

The OLD BOY



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On the 2nd of July 2009, the College welcomed its 17th Warden, Reverend John Charles Puddefoot, MA (Oxon) BD. Revd. Puddefoot will be the first non-Sri Lankan Warden after Warden McPherson who was Warden till 1931.

First Impressions.

A Keynote “Think-Piece” from the Warden.

The welcome invitation to contribute something to the OBA Newsletter has led me to sit down, with shades of “Forty Days and Forty Nights,” on the fortieth day since I took office, August 9th, 2009, the term just finished but with much left to be done, to draw together some first impressions of this great school. Forty days is not long to form an impression of a large and complex organisation, although the vibrant enthusiasm of the boys is unmistakable, certain major issues are already becoming clear, and they confirm whatever instincts they were that led me to couch my Inaugural Address on July 2nd in terms of the tensions between the past and the future, tradition and change, the school S. Thomas’ has been and the school it will need to be to be fit for purpose in the twenty-first century.

In that address, I decided to talk about the line in the School Song: “for all we have and are.” The theme I developed was that what we have may be the product of technology, economic activity and academic study, but what we are is defined by the kinds of traditions we value and the kinds of beliefs we hold. We cannot have one without the other. A school with tremendous values and beliefs that is not up to date does not prepare its students adequately for the world they will live and work in; a school that is completely up to date but which loses sight of its traditions, values and beliefs has won the world at the cost of its soul. S. Thomas’ has not lost sight of those values, although many schools have, but it lacks the money to equip itself with the educational resources necessary to complement those values with an education

that can compete with other schools with more financial fire-power in this technological – and therefore expensive – century.

One of the first things to strike me was that academic work does not seem to be at the top of the typical Thomian's agenda, although many boys work very hard and do very well. The majority – and this goes for both parents and their sons – seem to place what Thomians are and what Thomians do above what Thomians learn in the academic sense. Some parents will specifically say that they chose S. Thomas' because it does not apparently have academic success at the top of its agenda, but rather the nurture of the all-round adult who enters the school a child and leaves it a man.

In many respects that is admirable: nothing ultimately matters more than the kind of human beings we are, and any kind of success purchased at the expense of fully-rounded human being is too expensive. So one of the things we must retain whatever else we seek to add to the school is commitment to the nurture of well-rounded mature young men ready to face any and every aspect of the world.

Another thing to strike me, particularly in contrast to the UK, is that many parents and boys, while apparently looking to S. Thomas' to provide this outcome, are still nevertheless sufficiently worried about academic success to pay many thousands of rupees more than the school fee for private tuition and spend many hours in addition to their time at school in tuition classes, so much so in some cases that they have neither time nor energy left for the lessons, learning and other activities available through school. In such conditions no boy can benefit as fully as he should from the riches S. Thomas' has on offer. Yet the boys at S. Thomas' have roughly twice the teaching-time at Advanced Level of equivalent boys in the UK, and boys in the UK get generally better results with virtually no tuition on top. Something is wrong with a system that needs to supplement this amount of school-time work with tuition at all hours of the day and night at a cost to parents far in excess of the school fee. So a second challenge is to enable boys to make the most of the teaching we already offer by making it neither necessary nor attractive for would-be tutors to draw them into what should be, given the teaching-time allocated to the boys, completely unnecessary tuition classes. One part of the solution to that challenge, not just for S. Thomas', is to pay teachers enough to make tuition unnecessary.

What also strikes me in S. Thomas' case is that those who value what the school makes boys into as rounded mature adults and those who value progressive educational methods and sporting achievement often seem to represent opposing forces. The former want the school to remain what it has always been, a traditional, low-fee, low salary, low maintenance, under-resourced school that puts its efforts into turning out just this kind of boy regardless of facilities and relies upon its network of well-placed Old Boys for support when times are hard. The latter want the school to press forward to become the most technologically-advanced, well-equipped, well-maintained, richly resourced, financially independent school in Sri Lanka which sets standards others struggle to match in learning, in sport and in recreation. We have to find a way to combine the best qualities in both these points of view.

Hence, the theme of my inaugural address: we have to find a way to continue to produce notably mature, distinctive and remarkable young men in just the way the school has always done while also embracing all that is best in modern educational practice, including academic excellence, state-of-the art IT, and sporting, artistic, musical and dramatic success. Only then will we have a balance of "all we have and are."

Of course this is not all that has struck me, although the challenges what I have already said are substantial. Here are a few of the other things, mentioned here only in note-form -

- The maintenance of the buildings and equipment must be planned and paid for from the school fees so that the generous donations of Old Boys can make the school better, not just make good what lack of resources has allowed to decay
- Whatever the cost, the school must become completely IT-literate at all levels so that every boy leaves school completely confident in and conversant with this essential tool of twenty-first-century life.

- While fully acknowledging the cultural importance of Sinhala and Tamil, boys must leave the school as fluent in English as possible in order to be properly equipped for the modern world.

Nobody will be surprised to hear that lurking somewhere not far beneath the surface of all these ambitions lies the question of money. I find it difficult to believe, if we are to generate the financial resources needed to run the school I have described, that there is an alternative way forward other than to try to make the school what is generally called “needs blind.” This means that we can continue to admit those we choose to admit without reference to their parents’ ability to pay the fees because we have an extensive and elaborate fee-support structure in place that makes the school affordable to everyone, but does not require everyone to pay the same.

We have to find a way to “have it both ways”: to be a school that can afford everything necessary for an all-round modern education yet that remains financially accessible to everyone it wishes to admit.

Esto Perpetua

Rev. John C. Puddefoot

August 9th, 2009.



Service of Institution and Installation of Reverend John Charles Puddefoot as the 17th Warden, on Friday the 17th of July 2009 at the Chapel of the Transfiguration.

Perspectives Of A Thomian From The “War Torn Generation”

Introductory Comments:

The time the Newsletter Committee very kindly invited my contribution to this publication was around the same time “our war” finally ended. Belonging to our generation that grew up with this conflict, naturally my first choice of a topic was going to be this one. However by this time I had already committed to some other publications on similar themes, therefore my apologies to anyone who finds an element of repetition; I have attempted as much as possible to avoid it. I must also subject this to another important disclaimer lest these writings be misconstrued at any juncture. Except for unavoidable and purely scientific reasons (the Aristotelian definition that all men are political animals by nature) this is not a reflection of any “political angle” or ideology; but purely my humble thoughts, any references or inferences to any particular party or ideology therefore are purely coincidental and certainly not intentional!

A New Future Dawns – 19th May 2009:

His Excellency the President (and ex officio Commander-in-Chief of our forces) addressing Parliament in the wake of that historic and momentous occasion, on 19th of May 2009, whilst proudly proclaiming our resounding victory over the tyrants of terror did not forget to simultaneously assure our Tamil brethren with these words that “the defeat was not of any Tamil citizen” but over the common enemy of this State that had resorted to indiscriminate killing and maiming of thousands of Sri Lankans irrespective of their ethnicity; the cowardly terrorist that ultimately shielded behind the very lives of the innocent Tamils whom they claimed to be defending.

That same evening we celebrated our son’s 2nd Birthday, and as young Chrishen was blowing out the candles I was happy, not only for him, but for his entire generation; how fortunate they were

to have been born into this future that had dawned, free of violence and hatred; man killing man for nothing more than his ethnicity.

There was another moving part in the President's address that day, three cheers to the draftsman – it certainly had me on the verge of tears (sounded much better in the mother tongue, I've done a rough translation) - "Here you are son, daughter... I give you one united and free country ... Go forth and live free ... Walk tall like giants, bow down to no man... Its future I now leave in your hands ... Many of my generation have paid the ultimate sacrifice to give this free land to you..."; well said indeed Mr. President!

A ray of hope begins to flicker with the silencing of terror. Sri Lanka had become One Country; One Nation; One People again!

My "War-torn Thora Generation"

Thomians of my generation in contrast, were not that fortunate. We were born into a violent society. Apparently even my journey into this world (rushing my mother to hospital) had been interrupted several times due to the youth insurrection of 1971. When we entered school in January 1978 terrorism was beginning to show its ugly face; Doriappah had been assassinated in 1975 and the hitherto enjoyed peace and goodwill amongst the Sinhalese and Tamils were slowly giving way to suspicion and mutual resentment; not overtly at the time but it was there nonetheless.

Then came that unfortunate July of 1983! We were in Grade 5 at Prep School, just 11 years old and playing on the same field as those chaps in the "C class" the day before. How in the world were we to understand this "Tamil/Sinhala sentiment" which was exploding and burning the world around us? I remember how several Tamil parents were the first to rush to school and collect their kids, some of whom never returned to school. We heard of some who had migrated and yet some others, who knows? I have vivid memories of a classmate of mine (in the "B class") with his divider from the mathematical instruments, waving it menacingly in the air aiming towards the "C class"! A psychologist would've considered it a premature christmas present, I'm sure, to just round us all up and figure out the gamut of mixed feelings that were confusing us to the point of insanity!

My personal opinion is that Thomians

were much more fortunate in several ways than a majority of students attending not-so multi-ethnic schools. Since we had always grown up, played and studied together within the same school culture and curriculum this whole "race card" was never permitted to get the better of us; indeed to date we still share friendships fostered over decades and don't even see one another as "different." This is the very facet of a Thomian that we must now use to our advantage in rebuilding this great nation – but I shall come to that later. For a majority of students of our generation however, as subsequent events and the way in which the youth reacted would manifest; things were not that clear or straightforward. Some of us (who could afford it) went abroad, several others had their education permanently disrupted and took up employment whilst thousands of others, both Tamil and Sinhalese took up arms and waged a war against one another – some, never to return!

Socio-Political Consequences:

We were in our youth when the infamous "dhal-drop" came, preceding the Indo-Lanka Peace Accord. Even debates at College were centred on themes of sovereignty and territorial integrity. Foreign forces were invited to fight the youth of our own soil, devolution in the form of the 13th Amendment (to the 2nd Republican Constitution) was offered aimed at the North and East (rejected there) but established in the South and it is still questioned whether we actually needed these Provincial Councils or are they merely duplicating an already top-heavy budget – but that is yet another entirely different topic! Visiting Heads of State came under attack from our own ranks (considered as patriots by some), Parliamentary terms were extended by "*kala gedilampu* elections" and the drama continued. Political Science teachers went mad trying to explain all of this to an already disgruntled and severely affected youth; whilst many of us just watched not understanding anything at all, others (perhaps slightly more disillusioned) which vacuum was filled by red-bereted charismatic socialist ideologies of the 70's fame, took to the jungles in the South recommenced their own *vimukthi* (liberation) struggle. In retrospect who can blame them, with schools and universities constantly closed, citizens being blown to smithereens on live TV, even several highly secured political leaders paying the ultimate sacrifice; we were just an unfortunate generation stuck in an abyss of hopelessness and lost opportunities.

