

Concerns re Guru

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A

July 18, 2008

Dear Marc,

I was pleased, on our recent visits, to note the progress made on various fronts at Guru. Our appreciation and gratitude must be conveyed to all those responsible at that end.

There were various matters and areas that give cause for anxiety and concern for us Old Boys. I believe it is prudent that I place some of these before you. You will appreciate it is best to discuss them and endeavour to understand the strategies that are perhaps being adopted towards development.

I was initially very cautious in even voicing my concerns. However having carefully read through the address made by Dr. R.L. Hayman as Headmaster at the Inaugural Meeting of the O.B.A.; the Rules adopted at the very inception of the OBA; and the Current Rules which were adopted at the AGM in February, 2003, as regards the Objects of the Association, I feel

confident that it would not be out of place to voice these concerns. I am fortified in my view when I peruse the Saint Thomas College Board of Governors Ordinance No: 07 of 1930 read with the Rules framed thereunder by the S. Thomas' College Board of Governors, wherein the OBA had been recognised and accorded a place of importance, perhaps its due place, in the Structure, Administration and Management of the College and its Branches.

Having said that, I would like to briefly place before you the following matters for your consideration and discussion with those of us who may be interested in the future of the College.

1. Do the horses now forming part of the Riding Club and Farm belong to the College? Have they been gifted or has College to pay for it someday? What is the cost? Is there any clear understanding or arrangement about this matter? We understand that the 04 Horses have cost almost Rs.1,000,000/- and that it is hoped to by a nother 02.
2. What is the cost of maintaining the horses? i.e. animal feed, wages for support staff, veterinary charges etc. etc. We are informed that around 45 students had joined the Riding Club when it was set up; Students were charged Rs.600/- per mensem; the number of Students have now dropped to 25. As Horse Shoes and other paraphernalia required by the Club are not available a complete List was handed over on request to an Old Boy who recently visited College.
3. Was Jacques serious when he said he was finalising arrangements with the priest of a Buddhist Temple to purchase an Elephant? He mentioned it was to take the place of the old worn out Hand Tractor which inter alia ferries food from the Main Kitchen to Keble.
4. What is the cost of acquiring the Elephant? Will College bear this expense? What is the projected cost of securing the feed and meeting the wages of the support staff and maintenance of the animal? Would it be safe to have this animal on the campus? Where is it proposed to house the animal? Has College obtained the sanction of any Govenmental Authority, if need be.
5. The provision of Security for the College was previously outsourced. As the Security Charges were considered high the arrangement was done away with. It was felt that some of the existing support staff could be mobilised for this task. It was soon found that their Wages, Allowances and Overtime exceeded the previously paid Security Charges. What is the position now, cost wise. Is the security staff doing the job expected of them? Is it intended to revert to the former practice of outsourcing this service.
6. Has an adequate study been conducted with regard to recommencement of Advanced Level classes? The experiment was twice tried and twice aborted. The competence of the existing academic staff to handle studies at that level may be inadequate. This will necessitate the recruitment of perhaps four Additional Members to the Academic Staff. These recruits would normally have to be paid a higher remuneration. Has the cost factor been considered and evaluated against the fees to be recovered.

7. What provision is being made to accommodate the additional number of students on the Roll by having Advanced Level classes - class rooms, dormitories, dining hall, prep and allied facilities etc. etc?

8. Why was the Winchester Dorm which was totally refurbished and repaired only in 2003 abandoned? New beds and lockers were also provided for that Dorm. The closure within three to four years is not a good sign, and sends out the wrong signals.

9. A decision was taken to recruit Males to the Academic Staff in preference to Females for very good reasons, i.e. they were better suited to be Dorm Masters, Games Masters and to have staff resident on the campus of a Boarding School for Boys. However, it appears that more and more ladies are being recruited. Is it because College cannot afford to pay the salaries demanded by the Males or because the facilities available i.e. staff quarters, food, recreation etc.etc. are not up to standard.

10. In recruitment are the contracts now entered into for short term and not permanent as previously? So that if found unsuitable the persons contract need not be extended after the short term.

11. Have sufficient and competent Dorm Masters been recruited? Who are the present Dorm Masters? Are they resident and provided quarters adjacent to the dorms? Are they satisfactory?. When the Senior Vice President of the OBA found a Senior Dorm very untidy, the Beds and Lockers in disarray he inquired from the Dorm Master who happened to be close by why he does not pull up the Boys, the reply he received was that it was not his business. Apparently this Dorm Master still holds that Post.

12. Is there any control over the presence of the Dorm Masters on the Campus? Can they leave the Campus any time? Don't they have to get permission from the Headmaster? Are they paid an additional allowance for acting as Dorm Masters. If so, how much? What duties have been assigned to the Dorm Masters. Have they been briefed about their code of conduct and attire? A case is reported of a Dorm Master improperly shod who attempted to find fault with a Boarder for being in slippers.

13. It has been observed that members of the staff sitting at the staff table in the Dining Room consume food using their fingers. Yet boarders are required to bring forks and spoons from their homes for use in the dining hall. This difference raises obvious questions. The necessary example is not being set.

14. In order to improve the quality of English Boarders are required to converse only in English during room time in the Dorms; failure to do so attracting punishment. Can all the Dorm Masters and House Masters converse in English and do they address the Boarders in English during room time?

15. Is it not possible to require all Boarders and Day Scholars who stay over after classes to participate in sports activities to be attired in House/ College Jerseys and a uniform track bottom or shorts so that there is some uniformity and one can identify a student as against a member of the Support Staff or a labourer on the campus engaged in doing some repair or maintenance work outsourced to a contractor.

16. There are several items of furniture i.e. beds, lockers, class room tables, benches and chairs which need repair and attention lying in several places all over the campus. Cannot these be collected and brought to the carpentry/ maintenance workshop, taken stock of and repaired or cannibalised? The temptation and tendency to pilfer these items out of the campus is greater when left unattended. Further more exposure to the elements will only deteriorate their condition and eventually they will be fit for use only as fire wood.
17. Has the practice of requiring new boarders to bring mattresses, clothes cupboards, almyrahs and clothes racks been done away with. It is necessary to have uniformity in the dormitories. Is the College now providing the bunk beds and the mattresses with the side locker. Are coverlets or bed spreads manufactured according to College colours or house colours provided by the school and debited to the Boarders Account?
18. What of the clothes cupboards, almyrahs, clothes racks brought in by students who have since left College. Cannot they be auctioned and the purchasers required to remove these eye sores? Some income will be generated. More space will be found in the dorms to accommodate additional bunk beds and lockers. And thereby more Boarders can be accommodated in the Dorms.
19. Firewood has been found stacked in front of the Co-op Stores for several years, perhaps, for the use of the bakery. This is an eyesore. Cannot this be moved behind the bakery area?
20. Fire wood is also found stacked on the road from near the Squash Court to the Headmasters bungalow, perhaps for use in the main kitchen. Cannot this be moved out of sight.
21. Although the Co-op Store gives the appearance of being over stocked we have found it closed for business on every occasion we have visited College. Perhaps the person in charge is a member of the academic staff. Cannot the Co-op Stores be run differently?
22. We found the Canteen adjoining the Co-op Stores not to have any consumables in the nature of pastries, short eats, tea, coffee, soft drinks etc. etc, and very poorly stocked. Are there any proposals to re-organise these 02 institutions.
23. We understand that the Nursery is to be closed down at the end of the currant Academic Year. What is intended to be done with that building? Will this deminish the number seeking entry at Year 01 level.
24. A list of all buildings and quarters, which are not being used for any purpose whatsoever should be prepared and referred to when the need arises. The list of such buildings must always be available with the Headmaster so that when any new activity is envisaged accommodation is found without undue delay or difficulty.
25. A list of all buildings which are uninhabitable and abandoned as unfit for human occupation/habitation must be prepared. Competent people should be consulted and if advised that the premises are beyond repair they should be brought down and enable

new buildings to come up in due course. The existence of such carcasses is not advisable and sends the wrong signals.

26. How many students is it proposed to be had on the Roll? The first Headmaster thought 315 would be ideal for the School, at a time when the fees of Boarders were Rs.110/- Rs.125/- per mensum. Several Old Boys as Chief Guests at Prize Givings voiced their concern when numbers were increased. Another Headmaster went up to 1200. According to recent thinking having regard to the current quantum of fees charged i.e. Rs. 7000/= it is considered that the number on the Roll should be around 600. Numbers had fallen to around 240 when the decision to close the school was taken in December, 2006. Having done away with Admission Fees and keeping the doors open for 365 days of the year for admission to any class from Year 1 to O/L class, the number on the Roll has now been stagnant at about 512 for some months. On raising the question we were informed that numbers could be increased to 2000 or even 2500. Was this a serious assessment? What really is in the mind of the Management? Can the weight of a larger Roll be borne by the Current Infrastructure.

27. Non payment and delay in settling fees had been a huge problem. The arrears were progressively reduced within manageable limits. The current arrears are said to be approximately Rs. 6 million. We understand that around Rs.6 Mn was given to Guru from the last Fair and Carnival at Mt.Lavinia. Apparently no clear accounts are available of the manner in which this money was utilised. All that is said is that it was swallowed up by clearing the Bank Overdraft Facility, and also that it was utilised for day to day expenses. This explanation does not seem satisfactory. What steps are proposed to be taken to resolve this matter? Is there any link between the removal of Admission Fees and having a free and open admission policy of all comers and the lethargy and failure of Parents to pay fees? Has that Policy failed.

28. Has serious consideration been given from all relevant angles to the offer to parents who are in arrears of fees that they could perform the work of labourers in the vegetable plots? Have the authorities considered the psychological angle from the students point of view? We were informed that even as at present such parents are available working in the College Vegetable Plots.

29. The roof of the Lab was reported in 2003 to have caved in at certain points and best repaired. This must be examined and attended to.

30. We were taken on a conducted tour particularly of the new toilets for the use of the male and female students built in the junior block of class rooms . It was found that some of those Toilets had not been washed for the day although it happened to be a school day. Those donors funding these improvements will not be pleased at the manner in which these facilities are being utilised, and maintained. This neglect once again gives the wrong signals. We were made to understand that Labour was a serious problem and having on board a recalcitrant and lethargic support staff was creating many problems.

31. When we visited College for the last Prize Giving very Senior Old Boys found Volley ball being played in the Squash Court. The students were cautioned about the damage that could be caused by their conduct. After all, those were the Senior Old Boys who whilst engaged in the Social Service League during the games period were responsible for the

construction of the Squash Court. It was also an Old Boy who in 2003 repaired and refurbished this Squash Court. The response of the students was that the Master in charge had approved of same. This same pattern could be observed in students playing Cricket in the Basket Ball and Badminton Courts. And also Badminton in the Quadrangle of the Junior Dorms.

32. It has been reported that the number of students in the Tamil medium of instruction has progressively reduced to such an extent that sometimes a master is retained for the sake of two or three students. We were informed some time ago that students of different grades were amalgamated to have a Joint Class to get over this problem. These steps adopted do not seem to be satisfactory and must be reviewed carefully.

33. It was observed that the floor and sides of the pool require to be applied with a new coat of paint after it is scrubbed and cleaned. This will improve the appearance of the pool. It is also reported that the floor may be requiring some repairs. The non-availability of sufficient water in the event the pool is emptied for repairs may be causing a problem. Is there any way to get over this problem?

34. In assigning duties to Support Staff care must be taken as far as possible to assign the appropriate person. Over the years we have drawn the attention of the authorities to this problem. Previous instances of bad allocation to the Lab, Library, Swimming Pool, Farm, Co-op Stores, Canteen, etc. etc. have been pointed out by us. It would be to the benefit of all concerned if care is taken in this matter. Recently too in a matter requiring some mechanical knowledge / experience a raw hand was directed to effect specialised repairs to the Engine in the pool purification plant. The Old Boy who paid atleast 04 visits from Colombo to Gurutalawa to attend to repairs to the Engine was quite concerned and perturbed about this matter. This could have caused serious damage to the machinery.

35. Has the Pool Attendant been instructed to follow Snr. V.P. Mahen's directions regarding the addition of Alum to the water etc and is he in fact doing so.

36. Is there a Compulsory Swimming period. Traditionally all Guru Thomians could swim. Is it not possible to fit this in to the School Time Table.

37. Is the proper attire worn by students for Swimming. We have seen shorts of all sizes and hues being worn in the recent past.

38. Raw timber has been used to effect repairs to the Davidson Dorm. Previously in the laying of pipes to bring in water from the Tube Well at Keble to the tanks above the Main Entrance, pipes with wrong specifications had been utilised. Across the campus instances are many where competent professional advice had not been sought and obtained in various maintenance and repair work. This will only cause more wear and tare, early and frequent break downs, additional cost, and eventually a burden on finance.

39. Are games compulsory and are the Dorms locked during Games period. Is a Roster drawn up and Masters allocated for each area of sports or games activity.

40. Can we be given a list of Masters and Teachers who are resident on the campus with details of those living with their spouses and children; the subjects on the Time Table

allocated to them; the number of periods taken for a week; any extra curricular activities supervised by them and what allowances are paid for same.

41. Can we be given a list of Masters and teachers resident outside the campus with similar details as above.

42. I am aware that strict instructions have been given to Members of the Staff not to cane , assault or in any way cause bodily harm or hurt to Students, in keeping with the current statutory requirements re-Child Abuse and Human Rights etc, etc. In November last year I saw a circular handed over to them in this regard, immediately after a incident had been brought to the Headmasters notice. Yet a few days ago a parent complained to many Old Boys in Colombo that a particular Master had bashed the student's head against the wall for a trivial matter. The Student happened to be a girl. Previously too assaults had taken place with wire and other implements and the same Master was the Offender. If allowed to prevail incidents such as this can cause the Administration severe embarrassment and will entail punitive action by the various Authorities put in place by the State to prevent such incidents. In the recent past some students had to be hospitalised and outdoor medical treatment afforded at the Boralanda Hospital. Parents had been summoned by the student on the phone, and in several instances they had threatened not only to go to the Police but also to represent matters to the Child Protection Authority and Human Rights Agencies. Apparently some Masters have been warned more than on one occasion. What action will be taken to eliminate this menace that will bring disgrace to ther School.

43. Has preventive action been taken to stop any student from going out of the campus during school hours and the Boarders at all times.

44. The Hayman Museum needs regular maintenance. Has this area been allocated to any responsible person who can appreciate the value of the articles placed within. We observed that it had not been swept or cleaned and dusted for quite some time. Also some of the articles needed urgent care and cover. It will not look proper when Old Boys who visit the school from distant parts of the world see it in that state. It will not reflect on the high esteem and love Old Boys have for these 02 Founding Fathers. Also to the Old Boys who laboured many hours in putting it together it will be a cause for concern and sadness.

45. I handed over to you at an Ex- Co Meeting, 21 photographs which were given to me by Sisira Nanayakkara a Pioneer Old Boy. The photos were those relating to the last visit of Mrs. Hayman which Mr Colin Ratnayaka the Headmaster at that time had in his collection, and sent through Sisira to be placed in the Museum. I hope they have now been taken in to the Inventory and forms part of the Museum.

46. Have all students on the Roll now been housed in Dorms according to their Houses. The level of house competitions must be raised and encouraged. It would be good to re introduce the House Jerseys to be worn during games period.

47. It was observed that the big drain which runs down across the Campus had not been cleaned for some time. All those who go across the main bridge on the Road and more particularly the small bridge near the Old Lab can observe this.

48. A major drawback seems to be that there is no proper supervision of the support staff. The guy who has been made Supervisor of the support staff was one who was promoted from the ranks and so he is naturally unable to discipline his Comrades.

49. On our last visit we were taken to be shown the new Toilets done not only at Keble but also in the Old Block of Classrooms for Staff, and in the Junior Block below the road for Boys and Girls. We found that although it was a school day the Toilets had not been cleaned or washed and the man in charge was subsequently admonished.

50. On a previous visit in May we observed the state of the open pond in the front compound at Keble. This was not only a health hazard because of breeding mosquitoes, the kids of tender years could fall in to the pond and hurt themselves. On our last visit we found it in a worse state with even dead birds etc floating around. You personally gave immediate instructions to have it cleaned. Does not the Works Supervisor have duties at Keble.

51. On the last visit we found that there were hordes of stray dogs around the campus, mainly in the kitchen and dining hall areas. This menace poses a serious health hazard. We were made to understand that these stray dogs were afflicted by some skin disease and were infact dying. Cannot the Public Health Authorities be informed in writing and necessary action taken.

