



# S.Thomas' College Gurutalawa

## OLD BOYS ASSOCIATION - NEWSLETTER

Issue No: 7/03

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### **COMMENT – Giving**

No body knows what Dr.Hayman has given to S.Thomas' both at Mount and at Guru in its entirety. At Gurutalawa we know that he met current account shortfalls in the early years and sometimes helped out Warden de Saram at Gatembe. The College history records the swimming bath, the dormitories (in the expansion programme), Keble House and the land attached to it. There were numerous other things not so obvious, many unrecorded, and 'Scholarships' to many students.

On Prize Day 1952 Dr.Hayman personally appealed for funds and made a very rare and unique reference for the first and last time – on his personal contribution.

“Out of loyalty to Mr. Leslie de Saram, who gave us the farm, and who hoped so much from his gift, and also because I personally loved the place and wanted it to succeed, I decided to help to the utmost of my power. I realized at once that many of the items needed were far beyond my purse, so I had to content myself with providing the many necessary and unspectacular things, which were needed in every direction. I laid aside a certain sum of money for these purposes. All but a small part of this was spent on things that I considered essential. That small part was reserved for the swimming bath and its filtration plant. In any event I feel that it is neither proper nor right for a private individual to provide every essential that a collage needs, and I think that neither the boys nor their parents expect it. All the money I had available and much more has been spent by now, and I am no longer in a position to help to any great extent with the provision of further amenities. I have tried to do my part and I feel that it is up to other to carry on the work. I am sure that you will understand that I do not say this in any spirit of boasting and even less in any spirit of complaint. I have been happy to attempt as much as I could manage, and all I want now is to ensure that the true position is know and understood as it is essential for the good of the school.”

Since then the old Boys Association has raised Funds through public events like Benefit Shows and Thomian Fairs, whenever there was a special need. Otherwise the school has survived somehow, and so have O.B.A. projects been completed, by the wonderful generosity of a smattering of Old Boys who year in and year out have been the milking cows. At times, individual efforts of Old Boys helped. Last year we had a successful Fund Raising Dance and this year too we specially commend Mr. Sunil Wattawala's appeal already made – so spread the giving as widely as possible and lessen the burden of a few.

The critical words of Dr. Hayman's appeal are “ Because I personally loved the place and wanted it to succeed.” Do you? Your chance is NOW.

### **THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**

So far 6 meetings have been held of which one was held at Gurutalawa. The 7<sup>th</sup> meeting, was held at Gurutalawa on the Saturday 18<sup>th</sup> October with about 18 Members in attendance.

After the frenetic activity last year, the Ex Co: has not been under pressure from an operational point of view. The emphasis has been to consolidate on the administrative changes effected, and assist the New Administrative Officer, Liaison with the new Farm Manager, assist the New Food 'warden' (A “he”); and initiate ways and means to strengthen and improve the standards of discipline and support the Headmaster in whatever action he has had to take.

Our indefatigable Secretary Mahen Ranasinghe virtually took up residence at Gurutalawa in spearheading such activity. The Ex.Co is aware of the fact that the most important second stage of their concerns is to improve the tone of the School. In this they have been greatly encouraged by a group of young old boys (School leavers in the mid Nineties), who have come forward with enthusiasm to do whatever they can. Muditha Dissanayake who has featured elsewhere in this News Letter has been a leading spirit.

Still there is more to be done in improving the infrastructure facilities and the Committee have in mind principally the School Water Supply System – already a start has been made by Mr.Lakshman Seneviratne, Minister of Water Management and an Old Boy, who has got the Water Resources Board to dig a new well and if practicable, given the constraints that have emerged, the commissioning of at least one Ingestor for the production of Bio-gas for cooking purposes.

These will have to await the funding from the Dinner- Dance scheduled for November 29<sup>th</sup>.

The Committees initiatives on many matters have still to fructify. These include:

- (1) The effective functioning of the Sports Club for which a constitution was provided as a sine qua non to receive Grants/ Equipment from the Provincial Council.
- (2) The opening of a Police Post in Boralanda presently held up till the land ear marked for the purpose is released by the Agricultural Department.
- (3) The Induction of English Voluntary teachers, who have expressed their availability.
- (4) The publication of the College magazine awaiting Tamil translation of articles for this section.
- (5) The use of Linguaphones as an aid in the teaching of English.
- (6) Updating the Members Directory to free any errors. Members must give any changes of the details in addresses/employment/phone numbers etc.
- (7) The adoption of one sitting for Meals and for Prep.

Mr.P.J. Fernando, Vice President has resigned due to a long term overseas commitment and Brigadier. B Munasinghe was appointed in his place. It is hoped to appoint Mr. Mohomad Akbar to the Committee in place of Mr. Muditha Dissanayaka who left for the U.K. to complete his degree at the Staffordshire University in UK.

