COLTS ICONS

Merriam – Webster defines an icon as "*a person or thing widely admired especially for having great influence or significance in a particular sphere*". Therefore, a criterion for meeting iconic status in the cricket world is cricketing excellence, reflected in gaining national selection. Players who weren't considered for national selection are still icons if their impact on club cricket was so great that other clubs would liked to have had them in their teams. At the very least icons stood out in their game and boosted the morale of the club.

The "great stalwarts" of the club as listed in the centenary publication, have been chosen for their outstanding cricket achievements for the club. As such, as argued in the following chapter, they are icons first and stalwarts second, with notable exceptions where stalwart status is considered. Dr. Allan Raffel heads the list followed by Tommy Kelaart, C.E. Perera, W. de Rozario, A.T. Pollocks, Carl Van Geyzel, Johnny Murray, B. Krestser, D.W.L. Lieversz, R.G.W. Jayatilleka and E.B. Nathanielsz.

Douglas Lieversz, who joined the club in the mid nineteen-twenties, and probably interacted with the first-generation players who were associated with the club's early cricketing invincibility, had a major input into this selection. The presence of Douglas Lieversz and Tita Nathanielsz in the list reflected their undisputed status, in 1973, as club cricketing legends. The only addition to the list that the chronicler would like to make is Dr. Colvin van Geyzel, the uncle of Carl Van Geyzel[1], who is listed as a stalwart in the centenary souvenir.

[1] Dr Colvin Thomasz van Geyzel (b. 28/10/1867) captained the Colts in 1896 and 1897. He had three sons, namely, Frederick Christopher William (b. 30/05/1901), Cecil Theodore (b. 19/12/1902) and Colvin Leonard (b. 04/09/1905). FCW and CT van Geyzel played for the NCC. Dr. C.T. van Geyzel had an elder brother called Charles Walter (van Geyzel, also a doctor according to Foenander (1941: 18), who was a member of the Ceylonese XI that played against the Europeans in 1887 (Foenander 1941: 15). Charles Walter had three sons, the middle son being Charles Walter (b. 1890). This son is the CW van Geyzel aka Carl, who captained the Colts in 1927 (aged 37 – 39 years) and again in 1936 (aged 46 years) (Foenander 1941: 93). Foenander (1941:18) says that Carl van Geyzel was one of oldest playing members of the club which confirms that CW van Geyzel (b. 1890) and Carl van Geyzel is one and the same person. Douglas Lieversz who played an important role in selecting the Colts stalwarts at the club's centenary, would have played under Carl. CT van Geyzel Jr and FCW van Geyzel who played fo the NCC were the cousins of CW Jr, who played for the Colts. They all attended Royal.

The people selected to the hall of fame in 1973 are not disputed, but a strong argument can be made that they be described as icons rather than stalwarts. While icons usually double up as stalwarts, due to their service and loyalty to the club, many don't. Abu Fuard the off-spinner who played for the national team, is a case in point. Club icons must be distinguished from club stalwarts, former cricketers and non-cricketers who contributed to the success and survival of the club from behind the scenes, and who are described in the previous chapter.

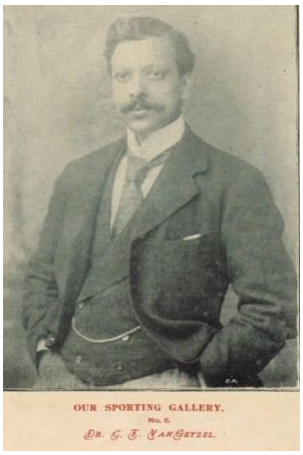
The first icons

It was natural that the Colts, being Ceylon's first cricket club, would produce the country's first sporting icons. An 1897 edition of The Ceylon Review featured three Colts cricketers in its sporting gallery. They were Dr. Colvin Van Geyzel, the current cricket captain, who was thirty years of age, Tommy Kelaart and Dr. Allan Raffel. They all attended Royal which was the *alma mater* for Colts cricketers at the time.