I wonder how many of my batch-mates recall

that infamous 1st term of 1990! I had just returned from an AFS award to Australia (had to miss my original batch and join “Coll. A” with the next one), O/L’s of December 1989 had not been held due to the prevailing situation and thus the Arts Block was required as an Exam Centre. Riding high on Roy-Tho fever of the time, the entire batch being literally “imprisoned” in the Science Block, I still have vivid memories of that historic *baila* session that went out of control and became a riot against a particular headmaster; the ensuing damage to the poor chap’s vehicle ending up with a few of us being asked to leave the campus premises – some never to return to College! Was this simply youthful exuberance or was there something more to it? Did those regular “street marches” of the period by other students have a “rub-off effect” on us (albeit on a softer scale)? Were we also reacting (or rejecting) the status quo that existed – if so, were we Thomians also lending allegiance to the liberation struggle of the brethren of our generation?

We Reach Our 30’s ... Victory, Finally, Is Ours:

We were 28 when the new millennium dawned, still the war continued and more from amongst us joined the massive exodus (the brain-drain) and we that remained reached our thirties; some got married, some had kids (not necessarily correlated), others perhaps not so unfortunate remained single; several others we laid to rest much before their time; those were the ones who went to war on our behalf. Each time a “high-spirited” Thomian occasion dawns and we chant those funny old verses – “our soldiers went to war...and our soldiers fought it ... (you know the rest of it – what happened to the bayonet *etc*); I pass through a quick mental-flash, a moment of nostalgia reminds me names of those brave Thomians of our era whom we laid to rest. There were several others but I have personal memories of the lives (and deaths) of Jason Martenstyn, Thilina Kaluarachchi and S. V. Perera. Some of these heroes we somberly carried into College precincts to bid them a final farewell at their “home by the Sea”! Was it all for politics after all? Was there any rationale behind this humungous loss of life? What then of our brethren of equal vintage that fought in the Vanni jungles with a cyanide-capsule around their necks? Who will answer for these irremediable and irreparable losses of youth and life suffered by our generation on either side?

Our generation witnessed the rise and (mostly premature) fall of several heroes and

due to their bravery we finally prevailed over the tyrannical forces of terror. Since many an ode will be recited and songs sung for them I shall leave it at that. I salute you brothers, I thank and honour you for giving your tomorrow for mine and for being brave enough to do what I was not; you remained “staunch and true”!

So Thomians - Where Do We Go From Here?

Is this it then? We have won and we celebrate (rightfully so) but what thereafter? When we cannot eat anymore *kiri buth* and the *papara* bands have deafened us *ad nauseam* what more is left for our generation of war?

At several social gatherings (in lighter vein of course) I have been vociferous in my argument that from the period of our first Prime Minister of independent Sri Lanka we have had a majority of Thomians at the helm and this country was “all right”; up until the time we handed it to the Royalists in the late 70’s! Leaving these traditional rivalries aside for a moment though, is it not time once again for us to be more actively involved in the decision making process of this great nation? We are quick to point fingers at the rapidly disintegrating levels of present day politics and politicians, but have we looked at “the man in the mirror” (as another late-great of our generation, MJ sings – God bless his soul) and posed the question “are they not there because we were not?” Yes, I agree that there are a multitude of reasons as to why a majority of present day Thomians (or a Royalist or a Trinitian for that matter) would think not twice but thrice before venturing into active policy making in this country; but does the challenge not lie in that very hopelessness, for us to go and “do something” rather than lament from outside?

I believe the two most prominent parts in the victory address by the Head of State were encapsulated in, (1) the need to reassure our Tamil brethren; and (2) the urgency to rebuild our homeland! We must immediately resolve this grievance (whether genuine or induced) of the Tamils to have resorted to violence in the first place; find a solution that would ensure that no citizen of this country would be led to such an extreme ever again. This is where I feel that “Thomian-ness” places us in an advantageous position, being fortunate enough to receive an “integrated and multicultural education” that the Lord Bishop spoke of recently (delivering the sermon at the induction service of our 17th Warden). Thomians are groomed to

discern the positive attributes of multiculturalism, we genuinely accept the concept of “unity amidst diversity” and therefore don’t need brainwashing sessions to build a future Sri Lanka as Sri Lankans; discarding narrow racial or ethnic lines that others find difficult to look beyond.

In as much as we lament the loss of life here in the South, we need to also lend ear to the cries of our brethren in the North. Indeed they may have been denied even the very childhood or youth that you and I had here in Colombo, despite the war. “Hardy Boys” or the “Carry-On series” or early mornings at the “Blue Elephant” must be as novel to these lads as the North Pole to you and me! There is that old Sri Lankan adage that one fallen into the well must come out through the opening itself (*lindey wetichcha eka lin katinma goda wenna onei*); thus I doubt whether our generation has a choice in the matter. We must now actively involve ourselves in rebuilding this nation. At least after three decades of our lifetime lost in war, we have now been given a very real prospect of building a strong and vibrant nation, a Sri Lanka that we can truly be proud of

and that can stand up to any other nation on its own right! Therefore, devolution, development and perhaps even repatriation must be the order of the day; the latter since we need to encourage those chaps who left our shores to return and to stand with us shoulder to shoulder in rebuilding this nation again – there is much to be done Thomians and time is of the essence!

This old Trini Lopez song that has always fascinated me, the lyrics of which I have very arbitrarily changed (for the occasion), which can be sung as follows:

This land is your land...

This land is my land...

From the point at Pedro...

to the one at Dondra...

From Sigiri, Dambulla...

to Katharagama...

This land was made for you and me....

Chrishmal Warnasuriya

Life At College In The 90's

Anyone familiar with S. Thomas' knows that the school is divided into four main sections - the Lower School, the Middle School, the Upper School and the College Forms. Each section has its own identity and sub-culture, and each plays an important role in shaping one's character.

I joined S. Thomas' as a five-year-old in January 1984, a few months after the dust had settled on the July '83 riots. While the Sinhalese boys were too young to grasp the impact of that tragic event, our Tamil friends had at a very young age been exposed to the worst form of ethnic violence. They belonged to that brave generation of Tamils who chose to remain in Sri Lanka after '83, despite all the odds. Of course, I realised this only much later. At the time, we were not Sinhalese, Tamils or Muslims, but a bunch of wide eyed kids, thrust into unfamiliar territory and smelly toilets.

The pair of kottamba trees planted in memory of two Japanese pilots killed in air raids on Colombo during World War II was the common meeting point for us in the Lower School. Our days would begin with fiercely contested games of 'high catches' and 'hand-cricket' at the big club grounds. The old Winchester dorm, run with an iron fist by

Mrs. Inese Senaris, stood near the old sightcreen (where the current indoor cricket nets are situated). There was a new pre-grade block, and to our delight an ice cream parlour near the main canteen. In the interval, we would go to Peter for his fantastic chinese rolls, and 'Carty' for stickers, bubblegum and super-hero cards. A bottle of coke was just Rs. 4.50. Mr. Jayasekera, who always wore a white suit, was our headmaster.

In 1988, the year of the Seoul Olympics, we were promoted to Upper 3 (Grade 4), and became 'seniors' in the Lower School. For the first time, we got a taste of power and responsibility, as our friends were appointed Lower School prefects and had to monitor noisy juniors. We were also introduced to fun periods like swimming and physical training (P.T.). The country meanwhile was in turmoil, caught in the whirlwind of the second JVP uprising. There were regular emergency drills in school, where students would have to leave their classrooms and congregate in the Big Club Grounds. On at least two occasions, school was closed for several weeks, and we were given study packs to take home.

The following year we journeyed to the great unknown, making our way to the other end of the

campus - the Middle School, commonly known as the C block. It was a new building, and to our delight the Lower 4 classrooms (Grade 5) had ceiling fans! We had different teachers for each subject, which was a new experience. Middle School prefects, we noticed, had substantially more power than Lower School prefects, and could punish students by sentencing them to stand on the form (bench/chair) or to write 25 lines. The Headmaster, Mr. Leo de Silva would patrol the block at least twice a day and any boy found misbehaving would get two stinging cuts from his cane. Apart from being a strict disciplinarian, Mr. de Silva was a gifted Sinhala and Divinity teacher.

Interval time was spent primarily at the basketball court or the gravel dunes surrounding the tennis courts. Unlike in the Lower School, we did not have easy access to the Big Club Grounds. The only time we went there during school hours was once a week for physical education (P.E.). In the Lower School P.T. comprised some exercises and a game of dodge ball ... but P.E. was all about football! It would not be inaccurate to say that these rough and tumble games of football were what set the foundation for the revival of the sport in College, which traditionally favoured rugby and cricket.

After three years, we graduated to the Upper School located in the stately M block, with high ceilings, large windows and huge pillars (not to mention a drain that resembled a small canal). Our desks and chairs were old and heavy, and I remember my desk in Upper 6 (Grade 10) having the name 'Michael Tissera' carved on it! In Lower 6 (Grade 8) boys were allowed the option of wearing white longs, and the following year they were made compulsory. A new subject, English Literature, was introduced into the national school curriculum, and many students opted for it over Art and Music. We were also introduced to sex education and discussion classes by Mr. Sarath Wickramaratne (fondly known as 'Jacko'), which we followed with much enthusiasm! This was also the time we felt the impending doom of the G.C.E Ordinary Level Examination.

A rather unfortunate phenomenon that occurred during our Upper School years (1992-1994) was the severe depletion of numbers in the College Boarding. During this period many boarders opted to become day-scholars. I cannot pin

point the socio-economic reasons for this. But the once powerful Boarding House, which essentially was the heart and soul of College, was significantly weakened. One wonders if it will ever be revived to its heyday.

In December 1994, the O/L exam was held at "Hena College" in Mount Lavinia. This was a bit unnerving as we were pushed into unfamiliar territory for a crucial exam. I don't remember the particulars of the exam, but I do remember how nervous we were, and how relieved we felt once it was over. After our last paper, a small group of us went to Majestic City to celebrate. MC was the hip and happening location in Colombo then, and this was before it outlawed students coming there in school uniform.

Getting into the College Forms was in many ways, like a new beginning. Some of our batch mates, having failed the O/Ls, either left school or remained with the batch below, and some left for international schools (London A/Ls was yet to be introduced to STC). Students from S. Thomas' Prep, Gurutalawa and other schools joined us. It was a time of losing old friends and gaining new ones. It was also a time when the student-teacher barrier seemed less rigid, and teachers were more casual and friendly towards us.

During these years, as senior students, we helped in administering the student population at various levels - as School Prefects, House Prefects, office bearers and 'coloursmen' in sports, and as heads of various committees and societies. Although we didn't realise it at the time, we were learning what responsibility and accountability meant.

I still remember our last day of school. It was 1997, and we were on the verge of sitting for our A/Ls. Without any prior planning, everyone in our batch congregated at the Chapel steps. We talked, laughed and signed each others shirts. We used the high vantage-point of the Chapel steps to observe the sights and sounds of STC. This had been our home away from home for the last thirteen years. It was time to say goodbye to our *alma mater* and step into the real world.