52. Not so long ago mothers who had visited their sons of tender years or had brought their sons to be left in the boarding were documented being permitted to sleep with their young sons in Keble Dormitories. Has this practice been stopped.

53. Also the practice of parents being permitted to stay on in the Isolation Ward to give moral support to their sons who were sitting for public exams. Also parents who are unable to find buses to get back to their homes far away. This practice eventually led to parents who were not married to each other i.e of different students, sharing common accommodation provided by the College in the Isolation Ward. Has this practice been abandoned.

54. Are Parents permitted to enter Dormitories for whatever reason/ purpose.

55. Has the problem with regard to Laundry been solved and are the Soiled Clothes and Linen of the Boarders removed atleast weekly for Washing and Ironing. If this problem is no longer in existence, then Boarders, especially New Entrants can be provided with a List of Clothes, Linen etc which they are advised to bring with them in a suitcase/ trunk which can be placed under the Bed in order to eliminate huge Almyrahs, and Cupboards as well as Clothes Racks.

56. Senior Old Boys who belong to the Pioneer group and immediately thereafter have stressed the importance and validity of putting in place a Committee of Management to look into all activities of College. This need not be an Official Committee recognised by the Board as that may require approvals and attendant red tape. It need not have Powers and Clout. All that is necessary is a set of Old Boys who are competent and Professional in their approach, in a purely Advisory Roll to assist the Headmaster in the Administration at Gurutalawa. This group should consist of persons having sufficient experience in Engineering, Architecture, Education, Farming, Agriculture, IT, Sports & Extra Curricular Activities, Accounts & Finance, Administration, Marketting, Counselling, Discipline etc etc. You can handpick the members and chair this body. The setting up of this body need not

be construed as an interference in the administration because it plays only an advisory role and you are free to take their advise or leave it. Although even now that is what you say you do, a body set up will have some sense of collective responsibility to the larger body of Old Boys. The body does not need to meet together at Guru or in Colombo. In this age it is possible to communicate with each other by using other means.

57. The History of Guru has been written up to 1992. You would be the ideal Historian to write up the History of Guru of the last 16 years. All the necessary material is readily available. Why don't you try to take this matter in hand. Unlike the previous endeavour hardly any outside assistance may be required. Even if it is required it is readily available now, and all will give you the necessary support.

58. Old Boys particularly from foreign countries have regularly inquired as to what assistance they could give College. A list of Urgent Requirements and a Newsletter or Updated News from College prepared by the Headmaster which could be mailed to Old Boys will be helpful. I have stressed the importance of keeping Old Boys and Well Wishers apprised of College News as well as a list of urgent needs at College. This may help Old Boys to identify those urgent requirements and perhaps remit funds collected from that end towards development work.

I have tried to make this short but it is not easy. We could meet and discuss these matters and invite all concerned Old Boys who have the interests of the present day Guru Thomians at heart to contribute their views. I do not think this exercise can be considered counter productive.

Warm regards,

Lakshman Jayatilaka

Residence : No. 23, First Lane, Kirillapone, Colombo - 05, Sri Lanka.

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: 2818989 (Chambers)

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E - Mail : decentee@stmail.lk / ashanjay@sti.lk

: decentee@slt.net.lk/ashannjay@slt.net.lk

B

From: [Headmaster S. Thomas' College at Gurutalawa](#)

To: [D.N.Thurairajah & Co](#)

Sent: Friday, July 18, 2008 4:43 PM

Subject: Re: Re STC Gurutalwa - Concerns of Old Boys

Dear Lakshman,

As always you have been very thorough. As I am now extremely tied up in preparing for exams please give me a little time to respond to each of your querries at the same time.

Needless to say I appreciate the spirit in which these have been made and certainly value your advice and guidance.

I shall be in touch.

Warm regards,

Marc

C

From: [D.N.Thurairajah & Co](#)
To: [Billimoria Rev. Marc](#)
Sent: Friday, July 18, 2008 10:12 PM
Subject: STCG 62 Group Web Site

Dear Marc,
Thanks very much for your prompt acknowledgement of today. I know you will respond at your earliest. I have kept, some of the Old Boys who I know share these concerns, informed.

In the meantime below is a mail I sent some of our friends. There is more ground to be covered.

I hope Mr. Kaviharan can proceed with the College Web Site smoothly with your guidance.

Warm regards,

Lakshman

D

From: [D.N.Thurairajah & Co](#)
To: [Gonawela Christo](#)
Sent: Friday, July 18, 2008 6:24 PM
Subject: Fw: Re STC Gurutalwa - Concerns of Old Boys

Dear Christo,
I refer to the matters raised by me at the last Ex-Co Meeting. Set out below is a copy of my letter to the HM as requested by you. He has been good enough to send me a prompt acknowledgement. As he is busy right now with the Term Tests he will take some time to respond. Let us wait. We will take these matters up in due course. Thank you very much for your interest and co-operation.

With warm regards,

Lucky Jayatilaka.

E

July 21, 2008

My dear Lakshman.

This my third attempt to get this across to you. Many thanks for your mail on guru which is most comprehensive and undoubtedly would have taken up much time and effort. I will do my utmost to follow this up when the board next meets on 21st August and come back to you. Maybe we should visit guru together some time.

With best regards Merrill

F

July 21, 2008

Dear Mr. Jayatilaka,

Received the email and thanks. I didnt want to read the two attachments at work but it was interesting and I stopped all the work this morning (monday). Specially the one named Dear Marc.doc.

I had hoped that things at guru have improved a lot with the new HM, development work, events (big match) etc etc. But now it is clear that the problems are still there under the carpet. During my time at guru there was 1 student at guru whos father worked as the college driver (short period). And the quality of the students were not great and not everyone was from a rich background. About 90% of them were borders and I know that whatever their background is all of them were well spent by their parents. Everyone had sportswear, everyone spent a lot of money on the canteen, and only 2-3 students were asked to return home for non-payment of fees but returned back soon. Me being a day boy could not compete with the borders from the sportswear, shoes etc etc which are available in welimada area. And my opinion is that the current arrears of fees is due to mis-management. I know things are hard in Sri Lanka with prices going up etc etc. But every single parent spent a lot of money on their children for extra classes, school fees, school van etc etc. May be it is common knowlege among parents that you can get away by not paying the due fees. As I heard that in some cases parents were offered to pay a % of what they owed to the college.

I'm not sure why the college needs an elephant. May be someone would like to have an elephant as a pet. My uncle used to be a Basnayake Nilame and had to look after an elephant untill it died and I have worked with him during perahera times so I know a lot of things about the maintainance and I know that you cant legaly buy an Elephant in Sri Lanka. (Well... its Srilanka so anything could happen). Unless you do make the transaction look like a gift.

We are so lucky to have you and a few others having a close eye on guru. Do you have a facebook account. I was searching for gurutalawa and a picture of you came up saying it matched your school to gurutalawa. And there are a few groups already on facebook for STC gurutalawa created by 3 different old boys. These are not monitored and is it not possible to monitor these groups so it is not the place to discuss these issues. But it is a great tool to find and communicate with all the generations of old boys.

It is time I do some work before I loose my job. Thanks for resending me the email.

Muditha

On Mon, Jul 21, 2008 at 6:42 AM, D.N.Thurairajah & Co <decentee@stmail.lk> wrote:

Dear Muditha,

I am resending these attachments as the previous mails returned.

Warm regards,

Lakshman Jayatilaka

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G

From: [Christo Gonawela](mailto:Christo.Gonawela)

To: D.N.Thurairajah & Co

Sent: Monday, July 21, 2008 10:08 AM

Subject: RE: Re STC Gurutalwa - Concerns of Old Boys

Dear Lucky,

Thanks for your continued interest in college. I have also taken up some matters with the current manager Lincoln. I am sure Rev Mark will take up matters mentioned in your letter in a constructive spirit. I myself will follow up on the various issues.

Rgds;Christo

H

July 22, 2008

Dear Lakshman,

I just read your comprehensive report on Guru.

In fact I visited Guru last Monday with Brigadier Mune. and also did a small report and sent to H.M. for the comments

Some of the issues brought up in your report is also appearing in my small report.

Can I meet up with O.B.A. Guru members and discuss some of the important issues. please give me a date.

Thanks

with regards

Lincoln,

I

From: [D.N.Thurairajah & Co](#)

To: [Raj Mohan](#) ; [Wanigasekera Bandula](#) ; [Wanniarachchi Nihal](#) ; [Gonawela Christo](#) ; [Duleep Kumar P S](#) ; [Algama Anilal](#) ; [Fernando Hermon](#) ; [Jallil Rizvi](#) ; [Jayasundera Prabath](#) ; [Jayatilaka Sanath](#) ; [Kuru Utumpala N D U](#) ; [Kurukularatne Buddhika](#) ; [Mahipala B A](#) ; [Munasinghe Brig. Bandula](#) ; [sumegsume@yahoo.com](#) ; [Ranasinghe Mahen](#) ; [Ranasinghe Mahinda](#)

Sent: Wednesday, July 23, 2008 5:10 PM

Dear Raj,

I am resending some of the very recent mails.

I am copying this to Christo and Mahen (and some Old Boys too.)

If you think it appropriate, perhaps between both of you, it may be possible to speak to Lincoln and proceed to have a discussion.

I am ready to participate in same if it is constructive, and for the benefit of the school.

I need not stress that we must see what the Headmaster has to say and give him all the support, all the way.

Warm regards,

Lakshman Jayatilaka

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J

From: [Christo Gonawela](#)

To: [D.N.Thurairajah & Co](#) ; [Raj Mohan](#) ; [Wanigasekera Bandula](#) ; [Wanniarachchi Nihal](#) ; [Duleep Kumar P S](#) ; [Algama Anilal](#) ; [Fernando Hermon](#) ; [Jallil Rizvi](#) ; [Jayasundera Prabath](#) ; [Jayatilaka Sanath](#) ; [Kuru Utumpala N D U](#) ; [Kurukularatne Buddhika](#) ; [Mahipala B A](#) ; [Munasinghe Brig. Bandula](#) ; sumegsume@yahoo.com ; [Ranasinghe Mahen](#) ; [Ranasinghe Mahinda](#)

Sent: Thursday, July 24, 2008 4:26 PM

Subject: RE:

Dear Lakshman,

I suggest we convene a special meeting of the OBA and invite the Manager and the current OBA rep to the Board and have a detailed discussion based on the matters raised in your communication at an early date .If you are agreeable we could proceed accordingly.

Rgds;Christo Gonawela

K

From: [D.N.Thurairajah & Co](#)

To: [Christo Gonawela](#)

Cc: [D.N.Thurairajah & Co](#) ; [Raj Mohan](#) ; [Wanigasekera Bandula](#) ; [Wanniarachchi Nihal](#) ; [Duleep Kumar P S](#) ; [Algama Anilal](#) ; [Fernando Hermon](#) ; [Jallil Rizvi](#) ; [Jayasundera Prabath](#) ; [Jayatilaka Sanath](#) ; [Kuru Utumpala N D U](#) ; [Kurukularatne Buddhika](#) ; [Mahipala B A](#) ; [Munasinghe Brig. Bandula](#) ; sumegsume@yahoo.com ; [Ranasinghe Mahen](#) ; [Ranasinghe Mahinda](#)

Sent: Thursday, July 24, 2008 6:16 PM

Subject: Re: Discussion re Guru

Dear Christo,

I am in agreement with your suggestion. I understand the HM is ill. We could meet him after our discussions. It is essential to maintain cordial relationship with the Authorities. At the same time we must not sweep the dirt under the carpet. It must be frank & open ,welcoming all shades of opinion and constructive criticism. We must not shut out advise or suggestions of all who have the interests of the school and the students uppermost in their minds. Adequate Notice must be given to as wide a circle of Old Boys as possible . Perhaps other Old

Boys may have valuable contributions to make. We should entertain them and not limit the discussions to matters I have referred to.

Warm regards,
Lakshman Jayatilaka

L

Dear Lucky,
Please find my comments adjoining your queries, typed in bold italics and Blue.
You are free to pass it on to any one you wish, within the Guru OBA., and you may even tell Jacques about my comments re the Elephant.

Warm regards

Peter.

-----Original Message-----

From: [D.N.Thurairajah & Co](#)

Date: 19/07/2008 2:18:14 AM

To: aravinda_gk@hotmail.com; kelaart@alphalink.com.au; kaviharans@yahoo.com; [Weerakoon Peter E.](#); [Gunasena M D Ananda](#); [Wanigasekera Bandula](#); sumegsume@yahoo.com; [Perera Sumeda](#)

Subject: Fw: Re STC Gurutalawa - Concerns of Old Boys

Dear Marc,

I was pleased, on our recent visits, to note the progress made on various fronts at Guru. Our appreciation and gratitude must be conveyed to all those responsible at that end.

There were various matters and areas that give cause for anxiety and concern for us Old Boys. I believe it is prudent that I place some of these before you. You will appreciate it is best to discuss them and endeavour to understand the strategies that are perhaps being adopted towards development. ***It is pleasing to note that certiam aspects have improved.***

I was initially very cautious in even voicing my concerns. However having carefully read through the address made by Dr. R.L. Hayman as Headmaster at the Inaugural Meeting of the O.B.A.; the Rules adopted at the very inception of the OBA; and the Current Rules which were adopted at the AGM in February, 2003, as regards the Objects of the Association, I feel confident that it would not be out of place to voice these concerns. I am fortified in my view when I peruse the Saint Thomas College Board of Governors Ordinance No: 07 of 1930 read with the Rules framed thereunder by the S. Thomas' College Board of Governors, wherein

the OBA had been recognised and accorded a place of importance, perhaps its due place, in the Structure, Administration and Management of the College and its Branches. *The old boys associations in most schools have a right to voice their opinions. I wonder why the Bishop thought otherwise. He must have had a card up his sleeve, but not an Ace.*

Having said that, I would like to briefly place before you the following matters for your consideration and discussion with those of us who may be interested in the future of the College.

1. Do the horses now forming part of the Riding Club and Farm belong to the College? Have they been gifted or has College to pay for it someday? What is the cost? Is there any clear understanding or arrangement about this matter? We understand that the 04 Horses have cost almost Rs.1,000,000/- and that it is hoped to by a nother 02. *Very good question, and if there were costs invovled in buying who paid for them and from what money, when the college was broke. It does seem that some ones fancy has been pampared for here. Thinking should always be in the long term, and not for ones glory or satsfaction, or just whims and fancies. We are interested in long term plans and results. if it is unprofitable this should stop. The horses sold and the money used for betterment of the campus in general. If this is done this money could be well used for either improving the campus or maintaining the present facilities. It would have been better to purchase four COWS, and supply milk to the boarding and even to the Milk Board, and some boys could have even taken to dairy farming, as some of us did.*

2. What is the cost of maintaining the horses? i.e. animal feed, wages for support staff, veterinary charges etc. etc. We are informed that around 45 students had joined the Riding Club when it was set up; Students were charged Rs.600/- per mensem; the number of Students have now dropped to 25. As Horse Shoes and other paraphernalia required by the Club are not available a complete List was handed over on request to an Old Boy who recently visited College. *Confirm what I said about closing up the Horse Riding. Where and when is Sri lanka going to have Horse Shows and Horse Jumping events? If College money was used for this then the person responsible for this madness should pay for the loss, FAITH, HOPE AND CHARITY does not seem to be helping except to take in more money and this is not helping the education, more could be spent on Sports and payment to Staff. Wonder what the other names of the horse are , JOKE, JESTER, and JOKER I presume.*

3. Was Jacques serious when he said he was finalising arrangements with the priest of a Buddhist Temple to purchase an Elphant? He mentioned it was to take the place of the old worn out Hand Tractor which inter alia ferries food from the Main Kitchen to Keble. *I fear the man has gone Bonkers!!!! Either find the money for a Tractor or Buy two Bulls who can draw the Trailer and then use them for Stud purposes as a side line. Use the manure plus the weed and grass cuttings for making Compost which could be recycled back to the Vegetable plot or sold for compost.. I think the man needs a rest from his labours, and should be FIRED !!!!! He is loosing his Marbles!!! or has his position gone to his head. I hate to think what would happen when the food is been transported , and the Elephant suddenly decides he has to make a call of nature. What would happen if the elephant goes into "Must" or runs rampage through the hallowed precincts of our Alma mater, Does Jacques guarantee an Insurance cover to cover the cost of the damage, or do*

the Old Boys have to raise money to cover the damage. In short its B S. sorry I should have said E.S. I am aware that St Francis of Assisi loved and cared for animals, but to try to convert the Hallowed precincts into a Zoo is beyond man's imagination, and this should be Condemned in the strongest possible terms. DOES JACQUES HAVE NOTHING BETTER TO DO THAN COME UP WITH SILLY IDEAS. surely he can put his expertise to better use, and help out with the proper administration of the OFFICE and help the Head master with his Office work, or does he have no grey matter. This is what happens when people are allowed to rule the roost without proper Regulations and Duties placed upon them. And this should be done with a correct letter of appointment, and not on his Lordships verbal instructions. Ask Jacques if he has a letter of appointment, and I am sure he will not be able to produce same or if he does it will not have his duties stated therein.

