

THE TUMULTOUS FORTIES

The club in 1940

The picture below doesn't include the chronicler's father who was in London after unsuccessfully trying to leave England by boat to Sri Lanka. A German pilot had other ideas.

MEMBERS OF THE COLTS IN 1940



In the middle is Dr. A.L. Raffel. On his right (left to the viewer) is F. Dadabhoy, Dr. E.L. Raffel, E.J. Livera and L. Jansz. On his left (right to the viewer), Col. P.J. Parsons, T. Pollocks, S.P. Foenander, a vice president, D.W.L. Lieversz

Courtesy of S.P. Foenander 1941

A year after the above picture was taken S.P. Foenander's History of the Colts came out. A year later the pavilion was requisitioned.

In June 1887 the Colts met a European side for the first time and members of the Colts team were presented with red and black blazers by the late S.T. Muttiah. In 1941 not a single member of the European XI was alive, although two members of the Colts team – A (Jillah) Weinman and E.H. Joseph were alive, neither of whom are in the above picture.

By now D.W.L. Lieversz had served the club well as a batsman and captain leading the club to an exciting win over the SSC in September 1939. He was on his way to becoming a Colts stalwart in emulation of the icons of yesteryear whom he rubbed shoulders with as a lad of 14 and some of whom he was photographed with in the 1933 photograph where he is shown along with a few names from the golden era of Colts cricket and the Colts at the turn of the century – namely Raffel, Pollocks and Dadabhoy. In a few years he would marry a lady he met at the club through tennis.

The war years

The scrapbook of Tommy Kelaart junior contains reports on two games between the Colts and the Police that took place in 1941. They appear to be one day games.

One was played on March and the other in September. Both games were drawn with the Police having the better of the Colts.

Tommy Kelaart scored unbeaten centuries in both games. How the Colts would have benefitted from Tommy Kelaart's only son playing for his old club.

During Colonial times burghers were favoured for positions in the railways and the Police. But the railways didn't have a strong cricket team and the Colts members employed by the railways played for the club.

In the March game Kelaart scored 111 out of a score of 217 for 6 wickets. The Police team was composed mainly of Englishmen and burghers, although M. Hallaldeen was their most successful bowler in the Colts reply of 83 for 8 wickets.

The Colts too was made up mostly of burghers – D. Van Cuylenberg, G. Weinman, E.G. Lorensz, E. Spittel, C.W. Schoorman and Crutchley (captain). The legendary L.V. Jayaweera opened the bowling for the Colts along with Lorensz. Willie Jayatilleke, the victorious Thomian captain of 1937, and future Colts captain (1942 – 4, 1949 – 1950), batted at No. 7. The Colts captain of previous years, D.W.L. Lieversz, didn't play in either game.

In the return game Kelaart's century was out of a total of 146 for 7 wickets. T. Melder and Jayatilleke were the main wicket takers.

The Colts replied with 90 for 8 wickets. W. Jayatilleke scored an unbeaten 26. The Police team included W.T. Brindley who played for Ceylon and the Ceylon Europeans against

visiting MCC and Australian sides in the 1920s and 1930s and even captained Ceylon vs Australia in 1934. He was a Deputy Inspector General.

8 MARCH 1941

POLICE DRAW WITH COLTS

T. H. Kelaart Scores A Century

The match between the Colts C.C. and the Police S.C. played on the Police ground ended in a draw. The Police batting first declared with 217 for 6 wickets. T. H. Kelaart, the Captain played a splendid forceful innings to score an unfinished 121 in 90 minutes. He hit 10 fours and two sixes.

The Colts in reply made 93 for 8 wickets. J. W. Alayadurai scored 41.

Hallaldeen took 5 wickets for 41 runs.

Scores:—

POLICE S. C.

J. Imrie, b Jayaweera	0
H. de S. Wijesinghe, c Jayatilleke, b Weinman	17
E. Gibson, lbw., b Crutchley	36
T. H. Kelaart, not out	121
M. Hallaldeen, c Schoorman, b Alayadurai	41
T. B. Wright, c Lourensz, b Weinman	41
F. K. Jonklaas, b Crutchley	24
W. Wills, not out	3
Extras	3

Total (for 6 wks.) 217

Fall of wickets: 1 for 0; 2 for 45; 3 for 59; 4 for 96; 5 for 121; 6 for 187

COLTS C. C.