## **S.T.C. GURU HAS A WEB SITE**

**[stcguru.com](http://stcguru.com)**

Thanks to Muditha Dissanayaka (1990-1996), our youthful (youngest) and energetic Committee member, the College has got a web site, which he is largely responsible for establishing. The web-site contains

- The latest happenings at the School and in the O.B.A.
- Staff Profiles
- Details of the Board of Governors
- Profiles of the Headmaster and Chaplain
- List of Head prefects men
- All round Sportsmen
- There is a section devoted to the O.B.A. with the
  - Headmaster, Dr. R.L. Hayman's inaugural speech in 1959.
  - The member directory (There are corrections to be made and it has to be up dated)
  - All the News Letters to date.
  - Application From Pro-Forma
  - Features of the Reunion Celebration 2003.
- Also information of the pending Projects of the O.B.A. The Hayman Memorial Archives and the impending Dinner – Dance which will be held on Saturday the 29<sup>th</sup> November 2003.
- There are quite a few articles about the College Teams and Photographs.
- The Academic and Sports Calender for the year
- Links to other Thomian Websties
- Photo gallery.
- On link - a condensed History and updated to the year 2002.

### Launch of Web Site for College by Muditha Dissanayake (and the 95 Group)

Muditha Dissanayake was a student at S.Thomas' College Gurutalawa ('90-'96). He is an undergraduate of the Staffordshire University in UK studying for his B.Sc in IT. In October 2001 he had written to the Headmaster of STCG expressing his desire to set up a Web Site for College. In

February 2002 having come across the Web site of the 62 Group of STCG, he communicated with the Secretariat of the 62 Group and at the very outset itself expressed his interest in setting up a Web Site for the College. They gave him all the encouragement, advise, guidance and assistance. The minutes of the Ex-Co Meetings and correspondence with the Headmaster testify to the efforts made by the Group to enable Muditha to initiate action to set up a web site for Gurutalawa. Although it has taken several months to make significant progress towards the establishment of this Web Site, we are gratified that the Web Site has eventually been launched (unofficially). It needs further 'filling' and updating. We congratulate Muditha for his singular determination and dedication to this cause. Well done Muditha.

This Web Site supplements the Web Site already in existence and established by the 62 Group by Lakshman Jayatilleke and whom it was that Muditha contacted. Thank you, Lakshman Jayatilleke.

Muditha wishes to thank, Messrs Lakshman Jayatilleke, Nihal Wanniaratchchi Bandula Wanigasekera, and P.S. Duleepkumar for their help.

Yajeewa Bandara, a contemporary of Muditha, deserves special mention for the photographs and Chandana De Silva for raising the initial Capital required of Rs. 12,000.00 which will be the annual Rental, till the next due in September 2004. Any sponsors for next year ? Even on a Commercial Basis from an Old Boy for his Company Advertisement.

Muditha can be contacted at -<[mudith@lycos.com](mailto:mudith@lycos.com) > or No 9 Knightly House Stafford Court, Staffordshire University, Beaconside, ST 18 OAB, UK. (Tel: 01785608932)

Browsers of the web will find it most absorbing – particularly if they are Loyal Thomians with an abiding interest in their alma – mater, and a sense of gratitude for what they have received from the College.

Lakshman can be contacted on [ashanjay@sti.lk](mailto:ashanjay@sti.lk) : Telephone No. 2854164, 2828273 or Home No.2828272.

## **FUND RAISING DINNER- DANCE ON SATURDAY NOVEMBER 29<sup>TH</sup> AT THE HOTEL CEYLON INTERCONTINENTAL**

Members would have already received two fliers to date from Sunil Watawala the Chairman of the Dance Committee. The tickets are now available and any Committee Member will assist you to purchase them – keep a date without fail.

Once again the Target is Rs.1,000,000.00 . Help us achieve it by your contributions – cash, attendance or getting us an advertisement or banner. Even one is well appreciated

There will be the usual welcome reception and the customary bottle of SCOTCH per table as well as an endless supply of draft BEER on the house.

Members will welcome the reduction in prize competitions to save dancing time and to get on with the show with the pace of “24 Hours” (The innovative Thursday T.V. serial thriller -just ended).

There will be 2 Bands in attendance namely Zodiac and Cross Section with Antoinette and Rodney.

The dance last year was an unqualified success from the point of view of enjoyment, entertainment and Fund Raising. This year a special effort is being made to allow greater freedom of movement within the hall that was packed last time.

Sunil has called for the support of every Old Boy by way of obtaining an advertisement (Full page Rs.5,000.00 , Half page Rs.2500.00) for the souvenir or a banner (Rs.3500.00). Or if that is not possible a contribution of Rs.1,500.00 towards the Development Fund, to which the Profit from the Dance will be credited for further rehabilitation and development work in the College.