4. What is the cost of acquiring the Elephant? Will College bear this expense? What is the projected cost of securing the feed and meeting the wages of the support staff and maintenance of the animal? Would it be safe to have this animal on the campus? Where is it proposed to house the animal? Has College obtained the sanction of any Governmental Authority, if need be. *What has the Head Master to say to this idea, and why do we as a Fee levying Private School have to be the laughing stock of the whole island. It will be interesting to investigate if there are other underlying reasons for this absurd idea.*

5. The provision of Security for the College was previously outsourced. As the Security Charges were considered high the arrangement was done away with. It was felt that some of the existing support staff could be mobilised for this task. It was soon found that their Wages, Allowances and Overtime exceeded the previously paid Security Charges. What is the position now, cost wise. Is the security staff doing the job expected of them? Is it intended to revert to the former practice of outsourcing this service. *The Security Section should be separate from the College Staff, and should be outsourced, to prevent theft, fraud, and insecurity to members of the staff, as action against a support staff member will be negated if the same support staff are in charge of security, and will cause desention amongst each other. Add more problems on the shoulders of the HM.*

6. Has an adequate study been conducted with regard to recommencement of Advanced Level classes? The experiment was twice tried and twice aborted. The competence of the existing academic staff to handle studies at that level may be inadequate. This will necessitate the recruitment of perhaps four Additional Members to the Academic Staff. These recruits would normally have to be paid a higher remuneration. Has the cost factor been considered and evaluated against the fees to be recovered. *Without the right Teaching Staff this should not be even considered. There still many teething problem which should be overcome first, before trying to get further into the mire.*

7. What provision is being made to accommodate the additional number of students on the Roll by having Advanced Level classes - class rooms, dormitories, dining hall, prep and allied facilities etc. etc? *It is possible that Jacques has an idea of adding another Bunk on top of the existing ones and then having the boys sit one on top of one another for toilets use. Why this sudden rush to increase the numbers when we have still not completed the improvements to the facilities, and cannot maintain the completed ones..*

8. Why was the Winchester Dorm which was totally refurbished and repaired only in 2003 abandoned? New beds and lockers were also provided for that Dorm. The closure within three to four years is not a good sign, and sends out the wrong signals. ***This is shocking. I thought ED Rowland donated some bunk beds for this dorm. if this is what is going to happen to donations and appeal money, then the old boys will not be very happy to contribute for the betterment of the school they cherish and love.***

9. A decision was taken to recruit Males to the Academic Staff in preference to Females for very good reasons, i.e. they were better suited to be Dorm Masters, Games Masters and to have staff resident on the campus of a Boarding School for Boys. However, it appears that more and more ladies are being recruited. Is it because College cannot afford to pay the salaries demanded by the Males or because the facilities available i.e. staff quarters, food, recreation etc.etc. are not up to standard. ***Its a Boy school first and foremost, and Master have to be found, even retired ones. Here the Gurutalawa Support Fund could come into play, to get a Staff member (male) to be Master in Charge of Games and be paid an allowance. Should be done by First term 2009.***

10. In recruitment are the contracts now entered into for short term and not permanent as previously? So that if found unsuitable the persons contract need not be extended after the short term. ***Actual letters need to be checked.***

11. Have sufficient and competent Dorm Masters been recruited? Who are the present Dorm Masters? Are they resident and provided quarters adjacent to the dorms? Are they satisfactory?. When the Senior Vice President of the OBA found a Senior Dorm very untidy, the Beds and Lockers in disarray he inquired from the Dorm Master who happened to be close by why he does not pull up the Boys, the reply he received was that it was not his business. Apparently this Dorm Master still holds that Post. ***Gone are the days, when Master ruled the Dorms. This is bad mangement at its very Best. What about a Prize for the Best kept Senior, Junior and Sub Junior Dorms.. Are there House Prefects. in cubicles appointed to each dorm?***

12. Is there any control over the presence of the Dorm Masters on the Campus? Can they leave the Campus any time? Don't they have to get permission from the Headmaster? Are they paid an additional allowance for acting as Dorm Masters. If so, how much? What duties have been assigned to the Dorm Masters. Have they been briefed about their code of conduct and attire? A case is reported of a Dorm Master improperly shod who attempted to find fault with a Boarder for being in slippers. . ***The HM needs to take control.***

13. It has been observed that members of the staff sitting at the staff table in the Dining Room consume food using their fingers. Yet boarders are required to bring forks and spoons from their homes for use in the dining hall. This difference raises obvious questions. The necessary example is not being set. ***If the staff cannot set an example, they should be asked to eat in the kitchen, or have their meals in their quarters. We can await HMs reply.***

14. In order to improve the quality of English Boarders are required to converse only in English during room time in the Dorms; failure to do so attracting punishment. Can all the Dorm Masters and House Masters converse in English and do they address the Boarders in English during room time? ***We will await the HM's reply.***

15. Is it not possible to require all Boarders and Day Scholars who stay over after classes to participate in sports activities to be attired in House/ College Jerseys and a uniform track bottom or shorts so that there is some uniformity and one can identify a student as against a member of the Support Staff or a labourer on the campus engaged in doing some repair or maintenance work outsourced to a contractor. ***Here again its the management 's fault. Surely these things need not have to be suggested.***

16. There are several items of furniture i.e. beds, lockers, class room tables, benches and chairs which need repair and attention lying in several places all over the campus. Cannot these be collected and brought to the carpentry/ maintenance workshop, taken stock of and repaired or cannibalised? The temptation and tendency to pilfer these items out of the campus is greater when left unattended. Further more exposure to the elements will only deteriorate their condition and eventually they will be fit for use only as fire wood. ***Agree that a Stock Book be maintained and repairs carried out. I thought Jacques was in charge of all this, but apparently he seems to be just hanging around and E.....Sh.....ing!!***

17. Has the practice of requiring new boarders to bring mattresses, clothes cupboards, almyrahs and clothes racks been done away with. It is necessary to have uniformity in the dormitories. Is the College now providing the bunk beds and the mattresses with the side locker. Are coverlets or bed spreads manufactured according to College colours or house colours provided by the school and debited to the Boarders Account? ***I think the college should supply the Bed, matterresss and the Coverlet, and the boarder bring their own bedsheets, pillows and pillow case plus their normal school uniforms, and casual clothes which should be specified. The cost of the boarding fees should cover all the things supplied by the school. We lived out of trunks and had a side cupboard for the books. Or even a long wall cupboard with locks on them for each student to use, by Bed numbers.***

18. What of the clothes cupboards, almyrahs, clothes racks brought in by students who have since left College. Cannot they be auctioned and the purchasers required to remove these eye sores? Some income will be generated. More space will be found in the dorms to accommodate additional bunk beds and lockers. And thereby more Boarders can be accommodated in the Dorms. ***Good Question/ Suggestion.***

19. Firewood has been found stacked in front of the Co-op Stores for several years, perhaps, for the use of the bakery. This is an eyesore. Cannot this be moved behind the bakery area? . ***This is lethary to the extreme, and bad management by the Manager not the HM. Also a Fire haszard.***

20. Fire wood is also found stacked on the road from near the Squash Court to the Headmasters bungalow, perhaps for use in the main kitchen. Cannot this be moved out of sight. ***Convenience versus Cleanliness and safety. Possible Fire Haszard. Bad Management again.***

21. Although the Co-op Store gives the appearance of being over stocked we have found it closed for business on every occasion we have visited College. Perhaps the person in charge is a member of the academic staff. Cannot the Co-op Stores be run differently? ***Mahen's master plan was sent out of the window by His Lorship. Should be Outsourced under legal agreement, Staff and Old Boys to to purchase shares. No College money to be used.***

22. We found the Canteen adjoining the Co-op Stores not to have any consumables in the nature of pastries, short eats, tea, coffee, soft drinks etc. etc, and very poorly stocked. Are there any proposals to re-organise these 02 institutions. *Refer above comment.*
23. We understand that the Nursery is to be closed down at the end of the currant Academic Year. What is intended to be done with that building? Will this deminish the number seeking entry at Year 01 level. *I will await the HM's reply.*
24. A list of all buildings and quarters, which are not being used for any purpose whatsoever should be prepared and referred to when the need arises. The list of such buildings must always be available with the Headmaster so that when any new activity is envisaged accommodation is found without undue delay or difficulty. *This is an excellent idea and should include any moveable items therein. Should be locked and keys kept in the Office Safe and the inventory checked at least every two months.*
25. A list of all buildings which are uninhabitable and abandoned as unfit for human occupation/habitation must be prepared. Competent people should be consulted and if advised that the premises are beyond repair they should be brought down and enable new buildings to come up in due course. The existance of such carcasses is not advisable and sends the wrong signals. *Another excellent suggestion, discussion should be held with the HM and the OBA and Board of Govenors if necessary and carried out within a space of three months to tidy up the place, and stop either unlawful occupation or misuse of property taking place.*
26. How many students is it proposed to be had on the Roll? The fist Headmaster thought 315 would be ideal for the School, at a time when the fees of Boarders were Rs.110/- Rs.125/- per mensum. Several Old Boys as Chief Guests at Prize Givings voiced their concern when numbers were increased. Another Headmaster went up to 1200. According to recent thinking having regard to the current quantum of fees charged i.e. Rs. 7000/= it is considered that the number on the Roll should be around 600. Numbers had fallen to around 240 when the decision to close the school was taken in December, 2006. Having done away with Admission Fees and keeping the doors open for 365 days of the year for admission to any class from Year 1 to O/L class, the number on the Roll has now been stagnant at about 512 for some months. On raising the question we were informed that numbers could be increased to 2000 or even 2500. Was this a serious assessment? What really is in the mind of the Management? Can the weight of a larger Roll be borne by the Current Infrastructure. *Personnaly I think 600.is the limit with the facilities presently available this is for the Boarders. Add another 600. day boys. I think this would ease the problem of cash flow, and reduce the unnecessary and excess staff.*
27. Non payment and delay in settling fees had been a huge problem. The arrears were progressively reduced within manageable limits. The current arrears are said to be approximately Rs. 6 million. We understand that around Rs.6 Mn was given to Guru from the last Fair and Carnival at Mt.Lavinia. Apparently no clear accounts are available of the manner in which this money was utilised. All that is said is that it was swallowed up by clearing the Bank Overdraft Facility, and also that it was utilised for day to day expenses. This explanation does not seem satisfactory. What steps are proposed to be taken to resolve

this matter? Is there any link between the removal of Admission Fees and having a free and open admission policy of all comers and the lethargy and failure of Parents to pay fees? Has that Policy failed. *This has been an on going problem at Guru from Patrick Goonewardens time. and I concur with your position that the explanation is unsatisfactory*

28. Has serious consideration been given from all relevant angles to the offer to parents who are in arrears of fees that they could perform the work of labourers in the vegetable plots? Have the authorities considered the psychological angle from the students point of view? We were informed that even as at present such parents are available working in the College Vegetable Plots. *I was under the impression that the system of "Rajakariya" was abolished with the de throning of Sri Wickrema Rajasinghe, and the Kandyan Kingdom. . Since it seem to be hapening in modern day Sri Lanka, is there a Supervisor to see that the daily task are complete, and that the "Hard Labour " been done is equivalent to the amount of Arrears due. . I trust this is not another ' scatter brain' idea of the Manager, which will in time cause some dissent among the parents and cause a bigger problem for the HM. As an ater thought. I was under the impresion that there was aDr R.L.Haymen Fund to cover the non payment of fees and then put it back when the fees were paid. I gave Rs 65, 000.00 to The HM for the start of this fund, at College level,as he suggested so. There is I understand another one with the OBA, and he is under instruction to transfer the money I gave him to the OBA Fund at the end of the Fixed depoist period. Worth mentioning and looking into. WHERE DO THE PARENTS RESIDE WHILE DOING 'RAJAKARIYA" Hope not in the Dorms with the children, and where to the have their food not from the Kitchen, Pantry I hope.*

29. The roof of the Lab was reported in 2003 to have caved in at certain points and best repaired. This must be examined and attended to. *Should be taken in hand at once with out Elephants in Mind.*

30. We were taken on a conducted tour particularly of the new toilets for the use of the male and female students built in the junior block of class rooms . It was found that some of those Toilets had not been washed for the day although it happened to be a school day. Those donors funding these improvements will not be pleased at the manner in which these facilities are being utilised,and maintained. This neglect once again gives the wrong signals. We were made to understand that Labour was a serious problem and having on board a recalcitrant and lethargic support staff was creating many problems. *The Donors will most certianly not be pleased, if one was to return to have a closer look. This is not a HM problem although he is in charge.Has the Labourer been placed under a supervisor who should be a Member of the Staff., and does he have a Roster. Who checks his work and who is responsible.are the questions one has to ask and as promoter of a Donor OBA Australia for Night Toilets I will have to answer the questions and we will not get any more help, if this is what is happening. . The Guru OBA Did the Junior Night Toilets, The Senior Night Toilets have been sponsored by OBA Austalia, Ladies College did the Keble Dorm Toilets. Come On HM, and Jacques, show some consideration for the genorosity. and no excuses please. I think there was one US President who had behind his desk this plaque. "THE BUCK STOPS HERE" so let it be with Marc and Jacques.*

31. When we visited College for the last Prize Giving very Senior Old Boys found Volley ball being played in the Squash Court. The students were cautioned about the damage that

could be caused by their conduct. After all, those were the Senior Old Boys who whilst engaged in the Social Service League during the games period were responsible for the construction of the Squash Court. It was also an Old Boy who in 2003 repaired and refurbished this Squash Court. The response of the students was that the Master in charge had approved of same. This same pattern could be observed in students playing Cricket in the Basket Ball and Badminton Courts. And also Badminton in the Quadrangle of the Junior Dorms. ***This is an HM problem. Looks to me like total indiscipline by staff, school boys and labourers.. If the Manager is thinking on Elephantine methods, the joke must be on him by the rest, so that is where the indiscipline comes in, sometimes a wise man can be a knave and a knave a wise man.!!***

32. It has been reported that the number of students in the Tamil medium of instruction has progressively reduced to such an extent that sometimes a master is retained for the sake of two or three students. We were informed some time ago that students of different grades were amalgamated to have a Joint Class to get over this problem. These steps adopted do not seem to be satisfactory and must be reviewed carefully. ***This may be due to racial and political problems. Needs carefully watching.***

33. It was observed that the floor and sides of the pool require to be applied with a new coat of paint after it is scrubbed and cleaned. This will improve the appearance of the pool. It is also reported that the floor may be requiring some repairs. The non- availability of sufficient water in the event the pool is emptied for repairs may be causing a problem. Is there any way to get over this problem? ***This should be handled by an expert. I do not think Marc or Jacques are capable of handling this matter. One of the Old Boys or Bandu or Mahen who have Engineering expertise should be consulted, otherwise Jacques might have another Elephantine idea.!!!***

34. In assigning duties to Support Staff care must be taken as far as possible to assign the appropriate person. Over the years we have drawn the attention of the authorities to this problem. Previous instances of bad allocation to the Lab, Library, Swimming Pool, Farm, Co-op Stores, Canteen, etc. etc. have been pointed out by us. It would be to the benefit of all concerned if care is taken in this matter. Recently too in a matter requiring some mechanical knowledge / experience a raw hand was directed to effect specialised repairs to the Engine in the pool purification plant. The Old Boy who paid atleast 04 visits from Colombo to Gurutalawa to attend to repairs to the Engine was quite concerned and perturbed about this matter. This could have caused serious damage to the machinery. ***Refer above. Same Comment .***

35. Has the Pool Attendant been instructed to follow Snr. V.P. Mahen's directions regarding the addition of Alum to the water etc and is he in fact doing so. ***Same as above. Plus lack of Mangerial supervision.***

36. Is there a Compulsory Swimming period. Traditionally all Guru Thomians could swim. Is it not possible to fit this in to the School Time Table. ***This will be bright idea, but it would need to have One and Only One Swimming Instructor, for obvious reasons.***

37. Is the proper attire worn by students for Swimming. We have seen shorts of all sizes and hues being worn in the recent past. ***This a job for the HM and the Instructor, There must be Hard and fast rules laid down.. Otherwise each one tends to do what he feels is***

correct. Cannot a Dress code be sent out with the Term reports to parents, Eg; House Colours for Swimming Trunks or Shorts.

