

S.P. FOENANDER'S GIFT TO THE COLTS - 1941

S.P. Foenander was born on 11th April 1882, nine years after the Colts came into being. He would therefore have acquired a sound knowledge of the beginnings of the club from its founding fathers and been an eyewitness to the games played in the late 1890s. In fact, many of his books have a feel of participant observation.

From the many tributes that followed his passing in 1967, some of which are presented at the back of this chapter, the following can be gathered. In 1900 he opened the batting for a combined colleges team which beat the then invincible Colts. In 1902 he was chosen to play for the Colts and represented the club against a combined Up-Country team. He also played in the first unofficial European-Ceylonese game.

**S.P. FOENANDER WITH
BRADMAN, OCTOBER 1930**



Foenander gifting Bradman with a replica of the temple of the tooth relic, Kandy, while carrying Australian captain, Woodfull's son, Jack.

Courtesy of the state library of South Australia, (PRG 682/16/108)

AT 67 YEARS OF AGE?



Courtesy of Foenander 1949

From a young age he took to maintaining scrapbooks of press clippings associated with cricket and other sports. In doing so he developed an archive of cricket memorabilia and statistical data that covered the beginnings of all forms of cricket in Sri Lanka.

Covering the beginnings of cricket institutions

Foenander's knowledge came to the fore in the Ceylon Cricketer Companion for 1926. In addition to the club and schoolboy season of 1925 there are the results of the following traditional encounters – Europeans vs Ceylonese, Dickoya vs Dimbulla and the CCC vs Up-Country. He also touches on the government service and mercantile cricket competitions. His books on the C.C.C vs Up-country and Europeans v Ceylonese encounters provides a glimpse into the European cricketing scene which laid the seeds for Ceylonese involvement in the game and the maturity they gained by taking on the Europeans.

In 1949 he produced the history of the Royal-Thomian called Three Score and Ten. Needless to say, the 1949 book is the basis of numerous updates on the Royal-Thomian and the historical statistics and records featured in every Royal and Thomian souvenir to this day.

In 1924 Foenander produced Sixty years of Ceylon cricket and was a useful source of information when Sri Lanka gained test status and many authors were inspired to compile comprehensive histories of cricket in the country. Foenander has helped the SSC, the Tamil Union and the Malay cricket club to write their histories but his *piece de resistance* was his History of the Colts up to 1941.

Writing style

Three Score and Ten showcases the unique style of Foenander's writing where he blends scorecards with anecdotal evidence and personal player history, and the reader gets to appreciate players through statistics, place, and family ties. This style is also prevalent in the History of the Colts.

Foenander attended practically every Royal-Thomian since 1895 and had full scores of every game in his private collection. Likewise, his scrapbook contained Colts club records from 1900 onwards.

The history of the Colts

Unlike other histories of clubs in Sri Lanka which contain plenty of statistics, current photos in colour and old articles reproduced, the book on Colts cricket breathe the characters. There are numerous pen portraits and photographs pertaining to the club's early years. If Foenander hadn't reproduced old photos in the book they probably would have been lost forever.

Foenander would probably have turned his thoughts to writing the book at the urging of president Dadabhoy about 1935 when he was 43 years of age. In an age when drafts were hand-written or type written, progress would have been slow. When the book was published Foenander was 49 years of age.

Foenander's book covers the first 68 years of the club. That period would be well-nigh impossible to reconstruct today, 81 years after the book was published. The originals of pictures would have been lost. And the statistics and anecdotes would be non-existent.

Ideally, the book by Foenander should be reprinted and inserted into the pocket of a newly compiled history of the club if it has a hard cover. The advertisements in the publication provide an intriguing glimpse into the commercial life of Colombo in the last decade of colonial rule¹. From Caves selling pianos to Tucker selling Vauxhalls. In the following chapter the advertisements are brought to life and made to reflect the society of the time.

From the advertisements it would be hard to tell that World War II was in full swing. In 1941 Germany invaded Russia and the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbour. Of course, colonial Ceylon was not directly affected by the War.

The chronicler came into possession of Foenander's book on the Colts and the cricketer's companion of 1926 through the courtesy of his uncle Douglas Lieversz who felt that he would appreciate the books following the contributions he made to the centenary souvenir. Douglas Lieversz would never have anticipated that his nephew would write an updated history of the Colts based on, and inspired by, Foenander's book, which he only read in full in 2014, 41 one years after he became sole owner of it.

Very much a Colt

Foenander is present in the 1933 and 1940 group photos of the Colts club. He was a member and a leading light in the club. Hence, the writing of the history of the club was an exploration of identity, ethnicity, and youth. The chronicler is motivated by similar emotions. It is a journey of discovery into his cultural roots as much as a nostalgic return to some unique cricket moments in his life. Throughout the book he touches upon the evolution of a cultural community, namely Sri Lanka's urban class, which mirror the vicissitudes of the club.

What the chronicler is hoping to achieve is to interest non-Sri Lankans and to write an account of club which is more than a simple history of a cricket club. It should tell people of periods in Sri Lankan history and the changes that are taking place culturally and economically. It must delineate the drama and conflict. The litmus test will be the extent to which the work will appeal to non-cricketers and non-Sri Lankans. It is about the Colts cricket club but also about its cultural and political setting, just as much as Baz Luhrmann's *Elvis* is not only about Elvis but also about the environment that influenced him and artistes who contributed to that milieu. It must inspire the Colts community to come up with contributions and to attract comments from those who have nothing to do with club.

