

Dear Trinitians,

I give below an article of the first ever Bradby encounters in 1945 written after much research. This would be of interest during this week before the second leg is played next Saturday. I have played in 1956 and won a “lion” (the highest award) and went on to represent Sri Lanka in Rugby as well as all the representative clubs except one.

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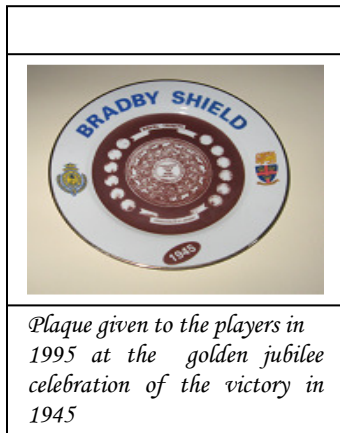


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FIRST BRADBY ENCOUNTER

1945

On the 12th of July 1945 was the day that the Trinity College team left Kandy in a road bus of Mr. Madanayake, who was a bus magnate and provided the transport at that time to the College. This trip started something that has grown into gigantic proportions. Never did they realize or dream that small step when they boarded the bus, would be a giant leap to what the Bradby is today. Some even say that during this season of the encounters the world revolves round a block of wood called the Bradby.



Plaque given to the players in 1995 at the golden jubilee celebration of the victory in 1945

Even though the series had been played since 31st July 1920 and my late father-in law, Victor Jayaweera recalled the early matches, this was the very first Bradby Shield encounter.

Before coming to Colombo they had to get ready. Repair and polish the boots. There were no aluminum screw type studs or the light boots. The sole was leather and pieces of leather were carefully and skillfully cut into circles at reducing diameter by Brodie the cobbler who lived on Hill Street and served us till the dawn of the aluminum studs. Each round piece of leather was nailed with four nails till the required height to grip the ground was obtained. The other side of the coin was when these pieces of leather wears off and fall it exposes razor sharp four nails or multiples of four. The ball was leather with a bladder inside and

laced . On especially Bogambara, which was lake that had been filled the rains make it into a mud sludge. It speaks volumes for the players of yore how this ball soaked with water and a two inch coating of mud was kicked and passed. It could have weighed anything up to five pounds.

Having come to Colombo the team was housed in a large house on Turret Road (present Dharmapala Mawatha) Those interviewed by me recall the dinner which was corned beef and string hoppers which resulted in some upset stomachs. But they all remember most of all the sumptuous lunch given by the Royalists on the day of the match. The match was published with the following unobtrusive news item. What a way to herald the great Bradby encounter!!

After the lunch the Trinity payers walked with their boots across their shoulders from Turret Road to the University grounds for the match. This was nothing unusual. Those who played in the match could recall very little of the match played 65 years ago. But the following paper articles are available in the Colombo archives with one article 4 ½ lines and the other 11 lines. What prominence for the Bradby.

Daily News – Friday 13th July 1945 - Page 5

**INTER SCHOOL RUGGER
ROYAL TO MEET TRINITY**

*The first interschool Rugger match for the season will take place this evening at 6 o'clock when Royal VX will meet that of Trinity College at the University ground.
(Though it is stated 6 o'clock it ought to be a misprint)*

Daily News Saturday 14th July 1945 – Page 6

**INTER SCHOOL RUGGER
ROYAL vs TRINITY**

*The opening match of inter school Rugger season took place yesterday evening on the University grounds, when Royal College met and beat Trinity by a solitary try scored.
The first half was evenly contested and unproductive. The game was resumed mainly as a forward struggle, with an occasional three quarter movement by Royal and it was nearing the end when Aurlpragasam went over for an unconverted try
Mr. S.G. de Zoysa refereed*

Ceylon Observer Saturday Evening 14th July 1945

YESTERDAY'S THRILLING SCHOOL RUGGER MATCH

*Royal scored a victory over Trinity by three points – the only try of the match to nil yesterday on the Varsity ground in the presence of a large crowd.
Though conditions were ideal for a splendid game of Rugger yet the match resolved into a grim forward battle rather on the scrappy side. Trinity having a heavier pack heeled out both in the set and loose scrums but then back division proved utterly futile and not once did it make use of the numerous opportunities that came their way. In the line outs too the Kandy School had the advantage, whilst Trinity tackling was poor, that of Royal was sound and hard. On a few occasions that Royal threes got the ball they showed their paces and only passing moves that came from them.*

ROYAL ATTACK HARD

Exchanges were more or less even in the first half. Within the first few minutes Royal had the opportunity of scoring but Nissar failed to place the penalty. Trinity on two occasions could have scored but lack thrust and finish in the back division foiled the work of the hard working forwards.

