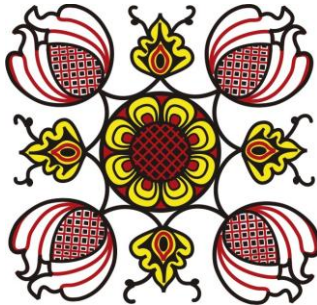


Quarterly Tours – No. 9



National Trust – Sri Lanka

30th August 2008

Compiled by Nilan Cooray

National Trust – Sri Lanka

Quarterly Tours – Saturday, 30th August 2008.

Programme

0630 hrs	:	Leave PGIAR
0830 hrs	:	Comfort stop and cup of tea at "Saman Villas" Bentota.
1030 hrs	:	Arrive at Old Gate, Galle Fort. Visit the many Monuments within Galle Fort along with Archt. Ashely de Vos
1130 hrs	:	Akersloot bastion within Galle Fort and tea with Shalani Wickremasuriya
1330 hrs	:	Lunch at Cloisenberg, a sea Captain's Residence in retirement, now an exclusive Hotel
1430 hrs	:	Leave for Rumassala, Bouna Vista Nature Reserve and a cup of tea
1630 hrs	:	Leave for Colombo
1930 hrs	:	Arrive at the PGIAR

Galle Fort



Galle was a port settlement before the advent of Portuguese in the 16th century. The strategic location of Galle in relation to the main sea routes has given it prominence among other ports in Lanka. There is evidence that it was visited by traders from many parts of the world. Many came and many stayed. The earliest recorded history of this settlement dates back to 545 AD, where Cosmos Indicopleustes makes the first reference to Galle in his records. The earliest foreign visitor, however,

was Ibn Batuta, the famous Arab navigator and traveller, who is reported to have touched at Galle in the year 1344 AD.

Some have gone as far as to equate Galle to the biblical town of Tarshish, and that King Solomon's ships called for merchandise consisting of such exotic products as precious stones, pearls, peacocks and spices for which Sri Lanka was famous. In 1421 the famous Ming admiral Cheng Ho called in at Galle during the voyages of the Chinese treasure ships. A carved stone inscription with messages in Chinese, Persian and Tamil was left behind recording the visit. This stone is preserved in the National Museum, Colombo. Lanka's famous trade commodities also attracted other interested parties, and by the 14th century, Galle was the Island's chief port of call. The monopoly of most of the trade in the ocean at the time was in the hands of the Moors.

In 1505, a fleet of Portuguese ships under the command of Don Laurenzo de Almeida set out for the Maldives to intercept a fleet of Moorish ships carrying spices, but owing to unfavorable weather in the ocean, were driven off course and took refuge in the port of Galle. A stone Padrao recording this event, including the name of the sculptor, was found in Galle. Couto recording the event says that the Portuguese were taken in a circuitous route by a group of Moors who saw the arrival

of this new group from the West as an intrusion into their arena of operations and the Portuguese were taken to see a Moorsih merchant who posed off as the king. The Portuguese who realized that they had been duped left for Goa. The now famous saying "*Parangiya Kottye gia wage*" records that the "Parangiya " was taken for a right royal ride in Galle and not in Colombo. In 1518, they returned to Colombo to build a factory, but continued to use the port of Galle for trade, and in 1588 returned to Galle to establish a fortification. The only major construction in the area prior to that was the building of a Franciscan chapel in 1543, in the vicinity of the present Fort.

In 1588, When the king of Sitawaka, in order to check the Portuguese territorial ambitions, laid siege on the Portuguese Colombo, the Portuguese withdrew along the south coast and fortified Galle. This fortification consisted of a wall and three bastions on the land side, while on the seaward there was only a palisade. Characteristically, the Portuguese named their bastions after the saints. These were Sanken Lanka Lago (St. James) on the Eastern side, near the bay. Conceycao (Immaculate Conception), near the present clock tower, Santa Antonio, on the western and facing the sea. There was no gate, the only entrance being across the drawbridge over a shallow moat and over the wall. This design is very characteristic of

Portuguese forts in coastal areas. The Portuguese felt they were the masters of the sea and therefore fortified only against the enemy from the land. Unfortunately, very little is known of the Galle fort during this period, as most of the records were burnt by Van Toll, secretary to Gerrit de Meere, Governor of Colombo.

In 1640, an Armada of twelve Dutch ships and two thousand men attacked the Portuguese fort at Galle. After a short but fierce battle, St. Lago's bastion was breached. Soon after the capture of the Fort, the Dutch set about building the ramparts and constructing the fortifications. While the Portuguese could afford to be complacent about the seaward frontier, the Dutch could not. The Indian Ocean by this time was full of competing European nations - British, French and Danish in addition to the Portuguese. For this reason, there is no example of Dutch coastal fortress with weak seaside defenses. Their forts were thus not merely fortifications against a land enemy, but also defenses of the harbours themselves. For the security of their forts depended on their ability to hold the harbours. The port city of Galle was their administrative hub for the southern maritime province and was a strategic location of their maritime trading routes connecting the Dutch territories in the East.