¹ Chapter 24 is devoted to an analysis of the adverts which appear in Foenander's book on the Colts. In addition, chapter 21 studies adverts from two of his books which appeared in the nineteen twenties.

The 1993 book on the S.S.C.

The chronicler wishes to avoid the pitfalls of a publication compiled by S.S. Perera in conjunction with the club's tour of Malaysia and Thailand. As befitting the most successful cricket club in Sri Lanka it has an embarrassment of riches concerning statistics and photographs. But the subjective element is missing. The various articles recounting the past lack depth of analysis and fail to evoke the landscapes of the past. The book is formatted like a souvenir and fails to develop a compelling narrative. All the big names of the club that are proudly flaunted do not compensate for the publication's numerous flaws. All of what is presented is familiar to a follower of club cricket in Sri Lanka. The information could have been better presented, formulated, interrogated and reimagined. By contrast, Foenander's book on the Colts is unique. It brilliantly evokes the past and is the perfect platform by which to bring to light the last 82 years of the club's existence by unearthing new information.

What the chronicler finds very useful in Foenander's book are the pen portraits of Colts cricketers and members which are used to identify persons and elaborate upon their contribution to the development of the club. It was a book previously browsed through on numerous occasions without analysing its contents as thoroughly as done in 2014. Much of Foenander's methods and approaches to writing are continued in the new history.

Other journalistic sources

The chronicler relied heavily on three articles in addition to the material in the 1941 book by Foenander and the 1973 centenary publication, when commencing this project. Frank Ondatje's article in Foenander's book complements Foenander in that it is a description of the origins of the NCC while articulating the friendly rivalry between the two clubs. It is a useful guide to how the superiority of the Colts was first challenged.

Although most of the material on the history of the Colts which appeared in the centenary souvenir of 1973, was reproduced from old publications there is an original article by A.W. Lorenz-Andree, from the famous family of photographers. This begs the question as to why Lorenz Andree wasn't asked to contribute to the 1941 publication when he seemed to know as much about the club as Frank Ondatje? Finally, a tribute to Tommy Kelaart which appeared in the DBU journal of 1950 by an unknown author (Foenander?) also sheds interesting light on the beginnings of the Colts.

A splendid array of tributes

Foenander passed away in 1967 at 85 years of age. Reading those tributes makes the chronicler proud to follow in Foenander's footsteps where the Colts is concerned.

The Wisden ran the following obituary –

“FOENANDER, SAMUEL PETER, who died on April 19, aged 84, was the doyen of sports writers in Ceylon and contributed to *Wisden* for many years. Captain of Wesley School in 1901, when one of the best schoolboy wicket-keepers of the time, he also captained Combined Colleges. He served on the tutorial staff of Wesley and Royal College before taking up journalism. For many years he was sports editor of the *Ceylon Observer* and for over half a century wrote with authority on cricket, Association and Rugby football, athletics, tennis and golf, besides being a well-known music critic. His services to cricket earned him an M.B.E. An honorary member of M.C.C., he was author in 1923² of *Sixty Years of Ceylon Cricket*.”

Both Bertie Wijesinghe and S.S. Perera paid tribute. Bertie Wijesinghe was a sportswriter par excellence. No one comes near him in English language fluency, except for T.M.K. Samat of yore. But whereas Samat’s diction was flowery, Bertie’s writing was not unlike his coaching: analytical and cerebral. He deployed prose to articulate nuances in cricketing styles and approaches, and this comes across in his book The love of my life. His prose served analysis and was subservient to it.

Yet, Bertie couldn’t match Foenander as a cricket historian and a guardian of cricket statistics and knowledge of Sri Lankan cricket in its infancy. S.S. Perera is closer to Foenander in dragging data out of old newspapers that often crumbled at one’s touch. But as statistician and historian Perera is indebted to the pioneering work done by Foenander.

Foenander mooted the idea to create a Ceylon Cricket Association in 1921. Indeed, as S.S. Perera points out in his tribute Foenander had many “firsts” from writing books on sport and initiating sporting organisations.

² The book actually came out in 1924.

'SPF'—REMARKABLE PERSONALITY

SELDOM if ever in the history of sport has a nation owed so much to one single man; a man who completed fifty years of journalism, made six trips to Australia one to England and several to India with cricket teams, during the course of which he had seen fifty test matches a man who shared with Neville Cardus the distinction of mention in Wisden, the only Ceylonese to enjoy the privilege of Honorary Membership of the Marylebone Cricket Club, the only cricket writer in the world to be honoured by the Queen of England and more — to receive that honour from the Queen's own hands.

That briefly is a record of the achievements of Samuel Peter Foenander one-time schoolmaster and free-lance writer, later sports editor of the "Ceylon Observer" who passed away yesterday at the age of 83.

As "S. P." or "Onlooker" he has been known by generations of sports fans in this country and wherever else cricket is played.