Dr Van Geyzel captained the Colts from 1896 to 1897, and then again in 1899. Raffel was Kelaart's opening bowling partner but by 1897 had experienced injury which had affected his bowling and was focusing on his batting. He had yet to qualify as a doctor. He was the first recognised icon of the club.

A chapter is devoted to the Kelaart family, with a significant amount of space allotted to Tommy Kelaart, but the relevant pages of the Ceylon Review is displayed below to highlight who the high-profile cricketers of the club and the most identifiable non-European cricketers in the country were, a year before the club's 25th anniversary.

COLTS ICONS OF THE NINETEENTH CENTURY



Dr. Colin Van Geyzel
Courtesy of the Ceylon Review and Richard Kelaart



Tommy Kelaart and Dr. Allan Raffel

PEN PORTRAITS

VAN GEYZEL

THE counterfeit presentment of the popular Captain of the Colts C. C., which we give on the opposite page, cannot, we fear, be regarded as a very faithful reproduction of the genial doctor, who, since the photo was taken, has gained much dignity and added considerably in weight to the comparatively slim and athletic figure of his former self. The future Captain of the Colts first gazed on this work-a-day world in October, 1867, at Prince Street, Pettah, Colombo, the then fashionable portion of the town. History does not relate whether when in the cradle he exhibited any sporting proclivities, but these were speedily developed—though not at the cost of his studies—when he joined the Royal College in 1881. His first public appearance of note on the cricket field was made in 1883, when he was one of the team which did battle against the Thomians in the great inter-collegiate match of that year. Though we have no data of his performance on this his *debut*, we have no doubt that he acquitted himself creditably. He took part in four inter-collegiate matches in all, those from '83 to '87, being Captain of the team from 1885 to 1886. We regret we have no handy record of his individual performances in each of these contests, but from the fact that he was regarded in the light of a champion among his school fellows, and as a promising member of the Colts Club—which he joined in 1881—we have cause to believe that he maintained his reputation well. Before leaving for England in 1887, Colvin Van Geyzel played on several occasions for the Colts C. C., making more than one big score. While in England he played for the London University College Hospital and for the United Hospitals of London against some of the leading London and suburban Clubs. On returning to Ceylon in 1893, Dr. Van Geyzel again played for the Colts C. C., and has captained them since 1894 up to date. As a batman he has perhaps lost some of that dash which characterised some of his more youthful efforts, but he is still a very hard man to get out, and after an over or two is decidedly dangerous. He does not bowl, but with his fielding at short leg he has often surprised on-lookers by the ease and agility of his movements. As a Captain he has proved himself to be a great success as may be judged from the fact of his re-election year after year to the captaincy. Being only 30 years of age, the young doctor should have a considerable spell of cricket before him yet.

KELAART & RAFFEL

Our Sporting Gallery.

THE COLTS BOWLERS.

MR. THOMAS KELAART AND MR. ALLAN RAFFEL.