The Dutch constructed the present 90 acre fort in Galle, completed in 1663. This fort was designed as a stronghold of power and therefore, was very similar to the fortified cities of Europe. It enclosed a vast area of land and accommodated all sectors of the population who were loyal to the Dutch. It was the town, and all the important people lived there. All the facilities necessary for them were also provided within the walls. The shape of the fort was irregular due to the coastline on which it was situated. However, bastions had been positioned in a manner to provide adequate defense of this irregular rampart. Facing the present esplanade was a deep, six meter wide moat.

This fortified city has been planned according to the iron grid pattern and it is comprised of an attractive street pattern with buildings nourished with distinctive architectural character, which is a mixture of both local and colonial Dutch traditions. The original usage of the buildings varied from dwellings to administrative edifices. The wide and high ramparts on all sides defining the city had a single gateway from the land side. When the British took over the control of the Maritime Provinces of the Island from the Dutch at the end of 18th century, they further consolidated the defensive system without altering the Dutch fortifications and constructed an additional gateway to the Fort. While retaining the town plan and most of the built structures and street facades established by the Dutch, the British made some modifications to the urbanscape of the Fort by adding new buildings and providing new infrastructure facilities to suit their administrative setup. However, the Galle Fort gradually ceased to function as a fortified base during British occupation, but continued as an administrative centre for the South. This has continued for over two centuries. Even today the fort continues to be an administrative and legal centre. The two major banking institutions of Sri Lanka are housed within its walls. Galle is the only living city in the Island where all the Dutch fortifications are intact to -date.

Recognizing the importance of the Galle Fort as a site of antiquarian value, the Department of Archaeology declared it as a protected monument in 1974 under the Antiquities Ordinance. It was inscribed on the UNESCO's World Heritage list in 1988. Conservation and management of the fort are being handled by the major stake-holders viz., Department of Archaeology, the Central Cultural and the Galle Heritage Foundation.

The Old entrance



Facing the old harbour, is the original entrance to the Fort. On the outer side above the arched gateway, is the coat of Arms of Great Britain and Ireland. On the inner side, there is carved stone, a shield with two lions on either side, and a cock bird perched on a rock as a crest which bears under it the date 1669. The timber arched doors of massive proportion of this gateway has

been conserved recently by the Central Cultural Fund.

The Dutch Warehouse



Built in 1676, this massive two-storied warehouse is 175 meters long, 13 meters wide and about 15 meters high up to the top of the gable roof. Faced with a Dutch gable on the west, which was characteristic of the Dutch colonial architecture, it is a major land mark of the Fort. The original entrance to the Fort, which was through the Ware House in the form of a massive arched doorway, still functions. The building has been conserved by the Central Cultural Fund by removing incompatible interventions carried out during modern times, but retaining the sympathetic alterations done

by the British to display the building's historical evolution. Under the Sri Lanka -Netherlands Cultural Cooperation Programme, this building is being developed as the Maritime Archaeology Museum cum Heritage Information Centre, by the Central Cultural Fund to be opened to the general public by the end of 2008. This museum will provide an introduction to the maritime heritage of this Island nation through artifacts, (including those recovered through the maritime archaeological explorations of the ship-wrecks within the ancient port of Galle), models, graphic panels etc. Multi media facilities will also be established to provide heritage information to the visitors. This museum cum information centre is also designed to be a valuable resource centre of heritage knowledge to offer a rewarding and complex experience of the World Heritage Site of Galle to visitors of all strata.

The Black Fort (Zwart bastion)



This site, presently occupied by the police is perhaps the only site in Galle where the remnants of Portuguese Galle could be found. Constructed on an elevated location overlooking the old harbour, this is the most romantic area of the fort with barrel vaulted structures (so-called "prison cells"), and two vaulted tunnels connecting different levels of the bastions. This is a highly potential area for tourism in Galle. This bastion is presently being conserved by the Central Cultural Fund.

Akersloot Bastion

To the South of the High Court building and along the hospital street is the Akersloot bastion, named after the birth place of Admiral Coster, who was killed soon after the capture of the Fort. Eight mounted guns and a telescope stood in this bastion which overlooks the harbour. Today it is the residence of the Master Attendant. It is believed that an underground passage existed between the Zwart and Akersloot bastions during the Dutch period. The present garden of the bastion contains a breadfruit tree, said to be the first planted in the Island by the Dutch.

Old Katchcheri building

Altered during the British period for the use as the Katchcheri building, this is the site of the old hospital of the Dutch period. Johan Jacobaz Saar who arrived in Galle on the 4th October 1647, writes as follows: *"On the left side as one approaches is seem the hospital where formerly the Portuguese had their mint, between the Aurora and Utrecht bastion were housed the workmen and slaves."*

Utrecht Bastion

Named after a inland city in the Netherlands, this bastion is the present location for the light house constructed in 1940. Below this is Dutch built powder magazine.

Flag Rock Bastion



The rocky outcrop, projecting out to the ocean in the south direction is the flag rock bastion that served as a Flagstaff and signal station.

Triton Bastion

The famous windmill was located within this bastion. The water drawn up by this mill was used to fill the water carts to water to the dusty streets. This also helped to keep the fort cool.