Peter Foenander's achievements in the journalistic field are but common knowledge. His association and friendship with the great names of international cricket, his profound store of the statistics of the game has earned him a reputation which even Wisden can envy.

He has indeed been termed as a "walking Wisden", but whereas Wisden deals exclusively with facts and figures, Peter Foenander's Storehouse penetrated further — he possesses intimate knowledge of the lives and personalities of the famous players and many an anecdote does he relate that has never been printed.

'BOOK-FUL'

"One hour with Peter Foenander of Ceylon", said one Australian columnist "and one can write a book". Can one be surprised therefore that on each of his trips to Australia, he was "snapped up" to give talks on the Test match scene, both over the ABC and in person. Nor did he confine his topics to cricket. Much publicity has Ceylon received by his efforts. The ABC booklet contained among the photographs of Jack Fingleton, Victor Richardson and Alan MacQuillan, that of Peter Foenander himself.

Little, however, is known generally of SPF's own personal achievements in the sporting field. Much has he contributed with his pen and with a bat. He has written about the feats of others will go into volumes but there has been none in



recent times to tell somewhat of his active participation in cricket, soccer and golf. It will be in the fitness of things therefore if on this occasion when he celebrates his three score years and twelve some attempt were made to tell his many readers a little of the part Peter Foenander played during the formative years of most of the sports associations which function today and his record of service to wards them.

RECORD

It would scarcely be fair to such a distinguished personality not to do so. I have undertaken that pleasant task, therefore, I have to thank him for kindly placing at my disposal some of his scrapbooks which are legion in number. I am also grateful to him, for helping to piece together his biographical record.

His career at Wesley College was outstanding all round. The years he spent there as a student, from 1893 to 1906, in the illustrious time of Highfield, were indeed worthwhile as his success and record of a service amply testify. He was awarded the Hill Medal for the best all-round student highest ambition of every schoolboy. He played in the cricket team for six years and was captain of his school for three of them. This dual distinction has been achieved by only one other R. E. Honter, the University scholar.

In 1902 while yet a schoolboy, Foenander was chosen to play for the all-powerful Colts eleven at the age of seventeen — the Colts XI which included such great players as Tommy Kelaart, A. C. Amath, A. T. Pollocks, Dr. Alan Raffle, C. E. Perera, J. C. McHeizer and W. de Rozairo the great wicket-keeper. In that same year he played in the first unofficial European-Ceylonese match and against Up-Country. He kept wickets on both these

occasions, despite the presence in the team of Rozairo.

GREAT VICTORY

It was Peter Foenander's proud privilege and honour to captain the only Ceylonese side in twenty years to beat that hitherto invincible Colts eleven. That rare feat was performed by the Combined Colleges team which counted Douglas de Saram, A. C. Amath and E. Weerasuriya. The match was played on the Nondescripts ground at Victoria Park, the site where now stands the Town Hall.

Peter Foenander also played soccer for Wesley and the Combined Colleges, as goalkeeper. Although he later played cricket for the Colts and the Education Department and football he was compelled on account of injury the scars of which he carries to this day, to take a minor part, which in turn influenced him to take to the less glamorous task of sports writing. He was, as Jim Swanton would say, "translated to the Press Box".

But let me not forget one of his outstanding feats as wicketkeeper. Playing for the Education Department in the Government Services Competition against the Government Stores he dismissed eight batsmen and not one single extra did he concede in the entire match. This must surely stand as a record in Ceylon cricket of any category.

Peter Foenander counts happy, active association with Ceylon golf. He was one of the earliest members of the Havelock Golf Club and in 1909 one of the first four Ceylonese (with E. W. Foenander, Fred de Saram, E. R. de Saram) to compete in the Championships on the Ridgeway. He later took part in several title meets both in Colombo and Nuwara Eliya. On that first occasion, he took W. Somerville to the 17th green and so fared best among the Ceylonese. Smallwood was the champion that year.

In 1918 for the first time there was played a match between the Europeans and Ceylonese, the unofficial inauguration of the Stanley Cup International. Foenander was in that match too playing for the Ceylonese, who included once again his brother, E. W. Timothy de Silva, Dr. Roy Dias, Dr. H. E. Ekanayake, F. Reimers and Frank Ondaatje. Timothy de Silva, was, by the way, the first Ceylonese to win a Ceylon Title.

FOR YOUNG

DESPITE the injury to himself which cut short his cricket career or perhaps because of it Peter Foenander set himself to the task of providing opportunities for young cricketers. From 1922 onwards

he was actively engaged in arranging matches for Combined School teams during the Easter Holidays in Colombo, Galle, Kandy and Up-Country. One of his earliest teams of schoolboys which included L. D. S. Gunasekara, Carl Cooke, Neil Joseph Kanagasabay, Dick Barber, Etipola, and Dr. N. M. Perera never once lost a match. On the contrary they beat the C.C.C. and the S.S.C. which had Gresswell and M. K. Albert respectively.

He continued to arrange these matches until 1928 and it is a matter of great pride to him that many of his proteges later played for Ceylon. He revived his Combined Colleges teams during the 1939-45 war and played matches against the services.

BIRTH OF C.C.A.