It is hoped that every old boy will match Sunil & the Dance Committee's untiring effort in organizing the dance and bearing a good part of the costs personally by Sunil, as he did last year.

We record with pleasure that CIC Fertilizers Ltd have sponsored one Band and Mr.Bhutani, an Old Boy has sponsored the other already, while some Old Boys have generously contributed between Rs.2500.- and Rs.5000.- as personal contributions in lieu of their inability to get advertisements. **We ask other Members also to make contributions directly if they are unable to get one advertisement for the**

**Souvenir as we expect each member to get his own Company where he is working to give us an advertisement.**

All suggestions will be most welcome both as regards the Dance itself, and towards the collection of Funds.

### **FELLOWSHIP DINNER**

The Fellowship Dinner was held on July 28<sup>th</sup> at the Mount Lavinia Hotel. It maintained the usual high standard that Old Boys have come to expect of it. The cost in excess of the Collection on Ticket Sales etc. was borne by a few Old Boys as no advertisements were solicited in view of the Fund Raising Dinner Dance scheduled for later in the year. Much appreciated all round. Well done, Organisers.

### **THE FARM PROJECT**

Initially the undertaking envisaged the purchase of 500 chicks at Rs. 42.00 per chick per week for culling after a 40 day period at an average weight of 1.62 kilos at Rs. 160.00 per kilo. However, a ceiling price control was introduced at Rs. 155.00 per kilo for dressed chicken; and buyers bargained for prices below that price in a very competitive market. Purchases were therefore reduced to 200 chicks a batch (Broilers) and the Farm Manager, diverted of necessity to the purchase of Layer chicks. An initial Batch of 500 chicks were purchased, and as at the time of this report, the first few eggs have been laid. The full production will only be reached in another two to three weeks. The broilers would solve the School dormus as to 50% of production, and we are exploring a steady and reliable market for the balance.

The Farm Manager has re-started the Vegetable Farm, and the initial crop of Beans has realized Rs.2800.00. He expects to start on Kankung and Mukunuwenna next with more area under cultivation. There will be phased increases in activities and the Headmaster has appreciated this trend. The periodic scarcity of water presents some problems and we hope that the new well under construction will alleviate some burdens both for the Farm & the Swimming Pool, not forgetting the needs of the College Campus as whole.

Meantime, it was decided to have an independent accounting basis for the Farm in order to further the expedient conduct of the business. In this way, a proper assessment of the Farm Project can be continually done. We are extremely grateful to Mr.Vijitha Fernando of our OBA but an Old Boy of Mount Lavinia for donating Rs.18,000.- to meet the Farm Manager's salary supplement by the OBA. **Thank you Vijitha. It was indeed remarkable that the largest contributor to the Farm Development Project was an Old Boy of Mount Lavinia.** Guru Old Boys can still, we hope, do better. Come on the list is still open.

### **DR R.L.HAYMAN ARCHIVES**

The S.T.C.Gurotalawa O.B.A. has decided to set up a Dr. Hayman Memorial archives with memorabilia relating to him and to complete the project by the end of this year. Its location will be the very office used by Dr.Hayman, including the room he himself occupied. To date we have collected the following material

- 1) 12 volumes of diaries he had maintained up to the year 1946 from the time he came to Mt. Lavinia.
- 2) His photograph Albums
- 3) His 16mm cine-films of school events and of his travel within Sri Lanka especially of Wild Life
- 4) Various Photographs of him at different stages of his career.
- 5) Photographs of events he was associated with
- 6) Letters he has written to Old Boys – we thank those who sent us these.
- 7) Books and other papers of Dr.Hayman

We appeal to all Old Boys to please try and locate any thing which could be placed in the archives either in their possession or with friends such as Reports, Photographs, Letters: Originals will be well preserved for posterity and if these cannot be given out right we will make do photocopies if you need the originals. We have commissioned a leading Sculptor, Manoranjana Herath who has had several solo Exhibitions, to make a bust of Dr. Hayman, which he has completed, working from the photographs available, which were suitable for his purpose. This has cost us a very reasonable Rs.55.000.00 and with the other costs of tables, glass cupboards, pictures, enlargements, framing and other accoutrements, we will require at least, about Rs. 150,000.00, including rehabilitation of the locations.

At the last Ex-Co Meeting, it was decided to extend the Archives to also house any Canon Foster memorabilia, and any Member who can contribute any matter of Canon Foster, is requested to do so.

