

**“AN ANECDOTAL SURVEY OF STREET AND PLACE NAMES  
IN THE DISTRICT OF COLOMBO “**

**By FREDERICK MEDIS**

**43rd lecture in the Monthly Lecture series of the National Trust- Sri Lanka will be held at the HNB Auditorium, 22<sup>nd</sup> Floor, HNB Towers, 479 T.B. Jayah Mawatha, Colombo 10 at 6.30 p.m. on Thursday the 30<sup>th</sup> August 2012.**



The fascinating study of place names involves research in nomenclature that derives from numerous sources including the natural features of the locality as well as fauna, flora and personalities. But it is the enchantment of its historical connections -- often burdened with legendary episodes and the scattered remnants of folk memory ---- which ensures its permanent appeal. In many instances even documentary evidence, however respected and time-honoured they may be, is fanciful and questionable, and has to be diligently sifted out from the hard core of reality.

Very often, fact and fiction is not a matter at issue. But what is of greater importance and concern is that it blends with its relevance to the natural features and the style of living inherent in the inhabitants of the locality in a by-gone era. A mere litany of place names is, however, a monotonous and futile exercise.

Frederick Medis is a Fellow of the Commonwealth Society of Antiquarians. He is the President of the Royal Commonwealth Society and Vice President of the Ceylon Society of Arts at the National Art Gallery. He is also a Past President of the Sri Lanka-Japan Friendship Society and the Ceylon Numismatic Society and the Philatelic Society.

He was former Vice-President of the Royal Asiatic Society where he was Chairman of the Toponymy Committee where research into place names was done. He has researched into around 900 place names in Sri Lanka tracing them back to their Portuguese, Dutch, Tamil, Pali and Sanskrit origins. He is a writer, lecturer and broadcaster in History, Numismatics, Philately, Art and Religion. Many of these have been published and broadcast in English, Sinhala, Tamil, French and German. Mr Medis also holds a British Diploma in Fashion Design and holds a Cambridge award as International Man of the year 2004. He is a visiting lecturer at the University of Peradeniya and Moratuwa.

**The National Trust – Sri Lanka conducts monthly lectures on the last Thursday of each month. The lectures are open to the members and the public.**

**Further information could be obtained from the Trust Office at the Post Graduate Institute of Archaeology, 407, Bauddhaloka Mawatha, Colombo 7. Tel: 2682730,**

**The events of the National Trust – Sri Lanka are principally sponsored by the HNB Sustainability Foundation.**