



Insight



The Power Of Giving



What is the power of an individual when that person happens to be a John D. Rockefeller or a Bill Gates? If history is a guide, the answer is, quite a lot. I'm speaking not only about the power to reshape an industry like oil or personal computers but also about the ability to improve the world through philanthropy. Rockefeller proved that giving away money is much more than charity. It can be transformative. And if today's billionaires were to pool their resources, they could outflank the world's governments in ending poverty and pandemic disease.

More than a century ago, Rockefeller decided to put his vast fortune to public use, offering to endow a federal institution to fight disease, poverty and ignorance. Hotheads attacked him, claiming that he was just trying to buy a good name, and Congress demurred. So, instead, in 1913, Rockefeller set up the Rockefeller Foundation with two initial gifts totaling \$100 million. No institution did more in the 20th century to further the cause of international development. It led the way in the eradication of hookworm in the U.S. South, helping pave the way for the region's economic development. It supported the Nobel-prizewinning work that created the yellow-fever vaccine. It helped Brazil eliminate a malaria-transmitting strain of mosquito.

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SL President in New York



President Mahinda Rajapaksa being received by a group of Sri Lankan children when he arrived in New York to attend the meeting of the UN General Assembly. Foreign Minister Rohitha Bogollagama is seen on the extreme left.

SLEA Host Female inmates in Dammam

The Sri Lankan Expatriates Association in the Eastern Province brought meaning to this years Ramadan by organizing an Ifthar for the Sri Lankan inmates at the Ladies Deportation Camp in Dammam on Sep 10, 2008.

The collective event successfully provided the inmates with a typical Sri Lankan style meal made possible by the active membership of the Association. The ladies expressed their gracious thanks to the SLEA. Mr Charley Talaratna, the dedicated Chairman of the SLEA's Labor and Welfare Committee was influential in obtaining access to the camp in order to host the event.



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Grand Old Homes from p3

exercise in memory recall, and also to jog the memories of readers. The descriptions are of people and homes along Havelock Road and beyond around sixty years ago. Havelock Road begins at the Bullers Road intersection or what is popularly known as the Thunmulla Junction, and ends at the Pamankade Bridge on the road to Kohuwala. Close to its southern end, at the intersection of Havelock Road with Maya Avenue, was a popular Shell Service Station opposite to which there was the City Hospital for Animals which opened in

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1947 by the then Prime Minister Mr D. S. Senanayake.

Adjoining the hospital was a roadway leading to the Boys Industrial School providing vocational education to young people

On the opposite side next door to Shalimar, at No 500, a battleaxe block stood the home of Alfred West Toussaint, a former Engine Driver of the Railway whose legs were severed below the knee after accidentally slipping off the engine on to the railway track. His father Alfred West Toussaint (Snr) was one of the first Burghers in Ceylon to be appointed as a Railway Engine Driver. Toussaint worked for several years in an administrative capacity in the railway office at McCallum Road.

He used to travel to work each day by rickshaw, pulled by his faithful rickshaw puller Muttiyah. Each morning Muttiyah would climb up the steps of the house, lift Alfred from his wheelchair, carry him and place him on the rickshaw. He would then pull the rickshaw all the way to McCallum Road in the city; spend his time around the office until his master was ready to go back home after work. Muttiyah and his wife were quartered in the garage of the Toussaint home, and the couple worked exclusively for the Toussaints. The Toussaint home was one of a duplex, the other occupied by the Rowalnds. Alfred's wife Alice (nee Drieberg) aged over 90 years, was living alone in this house in 1997, her son Maurice having migrated to Canada several decades earlier.

At number 502 stood the rambling old Caroline House in which Mrs Caroline de Silva lived for many years in the house built by her husband. The house was demolished in 1955. Mrs de Silva owned the adjoining row of houses in which lived the Fryer and Reimers families for several years. These houses have also been demolished. On the opposite side was 'Beth-Holme' the home of B. J. Pompeus, and earlier R. A. Honter. In the adjoining garden were several homes in one of which lived V. W. Halpe, a teacher at the Royal Primary School for several years.

His son Ashley who attended St Peters College was later Professor of English at the University of Peradeniya.

Maya Avenue was previously called Link Road. It linked Havelock Road to the new road to Nugegoda. At its intersection with Havelock Road was the famous Oasis Nurseries owned by John Cosmas, a Greek who was Colombo's leading horticulturist. He had a well-stocked nursery standing on several acres of land, and was the source of the plants that beautified the gardens around homes of Colombo at the time.

Most houses, in those halcyon times, would have a resident gardener or "thota karaya" as he was called. The Oasis Nurseries sold packets of Zinnia, Balsam, Dahlia, and Chrysanthemum seeds, which were all perennial favorites with the housewives of Colombo together with Canna Tubers, Rose Grafts, and a beautiful range of Orchids, all very popular with garden conscious Colombo



To be continued in the December issue

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Power of Giving – from pg 1

And perhaps most stunningly, it funded the Asian Green Revolution, the transformative agricultural success that enabled India and other countries to escape endless cycles of famine and poverty.