*Royal was in the picture right throughout the second half and Trinity was not only hard pressed but defensive the whole tie. In the second half Royal's pack more than held its own. A grim defense starved off a score by Royal, who however came in again and again till before the end Arulampalam scored a snap goal from forward rush meters from the goal line.
Mr. S.G de Zoysa refereed. (This was the former IGP)*

In lighter vein the Trinitians consoled themselves by saying the there was a talk that if Royal lost the Shield would have been withdrawn. That is their cover todate. The news items for the second match that was to be played in Kandy where Trinity won and also the Bradby Shield is as follows

Daily News 28th July 1945 – Page 8

INTER SCHOL RUGGER

The following will represent Royal in the Rugger match with Trinity to be played in Kandy today M. Kasisipillai, L.S.Dissanayake, A.C.M.Nizzar, K.R.Amrasinghe, R.M.S de Silva, R. Rajaratnam, M.Rodrogo, S.V.Edirimanasinghe, S.Mukherji, D de Moor, C.S. de Saram, C.D.L.Fernando (Captain) J.M.Kumaraswamy, N.W.Karunaratne, and L.Kumarasinghe

The previous match ended in a victory for Royal by three points

The report of the match is as follows

Daily News Monday 30th July 1945

***TRINITY AVENGE COLOMBO DEFEAT
ROYAL BEATEN AT RUGGER***

Trinity College avenged their defeat at Colombo by beating Royal College by 6 points (2 tries) to nil on Bogambara yesterday

Trinity was without their captain Sourjah. The match was keenly fought out and Trinity owed the victory to some superb work by the forwards. Using every ounce of their weight they smothered the Royalists in the tight and the loose especially in the first half. The backs supported Madugalle kicking brilliantly to touch.

Both tries were in the first half.

Dr. K.B.Sangakkara refereed. (This was our Rugger coach in 1956)

Who scored the tries for Trinity? No one was bothered even to record and the main thing was that the match was won and the game enjoyed. However on interviewing persons it could be reasonably stated that S.B.Pilapitiya scored the equalizing try by creeping by the side of the scrum, which he had done umpteen number of times in the later years of his Rugger career and the opponents feared him most in five yard scrums. T.B.Madugalle broke through and passed the ball to that 'terrier' wing forward Kenneth Gunawardena who scored the winning try. The team was coached by one of the best, if not the best, Rugger product, a double Lionsman in Rugger and Cricket, and Athletics Coloursman Philip Bultjens.

I was at a quandary as to why the "Lion" is called Rugger Lion and not Rugby Lion and it would be seen that the name given for the game at that time is Rugger. Trinity being the College that had played without interruption since 1906 continued with that name. The shield was awarded by Mr E.L. Bradby so that the interest in the game will be sustained. Strangely enough there is no mention in the newspaper articles of the Bradby, Shield encounter, especially that this match was the start of the momentous series. I gather that the shield itself was awarded to the Captain of Trinity in the Trinity College hall, at a special assembly a few months after the event.

TRINITY XV-1945



Standing (left to right)

Mr. C.E.Simithiaratchy (Principal) G.Shanmugam, S.Mediwaka, M. Vanderpooten, I. Bartholomeusz, P.Dedigama, H.Jones, D.K.D. Amarasinghe, D.Nethsinghe, G.A.Yatawara, J.Kuruwila, Mr. P.A.Bultjens (Coach)

Seated (left to right)

A.Ratwatte, R.Mottram, S.B.Pilapitiya (Vice Captain) R.Sourjah (Captain) W.Thurairatnam, K.A.Gunawardena, T.B.Madugalle
Absent. H.Ranasinghe

Rugger Lions had been awarded to Robert Sourjah and Senarath Pilapitiya in 1944 and colours to Kenneth Gunawardane and R.Mottaram

At the end of the season no 'Lions' were awarded but colours were awarded to I.Batholameusz, P.S.Dedigama, H.Jones, J.Kuruwila, T.B.Madugalle, D.Nethsinghe, H.Ranasinghe, A.Ratwatte, G.Shamugam, M.Vanderpoortan, and G.A.Yatawara.

