



THOMIANA



May 2024, Volume 27 Issue 2

Publication of S. Thomas' College Old Boys Association, Australia Branch Inc.
PO Box 2337. Mt. Waverley, Victoria 3149, Australia



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S. THOMAS' COLLEGE OLD BOYS ASSOCIATION -AUSTRALIA BRANCH (STCOBA)



S. Thomas' College is an Anglican, Government approved, private, fee-paying School for boys founded in 1851 by the first Bishop of Colombo, the Rt. Rev'd Dr. James Chapman. The school was originally located in Mutwal and moved to its present campus at Mount Lavinia in 1918.

S. Thomas' College is much more than just a school. It is an institution rich in tradition, characterized by more than one and a half centuries of hard work, dedication and achievement, all infused with the legendary "Thomian Spirit". It is a pioneering institution that seeks to incorporate the challenges and opportunities of the modern world in nurturing the very best in youth, where mere boys come in and young adults go out to be integrated "men and gentlemen always".

History of the OBA:

STCOBA Australia Branch was established in 1972 and is based in Melbourne, Victoria; and is the first Thomian OBA to be formed overseas. The membership is predominantly from Victoria and also includes other states in Australia and overseas.

The founders were a group of old Thomians who migrated to Australia after their primary and secondary studies at S. Thomas' College in Sri Lanka in the early 1960s and 1970s.

Mission:

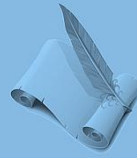
The main purpose, of the Thomian OBA, is to foster fellowship amongst Old Thomians in Australia and to raise funds that can be channelled to the Thomian fraternity of schools in Sri Lanka (Mount Lavinia, Kollupitiya, Bandarawela and Gurutalawa).

Esto Perpetua

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President's Message



Dear Thomians,

I hope this message finds you well.

I am deeply grateful to the membership for placing their faith in me by electing me as president for another year. I am also indebted to the Executive Committee members who have committed to serve another term. A special thank you goes to Joe Rajadurai and Mahes Heenetigala, who stepped down after their selfless contributions in 2023. A very hearty welcome to Vasikaran Ratnarajah, rejoining the committee after a year of absence, and to Mandula Fonseka, who is joining the Executive Committee for the first time.

It has been a busy five months for the Committee, organising the AGM, the Members Only Night, the Members Lunch with Warden Rev'd Marc Billimoria as our guest, and the upcoming Family Night on May 25th. This informal event will truly be a family night with various activities planned for children of all ages and the adults.

As the Warden mentioned at the Members Lunch, the Lower School Library Project has been earmarked for the STC OBA in Melbourne. His wish is for us to complete it before he ends his tenure in January 2025. In the coming months, we will be campaigning to raise the necessary funds, and I urge you to give generously.

I also encourage you to find internships, work experience, or employment opportunities for Thomians who are in Melbourne completing their studies. Currently, there are a few Thomian students seeking employment, and your assistance in helping these students would be greatly appreciated.

We have an exciting line-up of events planned for the rest of the year, detailed in the pages below. Your participation will truly help make these events successful.

Once again, I want to thank you for your support, and I look forward to a great time ahead.

Esto Perpetua

Sincerely

Saman Liyanage

EDITORIAL

"Dream, hope, and love. It makes life beautiful."

We express our appreciation to those who provided feedback on the January 2024 issue of the Thomiana. We are encouraged by the positive comments and will endeavour to refine the publication incorporating many of the suggestions.

This year's activities kicked off with the Annual General Meeting (AGM) on 9th February 2024 at the Mount Waverley Youth Centre. The attendance was similar to previous years but observed to be predominantly senior members. This aspect was discussed during the proceedings and ways of encouraging the younger members to attend is something that need to be considered. Changing from Friday to Saturday may have some merit considering the business environment; but would entail breaking from tradition.

The Executive Committee for 2024 saw some minor changes with the key positions remaining the same. The only exception was the position of Hon. Secretary with the new incumbent being Neomal Jasinghe who has served in the Committee in the past. The two vacancies in the Committee were filled by Vasikaran Ratnarajah and Mandula Fonseka. We wish to express our sincere thanks to the outgoing members – Joe Rajadurai, Mahes Heenetigala and Praveen Bandaratileke; and welcome Neomal, Vasikaran and Mandula. The new streamlined

team is now geared up for an eventful year.

The much-anticipated Stag Night (called Members Night) took place a couple of weeks after the AGM and coincided with a similar event by Royal OBA. As expected, the "official" feedback was very sketchy, which was quite understandable knowing its nature. Considering, several requests for this to be a permanent event in the OBA calendar, one could conclude it was a hit!! As a result, we had to cancel the planned RT Live Screening due to the two events being too close to each other. In hindsight, this was a very wise decision, considering the RT match this year was a big yawn with both sides playing for a draw.

