

BURGHER ASSOCIATION (AUSTRALIA) INC

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March 2017 News Bulletin





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Editor's Note



Dear Members & Friends

Welcome to this edition of the Newsletter. It is hoped that 2017 will be as successful as 2016 and, that you will find the endeavours of the BAA Committee as exciting and enjoyable for you the members, your families and friends as the previous year. We also hope you all had a wonderful Christmas and Holiday Season.

As you may have heard, the Australia Day celebrations was a very successful and enjoyable event and all who attended had a great time: further, there are also, several very economically priced events planned for you Members and friends throughout this year and, it is hoped that you can attend some or all these functions; you may even meet up with long lost friends.

Our very hardworking Secretary Harvey would like those of you who have use of a computer and, access to email to please forward your details to him if, you would like the Newsletter sent to you via email; remember you can also access the Newsletter via the BAA Web Site; please share details of the web site with your friends. It would help to reduce the mailing cost if you would accept the Newsletter electronically. Please consider it.

Finally, thank you for some of the positive feedback we receive. I will endeavour to keep the Newsletter interesting and relevant throughout this Committee year.

Sincerely

Neville Davidson

"Good judgment comes from experience, and experience ... well, that comes from poor judgment."

*New
Members*
**In the
Spotlight**

**Mr Cornell & Mrs Chrishani Jansen
Ms Sharon Kellart
Mr Ricardo Weinman**

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KAYMAN'S GATE: PETTAH'S DUTCH LEGACY

Sri Lanka

Sunday Observer, 25 December 2016

If, like me, you are a lover of Sinhala songs, you will no doubt have been mesmerized by the Sunil Edirisinghe song "Kayman dorakada indapan mama enathuru Selesssina" (Selesssina, please wait at Kayman's Gate till I come). Since this song is about the various old landmarks of Colombo, I was always curious to find out where this actually is. Then I found out that it is actually in Pettah, just a few minutes' walk from my office. Once Colombo's smartest residential area, Pettah is now the city's bazaar, a jungle of streets jammed with bargain-hunters, herds of trucks, Lorries, carts and the ubiquitous three-wheelers where the Dutch colonial facades still survive proudly beside gleaming new mercantile shops. After visiting Colombo's Dutch Period Museum (featured last week), our next visit was to Kayman's Gate and Wolfendhal Church. A visit to Pettah isn't complete without at least visiting these two Dutch monuments. A sense of anticipation gripped us as we left the Dutch Period Museum and strolled along Second Cross Street towards the busy Main Street. Having reached Main Street, we continued along Main Street. On either side, as we dodged down Main Street, shops were bursting with garments hung like bunting from merchants' doorways.

Crocodiles

Suddenly, we glimpsed a curious sight through the gauntlet of street vendors and bustling shoppers, beyond the huge bill boards adorning buildings. Unmoved by the chaos around it, an ancient belfry stood defiantly, symbolizing Pettah's proud past. It is all that remains of Kayman's Gate. It stands where the crocodiles, or caymans, from the Beira Lake once scavenged.

In Portuguese times, the Colombo Fort was fortified by a ring of 12 bastions with intervening ramparts and supported by a moat, flanked on the east by a crocodile-infested lake and on the west by a boulder strewn shoreline. To the south of the canal named De Revir is the Roa de Casa, while to the north of it is the Roa Directo which is the Main Street of today's Pettah. At the end of this street is seen the Poorta Reinha, (Queen's Gate), the principal exit which was a massive gateway built at the mouth of a tunnel under the eastern rampart, with access via a drawbridge over the moat. These were later called Kayman's Gate and St. John's River respectively. This gate opened on to the road to Hanwellia, which followed the left bank of the Kelani River. The Dutch captured the city in 1656 and held possession of it. After capturing Colombo, the Dutch set themselves to alter not only the fortifications but also the streets, which were laid out on a more regular grid pattern and are still so, today. The Dutch called the present Pettah, 'oude stad' or 'old city', because they found this to be the active centre when they took over. The walls and fortifications round the 'oude stad' were allowed to remain, but they were subsequently removed, though a mud wall on the east near Kayman's Gate survived until British times.

cont'd

It is all that remains of Kayman's Gate at the end of the Main Street of the Pettah on the right leading to 4th Cross Street. Today, the Department of Archeology has built a fence around the base which is confined to a small rectangular space. Near the age-old bell, crows build their nests. Public executions were held at its foot; now an Electricity Board transformer and commercial establishments block access to the site.

