

## Down Memory Lane of an 'Old' old Anadian (by Major N.L.C. Perera)



The year of 1936, in which I joined Ananda was a classic and auspicious one in the history of our Alma Mater, it being the year of Ananda's Golden Jubilee celebrations. The outstanding feature of the celebrations was the Jubilee Carnival, which lasted for one week drawing record crowds.

Mr. Kularatne was the Principal at the time. In 1936 Ananda had two sessions but in 1937 this was altered to one session in the morning for six days of the week. A couple of years later, afternoon classes were started for the poor children who could not afford to attend Ananda because of its high fees. This was called Olcott School. A year later some permanent buildings were put up for the College Workshop on a plot of land purchased from MacWoods Ltd.

Many of you may have not heard of the Farm Club, which Ananda established at Nawala on an extensive land of about five acres in 1939, just next door to my Parents' home, for students training in practical Agriculture. This dairy, which College Hostel that time the most the Primary Gunaratne, Miss Mulgirigama.

When the 2nd World War in was panic-stricken possibility of Air All the College requisitioned by Science Lab. As a out to the outskirts up branches at Pannipitiya and trend of the war the Japanese the 5<sup>th</sup> April 1942, branch at near Hayleys Ltd., year Mr Kularatne A.B.Perera Kularatne.

During Mr temporary class out of wood with Ananda's and we all moved then the period been a momentous College for higher at the beginning

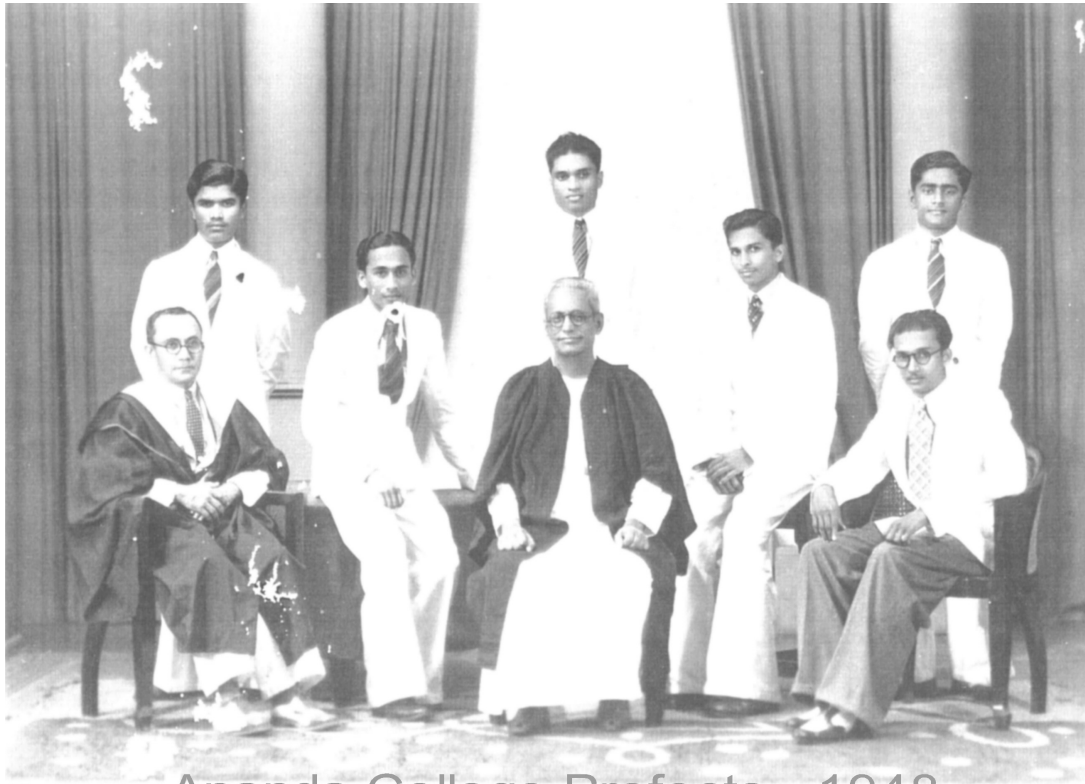


Farm Club had a supplied milk for the and retailers. During prominent teachers in School were Miss Ebert and Miss

Japanese entered the 1940 or so, every one anticipating the Raids on Colombo. buildings were the Army, except the result Ananda moved of Colombo, opening Gampaha, Elpitiya, Kolonnawa. When the started to ease off after bombed Colombo on Ananda opened a Mahabodi College in 1943. In the same retired and Mr succeeded Mr

Perera's time rooms were erected thatched roofs next to permanent buildings in there in 1944. Since upto mid 1945 had one. The Women's education was started of 1945 on the 2-acre

land acquired from MacWoods Ltd. The Primary school and part of the Industrial school were housed in the same premises. The Women's College provided instructions for the S.S.C., H.S.C., University Entrance, First M.B. and the Intermediate and Final Degree Examinations of the London University.