IT was in 1921 that the idea of a Ceylon Cricket Association was first mooted. One can take it for granted that S. P. F. was behind the idea. Together with Douglas de Saram and Dr. John Rockwood both of revered fame, he was the pioneer of what we know today as the C.C.A. and was its official recorder. Dr. Rockwood was the first President and Col. O. B. Forbes its first Secretary.

It was also about this time that athletics in Ceylon had come to a standstill. Peter Foenander revived the sport by moving in the formation of the Amateur Athletic Association of Ceylon and was for six years Honorary Secretary of the sports meet. Athletes like Carl VanGeysel, Noel Kelaart, J. W. de Alwis, Tom Tward, Dr. G. S. W. de Saram, Gerald Karunatilake, E. H. P. Layard, J. H. Burton, A. H. Healey, were thus given the opportunity to show their prowess as also the spectators to see these champions in action.

In those days schools athletes had no association to look after them. S. P. F. was at this time Sports Officer of the Ceylon Cadet Battalion. He therefore organised an island-wide cadet sports meet which served the purpose of the present day Public Schools Meet.

He has been the only Ceylonese who has officiated at a sports meet in Australia. For more than once on his trips to the Commonwealth has he been invited to officiate at the inter-state championships. It was on account of his services here and the confidence he enjoyed, that he was able to help Ceylon gain affiliation to the Empire Games, as they were known then.

For his services to athletics he was made life member of the AAA together with Carl Van Geysel and J. McRobbison, the first ever to gain that honour. He was also a vice-president of the Association till recently.

S.P. was an original in his own right

IF Cardus possessed style, S. P. Foenander had a manner all his own. It would be less than justice merely to compare him with the former and call him another Cardus, when he had claims to be an original in his own right.

But if such comparison must be made, as indeed it is human nature to do so, I would say that Cardus by his writings charmed thousands in the quiet seclusion of their drawing rooms — building a sort of remote association between sportmen and their admirers.

S. P. Foenander went closer to the heart of sport. He brought the sportsman, the player face to face with the public, establishing a kind of direct contact, as it were between the player and spectator, an Outlook introducing one to the other, on less formal terms.

S. P. Foenander did not strive for effect. He did not launch into fine, clever writing and smart dictation. He wrote from the heart — for his heart was in sport — simply and to the point. Accuracy was his watchword, accuracy and encouragement. He wrote profusely on every sport, and his writings, when they dealt with statistics, were precise and exact as a text on mathematics.

One will realise the hard work, day in, day out, month and year out, that he put in collecting all those records of a life-time. Only those who have tried to do so will realise what an arduous task it is. A labour of true love, if ever there was one. And we must raise parents of the future to the task of passing on to him for leaving to us and the generations to come these complete figures of the early years of our sport — the foundation for its history.

The good that he did will not be interred with his bones. Nor had he perpetrated any evil to live after him. On the contrary, he was a sincere soul. No matter what his judgement, if he could not write well of a person, he wrote not at all. He would always write UP the game. His progress, his improvement were what mattered to him, not the puny individuals.

GENERICUS

BUT let a player deserve recognition, and Peter Foenander was full of lavish praise albeit praise tempered with reason and merit.

It was while he was yet a schoolboy at Wesley College at the age of 10 that there sprang in him this love of sport. No wonder! He spent his childhood in Australia where his father died in 1849. He used to tell that even at that age, he took cuttings of all sports events and preserved them in scrapbooks. These books, yellowed and wrinkled with age, form part of the historical legacy that he has left behind.

Peter Foenander was a cricketer, athlete, footballer and later golfer in his own right. He had retired from active participation so long ago that the last two or three generations of sports fans will know nothing of his prowess. He was good enough to play for his College and the Combined Schools at cricket and soccer.

He was good enough to play for the Colts, even as a school-boy and Colts in those days were practically a one-sided team. He also captained a School XI which beat these same invincible Colts.

Injury put an end to his cricket but he took to golf and played in the first local inter-colonial. I do think that his friend and sporting companion, the late Frank Ondaatje was also in that side. The two for many years formed a formidable duo as sports commentators and cricket umpires. Frank Ondaatje, of course, continued to play cricket and golf for many years.

SCORER

Teaching at Wesley, Foenander used to relate, he had a brilliant pupil. Though the latter never played cricket, he was a keen spectator and duly was made scorer of the first eleven.

During a particular match, I believe he said it was Wesley vs St. Joseph's, in which this particular student was the sole scorer, feelings ran high as fortunes changed. Ultimately the match ended in a tie, Wesley's last wicket falling with but one to win. But when the teams returned to the pavilion, lo! a shout! the scorer announced that Wesley had won — by one run! The score book was checked, scores added and bowling figures double-checked and yes! the match was Wesley's.

"There was a furor", said S. P. Foenander "and the grounds ran riot. The fixture

was not played for several years."

"Who was the scorer", we all asked. "Tell it not in Gath," Foenander used to say, "but his name was one O. Goonetilleke."

FIXTURES

SINCE he could no longer play himself, Peter Foenander did the next best thing. He provided opportunities for others to play. He spent much of his time and energies, organising matches, Combined Colleges, Club teams, Ceylon's playing and the like. He would invariably umpire in the matches, or himself take charge of the score book.