Worshippers

In Dutch times at the foot of the Wolfendhal Hill (present eastern end of Main Street) stands the old belfry with the bell which summoned worshippers to prayer at Wolfendhal church. The bell is said to date back to the 16th century, during which time it hung in the Portuguese church dedicated to St. Francis. It is said that this church once stood in the Royal city of Kotte. The Dutch reoccupied this city which had been abandoned in 1565. The bell was found among the ruins and later mounted on the belfry at Kayman's Gate.

In the Dutch period, the Main Street was known as 'Koning's Straat' and stopped at Kayman's Gate, after which the belfry is named. 'Kaaiman' is the Dutch for crocodile, from which Kayman is probably derived. In the years of Dutch times, there had been crocodiles in the Pettah because the crocodile infested Beira Lake extended right up to Kayman's Gate via St. John's River. It is said that crocodiles from Beira Lake once scavenged for food along the St. John's River close to Kayman's Gate.

Another historical anecdote says that the Dutch have minted a large number of VOC coins in the building close to Kayman's Gate because of its security and protection provided from the crocodile-infested moat.

The bell still hangs majestically in the belfry which was decorated with some flower motifs on both sides. Although it did service as a Church bell for special services at Wolfendhal Church in the recent past, it seems to be desolated and neglected today.

After visiting Kayman's Gate, we strolled towards Sea Street crossing Wolfendhal Street and walked a little up a hillock. We continued on Central Road and crossed again to Wolfendhal Street where the imposing edifice of Wolfendhal Church stands crowning the hill and overlooking the city and harbour of Colombo. Built in 1749 in the Doric style, with walls made of clay ironstone 1.5-metre-thick, upon which the gables were raised, it is the finest historic monument of the Dutch period and has been left intact despite the changes that have come all round it. Its transepts, directed to face the four points of the compass, are facaded by four lofty gables supported by pilasters with spreading scrolls at the side. Its roof is composed of four brick-lined, plastered domes which radiate from a central tower. The high roof galvanized sheeting is painted in red. Carved into the gable over the southern entrance are the initials IVSVG. That associates the building with the name of Governor Julius Valentyn Stein van Gollenesse who was chiefly responsible for its construction. The date (1749) is seen over the doorway. On the southern façade, prominently displayed is the date AD 1749 which is evidence of the year the foundation was laid. Strolling around the church premises, we witnessed the western part of the exterior walls of the church displaying many gravestone dedications dating back to the 1700s in remembrance of loved ones.

cont'd

'Dale of wolves'

Wolfendhal Church is just one of four remaining structures in any decent state of preservation built by the Dutch in every settlement of importance. Wolfendhal literally means 'dale of wolves' and has probably been derived from the marshy lowlands haunted by jackals lying immediately outside the walls of the fort of Colombo.

When Colombo capitulated in 1796, many Dutch officials, settlers and clergymen returned to Holland (Present Netherlands) or retired to Batavia. In 1800 there were only about 900 Dutch inhabitants left on the island. It is to them and their descendants the Burghers, that credit must be given for the preservation of one of the few monuments in Colombo which stands as a memorial to the oldest Dutch institution in Sri Lanka.

We said goodbye to these magnificent edifices thinking for how many years can we see them as they were once managed and venerated by people who lived in the past. Go there and experience the places for yourself. It is a worthwhile excursion for anyone with history in their hearts.

--oo0oo--



"Our annual company barbecue is next week. HR is in charge of the chicken and ribs, Marketing is taking care of the burgers and hotdogs, and Accounting is going to cook the books."



It is always wise to look ahead, but difficult to look further than you can see.

Winston Churchill

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The Origin of Colombo

The origin of the city of Colombo itself is interesting. According to the author, "Colombo sprang up on a small piece of highland at the coastal edge of a wild, waterlogged marsh. When it became necessary to expand it the marsh was filled up and the jungle cleared". How did the name Colombo originate?" "The Sinhalese had two names for Colombo - Kolon Tota and Kola Amba. Kola Amba because of a huge mango tree which had only leaves but bore no fruit. That tree was a prominent landmark that stood for many generations off Commissariat Street, Fort. Originally a military fort, it was the Portuguese followed by the Dutch and the British who made Colombo the capital city, it now is."