Gihan de Chickera

College Sports In The 90's

Numerous sports were predominant in the 90's. Rugby, for instance, was building up well. The 90's took forward the great work done by the combination of Mr. Quentin Israel as Coach and Mr. Lal Kumarasinghe as Master-in-Charge. Many of our rugby players were selected for Schools and National rugby squads. We also had Warden Neville de Alwis, who put a lot of hard work into cricket, which was the sport closest to his heart. The late Warden also held office as President of the Schools' Cricket Association for a few years during the later years in his tenure as Warden. College produced a number of cricketing stars during the 90's who went on to play Division I cricket and a good number represented the Sri Lanka Schools and Junior National teams, some even reaching the National 'A' team. Hockey, Basketball, and Tennis also saw its best at the time which led to a good grounding in the post 90's period.

Thomian success in aquatic sports is seldom spoken of but I believe this was an area S. Thomas' dominated in the 90's. We had a number of stars who held national records, of which a few still stand today, both at schools and national level. College always won the bulk of the meets which were held through the 90's. Ghafari Dulapandan, Nishan Madewala, Dinu Wijesundara to name a few, were swimmers who represented the country at the highest level in swimming whilst Dilshan Karunarathne and Gihan Ranatunga represented the country in diving. We held numerous records with individual swimmers dominating meets while our relay teams were the strongest. It would take another article to list all those champion swimmers and divers who brought credit to College and their country during this period.

The public schools' swimming and diving championships were ours through the late 80's and early 90's. We were unbeaten throughout this period and had to fight the immense pressure of remaining unbeaten. Remaining dominant in aquatics, we were rewarded by trips and buffet lunches - the Warden's treat. 1998 proved to be a crucial year as it marked our unbroken dominance for ten years running. As the Captain of the swimming and diving team, this was not merely a huge challenge but also a hugely powerful experience. College managed to remain champions that year and the year after that as well.

Water Polo at the time was an infant sport, with not many events in this field at the time. Of course, there was the Hayman Trophy which many

are familiar with even today; yet it remained at the time, one of the few. The Warden at the time was extremely keen on aquatics and extended his fullest support through difficult times. When he sensed that nutrition lacked, he was prompt to provide the team with nutrition supplements, buns and milk. He even made it a point to be present at, as many events as possible including the Public Schools Meet.

Apart from such unstinting support by those in charge, the aquatic teams themselves proved tremendously dedicated, be it in training, planning or obedience. I remember for instance, the crucial point where the complete swimming squad, was willing to sacrifice the meet record for an overall win for College.

In 1995, the first ever Junior National Water Polo team left for India and pleasingly enough (given the effort put into aquatics) the national team was predominantly a Thomian one and continued to be even in the years that followed! Roshan Ranasinghe, Devin Chammugam, Viren Perera, Sashi Vedamanikkam, Nishantha Wickramasinghe and myself were some of the College players who represented the national teams whilst in school. The teams during the 90's virtually remained unbeaten in the sport of Water Polo. On most occasions the scores and margins of victory resembled those of a cricket match, even in encounters with our archrivals. During the '98 season S. Thomas' was able to win the Nationals Knock-out Water Polo Championships, becoming the first school to do so.

The number of tournaments increased in the later half of the 90's with new tournaments emerging and Thomian dominance spreading to the Novices Championships, the National League and C-league

In Water Polo records were set all the way back in the '80's and the 90's and some stand even today. These were achieved with new strategies, planning and experimentation all the way. The then famous deflection shot ("*bittherey*") made by the prop from a hard pass by a fellow team mate is simply one of the many gimmicks tried out.

The number of tournaments began to gradually increase between the years 1997 and 1999 with the National League, Age Group and Knockout Water Polo meets being introduced. These were again means of bringing glory to our *alma mater*. Thomians were

also seen representing the country at international meets like the Asia Pacific Swimming and Diving Championships, SAF Games and the Indo-Lanka dual meets. We owe our achievements not only to ourselves, but to our Coaches especially, Mr. Phillip Amarasingha (then Master-in-Charge of swimming and diving), our parents, team captains and every other supportive figure around us.

It was undoubtedly a fusion of dedication

and hard work; a blend of good and bad times which made us champions in the true sense, not merely in the realm of aquatics but also as strong, disciplined and humble sons, husbands and fathers.

Esto Perpetua

Nawaff Mubarak

Leveraging A New Future For The Next Generation

While overseas recently and engaging in intellectually stimulating sessions on current topics of global economic interest during the day and immersing in the warm social interaction that always follows these events in the evenings - I often envisioned the future of a potentially New Sri Lanka. In the course of meeting and talking with upbeat and happy people of diverse age groups and disciplines from a wide range of countries, my mind went to our very own "next generation" - a generation which had been robbed of its rightful future for decades - a generation which had left the country, to build careers, families and adopted homes offshore, many from among them - fellow Thomians.

Regaining Lost Opportunities

It was in the end of April, towards the latter stages of the three decade long conflict, that I contributed articles on this topic. My writings were titled: Beyond Bullets, Bayonets and Bailouts; Regaining Lost Opportunities; Beyond the IMF Bailout - Getting Real About The Future; Leveraging the New Window of Opportunity *etc.* Following up on a suggestion I made to a local radio station I developed a few personal sayings titled "Thought Leadership" which were aired several times each day throughout a week in early June. All this was time and thinking contributed to the print and electronic media, entirely on a gratis basis. My purpose was to make even a small contribution to a thought process, which will lead to a longer-term solution. A sustainable solution, for a nation which had not only won a battle against terror, but more importantly, "An Opportunity to Rebuild itself." Having been away for a decade myself, it is now two decades since returning to Sri Lanka, that I had begun to write and also conduct television interviews, on topics of compelling national interest, rather than simply being a passive passenger on this nations journey - a journey which could well have been different for us all.

Preventing and Pre-empting Conflict

Writing in many daily and Sunday papers, (and I am thankful to these papers for the space they readily provided) under a sub-caption titled "Leveraging the New Window of Opportunity" under the theme "Beyond IMF Bailouts," I said "*The military component of the "day to day" battle (I repeat the "day to day" battle) of an almost three decade-old conflict is reaching an imminent end. This would be singularly encouraging to any right thinking citizen of this country or anywhere else. It has of course been at a terrible cost of lives lost. Yes, we might say the "conflict" is not yet over, but it could also be said, that it is entirely in our hands to shape the manner in which we incrementally progress to a stage where the reasons or the catalysts for conflict do not exist. In essence we must set in motion an unprecedented initiative to pre-empt or prevent the recurrence of the conflict. If not, the almost three decades of the colossal money spent and the many lives lost, with the resulting deep cuts and bruises to inter-racial harmony and social cohesion, whether between and among people on shore or offshore, would have been in vain.*" That, I said was the spirit in which I put pen to paper.

A Pivotal Point in History

Writing further I said "*We do not need anyone to remind us that we are now at a pivotal point in history, ... We now have a new window of opportunity. A window, that valiant forces have selflessly made happen; that the people of the land, particularly those who have returned or remained, have also patiently and supportively, or even by default, provided. Whether they live in the North or East, South or West, they will all have expectations and hope. We cannot dash their hopes. We cannot indulge in the extravagance of perpetuating mediocrity in the manner in which we forge ahead as a nation.*"

California and Governor Schwarzenegger

While in San Diego in July, I wondered why those who have opportunities, such as in the USA for example, take them for granted only to be driven by greed and self interest to self inflict damage to such enabling environments. Then from this “land of the free and home of the brave” they export these toxic assets to the rest of the world’s banking and financial markets! Yes, San Diego was a distinct joy to visit but the state of California is now bankrupt. It was only a couple of months before my visit that I had heard that California Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger had been passionately appealing to US Treasury Secretary, Timothy Geithner, for a Federal Bailout from TARP (Troubled Asset Relief Programme) - funds earmarked for failing banks! (Very much unlike the Arnold Schwarzenegger we see in the movies). I cite this example, since in the current context of Sri-Lanka, it prompts one to think of the independence of governance states have on the one hand, and their fall back on the centre or Federal Government at times of need, on the other.

Post Conflict Belfast

While on the same trip, in the course of enjoying the abundant beauty and tranquility of Inverness in the mountain highlands of Scotland, I envisioned what Nuwara Eliya could well have been today if we were a conflict free nation attracting annual new investments for tourism. Then I travelled to Belfast in Northern Ireland and was encouraged by the significant new investment and new thinking that is readily apparent there. Yes of course, 10 years after the Good Friday Agreement, the conflict is yet not completely over there, but Northern Ireland has in relative terms become a peaceful and stable destination for tourism, investment and living. The deal is yet considered a volatile one, but the region seems well on its way to recovery.

While the Agreement was signed in 1998, it took until 2005 for the IRA to finally disarm. The DUP, by then the biggest Unionist party, could only be convinced of the legitimacy of the ceasefire when Sinn Fein took the vital step of recognising the authority of the Police Service of Northern Ireland in 2007. Ian Paisley had then astonished many by agreeing to form a government with his old enemies, serving alongside Sinn Fein’s Deputy-Leader Martin McGuinness. The most extreme sides from the two communities have successfully

formed a power-sharing government. Although there are undoubtedly still ongoing tensions between the Protestants and Catholics, the fact that the agreement has held proves that there is little appetite in the province for returning to the bad old days of terrorism and violence which resulted in the deaths of over 3,000 people in 30 years. I went to many places where the scars of the conflict were yet visible - including the walls separating the two factions (along Falls Street for example), which still remain.

Singapore PM’s National Day Speech

Moving from one city to another across continents, and retrieving my email along the way, I was encouraged by the words of Singapore’s Prime Minister Lee in a National Day speech he had delivered in August.

