

6 Jan 1994

RECEIVED 12 JAN 1994

My dear Warden,

I want to tell you of the very happy visit I paid to Melbourne, Australia, during the first two weeks of last December. My visit was made by the kind invitation of the STC OBA of Victoria, which must surely be one of the most numerous and most active of Old Boys Associations anywhere. Their kindness and generosity to me personally was beyond telling. Amongst their many acts of hospitality they gave me a delightful reception at the Burgher Club and also invited me, as the chief object of my visit, to officiate at a Service of Nine Lessons and Carols arranged and conducted by Roger Aldons with a Choir largely made up of people who had close connections with the school in the past or present.

I hasten to say that the whole service was extremely well sung and must have brought great credit to the school among the more than 280 people who were present.

I cannot speak too highly of the loyalty and spirit of the Thomian community in Victoria and their interest in the continuing welfare of the College.

Of course there was much talk about the musical tradition of STC and I was able to tell them of my own wonderful experience of attending last year's Carol Service. They also told me of the visit to Melbourne of Russell Bartholomeusz and their happiness at being able to talk with him about the school's music.

One question arose in the course of our discussions and that was to ask what steps, if any, were being taken to ensure the continuance of the fine musical tradition that Russell has built up when the time comes for him to hand over to a successor. Is a suitable successor being trained up? We all felt that it would be a great shame if the excellent standards that Russell has been able to instil in the Choir were to be allowed to come to naught for want of a suitable person to carry them on.

In places in England, for example, which have a high Choral tradition, there is nearly always an on-going organ scholarship under which a succession of organ scholars are trained up to the high standards of the institution which appoints them. My own college, King's College, Cambridge, has had a tradition for many years of training organ scholars many of whom have gone on to hold high positions in the world of English Church Music. To give but one example, (Sir) David Willcocks was himself an organ scholar of King's.

We wondered whether you and the Governors might consider the institution of an Organ Scholarship at St. Thomas College. These are only suggestions which you and your colleagues may wish to consider, but I envisage that such a scholarship might entitle the holder to free education at the college and cover the cost of special tuition in music, and particularly the organ, possibly partly in Sri Lanka and partly overseas. Such a scholarship could be of immense benefit, not only to the College, but to the whole music scene in Sri Lanka. I believe that such a scholarship would have the support of many Old Boys throughout the world, and not least in the OBA of Victoria.

I believe that the OBA of Victoria is intending to write to you on this subject and I would like you to know that the idea has my whole-hearted support. The details would, of course, have to be matter for careful consideration and advice but once the seed has been sown I trust that there is the will and determination to bring it to fruit.

May I take this opportunity to send to you and to the College my warmest good wishes for your continuing progress and prosperity in this coming year.

Yours most sincerely,

Roy Yum