He even arranged matches for Ceylon against visiting sides, one outstanding effort of his being the visit of Rev. F. F. Waddy's Australian side on a tour of Ceylon in 1933. The team included four test players and played several matches, in Colombo and up-country.

To the late A. C. Amath went the honour of leading the Ceylon XI which beat the Visitors.

S. P. Foenander summoned a meeting of leading personalities to form a reception committee which was to be in charge of arrangements for

By Bertie Wijesinha

the tour. Sir Solomon Dias Bandaranaike was Chairman, Dr. John Rockwood, treasurer and he himself took on the onerous duties of Honorary Secretary and liaison officer to the visiting team.

The tour, needless to say, was an unbounded success. What is more, it provided these enthusiasts an idea — that of forming a permanent cricket association — which however, had to be put off till 1922, on account of World War I.

Dr. John Rockwood provided Foenander with all encouragement and backing in this endeavour and virtually became the "father of Ceylon cricket". His well-known residence, "The Emms" became the rendezvous of cricketers personalities. Finally when the CCA was formed in 1922, Dr. Rockwood was unanimously elected President, Douglas de Saram was its Secretary and Peter Foenander its recorder.

But Peter Foenander's greater contribution to Ceylon sport was in the field of athletics. Practically single-handed he organised a Cadet sports meet, representative of the whole island. This provided the spring board for the formation of the Public Schools Athletic Association.

He acted as its Honorary Secretary for over 20 years, before he handed the job over to men like W.H.D. Perera and V. B. M. de Silva.

If Ceylon is thought of by people in various parts of the world as a land of natural sportsmen, of good natural spectators, where they have learnt to "play the game", S. P. Foenander has in a large measure been responsible for such a result.

So wrote a scholar who was once his pupil at Royal, whose penchant for Latin phrase is so compelling that he also wrote of S.P.F. — "He was a Cereotes Scribendi. He will go on writing until he drops."

Which was practically true, was it not?

Another pupil, Lyn Ludovick, wrote some years ago, "Mr. Foenander has kept us steadily aware of the joys and rigours of cricket, of the records of sport, of all those things which we should like to believe in if we did not know that there were other things — alas! — which we could not forget, wars, pestilence, politics and man's inhumanity to man."

This from J.L.C.R. also; "he had acquired the almost impossible art of writing about ladies at sport, and remaining friends with them, one and all."

Which goes to show that S.P.F. commanded universal respect and appreciation here and abroad, a man who lived and died for sport. His death marks the end of a legend, the end of one of the few great sports statisticians more infallible than even Wisden. Verily was he the "Recording Angel" of cricket in particular, and sport in general. Well has he earned his rest.

They called him...

'THE WALKING WISDEN'

THE death of Mr. S. P. Foenander on 19/4/67 removed from our midst 'The Walking Wisden' — a man who helped to put Ceylon on the Cricket map of the world prior to the Second World War when Ceylon's cricket organisation was in its infancy. By his many contacts in England, Australia and India he helped Ceylon in its attempt to gain recognition in the international cricketing world.

S. P. Foenander was born on April 11th, 1882, and was 85 years old. He attended Wesley College where he played for the team from 1898 to 1903, captaining the eleven from 1901 to 1903. Among his team mates were the great C. E. Perera, still acclaimed as the most stylish right hand batsman produced in Ceylon and the great Malay bowler M. L. Warish. Foenander was the Wesley wicket-keeper.

Success

"The Handbook of Ceylon Cricket & Field Sports" of 1902 says in its school cricket review — Wesley College — "In February 1900 the College achieved its greatest success by beating a fairly strong team of the Colts C.C. by 34 runs. The result was mainly due to the batting of S. P. Foenander who scored 52 runs in the 2nd innings. Foenander with D. L. de Saram and E. Fuller shared the distinction of being the only batsmen in Ceylon to score over half a century that year against the Colts." The Annual further states "Foenander the captain earned a high reputation at College as a batsman and wicket-keeper."

In 1900 Foenander scored 40 runs in 20 minutes out of a total of 43, while his partner A. Barbet scored only one for Wesley against Royal College. In 1900 he opened batting for the Combined Colleges team with D. B. Gunasekera (Snr.) against the 'Invincible' Colts C.C. The Colleges won for the first time against the Colts by 39 runs.

In 1913, while a master at Training College, he played for the Education Department against Government Stores in the Government Services Cricket competition and created a record by holding 5 catches and stumping 3 in both innings, giving away no extras. Earlier as a

master at Royal College he played for the Education Department in 1907 in the First Govt. Services Cricket Competition.

In 1913 he summoned a meeting of the representatives of all First Class Clubs and formed the First (temporary) Cricket Association in Ceylon with Sir Solomon Dias Bandaranaike as President to invite Rev. E. F. Waddy's team of New South Wales cricketers to Ceylon. He was elected Hony. Secretary and Dr. John Rockwood was elected Hony. Treasurer. In 1920 cricket enthusiasts led by Dr. John Rockwood, Col. E. H. Joseph, D. L. de Saram and S. P. Foenander met to draft a constitution for a Ceylon Cricket Association. At the inaugural meeting of the C.C.A. on July 12th, 1922, S. P. Foenander was elected Hony. Recorder, a post he held till 1947. He was later the first Hony. Recorder of the Board



S. P. Foenander

of Control for Cricket in Ceylon on its formation in 1948.