38. Raw timber has been used to effect repairs to the Davidson Dorm. Previously in the laying of pipes to bring in water from the Tube Well at Keble to the tanks above the Main Entrance, pipes with wrong specifications had been utilised. Across the campus instances are many where competent professional advice had not been sought and obtained in various maintenance and repair work. This will only cause more wear and tare, early and frequent break downs, additional cost, and eventually a burden on finance. *They dont seemed to have learnt from PAST EXPERINCE. I thought Jacques was a Master Supervisor, and had his fingers in every conceivable Pie. I presume his brain is now Elephantine.! Actually when I visited Guru in January this year. Marc showed me the damage to the roof and said that Raw timber had been used on the roof, hence the sagging. Is this the same roof or was it repaired after my visit. If its after. then no ones sem to know what is happening.*

39. Are games compulsory and are the Dorms locked during Games period. Is a Roster drawn up and Masters allocated for each area of sports or games activity. *This is a matter for the staff to suggest, I presume their back grounds dont tally with ours and the HM is also taking things easy. In our day games were compulsory and we had to have " Sick note "from the matron (Mrs Haymen) to be off games, and Prefects on duty had to be shown this note, plus the Master in Charge of the particular Sport or activity.*

40. Can we be given a list of Masters and Teachers who are resident on the campus with details of those living with their spouses and children; the subjects on the Time Table allocated to them; the number of periods taken for a week; any extra curricular activities supervised by them and what allowances are paid for same. *Good One.Especially with the Guru Support Fund for Games coming into force soon.*

41. Can we be given a list of Masters and teachers resident outside the campus with similar details as above.*Good One. I think we need the address's too, and mobile numbers .*

42. I am aware that strict instructions have been given to Members of the Staff not to cane , assault or in any way cause bodily harm or hurt to Students, in keeping with the current statutory requirements re-Child Abuse and Human Rights etc, etc. In November last year I saw a circular handed over to them in this regard, immediately after a incident had been brought to the Headmasters notice. Yet a few days ago a parent complained to many Old Boys in Colombo that a particular Master had bashed the student's head against the wall for a trivial matter. The Student happened to be a girl. Previously too assaults had taken place with wire and other implements and the same Master was the Offender. If allowed to prevail incidents such as this can cause the Administration severe embarrassment and will entail punitive action by the various Authorities put in place by the State to prevent such incidents. In the recent past some students had to be hospitalised and outdoor medical treatment afforded at the Boralanda Hospital. Parents had been summoned by the student on the phone, and in several instances they had threatened not only to go to the Police but also to represent matters to the Child Protection Authority and Human Rights Agencies. Apparently some Masters have been warned more than on one occasion.What action will be taken to eliminate this menace that will bring disgrace to the School. *This is worrying, and should be nipped in the bud.*

43. Has preventive action been taken to stop any student from going out of the campus during school hours and the Boarders at all times. *This is a matter for the HM, but it also concerns us, as it is matter of school. discipline and*

bad name for the school.

44. The Hayman Museum needs regular maintenance. Has this area been allocated to any responsible person who can appreciate the value of the articles placed within. We observed that it had not been swept or cleaned and dusted for quite some time. Also some of the articles needed urgent care and cover. It will not look proper when Old Boys who visit the school from distant parts of the world see it in that state. It will not reflect on the high esteem and love Old Boys have for these 02 Founding Fathers. Also to the Old Boys who laboured many hours in putting it together it will be a cause for concern and sadness. *This is a poor state of affairs. Cannot we find a retired old Thomian to reside there and keep the traditions a live. They may be some living somewhere , who may can help. What a pity that I am in Australia, after having bought a property at Mirahawatte with intentions to retire there. 1989, made that dream impossible.*

45. I handed over to you at an Ex- Co Meeting, 21 photographs which were given to me by Sisira Nanayakkara a Pioneer Old Boy. The photos were those relating to the last visit of Mrs. Hayman which Mr Colin Ratnayaka the Headmaster at that time had in his collection, and sent through Sisira to be placed in the Museum. I hope they have now been taken in to the Inventory and forms part of the Museum.. *I think the HM has too much on his hands, to handle all this, and should delegate and supervise. It took him over two months and four reminders to acknowledge a cheque sent to him by me for the Haymen Trust he was hoping to start, and he said that it was due to having to do all the work himself.*

46. Have all students on the Roll now been housed in Dorms according to their Houses. The level of house competitions must be raised and encouraged. It would be good to re introduce the House Jerseys to be worn during games period. *Excellent, This will encourage sportmanship and friendly rivalry. Another item to be put on the Dress code.*

47. It was observed that the big drain which runs down across the Campus had not been cleaned for some time. All those who go across the main bridge on the Road and more particularly the small bridge near the Old Lab can observe this. *Surely!, old boys dont have to tell them the finer points of HEALTH AND SANITATION. Jacques should know better!!! Utterly surprised and disappointed.*

48. A major drawback seems to be that there is no proper supervision of the support staff. The guy who has been made Supervisor of the support staff was one who was promoted from the ranks and so he is naturally unable to discipline his Comrades. *Favoritism or incomprtence. This must the general sneak. or number on sucker of the Manager!!!*

49. On our last visit we were taken to be shown the new Toilets done not only at Keble but also in the Old Block of Classrooms for Staff, and in the Junior Block below the road for Boys and Girls. We found that although it was a school day the Toilets had not been cleaned or washed and the man in charge was subsequently admonished. *Lack of total supervision by the Manager, who ever that is.*

50. On a previous visit in May we observed the state of the open pond in the front compound at Keble. This was not only a health hazard because of breeding mosquitoes, the kids of tender years could fall in to the pond and hurt themselves. On our last visit we found it in a worse state with even dead birds etc floating around. You personally gave immediate instructions to have it cleaned. Does not the Works Supervisor have duties at Keble. *If there is a Works Supervisor what is happening to the Work under his charge, and has he been given a list of duties he has to over look and also is he a 'Hands On' person.*

51. On the last visit we found that there were hordes of stray dogs around the campus, mainly in the kitchen and dining hall areas. This menace poses a serious health hazard. We were made to understand that these stray dogs were afflicted by some skin disease and were infact dying. Cannot the Public Health Authorities be informed in writing and necessary action taken. *A simple solution. A little bit of Arsenic on a slice of old bread, will fix it. We did this on Estates, but the Arsenic should be kept under lock and key and given out by the HM, na dhe should stand by or get a member of the Staff to supervise it. Religion unfortunately cannot come into this aspect, as the area is prone to Rabies in the Dry Period.. Or in the alternative try the Public Health Authorities for help.*

52. Not so long ago mothers who had visited their sons of tender years or had brought their sons to be left in the boarding were documented being permitted to sleep with their young sons in Keble Dormitories. Has this practice been stopped. *What about FOOD for these mothers, must have eaten the College food. What a shambles.*

53. Also the practice of parents being permitted to stay on in the Isolation Ward to give moral support to their sons who were sitting for public exams. Also parents who are unable to find buses to get back to their homes far away. This practice eventually led to parents who were not married to each other i.e of different students, sharing common accommodation provided by the College in the Isolation Ward. Has this practice been abandoned. *What a state of affairs, and who gave the permission. An enquiry should be held, and punishment meted out to the culprits. Terrible mess.*

54. Are Parents permitted to enter Dormitories for whatever reason/ purpose. *This should never be allowed, under any circumstances. I recall Marc asking two parents to leave the dorm when I was visiting in Jan uary.*

55. Has the problem with regard to Laundry been solved and are the Soiled Clothes and Linen of the Boarders removed atleast weekly for Washing and Ironing. If this problem is no longer in existence, then Boarders, especially New Entrants can be provided with a List of Clothes, Linen etc which they are advised to bring with them in a suitcase/ trunk which can be placed under the Bed in order to eliminate huge Almyrahs, and Cupboards as well as Clothes Racks.

Yes this is a very bright idea. Like the old days.

56. Senior Old Boys who belong to the Pioneer group and immediately thereafter have stressed the importance and validity of putting in place a Committee of Management to look into all activities of College. This need not be an Official Committee recognised by the Board as that may require approvals and attendant red tape. It need not have Powers and Clout. All that is necessary is a set of Old Boys who are competent and Professional in their approach, in a purely Advisory Roll to assist the Headmaster in the Administration at Gurutalawa. This

group should consist of persons having sufficient experience in Engineering, Architecture, Education, Farming, Agriculture, IT, Sports & Extra Curricular Activities, Accounts & Finance, Administration, Marketing, Counselling, Discipline etc etc. You can handpick the members and chair this body. The setting up of this body need not be construed as an interference in the administration because it plays only an advisory role and you are free to take their advise or leave it. Although even now that is what you say you do, a body set up will have some sense of collective responsibility to the larger body of Old Boys. The body does not need to meet together at Guru or in Colombo. In this age it is possible to communicate with each other by using other means. *I concur in full and would be available for comment if necessary and to serve the need to save my Alma Mater that I loved so dearly.*

57. The History of Guru has been written up to 1992. You would be the ideal Historian to write up the History of Guru of the last 16 years. All the necessary material is readily available. Why don't you try to take this matter in hand. Unlike the previous endeavour hardly any outside assistance may be required. Even if it is required it is readily available now, and all will give you the necessary support. *With the present problems HM has it may not be the best bet, cannot some old boy help out. In this modern world and communication been no problem, I am sure hHM can get a lot of help, if he wants to carry it out.*

58. Old Boys particularly from foreign countries have regularly inquired as to what assistance they could give College. A list of Urgent Requirements and a Newsletter or Updated News from College prepared by the Headmaster which could be mailed to Old Boys will be helpful. I have stressed the importance of keeping Old Boys and Well Wishers apprised of College News as well as a list of urgent needs at College. This may help Old Boys to identify those urgent requirements and perhaps remit funds collected from that end towards development work.. *This is an excellent idea and I will give you all the support for its on transmission in Australia.*

I have tried to make this short but it is not easy. We could meet and discuss these matters and invite all concerned Old Boys who have the interests of the present day Guru Thomians at heart to contribute their views. I do not think this exercise can be considered counter productive. *Lucky you have done a wonderful job, and sometimes to be constructive it is necessary to be lengthy, as many subjects have to be covered.* THANKS FOR ALL YOU ARE *DOING FOR GURU. Warm Regards, Peter.*

Warm regards,

Lakshman Jayatilaka

Residence : No. 23, First Lane, Kirillapone, Colombo - 05, Sri Lanka.

Telephone : 2828272 (Residence)

: 2818989 (Chambers)

: 0773137727 / 0773960823 (Celluar)

E - Mail : deentee@stmail.lk / ashanjay@sti.lk

: deentee@sltnet.lk / ashannjay@sltnet.lk

M

From: [Mahen Ranasinghe](#)
To: [D.N.Thurairajah & Co](#)
Cc: [Marc Billimoria](#)
Sent: Friday, July 25, 2008 10:37 PM
Subject: RE: Re STC Gurutalawa - Concerns of Old Boys

Dear Lucky,

Great work. I wish to comment on all the items, but for the moment I will comment on items 1,2 & 3.

When Jacques bought the first 2 horses I was happy, as I had always talked about getting at least one horse as part of our old glory. Jacques expected to cover the cost of maintenance from the membership of the Club. You will remember that he mentioned about it at the AGM of 2007 and at one of the Ex Co Meetings that year, that he had some arrangements with outsiders, for riding lessons, to raise a good income.

Now it looks like that the College is burned with them, with fewer members and it is going to be a horse farm, rather than a self financing extra curricular activity. It is important that we find out the details, before providing any funds for other infrastructure development.

Regarding the elephant it is the dumbest thing I have heard in the recent past. These days elephant owners cannot maintain the elephants as an elephant needs at least a coconut or a palmyrah tree per day. Now the owners don't feed them well and the elephants are suffering without food. Until the late eighties elephants had work like old rubber tree felling, to balance the cost of their maintenance. Three years ago I was offered 2 elephants free of charge, by a friend, as he couldn't afford to feed them. I managed to get one given to Gangarama Temple.

The cost of maintaining the tractor would be much less than the elephant, with the cost of a mahout adding to it. There is a period the elephant cannot be used, when in heat. There is the danger to the students and the possibility of annoying the elephant by any naughty student also exists, with bad repercussions. It is better to have a bullock cart and a bull and the bull can be part of the farm.

Regards,
Mahen

N

From: [D.N.Thurairajah & Co](#)
To: [Aluwihare Meryl](#) ; [Amarasinghe Karunaratne](#) ; [Bandusena K](#) ; [Caffoor Navaz](#) ; [Dharmadasa W A Sisira](#) ; [Dissanayake Muditha](#) ; [Fernando Shervon](#) ; [Gazarra Don](#) ; [Gunasena M D Ananda](#) ; [Kodituwakku Bandu](#) ; [Kodituwakku Kamal](#) ; [Lowe Ranjith](#) ; [Marikar Jurair](#) ; [Medonza Ananda](#) ; [vinomax@hotmail.com](#) ; [Rajapakse Palitha](#) ; [Senanayake Anura](#) ; [Waidyaratne Mahen](#) ; [Watawala Sunil](#) ; [crirat@yahoo.it](#)
Cc: [ashanjay@sti.lk](#)
Sent: Thursday, July 24, 2008 7:16 PM

Subject: Discussion Re- Guru

Dear All,

Forwarded herewith for your information are 2 mails re- a proposed discussion. The previous correspondence is also attached. In case you have already received any of these documents, please disregard same.

Your participation by sending in your comments, observations, ideas and thoughts would be greatly appreciated and valued. They will be placed before the assembly at any discussion.

Warm regards,

Lakshman Jayatilaka (Lucky)

Residence : No. 23, First Lane, Kirillapone, Colombo - 05, Sri Lanka.
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 : 2818989 (Chambers)
 : 0773137727 / 0773960823 (Celluar)
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O

From: [Headmaster S. Thomas' College at Gurutalawa](#)

To: [D.N.Thurairajah & Co](#)

Sent: Saturday, July 26, 2008 4:44 PM

Subject: Re: STCG 62 Group Web Site

Dear Lakshman,

I have just recovered from an attack of flu that kept me in bed for almost a week. I was out of office for the whole of the week. I have been writing my responses to your concerns and will send them on once I have completed them.

I know that a number of concerned old boys have still not begun to forget the past where Guru is concerned. I do not blame them. I have no illusions about the fact that not everyone will be happy with the way I am doing things. I cannot help that. I can only do my best under God for the children placed in my charge and for the school entrusted to me. I hope that when you read my responses many of your fears will be laid to rest and that you will continue to give me the support and encouragement that you have been doing over the past year.

Warm regards,

Marc

P

Dear Marc,

Thanks very much for your mail.

I heard that you were ill and informed others who were trying to arrange a discussion. I did not expect you to respond in any way just yet. I heard you were so ill you were not even answering the phone. I **hope you are better now**. The first thing is you must be fit enough to attend to your daily routine work. **Responding to our concerns should obviously be thereafter**. In fact I did inform Lincoln and Christo we must give you time to respond, and discussions could take place thereafter, if there was such a need depending on your responses. However if Old Boys wished to have some discussions beforehand, I was willing to participate, provided it was to assist you and was constructive and all shades of opinion were welcome and no attempt was made to sweep the dirt under the carpet. **So you can take your time and respond when you are perfectly fit**. No body, I am quite sure will want to rush you.

Let me be quite honest with you. Personally I have no doubt that you are the best thing that happened to Guru, perhaps after our Old Headmaster Dr. Hayman left and Fr Foster passed away in harness at Guru. THAT is saying a lot. I left College in 1962. Dr Hayman left in 1963. Fr Foster died in 1964. Though you may be soft at times due to your vocation as a Priest, again that perhaps is necessary at Guru at this point of time when the boat is being steadied after sailing through rough seas for almost a decade and we came near to closing down. Perhaps your arrival at Guru should have been about 08 years ago. Then your Honesty and Sincerity of purpose would have made a big difference. When you did arrive things had got pretty much out of hand. Nobody can expect you to stem the rot or find instant solutions for all the ills at Guru in so short a time. **Also personally I am not aware of old Boys who may be displeased with your Management or Administration in that sense**. All of us do know that you are definitely doing your best. **Although we do not talk of these things with you, the personal sacrifices you have made for the sake of the upliftment of the school are known to many. We cannot and should not forget that. We do appreciate that.**

Most of the matters I have referred to are ones that can be resolved without much difficulty, other than those which have been handed down. There are others which perhaps can be resolved with some joint participation in the decision making process with no compulsion to accept the viewpoint of the Old Boys, but only that they be heard and their views be considered.