THERE are, perhaps, two no better known Cricketers in Ceylon than those represented by the portrait on the opposite page, and the names of Tommy Kelaart and Raffel were always mentioned with some degree of trepidation by batsmen who had to oppose the fiery deliveries of these two sprightly Colts. With these two formidable bowlers to play havoc among their oppenents' batting, the Colts were well-nigh invincible up to May, 1895, and although the Club still occupies the proud position of the Premier Club in the Island, it is open to doubt whether they are as formidable now as they used to be up to that date, when Raffel, unfortunately, through an accident was no longer able to bowl for the Club. The two bowlers, have always been the thickest of chums, and might almost have been regarded as inseparables. Of the two the elder is THOMAS KELAART who was born as the 1st October, 1872, in Colombo. He comes of a family of cricketers, for his eldest brother, Colvin Kelaart, was Captain of the Colts for a great many years, and many a local Cricketer still retains a lively recollection of his "lightening-expresses." Another brother, J. Kelaart, were popularly known as "Banda" used to be one of the most punishing bats of the Colts C. C., and still plays for the Club, being a splendid field. Yet another and younger brother, C. Kelaart, plays for the Nondescript C. C., and occasionally trundles with success. "Tommy" was educated at the Royal College, where he was from 1886 to 1889—unfortunately, however, he only played in one inter-collegiate match, that of 1888, being prevented by ill-health from taking part in the other two. On leaving College in May, 1889, he joined the Colts C. C. for which he has bowled ever since, and with phenomenal success. In October, 1890, he was one of Mr. Vanderspaar's team that played against the Australians, while in December of the same year he accompanied Mr. Vanderspaar's team to the Straits and rendered the visitors great assistance. In October, 1891, we see him figuring in the match Ceylon *vs.* Lord Sheffied's team, which was played on Galle Face, and in this match he had the proud distinction of bowling the Champion, Dr. W. G. Grace. In April, 1892, when playing for the Colts C. C., against Colombo C. C., Kelaart secured four wickets in one over, all clean bowled. In November, 1892, he played for the Colts against Lord Hawke's team. He has also played (in December, 1892), for Col. Churchill's team in Colombo against a team representing the Madras Presidency, and also for an "All Ceylon" team got up by Mr. Ashley Walker at Kandy against the same visitors. In April, 1893, when playing for the Colts against the Nuwara Eliya C. C., he secured seven wickets for six runs. In October, 1894, he played on the Garrison Ground for Mr. Vanderspaar's team against Mr. Stoddart's team (which was on its way to Australia, and which was so successful there). In October, 1895, in the match Europeans *vs.* Colts on Galle Face, he, together with Fransz, dismissed a formidable European combination for 13 runs, Kelaart capturing four wickets for 5 runs, and Fransz three for eight. In January, 1896, at Kandy, when bowling for the Colts *vs.* a picked European team got together by Mr. Ashley Walker, he secured seven wickets for five runs on the second day of play. Tommy Kelaart is a medium-pace left-hand bowler, who can do with the ball pretty much as he likes. He gets any amount of sting into his deliveries, but secures more wickets with his yorkers' than perhaps any other ball. He is a very good field, and, sometimes makes runs, though his batting powers are by no means strong, still he is very "nippy" and has often been most useful in stealing runs and throwing a field into confusion. There are some who think that his bowling has not now its old-time sting, these have only to face it to alter their opinion. He has been more than an acquisition to the Colts, who owe many a victory to his trundling powers, and being still very far from the seer-and-yellow-stage, should have a lot more successes yet in store.

ALLAN RAFFEL is nearly three years junior to his "chum" having been born on the 9th February, 1875. He, too, was educated at the Royal College, which has been the *alma mater* of the majority of the Colts. He was at the College from 1887, to '92, and took part in no less than four Inter-Collegiate matches. captaining the team in 1892, on which occasion he was top-scorer for his side in both innings, making 56 and 49. He also played for the College in 1890 against the C. C. C. and secured eight wickets for seven runs. He became a member of the Colts C. C. in 1890. In 1891

he played for Mr. Vanderspaar's team against Lord Sheffield's team and took six wickets. In November, 1892, he played for the Colts C. C. against Lord Hawke's team, and with Kelaart, took part in the matches in December, 1892, against a team of the Madras Presidency, and also for the All Ceylon team in Kandy, against the Madras cricketers. On this occasion he was top-scorer in both innings in this match making not out 23 and 39 respectively. He also played for Mr. Vanderspaar's XV. against Stoddarts' XI in 1894, taking nine wickets for 54 runs, getting three wickets in one over, all clean bowled, (Lockwood, Stoddart and Brown). He scored his first century (118) in the match Colts *vs.* Sports C. C. on Galle Face in November, 1895. In May, 1895, whilst playing for the Colts *vs.* Nondescripts, he sustained an injury to his left arm, which has necessitated his giving up bowling ever since, a serious loss, as may well be imagined, to his Club. What, however, the Club have lost by his bowling they have gained to a great extent by his batting, which has so greatly improved, till now he is regarded as perhaps the best batsman of the Colts. His bowling used to be medium to fast left hand, his delivery being particularly graceful. Raffel is one of the best if not the best fielder in Ceylon, distinguishing himself in any part of the field, though it is at slip that his fielding is so brilliant. He is a most dashing batsman, and punishes anything approaching a loose delivery severely. His cutting and driving powers are great, and his batting generally very pretty to watch. Raffel may shortly be going to England to prosecute his medical studies, and while there we hope to hear of him as taking part in some good cricket.