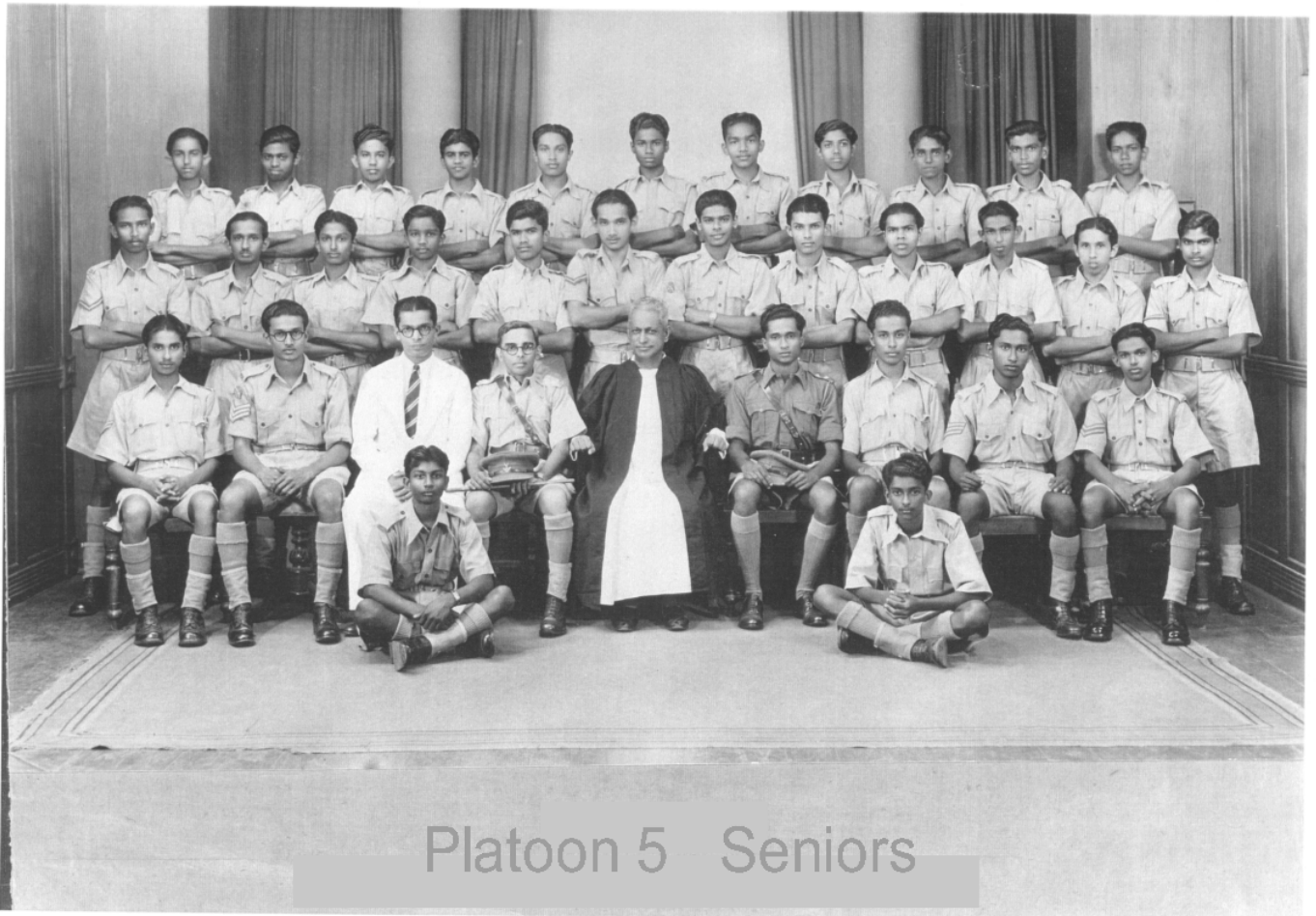
Ananda College Prefects - 1948

In the same year Mr Perera restarted the Olcott School. During this year of many vicissitudes, Ananda passed through a periodic crisis. The entire temporary buildings except the Women's College was engulfed by a great fire, consuming the Library and the Armoury in August or September 1945. The troublemakers were none other than our own unruly counterparts from the Ananda Branch at Upper Bullers Road, Bambalapitiya, which was established by Mr.Perera himself. Mr.Perera had to leave Ananda in November 1945 to take up an appointment as Ceylon's Ambassador to Egypt. Mr Perera was succeeded by Mr L.H.Mettananda. The task before Mr Mettananda was a Herculean one. The period of Mr Mettananda is recorded in the annals of Ananda in no unmistakable manner. The prosperity and security with which he conducted the College through turbulent times was remarkable. The ardour that he sheltered for the cause of Buddhism and Buddhist Education procured eminence for all the Anandians of the day. The pleasant memories of this great leader will remain cherished in my heart forever.

The termination of the war led to the closure of all the branches in 1945 but the Gampaha branch carried on for a few more months. All the buildings were re-requisitioned towards the end of 1945 and students from various branches