Please give generously. We shall publicly record your contribution in the archive itself, whether it be in cash or kind. But as important will be suggestions you can make about the lay out and presentation. In this regard, old boys with experience in such matters please respond by contacting either P.S.Duleepkumar, Tel. 2812736 (Home) or 2389669 (Office) or Bandula Wanigasekara (Tel: 2585865) or Nihal Wanniarachchi Tel. 2722624 (H) or 0712786877 (M). All financial contributions should be made either personally or by A/C Payee cheque in favour of S. Thomas College Gurutalawa OBA to Mr. Bandula Wanigasekara (Hony. Treasurer ) , 85/18 Jawatte Gardens, Colombo 5. They will arrange collection of your contributions in kind.

**EXTRACTS FROM THE HEAD MASTER'S SPEECH AT PRIZE GIVING**  
**9<sup>TH</sup> SEPTEMBER 2003**  
**S.THOMAS' COLLEGE – GURUTALAWA**

Chief Guest,

Mr.B.A.Mahipala does not need any introduction. He has been as old boy of S.Thomas' Preparatory School Kollupitiya and St. Thomas' College Gurutalawa and completed his studies at S. Thomas' College Mount Lavinia. If we examine the last three decades I'm sure Mr.Mahipala has given back to his Alma Mater more than his fair share in contributions, monetary and otherwise. He refurbished the senior dormitory where over 100 students are currently housed. The school is ever grateful for his goodness loyalty and generosity. We are aware of his great father Mr. Semanaris Appuhamy who was a well-known philanthropist from Homagama. The saying goes that "good trees brings forth good fruit" Mr.Mahipala you are a shining example to this.

Mr. Mahipala entered the University of Peradeniya and obtained a degree in Mechanical Engineering and gained work experience in Organizations such as Ceylon Plywood Corporation, Ceylon Insurance Cooperation, and started his own venture initially importing commercial vehicles and machinery to Sri Lanka. By 1980 realizing that the creation of wealth within the country was more important for national development Mr. Mahipala started export oriented manufacturing operations, initially in the Garment sector later diversified into manufacturing of plastic flexible packing materials and Diamond Industry. His business enterprised are well known as the BMA Group subsequently ventured in to providing training in information technology & bottling of mineral water. Operations expanded steadily and in 2001 established a plant in Madagascar. Today the BMA Group is a 2000 million rupee entity creating employment opportunities far in excess of 3000 beneficiaries in Sri Lanka and another 500 in Madagascar. In recognition of Mr. Mahipala's contribution to Madagascar the government of Madagascar appointed him the Honorary Consul for Madagascar in Sri Lanka.

In the year 2003 the school commenced English medium classes for grade 6 students. Today a student has the option of studying in any of the three media Sinhala, Tamil or English at Gurutalawa. The school has taken steps to improve English standards by introducing elocution classes and special English classes conducted over weekends. The school has also taken steps to improve English standards by introducing elocution classes and special English classes conducted over weekends. The school has also taken steps to help the students by arranging special classes in mathematics and science during the after school hours. In 2002 the G.C.E. ordinary level results were better than the previous two years and we trust this year's

results will be even better than 2002. We have also started Computer Classes, which will become a basic necessity in life.

### Glimpse of the sports activities

“A healthy body makes a healthy mind”. At S. Thomas’ Gurutalawa we make it a point to see that each student takes part in some sports.

14 of our athletes qualified for the nationals at the Uva Province Sports Meet . M.F.M. Naleer secured 3 second places while Prodoson Joy established a Pole Vault record in the Under 17 category and Dilanka Janaka secured the first place in the under 19 pole vault event.

In Hockey the College became the runners up while in Basket Ball our Under 15 & Under 17 teams emerged champions in the Uva Province.

Rugby Div 3 – All Island – Reached Semi Finals & lost to Royal College – an excellent result.

All Island Squash - Eleven boys have been selected to play.

Cricket Div 3 – All Island – Still on but we have won outright against Kingswood with S.B.Dodanwels taking 10 wickets for 36 runs.

Cricket - Four of our team were selected to the Uva Cricket Pool

### Old Boys Association

Within these two years the College has been very fortunate to have very close ties with the OBA, which has helped the school in numerous ways. The OBA Ex-Co visited the school on many occasions, meeting with the staff, the workers, observed the conduct of the students and had preliminary discussions with the Headmaster and worked out their strategies according to the needs of the school. They looked in to all aspects of development for the betterment of the school. They were concerned about the Thomian traditions, education, sports, landscaping, and ultimately the well being of the school in every way possible. This clearly highlights the words of Warden Stone “Live for S.Thomas’, do anything for her when you’re asked to do it”. I am fully aware that the OBA has spent a few millions towards the development of Gurutalawa within these two years. They did a marvellous bit of work. It’s my duty to highlight a few of projects completed by the loyal and generous old boys.