The author's observations and comments on the people who once lived in Kollupitiya and its environs are equally interesting and revealing. The 'dhoby' community for example lived on the side of the Galle Face where the land slopes down to the Beira Lake, and were employed as official washermen mostly to the colonial masters. "When the land was required for the new Military Hospital, the dhobies were given land for their housing and "drying ground" across the lake in the land known as Polwatte. The 'dhobies' settled down there and did their washing (mostly for the British) and carried their customers' clothes across the lake to the fort by canoe, even using donkeys to carry their bundles", he states. He also recalls the jockeys who occupied the first floor of St. Michael's building, close to the horse stables and riding school which were down Clifford Road.

According to Herath, at least two well-known persons of literary fame are said to have lived at Kollupitiya. One was Gajaman Nona, the southern poetess who was born at Kollupitiya in 1758 and christened Dona Esabella Peruman Koraneliya at the Milagiriya church.

The other was Andare who it is said, after an argument with the students of St Anthony's School at the time situated on the sea side of Kollupitiya near the present British High commission, and annoyed by the treatment given to him had said, "Kollupitiya Kollo thamai Mogan Kollo", calling Kollupitiya 'Kolan Petiya'. One of Colombo's most prominent landmarks, the Beira Lake was once known as the Colombo Lake and was originally an extensive reach of flood water from the Kelani Ganga." The Lake was called 'Lagoon' by the Portuguese, a sheet of water described as being full of frightful alligators and crocodiles. Hence the name Kayman's Gate for a nearby street", notes the author.

We also learn that the Cargills Department store in the Fort, another prominent landmark, was once the temporary residence of the first British governor North. Herath's comprehensive account covers practically most of the streets, lanes, houses and other buildings in Kollupitiya and its environs, including market places, burial grounds, churches, hospitals, parks, religious buildings, schools, museum and art galleries.

The author has evidently spent a great deal of time and effort researching his facts. Reading his book is like going through the pages of a history book with a difference; the writing is subjective and nostalgic written by a person has strong sentiments for his home town.

The real value of the book is that it does not confine itself to describing only Kollupitiya, but goes beyond, Kotahena, Pettah and Fort. Here too his writing is enlivened with anecdotes and little known facts. According to the author Slave Island was originally a mud village containing a bazaar, an excellent parade grounds and "two gentlemen's villas". Kew Road connected Slave Island with the fort.

by bridges and causeways. It was to Slave Island that the Portuguese brought the Kaffir population as workmen from Goa in 1600. And it was here that the first insurrection by the Kaffirs took place against their employers.

When the insurrection was suppressed all the slaves were taken along a narrow passage through the ramparts and ferried across the Beira lake to a jagged peninsular called IJE meaning 'Island' specially built for them. The Dutch too kept their slaves on this island to prevent them from escaping.

Did you know that the last King of Kandy after being captured by the British was temporarily detained in an old Dutch building before being sent to India on the very spot that the sky high buildings of Ceylinco House stands today? A tiny concrete cubicle in which a man can barely sit, now displayed in the courtyard off the foyer of Ceylinco House is believed to have been the cell where Śrī Wickrama Rajasinghe was imprisoned. Or that the Dutch built a house known as the Government House occupied by the last Dutch governor on the very spot that the President's House now stands?

Popular landmark Galle Face Green, another popular landmark in Kollupitiya, was only a small part of what was once a large undulating coastal swamp. "It was the British who developed it into a leisure ground...A place for colonial ladies and gentlemen to unfold their grace and haughtiness, a place for soldiers on horseback to show off their latest accoutrements, a scene for flirtation and gossip, political and social", writes the author.

"At first cricket, football and polo were played on the Green; later horse racing", Herath states. The sea side walk on the Galle Face Green was built in 1859 "in the interests of ladies and children of Colombo," states a plaque still found on a pillar that stands mid-way besides the walk. The origins of important religious places in and around Kollupitiya are no less interesting. The Devatagaha Mosque - at Town Hall, Cinnamon Gardens, we learn was once the resting place of a Muslim saint Seyyadana As-sheik Usman Ibn Abdur Rahaman al siddique who came from Arafat, Saudi Arabia. He was a direct descendent of the first Caliph after the passing away of the Holy Prophet. The grave of the saint was discovered in 1802 by a Moor residing in Maradana who said that the location was given him in a dream. The name of the mosque is derived from a Davata tree which grew near the grave.