There is another first for Robert Sourjah, S.B.Pilapitiya, Kenneth Gunawardena and Ian Batholameusz and this time playing for Havelocks winning the Clifford Cup in 1950 in the newly re-constituted tournament. The other members of the team were Ian Labrooy as captain, H.E.W. Metzeling, Hugh Aldons, Fred Aldons, Basil Henricus, E.M. Aldons, Alan Driberg, Vernon Kelly, Lecho Ephraums, Aubrey Raymond, Ian Bartholomeusz and D. Evarts

I was fortunate enough to talk to some of the Trinitians who played in those two matches and recreate the image of those matches. The first ever match was led by Robert Sourjah and deputy was Senarath Pilapitiya both of whom were awarded 'Lions' the previous year. Robert Sourjah was injured at practice before the second leg, while trying to teach the three quarters to fall on the ball to stop a dribble. Senarath Pilapitiya, that versatile scrum half who strode the Rugger grounds of Sri Lanka playing for Havelocks, Uva, Dimbulla and All Ceylon later in life, led the team in the second Badby Shield match. He was a double Lionsman in Cricket (1946) and Rugger(1944). I had the fortune to play with and against him on many occasions.

Many were the times that that Trinity was called the school with steps without any brains. This team has completely disproved that statement. It may be of very great interest to learn that this was a very intellectual Rugger team perhaps the most intellectual. As far as I am aware there had been five medical doctors in Robert Sourjah, Asoka Ratwatte, Kenneth Gunawardane, J. Kuruwila, H.Ranasinghe and Douglas Nethsinghe obtained a doctorate in Physics and so was Sena Mediawaka. Douglas Nethsinghe went on to be a Senior Officer of Directorial Level at International Atomic Energy Agency in Vienna. There were T.B.Madugalle, H.Jones, and R.V.Mottram who qualified as engineers. S.B. Pilapitiya was a planter of great repute and later a Director of Whittalls Estates and Agencies Ltd. where he was my Director and Percy Dedigama too was a respected planter. I thank Dr. Robert Sourjah for sending his reminiscences from Australia.

DR. ROBERT SOURJAH – CAPTAIN – PROP FORWARD

Lion -1944

The oldest living Rugger Lion

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Dr. Robert and Inez Sourjah
Domiciled in Australia

“I remember we were in The Physics Lab when The Senior Prefect Jim Cooke – a classmate – was sent for by The Principal, Mr Simithraarathcy. When he returned he called me aside and said “ I have good news for you “. You have been appointed Rugby Captain and also promoted to Prefect. At that time there were only four Prefects, one for each House and five Monitors, one for each House and one for The Junior School. I was already the Garret House Monitor and the promotion was not unexpected, but to captain the Rugby Team was a surprise, as a Boarder was generally entrusted with this position.

The 1945 Team had a good set of players, but our main strength was the Forwards, who were more experienced, having played for The School one or two years before. The “ Threes “ had a number of new faces yet to be blooded.

The Team set out for Colombo using public transport. Fortunately the bus that was to take us to Colombo was one of a fleet that was owned by the Father of two boys who attended Trinity, so we were picked up in front of The College Hall before it went to the “ Bus Stand “ to collect the other passengers.

The First Bradby was played in fine weather and I leave it to that Rugby Idol and our Coach to describe the game in his own words:-

“ We played our first match in Colombo against Royal. The Forwards played well, but the “Threes” showed a nervous uncertainty as to what to do when the ball came to them. A snap try out in the corner and Royal had won by the only score made in the game “

We lost by three points, but I can still remember walking off the field arm in arm with the Royal Captain CDL Fernando. It is strange that both teams were captained by “Prop Forwards”

Rugby is a team game and the credit for winning –or losing- must go to the team as a whole. Teams are moulded by their coach. We were fortunate to have Mr. Phillip Bultjens, a dedicated member of the teaching staff, who in his time was a Rugby Legend. He could watch an opposing team and instruct you how to play them. I am indeed very grateful to him for all he has taught me.

The other day one of my friends-not a Trinitian- asked me how many of the 1945 team went in for tertiary education? Surprisingly five Ratwatte, Kuruwila, Ranasinghe, Gunewardene and I graduated as doctors. Madugalle, Mottram, Jones qualified as engineers, Mediwake graduated as did in Nuclear Physics. Pillapitiya was a Company Director. Dedigama was a Planter. It just goes to show that those who played games were also good students. The Royal Captain also graduated as a doctor”.