The Melbourne annual Royal-Thomian cricket matches were held on 23rd March 2024 with the Thomians winning all three matches, repeating the same feat last year. The social after the matches, organised by the Royal OBA, proved to be a hit with a sell-out crowd.

The highlight for this quarter was the Members Lunch, which was brought forward from August to May, to accommodate the visit of Warden Rev. Marc Billimoria to Melbourne. This gave us a unique opportunity to show our gratitude to the Warden for his tremendous

contribution to the development of our alma mater during his tenure.

In order to cater for the younger members, we have reintroduced the Family Night in this year's calendar and scheduled to take place on 25th May. The event includes activities for children in addition to music and dancing for the adults. Hopefully, this would be an annual feature of the OBA.

After much effort the date for the 2024 Thomian Dance was finally confirmed for 12th October at the Pullman in Albert Park, Melbourne. This venue which has been used in the past has a capacity of around 600 and large enough not to disappoint anyone who wants to attend.

On the membership front, we are encouraged by the increase in interest of the "younger" old Thomians to join the OBA. New membership is vital to "keep the ship afloat" and it is hoped that the concerted effort by the new Executive Committee will be successful.

Finally, we appeal to our readers to send us any interesting articles relating to your college days and beyond that could be considered for publication in the Thomiana.

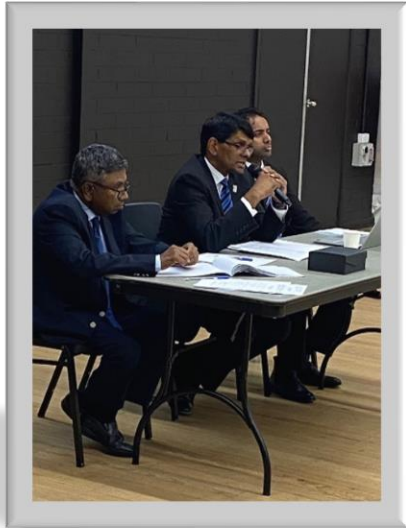
ESTO PERPETUA

Upali Gooneratne
Editor



OBA News

Annual General Meeting – 9th February 2024



The Annual General Meeting (AGM) of the STC OBA Melbourne was held at the Mount Waverley Youth Centre on Friday February 9th 2024 at 6.30pm. The attendance was similar to the previous year with around 75 including spouses.

The meeting noted that in 2023, the OBA was able to undertake their regular activities for the membership; and following suggestions from the floor, would try to include additional activities to attract the younger generation and also for the seniors. As a result, a Members Night Party (Stag Night) and a Family Night was considered and included in the 2024 Calendar of events. The meeting also noted that a Bowling Machine was donated to Mt. Lavinia following a request from the Warden. There was also discussion on the annual Dance which attracted the largest gathering of Old Boys in recent history, but met with challenges with sponsorships to generate sufficient profits from the event. Support of the general membership in seeking additional sponsors was sought.

Saman Liyanage was re-elected as President of the OBA and there were no significant changes to the existing Committee. The most notable change was the position on Honorary Secretary, which was assigned to Neomal Jasinghe following the resignation of the incumbent, Joe Rajadurai. The President in his address thanked the membership and the Executive Committee for their support and assistance.

Peneeth Goonawardena, a former President of the OBA received the President’s Award for 2024. Peneeth, who has served in the Executive Committee in many positions for over a decade, stepped aside as President in 2023 but have continued to serve in the Committee as Vice President. His long-term service to the OBA was widely acknowledged.

The meeting ended with the singing of the College Song and followed by the traditional social with dinner and drinks.



Members Night Party – 23rd February 2024



This event was added to the OBA Calendar of Events to accommodate the requests from the “younger” members. The format was similar to the “Stag Nights” previously organised in conjunction with the Big Match. This event coincided with a similar function organised by Royal College OBA in Melbourne.

The program provided unfettered enjoyment to the attendees with music, floor shows and a sumptuous buffet dinner and drinks. The venue ((Mount Waverley Youth Centre) proved to be ideal to

accommodate the crowd of around 70 who supported the event. The feedback from the attendees was positive and it is expected that it will be included in the OBA calendar in the future.



Royal – Thomian Cricket Encounter – 23rd March 2024

A Whitewash – Second Year in a Row!!



The annual Royal Thomian cricket encounter was held on the 23rd of March at the Max Pawsey Reserve in Narre Warren.

Over 50s Game

The **over 50's** kicked off the day with Royal batting first and made 142/9 in their 20 overs with Shehan Paranavithana, the pick of the bowlers, taking 5/33. In reply the Thomians passed the score 8 down in the last over with Mahen Siritunga scoring 30 not out along with Shehan Dhanapala (20) and Dirk D'Silva who made a fighting 19 n.o at the end.

