

The Last Colonial

Curious Adventures and Stories from a Vanishing World

Christopher Ondaatje

Images by Ana Maria Pacheco

Introduction by Michael Holroyd

Publication date: 12 September 2011

“Ondaatje’s captivating stories are the last we are likely to read of a post-colonial era. They are full of vivid curiosity and reveal an exceptional willingness to deal with unexpected challenges.”.

Michael Holroyd - from the Introduction

Christopher Ondaatje has lived an adventurous life that’s the stuff of legends, so it is fitting that his new book is an unusual and highly personal collection of essays about events he’s lived through in Sri Lanka, Canada, Africa, India, and darkest Devon.

Born in Ceylon, the son of a tea planter, he spent a carefree wilderness life as a child. But Christopher Ondaatje didn’t develop his interests, talents and career - as an athlete, explorer, businessman, publisher, writer and patron of the arts - by staying in one place.

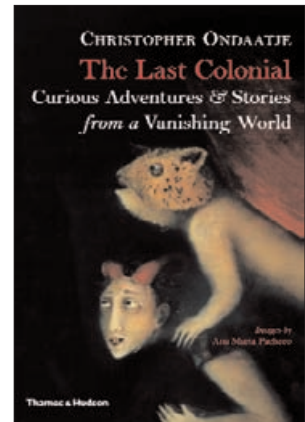
As a young teenager he was despatched to an English boarding school to get a decent education. However, this came to an abrupt end when his mother wrote to say that the family were destitute. It was a terrible shock, but Ondaatje joined a London bank, which was no place for an imaginative 17-year-old.

In 1956, with just \$13 in his pocket, he emigrated to Canada and later made his fortune as a financier. At the peak of his career, having enjoyed a series of commercial successes, he decided to follow his heart and focus on travel and exploration, and also writing.

The Last Colonial is a revealing glimpse into his childhood days in Ceylon which made a lasting impression on him, his early adult life in Canada, and his lifelong pursuit of leopards. He also writes about his travels and explorations which show the perils he encountered while researching his books on Sir Richard Burton, Ernest Hemingway and Leonard Woolf. These semi-autobiographical short stories are fascinating in themselves, but are also the closest we will get to a complete autobiography of the ‘last colonial’.

Author

Sir Christopher Ondaatje was born in Sri Lanka, educated in England and built a highly successful career in finance and publishing in Canada. In 1988 he sold all his business interests and has since then devoted his time to literature, philanthropy and travel.



Extent

256pp

Size

24.0 x 16.0cm

Illustrations

37 illustrations

Binding

Hardback

Price

£19.95

ISBN 978 0 500 251867

Press Office Contact

Rosalie Macfarlane

Thames & Hudson Ltd
181A High Holborn
London WC1V 7QX

T +44 (0)20 7845 5102

F +44 (0)20 7845 5050

E r.macfarlane@thameshudson.co.uk

W www.thamesandhudson.com