DR. KENNETH GUNAWARDENA – WING FORWARD
Colours-1944

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Long after Kenneth Gunawardane had left school and even in 1956 his tacking was talked about in the Rugger circles He was rightly called a 'terrier'. He was the scorer of the winning try of the second Bradby encounter thus winning the shield for the College for the first time. Since leaving school he turned out for Havelocks and did great service to the club and even playing in the team that won the Clifford Cup for the first time. His father Mr. D.E.G.Gunawardardena was a respected teacher at the College.

He welcomed me into his house at Kohuwala and reminisced how they had traveled to Colombo for the matches and most of the details given above.

Dr. Kenneth became a reputed Gynecologist and was in Sri Lanka now retired enjoys the company of his daughter in the palatial house with the dogs – not terriers

T.B.MADUGALLE – STAND OFF

Colours- 1945

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T.B. Madugalle was the stand off who was able to kick with both feet equally well. He was the architect of the victory of the second leg for having broke off passed the ball to the terrier Kenneth Gunawardane to score the try.

The name Madugalle has had long associations with Rugger at TCK. His father S.B. was the recipient of the first Rugger Lion. Elder brother Percy won the Cricket Lion (1938) and the Rugger colours (1937)and in the 1970's coached the College side with great success. He played with me for Kandy in 1958 twenty years after he had left school!! Younger brother Dharmasiri captained Trinity in 1953. In the Clifford Cup semi finals in 1963 I scored my most memorable try backing up his brother Dharmasiri in the Clifford cup semi final played at London Place where Dimbulla beat the much fancied CR&FC.

Madugalle was admitted for higher studies at a very tender age and went on to qualify as a brilliant engineer. He was Chairman of the Water Supply and Drainage Board for many years and even today his expertise in water management is much sought after.

DR ASOKA RATWATTE – FULL BACK

Colours- 1945

TEL: 011 - 2736244



Dr Asoka Ratwatte with his wife Winnie holding the commemorative plaque

Dr. Asoka Ratwatte was the regular full back of the Trinity XV in 1945. He entered the Medical College and was working in Government hospitals in Kandy, Badulla, Wathupitiwala and Ragama among other stations. He recalls vividly a gash he received on the right hand from a protruding sharp nail from a boot. While he is not able to remember the details of the two matches he remembers the dinner of the previous day to the first encounter being string hoppers and corned beef and the bad stomach.

He later practiced in England and has returned to the mother land to spend his retirement. He has five children all of whom are professionally qualified with only one living in Sri Lanka.

As a Ratwatte he is able claim to be a name synonymous with Trinity Rugger. It is quite uncommon not to have a Ratwatte in the College team He had Ananda Bandanayake, a nephew who I recall scored four tries in one match playing as a full back like the uncle. Then there is that waltzing stand off Jayantissa Ratwatte, a Cricket Lion who went on to Represent Sri Lanka at Rugger.

His five children are all professionally qualified with three of them abroad. The eldest has obtained a Phd. And the second Msc in IT.

DR.DOUGLAS NETTASINGHE – WING FORWARD

Colours 1945

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Dr. Douglas Nettasinghe with his wife Audry and daughter Dilani

I meet Dr. Nettasinghe practically every Sunday at Church, where he is my singing partner but never realized that he was such a luminary. He has had a wonderful and most mischievous school career and one wonders how he ended up as a Prefect. On one occasion the Master Johnny Moses had given dictation and warned that anyone who had more than three mistakes would receive "six of the best" Douglas had four mistakes but was not caned. Up he jumped and said "Sir, you have made a mistake I had four mistakes" Johnny's six cuts at that time was not for the spelling mistakes but for being cheeky. All his life he has stood for justice and fair play and he is the first to get up even at a Church meeting, if he feels that there is something is wrong. What he did to G.Y.Shayam, the House Master of Ryde House, flashing his torch to check whether all in the brood were in bed is unprintable therefore left for imagination. GYS never flashed the torch on to Netha's side after that day. Space does not permit to write all his pranks, which were very innocent but remembered by his team mates up to date. He has still not grown up to be an old man on a rocking chair!!

One of his daughters is married to Yoheesen Casichetty, the Head Master of S. Thomas' Preparatory School at Kollupitiya.

His wife Audry is the elder sister of that famous Peterite winger Ralph Gauder, who later turned out for Dimbulla and Dickoya, who would be remembered for the very long strides in the Rugger field.

RESPICE FINEM