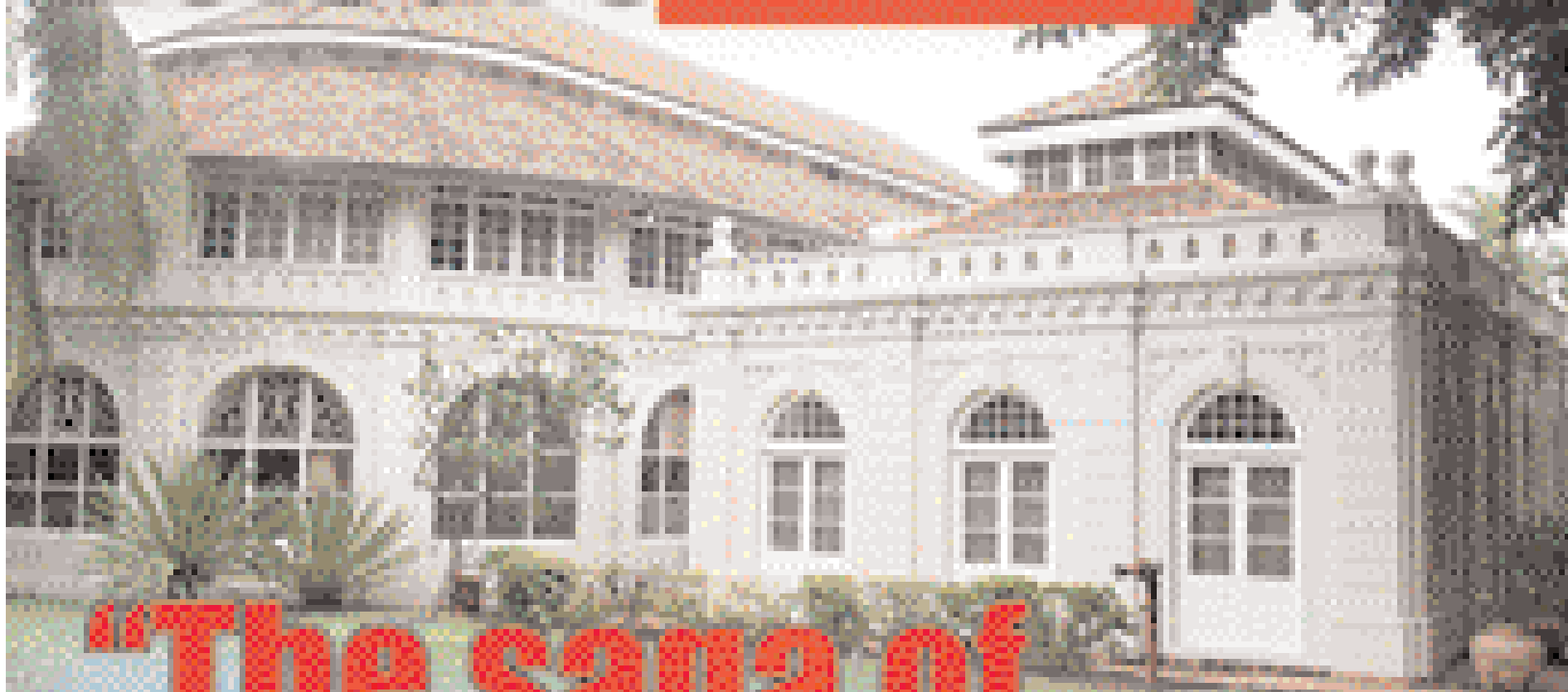


# The Island LeisureLAND



## "The saga of Colombo club"

by Aisha Edris

The city of Colombo has several ageless buildings that illustrate an era that changed the history of Ceylon. The colonial buildings in Fort, the heart of Colombo city, has many untold stories of a bygone age. Down Galle road, colonial architectures are surrounded by the seashore. During the colonial period, the Galle Face Green was a place for relaxation. Buildings were rapidly built, while the architectural styles began to revolutionise during that period. It was a period where both men and women wanted to show off their fashion styles -

every meeting was a place to show off a fashion statement, the voluminous hooped skirts and cosy bonnets for women, while high and black hats and long narrow trousers were introduced for men.

The famous Galle Face Esplanade, where men and women were seen walking or driven up and down the streets of Fort. The gentle breeze of the sea, had given the weary colonial rulers a place to relax with their families and friends. They were in need for a Club to meet and to relax, and thus, The Colombo Club came into being.

### Opening a club in Colombo

As mentioned by famous historian and publisher, A.M. Ferguson wrote in 1887 that "the Englishmen carries his club with him... wherever he goes". Thus, British in Colombo too were in need of a club. The origin of Colombo Club is said to have commenced when Governor Fredrick North, the first British Governor in Ceylon, wrote to, Lord Hobart, on October 5, 1804, on the social aspect of the colony.

"In a country where there are no inns or procurable entertainment for travelling, Commanding Officers of different stations can hardly avoid the obligation of receiving such as are in the upper ranks of life, into their homes," he wrote. Thus in 1776, the first Club in Ceylon, "Coco-nut club", came into existence. Later, Galle Face became a place where many races were held and also as a place for reunion. The "Grandstand of the Colpetty racecourse" was built to house British men and women.

The Colombo Club was built during an era where Colombo city was illuminated by gas lights. The actual birth of the Club can be traced back to a resolution proposed by Sir. Richard Caley and seconded by Colonel J.G. Jervis.

It states that a club be formed for the purpose of "establishing and maintaining reading, billiard, card and refreshments rooms in Colombo for the benefit of members, and generally carrying out of all purpose incidental to social clubs of above description. And that the club be called "The Colombo Club".