D. Van Cuylenberg, c and b Jonklaas	8
G. C. R. Weinman, c Jonklaas, b Hallaldeen	34
E. G. Lourensz, c V. de Silva, b Hallaldeen	44
J. W. Alayadurai, lbw., b Kelaart	41
E. M. Spittel, lbw., b Hallaldeen	2
B. A. Ferrera, c Kelaart, b Hallaldeen	4
W. Jayatilleke, run out	0
L. V. Jayaweera, b Hallaldeen	3
R. A. Crutchley, not out	11
Schoorman, not out	2
Extras	6

Total (for 8 wks.) 93

L. de Niase absent.

Fall of wickets: 1 for 15; 2 for 25; 3 for 38; 4 for 63; 5 for 74; 6 for 75; 7 for 81; 8 for 82.

BOWLING ANALYSIS

POLICE S. C.

	O.	M.	R.	W.
L. V. Jayaweera	8	0	31	1
E. M. Spittel	13	0	50	2
G. C. R. Weinman	11	0	72	2
R. A. Crutchley	13	2	12	1
J. W. Alayadurai	4	0	21	1
C. W. Schoorman	1	0	23	0

COLTS C. C.

	O.	M.	R.	W.
W. Jayatilleke	3	0	12	0
Schoorman	19	7	24	2
J. W. Alayadurai	4	0	24	1
V. de Silva	4	0	15	1
Kelaart	6	0	18	1

28 SEPTEMBER 1941

POLICE DRAW WITH COLTS	
T. H. Kelaart Scores A Century	
The above match came off yesterday on the Colts grounds at Havelock Park and ended in a draw.	
<p>Scores:—</p> <p>POLICE</p> <p>F. H. de Saram, c Melder, b Schoorman 0; S. Wijesinghe, run out 9; B. Wright, b Melder 1; T. H. Kelaart, not out 101; B. Thiedeman, c Maclean, b Melder 10; W. T. Brindley, st. Van Cuylenberg, b Jayatilleke 7; A. N. Dharmaratne, b Melder 5; V. de Silva, b Jayatilleke 5; R. Elijatamby, not out 0. Extras 8. Total (for 7 wks) 146.</p> <p>*Innings declared closed.</p> <p>COLTS</p> <p>R. Rajaratnam, b Thiedeman 0; D. Van Cuylenberg, c Dharmaratne, b Thiedeman 2; M. Silva, c Thiedeman, b Elijatamby 0; A. Weerasinthe, b de Silva 26; T. Melder, b Kelaart 24; E. Bartholomew, run out 0; C. W. Van Geysel, c Brindley, b de Silva 2; J. Lawrence, not out 14; W. Jayatilleke, not out 20. Extras 2. Total (for 7 wks) 90.</p>	

Courtesy of Richard Kelaart

The chronicler's knowledge of what took place between 1942 and 1947 is based on information provided to him by Trevor Jansz. It is a page probably taken out of the Colts club yearbook from the late forties.

The club pavilion was requisitioned in March 1942. While the pavilion was returned to the club in November 1946, the grounds were not released till August 1947. During this period a rented bungalow in Frankfurt Place served as the clubhouse. (Frankfurt Place lies directly west of Park Road, between the beach and Galle Road, which is parallel to Havelock Road.)

The want of a ground for practice and to conduct matches on was a severe handicap, but the spirit of the players and general members remained undaunted.

During this period the club probably lost members linked to the golden era of the turn of the nineteen century but was held together by members known to the chronicler. The honorary secretary was Clarence Schoorman and the honorary treasury was Ronnie Elders. The captain for most of this period was Willie Jayatilike. The three of the above did more than anyone else to preserve and maintain the traditions of the club during the difficult period.

The chronicler never knew Clarence Schoorman but he was the chronicler's father's maternal cousin, as was Prince Schoorman who introduced Douglas Lieversz to the Colts. Clarence was honorary secretary of the club from 1938 to 1947, as well as a fast bowler and hard-hitting batsman. His father was Willy Schoorman, a younger brother of George Francis, who was the father of Prince Schoorman.

The chronicler has been to the house of Ronnie Elders which was located on Galle Road close to the Savoy theatre. He passed away unexpectedly about 1970.

New talent

Adversity brought some very talented young cricketers to the club. Amongst them were the Aldon's brothers, V. da Silva, Mike Chanmugan, G.P. Schoorman and Tita Nathanielsz. (Hugh Aldons was the only Ceylon tripple international – captaining the country in cricket, rugby and hockey. He left for Australia in 1957.)