The Moon Bastion



The clock tower which stands on the bastion was erected in the memory of Dr. Peter Daniel Anthionisz (1883).

The Sun Bastion

This is the location of the Portuguese bastion of San Lago. It is said that 15 cannons were mounted in the Bastion during Dutch Period.

The Dutch Reformed Church

Completed in early 1750's, the Dutch Reformed Church is the oldest surviving Protestant place of worship in Sri Lanka. Being a land mark in the historic Galle Fort, the church is located along the church street facing east and, is bounded by the middle street to the north. It was built as a thanks offering to God in the birth of a daughter to Casparus de Jong, the commandeur of Galle (from 1751- 1753) and his wife Gertruyda Adriana Le Grand. The couple had been childless for many years. During the Dutch occupation in Sri Lanka this was the most celebrated church in its southern coastal belt. Although there is a belief that the present church is built in the site of a Capuchin Convent demolished by the Dutch, the maps of Valentyne and Barrete de Resinde do not suggest the existence of a religious institution at this location. Ground plan of the Galle Fort published in 1767 indicates the area

under discussion as open space. Though this is a property of the Dutch Reformed Church up to the present day, Anglican community also used the Dutch Church to hold their services during early British rule till 1867, when the present All Saint's Church was built by the British.



As it appears today the Church displays a fine example of a gabled roof edifice of the Dutch period. Like the Wolvendaal

Church in Colombo, the plan of the Galle Church too is cruciform, only that the transepts are shorter. Unlike the quasi- classical of Renaissance style of the two other churches built in the same century at Jaffna and Colombo, the Galle Church has no central tower. The two gables on the eastern and western walls with unusual double scroll' moldings, which is unique and the first specimen of the Dutch gable erected on any edifice in the island, however compensate for the absence of a central tower. These masonry gables are finished off with three fumed - like finials, one on each of the pedestal of the two ends and another on the apex.

Two wide arches visually separate the transepts from the nave. The high vaulted ceiling over the nave was originally painted blue and studded with golden stars. Unlike many of the Dutch churches, the interior is not disturbed by pillars, except at the front, which support the wooden organ loft. The thick timber doors that provide light and ventilation are wide, high and spacious in typical Dutch style.

The Pews along the wall of the northern transept have been dismantled during the British Period to accommodate the platform and massive communion rails for the services of the Anglican community. Though these spatial modifications

were severely criticized at that time, the presence of communion rails in a Dutch Reformed Church is considered as a clear manifestation of Christian charity and amity, that was extended in the true spirit of Christianity. The orthodox pulpit is the finest specimen of its type in the Island, built hexagonal in shape, of finely grained calamander with panels of flowered satinwood and attached to the wall. As in the case of other Dutch Churches, there are large number of tombstones on the floor as well as tablets and hatchments on the walls. The memorial tablet on the southern wall of the nave close to the main entrance is the largest and most interesting of many hatchments inside the church. It is regarded as the most elaborate mural tablets in the Island and only specimen in the East, decorated not only with armorial ensigns, but also with desires of martial insignia. In 1880, the western wall was opened up to introduce a large and elaborate stained glass window. This was the original position of the large hatchment now on the south wall close to the main entrance. This can be considered as a major visual alteration to the interior of the monuments which enabled to enhance its major east- west axis.

The area beneath the floor opposite the organ loft is the main burial vault of the Church. There are two more vaults, which

extend from the side of the Church to the parapet wall of the compound and, is roofed over with a pavement. The rectangular compound on which the church stands is surrounded by a chastely built boundary wall.

Old Post Office Building



This was the Dutch Trade Office and Personnel Department of the Dutch period. Called "Negotie Kantoor" in Dutch, it was responsible for all mercantile affairs of the Southern Maritime Province. This office was administrated by several clerks and book - keepers. The building has a colonnaded front verandah and a central courtyard with large and spacious rooms.

Owned at present by the Department of Archaeology and assigned to the Urban Development Authority, this building was used as the post Office during the British administration. The trees grown within the building have affected seriously the building's structural stability. The Banyan Tree that is grown at the rear section of the building has invaded the whole architectural fabric of this section, and has affected its structural integrity and hence, beyond repair. The wall plasters in many areas have been peeled off, mainly due to salt action. The parts of the roof have deteriorated, resulting structural instability and rain water percolation. In some areas, the original half - round tiles have been replaced with asbestos sheets, which is not compatible with the heritage character of the building. As such urgent attention is needed to save this priceless monument which is about to loose all its heritage values.

Old Governor's house

Along the church street, and not far from the Dutch Reformed church, and located opposite of the Old Post Office building is the Old Governor's house. Over the doorway is a stone slab inscribed with the figure of a cock and is dated 1683. This

building was altered in part by the British to adapt it to the requirements of a temporary residence in Galle for the Governor and other high officials. In 1873, it was sold to Messers Clarke Spence and Co. merchants and then it was used as an office by Walker Sons and Co. Ltd.

Sewerage System

The Dutch also built an intricate sewerage system to carry the waste and rain water to the sea which is operated through the natural action of the high and low tide. These brick lines vaulted drains are 2-4 meters below ground level.