Courtesy: The Sunday Observer

"Anger is a feeling that makes your mouth work faster than your mind."

End of Year Ball 2016



The fun continues



The Hopper Lunch

19 February 2017



continued



OBITUARIES

Compiled by Victor Melder
(E & O.E.)

(FEBRUARY 2017)

FERDINANDEZ (FERDY), husband of Marta, brother of Rev. Father Marcus Fernandez, late Winnie, late Ignatious, Frank and late Nita, brother-in-law of late Paul, Joe, Lucy and Peter, in Sri Lanka – 25/2, Samagi Mawatha, Kulatunga Road, Walana, Panadura, Sri Lanka. (Daily News 1.2.2017)

JANSEN - LETITIA (17.02.1924 - 29.01.2017). wife of the late Earle Jansen, sister of Friedel, Hendel, Neville, Shelton and Conway (all deceased), mother of Charmaine, Manville, Cleve, Jacqui and Dulika, passed away peacefully on 29.01.2017 in Melbourne, Australia. (Daily News 1.2.2017)

PERERA - JANETTE (nee DE SARAM), wife of late Ronnie (Rathna), daughter of late Freeda and late Leo, mother of Rozainne, Ronald and Sharmalene, mother-in-law of Shyam, Kanta and Dinesh, grandmother of Shehani, Lyendra, Dimitra and Shanelle, sister of late Antonette, late Joseph and Thomas, in Sri Lanka. – 121/60, Pio Mawatha, Kandana, Sri Lanka. (Daily News 1.2.2017)

LUADOWYK - CHIREEN PHYLLIS, (7th October 1937 - 28 January 2017). Wife of Travice (dec), mother of Francine and Maryvonne, mother-in-law of Raymond, grandmother of Brady, Grayson, Timothy and Leah, sister of Maurits Fernando, Helene de Rosayro and Alison Berman, in Canberra, Australia. (Daily News 3.2.2017)

FELSINGER – LINDA, mother, grandmother, sister, cousin, in West Australia. (The West Australian 4.2.2017)

VETHAKAN – VIOLET, wife of late Edmund Vethakan, mother of Russel, Kingsley and Paul, mother-in-law of Shanaz, Jennifer and Debbie, grandmother of Shohana, Roshni, Dinuk, Selomie, Nehansa and Vihansa, sister of Eric, Henry and Lilly Jacob, in Sri Lanka, on February 2, 2017. – 37A, Shramadana Mawatha, Rawathawatte, Moratuwa, Sri Lanka. (Sunday Observer 5.2.2017)

GOMEZ - CYRIL ALEXANDER, son of late Mr & Mrs. Lewis Thomas Gomez, husband of Pamela (nee Vaz), father of Conrad & Tony, brother of late Philomina, late John, late Eric, George and Mabel, in Sri Lanka. – 81/19, Silver Smith Lane, Colombo 12, Sri Lanka. (Daily News 6.2.2017)

JOBSZ – PAMELA (PAM) nee GERREYN, wife of late Andy, daughter of late Noel and late Brenda Gerreyn, sister and sister-in-law of late Norman and Jean Gerreyn, Andrew and Jenny Gerreyn, Arlene & Royce Fernandopulle, Paul & Claudette Gerreyn (Australia), late Barbra, Lulu & Reggie Nathaniel, Orril & late Mahinda Galle Arachchi, sister-in-law of Clary & Bell Jobz, late Millie & Tom Tissera, Ivy & Dr. Reggie Tennakoon (Australia), Norman Jobsz late Rosemary & Hilary Schradder, in Sri Lanka. – 381/1, Alhena Road, Siddhamulla, Piliyandala, Sri Lanka. (Daily News 6.2.2017)

MATHIASZ – CLAIRE (MARY), wife of the late Rev. Vernon Mathiasz, mother of Herman (Jilo), Brian, Bernadine, Suzanne and Steve, mother-in-law of Hema, Manel, Sumith, Lalith and Wendy, grandmother of 15, great grandmother of 3, in Sri Lanka (Daily News 11.2.2017)