Having said all that, **I must mention perhaps the most important and Fundamental need at Guru**. That is there must be One Head of Administration and Management. What ever Jacques contribution may have been and is to the school and support for you, there must be a clear Division of Powers and Duties. Unquestionably, you must remain the Head of the Institution not only in name but in Spirit and in Practice and Factually at Ground Level. I am aware this matter has caused concern to not only Old Boys who were very much involved with various aspects of College life but also Staff and Parents. This problem surfaced in a different way in 2003 and when a Professional Management and Financial Consultancy Firm was engaged by us to do a special study, in their Report, they were constrained to point out this particular short coming and recommended the putting up on the Staff Notice Board outside the Headmasters Office an Organisation Chart/ Line of Command.

I quite appreciate the embarrassing situation you are in, to even mention this. I feel the Old boys will take this up and send it upstairs if need be, for serious consideration. You will I am sure recall Mahen adverting to this subject on your immediate assumption of duties at Guru. This awkward situation has persisted. I do not blame you for not eliminating same. **When God in His wisdom sends an Angel after all who are we mortals to question, except to look askance.**

As regards my continued support and encouragement, please rest assured that you have my fullest support and co-operation which has stood undiminished right through your term of office. As I said before quite candidly my regret, as I heard it voiced by many an Old Boy who answered my call and came to the rescue of our Alma Mater way back in 2001/2002 is the wish that you had been at the Helm at Guru during that year or so. Unfortunately our voices were not heard and though Millions were collected and an enormous Support

Brigade and Think Tank were created all went waste. Pioneer old boys who had distanced themselves from College and the OBA were drawn back because they saw my sincerity of purpose never asked any old boy for financial support or contributions for College. Yet the Avalanche was unbelievable. Old boys from UK, USA, Australia dropped in at my house or sent money direct to me for College was able to gather most of the Head Prefects of different eras. Dozens of well meaning Old boys drew back disillusioned thereafter. It is the Remnants of that Army that is still around ie Duleep, Bandu, Mahen, Sunil Watawala. You have only to glance your eyes through the Newsletters, Ex-Co Minutes, and Reports of that period to realise the enormous amount of work put in. In fact it was said that a future Ex-Co would find it difficult to match up to our record of work, both in the OBA as well as at College. Just to point out one item, one single old boy spent Millions and refurbished the entire Senior Dorms. He had not visited College after he had left in 1963 and came after almost 40 years only on my invitation to participate at the AGM in 2002 after the awareness campaign I launched. On closer examination you will see shades of The Scarlet Pimpernel in that Ghost Group I created back in 2001 that sent shivers down so many people. That was the time Marc, we missed you.

If I do seem a trifle quiet now it is mainly because of Family. Also we are right in the middle of relocating our office from Siripa Rd to Sulaiman Terrace. Today we despatched the Library. Tomorrow early morning it will be the hard furniture. Come Monday the Telephone System, and the PC'S and other equipment etc etc. But I did not want to say no to any discussion aimed at helping **You and Guru which in my view are synonymous.**

I hope Marc, having read what I have said above, you will, as I know you will, continue to do what is best, as you have been doing all this while, for the children, and the school that has been entrusted to you.

If I may digress, I have created a Guru Support Group Profile in < www.facebook.com > Its just a light one now. Perhaps later, who knows..... I keep loading Images of interest to old boys of different eras. Muditha Dissanayaka who set up the College Web Site has Posted an Item on the Profile which is an Article which had appeared in the UK Lanka Times. I do not know who the Author is. It is a Journalist.. It seems like Neville De Silva, Mervyn's brother.

As usual, with Warm Regards,

Lakshman.

P.S.

Am attaching:-

01-	LJ to Christo	-July 18th
02-	Christo to LJ	-July 21st
03-	Lincoln to LJ	-July 22nd
04	LJ to Raj	July 23rd
05-	Christo to LJ	July 24th
06-	LJ to Christo	July 24th

-- Original Message -----

From: [Headmaster S. Thomas' College at Gurutalawa](#)

To: [D.N.Thuraiajah & Co](#)

Sent: Saturday, July 26, 2008 4:44 PM

Subject: Re: STCG 62 Group Web Site

Dear Lakshman,

I have just recovered from an attack of flu that kept me in bed for almost a week. I was out of office for the whole of the week. I have been writing my responses to your concerns and will send them on once I have completed them.

I know that a number of concerned old boys have still not begun to forget the past where Guru is concerned. I do not blame them. I have no illusions about the fact that not everyone will be happy with the way I am doing things. I cannot help that. I can only do my best under God for the children placed in my charge and for the school entrusted to me. I hope that when you read my responses many of your fears will be laid to rest and that you will continue to give me the support and encouragement that you have been doing over the past year.

Warm regards,

Marc

On 18/07/2008, **D.N.Thurairajah & Co** <deeentee@stmail.lk> wrote:

Dear Marc,

Thanks very much for your prompt acknowledgement of today. I know you will respond at your earliest. I have kept, some of the Old Boys who I know share these concerns, informed.

In the meantime below is a mail I sent some of our friends. There is more ground to be covered.

I hope Mr. Kaviharan can proceed with the College Web Site smoothly with your guidance.

Warm regards,

Lakshman

Hello Everybody,

Once again a short message to let you know that our Web Site >stcg62group.org< has just been updated, with the latest news and images from Guru. Some of the latest items placed are:-

1. News of Old Boys (as at July 2008)
2. Members Directory – (as at July 09, 2008)
3. Old Images of Guru (latest image is of ERV, Jayantha Sellahewa and T.R. Bridge - Taken almost 50 years ago)
4. Updated e-mail addresses. (as at 09.07.08)
5. Images of the Royal Thomian Cricket Match in Canada – July 01, 2008.
6. Images - Malik Candappa – Immediate Past President of STC- OBA Canada visits Guru – July 2, 2008.
7. Present composition of the STC Board of Governors for the next 04 years (July 2008)
8. STCG Ex-Co minutes – May 27, 2008
9. Thomiana June, 2008.
10. Images- Blue Black Night- STC OBA Canada - Dinner Dance – May10, 2008.

11. Dr. Hayman's speech at Inauguration of OBA-1959
12. Images of Ex-Co Meeting at 80 Club- July 11,2008
13. See Gurutalawa/ Welimada Road on Wikimapia

You may be able to recognise the following in the Images taken almost half a century ago (while they were Students at Guru).

[D C Kannangara](#) (presently Don Gazara), [Upali Jayasinghe](#), [R Shagundaran](#), [Kishin Butani](#), [Anilal Algama](#), [F M Tan](#), [Jurair Marikkar](#), [Lakshman Jayatilaka](#), [Robert Dobbs](#), [A A De Silva](#) (presently Ananda Amaranath), [Anura Nilaweera](#), [Sarath Suraweera](#), [H D Wickramatilake](#), [Ranjith Butani](#), [Zubair Caffoor](#), [Ranjith Lowe](#), [Timothy Bridge](#), [I A Munasinghe](#), [Sunil Watawala](#), [R L Weerakoon](#), [T Sundaraj](#), [Tilak Nialaweera](#), [Mahen Ranasinghe](#), [Crysantha Ratwatte](#), [Mario Fernando](#), [Upali Jayawardena](#), [L U Jayawardena](#), [Harish Weerasekera](#), [M A Siriwardena](#), [Ravi Kotalawela](#), [Lal Yapa](#), [Harish Nilaweera](#), [Jabir Junaid](#), [U K D Jinapriya](#), [L N De S Jayasuriya](#), [O C R Jayasinghe](#), [Kamal Nilaweera](#), [Lakshman Amunugama](#), [A M Gunaratne](#), [Sarath Nanayakkara](#), [S Sivasinniahnathan](#) (presently Siva Selvaratnam), [N L Fernando](#), [S N Rodrigo](#), [A G Jayasinghe](#), [Ananda Medonza](#), [G Radhakrishnan](#), [U De S Jayasinghe](#), [Anil Ratwatte](#), [Mahen Divitotawela](#).

Recall the following who have moulded some of us whilst members of the Staff at Guru .
[Dr.R L Hayman](#), [Rev.A J Foster](#), [Mrs.Mary Hayman](#), [B J H Bahar](#), [A C M Laffir](#), [C Karunanayake](#), [Daya Jayasuriya](#), [J De S Jayasinghe](#) (Uncle J), [Selwyn Gunawardena](#), [C M Chinniah](#), [Oliver De Zoysa](#), [A K Chapman](#), [Benjamin Fernando](#), [L M Fernando](#) and [D U Samaranyake](#).

Not forgetting the following members of the Support Staff who were good friends to some of us.

[Bell Simon](#), [Van Simon](#), [Driver Piyasena](#), [Sick Room Hand Ariyadasa](#), [Pantry Hand Gunadasa](#) and [Ground Boy Karunadasa](#).

You may also be able to recognise Pioneer Old Boys [P S Duleepkumar](#), [L W A Fernando](#), [Sisira Nanayakkra](#), [Navaz Caffoor](#) and a host of others most of whom attended the Inaugural Re-Union Celebrations of the OBA at Guru in 1959.

You may be interested in reading the The Prize Giving Speeches of [Headmasters Dr.R L Hayman](#) "1954,1959 & 1962 (Last Speech); [Fr.Foster](#) 1963 (last Speech), [Frank Jayasinghe](#) 1967, [M L C Illangakoon](#) (1974) and [Patrick Gunawardena](#) (1983,1984 & 1985); Chief Guests [H A Hulugalle](#) (1954), [C J Oorloff](#) (1959), [Rt.Rev.Rollo Campbell](#) (1962), [Prof C C De Silva](#) (1963), [Canon R S De Saram](#) (1967), [Bradman Weerakoon](#) (1974 & 1983), [Ronnie De Mel](#) (1984), and [Gamini Dissanayake](#) (1985).

Read the speeches of Mr. Bradman Weerakoon at the STC- Mount Prize Giving of 2007; at the Unveiling of the Portrait of Dr. R L Haymen at the OTSC.

Read about the Official Opening of the Guru Swimming Pool in 1953; the Unveiling of the Portraits of Rev. Canon R S De Saram and Mr. C H Davidson by Prof. C C DeSilva ; the Visit of Dr. R L Haymen to Buckingham Palace for Investiture as a Member of the British Empire; the progress in the Buildings and Infrastructure of Guru from 1942 to date.

General Notices, Obituary Notices, and other useful information sent to us by the STC OBA Branches of Canada, UK, East Coast of USA, Australia as well as STC Bandarawela OBA continue to be placed on our site regularly.

Some of our friends who have not visited College since their departure in or around 1962 informed us that they are able to visit College from the comfort of their homes flung as far away as Ontario, New Jersey, Los Angeles, London, Scotland, Cambodia, Japan, Perth, Brisbane, Melbourne and Sydney. These long distance visits must surely bring back pleasant memories.

Owing to the information placed on our Site, others have been able to renew childhood friendships, even after almost five decades by communicating with each other through e-mail and snail-mail. Yet others have travelled cross continent and visited friends, from Brisbane to Perth; from Los Angeles to Sydney/ Melbourne and so on. They have commended us for making these possible.

If you are aware of the email addresses of any other Guru Old Boys who may be interested in our Web Site or receiving News of Guru please inform us of same so that we may add such persons to our Mailing List.

Please forward this mail to any of your friends who may be interested in Guru.

Please let us have News of Yourself, Your Current Contact Details, E-mail Address etc. etc. so that we may update our records and also keep others informed, through the Web Site.

Due to our persistent efforts in bringing College to your homes, Old Boys from Canada, USA, UK and Australia have individually, through their Old Thomians' Branches and otherwise remitted funds for development work at Guru.

Your Feedback, Observations and Comments are welcome.

It is hoped that the efforts of our Site will continue to assist the Revival Process at Guru.

Warm regards,

Lakshman Jayatilaka

Residence : No. 23, First Lane, Kirillapone, Colombo - 05, Sri Lanka.

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Rev. Marc Billimoria
Headmaster
S. Thomas' College at
Gurotalawa

(0094) 57 2280000 (Tel/Fax)
(0094) 773876060 (Hotline)
www.stcguru.com

Q

Dear Lakshman,

Thanks for your email. It is encouraging and I am grateful for the sentiments expressed. On the matter you raise as a fundamental issue may I assure you that there is but one head at Guru. Jacques continues to journey with us only in an advisory capacity and is at my request, handling the development of the Farm and infrastructure and reform of the accounting system. He never does anything without seeking my approval first. I certainly do not acquiesce with everything he suggests either. If that impression has been created by people it is a wrong one. Jacques will not be with us forever. He himself does not think it a good idea to remain as he does not want to be depended upon. A lot of people do not like his involvement because due to his involvement their avenues of profit have been closed and have dried up. They are perhaps the ones who are trying to discredit him and give false reports to old boys. I trust him and quite honestly had he not been around to help me I would not have been able to focus on other matters. He is a strong support to me and we are working well together. So please rest assured on that matter.

I have attached to this your queries with my responses. I trust that they answer the doubts you have. We can discuss them sometime. Unfortunately I have very little time to spend in Colombo and we may need to meet here.

Thanks again for your concern and support.

Warm regards,

Marc

Dear Marc,

I was pleased, on our recent visits, to note the progress made on various fronts at Guru. Our appreciation and gratitude must be conveyed to all those responsible at that end.

There were various matters and areas that give cause for anxiety and concern for us Old Boys. I believe it is prudent that I place some of these before you. You will appreciate it is best to discuss them and endeavour to understand the strategies that are perhaps being adopted towards development.

I was initially very cautious in even voicing my concerns. However having carefully read through the address made by Dr. R.L. Hayman as Headmaster at the Inaugural Meeting of the O.B.A.; the Rules adopted at the very inception of the OBA; and the Current Rules which were adopted at the AGM in February, 2003, as regards the Objects of the Association, I feel confident that it would not be out of place to voice these concerns. I am fortified in my view when I peruse the Saint Thomas College Board of Governors Ordinance No: 07 of 1930 read with the Rules framed thereunder by the S.

Thomas' College Board of Governors, wherein the OBA had been recognised and accorded a place of importance, perhaps its due place, in the Structure, Administration and Management of the College and its Branches.

Having said that, I would like to briefly place before you the following matters for your consideration and discussion with those of us who may be interested in the future of the College. **My responses to your points are given in a spirit of transparency and with a view to helping you to put aside the anxieties and concerns that you have about how the School is progressing. I know that you are one of those who has always acted in the best interests of the School. I trust that you and the other concerned old boys will be mindful of the fact that STCG will never again be what it was in the 1960s under the legendary figures who formed you all. We live in different times and have to face different challenges. The whole process of education too has changed and certainly my personal approach to situations will not be the same as my predecessors. As I have said so many times since I took over as HM I have a vision and mission and must be allowed to act as I see fit within the boundaries set for me by the Board of Governors and the Bishop.**

1. Do the horses now forming part of the Riding Club and Farm belong to the College? Have they been gifted or has College to pay for it someday? What is the cost? Is there any clear understanding or arrangement about this matter? We understand that the 04 Horses have cost almost Rs.1,000,000/- and that it is hoped to buy another 02. **As far as I am aware the four horses have been gifted to the School. It is not intended to buy two more – Faith & Hope are pregnant and will give birth later this year.**

2. What is the cost of maintaining the horses? i.e. animal feed, wages for support staff, veterinary charges etc. etc. We are informed that around 45 students had joined the Riding Club when it was set up; Students were charged Rs.600/- per mensem; the number of Students have now dropped to 25. As Horse Shoes and other paraphernalia required by the Club are not available a complete List was handed over on request to an Old Boy who recently visited College. **Will get back to you with exact figures re the covering of regular costs incurred. As far as I am aware there is no loss to the School where the horses are concerned. On the issue of less participation by students I agree that numbers have dropped but that is symptomatic of a wider issue that I am dealing with as they have done so from a number of other activities too.**

3. Was Jacques serious when he said he was finalising arrangements with the priest of a Buddhist Temple to purchase an Elephant? He mentioned it was to take the place of the old worn out Hand Tractor which inter alia ferries food from the Main Kitchen to Keble. **This was just an idea and we have not proceeded beyond that point. I myself have some health and safety concerns about this proposal and we will not proceed until the matter has been given adequate thought and I have looked into all the pros and cons fully. Don't worry about this. Ideas are good but practical realities must be taken seriously.**

4. What is the cost of acquiring the Elephant? Will College bear this expense? What is the projected cost of securing the feed and meeting the wages of the support staff and maintenance of the animal? Would it be safe to have this animal on the campus? Where is it proposed to house the animal? Has College obtained the sanction of any Governmental Authority, if need be. **Have responded adequately above I think.**

5. The provision of Security for the College was previously outsourced. As the Security Charges were considered high the arrangement was done away with. It was felt that some of the existing support staff could be mobilised for this task. It was soon found that their Wages, Allowances and Overtime exceeded the previously paid Security Charges. What is the position now, cost wise. Is the security staff doing the job expected of them? Is it intended to revert to the former practice of outsourcing this service. **The present system being more economical is actually not so. I am in the process of exploring options for 2009 as I am not at all satisfied with the present set up. We will**

manage till the end of the year but some alternative has to be considered. If you know of any reliable security firm please forward contact details. Ofcourse I do not want to create a Guantanamo Bay Camp here! This is a School and all I want is a group that will ensure regular patrols, man the gates and other security points adequately. I do not believe that we have anything to fear from the village so spending too much money on perimeter fencing etc may not be required at the moment when the money could well be put to better use. But a good and reliable security force is necessary.

