

TRIBUTE TO MRS. MARY HAYMAN

Mrs.Mary Hayman- Tribute at the Service of Remembrance and Thanks Giving at the Chapel of the Transfiguration S.Thomas' College Mount Lavinia 12th January 2008.

'When I am dead my dearest
Sing no sad songs for me.
Plant thou no roses at my head
Nor shady Cypress tree.
Be the green grass above me
With flowers and dew drops wet.
And if Thou wilt remember,
And if thou wilt forget.'

These lines from Christiana Rosetti resonates the sentiments of the late Mary Hayman when she wrote in her will, 'I want a simple funeral and no flowers Please. " In life she never imposed on any one and so too indeed on her death. She was a person who disliked fuss, putting people out, and shunned the limelight. But Today in this service it is Right and we are privileged to Remember And give her Centre Stage.

Mrs.Mary Hayman was the last but not the least of that great Triumvirate which Guided the destiny of S.Thomas' College at Gurutalawa in its formative years. Under the shadow of the legendary Dr.Rollo Hayman, subwarden of S.Thomas' Mount Lavinia and later the first Headmaster of S.Thomas' College at Gurtalawa Mrs.Hayman emerged from it, albeit in her characteristic subdued manner and established herself as a person of great value in her own right.

She was born Mary Rudd in Sutton Surrey and her family settled Down in Worcestershire. She was an ardent supporter of Worcestershire in the County Cricket Championship and one immediately established a strong rapport with her in her unsuspected interest both in the county cricket Championship and the F.A.Cup. It was a rapport which undergirded a lifelong friendship and evokes nostalgic memories no less compelling than one has for Dr.Hayman and Canon Foster.

Trained as a nurse Mary Rudd jointed the Army and in the line of Service was sent to the military base Hospital in Bombay. In fulfillment of the axiom that God works in a mysterious way his wonders to perform the guiding hand in its benevolence brought her to Ceylon, happily so called at the Time, where she took up duties at S.Thomas' College Mount Lavinia which had been requisitioned for a military hospital.

Part of the College was relocated in a show piece Farm of 35 acres at Gurutalawa Where Dr..Hayman was in charge and it was a matter of time before she met Dr.Hayman in an exchange hiking visit from the Army camp at Diyatalawa accompanied by a Major Kirk. It was a fortuitous meeting which had Dr.Hayman Reversing roles and playing the nurse to remove some leaches which had adhered to the future Mrs.Hayman's Feet.

They married in 1945 when Dr.Hayman took his home leave in England and returned as Dr and Mrs.Hayman initially to help Warden De Saram rehabilitate the School at Mount together with Fr.Foster as Chaplain, also returned from Home Leave. Their Job Done they were released to go back to The College at Gurutalawa, commencing from the first term in 1948.

As a nurse Mrs.Hayman epitomized the highest standards of the profession and as sickroom matron she established her own particular Regency over the Thomian community. If Gurutawala was a showpiece farm with its Keatsian ambience Mrs.Hayman made the sickroom a haven of care and love. She was particularly concerned with the Junior boys that they were warm against the cold and gave two of the attendants a rigorous training such that they could cope in her absence. She had a bug bear that the food served was hot and that the kitchens were kept clean and airy.

Apart from ministering To the boys of the college she opened its doors to the surrounding Villages and they came to her from every dell. It was characteristic of her that those needing Hospital attention were sent in the school vehicle to Badulla 25 miles away with firm instructions to the accompanying attendant from the school to take good care of the patient which she would follow up with a telephone call to the hospital, monitoring progress. It was more than professional care. It was compassion!.

She was a committed environmentalist and her Regency included the house keeping of the vast campus redolent with Gum and Fir Trees, fruits of every Kind and flowers of every hue. Under her unrelenting eye Grass was mowed, Hedges were trimmed, flowerbeds bloomed, roofs and gutters were cleared of leaves and twigs. Her Ubiquity kept everyone, Staff, boys, Domestics and Farm Labourers on their toes. So too the cooks in the kitchen and the house boys in the Dormitories and I suspect even when the occasion demanded, Canon Foster and Dr.Hayman. These occasions though rare arose from moments of indecision and the predilection to be soft, when firmness was the order of the day. She was a Florence Nightingale no doubt but with more than a touch of Margaret Thatcher.