### Colombo Club comes to existence

The idea of the formation of the Colombo Club originated on St. Andrew's Day that fell on November 30, 1870, at the Turf Club Ball attended by 90 Scotsmen, who sat down to dinner in the upper floor of the Grand Stand building in Galle Face.

The founders of the Club could not find a more appropriate building to house the club. The place on which the Assembly Rooms Company Limited built the earlier Grandstand of Colpetty racecourse was let out to the Club.

Continued on page 11

## Woman denied fertility treatment because husband has children

by Jonathan Wynne-Jones, Laura Donnelly and Patrick Sawyer

Janine Macallister, 27, from Newport, in Shropshire, should be entitled to IVF treatment under national guidance but has been told by her local health service that she is not eligible.

Fertility charities fear that an increasing number of couples are experiencing similar discrimination due to the inconsistent approach of primary care trusts.

Rationing body the National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence says three full cycles of IVF treatment should be provided for women aged between 23 and 39 who have had fertility problems for at least 3 years.

Individual PCTs, however, have drawn up their own restrictions, limiting treatment further.

Telford and Wrekin PCT said Ms Macallister, who suffers from polycystic ovaries, cannot have IVF because her husband Jason, 36, already has children - even though both girls, aged 7 and 10, live with their mother.

The Macallisters, who married three years ago, are appealing against the decision and say they are prepared to take their case to the European Court of Human Rights in Strasbourg.

Mrs Macallister said that their failed attempts to secure funding for fertility treatment was putting an enormous strain on their marriage.

Breaking down in tears, she said: "Jason tries to be sensitive about it, and I do my best, but on a bad day it makes it difficult for me to even see his children.

"Sometimes he says it would be better for me to leave him, because I am absolutely desperate to have a child. I think that sometimes too, but it is really painful for both of us. We feel it is unfair that we have been forced into this position".

The receptionist said she and her husband, who works as a warehouse manager, could not afford to pay for treatment which can cost up to £8,000 for three cycles.

The couple, who began a relationship in 2003, have been trying to have a baby for many years, Mrs Macallister said.

She says that in denying her treatment, the PCT is classing her and her husband, Jason, as one person, even though she has little to do with the children of his previous relationship.

In a letter to the trust she wrote: "I am the one who has the problem, not my husband and I am the one in need of treatment, not my husband.

"I would completely understand you denying us treatment if we already had a child together, which is not the case."

Susan Seenan, from the charity Infertility Network UK, said its helplines were hearing from an increasing number of women in the same position.

She said: "These women are shocked and upset to hear that they are being penalised because their partner had children in a previous relationship.

"We think it is terribly unfair, especially when there will be other PCTs which will have totally different criteria."

The charity is urging the Government to enforce standard rules for all NHS trusts.

In a statement Telford & Wrekin PCT said: "We are not able to comment on individual cases. However, we can confirm that the policy regarding fertility treatment is currently under review."

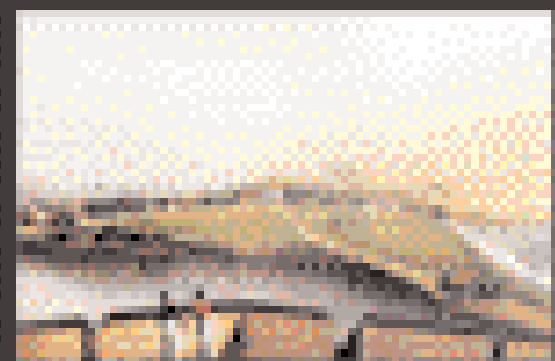
The postcode lottery in IVF provision means that if the Macallisters lived just a few miles away and were covered by Worcestershire and Coventry PCT their treatment would be funded.

Around 8,000 births each year in the UK are the result of fertility treatment, but only one in five is funded by the NHS, forcing the vast majority to seek private treatment.

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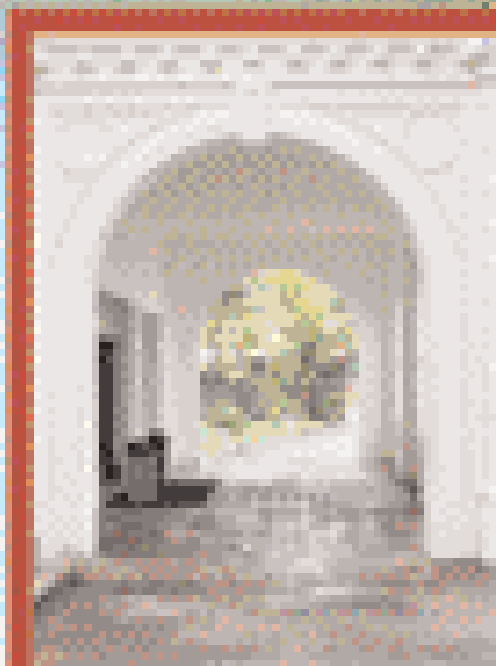
Interior



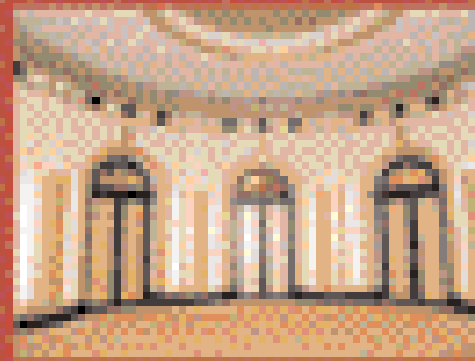
Beria Lake



A rickshaw in Galle Face



Entrance



Stairway

Pic by Kamal Bogoda



An old picture of Colombo Club and Galle Face Hotel