Now Bill and Melinda Gates, backed by more than \$30 billion of their own funds and an additional \$31 billion of Warren Buffett's, can do the same. Like the Rockefeller Foundation, the Gates Foundation rightly looks to technology for the breakthroughs that can end extreme poverty on a global basis. Its original focus has been on health technologies, but now the foundation is expanding to agriculture, water and other areas that are also critical in the fight against poverty.

Of course, they are not alone in contemporary transformative philanthropy. George Soros' support for brave truth tellers in Central Europe and the former Soviet Union helped catalyze the peaceful end of communism. The Google guys, Larry Page and Sergey Brin, are out to prove how information technologies can bring about major change. The King Feisal Foundation and Islamic Development Bank, in Saudi Arabia, have ventured into many successful projects in bringing relief and poverty alleviation for millions of people across the developing world.

According to Forbes magazine, there are some 950 billionaires in the world, with an estimated combined wealth of \$3.5 trillion. Even after all the yachts, mansions and luxury living that money can buy have been funded many times over, these billionaires will still have nearly \$3.5 trillion to change the world. Suppose they pooled their wealth, as Buffett has done with Bill and Melinda Gates. By standard principles of foundation management, this would yield, an amount sufficient to extend basic health care to all in the poorest world; end massive pandemics of AIDS, TB and Malaria; jump-start an African Green Revolution; end the digital divide; and address the crying need for safe drinking water for 1 billion people. In short, this billionaires' foundation would be enough to end extreme poverty itself. All in all, it's not a bad gig for men and women who have transcended the daily economic struggle faced by the rest of humanity. They might also take note of the admonition of America's first megaphilanthropist, Andrew Carnegie, who wrote in 1889 that "the day is not far distant when the man who dies leaving behind him millions of available wealth, which was free for him to administer during life, will pass away unwept, un-honored, and unsung." Fortunately, plenty of new heroes seem ready for a different legacy.

New Premises for SLIS Jeddah



Caption : Lankan school : Sri Lankan Ambassador Mohamed Ageed Mohammed Marleen opens the new premises of the Sri Lankan International School in Jeddah, Saturday . At extreme left is School Principal Fareeda H.Wahab. AN Photo

RIYADH- With the beginning of the new academic year, the Sri Lankan International School in Jeddah moved to a new premises in the Bani Malik District of Jeddah, following the formal opening by the country's Ambassador Mohamed Ageed Mohammed Marleen.

Offering his best wishes to parents, students and teachers, the envoy said that the new school has a convenient and comfortable environment for effective learning. "A conducive environment for learning is important in children's education," Marleen stressed, pointing out that home, school and social environment play a prominent role in bringing up children in a healthy manner. "The new place is spacious, serene and would create a good platform for students for curricular activities," Marleen said.

Delivering the welcome address, School Principal, Ms Fareeda H.Wahab, said the new premises would help enhance the quality of education in the coming years. She noted that the school students obtained 90 percent passes in all subjects at the recent IGCSE examination conducted by the University of Cambridge. "The new complex has a full-fledged library, science laboratory and all the facilities needed for children's education", she said, adding that the school had 324 students on roll and half of them are girls.

The function was organized by the members of the previous board of management of the school. The former Chairman, Azmy Anverdeen, also spoke during the opening ceremony.

Farewell to Ms Padminie Porage



Ms Padminie Porage, Personal Assistant to the Sri Lankan Ambassador in Riyadh, was accorded a farewell reception on her completion of service with the Embassy. Left-right, Hanida Salam, Shamila Aboosally, Padminie Porage, Aynfer Mansoor, & Azra Hilmy

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Cricket in Sri Lanka

Ten years after the British subdued the Kingdom of Kandy (1815), the cinnamon trade began floundering. The British had messed up a well-controlled industry. By 1840, Cinnamon as a crop was virtually extinct with prices down. Only the scattered village plots were left.

In 1825, the British introduced coffee in Kandy, at elevations from 1600 ft above sea level to about 2000 ft. The first plantations were 'Gangaroo' (now Gannoruwa) in Kandy and 'Sinnapitiya' (now Sinhapitiya) in Gampola. Coffee was also planted in the Knuckles/Rangala/Galaha areas. The British Coffee Planters introduced cricket in the area north of Kandy, where they carved cricket grounds out of leech-infested hillsides.

Although the British worked hard to make the coffee plantations economically successful they did not bargain for the leaf disease 'hemileia vastatrix' that could not be controlled and spread fast, bringing ruin to coffee around 1865.

Tea brought young men in search of 'green gold' - men from the English Public Schools and Universities, sportsmen, even a Lord or two. They made Ceylon the leading Crown Colony of the British Empire (John Ferguson), which gave the island a favored status.