PIETERSZ – SYBIL MARY (nee PIERIS), wife of Shane Pietersz, mother Jevon and Jehan, daughter of late Mr . Pieris and late Mrs . K. Pieris, daughter-in-law of late Kingsley Pietersz and Charmaine Pietersz, sister of Lourdes and Jenette, sister-in-law of Marven and Judy, Dave & Sriyanthi, Kershel and Jennifer, Gerard and late Tally, in Sri Lanka. (Daily News 13.2.2017)

VANHOFF – MAUREEN (nee GRAND), wife of late Franklin, mother of Roville and Tania (Aust), mother-in-law of Roshani and Roger, sister of late Bertram, Gerry and of Pearl, in Sri Lanka. (Daily News 14.2.2017)

SOUNDY – MARLENE ELIZABETH, wife of Richard, mother of Sam and Jonathan, in Sri Lanka, on February 12, 2017. (Daily News 14.2.2017)

cont'd

PEREIRA – LENNIE, husband of late Kanthi (nee Blok), father of Niroshan, father-in-law of Amila, grandfather of Thiyago. Brother of late Vernon, in Sri Lanka. (Daily News 15.2.2017)

SLEMMERMANN – OLGA (nee TRANCHELL), wife of late Leslie, mother of Jerome, Cedric, Wellington, Roger and Dexter, mother-in-law of **Malkanthi**, Eileen, Pushpa, Hasanthi, Pearly and Shirley, grandmother of Joanna, Jilian, Jolin, Jonathan, Jason, Shehan, Ruth, Sassana and Shannon, in Sri Lanka, on February 15, 2017, aged 85 years. (Daily News 16.2.2017)

PAKTSUN – CHRISTOPHER (CHRISTO), son of late Vernon (Teddy) and Carol, husband of Doreen, father of Dilan, Dilshan and late Dilruk. Brother of Kenneth, Anslem, Cecil, Ralph and Annette, in Sri Lanka. 10/29, Jayawardenapura, Amandoluwa, Seeduwa, Sri Lanka. (Daily News 17.2.2017)

JANSZ – CECILA, wife of Leonard “Son” (dec). Sister of Eric (US), Doris, Frances (both Aust), Norma, Joyce (UK) and Margie (Malaysia), in Perth, on February 15, 2017, aged 88 years. (The West Australian 17.2.2017)

ROBERTS – DAVID MANFRED, son of Lina and Sumedha, brother of Yolande, Tony, Patrick, Nanette, Barbara, Christine and Dennis, in Fiji. (Daily News 18.2.2017)

HERFT – SHIRLEY ZOHARA, wife of late Desmond Herft, mother of Denver and Minnelli, mother-in-law of Shehani Herft and Shane Bahar, sister-in-law of Brian and Sylvérine Herft and Aloma Herft. Grandmother of Nicolena, Joseph Rodrigo, Shennelle and Sienna. Sister of Gnei Oneza Buckman, Gnei Zeenia Rajap, late Gnei Fareena Abeywardana, Gnei Fawziya Sawal, Tuan Yaheya, Maharook Jamion and Sidney Jamion, in Sri Lanka. – 44.7, Thimbirgasyaya Road, Hendala, Wattala, Sri Lanka. (Daily News 18.2.2017)

JANSEN – ROSE, wife of late Bertram (Berty), mother of Charmaine and Michael, mother-in-law of Jeffrey Rodrigo, grandmother of Joseph and Denise. Sister of Marie, late Patrick and late Percy, in Sri Lanka. (Sunday Observer 19.2.2017)

CHRISTIE-DAVID – SHEILA DOROTHY VIVIENNE (nee VANNITAMBY), wife of the late Fred Christie-David, mother of Clement, Harold, Deanna Sathanandan, Shirani Cullen Trevor and Noel, mother-in-law of Shiranie, Daphne, Dhankar, Ramani and Selvi (all Aust), grandmother of Dinuke, Aaron, Shaun, Vinod, Sijith, Andrea, Deshanie, Sean, Marcus, Tara, Damien, Eden, Darshika, Nirosha, late Christopher, Anita and Shane, great grandmother of 11. Sister of Douglas, Elmo, Lloyd, Noeline, James and John (all dec), sister-in-law of Leela, late Sarojini, Doris, Leela and late Beulah, in Sydney (1.4.1928 – 19.2.2017) – (Daily News 23.2.2017)

