



THE NATIONAL TRUST – SRI LANKA

“Ancient Glass Bottle Finds from Sri Lanka's Sea-bed”

by

Dr. Malik Fernando

The Monthly Lecture Series No: 160 of the National Trust

Thursday 25th April 2024 at 6.00 pm

at the Auditorium of the College of Surgeons of Sri Lanka,

No. 6, Independence Avenue, Colombo 7.

(For those who join online: <https://www.youtube.com/@nts19627>)

Significant number of glass bottles found on the sea beds, particularly that from the ancient Galle Harbor, provide us the opportunity to trace the evolution of bottle designs and manufacturing techniques over the years, right up to the invention of the fully automatic bottle making machine at the beginning of the 20th century. While the early finds were collected by divers of the Sri Lanka Sub-Aqua Club, including the speaker, the majority of the collection were purchased from antique shops in Galle, most showing evidence of having been found in the sea. After a short introduction relating to the history of glass and its applications, the talk will focus on the early finds consisting of free-blown Onion bottles; early dip-moulded bottles with hand finished lips; squat bottles for wine and their evolution into cylindrical bottles; case bottles (Dutch gins) from early 18th century fragments from the harbour and the Kelani Ganga to more recent sealed bottles of the 19th century; beers of the British period; the evolution of carbonated water bottles from the early designs of the first half of the 19th century to the end of that century when the crown-cork seal was invented; poison bottles; household bottles; and toilet water bottles. The talk will be profusely illustrated with images made from the speaker’s bottle collection.



Dr. Malik Fernando is a retired medical doctor whose hobby is SCUBA diving. He is a Past President of several organizations such as Sri Lanka Medical Association, Wildlife & Nature Protection Society, Sri Lanka Natural History Society and Sri Lanka Sub-Aqua Club. A Diver and a Marine Naturalist, Dr. Fernando was engaged in the identification and cataloguing of glass bottles found on the harbour bed, and from other sources. He has also contributed to the initiation of Maritime Archaeology in Sri Lanka.

The National Trust – Sri Lanka conducts monthly lectures generally on the last working Thursday of each month. The lectures are open to the members and the general public.

Further information can be obtained from the Trust Office Tel.0112682730/ 0719566929