In 1921 S. P. Foenander covered the Australian Tour in England. In 1926 he was again in England to cover the Australian Tour. He next toured India with the Ceylon team captained by S. S. Jayawickrema in 1941/42. In 1946/47 he was in Australia to cover W. R. Hammond's M.C.C. team and in 1947/48 reported the tour of Lala Amarnath's Indian team to tour Australia. He had the unique honour of being one of the Australian Broadcasting Commission commentators on these Tests, along with Alan Megdway and Victor Richardson. In 1949/50 he was in India for the West Indies' Tests.

by S. S. Perera

His visits to these countries helped him make numerous friends in official cricket circles and among international players with whom he kept in touch till very recently. His letters of introduction to Lords, Melbourne, Sydney and Madras saw every courtesy extended. I am one of the many who benefited in this respect and I can gratefully recall the kindness extended to me at Sydney by Allan Barnes and at Melbourne by Bill Ponsford during the first West Indies tour in Australia in 1951/52. At Lords in 1956 and 1961 I was entertained by Mr. R. Aird, former Secretary of the M.C.C., and Miss Diana Rait Kerr, Curator of the Lords Museum and the present Secretary, Mr.

S. C. Grimms. In 1961 I had the privilege of presenting on behalf of S. P. Foenander, Tommy Kelaart's hat to Miss Rait Kerr and Mr. Aird to be kept in the Lords' Museum.

Mr. Foenander's doings in the cricket world have been dealt with adequately by others. He was however also interested in other outdoor activities. He was connected with the Ceylon Cadet Battalion for 20 years while at Royal College and Training College. In 1913 he was C.O. of the Training College Company which won the Challenge Shield for Physical Drill and Marching. He was responsible for organising the first Schools Athletics meet — then called the Empire Day Games — in 1910. He was its Honorary Secretary and held this post later at the Public Schools meet.

At the 1910 Empire Day Games A. E. Christofelz (Royal) won the 100 yds., Long Jump, High Jump and 440 yds. He was the only Ceylonese to serve as a judge in the Australian National Athletics Championship. He was responsible for the formation of the Ceylon Amateur Athletics Association in 1921 and was its first Honorary Secretary — a post he held for about 5 years. He was later a Vice President of the AAA for many years. He officiated as a judge at the First Ceylon Athletics contest in Colombo in 1941. During this period he was on the staff of Royal College.

On leaving Royal he joined the Ceylon Observer as Sports Editor and wrote on practically every sport and music. As 'Onlooker' of the Observer he covered everything connected with cricket. He, along with Donovan Andree (Times of Ceylon) and Frank Ondatje (Daily News) helped to form the first Press Club in Ceylon.

Author

Readers would be interested to know that he was the author of many sporting books and souvenirs — the best being his "Sixty Years of Ceylon Cricket". He produced his first cricket souvenir in 1911 for the visit of the M.C.C. team. Subsequent visits of foreign cricket teams also saw his publications on sale.

His other publications of note were:—

1. Ceylon's Champion Bowler — a sketch of Tommy Kelaart — 1910.
2. Official Souvenir of the Visit of the New South Wales Cricket Team to Ceylon—1914.
3. Souvenir of the Jubilee of the Colts C.C.—1923.
4. Souvenir of the Royal-Thomasian Match — 1923.
5. Sixty Years of Ceylon Cricket — 1924.
6. (a) Ceylon Cricketers' Companion—1925. (b) Ceylon Cricketers' Companion—1926. (c) Ceylon Cricketers' Companion—1927.
7. History of the C.C.C. vs. Up Country Matches—1925.
8. Short History of Matches played by Dr. John Rockwood's Team — 1925.
9. A Complete History of Test Cricket in Ceylon — (Europeans vs. Ceylonese — 1887/1927).
10. History of the Colts Cricket Club — 1941.
11. A Souvenir of the 25th Anniversary of the Ceylon Cricket Association — 1947.
12. Three Score Years & Ten (a History of the Royal-Thomasian Matches) — 1960.

13. History of the Sinhalese Sports Club — 1962.

14. Golden Jubilee History of the Government Services Cricket Association — 1957.

15. History of Ceylon's Lawn Tennis Personalities.

He was a man with many 'Firsts' as related earlier and may be the only sports personality in Ceylon to produce so many publications on sport. He has through his columns in the Ceylon Observer given prominence to thousands of Ceylon's cric-

keters, tennis players, ruggerites, racing men and many others.

It is largely due to him that the present day sports writers in Ceylon are able to bring out statistics of the past and revive memories of many a famous match. Due to the foresight of Mr. W. Dahanayake a part of his valuable collection will be in safe custody for future generations to know what took place during the years 1920 to 1960.



The funeral of S. P. Foenander took place yesterday, in the presence of a distinguished gathering. Among those who paid their respects were the Minister of State Mr. J. E. Jayawardene, and his Permanent Secretary Mr. Ananda Tissa de

Alwis. The funeral service was conducted by the Rev. C. W. Muthukrishna, Vicar of St. Paul's, Milagiriya. The pall bearers included, Col. Stanley Fernando, Major-General B. R. Heyn, Senator J. P. Obeyesekere and R. McHeyzer.