BLOK – VINITHA (nee VITHARANA), wife of late Mervyn Blok, mother of Lalith, Aruni Kasturiarachchi and Padmika Wirasinghe, mother-in-law of Vajira and Gishan, grandmother of Lakshani, Gyan and Avindra. Daughter of the late Dr & Mrs W.L. Vitharana, sister of the late Rani Atukorale, Dr Mallik Vitharana and Lalitha Wirasinghe, sister-in-law of the late Dr Upali Vijitha and Tissa, in Sri Lanka. - 7/4, Mahamaya Mawatha, Kandy, Sri Lanka. (Sunday Observer 26.2.2017)

LUDOWYKE – CHRISTOPHER RAYENZI, son of Aloysius & Padma Ludowyke, husband of Sriyani, father of Julian, Marlon and Jason. Brother of Ansolem, brother-in-law of Melani, in Sri Lanka, under tragic circumstances. – 284/5, 3rd Lane, Lake Road, Malabe, Sri Lanka. (Sunday Times 26.2.2017)

BROHIER – BERYL DELORAINE, daughter of late Dr Richard Leslie Brohier and Pansy Elaine Brohier (nee Werkmeister), sister of Yvette (NZ) and late Lucien, in Sri Lanka, on February 27, 2017. (Daily News 28.2.2017)

Note: All spelling of names as taken from Sri Lankan newspapers

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INVESTOR FORUM – MELBOURNE

23RD MARCH 2017

KEYNOTE ADDRESS BY

HON. NIROSHAN PERERA

STATE MINISTER OF NATIONAL POLICIES AND ECONOMIC AFFAIRS

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For further information and details of the Seminars to be held in Melbourne & Sydney, please access the Invest Sri Lanka link on the Burgher Association Web Site under the heading “Links”.

<https://burgherassocn.org.au>

LOVE IT OR LOATHE IT: DURIAN

By Emilee Tombs - 11 Nov 2016

Adored throughout Asia, the durian fruit was once considered 'unchaste' by the British. While it's now popping up on modern menus around the world, the fruit's pungent flavor profile is as divisive as ever. There's no other fruit in the world as divisive as the durian. The acrid smell it emits, even through its spiky casing, has me gagging from a mile away. Smelling like something between rotting cabbage and faeces, durian's potency has even led to its ban on public transport in Singapore. Although many revile it, fans of this 'King of Fruits' are fervent in their idolatry.

On my travels through Malaysia several years ago, I would swerve my moped to avoid the bowling-ball husks dangling menacingly by the roadside, and warned everyone I met not to buy the sealed boxes that were being hawked at night markets. It was rare to see it being eaten in public, and even rarer to see it on menus. Today though, it's a different story, and enthusiasm for durian is growing beyond Malaysia and Indonesia; it's been revered as a delicacy around the world. Crack open a durian and inside you'll find individual pods that encase the flesh. American Lindsay Gasik, author of *The Durian Tourist's Guide to Thailand*, is a convert.

While backpacking in 2012, Gasik discovered that she enjoyed the smell and the taste of this peculiar fruit so much that she went on to create a blog dedicated to it. *Year of the Durian* documented her travels and tastings and, after encountering others who shared her passion, she partnered with local Malaysian durian farmers and connoisseurs to create the Bao Sheng Durian Festival in Penang. 'When western travelers first arrived in Southeast Asia in the 16th century, they mostly thought durian was amazing—the custard of the gods, nature's ambrosia and so on,' Gasik enthuses. 'It was only with colonisation by the British that durian came to symbolize a threat and a schism between culture. 'In the Victorian era, women had to go to their bedrooms to eat things like oranges because it was considered indecent to eat them in public, so durian—with its strong and pungent aroma and untidy appearance—was considered an 'unchaste' food.'

Western tastes have changed dramatically in the past 100 years, with the adventurous looking to the east to expand their culinary horizons. 'People are a lot more open-minded these days,' adds Gasik. 'They're looking for culinary adventures and things to taste different. Now people want to 'go native', as it were.' In her durian fan club, Gasik counts connoisseurs from Iceland and Australia, to Hong Kong and the US. 'Our community is adventurous, open-minded, passionate, social and dedicated to having a really good time in life. The best tasting durian is one that you share with good friends,' Gasik laughs.

cont'd ..