He said and I quote *“We didn’t start out as one people. Our forefathers were different peoples from different lands, who had come to Singapore to seek better lives for themselves and their children. But our formative years fighting for independence, then striving as a new nation to survive against the odds, brought us all closer together. Each time we were challenged, we responded as one, everyone pulling together and working for the common good. And each success further cemented our cohesion, and helped us to meet the next challenge. We are doing this again in this crisis. Everyone of us – Government and people, employers and unions – are working together, keeping companies viable and competitive, preserving jobs and livelihoods, and enhancing social safety nets like Workfare and ComCare. This crisis may be a severe test, but our history and record give us confidence that we will once again turn it into an opportunity to strengthen our social compact, and upgrade our economy”*

Whether Fighting the Recession or the Avian Flu

Referring to the recent global meltdown he said *“Whether fighting the recession or the flu, we made sure every Singaporean knows he’s not alone, but that the community and country are behind him. So long as you make the effort and do your best, the rest of us will help you to pull through. This unity is key to our success in many fields. We must work hard to strengthen it, and to bridge potential divides within our society, be it between Singaporeans and new arrivals, between rich and poor, or most fundamental of all, between the different races and religions.”*

Enlarging the Secular Common Space

Addressing issues of social cohesion he had this to say “*We often see ethnic strife and religious conflict in other countries. In Singapore we have to respect each other’s cultures, practices and beliefs, build trust and harmony between our communities, and gradually enlarge the secular common space which all groups share. In this way, we can become one people, one nation, one Singapore. We are well placed to deal with these challenges. We are not just pursuing economic growth, or strengthening our society, or remaking our city, but creating a new Singapore. In the half-century since we attained self-government, we’ve been tested many times, but we’ve also created many possibilities for ourselves. Let us stand shoulder-to-shoulder, so that whether it rains or shines, we can work together and achieve the best results for Singapore. This is how we build a better and more vibrant nation, and make Singapore a special place that we are all proud to call our home.*”

These words of wisdom of Singapore’s Prime Minister Lee are a potent message to all, whether in Government or in Opposition, in Business or in the Professions or simply representatives of Civil Society, whether Tamil or Sinhala or Muslim

or Malay or Burgher; whether it is the diaspora offshore or our people on shore.

Turning the Searchlight Inwards

A new realisation must awaken those who live in the luxury and in the comfort zones of their adopted homes offshore, while investing their minds and money or simply their time in influencing thinking, in order to perpetuate conflict. Whether they are Tamil or Sinhala, they should now in particular turn the search light inwards to see how they can invest their minds and money to be catalysts for change for the better, rather than be agents of terrorists or “triumphalists.”

Ranel T. Wijesinha

Hail, The Fallen Thomian Heroes

“My Son, My Son, you must go with the rest. I would not have you stay. You, my very own, who drew at my breast will one day face that final test...”

The sons of our *alma mater* that walked into a military life as their chosen profession would have done so with pride and expectation. The portals of College that nurtured these young lads to serve their motherland by choice would necessarily place them on the mantle of the brave and the bold, “the staunch and the true.” They would be the icons of selfless sacrifice. I refer not only to the deceased but even to those who have survived the bloody thirty years of unflinching conflict.

When I pondered of what could be said of these Thomians, young and old, who served their motherland, the instant thought that flashed through my mind was the Thomian ethos; this unparalleled characteristic is not seen amongst the others who served in the rank and file of the military. This made our sons unique.

The individual circumstances of the death of each one of those who laid down their lives carries with it a distinctive character. The documented episodes, as published in what is termed as the Part I Order, by the Regiment to which they belonged echoes more or less the last moments of their sacrificial service.

It captures the scene, creating that aura of Thomian grit around the incident whether it was a fall from a helicopter, a crash into the ocean, or being gunned down by enemy fire, they all carried the hallmark which read, “another Thomian falls.” The men who fought side by side or the Squadrons in which they served, without question, will testify to the Thomian spirit which they carried to the last.

We salute you, my son, my brother, my husband, my colleague; what else have we to say than perpetuate the deeds of chivalry performed in the name of your motherland and your *alma mater*. These gallant young men, plucked away in the prime of their life, would have joined S. Thomas’ not having a vision of a military career.

Starting their school careers, with dreams of playing cricket under the trees or the fives court, or football with a tennis ball or marbles, with lesser concentration on the lessons that followed in the class room, they grew in stature under the Blue-Black banner. Chapel in the morning, assembly on Wednesday, wild sweat out during the interval, slowly made the boy into an adult.

Being 'on-report', caning (perhaps not now), detention, Cop-room lines, the debates, the boxing, the fives matches, rugger and the pinnacle the Royal-Thomian all came together like a mechano set being put together to make the Thomian. The term exams, the promotions, withdrawals, the Ordinary Levels and then the last sling – the Advanced Levels, made these “little fellows” into the adults who were ready to sacrifice their lives.

How much did they know of what this military life held for them. Put through the fire and honed from the finest steel, polished with the brush of gentleness, obedience, emotion and truth etched in the luster of the richest gold, tradition, loyalty and faith enters the world of these Thomians to pay the price.

They knew not of Tamil nor Sinhalese, Muslim nor Burgher; North or South, East or West; rich nor poor - but just one purpose. Walking with their heads held high, sweeping aside pettiness of jealousy and ambitions they drive towards their goal. They have left behind their friends, their teachers, their coach and captains, the Chaplain and the Warden - who have now rallied round the College flag - standing motionless by the flame extinguished by a bullet or blast and there ending the life, of yet another son of S. Thomas'.

The rattle of Guns fell silent
The battlefield was clear
As on that dismal night I dreamt
Of home and my mother dear

I came and knelt beside your bed,
I nestled at your breast
And on my dark and bloody head,
Those gentle lips you pressed

You whispered with such accents sweet,
“My son how proud I am of you”
The battlefield where soldiers meet,
Is the same plane where they, your father slew.

I saw a tear drop in her eye,
She tried to hide in vain
Her suppressed grief and silent sigh
And a heart so full of pain.

But the Dawn so cruel and mean,
Found me here alone
Such is the bliss of souls serene,
The grief to bear alone.
Sauitier in modo; Fortiter in re.
(Gentle in manner, Brave in action)

Esto Perpetua

Col. Sunil Peiris



Service of Thanksgiving and Remembrance on the 11th of November 2009, at the Big Club Grounds.

Sepala Ilangakoon (1925 - 2009)

“Carl” to some, “Sepala” to others, “Sepa” to many, and always “Sir” to me, a legendary tea and rubber industry stalwart passed away at the age of 86, in the early hours of Friday the 26th of June, whilst resting in his favourite armchair, at his Colombo residence. In compliance with his instructions to his family and the undertakers too, he was cremated at a very private funeral. The detailed, clear and no-nonsense instructions, including his own obituary notice, were typical of the perfectionist he always was. I wish I could read out three pages from one of his books under the caption “When I die” but that will be too time consuming, though I must say that I do not envy his family having to comply with his numerous instructions at such short notice.



With your permission, I will refer to the great man as “Sepala,” lest you get bored with too many references to “Mr. Ilangakoon.” In one of his books he says “My firm belief in Jesus Christ makes me unafraid of death. All my responsibilities to everyone have been fulfilled. I have lived a full life. I am ready to die” – very crisp and to the point.

Sepala was charming, a gentleman to his fingertips, caring, humble and unassuming, a born leader and a distinguished personality. When Sepala entered any gathering, people noticed him. Erect, meticulously well groomed, with that slight bounce in his stride and always smiling. Right to the end he had a very firm fist and it was difficult to match his impeccable English, both spoken and written, as well as his in-depth knowledge of agriculture.

Sepala actively supported his old school, S. Thomas’ College, where he was the Head Prefect in the early 40’s, and was awarded the much coveted Victoria Gold Medal for the Best All-Round Student.

Sepala gave up medicine at the University and moved to the School of Agriculture and then to planting. He passed out of the School of Agriculture, topping the batch and with a 1st Class. He also won 12 out of the 16 prizes on offer. He says that it was at the School of Agriculture that he learnt to mix with the different strata of society. This motivated him to break the hierarchical tradition for the Sunday Holy Communion Service at the estate Church where he stayed back and joined the workers in the queue.

Sepala was, indeed, the best ever tea-cum-rubber planter this country has seen. He was among the earliest Ceylonese planters to join the exclusive club of planters in the colonial era. I was told by old-timers that right from his very early days he had an abundance of self-confidence. The story goes that he was at the bottom of a steep hill, supervising the manuring of the tea in that area when his boss got out of his car on the road above and called out to Sepala to come up and see him. Sepala wearing his hat and smoking a pipe, is said to have called back, “It is easier for you to come down and go up than for me to come up, come down and then finally go up again.” Apparently his boss took this near insubordination in his stride and went down the hill to talk with Sepala.

He effortlessly stood out in the two industries that he was involved in. His post-planting career as Chairman and Managing Director of Mackwoods Estates, Chairman of the Planters’ Association of Ceylon, Chairman of the Tea Board and as Secretary-General of the Planters’ Society were exceptional spells in these entities, where persons who worked with him still talk of him with great admiration. It was during his term as Chairman of the Tea Board that, along with the then Minister, the late Hon. Gamini Dissanayake, he worked around the clock on the clusterisation of estates, which was the fore-runner to the privatisation of the management of estates. In recognition of his services to the plantation industry he was awarded the title “Deshabandu.”

I had the unique opportunity of working under Sepala for nearly six years at Hapugastenna Group,

Ratnapura, in the early days of my working career, and I have kept in touch with him ever since. If I have achieved any little success in my career, a large part of it is thanks to the training imparted by Sepala. He is my “superhero.” Sepala was a stickler for punctuality which is another excellent trait I learnt from him.

Sepala and his wife Sunethra both come from highly respected, distinguished and aristocratic families, but there was never even a touch of arrogance in either of them. Just as an example, one of the early chapters of the first book he authored is in praise of Kandasamy (“K.P.”) who was his first Field Supervisor when he commenced planting in 1948. Sepala was very courageous and was never afraid of anyone. Agency House executives who wrote stinkers to Superintendents at the drop of a hat, were very reluctant to write to Sepala because more often than not, they would get cornered and found it extremely difficult to extricate themselves. Once, however, the Visiting Agent had made an adverse comment on a particular rubber field and the Agency House executives thought this was an ideal opportunity for them to get their own back on Sepala. A letter calling for a detailed explanation was despatched. Sepala’s response was calm, short and precise: “Please note that when we drove past this particular field the Visiting Agent was fast asleep. My Assistant, Balendra, who was in the vehicle, will vouch for it.” That was the end of the story as far as that V.A’s report was concerned.

Sepala was indeed fortunate to have lived to a full and rewarding age of 86, and with a very clear mind right to the end. I am told that two weeks prior to his demise, he had stubbornly (one of his characteristics) insisted on driving himself to church, despite his driver being available and sitting at the back of the vehicle. In retirement Sepala became a prolific writer and his four books give a detailed insight into the great man and his abilities.

Let me conclude by saying that with his unshakeable faith, Sepala must surely have gone back home to his maker. Farewell Sir, and may you Rest in Peace.

Ken Balendra

Shantha Warnakulasooriya (1966 – 2009)

“Uncle Dayasiri, you raised-up sons, whom you can be proud of; they have all been examples of who and what is meant by being called a Thomian. Shantha was an outstanding example. He gave of his very best to S. Thomas’ College. Nothing was impossible or too difficult for him in relation to “doing and caring” for the College he so loved. In your grief you can be proud that you produced a son who had wonderful values and qualities. A son whom S. Thomas’ College can be proud of. A Son, who was made by S. Thomas’ College and who in turn, gave his best to S. Thomas’ College. He was a fine example of a Thomian.”

Those words were expressed by me to Shantha’s father, Mr. Dayasiri Warnakulasooriya, himself, a very loyal old Thomian, when I condoled with him immediately after Shantha’s sudden and unexpected demise. I meant every word from my heart, because each word was so very true.