The Kandy district was the hub of early cricket activity in Ceylon, the best cricketers playing in Knuckles / Rangala / Hewaheta. Both the Dickoya-Maskeliya Cricket Club and the 'Dimboola' Agrapatana Cricket Club were founded in 1856, according to S. P. Foenander.

The 'Club' is a place where planters socialized or engaged in sports activities and was introduced by the British Royalty in England during the period 1399 - 1413 and was mainly for dining purposes, but with political and social change, sports clubs began from the 17th century.

The Ferguson Directory listed 22 clubs playing cricket, among which was Colombo Cricket Club. 'The Colombo Journal' was the only newspaper in and around 1830. In September 1832 it had carried a notice towards establishing a cricket club and requested gentleman who may feel inclined to lend assistance towards this initiative to meet. This newspaper then carried reports to say that "The Colombo Cricket Club met the 97th Regiment in a game in Colombo at the Army's Rifle Parade Grounds". This is said to be the first recorded cricket match in Ceylon.

Grand Old Homes Of Colombo

Changes to Colombo's landscape in recent years have been so rapid and comprehensive that anyone visiting the city after a period of time will hardly recognize parts of the landscape where its grand old homes of yester years have virtually faded out of sight. Where beautiful houses and gardens once stood gladdening the eye of passers by, there now stands a compacted structure enclosed by high walls. The grand old garden city that Colombo, once was, up until the nineteen sixties, and which enraptured visitors over the years, seem to have been lost forever. A visitor on a recent visit to Sri Lanka, walking past old haunts, tried to recapture some of the imagery of the past, particularly in relation to Havelock Road, which was a regular route to him in the days of his youth. He was met only with limited success. Lots of old memories and images did, however, return, and he thought he should retrieve some of it and place them on By then, around 1,000 Malay troops of the Dutch Colonial Army opted to join the British, forming the Ceylon Rifle Regiment and this saw the Malay soldiers taking to the game. A newspaper report indicates that they played the civilian members of the Colombo Cricket Club on the Rifle Regiment Grounds (site of the present Slave Island Police Barracks.

Their interest in the game saw the establishment of Malay Cricket Club (now Colombo Malay Cricket Club), in 1871/72, the first all Ceylonese Cricket Club. The next to take to cricket were the Dutch Burghers. By 1873, the Burghers of Colombo had taken to the game so wholeheartedly that they felt strong roots should be put down for a Burgher Cricket Club that could take on the Colombo Cricket Club and Malay Cricket Club on an equal footing. And so, the Colts Cricket Club was formed in 1873. -- ctd on page 4

Cricket in SL ctd

A meeting to form the first Sinhalese Sports Club was held at Wesley College Hall, Maradana, on March 28, 1899. The young Tamils of Colombo formed the Lanka Sports Club in November, 1895. The first President was D. Muthuswamy, the Hony. Secretary was N. C. Ponnambalam and the Cricket Captain was W. Duraiswamy, later a member of the State Council and its Speaker. Price Park was the club's home ground. Down the years from 1856 to 1908, all the major clubs were formed on ethnic lines: English, Malay, Burgher, Sinhalese and Tamil. In 1908, the last of these clubs was founded, the Moors Sports Club, who celebrate 100 years of Cricket in Sri Lanka this year.

Next-door was the home of Dr Thomasz whose daughter was a well-known sporting figure of the time. A fine specimen of the Traveller's Palm-Ravenela Madagascaris grew on its front lawn. Next door, No 498 Havelock Road was "Kamala", the home of Dr Nair named after his daughter. For a few years it was tenanted by B. J. Lalyett, a Director of Darley Butler and Company Ltd. The house was later purchased by the then Director of Education H. S. Perera who named it "Shalimar". Mr Perera died not long after he moved in to the house. His British wife continued to live in the house till she passed away some years ago. In the house opposite lived Horace van Twest, who served with the Ceylon Garrison Artillery during World War II

Matara: Sunset In The South



Matara Sunset

Matara, located in the Southern region of the Paradise island of Sri Lanka is undoubtedly one of the most important cities. Matara, owes its name to its location. It was originally known as Maha Thota which is a Sanskrit word derived from Maha Theertha commonly used to indicate a Ferry. Many called it so, meaning the Great Ferry.

Matara's main claim to fame is the river Nilwala which meets the sea at this point. Being a coastal city, it was an easy victim of the foreigners who gained control of the Maritime Provinces in the days gone by.

Portuguese, Dutch and the British Colonial rulers had set their feet here at one time or the other. Archaeological remains show that Matara has been one of their attractions. Matara Fort, the Star Fort and the Nupe Market are the famous landmarks in the city. They are a part of the Colonial heritage. The archway into the Fort which house many official, mostly judicial buildings, the surrounding ramparts, the clock tower which still remains gives a picture of the history of foreign occupation.

Still another proud landmark of olden times, the colonial era was the Matara railway station, which terminates the Southern bound railway line. Matara is also the home to many races and religions who have lived in peace and harmony for centuries.

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