Courtesy of the Ceylon Review and Richard Kelaart

Allan Raffel appears in every available photo of the club taken between 1900 and 1941. In 1941 he was patron of the Colts. Foenander (1941: 12-13) ranks him among the six greatest cricketers the club has had. (Of course, 73 years have passed since this assessment.) To quote Foenander –

> "As a left-handed bowler he shared many a triumph with Tommy Kelaart, and between 1890 and 1895 he was irresistible even against powerful visiting teams. At the Royal College Dr. Raffel won the highest cricketing honours as captain and as a batsman and bowler. Joining the Colts while still in his teens, he proved himself a very deadly bowler, dashing batsman and brilliant fieldsman. His most memorable bowling performance in Ceylon cricket was recorded for the All-Ceylon team against A.E. Stoddart's England team at the Barrack Square in 1894, when he captured 14 wickets for 87 in the two innings, numbering amongst his victims such celebrated batsmen as A.E. Stoddart, A.C. McLaren, F.J.G. Ford, W. Brockwell, J.T. Brown, R. Peel, W.H. Lockwood, and J.T. Briggs. … While studying medicine in Scotland, Dr. Raffel played with success for the famous Carlton Club. For several years after his return from Scotland Dr. Raffel captained the Colts with marked success and has been a most popular personality in the club. Some years ago Dr Raffel was elected President of the Ceylon Cricket Association. He is now Patron of the Colts C.C. having succeeded the late Sir T.F. Garvin."

Dr Raffel was the club's cricket captain from 1901 to 1919, was president from 1928 to 1940, its patron in 1941 and its first life member. In 1942 Col. Sir John Parsons was appointed patron and it is possible that Mr. Raffel passed away between 1941 and 1942?

DR. ALLAN RAFFEL



Courtesy of S.P. Foenander

Dr. C.T. vanGeyzel

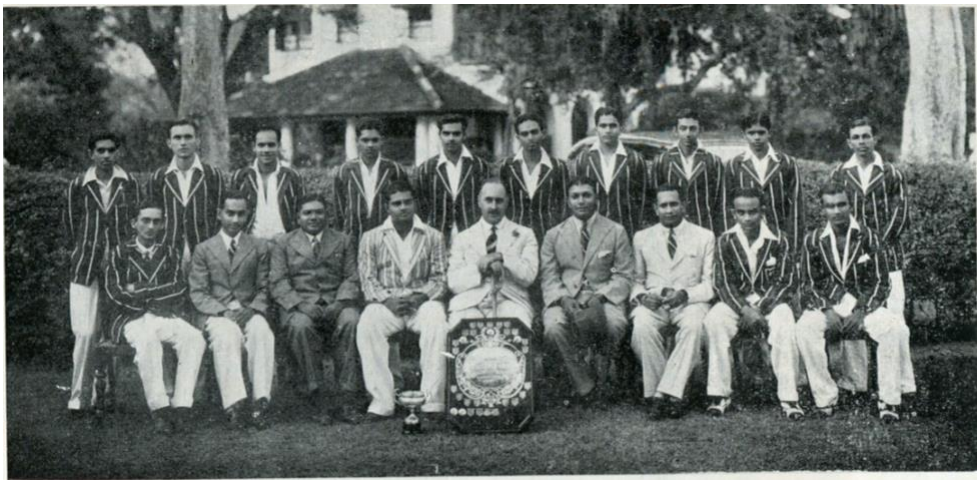
Foenander (1941: 15) talks about the Dr. C.T. van Geyzel, the uncle of Alan Raffel.