I first met Shantha, if ‘met’ is the right word, way back in 1971. I was in Upper Third and Shantha had just joined Winchester. Our class used to wait for the long interval bell to ring, to rush out to play cricket. We used our school bags (suit cases), which are not seen any more as the wicket in the shade of the trees between Winchester and the “Fives-Courts.” The small ‘brats’ (not that we were much bigger) used to line-up, two by two to march-off to the Dining Hall for their lunch, under the eagle eyes of Mrs. Burder. One day we noticed that there was a new boy. As someone said a handsome looking little “*Japang*



Baby Sumo Wrestler.” A couple of our boys walked up to him and tried to get ‘friendly’ by trying to pinch his cheeks. Shantha, very calmly, without any excitement swung his little fist, “biff!!” - straight into the tummy of my classmate, a much older boy. “*Podi Yakek!*” they said and moved aside! From then on, over the next nine years in which I had the privilege of staying at our seaside health resort, I used to see him around, very noticeably growing bigger. First, marching in that file of boys going for lunch, then seeing him at times being visited by his parents, and then seeing him around College. More usually I used to see him calmly ensconced in the goalie’s position while he played hockey and I trained for athletics.

Time went by and years later, in 1998, a few of us formed the “Special Events Team” of the OBA, to launch the inaugural “Thomian Armed Forces Thanksgiving Service and Memorial Ceremony.” After that event was over, I felt we needed a few more highly capable and very dedicated old Thomians to join up and strengthen this new team that had been set up. I drew up a list of younger, very capable old Thomians, whom I had noted from my stint on the Ex-Co. Shantha’s name was one of the first I wrote down. Thereafter, I tracked his phone number and called him. He did not hesitate to volunteer and join us. He also asked me whether he could bring along another “fine young Thomian?” I replied and asked “Most certainly, but whom?” “My brother Kumudu” he replied. At our first meeting he said “I know of another one” I asked “Who?” He said, “A badminton player called Shawn Sheik.” All of them have since grown into being valuable members of the Special Events Team.

The close association with Shantha which began in 1998, through our common commitment to the Special Events Team lasted until his death. We grew closer over the years and I got used to regularly receiving humorous emails from him, or some hilarious comments from him about matters of topical interest – including special updates on the latest restaurant in town!

Shantha grew into being a key team member of our Special Event Team and he was very actively involved in every project we undertook. He was a Buddhist, but in typical Thomian fashion, worked tirelessly to help collect the funds that we needed to renovate the Chapel of the Transfiguration.

His dream was to have the Special Events Team structure a scheme to recognise and reward exceptionally outstanding old Thomians through an “Awards Scheme.” His dream became a reality in March, 2008, when at our “Gala Dinner” that was arranged to raise funds, we were able to present “Appreciation Awards” on behalf of the Thomian community to Deshamanya Mrs. Siva Obeysekera, Mr. Russel Batholomeusz and Mr. Bertie Wijesinghe. I was so happy that day, seeing Shantha take centre stage to give away those awards together with our then Warden, Dr. David Ponniah.

His absolute forte was taking responsibility for managing the production of Thomian Souvenirs to be sold at College Fairs. The Special Events Souvenir Stall at the Thomian Fairs in 2001 and 2005 made a handsome profit for the College. He was involved for a time on the Ex-Co. He never missed the Royal-Thomian. A photographer had caught him ‘parked’ in the Stables, intensely absorbed in this year’s match, when we were all seeing ‘Thomian Grit’ in action! This photo can be seen on the College Website (see inset).

Shantha will always be in our hearts, because we respected, appreciated and loved him as a sincere, genuine and caring friend, who gave his maximum to the success of whatever he was doing.

In recent years, my family and I used to cross Shantha’s vehicle every morning on our way to school/office. He used to travel in the other direction. We used to cross each other usually on Madiwela Road, in the Thalawathugoda area. We had a ritual of a “honk of the horn” when we passed each other, or an SMS being sent later in the morning asking “Why no honk of horn?” if we accidentally passed without recognition. My daughters also got used to this and used to say, “Uncle Shantha’s jeep is coming!” We now miss that ritual. Even this morning, on the day I am writing this appreciation, as I drove into work I noticed a white jeep coming along and I pictured Shantha’s face. It is still fresh and vibrant in our minds, and it will always be so, because he made his mark in our hearts as a dear friend, a dedicated team member and an outstanding Thomian! There is so much more we can write about our fun loving, cheerful, humorous brother and friend, but I will simply say, “Thank you Shantha for all you did and for being with us. We

appreciated you as a person. We were proud to be able to be considered a friend by you. You lived your life as an example of who a “true Thomian” should be.”

“Shantha, may your wife, children, parents, sister and brothers be comforted by knowing that you were a credit to all of them and that you really mattered as a person to us all, and that you will be sadly missed because of the genuine warmth and sincerity that you so consistently and naturally reflected.

May our College Motto apply to your memory of you... *Esto Perpetua*

Bertal Pinto-Jayawardena

Rukshan Perera

Rukshan Perera – a member of the Newsletter Committee from 2003 to 2008, passed away on November 16, 2009.

Illness prevented Rukshan from joining the Committee in editing the Newsletter this year and he was sorely missed at our meetings. Rukshan never failed to make us all roll with laughter by narrating funny anecdotes. The jokes we published were mainly from Rukshan. This year’s Newsletter is devoid of Rukshan’s humour. Some of us in the Committee remember Rukshan in his College days, where he was noted as a talented Hewisi Drummer and a Scout. In fact, he was awarded the prestigious President’s Badge in Scouting.



Rukshan joined the Newsletter Committee in his capacity as the Administrative Secretary of the OBA Secretariat. He was a competent administrator and a key link in all OBA activities. If you received your Newsletter on time in the past few years – Rukshan was the man behind it – updating the database and organising the dispatch.

One task Rukshan used to carry out faithfully was to compile the list of Thomians who passed away during the year, for publication in the Newsletter. He always ensured the list was up to date and accurate. In a strange twist of fate, with much sadness, we had to update the “Laid to Rest” section to include our colleague Rukshan’s name just a few days before the Newsletter went into print.

We express our heartfelt condolences to Rukshan’s family – the loss of a son and a brother is irreplaceable. Rukshan – our thoughts and our prayers are with you.

Newsletter Committee

Laid to Rest

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|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------|
| • Mr. P.H.A.N. Dias | • Mr. Sepala Illangakoon | • Mr. Rohan Wijeratne |
| • Mr. Ranjith Cooray | • Mr. Nizam Saleem | • Mr. L.M.P. De Silva |
| • Mr. Stanely Abeywickrama | • Mr. Dayananda Wanniarachchi | • Mr. A.C. Ginige |
| • Mr. Shantha Warnakulasuriya | • Mr. Romesh Algama, | • Dr. Nihal Jayasundara |
| • Mr. Shahan Peiris | • Mr. Rukshan Perera | • Mr. Ossie Seneviratne |
| • Mr. Ranjit Jinasena | • Mr. Roy Abeysekera | • Mr. Sri Chandrasekera |

The Boys Who Stood On The Burning Deck



Raveenthiraraja Nirrushan and Fahim Saleem - two names that will go down in the annals of Thomian Cricket as superheroes. They came up with a fightback of such epic proportions in the 2009 Royal-Thomian that it will require another superhuman effort to match this performance. Giving them great support and playing a key innings was 15 year old Sachin Peiris.

The Thomian Cricket team for the 2008/2009 season was somewhat weakened due to the age limit being changed from Under 20 to Under 19. Nirrushan, a 3rd year coloursman, was appointed the Captain with Dinesh Walpita as his Vice-Captain and Fahim Saleem as Secretary.

Nirrushan, a studious boy with a quiet demeanour, is a senior Prefect, the College Tennis Captain and has now added the extra feather to his cap, the Captaincy of the College Cricket Team. In his team he had only three coloursmen and a host of youngsters, many of whom had not played any 1st XI cricket, to vie for places in the team.

As expected, the 3rd term passed without many 'hiccups' and the stage was set for the 1st term, when we thought we would be able to separate the men from the boys. Disaster! We had to follow on against a relatively weak St. Benedict's team and lost badly to Ananda and St. Joseph's. Meanwhile Royal were sweeping aside every team that they played. They had won 9 matches outright before the Royal-Thomian and were firm favourites to win the Big Match inside two days, according to pundits. Unknown to many, droves of old Royalists arrived in Sri Lanka from abroad, to savour a Royal victory, which was certain in their minds. The more circumspect old Royalists privately admitted that "you can never say with these Thomians!"

We, however, went about our work of

teaching them the basics and building on them. Neil Chanmugam, a former Thomian great, mapped out strategy and Kumar Boralessa, another former Thomian great spent many hours at the indoor nets, ironing out flaws in the batsmens technique. When we played our penultimate match against St. Sebastian's at Moratuwa, our bowlers suffered a lot of "stick" and we ended up conceding 303 runs. What followed was a run feast by our batsmen. Saleem stroked 143 runs and Nirrushan followed with century. Our 15 year old wicket-keeper, Sachin Peiris, going in at No. 11 stroked a fluent 25 not out, taking his season's aggregate to 58(!). We decided to persist with him because he was by far the best 'keeper' we had and an investment for the future. We totalled 438 for 9 in that game, which I believe is a Thomian batting record. This gave us a lot of confidence that we could at least match up to the Royal batting if not better it.

Things turned out differently on the big day, though. The Royal batting machine tore us apart to get 313 in the 1st innings and their bowling rolled us over for 99 by 11:00 am on the 2nd day. By lunch on the 2nd day, we were staggering at 39 for 2. Defeat stared us in the face. Lunch was an insipid affair... No one dared speak. Two boys with loads of talent strapped on their pads and stood up from their seats (where they they had been in deep thought for 45 minutes), picked up their bats, acknowledged the muted words of encouragement from their colleagues and stepped out into the sunshine, into history and Royal-Thomian folklore.

For the next two sessions, what we saw was batting of the highest calibre with sweetly timed strokes through the covers; cuts, pulls, flicks off the pad and rock-solid defence. By tea time, we had salvaged a lot of pride. We looked like we

would go down fighting. Nirrushan and Saleem had other ideas - we were not going down at all! They continued in the same vein and towards the end of the day there were minor palpitations as both boys inched their way up towards their centuries and they came off the field with their heads held high.

When the 3rd day dawned we were still not out of the woods. There were 105 overs more to contend with. Nirrushan got out early, but Saleem continued unperturbed. We lost a couple of wickets in quick succession and by lunch we were 6 wickets down. Cometh the hour, cometh the Man. In this instance it was a slip of a boy, all of 15 years old, named Sachin Peiris. We had sent him in at No. 11 in the 1st innings and he had stroked 3 fours in his 12 not out, in our meager total of 99. He was No. 7 in the 2nd innings. He was not out at lunch and Kumar Boralessa told him, "Son, try and stay as long as you can." The boy promptly replied, "Don't worry Sir, I will stay till tea!" Yes, he was there at tea and for a long while thereafter and he played the defining innings of this game, reminiscent of Anura Tennekoon making his debut in 1962 as a 15 year old, and

partnering Paul Selvadurai in an innings-saving stand. S. Thomas' unearthed and displayed to the world at large, an awesome talent in this little boy. Expect big things from him in the future.

