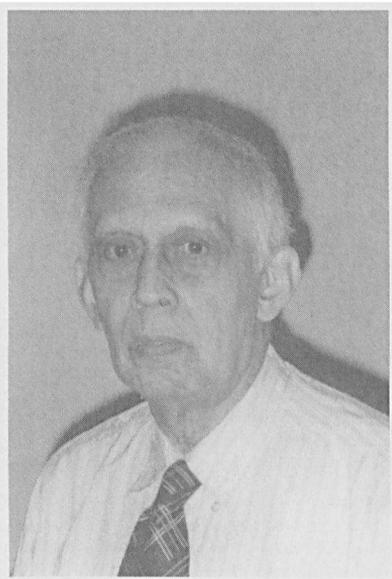


OBITUARY

TERENCE DE FONSEKA (1919-2000)

It is with great sadness I report the sudden death on 21st March 2000 of the Sri Lankan odonatologist Terence de Fonseka in Finchley, North London, England. He is greatly missed by many friends and more especially his immediate family, wife Irangani, son Nahil, daughter-in-law Maria and granddaughter Joanna.



Terence was born on 6th September 1919, the second in a family of six children, in Kalutara, a coastal town in south west Sri Lanka, known as 'Palm Beach' and situated about 25 miles south of Colombo. His father was a legal advocate. Terence was educated at St Peter's College, Colombo and Holy Cross College, Kalutara. He won an Entrance Scholarship to University College Colombo and obtained a degree in Zoology from the University of London. He served for two years as a Graduate Probationer in the Department of Agriculture and entered the Ceylon Civil Service in 1945, serving in a number of government departments, including

the Department of Fisheries and as Permanent Secretary to the Ministries of Commerce, Nationalised Services and Social Services until retirement in 1970. Terence, his wife and son then emigrated to England, where he worked for the Department of Health until his full retirement in 1984.

Personally I knew Terence only during the last decade of his life. Two odonatologists, living locally, we met by chance. Terence would visit me occasionally at my place of work, which was not far from his home and we talked on our shared interest. Terence, a devout Christian, was a very generous, polite, gently spoken person, seemingly self-effacing, he was passionate about dragonflies and their conservation. He had made their study a life long hobby. Nahil often accompanied his father in the 1960's on field trips, where Terence would take black-and-white photographs of dragonflies, developing and printing these himself. His dedication showing in a 'home movie' of an eclosion sequence that he filmed at 4.30 a.m. To my knowledge Terence did not publish any papers on his chosen subject, but in retirement in the U.K. worked hard and long to produce a book on his beloved Sri Lankan Odonata:

2000. *The dragonflies of Sri Lanka.*

WHT Publications, Colombo. 303 pp., 20 col. pls excl.

ISBN 955-9114-19-0.

During recent visits to his homeland, he was appalled at the rate of habitat destruction in certain areas and found it difficult to obtain information from others because of the current political unrest. His aim, through his book, was to inspire a greater public interest in the Odonata of his native land. Unfortunately he did not live to see this admirable aspiration come to fruition, tragically dying shortly before the publication of his life's work. The book then is Terence's epitaph, and I for one hope it achieves all he intended.

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