> "Dr. C.T. van Geyzel joined the Colts after having been a successful captain of the Royal College team. In England he played with success for Middlesex Hospital; and on his return to Ceylon he captained the Colts and hit up 57 on his first appearance against the Colombo Sports Club. On that occasion Colvin Van Geyzel set up a Colts and Ceylon record when he and his nephew Dr. Allan Raffel (118), put on 156 for the 8th wicket. This still remains unbeaten. Dr. van Geyzel captained the Colts in more than one test match, and later became a Vice-President of the Club. His sons, F.C.W. and C.T., are among Ceylon's best batsmen produced in this century; but both played for the Nondescripts, and not for their father's old club."

Carl van Geyzel

Carl van Geyzel (C.W.) is a nephew of Dr. C.T. "Colin" van Geyzel. His father was Dr. C.W.Q. van Geyzel. Carl captained the Colts from 1927 to 1929, and again in 1936. Apparently he was very fussy about clothes and keen on flannels. As he was a man of means he apparently bought the entire team cream flannels or china silk. The following two photos feature Carl van Geyzel in government service cricket teams.

RUBBER CONTROL DEPARTMENT TEAM, "A" DIVISION CHAMPS, 1937



Standing L to R: A.M.A. Ratnayake, A. Powell, G.N. Schoorman, D.S. Jayasundera, I.M.S. Deen, W.E.V. Fernando, G. Sellayah, S.R.B. de Z. Adhihetty, W.P.A. Sirisena, D.D. Abeygunawardena
Seated L to R: C.W. Van Geyzel, K.C. Thangarajah, F.D. Wijesinghe (Hony. Secretary C.G.S.C.A.), S.S. Jayawickrema (capt.), H.E. Andrew Caldecott, P. Saravanamuttu (rubber controller), S.P. Wickremasinghe (deputy rubber controller), G.S. Hubert, I.D. Abeywardena

Courtesy of Ceylon Government Service Cricket Association Golden Jubilee Souvenir,1957

TEA CONTROL DEPARTMENT TEAM, "A" DIVISION CHAMPIONS, 1944



Standing L to R: A. de Silva, E.W.R. Fernando, F.G. Dalpathado, E.R. Hubert, G.F. Walters, G.M. Spittel, I.H. Walbeoff, E.L.S. Thamotharam, A.MN. Faize, M. Raize
Seated L to R: C.P.W. Van Geyzel, U.L.L. Perera, B. Wijewardena (Hony. Secretary, C.G.S.C.A.), Hugh Scharenguivel (Capt.), H.E. Sir Henry Moore, P. Saravanamuttu (Tea controller), Robert Fernando, Claude Wijesinghe
Courtesy of Ceylon Government Service Cricket Association Golden Jubilee Souvenir, 1957

An icon but not a stalwart

A Wesley College website (www.wesleycollege.org/**cricket**/**ceperera**.htm) carries an article on C.E. Perera from A hundred years of Ceylon cricket edited by S.S. Perera. His career spanned 10 years from 1897 to 1907 before he succumbed to enteric fever.

> "While at Buddhist College (later Ananda College), he was coached by J.C. McHeyzer the Thomian and Colts player, then head-master at Buddhist College. He first hit the headlines with a classic 97 not out against Royal College in 1898 enabling Wesley to beat Royal (by an innings) for the first time since the inaugural match in 1893. With W.V. Wijekoon, the pair put on 105 runs for the 10th wicket. The first century partnership for the 10th wicket in Ceylon. This innings gained selection for the Colts CC (then representing Ceylon) against Captain Ward Jackson's European XI in 1898. A historic match was played on the 5th and 6th of July 1901 between Colts CC and "The Boer Prisoners of War." Perera going in at number seven for Colts scored a brilliant 90 not out, out of

146. In 1901 he was associated with a partnership of 204 for the 4th wicket and 193 for the first wickets. On both occasions he scored centuries.
From 1904 to 1907 he spent time playing for SSC and Colts. He was selected to tour Bombay with the first Ceylonese team (mostly consisting of Colts players) to travel overseas. In India C.E. Perera (80) and Ahmath (79) added 117 runs for the 4th wicket in just 25 minutes. His 80 included 15 fours. During the last two years he had a rare distinction of scoring four centuries in first class cricket, a feat uncommon in Ceylon at the time.
He was elected to captain of SSC at the annual general meeting a month prior to his death and never got the opportunity to lead the team. According to newspaper reports, Ceylon's greatest cricketer was given a military funeral, coffin was draped with the Union Jack and the funeral took place at Mt. Lavinia cemetery. On the 1st of March 1940, portrait of C.E. Perera was unveiled at Campbell Park pavilion by P. Saravanamuttu, President of the Ceylon Cricket Association."