Saleem's vigil came to an end after 545 minutes of solid defence, sanguine strokeplay and an absolutely magical display of guts and determination. The match ended in semi-darkness with Royal trying the impossible and losing their top batsmen compelling them to accept the offer for bad light. A huge moral victory for S. Thomas'.

When the sun goes down and people reminisce on Royal-Thomian folklore, they will always remember these three boys who stood on the burning deck and pulled us out of the fire. Never in the annals of Thomian cricketing history have so many Thomians owed so much to so few in these brave young Thomians who did the impossible. Thomian Grit is alive and kicking. We continue to produce high calibre Thomians to enrich the world we live in.

Ajit Jayasekera

College Events



The Royal-Thomian Rugby Football encounter in progress.



The Thomian soccer team that won the Royal-Thomian soccer match after 16 years.



The Royal-Thomian Hockey match which ended in a draw.



The victorious Thomian Rowing Crew after the Royal-Thomian Regatta.

PRIZE GIVING - 9th of October 2009



Extracts From The Warden's Speech

“In essence, my message is simple: great nations need great schools. They also, of course, need great universities, and much else besides, but without great schools there is no fertile soil in which anything worth growing can grow. Nonetheless, Eton College, in which I worked for 25 years, was constantly in the news not just in the UK but throughout the world, but not because everyone rejoiced in its success; it was far more often in the news because of some minor mishap which gave the world a chance to take a pot-shot at it as a bastion of privilege. S. Thomas' College knows of similar prejudices even in its own country. Prejudice and the small-minded politics of sport and society are everywhere, and envy and ideology frequently play too large a part in the ways we evaluate and reward success and failure.

This “tall poppy syndrome” is the enemy of greatness. At its most absurd it would have everyone fail rather than anyone succeed; everyone die rather than anyone be cured; everyone be ignorant rather than anyone be learned; everyone lose rather than anyone win. For to be consistent, those who would undermine or destroy institutions such as this or Eton would also have to deny everyone access to sport, for sport is based upon competition, and competition upon the assumption that on a particular day one side or player is better than another. And so nobody must win unless everyone wins. And I draw attention to this not to make a minor political point but to draw attention to a genuine confusion in the minds of many between all people being equal and all people being identical.

The challenge is not to provide everyone with the same education, which all too often just becomes an excuse to reduce everyone to the lowest possible level; the challenge is to provide each and every

boy and girl with an appropriate education, tailored to their abilities, interests and needs. This leads to two intimately related objectives in any educational system: the first is personalised learning, learning that occurs at a speed and in a way appropriate to the student; the second, which is necessary to achieve the first, is assessment for learning, assessment that is which allows us to diagnose the difficulties and achievements of each child in a way that will permit us to adjust the way we teach to the way in which they most effectively learn. Such teaching is based upon a deep understanding of the abilities, interests and needs of each student grounded in assessment that can shape curriculum delivery for that child.

The main enemy of this two-fold vision for improved education is a model of teaching in which one teacher delivers a syllabus to a class of children – sometimes a very large class of children – as if they were all exactly the same: as if they learn the same way, at the same speed, by being responsive to the same resources delivered in the same way day in and day out. Yet nobody would respect or trust a doctor who treated every patient with exactly the same medicine regardless of symptoms, or who ran his surgeries by assembling all his patients in one room only to write them all exactly the same prescription. Yet in many schools not just in Sri Lanka but throughout the world this is exactly the model of teaching and learning being employed.

And our very professional teachers sitting behind me will by now be gnashing their teeth and muttering under their breath that this is all very well but it is a counsel of perfection, and in practice a thousand other things prevent anything like this kind of personalised learning and assessment for learning being practised. And of course they are absolutely right. We cannot expect teachers to deliver such a vision for education without providing them with the time to prepare, the skills to diversify, the confidence to divert from the printed syllabus, and the motivation and self-esteem needed to achieve such an ambitious objective. And of course if we wish teachers to exhibit these high-level professional skills that will re-establish teaching as a career on par with medicine, accountancy or the law, we will have to be prepared to reward teachers appropriately when they display those skills.

How does today's celebration of achievement connect with this ambitious vision for education? I

first want to observe that every one of today's prize-winners has spent his life at S. Thomas' College in a class of other boys, sometimes 10, sometimes 20, 30 or even occasionally 40 others. There is absolutely no doubt that the higher the quality of the achievement of those classes, the greater the opportunity there will be for true excellence to emerge among those who are most able to learn from it. As I say in my printed report, great men stand upon the shoulders of giants, and every young man who mounts this stage to receive a prize today will owe a debt of gratitude not only to his teachers, but to his classmates and of course his long-suffering parents, for he stands on their shoulders, too.

So the excellence we celebrate today is not just a celebration of those who will receive prizes, but of a common, shared, corporate achievement in which current boys and teachers stand upon the shoulders of their forebears who have established the ethos of this College as a place of learning by developing its facilities and its reputation all the way back to 1851 and our Founder, Bishop James Chapman. Everyone who has opened a book, taught a lesson, laid a brick, mowed a playing-field, marked a script, recorded an absence or written a report, as well as countless other things, in the intervening years, is celebrated today, for without them we would be nothing. And I would like to thank in particular everyone who has worked so hard under the most trying of circumstances with neither power nor water to make this hall look so lovely today.

Today and in my inaugural address and other things I have said and written since my arrival in July, I have defined an awesomely difficult task. My predecessor, in several of his later addresses, spoke on similar themes, generally lamenting the constant change of the educational system and hoping for a period of political and educational stability that would allow us to do what we do properly. But much of this is beyond our powers. The task for us is to change what we can change and learn how best to endure what we cannot. So I would identify three things we can change if we have the will.

The skills, knowledge and commitment required of great teachers are every bit as onerous and demanding as those of doctors, accountants and lawyers, and so we must find ways to make teaching at the very least at S. Thomas' College as attractive to our young graduates as those other honourable professions.

We need to provide ongoing persistent and consistent professional development for teachers which they come to regard as every bit as vital to the discharge of their professional duties as do lawyers keeping up with case law or doctors with medical advances or accountants with financial instruments.

We need to move the mind-set of teachers and pupils from one where teachers teach and pupils learn to one where adults and children see themselves as engaged in an exploration of new territory that has something to teach all of them.

All this will require financial resources and professional determination. So I hope you will think it neither frivolous nor offensive if I end by saying something about how we value education in the shape of a really silly illustration. I was told by some prominent members of the UK OBA before I left for Sri Lanka – members who in their time here had distinguished themselves more by being in the “naughty but nice” category than the narrowly studious, if their reputations are correct – that the only thing anyone drinks in Sri Lanka is something I have never heard of called Johnnie Walker Black Label. That being the case, and acknowledging that in the presence of so distinguished an economist as Dr. Sanderatne I am walking on very thin ice here, let me ask this simplistic and amateur question: how many litre bottles of this exotic liquour would you have to forego in order to afford a term's fees at Eton? The answer is “something like five hundred.” And my second question is obvious: how many bottles would you have to forego to afford one term's fees at S. Thomas' College? Strikingly, the answer is “about two.” Now I am not quite sure what this means, but it seems to suggest something about the relative levels of resources seemingly thought to be needed in the UK and Sri Lanka to achieve what both schools are trying to achieve.

If we value education, we have to be ready to pay for it. And it is of course, whether provided by the government or through independent schools, fantastically expensive. But when politicians, from whatever political hue they come and in whichever country they wield power, tell us that “the country cannot afford it,” we need to keep in mind the reply, “If our armies are worth everything it takes in times of war, our children must be worth everything it takes in times of peace.”



The Thomian Aquatic Sports Union

S. Thomas' College, Mount Lavinia, has always been synonymous with achievements in aquatic sports. So much so that, as I am sure we are all aware, we have the first pool built in a Sri Lankan school and were until recently the only school that had included swimming as a compulsory life skill within the curriculum. This dedication to aquatic sports culminated in S Thomas' College being ranked 1st in the country in Swimming, Diving and Water Polo for a significant period of time.

However, in the recent past it has become painfully clear that College aquatics have sunk to an all-time low with an average overall ranking of almost 6th or 7th in Swimming and no participation in diving at all. Water Polo too has seen College go down to a four-year winning streak by the Royalists.

Against this backdrop the Thomian Aquatic Sports Union (TASU) was formed in January 2008 with the aim of improving College aquatics through the provision of funds and equipment. TASU is affiliated to the Sri Lanka Aquatics Sports Union and the Old Boys' Association and also works hand in hand with the Old Thomians Swimming Club (OTSC) to encourage school-leavers to represent the Club. In addition the OTSC has asked TASU to propose appointment holders for the roles of Club Captain and Swimming Captain towards improving OTSC's representation in aquatics.

Since its inauguration, TASU has facilitated the inclusion of two new coaches into the College Swimming programme to accommodate beginners and senior swimmers. The results speak for themselves as S. Thomas' College now has an overall ranking of 2nd in the Island. It also organised "outward bound" programmes for the Swimming and Water Polo teams to build team work and confidence, and high altitude training camps at S. Thomas' College, Guruthalawa, in order to increase their stamina. The latter had the added benefit of strengthening ties between the two schools as we also conducted 'learn to swim programmes' for the Guruthalawa students during the camp. TASU was also instrumental in setting in place a Time Trial system for College Swimming so that coaches can monitor the progress of their charges and better plan training programmes and competition preparation. The Warden requested TASU to take on the responsibility of organising the 2008 Royal-Thomian Water Polo Encounter (Dr. R. L. Hayman Trophy), which the Union did, finding funding for the event as well as kit and equipment for the team. In 2009, TASU in conjunction with the Royal College Aquatic Steering Committee successfully organised the inaugural Royal-Thomian Swimming Championships which was a resounding success.

It is our contention that the budget for running an intense aquatics program at S. Thomas' College will prove to be beyond the means of College, and as such, TASU plans to collect as much of the funds as possible. TASU has taken upon itself to collect funds through membership drives, fund raisers and requests to well wishers and sponsors. These efforts have met with a degree of success bringing, in excess of Rs 1,000,000/= towards the 2008/2009 and 2009/2010 budgets, but is still less than the required funds. In light of this, TASU has also been in touch with the OBU Branch Associations in the United States of America, Australia and the United Kingdom and hope to garner their support in this respect. We have received positive feedback from all these Branch Associations with the Branch Association of New York/New Jersey/Connecticut sponsoring equipment to the value of US \$ 3000/=.