6. Has an adequate study been conducted with regard to recommencement of Advanced Level classes? The experiment was twice tried and twice aborted. The competence of the existing academic staff to handle studies at that level may be inadequate. This will necessitate the recruitment of perhaps four Additional Members to the Academic Staff. These recruits would normally have to be paid a higher remuneration. Has the cost factor been considered and evaluated against the fees to be recovered. The matter has been studied and a comprehensive proposal made to the Board. The Bishop and Board have passed this to a Board sub committee chaired by Lincoln Fernando to study our proposal further. This Committee has since met at Mount Lavinia and will be presenting a Board Paper at the next Board meeting. As far as I am concerned there is no option if the future viability of the School is to be assured. Our numbers at primary are inadequate but if we have A/Ls parents are more likely to admit their children if they are assured of a complete cycle here. However, if we can give assurances, as we have been given by STCML and STCB that after O/Ls our boys (who qualify) will be absorbed there for A/Ls then we may not need A/Ls here. All options are being seriously studied and I assure you I am not going to rush into this without doing so. I am sure the sub committee will guide me on this.

7. What provision is being made to accommodate the additional number of students on the Roll by having Advanced Level classes - class rooms, dormitories, dining hall, prep and allied facilities etc. etc? Davidson dormitory will house up to 50 students under the supervision of a full time supervisor recruited for the purpose. It will be a state of the art dormitory. The classrooms in front will be used as well as the ones in the laboratory. Space is not a problem considering that we have had so many students in the past.

8. Why was the Winchester Dorm which was totally refurbished and repaired only in 2003 abandoned? New beds and lockers were also provided for that Dorm. The closure within three to four years is not a good sign, and sends out the wrong signals. I presume what you refer to as Winchester is the dorm adjoining the basket ball court. If so, then you have been misinformed as it is not abandoned, as Hayman Junior occupies it under a Dorm Master resident with his family in the quarters behind the Tuck Shop.

9. A decision was taken to recruit Males to the Academic Staff in preference to Females for very good reasons, i.e. they were better suited to be Dorm Masters, Games Masters and to have staff resident on the campus of a Boarding School for Boys. However, it appears that more and more ladies are being recruited. Is it because College cannot afford to pay the salaries demanded by the Males or because the facilities available i.e. staff quarters, food, recreation etc.etc. are not up to standard. Many decisions can be taken in theory, such as recruiting males. In practice it is not as easy as taking the decision! I too would love to see more males on the staff. The problem with recruiting males is not the salaries as we pay standard government approved salaries as do STCML and STCB. The problem is that those who apply are mostly female and even the males we recruit don't seem to want to stay in Gurutalawa for too long. Accommodation is also a problem which is why we are looking at renovating as many staff quarters as possible as and when funds are available. I share your concerns over the number of females recruited. I fully agree with the reasoning but I am helpless. I am sure you will agree that a female teacher is better than no teacher at all. In all fairness I must say that there are one or two female teachers who are able to control children better than some males although this is more the exception than the rule. On the whole my recruitment policy is to get as many young graduates in as this will undoubtedly raise the standards of teaching. Unfortunately, not all graduates even with a

good class have the training to be a good teacher. Trained Graduates are not so easy to recruit. My plan is to send graduate teachers for a Diploma in Education from time to time.

10. In recruitment are the contracts now entered into for short term and not permanent as previously? So that if found unsuitable the persons contract need not be extended after the short term. I start everyone on a fixed term contract of a year with six month's probation, at the end of which we can discontinue if unsatisfied by their performance, conduct etc. Once they are made permanent it is very difficult to get rid of them. This is why we are stuck with one or two among the senior staff until they reach 55 or until they make a total mess and need to be disciplined. We cannot keep a young teacher on contract for too long as they almost always seek registration for the purpose of pension. This is their right. However, the one year is crucial and I certainly will not keep a teacher beyond a year if I am not satisfied.

11. Have sufficient and competent Dorm Masters been recruited? Who are the present Dorm Masters? Are they resident and provided quarters adjacent to the dorms? Are they satisfactory?. When the Senior Vice President of the OBA found a Senior Dorm very untidy, the Beds and Lockers in disarray he inquired from the Dorm Master who happened to be close by why he does not pull up the Boys, the reply he received was that it was not his business. Apparently this Dorm Master still holds that Post. We cannot afford to recruit full time dorm masters. What we do is assign a resident master to look after a dorm as part of his 'rent' as it were for the room attached to the dorm. Such persons also serve as Duty Master for the seniors and juniors and they are under the guidance of the Senior Boarding House Master (Fr HCG) and the Prefect of Discipline. Thus again we have to work with those we have. It is not ideal but it is the only thing that can be done for the present. For my good fortune I have an excellent group of School Prefects who have made a great difference with dormitory discipline in particular and school discipline in general. My daily visits to the dorms (at different times, even late at night) and regular Dorm Master's meetings have also helped. In addition I have set up a Boarding Council that meets once a month as well as monthly senior Boarders Meeting chaired by the Head Prefect at which the Dorm Masters and I sit at the back to offer guidance if required. I am sure anyone who knew the college pre June 2007 will agree that dormitory discipline has been greatly improved. The dorm masters once told what to do have contributed to this and those who have found it hard to accept my systems have no choice now but to do so or lose their privileges such as free rooms, free food and their duty master's allowance. I also shuffle them around from time to time to keep them on their toes. They dont always like that – but too bad! I do not believe that anyone is indispensable.

12. Is there any control over the presence of the Dorm Masters on the Campus? Can they leave the Campus any time? Don't they have to get permission from the Headmaster? Are they paid an additional allowance for acting as Dorm Masters. If so, how much? What duties have been assigned to the Dorm Masters. Have they been briefed about their code of conduct and attire? A case is reported of a Dorm Master improperly shod who attempted to find fault with a Boarder for being in slippers. No staff member may leave the campus during school time without my approval and certainly dorm masters never do unless they have informed either Fr Goodchild or the POD or me. There is no allowance but there are perks – as mentioned above they get free meals, rent free accommodation and an allowance only if they function as a duty master. While the dorm masters have a code of conduct and are reminded regularly of what they should and should not do, I am always conscious that because we have to work with who we have there are certain things that we have to accept – the cultural background of the majority of our dorm masters is certainly not that of the masters of yesteryear. The only thing that I can do perhaps is to have regular training programmes to which I could invite some of you to instruct them in how they should perform their duties.

13. It has been observed that members of the staff sitting at the staff table in the Dining Room consume food using their fingers. Yet boarders are required to bring forks and spoons from their homes for use in the dining hall. This difference raises obvious questions. The necessary example is

not being set. The Boarders are now being trained in the use of cutlery at lunch for which it is mandatory to use spoon and fork. This is not a rule I am prepared to enforce on the staff – again my point is that there is a limit of what I can expect from people who come from a background where the use of cutlery may not be a norm.

14. In order to improve the quality of English Boarders are required to converse only in English during room time in the Dorms; failure to do so attracting punishment. Can all the Dorm Masters and House Masters converse in English and do they address the Boarders in English during room time? On the whole campus I think it is only a handful of teachers who address the boys in English outside the classroom and this would include me and Fr Goodchild. The reason is that they find it hard to converse in English themselves. The rule is in place but is not as effective as I would want it to be. It will be possible only if all our teachers and boarding staff were conversant in English – a culture that is going to take a long time to create. I am hoping that once the English volunteers start coming to us from next year this culture can slowly emerge here.

15. Is it not possible to require all Boarders and Day Scholars who stay over after classes to participate in sports activities to be attired in House/ College Jerseys and a uniform track bottom or shorts so that there is some uniformity and one can identify a student as against a member of the Support Staff or a labourer on the campus engaged in doing some repair or maintenance work outsourced to a contractor. Certainly. And I would love to see this happen. Let me look into the possibility for at least 2009.

16. There are several items of furniture i.e. beds, lockers, class room tables, benches and chairs which need repair and attention lying in several places all over the campus. Cannot these be collected and brought to the carpentry/ maintenance workshop, taken stock of and repaired or cannibalised? The temptation and tendency to pilfer these items out of the campus is greater when left unattended. Further more exposure to the elements will only deteriorate their condition and eventually they will be fit for use only as fire wood. Agreed. Will look into it. Most of the unused items are stored in the old lab or the carpentry workshop.

17. Has the practice of requiring new boarders to bring mattresses, clothes cupboards, almyrahs and clothes racks been done away with. It is necessary to have uniformity in the dormitories. Is the College now providing the bunk beds and the mattresses with the side locker. Are coverlets or bed spreads manufactured according to College colours or house colours provided by the school and debited to the Boarders Account? Since I took over all new boarders are required to purchase uniformed steel cupboards, mattresses, pillows and towel racks from the school. I have also ordered coverlets from the Micklefield weaving project in blue and black for all. These will be used from Term 3.

18. What of the clothes cupboards, almyrahs, clothes racks brought in by students who have since left College. Cannot they be auctioned and the purchasers required to remove these eye sores? Some income will be generated. More space will be found in the dorms to accommodate additional bunk beds and lockers. And thereby more Boarders can be accommodated in the Dorms. Children who leave either take these away or sell them before they leave. There are none of these left in the dorms at present.

19. Firewood has been found stacked in front of the Co-op Stores for several years, perhaps, for the use of the bakery. This is an eyesore. Cannot this be moved behind the bakery area? Not for the moment.

20. Fire wood is also found stacked on the road from near the Squash Court to the Headmasters bungalow, perhaps for use in the main kitchen. Cannot this be moved out of sight. Ideally, but not for the moment.

21. Although the Co-op Store gives the appearance of being over stocked we have found it closed for business on every occasion we have visited College. Perhaps the person in charge is a member of the academic staff. Cannot the Co-op Stores be run differently? **I am seriously thinking about reorganizing the Coop in the near future as I am not satisfied with the way it is being run. Needless to say it will be with a new manager when we reopen it.**

22. We found the Canteen adjoining the Co-op Stores not to have any consumables in the nature of pastries, short eats, tea, coffee, soft drinks etc. etc, and very poorly stocked. Are there any proposals to re-organise these 02 institutions. **I am closing the Tuck Shop indefinitely at the end of Term 2. When we do reopen it will have short eats and tea/coffee etc but I am not permitting the sale of aerated waters or similar drinks to the children. The sale of chewing gum too will be stopped for obvious reasons.**

23. We understand that the Nursery is to be closed down at the end of the currant Academic Year. What is intended to be done with that building? Will this deminish the number seeking entry at Year 01 level. **The building will be refurbished to accommodate single lady teachers. The Nursery has not had the desired impact on Grade 1 admissions and my studies have shown that it has failed its purpose.**

24. A list of all buildings and quarters, which are not being used for any purpose whatsoever should be prepared and referred to when the need arises. The list of such buildings must always be available with the Headmaster so that when any new activity is envisaged accommodation is found without undue delay or difficulty. **Already being done.**

25. A list of all buildings which are uninhabitable and abandoned as unfit for human occupation/habitation must be prepared. Competent people should be consulted and if advised that the premises are beyond repair they should be brought down and enable new buildings to come up in due course. The existance of such carcasses is not advisable and sends the wrong signals. **Already planned. For example the old science lab. We are working to a plan and some of these things are down on the list of priorities.**

26. How many students is it proposed to be had on the Roll? The fist Headmaster thought 315 would be ideal for the School, at a time when the fees of Boarders were Rs.110/- Rs.125/- per mensum. Several Old Boys as Chief Guests at Prize Givings voiced their concern when numbers were increased. Another Headmaster went up to 1200. According to recent thinking having regard to the current quantum of fees charged i.e. Rs. 7000/= it is considered that the number on the Roll should be around 600. Numbers had fallen to around 240 when the decision to close the school was taken in December, 2006. Having done away with Admission Fees and keeping the doors open for 365 days of the year for admission to any class from Year 1 to O/L class, the number on the Roll has now been stagnant at about 512 for some months. On raising the question we were informed that numbers could be increased to 2000 or even 2500. Was this a serious assessment? What really is in the mind of the Management? Can the weight of a larger Roll be borne by the Current Infrastructure. **My plan is not short term. My vision is that one day we will be again the best boarding school in the country drawing children from all parts of the country including Colombo. For that to be we have to take one step at a time. My initial target is 750, but I am conscious of the fact that until we can offer quality of life and education we will not achieve this. As we progress we can raise numbers, but there is much yet to be done if we are to succeed. I am satisfied with the way admissions are now going on but as mentioned earlier while we have good numbers at Middle and Upper Schools our problem is with the Lower School admissions. Parents are not keen to board children while they are too young. We are exploring other options for the Lower School.**

27. Non payment and delay in settling fees had been a huge problem. The arrears were progressively reduced within manageable limits. The current arrears are said to be approximately Rs.