Despite leaving the Colts for the SSC he is still treated as an outstanding Colt? Most of his success was had as a Colts player.

Other early icons

Lorenz-Andree (1973) has summarised Wally de Rozayro. To quote -

"Wallie de Rosayro was for several years the Club's wicket keeper and was famous for legerdemain behind the wickets. He generally stood with his nose upto the stumps, and many a batsman was caught or stumped behind the wickets. Mr. Pelham Warner, the famous M.C.C. captain on a visit to Ceylon in 1911 with the M.C.C. team, de Rosayro played for All-Ceylon then and Mr. Warner said, that he considered him one of the world's best wicket keepers. Wallie de Rosayro was short and frail and was nicknamed by his colleagues as "CHEEKU" probably because of his cheeky manner and mannerisms. As a matter of fact, he refused to play for the Colts in a "big" match unless he was provided with a new out-fit, which Dr. Raffel generally gave him in order to persuade him to play."

WALLIE DE ROSAYRO



BERTRAM DE KRETSER



Courtesy of S.P. Foenander 1941

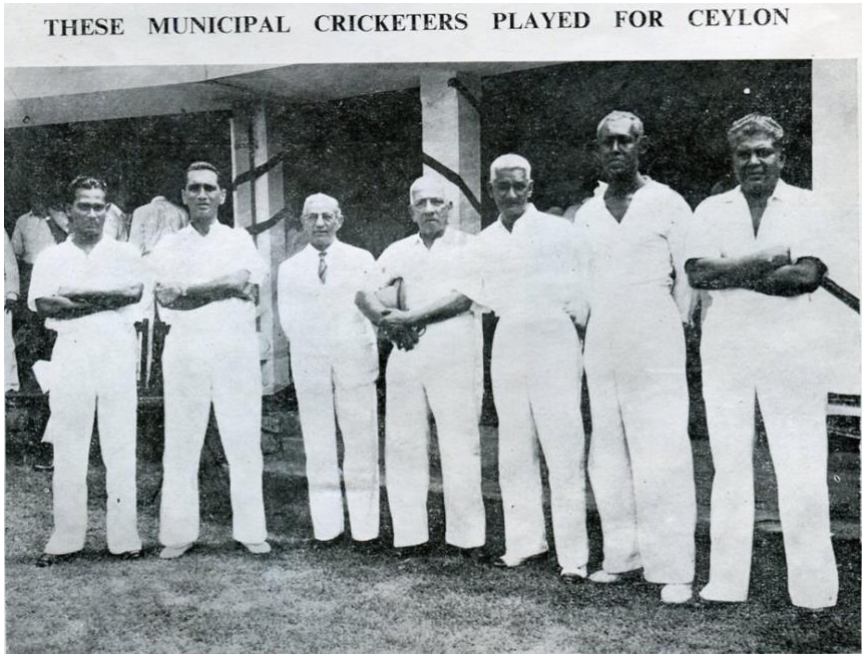
A.T. Pollocks was an opening batsman with four centuries against his name. At 1941 he was the only Colts batsman to have scored centuries against the N.C.C. and S.S.C. In 1913 he was the first Colt to score a century against the SSC. He carried out his bat in scoring a century against the N.C.C. on a very difficult wicket. He headed the Colts batting in 1913 with 37.08. Pollocks is said to have resembled the Lancastrian cricketer Tyldesley in appearance. For some reason the name A.T. Pollocks looms large in the chronicler's imagination, possibly because his father and uncle spoke highly of him.