came into Colombo. Thus the entire school including the Hostel was reestablished in the College premises. During this period most of the members of the Staff left the college and new teachers from various branches came in.

With the usual loyal characteristic of Anandians the Old Boys rallied round the new Principal to lend him the hand of co-operation in the task of reconstruction of the College. The OBA organised the magnanimous Diamond Jubilee Carnival and Exhibition, which was opened by Sir Earnest de Silva on the 31<sup>st</sup> October 1946, This Carnival was undiminished in splendour but yet maintained the best traditions of our Buddhist Culture. The Science Exhibition and Art show drew tremendous crowds. There was all night Pirith chanting in the College Hall which was followed by Alms giving for 60 Monks

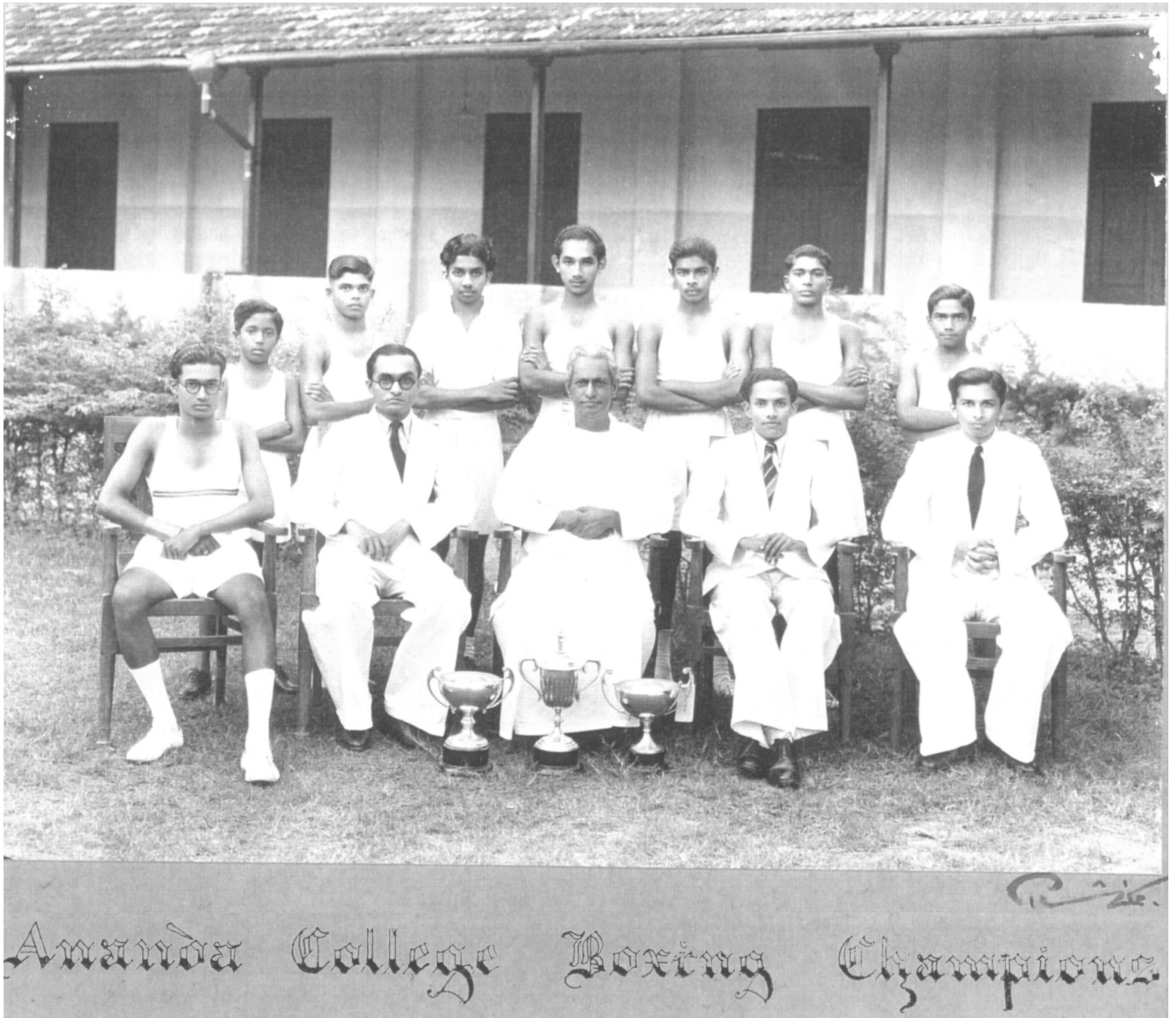
Two years later Ananda celebrated Ceylon's Independence by holding a national Pageant in the open air in the presence of about 5000 people, in which about 300 students of the College took part. Dulsie Bastains was Queen Kuveni and I had the privilege to act as King Vijaya. Mr Weeraratne organised a stage play called 'SAMSON NOTHARIS' in which I played the role of Samson Notharis. Mr Shakundur Dutt, the famous Oriental Dancer at the time organised a Ballet in which I was the lead dancer. Titus de Silva, now