Finally, Bobby Schoorman, a nephew of Prince Schoorman, a seam bowler of repute, played for the Colts between 1948 and 1955, when he represented Ceylon in a Gopalan trophy game, and then moved over to the B.R.C. and captained the team.

The report states that without practice, any sort of cricket is not easy, but when serious cricket is attempted, good results are almost impossible. Nonetheless, in 1943¹ they beat a powerful army command XI led by F.C. de Saram, and which included several other all-Ceylon cricketers. First-rate bowling by the left armer da Silva backed up by brilliant fielding were instrumental in this win.

However, the lack of practice, which can only be satisfactorily indulged in a ground of one's own, took its toll. As a result, the club faired poorly in succeeding tournaments.

Normal services resumed

The grounds were returned a year prior to the 75th anniversary of the club's founding which fell on 26th August 1948. A tour of Madras (India) was organised to commemorate the occasion.

The team in review

A review of the current Colts team appeared in the Ceylon Times of 20th November 1948. It was written by A.V. Fernando under his pen name of Alban.

¹ Some sources date the game to 1946 rather than 1942

COLTS TEAM REVIEW



Courtesy of Trevor Jansz

The sub-title to the article states – A keen young side, they suffer from a lack of practice facilities. Presumably it took some time to get the facilities back to normal.

Three photos are included in the article: that of Douglas Lieversz, Mike Chanmugan and L.V. da Silva. The article is transcribed it is a good piece of cricketing journalism and possibly provides an insight into why the Colts struggled to achieve Premier League success until the last decade of the twentieth century.

“DOUGLAS LIEVERSZ ENJOYS THE HONOUR OF LEADING THE COLOMBO COLTS CRICKET CLUB IN THE YEAR THEY CELEBRATE THEIR SEVENTY FIFTH ANNIVERSARY.

A happier choice could not be made, for the abundant talent in the club calls for expert guidance. Lieversz is eminently fitted for the responsibility.

The Colts ground in Havelock Park is still under repair and will not be ready till February next year.

A practice wicket is available for batting and bowling. No fielding practice is possible as the ground is being leveled and turfed.

As is the case of the B.R.C the want of proper practice is a severe handicap. This is especially so in the case of the Colts, a very young side, who need much more practice than is necessary for experienced players.

The club has played two tournament matches both of which have been lost, the game with the B.R.C. by a few runs on the first innings and by an innings against the N.C.C.

The heavy defeat sustained at the hands of the N.C.C. calls for no excuse. But it was only the previous weekend that the University were routed, their combined batting efforts totaling 68 runs on the same ground by the same club. The University had previously beaten the B.R.C. and a week after their debacle against the N.C.C. proceeded to take first innings points from the seemingly invincible Sinhalese Sports Club eleven.

These are the uncertainties that make cricket the game it is.

BATTING

The crying need of the Colts is for reliability in batting. The bowling is very good and the fielding efficient always, with some brilliant performances.

A sound opening pair have yet to be found. Powell, Gauder, Schoorman, Kreltszheim, Bertus Perera, Jansz and Harold de Silva have all been tried, but the problem is no nearer solution than it was months ago. The advantage of a regular pair who are able to give the side even a fair start are obvious.

There is a marked tendency among most of the batsmen to regard twenty or thirty runs as a good score. There is also a needless and sometimes reckless throwing away of wickets which may be put down to a lack of concentration or experience.

Jayetilleke, the best batsman in the team, is one of the few who does not suffer from these complaints. Although he has not fully realized the great promise he showed at school. Willie Jayetilleke has scored heavily for the Colts in recent years. He is at his best on a fast turf wicket where he is able to use his favourite and prolific scoring stroke past gully at will. A fighter to the bitter end Jayetilleke does not believe he should make a present of his wicket to any bowler.

Oorloff is one of the best of our younger batsman and is capable of many more runs than he makes just now. He drives well and uses a straight bat in defense.

Hugh Aldons, the vice-Captain, scored 96 in a trial a few months ago but has never given himself a chance of making a big score since he played that innings. A powerful driver, he plays fast bowling particularly well, being unafraid to drive into the fielderless long-field.

Weerasinghe has been out of the side for some time. At his best he was a very consistent scorer who made many much-needed runs for the Colts.