Courtesy of Foenander 1924

The photo below was taken about 1957 when A.T. Pollocks was in his eighties. Another Colt, L.V. Jayaweera, is also in the photo.

A.T. POLLOCKS IN THE MID-FIFTIES



L to R: R.B. Wijesinghe, D. Fairweather, A.T. Pollocks, J.C.O. Ernst, L.E. Bakelman, L.V. Jayaweera, B.A. Wijewardene
Absent: Dr. C.H. Gunasekera
Courtesy of Ceylon Government Service Cricket Association Golden Jubilee Souvenir, 1957

Johnny Murray, an old Trinitian, was one of the most punishing batsmen the Colts had produced in the twentieth century (Foenander 1941: 18). Next to A.T. Pollocks he had scored the most number of centuries for the Colts as at 1941. Between 1927 and 1934 he scored four centuries.

Bertram de Krestser was an effective left-arm bowler, a useful right-hand batsman and a popular captain (Foenander 1941: 17). Cecil Horan of the N.C.C. was the only reason he failed to gain representative honours. He was considered to be the best left-arm spinner produced by the Colts since Jim Ludovici. In 1926 he and fellow Colt A.E. Schoorman[2], represented Dr. Rockwood's Ceylonese XI against W.E. Lucas' Bombay team. And in 1936 he was amongst the seven Ceylonese who played against Gubby Allan's M.C.C. team at the C.C.C. in 1936. His nephew Warwick de Kretser represented the Colts in the fifties, while still at school.

Finally, L.V. Jayaweera must be considered an icon. He made the national side in 1927-28.

He used to delver the ball at great speed from a few steps. He was also a famous boxer with a competition named after him.

[2] "Prince" Schoorman was the chronicler's father's first cousin and introduced the chronicler's uncle to the club.

Willie Jayatilleke

About 1960 the chronicler recalls watching Willie Jayatilleke bat at the KV club grounds, with its quaint pavilion overlooking the wicket and a viewing area by the side of the Seethawaka river which was parallel to the wicket. Warden Stone was present at the club on that occasion.

WILLIE JAYATILLEKA, SIXTH FROM LEFT, PERADENIYA, 1937



Courtesy of Wendy Hilder

Bertie Wijesinghe in a tribute stated that Willie was a member of the Thomian teams of 1935, 1936 and 1937 when in his final year he captained the team and led it to victory with a magnificent century, opening the innings and remaining unbeaten. Bertie Wijesinghe played in that team and praises the coach of the time, John Halangoda, a Trinity Lion.

Willie Jayatilleke attended the chronicler's father's funeral in Sydney in 1984 and the chronicler recalls traveling with his mother to see him in Gosford and having a meal at the club there and also attending his fiftieth wedding anniversary celebration. When he died in 2004, they visited his widow who showed them a picture of what the Royal Thomian looked like at the N.C.C. when he was captain.

Willie Jayatilleke an old Thomian captain, was the grandson of W.B. de Saram who played with Dr. Raffel and Tommy Kelaart. W.B. De Saram captained St. Thomas' in 1885 and the entire clan except for F.C. De Saram and his siblings, were Thomians. Willie Jayatilleke's uncle was Douglas de Saram.

Tita Nathanielsz who was Willie Jayatilleke's bestman, observed that he donned his Thomian blazer after every club match. In 1948 Jayatilleke captained a CCA team against Ranji Trophy champions Holkar led by Col. C.K. Nayudu. Hugh Aldons, along with another Colt, H.S. Orloff, were in the team.

Willie Jayatilleke captained the Colts five times. He should be given the status of an icon despite leaving the club under acrimonious circumstances.

And so should Tita Nathanielsz. He stood out as a bowler with his short run up and catapult action. He was larger than life.

Nathanielsz talks about his friendship with Jayatilleke in a tribute to Zoe the sister of Willie, which appeared in the Sunday times of 8th October 2006.