known as Titus Totawatta, the well-known Sinhalese Film Director was also in the group. All these fund raising events contributed profitably for the rebuilding of the College was the result of an united effort of all the Anandians who participated in the above events.

I was very fortunate to have entered manhood under the guidance of an eminent leader. This great educationist brought us up in distinctly religious atmosphere. He always acted in the spirit of Buddhism and wanted to send out to the World young men who would not confuse liberty with license, grandeur with bigness. Thus I followed his footsteps and was able to acquire the position of Senior cadet Sergeant, Senior Prefect, College Athletics Captain and Boxing Captain, house Captain Member college Cricket XI all during the same period, but I was not big headed although I learned to be firm and resolute. I maintained perfect equanimity and was well disciplined without being selfish and possessive. As a result I was promoted Head

Prefect and Sergeant Major in charge of Ananda, Nalanda, St.Benedict and Zahira. With due respect to General Hamilton Wanasinghe, and Major Generals Duleep Wickramanayake, C.M.N.de Silva, Vijaya Athukorala and Asoka Jayawardena were Senior and Junior Cadets of Ananda at the time and they were all trained under my leadership. I was one of the three schoolboys selected for the eight-member team to represent Ceylon at the Inter Colonial Shooting Competition. This enabled me to win Ceylon Colours for shooting and in addition College Colours for Athletics, Boxing and Cadeting. The guidance of our eminent