TALENTED ALL ROUNDER

Chanmugam has shown greatly improved batting form in recent games. Keenness and regular practice have contributed much towards the general improvement shown by this talented all-rounder.

Jansz is a capable batsman who prefers to attack. He scored an excellent half century against the B.R.C. recently when the side needed runs badly.

Lievers the Captain plays with a very straight bat in defence. He goes in too late for his steadiness to be of great assistance to his team.

Frederick Aldons is a natural batsman with a number of effective strokes.

Harold de Silva, Captain of St. Peters', is out of form at the moment but is too good a batsman to fail much longer.

Of those available for selection for the first-eleven G.P. Schoorman is the solitary left-handed batsman. Schoorman at one time gave promise of developing into a Ceylon opening bat. He may yet do so.

Marambe, also an opening batsman, is now available and it is hoped he and Schoorman will solve the difficulty the Club is experiencing about a regular opening pair.

Gauder who has been opening with some measure of success is a promising young batsman who drives straight and to the on with power.

O.W. Kern, the Prisons Department all-rounder, hits the ball hard. A batsman of the dogged type, he has scored heavily for the department. His fifty in the B.R.C. match was a great effort which only failed by a small margin to bring victory to his team.

Bertus Perera like Harold de Silva is still in school. He is a sound bat who has scored many runs in inter-school matches. He is very promising.

Kreltszheim, who is perhaps the best player of swing bowling in the Colts, should be a great asset when the grounds are ready and he is able to have all the practice he needs.

Powell opens for the Railway, but has not had much success in this position for the Colts. With more experience of turf wickets, he is bound to improve.

Mottau, just out of school, is very keen. He will improve if the keenness is maintained.

Inman, a plucky hard hitting batsman has not played for some months.

Da Silva has often come to the rescue with an useful contribution. This is most creditable as he is regarded as a bowler pure and simple.

Chanmugam and da Silva are as good a pair of opening bowlers as one could wish to have. Chanmugam the right-hander has not had much luck lately. His out-swing which is well controlled often beats batsman and wicket too.

The left-hander, da Silva, has been the most successful Colts bowler from the day he joined the Club. He is that rare combination of a bowler who bowls well whether the ball is new or old. His length is always very good, he changes his pace, and his break is the small one most feared by good batsmen.

The other left-hander, Oorloff, bowls slower than da Silva with a high trajectory. One of the best of his type, he bowled very well last weekend against the N.C.C. His forty-seven overs cost only sixty-seven runs. A splendid performance on a batsman's wicket and with two of the opposition batsmen being Malcolm Spittel and Vernon Prins.

Kern has sent down eighty-six overs against the B.R.C. and N.C.C. at a cost of 145 runs he has captured 9 wickets. This is first-rate bowling especially when the batting strength of the N.C.C. and the B.R.C. is remembered. Kern bowls both breaks with great command of length. He is very fit and strong and is about to stand up to much hard work.

G.P. Schoorman bowls a beautiful length. He uses the small break from leg or off most intelligently. He changes his pace in a manner that may deceive the best batsmen. On a wicket which gives him the slightest assistance he is a match-winning bowler even against the strongest batting team in the island.

Jansz can bowl both breaks but has more control over the off. He spins the ball considerably with a combination of finger and wrist work. He bowled very well last weekend against the N.C.C.

Hugh Aldons is a bowler who is certain of improvement when the grounds are in working order and proper facilities for practice exist.

The formidable Colts bowling would be completely equipped with a right hand leg spinner. Inman or Heyzer should, over time, develop onto good leg-spin bowlers.

FIELDING

The wicket-keepers are Powell, Kreltszheim and Mottau.

Powell who is first wicket-keeper might well be the successor to Navaratne with experience and coaching. Quick, young, powerfully built and fearless he has the makings of a first rate stumper.

Kreltszheim toiled manfully for years before Powell joined the Colts, and Mottau shows promise.

The slip fielding is brilliant at times, the Aldon brothers and Schoorman being excellent in these positions.

Oorloff fields well close-in or at gully and covers are served by those first class performers, Willie Jayatilleke, Harold Silva and Bertus Perera.

Lieversz, Chanmugan, Kern, Jansz and da Silva are hard-working and safe.

The Colts are fortunate that most of their short-distance fieldsmen are good in the outfield.

High and Frederick Aldons, Willie Jayetilleke, Bobbie Schoorman, Harold de Silva and Bertus Perera are all round fieldsmen who excel any where.