1. Refurbishing the senior dorms, the Winchester and Davidson dorms.
2. Building the dining hall and the kitchen
3. Repairs to Swimming Pool, the Basket Ball and the Badminton Courts.
4. Refurbishing the school canteen and the Squash Courts.
5. Providing Lab equipment, Library books and other sports equipment
6. Leadership training program for prefects & life education program for grade 10 students.
7. Partitioning the new office section and the Headmaster’s office
8. Recommending and installing an Administrative Officer for the College
9. Funding the farm project
10. Helping to find British Volunteers.

It’s a source of great strength and encouragement to school and to me particularly to feel and know this Association exists, and which has given of its faithful and untiring services to the College. Finally I wish to state that it was encouraging, interesting and exiting to work with the Ex-Co.

### General:

With the introduction of English medium classes from grade 6 onwards it is certainly hoped that it will pave the way for improvement of English standards within the school. The school thanks the PTA for its continuous support and co-operation in all matters.

In his concluding remarks the Headmaster expressed his gratitude to the Bishop, The Rt. Rev. Duleep de Chickera the Chairman of the Board of Governors, his indebtedness to Mr. Upali Panditharatne the Manager of the School ; and expressed his thanks to key members of the staff. Of special significance was his reference to the schools Chaplain, Rev. Nihal Fernando.

“Our school is blessed with a good Chaplain, who does his best to assist the school to reach higher levels of spirituality. Apart from his pastoral ministry, he trains the college choir, teacher English and conducts elocution classes. I thank him sincerely for his contribution”

### CHIEF GUEST’S ADDRESS

Mr. B.A. Mahipala in his address to the gathering, deplored the decline in standards of discipline and emphasized its importance for the good name of the School apart from its value as an essential part in the educational process.

Introducing a touch of humor he recalled a prize giving when he was a Student in College and the friend sitting next to him, nudged him to alert him to a nice ‘bit’ who was present. When he looked round, he found it was his sister; much to his friends embarrassment when he told him.

Mr. Mahipala also advised the boys that they should desist from damaging College property, and on the contrary look after what was to their benefit as they were major stakeholders in the Thomian enterprise that was Gurutalawa. They should behave and keep the School so that every one would be proud of it.

( Ed. This had reference to the Headmaster informing the Committee that a Student had damaged the plaster of the wall by the corridor leading up to the sick room. He mentioned that this kind of behavior was not generalized and that necessary action had been taken to recover the cost of repairs. Its significance is heightened by the fact that Mahi himself had spent a King’s ransom on redoing the entire Senior Dormitory Block).

### Special Awards to Teachers

A Group & Young Old Boys (School Leavers in the early and mid nineties) presented trophies to those Teachers who were there in their time and still on the Staff. This was indeed a great gesture on the part of the younger set to honour their Teachers as in the days of yore and which was a great tradition in ancient times.

### SCHOOL ACTIVITIES – Highlights

#### Agriculture Club

Organized a nursery for the School Tree planting Campaign.

#### Aesthetic Studies

The College secured 2<sup>nd</sup> place at the all Island Dancing competition and in music secured 1<sup>st</sup> place in the Uva Province.

This years Prize giving on August 9<sup>th</sup> featured the Schools Dance troupe in an item of entertainment as also the sub-junior choir.

#### Cadetting - Prefect & Games and master mid age – Mr. Shirantha Medawela.

Has become another thriving extra-curricular activity. Four cadets attended a training camp at Randunugala. The cadets’ western band render their services to any function or special occasion in the district and are trained by the officer of the Diyatalawa Army camp.

#### Athletics – Mr. Medawala

At the Junior Zonal meet held in April at Ambagasdowa and Welimada, 84 of our athletes took part and 34 of them were either placed 1<sup>st</sup> of 2<sup>nd</sup> in their respective disciplines. 14 of our athletes were chosen for

the national meet and among which special mention should be made of M.F.M. Naleer who was placed 2<sup>nd</sup> in the 100M and 400m events and Dilanka Janaka for securing the 1<sup>st</sup> place in the pole vault event.

Badminton – Mr Shirantha Medawala.

18 of our boys attended a special coaching camp at the Bandarawala indoor courts and 8 were elected into the national Pool.

Basket Ball – Mr. S. K. L. Alam

The court was refurbished due to the untiring efforts of our old boys. Last year the Under 17 and Under 15 team won the Uva Province Championship.

Hockey – Mr.S.K.L.Alam

Under 15 team emerged Runners Up in the Uva Province tournament and qualified for the all island tournament held in Kandy. We performed to satisfaction and were placed 3<sup>rd</sup> in our respective group. The players also attended a training camp in Badulla. The game has great potential to improve due to the talent available among the players.