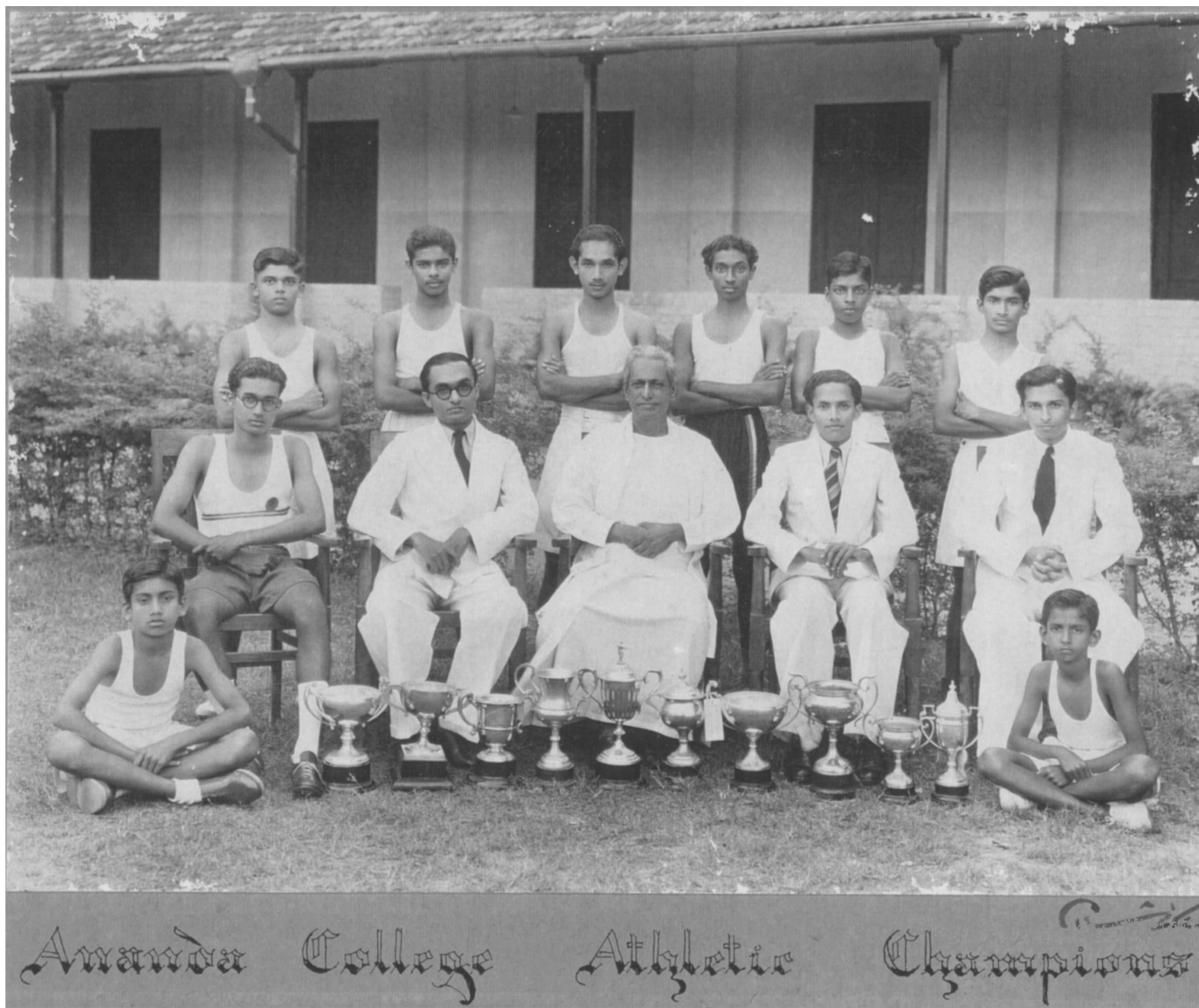


leader augured me to win laurels to prove my ability. I have listed my achievements merely to show how one could still maintain perfect equanimity without being selfish and possessive.

I wish to mention that the group of Old Anandians who founded our association are those who excelled either in the field of sports or academically bringing immense credit to our College in 1940s and 1950s. The affection, loyalty and service, which they have displayed towards our Alma Mater, became qualities that they exhibited in forming our Association. Now, the present younger generation of Old Anandians have the benefit of an organisation, which has been established and maintained through arduous efforts of men who worked hard in the midst of difficulties.

The future of the Association depends on the maintenance of friendly and sympathetic understanding of all age groups. We should, therefore, cultivate a spirit of tolerance and see that restraint and sincerity of purpose mark our speech and action.

It is time for all of us to collectively set an example to the present generation without dividing ourselves into rival camps and play our part worthy so as to mature good qualities of our youth. For this reason it is right to look back to the past, but do not keep the eyes so fixed on the past as to make us unfit for our work in the future.



(End)

Please note that NLC is a founder member of our Association and was appointed as President in the third year (1984/85) since inception. NLC and his wife, Kusum are the parents of Ruwanthi and five sons Shantha, Hemantha(Vip), Krisantha(Kris), Akila and Kapila. All the five sons in the NLC family are all Anandians and all of them have represented the AoA at the FoC in the past. NLC remembers well, how Akila hit the winning four to win the FoC Trophy for the AoA in the inaugural year of the cricket festival.

At present NLC and Kusum are resident in Harrow, Middlesex. NLC would be very pleased to hear from his contemporaries at Ananda from wherever they are now. You may telephone NLC on 020 8907 8545. 30Dec2003 Jp.