In addition to these measures, we would like to invite all old Thomians who have an interest in assisting the College aquatics program to join the membership of the TASU and contribute towards this cause. The benefits are not in gaining any facilities or privileges but rather the gratification of knowing that you have contributed towards the continuation of a fine tradition of producing outstanding sportsmen at S. Thomas' College.

Esto Perpetua

Shehan de Alwis



OBA EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE – 2009/2010 HON. SECRETARY'S REPORT

It gives me great pleasure to welcome our new Warden, Rev. John C. Puddefoot as the President of the Old Boys Association of S. Thomas' College, Mount Lavinia. I wish to thank Mr. Harshana Perera who was our Acting Warden and Mr. M. D. Maurice who was our Acting Sub-Warden for the encouragement and guidance given to College and the OBA.

The OBA is undoubtedly a gift given by God in support of our beloved school by the sea. Late Warden Neville de Alwis, speaking at the feast day of S. Thomas The Apostle, on the 21st of December, 1985 said

“To rest on our laurels would be fatal. Every Old Boy should begin to think of the College as a mother to whom we owe a nurture fee for having nurtured us through our formative years. Let not the principle that the creditor should seek the debtor be applicable to us old Thomians. We must reverse the principle and say ‘let the debtor seek the creditor.’ We are, all debtors of the College. We owe the College so much. Let us pledge to repay this debt... A pledge to help the College to continue the levels of excellence prescribed for it by our forebearers.”

In response to the challenge the late Warden laid upon us the following projects were successfully commenced in 2009 -

Code Of Conduct [Chairman: Lakshman Siriwardena]

A committee was appointed to “Develop a Culture for the Election of Members to the Ex-Co of the OBA.” The Committee has submitted its proposals to the Ex-Co, but these proposals are yet to be finalised prior to implementation.

Thomian Dance 2009 [Chairman: N. S. Dayanandan]

The “Thomian Dance 2009” was held on the 17th of October, 2009 at the Colombo Hilton. The tickets were sold out one month prior to the event. All profits would be in aid of the Bishop Chapman Scholarship. I take this opportunity to thank the Dance Committee for a job well done.

Infrastructure Development [Chairman: Nayanta Pandita]

The replacement of the sea-side windows of the Hostel was given priority and completed in two months.

Educational and Faculty Development [Chairman: Prof. Jayantha Welihinda]

The urgent need of white boards for classrooms was met by 30 white boards being donated by Class of '87 and 55 white boards being sponsored by the OBA.

[Cost: Rs. 7,452.25 x 55 = Rs. 409,873.75]

Sports Committee [Chairman: Retd. Major General Lohan Goonewardena]

A sponsorship of Rs. 33,900/= was given to a College badminton player. The OBA was able to sponsor jerseys, skinnies, shorts and track bottoms for the College Athletics Team.

[Cost: Rs. 71,200.00]

Esto Perpetua Forum [Chairman: Milinda Hettiarachchi]

The first Forum was conducted by Mr. Sarath Fernando and was a great success. The Managing Director of Aitken Spence Travels Ltd. conducted the second Forum in October.

Finance Committee [Chairman: Ranil Goonetilleke]

For the 8 months ending 31-08-2009 the OBA has received Rs. 223,200/= as membership fees. The Fixed Deposit interest received during this period is Rs.724,885/=. The accounts of the Thomian Walk are being finalised and at present a net income of Rs. 4,329,500/= has been recorded. However, certain expenditure committed in respect of the Walk has not yet been disbursed and the net income after disbursing these would be lower than that currently recorded. This year too, the OBA contributed Rs. 250,000/= towards the bonuses of the College staff. Thanks to the efforts of the members, the OBA succeeded in collecting and donating Rs. 510,801/= towards the urgent surgery of its Administrative Secretary. The Finance Committee wishes to thank all the members and class groups for rallying towards this cause. With the income recorded as above the deposit base of the OBA has risen to a healthy Rs.11.3 million from Rs.5.8

million in December 2008. However, expenditure on the various development projects planned for the rest of the year will be incurred from this.

Membership Development Committee [Chairman: Ravin Gunawardena]

A request letter was forwarded by the committee in order to get support of the Old Boys to update the records of the OBA. The letter was circulated via e-mail and Facebook. To encourage the young Old Boys a traditional boarding dinner was organized at the Mount Lavinia beach on the 12th of September, 2009 and was well - attended and 17 young Old Boys joined the OBA at this event. The revenue earned through new membership fees was Rs. 3200.00 x 17 = Rs. 54,000.00. From March '09 – Oct '09, 170 new members have joined the OBA.

Newsletter Committee [Co-Chairmen: Mangala Gunasekera / Hejaaz Hizbullah]

The Newsletter is being printed this year, and will be dispatched by courier and e-mail.

Web Committee [Co-Chairmen: Mangala Gunasekera / Menuke de Silva]

The Committee continues to provide an update on OBA events. They were able to increase the bandwidth of the OBA site. Most importantly the membership data submission form has been included in the OBA website.

Corporate Placement Development Committee [Chairman: Sarath Fernando]

There were requests by Hong Kong and Shanghai Bank Corporation (HSBC) for school leavers who were interested in banking. There were also job opportunities at a new radio station.

Thomian Walk '09 [Co-Chairmen: Sudath de Silva / Mahen Palliyaguru]

The Thomian Walk was held on the 11th of July, 2009 and it turned out to be a great success. The total income of this project was Rs. 6,287,000.00 and a net profit of Rs. 4,396,662.00 was made. The Committee will hand over the audited accounts to the Ex-Co and the Board of Governors by the 30th of October, 2009.

100 Million Trust Fund [Chairman: Udaya Gunaratna]

This project was brought forward and is still in its preliminary stages. It has to be approved by the Board Of Governors and the Ex-Co.

Finally, I thank the members of the Ex-Co for rising to the challenges and completing the projects successfully. I wish to thank the Warden, Sub-Warden, members of the Staff, Old Boys, present boys and well-wishers who helped us in numerous ways to make these projects a success.

May I end with a quote from the Old Boys Magazine of 1888, which has been recorded in the History of The Old Boys Association (Centenary Number) -

“With such recollections of the past, the thought ‘What will the future bring to the Association and the College?’ must have occurred to many. Did their thoughts agree with ‘the common speech of mankind’ which ‘lays more emphasis upon the ravages than upon the conservative or constructive effects of time?’ Or did they think of the present prosperity but as the dawn of a brighter and more glorious future?

*prudens futuri temporis exitum
caliginosa nocte permit deus.*

Yet, judging from the fact that the Association has increased in numbers, in wealth, and in enthusiasm, there can hardly be a doubt as to its lasting and enduring character ... We may still confidently point to our motto ESTO PERPETUA”

May I wish you and your family members a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

Esto Perpetua

Udaya Gunaratna

Hony. Secretary – S. Thomas’ College, Mount Lavinia, Old Boy’s Association 2009/2010

OBA EVENTS



The "Thomian Walk 2009" from St. Pauls Milagiriya to the Big Club Grounds, was held on Saturday the 11th of July, 2009.



A function to welcome the new Warden, Reverend Puddefoot, was organised by the Executive Committee on the 27th of July, 2009 at the Small Club Grounds.



The "Thomian Paan Party" was organised on the Mount Lavinia Beach on Saturday the 12th of September, 2009.



The "Thomian Dance" at the Colombo Hilton, on the 17th of October 2009.

Code of Conduct for the OBA Elections

After several rounds of extensive discussion the Executive Committee of 2009/2010 has decided to adopt the following Code of Conduct for the OBA Elections.

1. Following best practices are proposed:
 - a. Canvassing of any kind is discouraged.
 - b. Discourage “Power Groups” fielding candidates.
 - c. Nominations for the post of elected Vice-President, Secretary and Treasurer should ideally be from members who have served in the Executive Committee for a minimum period of one year;
 - d. Prior to the Annual General Meeting (AGM) candidates nominated for the posts of elected Vice-President, Secretary and Treasurer should submit a resume which should:
 - give their name and years at the College and strictly set out only their contributions to the College and the OBA since leaving College with other relevant factual information about their careers;
 - be limited to one A4 page typed double spaced.
 - if any resume so submitted is found not to conform to any of the afore stated requirements the President may call on the candidate to submit another resume complying with the same.
 - upon submission of such resumes – each candidate’s resume will be read out at the AGM by the Chairman of the AGM for the purpose of introducing the candidate.
2. Names of all nominees for Age Group positions will be read out at the AGM and the nominee will be required to stand up in order to be recognised by the membership.
3. This Code of Conduct upon ratification by the Executive Committee of 2009/2010 shall apply at the election of Members of the Executive Committee of 2010/2011 and shall remain in force unless rescinded by the Executive Committee.
4. This Code of Conduct embodies only the best practices to be adopted for the election of Members to the Executive Committee.

STC SOUVENIRS

OBA Tie	Rs.1000	Our Alma Mater Souvenir	Rs.200
Mug (small)	Rs. 100	125th Anniversary Souvenir	Rs.1000
Mug (big)	Rs.200	Car Badge (Gold/Silver/Bronze)	Rs.400
Thomian Choir at Christmas (Audio CD)-	Rs.500	Thomian Walk '09 Tshirt	Rs.250
Blue, Black and the Blues (Audio CD) –	Rs.500	Thomian Walk'09 Cap	Rs.250
School by the Sea DVD (A documentary on S. Thomas' College, Mount Lavinia) –	Rs.500		

Contact the OBA Secretariat for purchases on 0114955047 / 0114944530 or via email on stcmloba@sltnet.lk

OBA WEEK CELEBRATIONS

Event	Date	Time	Contact Person	Contact Number
Hockey	Feb 8th Monday	5.00 p.m.	Amitha Abeynayake	077-3876242
Table Tennis	Feb 9th Tuesday	5.00 p.m.	OBA Secretariat	0114 955047
Badminton	Feb 9th Tuesday	6.00 p.m.	OBA Secretariat	0114 955047
Tennis	Feb 10th Wednesday	5.00 p.m.	Hiran Siriwardena	071-5334458
Debating	Feb 11th Thursday	6.00 p.m.	Hejaaz Hizbullah	077-2228920
Basket Ball	Feb 12th Friday	8.00 p.m.	Sanjeewa Hewagamage	077-7587548
Water Polo	Feb 12th Friday	8.00 p.m.	Jeewaka Perera	077-3600710
Cricket	Feb 12th/13th Fri/Sat	9.00 a.m.	Nisal Fernando	077-7590617

All Old Boys wishing to participate in the above should contact the above mentioned coordinators.

❑ **The following exhibitions will be held in the College premises:**

Science Exhibition

Art Exhibition

Rail Road Club Exhibition

12th of February 2010 (Friday) – 3.00 p.m. – 6.00 p.m.

13th February 2010 (Saturday) – 9.00 a.m. – 4.00 p.m.