The annual durian festival, organized by Gasik and her team—which includes Australian raw food enthusiast and endurance athlete Grant Campbell and durian 'sommeliers' Master Seng and his son Zhi Vooi—involves a week-long stretch Bao Sheng Farm, Master Seng's fourth-generation durian farm. Perched on the hillside overlooking the Straits of Malacca and Penang's durian orchards, the trip involves all-you-can-eat durian, plus various cooking and educational sessions. Durian appreciation is not so unusual these days, I am told by Phoebe Donko-Hanson, a Ghana native who took up her role as executive chef at Aloft Kuala Lumpur in December 2015. 'It's an indulgence for many locals here,' explains Phoebe, who first learned about durian when she travelled to Malaysia a year ago, but now features a durian cheesecake on her dessert menu. 'I know people who travel the width and breadth of Malaysia during durian season in order to sample the different varieties. For the non-locals who are not familiar with durian, there seems to be a love-hate relationship with it. The ones with more adventurous palettes eventually came around to liking it though,' she reveals.

Phoebe isn't alone in her pursuit. Chef Ken Liew at the Sheraton Imperial Kuala Lumpur Hotel recently put a snow-skin mooncake on his menu, the main ingredient of which was the Musang King durian—regarded as one of the best varieties. 'It's a challenging but rewarding ingredient and I really like to use it,' he says. 'For locals in Malaysia, Singapore, Indonesia and Thailand, it's been enrooted in our system for many years. It's known as the 'king of fruit' here.' Head Pastry Chef at Le Meridien Kuala Lumpur, Loh Mee Foong says even in her own family there's a love-hate relationship with the fruit. 'It's still a popular fruit among Malaysians, especially during the season, yet in my own family two of my children do not like it, and a few of my local colleagues too.

They all say that the smell is too strong. 'I think this is very personal, it is difficult to change their mind, and make them like it.' As for me, I was never able to get past those pungent aromas in Malaysia to try it myself, but perhaps one day I'll hold my nose and be adventurous enough to give it a go! Perhaps, like kimchi or camembert, it's only a matter of time before the smell and taste of durian converts us all.



THINGS YOU SHOULD KNOW BUT PROBABLY DON'T

1. Money isn't made out of paper, it's made out of cotton.
2. The Declaration of Independence was written on hemp (marijuana) paper.
3. The dot over the letter 'i' is called a 'tittle.'
4. A raisin dropped in a glass of fresh champagne will bounce up and down continuously from the bottom of the glass to the top.
5. Susan Lucci is the daughter of Phyllis Diller
6. 40% of McDonald's profits come from the sales of Happy Meals.
7. 315 entries in Webster's 1996 Dictionary were misspelled.
8. The 'spot' on ZUP comes from its inventor, who had red eyes. He was albino.
9. On average, 12 newborns will be given to the wrong parents, daily.
10. Warren Beatty and Shirley MacLaine are brother and sister.
11. Chocolate affects a dog's heart and nervous system; a few ounces will kill a small-sized dog.
12. Orcas (killer whales) kill sharks by torpedoing up into the shark's stomach from underneath, causing the shark to explode.
13. Most lipstick contains fish scales (ewww).
14. Donald Duck comics were banned from Finland because he doesn't wear pants.
15. Ketchup was sold in the 1830's as medicine.
16. Upper- and lower-case letters are named 'upper' and 'lower' because in the time when all original print had to be set in individual letters, the 'Upper case' letters were stored in the case on top of the case that stored the smaller, 'lower case' letters.
17. Leonardo Da Vinci could write with one hand and draw with the other at the same time, hence multi-tasking was invented.
18. Because metal was scarce, the Oscars given out during World War II were made of wood.
19. There are no clocks in Las Vegas gambling casinos.
20. The name Wendy was made up for the book Peter Pan; there was never a recorded Wendy before!
21. There are no words in the dictionary that rhyme with: orange and purple.
22. Leonardo Da Vinci invented scissors. Also, it took him 10 years to paint Mona Lisa's lips.
23. A tiny amount of liquor on a scorpion will make it instantly go mad and sting itself to death.
24. The mask used by Michael Myers in the original 'Halloween' was a Captain Kirk's mask painted white.
25. If you have three quarters, four dimes, and four pennies, you have \$1.19. You also have the largest amount of money in coins without being able to make change for a dollar (good to know.)



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