Squash- Mr.S.K.M.Azane

Boys are very keen and regular practices are held. In the all Island Championships in the year 2002 K.H.N. Chaturanga was the runner up in the Under 13 age group and W.A.Maduranga was placed 2<sup>nd</sup> runner up in the same age group. In the Under 11 age group S.Dodanwela too performed very well in the Championships.

## Cricket

### Outstanding Cricketer:

Maduka Damian Fernando, a Year 10 Student, was selected as the Outstanding Student in Cricket Under 16 for 2002 as well as an Outstanding Student in Rugby for the Uva Province. He received his prize of the President, Board of Control for Cricket, (NOW Sri Lanka Cricket), at a recently held function at Gurutalawa, attended by the Headmaster. He had been adjudged as the outstanding student in Under 13 cricket for 1999, 2000 & 2001. He is also a member of the College Swimming & Basketball teams.

Under 16 Cricket Team – Mr.G.Nesaseelan

The Team won their first round matches and qualified for the second round in the Sri Lanka Schools Tournament. A coaching camp was also conducted at Bibile in March, which no doubt contributed to the high level of performance.

Under 14 Cricket Team - Mr. R. C. Kumar

Two teams 'A' and 'B' were trained for this age group and 'A' team won two matches and lost one at Sri Lanka Schools tournament.

### Sinhala Literary Association.

The following is a newspaper report, which appeared in the Daily Island Newspaper of 28<sup>th</sup> June 2003.



“ Some television shows and programmers of FM channels relayed by the electronic media carrying nauseating stories, have destroyed our language, culture and essential values of society. It is a pity that the so-called National Rupavahini channel, too has joined this crime.”

This was said by Professor Sunil Ariyaratne, which he addressed the Sinhala Day celebrations at S.Thomas’ College, Gurutalawa.

Professor Ariyaratne of the Sinhala Faculty of Sri Jayawardanapura University, further said, that once he spoke to a Tamil intellectual in Jaffna and he said that he loved his language like his own life. Most of the statues and monuments found in the Jaffna peninsula belong to the persons who had contributed towards education and culture of that community, but most of the monuments in the south are those of politicians. He appealed to the politicians, intellectuals, patriots and the masses, to take immediate steps, to rescue the language, culture and eroding values and protect them for future generations.

He said at the Sports Festival held recently in Colombo, sports fans danced to the tune of ‘Kuch Kuch Hotha Hai’. The organizers of that festival could have displayed the dances and songs valued by the Sinhala, Tamil and Muslim culture he added.

He appealed to the younger generation to learn more English and other foreign languages, without neglecting their own mother tongues. If each and every community try to preserve their identity, and learn the value of co-existence in a plural society, we need not get down mediators to bridge the gaps. The three major communities of Sri Lanka have had their experience, from time immemorial, living in harmony as one nation, he said.

He commended the Headmaster for making arrangements, for Sinhala, Tamil and Muslim students in his school to preserve own language, culture and esteemed values, by conducting literary societies and other activities.

The Headmaster G. C. Mendis appreciated, the contributions made by Professor Ariyaratne and “Visharada Nanda Malini (the two chief guests) to the development of Sinhala Language, culture and music in their different programmes conducted through electronic and print media over the world.

“Visharada” Nanda Malini sang with the college music troupe conducted by Rev. Father Nihal Fernando and Dushan Sugatapala.

Rev. Fr. Nihal Fernando, Headmaster G.C. Mendis, Mrs. Manomani Wickramage, R.C. Kumara, W.M.Sumanapala (Head of Sinhala Faculty) had made elaborate arrangements to conduct this festival, with the co-operation of the Sinhala Literary Society of the College.”

### Tamil Literary Union

With the efficient guidance of Mr. G. Nesaseelan and Mr. M.L. Razik Senior/Junior Tamil Societies were functioning smoothly. The Tamil day was held on 16<sup>th</sup> July 2003 and essay writing, handwriting, Oratory & Poem reciting Competitions were held and winners were awarded certificates. The chief guest at the Tamil Day was Ven. Diloraj Canagasabey, the archdeacon of Nuwara Eliya.

### English Literary Society

Under the guidance of Rev. Fr. Nihal Fernando, M. Sunil Jayarathna and Mrs. R.L. Seneviratne, this association was able to organize an English Day on the 18<sup>th</sup> of July 2003. Essay writing, Hand Writing, Oratory, and debating competitions were held and the winners were awarded certificates. Monthly meetings are held regularly.

### Reported Extract – English Day 2003

On the 18<sup>th</sup> The Rev. Fr. Samuel Jayantha Kumar Jayaweerasingam and old Thomian himself was the Chief Guest. A morning with a difference was organised where the College Band conducted the Guests from the Headmaster’s residence to the Hall where they were welcomed and the Chief Guest was garlanded with orchids. Candles on a cake was lit instead of the traditional oil lamp, and was followed by a prayer by the College Chaplain.