The high fielding standard maintained by the club is most creditable as it is achieved without practice.

The Colts will be laying a turf wicket at Havelock Park. Practice turf wickets, however, will be made and these should help the young Colts cricketers to acquire the technique necessary for grass wickets.

With regular practice and matches, the Colts should soon be able to field a very strong team from the talent available."

It appears that the same problem which plagued the Club in the sixties, namely, batsmen who could concentrate for long periods and make big scores, was an issue even in the forties. In 1948 the club had some enviable young talent, and one is surprised that they weren't the bedrock on which the fifties could have been a Colts, rather than an NCC decade.

It is possible that the club was unable to hold on to key players. Or was it caused by the delay in establishing a turf wicket (completed in 1957). A lack of proper facilities, particularly in relation to practice, a problem which persisted into the seventies, was probably what held the club back. What havoc might have the youngsters of 1948 wreaked with the facilities available today?

The seventy fifth club anniversary celebration – 18th December 1948

In 1948 Ceylon and Burma gained independence from Britain. Israel declared itself an independent state. Mahatma Ghandi was murdered.

The Soviet Union blockaded West Berlin and the US Congress ratified the Marshall plan. The policy of apartheid commenced in South Africa. The UK railways was nationalised.

The first polaroid camera went on sale and the transistor radio was invented. The long-playing record made of vinyl and played at 33 rpm was introduced.

Holden cars started to be manufactured in Australia. The Porsche motor company was founded. Mary Leakey discovered the fossil remains of a possible human ancestor.

In 1948 South Pacific opened on Broadway. Johnny Ramone, Glen Fry, Andrew Lloyd-Webber, Olivia Newton-John, Donna Summer and James Taylor were born.

The following account of the anniversary celebrations appeared in the Ceylon Fortnightly Review of 12th January 1949 (Vol. 1, No. 17) under the pen name of "Itinerant"

"The Colt Cricket Club, founded on August 26th 1873, celebrated their seventy-fifth anniversary in a manner befitting the occasion on Saturday, 18th December, with a largely attended garden party on their ground at Havelock Park. The gathering included His Excellency the Governor-General, Sir Henry Moore, Sir Francis Soertsz and representatives of all the leading cricket clubs in Ceylon. Excellent arrangements had been made for an open-air function and it was distinctly unfortunate that the weather should have interfered as it did. Sir John Parsons, Patron of the Club, and Mr. A.E. Christoffelsz, the President, were the chief hosts and despite the rain the function proved most enjoyable, several of the guests and members, indulged in dancing till a late hour. Two of the oldest members present were the famous bowler Tommy Kelaart and A.T. Pollocks, a great opening batsman in his day.

Mr. A.E. Christoffelsz in welcoming the Governor-General made a short speech thanking Sir Henry and other guests for their presence. He briefly outlined the history of the club before calling upon His Excellency to present two silver cups for batting and bowling respectively to Mr. W. Jayatileke and Mr. O.W. Kern.

H.E. the Governor-General in reply said that though he had never been a real cricketer he loved the game and had followed Ceylon cricket with much interest. He had read the history of the Colts club written by Mr. S.P. Foenander and had been greatly interested in the early history of this famous club. He thought that instead of his making a speech the author of that history should be called upon to relate some anecdotes and reminiscences. His excellency paid a high tribute to the Colts whose record was a truly great one. He was delighted to have met his old friend Tommy Kelaart with whom he used to play many years ago.

Finally, Sir Henry expressed that the Club would continue to flourish and in time celebrate its centenary."

Tommy Kelaart made one of his last public appearances. He passed away in 1950.

Interestingly, S.P. Foenander was requested to relate some anecdotes about the club. What Foenander said if he accepted the offer is not recorded.

On 4th February 1948 Sri Lanka had gained independence. But the old order still prevailed because the Governor General was still an Englishman. The atmosphere at the club anniversary would no doubt been very English and proper. However, between the 75th and 100th anniversaries of the club much changed in the society at large.

In 1956 a scion of the Sinhalese aristocracy, who never played any sport, let alone cricket, whose father was more English than the English, came into power on an opportunistic policy of making Sinhalese great again. In 1973 his widow was in power for the second time and the departure of many Colts stalwarts to overseas countries, which commenced from 1956 onwards, had begun to accelerate.

At the 75th anniversary English style food would have been served. In 1973 rice and curry was probably the main fare. Spoon and fork, or even fingers, had replaced knife and fork.