SPF: only journalist to dare Wisden

By M. M. Thowfee

WISDEN'S CRICKET ALMANACK, THE "CRICKETERS' BIBLE" WAS NEVER KNOWN TO NOB. ITS STATISTICAL DATA WERE PERFECT TO THE T. BUT ONE DAY, IN 1923, A CEYLONESE SPORTS EDITOR PROVED WISDEN WRONG. AND WISDEN GRACIOUSLY ACKNOWLEDGED ITS MISTAKE.

That was Sam Peter Foenander, MBE, Sports Editor of the 'Ceylon Observer' from 1923 to 1954, who became the only journalist in the world to correct Wisden's official records.

The subject of error and correction was famous England Test batsman E. (Patsy) Hendren, who hit 13 centuries in one season thrice — in 1923, 1927 and 1928.

Sir Pelham ('Plum') Warner paid this tribute to 'SPF' at a banquet to the MCC team at the Galle Face Hotel:

"MR. Foenander once corrected the great Wisden. When Wisden declared that Patsy Hendren had compiled a hundred centuries, Mr. Foenander declared that it was a hundred and one — and he was right! — 'THE Cricketer' (the monthly magazine that Warner edited) is always ready to apologise if it is wrong, but I never heard Wisden was wrong before!"

'Firsts'

Foenander's 'firsts' and 'onlys' in the field of sports journalism are unparalleled. Some of them are:

- ONLY cricket writer in the world, with Neville Cardus, whose name appeared in Wisden's Birthday Book.
- FIRST sports writer in the East to be elected an honorary member of the MCC (in 1926).
- ONLY Ceylon journalist to be invited by Sir Pelham Warner to write a chapter on Ceylon cricket in "Imperial Cricket" (1911) — the biggest work on the history of the game.
- ONLY cricket writer in the East to have 'covered' 50 first-class Test matches (30 in Australia).
- ONLY Ceylonese journalist to have made international broadcasts of cricket Tests in Australia. (In 1947-48 he 'covered' the entire Indian cricket tour of Australia for the Australian Broadcasting Commission, along with former Test cricketers Victor Richardson and Jack Fingleton, and Alan McGilray).
- FIRST and only Ceylonese to be invited to officiate as judge at Australian athletic champions' inter-state contests and the women's championships of Australia.
- FIRST to compile a book on Ceylon cricket "Sixty Years of Ceylon Cricket". His many histories include the Royal-Thomian match series.
- FIRST and only sports journalist in the East to be honoured by the Queen — he was awarded the MBE.

Pioneer

Foenander was not content to write sport from desk and field. He was a pioneer organiser who helped to establish sports bodies and institutions. Together with Douglas de Saram and Dr. John Rockwood, Foenander was the founder of the Ceylon Cricket Association over 50 years ago, and was its official recorder for many years.

His pioneer work led to the formation of the Amateur Athletic Association of Ceylon. As captain of the Ceylon Cadet Battalion (he was one of the first three officers) he organised the Cadet sports meet (forerunner of the Public School's Meet) regularly and was secretary of the first Empire Day Sports meet.

When he helped revive the AAA he was its first secretary — for six years.

Foenander joined Wesley College, Colombo as a free scholar in 1893. Before he was 18 years of age he was Head Boy of the school and winner of all the big scholarships and medals. He played for the Wesley College cricket team for six years (1898-1903) captaining in the last three years, and in the football team for the same period, captaining one year.

He was also captain of the Combined Colleges team. In 1900 he was a member of the famous Combined Colleges team that beat the invincible Colts Cricket Club team. In 1902, while still a schoolboy, he played for the Colts vs Combined Up-country at Darrawella. He was wicket-keeper. Later, he organised the Combined Colleges teams to play in Kandy, Galle and Up-country.

His unique collection of cricket souvenirs has been presented to the Imperial Cricket Museum at Lord's. Among SPF's many friends and admirers were, besides Sir Pelham Warner and Neville Cardus, Sir Jack Hobbs, Sir Robert Menzies (former Prime Minister of Australia), Walter Lindrum (world billiards champion) and all Test cricketers of England, Australia, West Indies, India, New Zealand and Pakistan.

Tipster

'SPF' not only covered cricket (as "Onlooker") and athletics but also tennis, rugby, boxing, golf, football and any sport worthy of reportage. As "Captain Cuttle", he covered horse-racing too; and, during the 1931 August racing season, he tipped 23 winners in 40 races. He also tipped the winner of the Cesarewitch — Noble Star — in a field of 26 that year.

Foenander also helped local cricket clubs like Sinhalese Sports Club, Tamil Union, Colts and Maley CC to write their histories. He helped the CCC to retrace its history from 1863 from his records. It made him its first non-British honorary member. It is not well known that he was the first to introduce an August racing feature — notes on women's fashions!

Doyen of sports journalists' dies

CEYLON and the whole cricket world mourn the death of Samuel Peter Foenander celebrated sports writer for over half a century, who died on Wednesday after a prolonged illness.

Music and cricket — not forgetting the other sports he covered — received their rightful place in the columns of the Ceylon Observer on which he served as Sports Editor for over 25 years.