Her outreach to the farm included in particular the guardianship of the trees in the campus. It was not just that she saw in their conservation the opportunity for bird watching which was her pet hobby but she was sensitive to the amplitude of its ecological implications and this, long before it became a global concern as it has become now. Inevitably it brought her in confrontation with the Welsh Farm manager of the time who was pressing for a larger extent of pasture land for the dairy. I believe the lease of the Nine acre block was Dr.Hayman's resolution of an embarrassing Empasse as Mrs.Hayman stood her Ground.

She extended her vocational remit not just to the vegetation around but to all forms of natural life. She once received a Turkey for Christmas which lived to a ripe old age and died a natural death. On another occasion some villagers brought her a python which she duly released with Piyasena the driver's assistance by the very same sisal plant where it was captured. She always had a Siamese cat as a pet to which she added a deer and a

peacock which actually followed her around She empathized with them as S.Francis would have done presiding as he was as the Patron saint of the College Chapel.

Mrs.Hayman was slightly built, always very simply dressed and had the minimum make up, if at all. She was very much the country lass unspoilt by her exalted position as the Head masters wife and completely free of any desire to acquire the sophistication that would entrap lesser beings to buttress shallow personalities. But Integrity was the shared value of this famed Gurutalawa triumvirate-that rare and elusive quality of being true to yourself. She was soft spoken as one would expect and when she did speak it was in a whisper. She had a great sense of fun and was equal to making humorous asides, Deflating the pompous and exposing the spurious. Her asides were made sotto voice' with close and understanding friends. There was no malice or littleness in her.

The ship that brought her to Colombo dropped anchor perforce a safe distance away from the harbour which was under attack by a Japanese air squadron, on Easter day April 2nd 1942. She watched the ominous fireworks display with equanimity from the deck of her ship and wondered if it was a foretaste of things to come. One of the Japanese planes crashed in the big club grounds. But the Dangerous moment Passed. She knew no danger and had a particular fearless disposition.

One such was an expedition with some old boys on holiday to explore a cave which tradition maintained reached all the way by a tunnel to the banks of the Kelani in the Siyanne Korale. She was gone missing for about One and a Half hours and emerged from that to the eye was a black hole full of bats and sundry rodents, to the Great relief of Canon Foster and some old boys on holiday but one who had the guts to accompany her. To Mrs.Hayman it was just another day at the office.

Mrs.Hayman retired in 1963 when Dr.Hayman himself decided to leave. It was a wrench for the School. She returned again and again 5 times in all 3 of them after Dr.Hayman's Death in 1983. On one such occasion she came as the most Logical Chief Guest for the Schools Golden Jubilee Celebrations. Her visits were at her own expense and was a great source of strength to the Thomian Community. She gave generously from her limited resources without Ostentation.

Having settled down in Bournemouth, Dr.Hayman's home. Mrs.Hayman spent Her retirement in ever the Ministering angel looking after the Old, The infirm and the Bed ridden. These included Miss.Mowena Hayman Dr.Hayman's sister, Miss.Joan Foster Canon Foster's sister and Miss. Blanchard of prep. school fame: 3 with Thomian connections of seventeen in all, at the height of her self obligated Ministry. On Dr.Hayman's death she was justly made patron of The Old Thomian association in the U.K.a position she held till about a few years Before her death on November the 17th 2008 at the age of 94.

On her later visits she was progressively dismayed at the State of affairs in the Country and its noxious effect on the values system which spawned the Thomian Ethos.

Laid Back, softspoken and simple Mrs.Hayman had nerves of steel and a heart of Gold. She will assuredly have a place in her own right in the annals of the College. She lives on according to her faith elevated by the quality of her life In a dimension beyond the ken of human consciousness.

And we shall not forget. We shall Remember. Her memory remains within our domain, Inspiring us by example to love not merely the School but all Life; and indeed Life itself as a gift to be shared and given in the service of others.

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