- ❑ The Traditional OBA Lunch will be held on Saturday the 13th of February, 2010 at the College Dining Hall at 1.00 p.m.
- ❑ The garden tea party will be held on Saturday the 13th of February, 2010 at 5.00 p.m at the College Quadrangle. Old Boys and their spouses are welcome. There will be items from the College Hewisi Band, Western Band and the Orchestra. It will be followed by a comedy drama presented by the Old Boys. *(Please confirm your participation for the tea party in order to facilitate catering. Preferred Dress Code: Lounge)*
- ❑ The Old Boys week will be concluded with a Thanksgiving Service at the Chapel of The Transfiguration on Sunday the 14th of February, 2010 at 7.30 a.m., which will be followed by a time of fellowship.
- ❑ The AGM will be held on the 12th of February, 2010 (Friday) at 6.30 p.m. in the College Hall. Members are advised to produce the OBA Membership Card to avoid inconvenience at the time of voting. Those who do not possess the OBA Membership Card should bring proof of identity, which will be checked against the membership list.

Your participation at these events will be greatly appreciated.

Udaya Gunaratna

Hony. Secretary – S. Thomas' College, Mount Lavinia, Old Boy's Association 2009/2010

Reader Response

The Newsletter Committee would appreciate your comments on the current edition of *The Old Boy*. Please send us your comments and criticisms so that they can be considered when work begins on the next edition. The Newsletter Committee also welcomes articles on any aspect of 'College life' or a response to an article in this edition of *The Old Boy* for publication in the future. You can forward your comments/articles to newsletter@stcmloba.org.

**S. THOMAS' COLLEGE, MOUNT LAVINIA
OLD BOYS' ASSOCIATION**

**NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN THAT THE 124TH ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING WILL BE
HELD ON FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 12, 2010 AT 6.30 PM IN THE COLLEGE HALL ,
S. THOMAS' COLLEGE, MOUNT LAVINIA.**

PROPOSED AGENDA

1. RELIGIOUS OBSERVANCES.
2. MEETING OF THE 124TH ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING IS CALLED TO ORDER.
3. READ THE NOTICE CONVENING THE 124TH AGM IF NOT TAKEN AS READ.
4. OBITUARIES-OBSERVANCE OF TWO MINUTES SILENCE IN THEIR MEMORY (SEE REPORT).
5. ADOPTION OF MINUTES OF THE 123RD AGM HELD ON FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 13, 2009.
6. BUSINESS OR MATTERS ARISING OUT OF AGENDA ITEM 05 ABOVE.
7. ADDRESS BY REV. JOHN C. PUDDEFOOT, PRESIDENT, STCML OBA.
8. REVIEW AND ADOPT THE 2009/2010 ASSOCIATION'S ANNUAL REPORT.
9. REVIEW AND ADOPT THE 2009/2010 AUDITED FINANCIAL STATEMENTS AND BALANCE SHEET.
10. MOTION(S) OF WHICH DUE NOTICE HAS BEEN GIVEN. **NOTICE OF ANY MOTION OR OTHER MATTER TO BE BROUGHT BEFORE THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING SHALL BE SUBMITTED IN WRITING TO THE HONORARY SECRETARY AT LEAST THIRTY FIVE (35) DAYS BEFORE THE DATE OF SUCH MEETING.**
11. ANNOUNCEMENTS.
12. ANY OTHER BUSINESS OF WHICH DUE NOTICE HAS BEEN GIVEN.
13. ELECTION OF OFFICE BEARERS AND AN EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE FOR 2010/2011.
 - I. President of the Association /Ex. Officio Warden of S.Thomas' College, Mount Lavinia.
 - ii.FIRST Vice President / Ex-Officio, Sub Warden of S. Thomas' College, Mount Lavinia.
 - iii.SECOND Vice President.
 - iv.Honorary Secretary.
 - v.Assistant Secretary (Nominated by the Warden of S. Thomas' College, Mount Lavinia).
 - vi. Honorary Treasurer.
 - vii. Honorary Assistant Treasurer.
 - viii. Honorary Auditor.
 - ix. Honorary Assistant Auditor.
 - x. FORTY (40) MEMBERS TO BE ELECTED TO THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE AS FOLLOWS.
 - a. TEN (10) MEMBERS UNDER THIRTY (30) YEARS.
 - b. TEN (10) MEMBERS BETWEEN THIRTY (30) AND FORTY (40) YEARS.
 - c. TEN (10) MEMBERS BETWEEN FORTY (40) AND FIFTY (50) YEARS.
 - d. TEN (10) MEMBERS OVER FIFTY (50) YEARS OF AGE.

14. ADJOURNMENT.

NOTICE OF AGENDA ITEM 13 ABOVE:

NOMINATIONS FOR ELECTION OF OFFICE BEARERS AND THOSE REPRESENTING THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE AS PRESCRIBED IN ITEM 13 ABOVE SHALL BE RECEIVED AT THE STCML OBA SECRETARIAT, S. THOMAS' COLLEGE, MOUNT LAVINIA, NO LATER THAN CLOSE OF BUSINESS AT 1700 HRS, FRIDAY JANUARY 29TH 2010, HAVING GIVEN FOURTEEN (14) CLEAR DAYS NOTICE BEFORE THE SCHEDULED ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING. NOMINATION FORM MUST BE DULY PROPOSED AND SECONDED BY TWO (2) SEPARATE MEMBERS OF THE ASSOCIATION, TOGETHER WITH THE WRITTEN CONSENT OF THE MEMBER SO NOMINATED. NO MEMBER WHO HAS SERVED THE STCML OBA EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE FOR FIVE (5) SUCCESSIVE OR CONSECUTIVE (UNINTERRUPTED) YEARS SHALL BE ELIGIBLE FOR ELECTION, UNTIL A LAPSE OF TWO (2) CONSECUTIVE YEARS HAS OCCURRED.

NOMINATION FORMS CAN BE SELF-PREPARED BY HAVING THE NAME OF PROPOSER, SECONDER, THEIR RESPECTIVE MEMBERSHIP NUMBERS AND THE CONSENT OF THE NOMINEE WITH HIS ATTESTATION AND MEMBERSHIP NUMBER. THE ABSENCE OF THE STATED INFORMATION MAY RESULT IN REJECTION OF THE NOMINATIONS, REJECTED NOMINATIONS CANNOT BE RECONSIDERED.

BY ORDER OF THE 2009/2010 EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

STCML OBA SECRETARIAT,
S. THOMAS' COLLEGE,
DE SARAM ROAD, MOUNT LAVINIA.
TEL / FAX : 4944530, 4955047

sgd:
Udaya Gunaratne
Honorary Secretary
STCML OBA 2009/2010

EPILOGUE

The Newsletter Committee of the OBA of S. Thomas' College is privileged to bring together this year's edition of *The Old Boy*. The narrative of S. Thomas' College and the contemporary history of Sri Lanka have been entwined and this year has seen the commencement of new chapters in both the narratives. The Newsletter Committee believes that the events during the course of the year bring with them "new beginnings," both for our country and our *alma mater* and warrant reflection as to how we, as Thomians, will seize these opportunities.

On the 19th of May, His Excellency the President announced in Parliament the military defeat of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE). A heady euphoria swept the country in the month of May at the news that the armed conflict that spanned three decades had ended. In the Newsletter, you can read Chrismal Warnasuriya description of the feelings of the generation that grew up with the conflict and Ranel T. Wijesinghe's analysis of the challenges and opportunities to rebuild. The Newsletter Committee take this opportunity to pay tribute to the Thomians in the Armed Forces, Police and other Public Officials who played a direct role in bringing an end to the conflict. In particular, we pay tribute to the Thomians who have paid the supreme sacrifice in the quest for peace.

Collectively all Sri Lankans will need to reflect on the past and resolve how to face the challenges of development while ensuring that we never experience any conflict and senseless loss of life, on Sri Lankan soil. However, as Thomians we need to consider our role in the life of Sri Lanka in the post-conflict era. When Sri Lanka gained Independence from colonial rule, S. Thomas' was the undisputed leader in education and Thomians played a dominant role in the movement for Independence, in State affairs and private entrepreneurship. With great socio-economic changes since Independence and the end of the conflict we need to ask ourselves - "Is S. Thomas' the undisputed educational institution?" and "Does S. Thomas' continue to provide its students with an education that will stand them in good stead to give ethical and intelligent leadership in the public and private sectors in a county (and world) that desperately needs the same?"

These questions bring us to the important occurrence at our *alma mater* – the installation of the 17th Warden, who will need to grapple with these questions. On the 2nd of July, Reverend John Charles Puddefoot took over the reigns of S. Thomas' College, Mount Lavinia. The Newsletter Committee warmly welcomes Revd. Puddefoot to Sri Lanka and S. Thomas' College, Mount Lavinia. With this appointment we note the rekindling of the historical ties S. Thomas' College has had with the United Kingdom and Eton College. It is indeed right to say that in Revd. Puddefoot we have a multi-faceted individual whose credentials (at Eton College alone) include - teacher of mathematics, philosophy and computer science; head of mathematics (for ten years, during which the number of Etonians opting for mathematics at the Advanced Levels doubled); and head of innumerable committees (designing the curriculum, managing the finances, establishing the criteria for admissions, organising and awarding scholarships, managing the professional development of the staff, controlling the timetable and examinations). He has even taken time to coach and referee Rugby !

The time is ripe for us Old Boys to take this opportunity to assist Revd. Puddefoot in implementing his vision for College. Glimpses of Revd. Puddefoot's vision for the College can be seen in the Wardens "Keynote" to the Newsletter and his "Prize Giving Speech." We would recommend that every Thomian reads both pieces and understands the challenges our *alma mater* faces, in the eyes of the new Warden. It is our duty as Old Boys to constructively engage with and assist Warden Puddefoot in overcoming these challenges.

The need to constructively engage with the administrative engine of S. Thomas' College is highlighted by one example. Past issues of "The Old Boy" have carried updates of the "e-Campus" project, which was a project spearheaded by the Old Boys and the OBA to equip the College with a state of the art IT infrastructure and the students with a sound knowledge of IT. At the time this project was planned with Dr. Ponniah, no other school had implemented such a project. While the project has achieved many successes we now find other schools which embarked on such projects much later, are ahead of us. Most recently another school in Sri Lanka was recognised "as one of the most innovative schools" by Microsoft Corporation.

Throughout the ages we have seen many Old Boys, either individually or collectively, come forward to help College. We commend these Old Boys and encourage more Thomians to come forward. While most assistance from Old Boys comes in financial terms, the changes that will take College through the 21st Century not only require financial support, but also support in terms of helping to change attitudes and thinking. Therefore, our message is "assist S. Thomas', your *alma mater*, in anyway you can – the time is ripe."

Hejaaz Hizbullah (Co-Chairman)
Dilshan Boteju

Managla Gunasekera (Co – Chairman)
Dulip Soysa
Shehan Silva

Prajeeth Balasubramaniam
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