His comments on all games which he wrote with authority, were widely read and once a week as 'Onlooker' he boosted the game and those who made it interesting to



S. P. Foenander

the hit. Seldom did he attack; for 'attack' was not in 'SPF's' dictionary. Rarely does one come across journalists of his calibre.

At seventeen

From his early childhood days at Wesley College, cricket formed an integral part of his life and at 17 he skippered the college first eleven with distinction in 1901. He was skipper the following year too.

From cricket master cum teacher at Wesley he moved on to the tutorial staff of Royal College.

Royal was the end of the road to his illustrious teaching career and he answered the call of journalism by accepting a job on the editorial staff of the Ceylon Observer of which he soon became Sports Editor.

No Ceylonese sports journalist can beat the records established by Foenander in

the profession. Foenander had made such a name for himself that he was selected to cover the England-Australia Test series in both countries.

Upto the time of his death he was the oldest living master cum-journalist and it was just over a week ago — on April 11 that he celebrated his 85th birthday.

The Lady-in-Waiting attached to Her Majesty's household never forgot to send the Queen's greetings. The other world personality who always remembered 'SPF's' birthday was the Prime Minister of Australia, Sir Robert Menzies.

His services to cricket received attention and recognition so much so that the British Government conferred on him the MBE. Many years ago the Marylebone Cricket Club recognised his services to the game by making him an Honorary Member.

Cricket was so much in his veins that his collections of books, records and souvenirs were about the best an individual could boast of. His drawing room was a miniature museum and his living room a library.

'Callers'

None of the famous cricketers, be it Englishmen, Australian, or West Indian would pass Colombo without paying a call on 'SPF' at 'Warrendale' — his home in Bambalapitiya named after the famous Australian cricketer Warren Bardsley.

'Plum' Warner, Gilligan, Hobbs, Sutcliffe and in the more recent years the late Worrell, as well as Weekes and Sobers have all enjoyed his hospitality at his residence.

'SPF' was equally proficient in music and he was the Observer's music critic. Few could harmonise the two. The other well-known example being the world renowned Neville Cardus.

Foenander leaves behind his wife Edith (85) and two daughters Ruth and Mrs. Carmen Foenander-Herft now residing in Australia.

CNS

'S.P.F.' helped promote all sport in Ceylon

"What Neville Cardus was in England. In my opinion Mr. S. P. Foenander was the same in Ceylon. He was the doyen of all sports writers. If there was one common factor in Cardus and Foenander, it was their love for all sport and music," said Dr. W. R. Channugam, former President of CHF in paying tribute to the late Mr. S. P. Foenander, who died yesterday.

Dr. Channugam, added "In an era when writers were circumscribed by dictators, he was one who broke away from the ordinary rut of journalism to pen whatever he thought.

"He was frank and ruthless in his criticism and irrespective of hurting the feelings of sport bodies, he wrote boldly the way games should be played. He followed the progress of every game with child-like simplicity, but I believe hockey was his latest love. He was one of those who opened the frontiers of journalism to embrace all criticism as long as it was constructive."

Mr. Willie Ratnavale, president of the CRFU, said, "We are distressed and offer our sympathies to the family. Mr. S. P. Foenander, a former sports editor of the Ceylon Observer, was perhaps one who followed Ceylon rugby from its nursery stage."

Said a ruggerite who played during the Foenander era of sports journalism, "His comments were backed by his knowledge of the game. It was constructive and well received in rugger circles. He helped in a big way to promote rugger in Ceylon."

Major Dennis Hapugalle, Secretary of the Board of Control for Cricket in Ceylon, said "Mr. S. P. Foenander can be considered the 'Father of Ceylon Cricket, when it came to promoting the game in Ceylon and also writing about it with courage and authority. Our President Mr. Robert Senanayake is not in Colombo. On behalf of him and the Board, I wish to convey my sympathies to Mr. Foenander's family."

Mr. Eddie Gray, Secretary of the Boxing Association of Ceylon said "Mr. S. P. Foenander helped to promote all sport in Ceylon, and Ceylon owes much to him for his coverage in keeping Ceylon in the news in sport. On behalf of the Boxing Association, I wish to convey our sympathies to his family."

On February 26 this year Mr. Foenander and his wife celebrated 61 years of married life.

On his birthday on April 11, the Lady in Waiting to the Queen conveyed her Majesty's good wishes.

The cortege will be leaving the residence 'Warrendale', No. 6, De Kretser Place, Bambalapitiya, today at 4.30 p.m. for interment at the General Cemetery, Kanatte.



Mr. S. P. Foenander inspecting cricket gear.

Bertie Wijesinghe and S.S. Perera are no longer with us. Wijesinghe passed away in 2017 one month short of his 97th birthday. Perera passed away in 2012. He would have been in his late eighties.

S.P. Foenander left us 57 years ago (writing in 2024) and would have been 142 years old in 2024. Even his great grandchildren would be getting on in years. Yet it seems like he was alive not so long ago. This perception is testimony to the quality of his work which is evergreen and irreplaceable. The country was singularly fortunate in the timing of his birth. In addition to being a record keeper of high calibre he commenced following cricket in the late 1800s. In his absence, there would be a black hole in the public's understanding of cricket's beginnings in Sri Lanka of which the Colts cricket club was a vital part of.