The welcome address was made by the President of the Literary Association Aeshan Abeywardana followed by a group recital from the College choir conducted by the Rev. Nihal Fernando which kept the group enthralled. The kids from Keble sang too directed by the versatile Mrs. S.B.M.Anandappa. Miss Nadeesha Ratnapala of Grade 11A recited ‘I’m your Bride’ in appropriate attire which had the young crowd impressed with her elegant performance. Father Nihal Fernando directed a recital of a poem which had much meaning and was an inspiring performance.

After a number of years ‘The Guru Thomians’ got on to team debating arguing a very controversial topic..... ‘Co-education should be introduced in Schools’. Mrs Najmuna Farook A former teacher at Guru now attached to the Muslim School at Gurutalawa, Mrs. Martina De Silva another former teacher at Guru presently teaching at Boralanda, both versatile teachers of English and Mrs. Fairweather of Environmental fame in the area joined while Mr. Sunil Jayatunga chaired the debate in his usual flamboyant way which kept the crowd attentive. A satisfactory standard of Good English debating was witnessed with the Judges taking a long time to decide. The Proposition was judged the winners while M.I.M.Imitiaz was declared the best speaker. While the judges took their time, a mixed orchestra of Oriental drums, Tamil and Western instruments gave a very lively musical miscellany performance conducted by Mr. Wijesiri the Dancing master and Mr. D. Sugathapala the Music master with Keble boys trained by Mrs. B.Anandappa, singing their hearts out and the audience joining in ‘Pack up your Troubles’ livening up the crowd.

A poem by Keble children directed by Mrs. Thusitha Sureshkumar was followed by an interesting drama directed by Mrs. R.L. Senevirathna, Rev. Nihal Fernando brought on a dance by the Senior Prefect T.O. Meemaduma in right ‘Royal’ style with trumpets in attendance.

Certificates were then distributed by the chief guest to the outstanding performers followed by his address emphasising the importance of English in the Thomian tradition and followed by a vote of thanks proposed by G.N.M. Perera, the Hon. Secretary.

### NEWS OF OLD BOYS

**M.N.V. Murugappa** – A Stalwart of the College of the fifties has been in touch and writes with a compelling nostalgia - “It was with a lot of sadness that I read of the decline of our much loved school. Since migrating to the U.K. in 1969, made my first visit to Guru in 1982 with my wife and 4 year old son Nigel. I wanted them to see the place I spent the most unforgettable part of my school life. I did notice then that there were signs of decline. The state of the Dormitories shocked me. The pool was in neglect. We had tea with the headmaster whose name I do not remember. He did not seem to know much of the various fruit trees in the orchard and had never heard of the Lychee tree we used to call “ hairy balls in our days. I felt quite sad then. The only thing that made me happy that day was that “Bell Simon”, “Bus” Simon and Sick Room boy Piyadasa all recognized me and spoke to me. I felt really emotional that they recognized me after so many years! Against the background of social changes, not to mention the corruption and decay of our S.L politics, the survival of the values of our time stood little chance. The culture and society that sustained Guru’s high standards have more or less disappeared. Therefore It is all the more creditable that a group of very loyal old boys are trying their utmost to stem the rot. Not an easy task by any means! You need all the support you can get from those old boys who regard the institution with great affection.

Recently I read a book on India by William Dalrymple. This book has won some award as a book of the year. There is a lengthy chapter in the book on La Martinere College Lucknow. It was founded in 1845 by a Frenchman and run on the lines of English public Schools such as Eton and Harrow. The school produced generations of famous Indians in every walk of life and also the Nehru-Gandhi dynasties. Those of us who owe a great deal to Guru need to rally round the Committee to salvage whatever is possible.”

[Ed. The comparison with La Martinere College is significant. It raises the question whether English type Public Schools can survive in post Colonial Asia. On the other hand Both Thailand and Japan are instituting such public schools. The reintroduction of English in Sri Lanka presages the turning of the

wheel full circle. Or does it.? Fortunately the Thomian Schools have survived and Guru still has a vibrant Boarding which is the hallmark of the Public School. So has Bandarawela as opposed to Colpetty with only a House system]

Muru backed his sentiments with a donation of Rs.7500/=

### **Steuart Jonklaas**

P.O.Box 5310 Chittaway Bay N.S.W 2251 has enrolled as a member. He requested and was sent copy of the College History and Directory. F.M. Tan also was sent the same on request. The last copy of the History has been reserved for V. Murugappa who has included payment and postage cost in his donation.