> " … Willie and I joined the Colombo Colts Cricket Club in 1940 and clicked immediately, playing for the club in the Premier League with success. We cycled to work, to the club and to chase the girls in Havelock Town and Bambalapitiya with occasional success. Our buddies were Stanley & Christobel Livera, Budgie & Esme Metzling, Jack & Ranee Misso, Mervyn Vandort, Ernie Kelaart, Ted Misso, Fred & Babs Kellar, Haig & Maureen Christoffeltz. We were regulars at the Milgiriya School's quarterly dances, the Otter Annual Dance, the BRC Dance, and occasionally at the D.B.U. My friendship with Willie got closer over chasing girls together, and my playing under his captaincy. In the early fifties he met and tied the knot with attractive Lois Vanderziel and they made a handsome couple. I was Willie's bestman at the well-attended ceremony at St. Paul's Church, Milagiriya.

Modern day icons

Since then, the Colts have produced many players who have represented Sri Lanka before she gained test status. The names which come to mind are Abu Fuard and Darrell Lieversz. If Darrell had remained in Colombo and continued his first-class cricket career, he would surely have won a Sara trophy for the club, after coming very close in 1962-63. More than an icon he would have become immortalised. It is regrettable that he took up planting rather than hold a desk job in a mercantile establishment in Colombo where he could have had a complete bowling career and led the Colts to a few premierships.

Roy Dias

In the seventies Roy Dias played for Sri Lanka while a member of the Colts. He captained the club side in 1977.



Courtesy of archives. sundayobserver.lk

Kumar Ramanathan

Kumar Ramanathan played in one Gopalan trophy game. But if anyone deserved to be regular member of the national side it would be him. His consistency with the bat at the club level was simply phenomenal. He was a truly iconic figure in the seventies.

Chaminda Vaas and the new Colts generation

There was a gap of over eighty years between the end of Tommy Kelaart's career and the advent of another left-arm bowler. Chaminda Vaas captained the Colts on five occasions (1998, 200, 2009, 2010 and 2011) and was made an honorary life member of the club. He had a busy international career and also played for foreign clubs and in foreign leagues. He would therefore have been unable to make a full commitment to the Colts as a player although there is no doubt that when he did, he would have made a difference. The arrival of Vaas to the Colts coincided with a resurgence of cricket at the Colts which resulted in her first premier trophy win.

The chronicler doesn't have access to details pertaining to Vaas's performances for the Colts. But there is plenty of information on the web about his international career and he no doubt that club gained much from having such a high profiled international player in its ranks.

Vaas attended St. Joseph's College, Colombo, and debuted for the Colts in 1990, at the age of 16. He is regarded as the most successful new-ball bowler ever produced by Sri Lanka. He retired from test cricket in 2009.

There was a book for sale on the web titled Colts Cricket Club Cricketers and it refers to the following players – Chaminda Vaas, Thilan Samaraweera, Roger Wijesuriya, Romesh Kaluwitharana, Nuwan Kulasekera and Jeevantha Kulatunge. Clearly, these are the players who lifted the club out of the doldrums and made the club a force to be reckoned with and as competitive as it was in her first twenty-five years. And the former national cricket captain Angelo Mathew, is also a Colt. At last, the Colts had players who impacted on the national scene not unlike Kelaart, Raffel, Fuard and Darrell Lieversz.

Hopefully, As the history progresses the new generation Colts who have contributed to the club's recent development will be captured. They deserve to be honoured and described in detail as much as the foundation icons.

An iconic family

Tommy Kelaart was one of three brothers who played for the Colts. Tommy, the first Colts icon, and his siblings made the Kelaarts an iconic family.

Hence, this an opportune moment to reflect on the Kelaart family which played such a significant role in the success of the Colts in her first 35 years when she gave Ceylonese cricketers an identity by beating European cricket teams and demonstrating that Ceylonese could be just as good at cricket as the Europeans were. The Kelaarts embodied a golden era when Colts cricketers were the most reknown in urban and anglicised circles. The Colts was the model for other Ceylonese clubs and Colts cricketers the model for cricketers from ethnic communities across the board. And no one was more famous during this period than Tommy Kelaart who might be considered Sri Lanka's first cricketing legend.