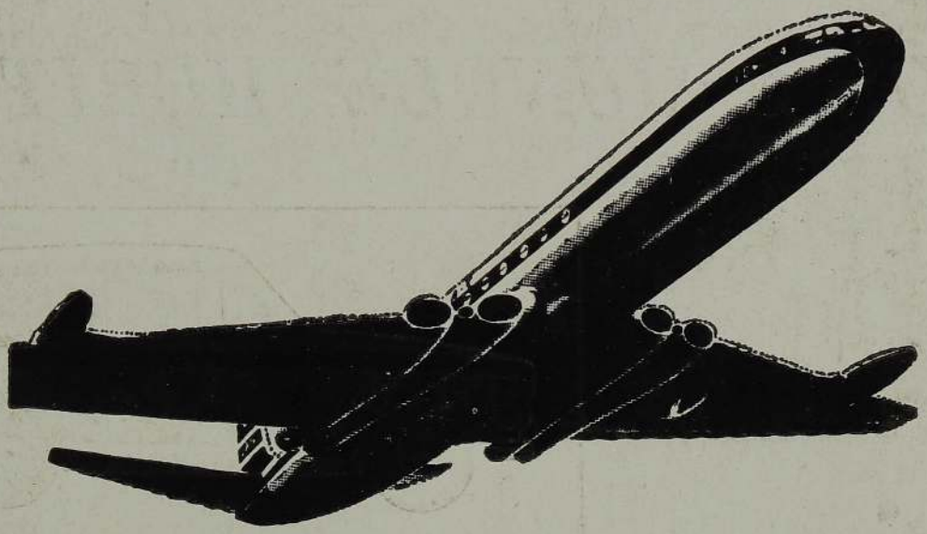
A 55

YOU CAN DEPEND ON IT !

See the latest range of AUSTINS in our showrooms

WALKER, SONS & CO., LTD.

COLOMBO & BRANCHES



B·O·A·C

COMET 4

jetliners—fastest to

LONDON

London is only 19 hours from Colombo by B.O.A.C's incomparable COMET 4 jetliner—supreme in the skies for super-fast, super-smooth vibration free travel. Enjoy the COMET'S comfort, delight in superb B.O.A.C. food and wines and the PERSONAL service for which B.O.A.C. is so famous! Whether you fly de Luxe First Class or Tourist, you'll arrive gloriously fresh, barely realizing you've travelled at all.

BRITISH OVERSEAS AIRWAYS CORPORATION

Printed at The Times of Ceylon, Ltd., for The Wild Life Protection Society of Ceylon.