6 million. We understand that around Rs.6 Mn was given to Guru from the last Fair and Carnival at Mt.Lavinia. Apparently no clear accounts are available of the manner in which this money was utilised. All that is said is that it was swallowed up by clearing the Bank Overdraft Facility, and also that it was utilised for day to day expenses. This explanation does not seem satisfactory. What steps are proposed to be taken to resolve this matter? Is there any link between the removal of Admission Fees and having a free and open admission policy of all comers and the lethargy and failure of Parents to pay fees? Has that Policy failed. **I cannot speak for how funds were or were not used prior to 2007. I don't think the arrears are related to the lack of admission fees. There are wider issues that need to be taken into consideration. The economic crisis in the country is certainly one factor. I have many parents who come to me and request time to pay due to more than just irresponsible living or inability to pay. While there are a number who are lethargic when it comes to fee payments most of them have a deep desire for their children to have a Thomian education and will do all they can to finance it, often with great difficulty. Although I have now sent out a 'red notice' informing parents that we will not take back any child who is in arrears over two months from 1st September I am always mindful of the fact that this is a School that is founded on certain social principles and that compassion, understanding and generosity are essential ingredients. I am here today because a great educationist saw something in me to excuse delayed payments that my father had to appeal for every term practically while I was a student. My brother is where he is today because despite my father not being able to pay his fees in his last year in School Warden de Alwis, recognizing his potential took him into the hostel gratis for the last two terms. So while school fees is the lifeblood of this School there are higher principles that I have to take into consideration. Furthermore, STCG will not attract the upper middle class for a while yet and we can't sit around waiting for them. My view is that we should take anyone who applies and can pay for it. My firm conviction is that it is the end product that defines a Thomian not his parentage, class or ancestry. All my boys who went to Mount Lavinia in January this year are decent, well disciplined young men who the Warden assures me are a credit to STCG. Many of them come from modest homes. Not all of them were able to pay their fees on time while they were here, not one of them was the son of an old boy, but all of them are true Thomians who are able to hold their own at STCML and have earned the regard of teachers and peers alike in a very short time. This year's O/L batch is even better. Only one or two of them are second generation Thomians. I do not believe the present admission policy has failed. I believe an open admission policy is necessary for some time yet.**

28. Has serious consideration been given from all relevant angles to the offer to parents who are in arrears of fees that they could perform the work of labourers in the vegetable plots? Have the authorities considered the psychological angle from the students point of view? We were informed that even as at present such parents are available working in the College Vegetable Plots. **The Bishop's only concern shared by the Board is that we must cover ourselves legally to prevent future land grabbing problems. But I have endeavoured from day one to point out that being a farmer is not something to be ashamed of but something to be proud of. The present lot have no issues with this arrangement. There is great dignity in farming and if a child can achieve educational goals and pass out as a Thomian sponsored by his father's farming all the more credit to him or her. At present we only have one such person and he is doing fine as far as I can tell. The boy is very bright, comes first in class and will go on to achieve great heights.**

29. The roof of the Lab was reported in 2003 to have caved in at certain points and best repaired. This must be examined and attended to. **First I am hearing about this and I shall look into it at the earliest.**

30. We were taken on a conducted tour particularly of the new toilets for the use of the male and female students built in the junior block of class rooms. It was found that some of those Toilets had not been washed for the day although it happened to be a school day. Those donors funding these improvements will not be pleased at the manner in which these facilities are being utilised, and maintained. This neglect once again gives the wrong signals. We were made to understand that

Labour was a serious problem and having on board a recalcitrant and lethargic support staff was creating many problems. **This is nothing new and subsequent to the visit I have taken steps to remedy same.**

31. When we visited College for the last Prize Giving very Senior Old Boys found Volley ball being played in the Squash Court. The students were cautioned about the damage that could be caused by their conduct. After all, those were the Senior Old Boys who whilst engaged in the Social Service League during the games period were responsible for the construction of the Squash Court. It was also an Old Boy who in 2003 repaired and refurbished this Squash Court. The response of the students was that the Master in charge had approved of same. This same pattern could be observed in students playing Cricket in the Basket Ball and Badminton Courts. And also Badminton in the Quadrangle of the Junior Dorms. **All these activities are no longer permitted and those who are found guilty are punished.**

32. It has been reported that the number of students in the Tamil medium of instruction has progressively reduced to such an extent that sometimes a master is retained for the sake of two or three students. We were informed some time ago that students of different grades were amalgamated to have a Joint Class to get over this problem. These steps adopted do not seem to be satisfactory and must be reviewed carefully. **Certainly. The Tamil medium continues to receive my attention. Most of the children who have left have joined the Muslim School across the road and are day scholars. Fees have been a major concern for them.**

33. It was observed that the floor and sides of the pool require to be applied with a new coat of paint after it is scrubbed and cleaned. This will improve the appearance of the pool. It is also reported that the floor may be requiring some repairs. The non-availability of sufficient water in the event the pool is emptied for repairs may be causing a problem. Is there any way to get over this problem? **I need to get the advice of someone on this as I have been told that it would be dangerous to empty the pool, not due to the lack of water but as it may burst inwards. Do you know anyone who can advise? I invited Foster & Reed to do this study for me but they have still not come back to me. A friend of mine who is Secretary of NAASU has also said he is willing to help out.**

34. In assigning duties to Support Staff care must be taken as far as possible to assign the appropriate person. Over the years we have drawn the attention of the authorities to this problem. Previous instances of bad allocation to the Lab, Library, Swimming Pool, Farm, Co-op Stores, Canteen, etc. etc. have been pointed out by us. It would be to the benefit of all concerned if care is taken in this matter. Recently too in a matter requiring some mechanical knowledge / experience a raw hand was directed to effect specialised repairs to the Engine in the pool purification plant. The Old Boy who paid at least 04 visits from Colombo to Gurutalawa to attend to repairs to the Engine was quite concerned and perturbed about this matter. This could have caused serious damage to the machinery. **This is an inherited curse!! As you know the support staff are unionized. Many of them are lazy and incompetent for the jobs they have been assigned. I agree fully with you on this. I am doing what I can to remedy the situation but it has to be done tactfully. Five are being retired in August and before I recruit replacements I am going to see how we can shuffle the existing ones to get better work from them. The pool man is certainly not suited for his task but at present he is the 'best' we have. I have had to issue letters of discipline to more than one support staff member about their duties and the JSS too have been informed that while we are willing to give the support staff their dues we have a right to expect honest work in return.**

35. Has the Pool Attendant been instructed to follow Snr. V.P. Mahen's directions regarding the addition of Alum to the water etc and is he in fact doing so. **Yes and not always but Fr Goodchild sits on him.**

36. Is there a Compulsory Swimming period. Traditionally all Guru Thomians could swim. Is it not possible to fit this in to the School Time Table. **There is one.**

37. Is the proper attire worn by students for Swimming. We have seen shorts of all sizes and hues being worn in the recent past. **As far as possible, yes. We have stocked bathing trunks in the College Shop for those who wish to purchase same.**

38. Raw timber has been used to effect repairs to the Davidson Dorm. Previously in the laying of pipes to bring in water from the Tube Well at Keble to the tanks above the Main Entrance, pipes with wrong specifications had been utilised. Across the campus instances are many where competent professional advice had not been sought and obtained in various maintenance and repair work. This will only cause more wear and tare, early and frequent break downs, additional cost, and eventually a burden on finance. **With regard to the pipes used to bring water from the tube well I have looked into the matter and am satisfied with the explanation given as to why the gauge chosen was used. Please do let me know of the other instances you mention.**

39. Are games compulsory and are the Dorms locked during Games period. Is a Roster drawn up and Masters allocated for each area of sports or games activity. **Extra Curricular activities are compulsory from 3.30 to 5.20 on school days, not just games. A roster is up and dorms are locked although recently the Upper VIth has been stopped temporarily from all extra curricular activities by me and are permitted to remain in the dorms during that time. The POG and I are addressing the problem of non participation in games and sports. A serious problem is the lack of coaches.**

40. Can we be given a list of Masters and Teachers who are resident on the campus with details of those living with their spouses and children; the subjects on the Time Table allocated to them; the number of periods taken for a week; any extra curricular activities supervised by them and what allowances are paid for same. **No problem but I would like to know for what purpose?**

41. Can we be given a list of Masters and teachers resident outside the campus with similar details as above. **Again, no problem but for what purpose?**

42. I am aware that strict instructions have been given to Members of the Staff not to cane , assault or in any way cause bodily harm or hurt to Students, in keeping with the current statutory requirements re-Child Abuse and Human Rights etc, etc. In November last year I saw a circular handed over to them in this regard, immediately after a incident had been brought to the Headmasters notice. Yet a few days ago a parent complained to many Old Boys in Colombo that a particular Master had bashed the student's head against the wall for a trivial matter. The Student happened to be a girl. Previously too assaults had taken place with wire and other implements and the same Master was the Offender. If allowed to prevail incidents such as this can cause the Administration severe embarrassment and will entail punitive action by the various Authorities put in place by the State to prevent such incidents. In the recent past some students had to be hospitalised and outdoor medical treatment afforded at the Boralanda Hospital.

Parents had been summoned by the student on the phone, and in several instances they had threatened not only to go to the Police but also to represent matters to the Child Protection Authority and Human Rights Agencies. Apparently some Masters have been warned more than on one occasion. What action will be taken to eliminate this menace that will bring disgrace to ther School. **The rule is clear and not just for teachers but also for prefects. I have taken steps to discipline anyone who breaches the rule. However, parents must take these breaches up with me directly. There is no point talking around town to everyone but the person who can do something about it! I have still not heard directly from this parent you mention and now too much time has lapsed for me to do anything about the matter, except to have a word with the master concerned. One has to also be mindful to check if the allegation is true. Gurutalawa thrives on false accusations and innuendo!!**

43. Has preventive action been taken to stop any student from going out of the campus during school hours and the Boarders at all times. **Yes. Anyone found in the breach is suspended or appropriately dealt with.**
44. The Hayman Museum needs regular maintenance. Has this area been allocated to any responsible person who can appreciate the value of the articles placed within. We observed that it had not been swept or cleaned and dusted for quite some time. Also some of the articles needed urgent care and cover. It will not look proper when Old Boys who visit the school from distant parts of the world see it in that state. It will not reflect on the high esteem and love Old Boys have for these 02 Founding Fathers. Also to the Old Boys who laboured many hours in putting it together it will be a cause for concern and sadness. **I fully agree. Just a few days ago I have spoken with our old boy staff member S. Kaviharan who has agreed to be Master in Charge of a new Club I am founding called the 'Thomian Union' along the lines of the one Selvyn Gunawardene and I started at Mount Lavinia in 1997. This Club will have among its many tasks the duty of looking after the Museum.**
45. I handed over to you at an Ex- Co Meeting, 21 photographs which were given to me by Sisira Nanayakkara a Pioneer Old Boy. The photos were those relating to the last visit of Mrs. Hayman which Mr Colin Ratnayaka the Headmaster at that time had in his collection, and sent through Sisira to be placed in the Museum. I hope they have now been taken in to the Inventory and forms part of the Museum. **Done.**
46. Have all students on the Roll now been housed in Dorms according to their Houses. The level of house competitions must be raised and encouraged. It would be good to re introduce the House Jerseys to be worn during games period. **The House system is fully in place. Jerseys can be organized by the houses too. I am still reorganizing the Houses.**
47. It was observed that the big drain which runs down across the Campus had not been cleaned for some time. All those who go across the main bridge on the Road and more particularly the small bridge near the Old Lab can observe this. **Is being dealt with.**
48. A major drawback seems to be that there is no proper supervision of the support staff. The guy who has been made Supervisor of the support staff was one who was promoted from the ranks and so he is naturally unable to discipline his Comrades. **He is retiring in August and I am looking for a suitable replacement who can control these staff.**
49. On our last visit we were taken to be shown the new Toilets done not only at Keble but also in the Old Block of Classrooms for Staff, and in the Junior Block below the road for Boys and Girls. We found that although it was a school day the Toilets had not been cleaned or washed and the man in charge was subsequently admonished. **We have two cleaners for the whole school but due to a lack of supervision by the Works Supervisor a lot that should happen does not. Senior Dorms are ok as the boarders are responsible for their own toilets as part of the discipline.**
50. On a previous visit in May we observed the state of the open pond in the front compound at Keble. This was not only a health hazard because of breeding mosquitoes, the kids of tender years could fall in to the pond and hurt themselves. On our last visit we found it in a worse state with even dead birds etc floating around. You personally gave immediate instructions to have it cleaned. Does not the Works Supervisor have duties at Keble. **As of two weeks ago it has been repaired fully.**
51. On the last visit we found that there were hordes of stray dogs around the campus, mainly in the kitchen and dining hall areas. This menace poses a serious health hazard. We were made to understand that these stray dogs were afflicted by some skin disease and were infact dying. Cannot the Public Health Authorities be informed in writing and necessary action taken. **We are awaiting the**

response of the Provincial Director of Health to a recent complaint. Under the Mahinda Chinthanaya we cannot put down these dogs.

52. Not so long ago mothers who had visited their sons of tender years or had brought their sons to be left in the boarding were documented being permitted to sleep with their young sons in Keble Dormitories. Has this practice been stopped. **Certainly not being allowed now. In fact parents are no longer allowed to even sit on the beds in the Junior dorms and can only go in with the permission of the Dorm masters to arrange the cupboard if at all. Senior dorms are out of bounds to parents except in certain exceptional circumstances.**

53. Also the practice of parents being permitted to stay on in the Isolation Ward to give moral support to their sons who were sitting for public exams. Also parents who are unable to find buses to get back to their homes far away. This practice eventually led to parents who were not married to each other i.e of different students, sharing common accommodation provided by the College in the Isolation Ward. Has this practice been abandoned. **Not entirely but is supervised and controlled. The parents who stayed with my permission during the last year's O/L exam were a very responsible and supportive group. I use my discretion in deciding on this. Most parents who miss the bus et al are directed to guest houses or rooms in the village now. I am mindful of the moral problems that may arise but hospitality is also a cardinal principle for me.**

54. Are Parents permitted to enter Dormitories for whatever reason/ purpose. **Not under any circumstances and disobedient ones are pulled up if discovered. However they may enter Keble House and the Junior Dorms with the permission of the Dorm Masters for exceptional things.**

55. Has the problem with regard to Laundry been solved and are the Soiled Clothes and Linen of the Boarders removed atleast weekly for Washing and Ironing. If this problem is no longer in existence, then Boarders, especially New Entrants can be provided with a List of Clothes, Linen etc which they are advised to bring with them in a suitcase/ trunk which can be placed under the Bed in order to eliminate huge Almyrahs, and Cupboards as well as Clothes Racks. **We have a new dhobi but we still have problems due to the quantum of clothes. The long term plan is to have washing machines. A list of items is given to new entrants but we have over zealous parents!! I am not keen about trunks under beds. This is home away from home and a small cupboard if far more conducive to creating that spirit than a suitcase under the bed.**

56. Senior Old Boys who belong to the Pioneer group and immediately thereafter have stressed the importance and validity of putting in place a Committee of Management to look into all activities of College. This need not be an Official Committee recognised by the Board as that may require approvals and attendant red tape. It need not have Powers and Clout. All that is necessary is a set of Old Boys who are competent and Professional in their approach, in a purely Advisory Roll to assist the Headmaster in the Administration at Gurutalawa. This group should consist of persons having sufficient experience in Engineering, Architecture, Education, Farming, Agriculture, IT, Sports & Extra Curricular Activities, Accounts & Finance, Administration, Marketing, Counselling, Discipline etc etc. You can handpick the members and chair this body. The setting up of this body need not be construed as an interference in the administration because it plays only an advisory role and you are free to take their advice or leave it. Although even now that is what you say you do, a body set up will have some sense of collective responsibility to the larger body of Old Boys. The body does not need to meet together at Guru or in Colombo. In this age it is possible to communicate with each other by using other means. **I am reluctant to formalize this as it may lead to differences of opinion between the Committee and the HM. It will be hard to define the role of an Advisory Group. While I know most of those who would like to serve on this will not object if I go against their advice if I think that is the right thing to do, where does advice stop and dissatisfaction with a decision made contrary to advice given begin? I know only too well that the word 'interference' is one that upsets many old boys, but the sad truth is that there will be some who will use this type of advisory body to do just that and will then get upset if I do not take their advice. However, I am not averse to constructive criticism,**

advice and exercises like this from time to time and would welcome same in the spirit with which it is offered.

57. The History of Guru has been written up to 1992. You would be the ideal Historian to write up the History of Guru of the last 16 years. All the necessary material is readily available. Why don't you try to take this matter in hand. Unlike the previous endeavour hardly any outside assistance may be required. Even if it is required it is readily available now, and all will give you the necessary support. I would love to do this but at the moment I just don't have the time. I have no Secretary or PA and so have to manage my own correspondence et al. Somedays I hardly see my family during the day even though I live on campus!! Guru is not ready for decentralization yet and I have to have my finger in practically every pie. I have to see to many things myself if I want the job done well. SO time is my problem although as I say I would love to do it.

58. Old Boys particularly from foreign countries have regularly inquired as to what assistance they could give College. A list of Urgent Requirements and a Newsletter or Updated News from College prepared by the Headmaster which could be mailed to Old Boys will be helpful. I have stressed the importance of keeping Old Boys and Well Wishers apprised of College News as well as a list of urgent needs at College. This may help Old Boys to identify those urgent requirements and perhaps remit funds collected from that end towards development work. Am working on this but it is not an easy task with everything else hence the delay. I am now teaching 12 periods a week as well. The newsletter should ideally be sent out by the end of the month.

I have tried to make this short but it is not easy. We could meet and discuss these matters and invite all concerned Old Boys who have the interests of the present day Guru Thomians at heart to contribute their views. I do not think this exercise can be considered counter productive. Certainly not counter productive but I don't even make it for exco meetings regularly as I try not to leave Guru except for Board meetings. I value your comments, advice and support and am all the more grateful that it is offered with no strings attached.

With best wishes,

Marc

Warm regards,

Lakshman Jayatilaka

On 27/07/2008, D.N.Thurairajah & Co <deentee@stmail.lk> wrote:
Dear Marc,

Thanks very much for your mail.

I heard that you were ill and informed others who were trying to arrange a discussion. I did not expect you to respond in any way just yet. I heard you were so ill you were not even answering the phone. I hope you are better now. The first thing is you must be fit enough to attend to your daily routine work. Responding to our concerns should obviously be thereafter. In fact I did inform Lincoln and Christo we must give you time to respond, and, discussions, could take place thereafter, if there was such a need depending on your responses. However if Old Boys wished to have some discussions beforehand, I was willing to participate, provided it was to assist you and was constructive and all shades of opinion were welcome and no attempt was made to sweep the dirt under the carpet. So you can take your time and respond when you are perfectly fit. No body, I am quite sure will want to rush you.