### **John De Vos**

P.O. Box 77 Korumburu 3950 Australia - has sent a remittance of Rs.5500/= towards the College Dev. Fund. He made a specific request that money be applied first to provide adequate lighting for the lecturn in the College Chapel. This was done with a suitable reading lamp. Photographs were sent to him and he has approved and appreciated this.

He says: My wife & I attended a dinner at Dr.Nihal Heenatigala's place & present were Dr.Ranjit Dambawinna (aka KDPR), Ana Jayasinghe, Errol Jacotine & their spouses and Buddy Reid.....and a bit of family History – We are proud grandparents of three grandsons & a granddaughter. Good Luck for more – the merrier.

**Upananda Karunatilaka** (1934-1946) Has donated a painting of S.T.C. Mt.L. chapel done by his daughter Savithri which will adorn the walls of the Dr. Hayman Museum, responding to our appeal for funds. His abiding interest in the School is an inspiration. A pioneer old boy he was a day boy and walked to school from Wangiakumbura through Hulankata. Though he did Science he was a remarkable essayist while in college and developed in to one of Sri Lanka's foremost poets. He developed a career in the Pharmaceutical Industry and ended his career as a senior director of J.L. Morisons backed by a class degree in Chemistry from the University of Ceylon. A course for celebration and pride is his recently published book "Colombo Diary" a must read for all Thomians. It is a perceptive record of the tumultuous events 1971 to 1975 seen through the prism of a leftwing political ideology and contains reference to both Guru and Mount. The back cover in fact contains a picture of the entrance to Guru with the College Chapel dominating the foreground as also a classic view of Totupola and the high mountain wall that supports it.

### **Ivo Keleaart** (1943-1947)

PO Box 5108 Studfield, Vic 3152, has sent his enrolment form and a donation of A\$.200. This is very much appreciated as it will realize **over Rs.12,000.-** He says – "The donation is to say 'Thank you' to my Alma Mater for the best education a boy could have received. I still recall my days at Guru as some of the happiest of my life. It was thro' the generosity of Dr.Hayman, that I made it to Guru on his personal scholarship.

The College did this for me :

Taught me Discipline which stood me in good stead during the years that were to come.

It taught me that by Study I could become a valuable member of society – this I did in Australia and pity it is not in the land of my birth. And one thing above all else – to pride in myself and in the institution that gave me a priceless education."

We are grateful to the '62 Group that canvassed his membership and obtained the donation.

### **Kapila Gunawardens**

St.Louis, Mo., USA has sent us a valuable contribution of Rs.25,000.- for the Development Fund and which is well appreciated. He is a Vice President at Eveready USA.

### **Job Placements**

There are quite a few young old boys who have recently finished their Schooling who are on the look out for suitable placements. Old boys who are in a position of assist either directly or indirectly please contact P.S. Duleepkumar 172/8 A, Polhengoda Road, Colombo 05. Tel. Nos. 2812736 or 2853667 (Home) 2389668 or 2389669 Office.

“What a fine thing it would be if some one was wanted for a position of trust, men would say “give me a boy from Gurutalawa”. [Rt. Rev. Graham Campbell, Bishop of Colombo – Prize giving address **17<sup>th</sup> August 1962**]

### **S.K. Kulasingham**

An old boy of Peiris Traders 42 Anguruwatota Road seeks a business partner or purchaser for two types of Masala (Curry Powder) for cooking meat, fish and vegetables, for packing and distribution to supermarkets and/or other retail outlets. He runs his own grinding mill so that purchasers can be confident of source and quality. Samples can be delivered on request and he can be contacted during office hours at Tel. No. 034 2262208.

### **WANTED:**

Civil Engineer, Accounts Clerk, Civil Engineering Supervisors, Draughtmen, etc. are required for a Mini Hydro Project at Haldunmulla.

Those interested apply to:

Mahen Ranasinghe 071 222 8675

### **OBITUARIES:**

Mr.Alexis Ellawela

Mr.Mahinda P Suriyarachchi

Mr.G.Kasturiarachi

### **CONTRIBUTIONS**

Old Boys can make contributions for any named Project or a particular item that he may feel need be done. An Old Boy recently said he will repair the Chapel Windows expected to cost about Rs.20,000.-. Or you can send to our general College Development Fund and we ensure the best use – and will surely inform you.. Others are the Farm Development Project and the Annual Dinner Dance Account. Ensure that these are sent by A/C Payee cheques to the Hon. Treasurer. If in cash, please contact him personally. We assure that all payments are duly acknowledged & receipts posted within a week as you may have experienced.

**HELP BY CONTRIBUTING FOR A WORTHY CAUSE**

**GIVE GENEROUSLY TO THE STC(G) FARM DEVELOPMENT FUND**

Cheques in favour of STC Gurutalawa OBA

If undelivered return:  
185 Madinnagoda Rd.,  
Rajagiriya, Sri Lanka.