Let me be quite honest with you. Personally I have no doubt that you are the best thing that happened to Guru, perhaps after our Old Headmaster Dr. Hayman left and Fr Foster passed away in harness at Guru. THAT is

saying a lot. I left College in 1962. Dr Hayman left in 1963. Fr Foster died in 1964. Though you may be soft at times due to your vocation as a Priest, again that perhaps is necessary at Guru at this point of time when the boat is being steadied after sailing through rough seas for almost a decade and we came near to closing down. Perhaps your arrival at Guru should have been about 08 years ago. Then your Honesty and Sincerity of purpose would have made a big difference. When you did arrive things had got pretty much out of hand. Nobody can expect you to stem the rot or find instant solutions for all the ills at Guru in so short a time. **Also personally I am not aware of old Boys who may be displeased with your Management or Administration in that sense.** All of us do know that you are definitely doing your best. **Although we do not talk of these things with you, the personal sacrifices you have made for the sake of the upliftment of the school are known to many. We cannot and should not forget that. We do appreciate that.**

Most of the matters I have referred to are ones that can be resolved without much difficulty, other than those which have been handed down. There are others which perhaps can be resolved with some joint participation in the decision making process with no compulsion to accept the viewpoint of the Old Boys, but only that they be heard and their views be considered.

Having said all that, **I must mention perhaps the most important and Fundamental need at Guru.** That is there must be One Head of Administration and Management. What ever Jacques contribution may have been and is to the school and support for you, there must be a clear Division of Powers and Duties. Unquestionably, you must remain the Head of the Institution not only in name but in Spirit and in Practice and Factually at Ground Level. I am aware this matter has caused concern to not only Old Boys who were very much involved with various aspects of College life but also Staff and Parents. This problem surfaced in a different way in 2003 and when a Professional Management and Financial Consultancy Firm was engaged by us to do a special study, in their Report, they were constrained to point out this particular short coming and recommended the putting up on the Staff Notice Board outside the Headmasters Office an Organisation Chart/ Line of Command.

I quite appreciate the embarrassing situation you are in, to even mention this. I feel the Old boys will take this up and send it upstairs if need be, for serious consideration. You will I am sure recall Mahen adverting to this subject on your immediate assumption of duties at Guru. This awkward situation has persisted. I do not blame you for not eliminating same. **When God in His wisdom sends an Angel after all who are we mortals to question, except to look askance.**

As regards my continued support and encouragement, please rest assured that you have my fullest support and co-operation which has stood undiminished right through your term of office. As I said before quite candidly my regret, as I heard it voiced by many an Old Boy who answered my call and came to the rescue of our Alma Mater way back in 2001/2002 is the wish that you had been at the Helm at Guru during that year or so. Unfortunately our voices were not heard and though Millions were collected and an enormous Support Brigade and Think Tank were created all went waste. Pioneer old boys who had distanced themselves from College and the OBA were drawn back because they saw my sincerity of purpose never asked any old boy for financial support or contributions for College. Yet the Avalanche was unbelievable. Old boys from UK, USA, Australia dropped in at my house or sent money direct to me for College was able to gather most of the Head Prefects of different eras. Dozens of well meaning Old boys drew back disillusioned thereafter. It is the Remnants of that Army that is still around ie Duleep, Bandu, Mahen, Sunil Watawala. You have only to glance your eyes through the Newsletters, Ex-Co Minutes, and Reports of that period to realise the enormous amount of work put in. In fact it was said that a future Ex-Co would find it difficult to match up to our record of work, both in the OBA as well as at College. Just to point out one item, one single old boy spent Millions and refurbished the entire Senior Dorms. He had not visited College after he had left in 1963 and came after almost 40 years only on my invitation to participate at the AGM in 2002 after the awareness campaign I launched. On closer examination you will see shades of The Scarlet Pimpernel in that Ghost Group I created back in 2001 that sent shivers down so many people. That was the time Marc, we missed you.

If I do seem a trifle quiet now it is mainly because of Family. Also we are right in the middle of relocating our office from Siripa Rd to Sulaiman Terrace. Today we despatched the Library. Tomorrow early morning it will be the hard furniture. Come Monday the Telephone System, and the PC'S and other equipment etc etc. But I did not want to say no to any discussion aimed at helping **You and Guru which in my view are synonymous.**

I hope Marc, having read what I have said above, you will ,as I know you will,continue to do what is best, as you have been doing all this while, for the children, and the school that has been entrusted to you.

If I may digress,I have created a Guru Support Group Profile in< www.facebook.com> Its just a light one now.Perhaps later, who knows.....I keep loading Images of interest to old boys of different eras.Muditha Dissanayaka who set up the College Web Site has Posted an Item on the Profile which is an Article which had appeared in the UK Lanka Times.I do not know who the Author is. It is a Journalist..It seems like Neville De Silva,Mervyn's brother.

As usual, with Warm Regards,

Lakshman.

P.S.

Am attaching;-

- 01- LJ to Christo -July 18th
- 02- Christo to LJ -July 21st
- 03- Lincoln to LJ -July 22nd
- 04 LJ to Raj July 23rd
- 05- Christo to LJ July 24th
- 06- LJ to Christo July 24th

-- Original Message -----

From: [Headmaster S. Thomas' College at Gurutalawa](#)

To: [D.N.Thurairajah & Co](#)

Sent: Saturday, July 26, 2008 4:44 PM

Subject: Re: STCG 62 Group Web Site

Dear Lakshman,

I have just recovered from an attack of flu that kept me in bed for almost a week. I was out of office for the whole of the week. I have been writing my responses to your concerns and will send them on once I have completed them.

I know that a number of concerned old boys have still not begun to forget the past where Guru is concerned. I do not blame them. I have no illusions about the fact that not everyone will be happy with the way I am doing things. I cannot help that. I can only do my best under God for the children placed in my charge and for the school entrusted to me. I hope that when you read my responses many of your fears will be laid to rest and that you will continue to give me the support and encouragement that you have been doing over the past year.

Warm regards,

Marc

On 18/07/2008, **D.N.Thurairajah & Co** <deentee@stmail.lk> wrote:

Dear Marc,

Thanks very much for your prompt acknowledgement of today. I know you will respond at your earliest. I have kept, some of the Old Boys who I know share these concerns, informed.

In the meantime below is a mail I sent some of our friends. There is more ground to be covered.

I hope Mr. Kaviharana can proceed with the College Web Site smoothly with your guidance.

Warm regards,

Lakshman

Hello Everybody,

Once again a short message to let you know that our Web Site >stcg62group.org< has just been updated, with the latest news and images from Guru. Some of the latest items placed are:-

1. News of Old Boys (as at July 2008)
2. Members Directory – (as at July 09, 2008)
3. Old Images of Guru (latest image is of ERV, Jayantha Sellahewa and T.R. Bridge - Taken almost 50 years ago)
4. Updated e-mail addresses. (as at 09.07.08)
5. Images of the Royal Thomian Cricket Match in Canada – July 01, 2008.
6. Images - Malik Candappa – Immediate Past President of STC- OBA Canada visits Guru – July 2, 2008.
7. Present composition of the STC Board of Governors for the next 04 years (July 2008)
8. STCG Ex-Co minutes – May 27, 2008
9. Thomiana June, 2008.
10. Images- Blue Black Night- STC OBA Canada - Dinner Dance – May10, 2008.
11. Dr. Hayman's speech at Inauguration of OBA-1959
12. Images of Ex-Co Meeting at 80 Club- July 11,2008
13. See Gurutalawa/ Welimada Road on Wikimapia

You may be able to recognise the following in the Images taken almost half a century ago (while they were Students at Guru).

[D C Kannangara](#) (presently Don Gazara), [Upali Jayasinghe](#), [R Shagundaran](#), [Kishin Butani](#), [Anilal Algama](#), [F M Tan](#), [Jurair Marikkar](#), [Lakshman Jayatilaka](#), [Robert Dobbs](#), [A A De Silva](#) (presently Ananda Amaranath), [Anura Nilaweera](#), [Sarath Suraweera](#), [H D Wickramatilake](#), [Ranjith Butani](#), [Zubair Caffoor](#), [Ranjith Lowe](#), [Timothy Bridge](#), [I A Munasinghe](#), [Sunil Watawala](#), [R L Weerakoon](#), [T Sundaraj](#), [Tilak Nialaweera](#), [Mahen Ranasinghe](#), [Crysantha Ratwatte](#), [Mario Fernando](#), [Upali Jayawardena](#), [L U Jayawardena](#), [Harish Weerasesekera](#), [M A Siriwardena](#), [Ravi Kotalawela](#), [Lal Yapa](#), [Harish Nilaweera](#), [Jabir Junaid](#), [U K D Jinapriya](#), [L N De S Jayasuriya](#), [O C R Jayasinghe](#), [Kamal Nilaweera](#), [Lakshman Amunugama](#), [A M Gunaratne](#), [Sarath Nanayakkara](#), [S Sivasinniahnathan](#) (presently Siva Selvaratnam), [N L Fernando](#), [S N Rodrigo](#), [A G Jayasinghe](#), [Ananda Medonza](#), [G Radhakrishnan](#), [U De S Jayasinghe](#), [Anil Ratwatte](#), [Mahen Divitotawela](#).

Recall the following who have moulded some of us whilst members of the Staff at Guru .

Dr.R L Hayman, Rev.A J Foster, Mrs.Mary Hayman, B J H Bahar, A C M Laffir, C Karunanayake, Daya Jayasuriya, J De S Jayasinghe (Uncle J), Selwyn Gunawardena, C M Chinniah, Oliver De Zoysa, A K Chapman, Benjamin Fernando, L M Fernando and D U Samaranayake.

Not forgetting the following members of the Support Staff who were good friends to some of us.

Bell Simon, Van Simon, Driver Piyasena, Sick Room Hand Ariyadasa, Pantry Hand Gunadasa and Ground Boy Karunadasa.

You may also be able to recognise Pioneer Old Boys P S Duleepkumar, L W A Fernando, Sisira Nanayakkra, Navaz Caffoor and a host of others most of whom attended the Inagural Re-Union Celebrations of the OBA at Guru in 1959.

You may be interested in reading the The Prize Giving Speeches of Headmasters Dr.R L Hayman "1954,1959 & 1962 (Last Speech); Fr.Foster 1963 (last Speech), Frank Jayasinghe 1967, M L C Illangakoon (1974) and Patrick Gunawardena (1983,1984 & 1985); Chief Guests H A Hulugalle (1954), C J Oorloff (1959), Rt.Rev.Rollo Campbell (1962), Prof C C De Silva (1963), Canon R S De Saram (1967), Bradman Weerakoon (1974 & 1983), Ronnie De Mel (1984), and Gamini Dissanayake (1985).

Read the speeches of Mr. Bradman Weerakoon at the STC- Mount Prize Giving of 2007; at the Unveiling of the Portrait of Dr. R L Haymen at the OTSC.

Read about the Official Opening of the Guru Swimming Pool in 1953; the Unveiling of the Portraits of Rev. Canon R S De Saram and Mr. C H Davidson by Prof. C C DeSilva ; the Visit of Dr. R L Haymen to Buckingham Palace for Investiture as a Member of the British Empire; the progress in the Buildings and Infrastructure of Guru from 1942 to date.

General Notices, Obituary Notices, and other useful information sent to us by the STC OBA Branches of Canada, UK, East Coast of USA, Australia as well as STC Bandarawela OBA continue to be placed on our site regularly.

Some of our friends who have not visited College since their departure in or around 1962 informed us that they are able to visit College from the comfort of their homes flung as far away as Ontario, New Jersey, Los Angeles, London, Scotland, Cambodia, Japan, Perth, Brisbane, Melbourne and Sydney. These long distance visits must surely bring back pleasant memories.

Owing to the information placed on our Site,others have been able to renew childhood friendships, even after almost five decades by communicating with each other through e-mail and snail-mail. Yet others have travelled cross continent and visited friends, from Brisbane to Perth; from Los Angeles to Sydney/ Melbourne and so on. They have commended us for making these possible.

If you are aware of the email addresses of any other Guru Old Boys who may be interested in our Web Site or receiving News of Guru please inform us of same so that we may add such persons to our Mailing List.

Please forward this mail to any of your friends who may be interested in Guru.

Please let us have News of Yourself, Your Current Contact Details, E-mail Address etc. etc. so that we may update our records and also keep others informed, through the Web Site.

Due to our persistent efforts in bringing College to your homes, Old Boys from Canada, USA, UK and Australia have individually, through their Old Thomians' Branches and otherwise remitted funds for development work at Guru.

Your Feedback, Observations and Comments are welcome.

It is hoped that the efforts of our Site will continue to assist the Revival Process at Guru.

Warm regards,

Lakshman Jayatilaka

Residence : No. 23, First Lane, Kirillapone, Colombo - 05, Sri Lanka.

Telephone : 2828272 (Residence)

: 2818989 (Chambers)

: 0773137727 / 0773960823 (Celluar)

E - Mail : deentee@stmail.lk / ashanjay@sti.lk

: deentee@sltnet.lk/ashamjay@sltnet.lk

R

July 28, 2008

Dear Marc,

Thank you very much for taking the trouble and time to respond to all the concerns listed by me. I sincerely appreciate your frank responses.

As I mentioned to you earlier my office relocation was completed yesterday. We are settling in now. The process will take another day or two.

I will be forwarding your response to all those to whom I had copied my mail to you re our concerns. This should happen tomorrow.

We hope to visit Guru for the Swimming Meet on August 08 and the AGM of the OBA at STCB during the same weekend. Will let you know for sure in advance.

Warm Regards,

Lakshman.

S

July 29, 2008

Dear Marc,

I have this morning forwarded to the Old Boys concerned your response for their information.

Warm regards,

Lakshman

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: deentee@sltnet.lk/ashanjay@sltnet.lk

T

From: [Mahen Ranasinghe](#)

To: [Lucky](#)

Sent: Thursday, July 31, 2008 8:04 PM

Subject: Acive Again

Dear Lucky,

....., As I said before, great work on Guru. HM has replied nicely, as usual, avoiding the critical issues. Regarding Pushpakumara I asked Mrs. Abeyawardena to get the facts correctly and make a direct complain. She hasn't done it, I think. HM said that he would sack any one if found guilty, as the Rules allow that. Regarding Jacques he is covering him. The income from the students definitely cannot cover the expenses for horses. Jacques told me that he would take them back if the College couldn't afford them. I think, he still owns them if he had purchased them. Assumption that horses are a donation cannot be believed and should be agreed with Jacques.

Eventhough HM says that he runs the show, he doesn't show it practically. He should answer people direct, without asking people to talk to Jacques, for everything. Whole school thinks otherwise. All can't be wrong.

Shall write again later.....

.....
Regards,
Mahen

U

July 29, 2008

Dear All,

I am forwarding herewith for your information the response of the Headmaster at Gurutalawa, which was received by me yesterday.

Your comments and observation are welcome.

Warm Regards,

Lucky

Lakshman Jayatilaka

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: decentee@sltnet.lk / ashannjay@sltnet.lk

V

July 29, 2008

Dear Peter,

Thanks very much for your comments.

I will be forwarding same to a selected few of the Old Boys.

You would have received by now the Headmasters response.

Let me know what you think about it.

Warm regards,

Lucky.

----- Original Message -----

From: [Peter Weerakoon](#)

To: [D.N.Thurairajah & Co](#)

Cc: [Ranasinghe Mahen](#) ; [Wangasekera Bandu](#)

Sent: Friday, July 25, 2008 3:20 PM

Subject: Re: Fw: Re STC Gurutalawa - Concerns of Old Boys

Dear Lucky,

Please find my comments adjoining your queries, typed in bold italics and Blue.

Your are free to pass it on to any one you wish, within the Guru OBA., and you may even tell Jacques about my comments re the Elephant.

Warm regards

Peter.

W

August 4, 2008

Dear Marc,

I refer to the telephone conversation you had with me this afternoon.

My intention was to have a constructive discussion even through the means of e-mail.

You will appreciate that Old Boys will have various shades of opinion. Their expression of same may sometimes be not palatable or pleasant. But I am sure no offense is meant.

It is also a fact that the doer cannot please everybody all the time. Often we find criticism distasteful and hurtful. But we musn't be disheartened. The buck always stops with the person who sits at the Head.

I suggest that we carry on and do what is best for the College and the Students. All well meaning Old Boys will stand behind you.

Christo called me and inquired whether anything further need be done. I answered in the negative.

Warm regards,

Lakshman Jayatilaka

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