Scores

Royal: 142/9 20 Overs
S. Thomas': 143/8 19.5 Overs

Award Winners

Best Batter: Shyam Sideek (RC)
Best Bowler: Shehan Paranavitharana (STC)

Player of the Match: Dirk da Silva (STC)

Over 40s Game

The next game was the over 40's and the Thomians batted first and made 181/7 in their 20 overs with Dilusha Nanayakkara (34) and Jeevan Mendis (36) getting the team off to a quick start

and then Asfan Thajudeen making a quick fire 40 n.o. at the end. In reply the Royalists were in all sorts against some fantastic Thomian bowling and fielding and could only get a total of 107/9. The wickets were shared by all with Jeevan grabbing 2/6 off 1 over.

Scores

S. Thomas': 181/7 20 Overs
Royal: 107/9 20 Overs

Award Winners

Best Batter: Asfan Thajudeen (STC)
Best Bowler: Jeevan Mendis (STC)
Player of the Match: Jeevan Mendis (STC)

Open Game

The open game had the Thomians batting first again after winning the toss and got off to shaky start losing 2 early wickets; however after that it was the Shiran Rajakaruna show along with Chenutha Wickramasinghe who put on a batting clinic. Shiran stole the show with a record-breaking knock of 153 with 11 x 6's and 15 x 4's. Chenutha scored 61 including 5x 6's and 5x4's. The final total 246/6 in 20 overs.

Royal in their reply kept up with the required run rate at all times with several of their batsman getting quick runs. The game got down to the wire and the Thomians prevailed with a hard-fought win by 8 runs.

Scores

S. Thomas': 246/6 20 Overs
Royal: 238/ 4 20 Overs

Award Winners

Best Batter: Shiran Rajakaruna (STC)
Best Bowler: Chaminda Vidanapathirana (RC)
Player of the Match: Shiran Rajakaruna (STC)

Randy De Silva Memorial Trophy for the best Thomian player: Shiran Rajakaruna (STC)

It was a great day with plenty of support for all 3 teams throughout the day.



Members Lunch – 4th May 2024



The Members Lunch this year was brought forward from August to May to coincide with the visit of Warden Rev'd. Marc Billimoria to Australia. The event was held on Saturday 4th May at the RSL Club in Springvale attended by over 90 Old Boys and spouses, with the Warden as the Chief Guest.

The proceedings commenced with Saman Liyanage (President, OBA) welcoming the guests and acknowledging the Warden for his loyal service to the College during his tenure since 2015 and passing the good wishes of the Thomian fraternity in Melbourne. The Warden in response thanked the OBA for their loyal support to the College and confirmed that he will be vacating his position as Warden voluntarily at end of this year after a period of 10 years; and requested the OBA for their continued support to the incoming Warden. There was a Q&A session, where the Warden was able to clarify a range of academic and sporting issues. The Warden was then presented with a range of gifts including a bottle of vintage wine, hat and a plaque of appreciation for his life-long service to our Alma Mater.

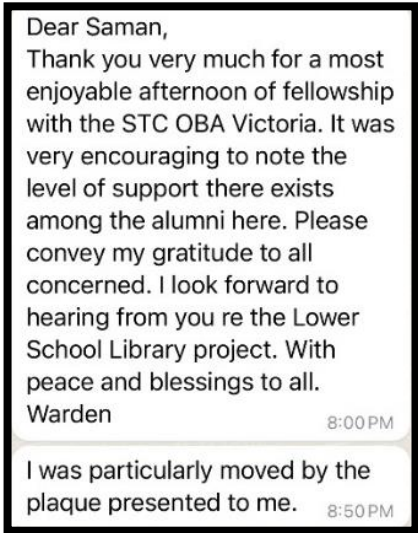
This was followed by a sumptuous lunch provided by the Sri Lankan Chef at the RSL, John Fernando including an array of Western and Asian dishes; with some specially “spiced up” to satisfy the Sri Lanka palates.



There was a raffle conducted after lunch drawn by Wendy Reid (wife of Claud). The winner this year was Mrs. Sandra Silva (wife of the former President “Paijo”). This was followed by the signing of the College Song.

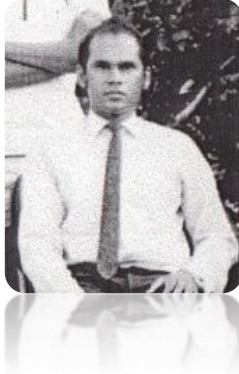
The highlight of the event was the Warden singing a rendition of Neil Diamond’s “Sweet Caroline”, that was appreciated by all.

The EX-Co wishes to thank all those who supported the event and a special appreciation to the Warden for giving us the opportunity to thank him personally for his services. The Warden’s acknowledgement after the event is shown in the adjacent box.



MILESTONE BIRTHDAY CELEBRATIONS

Dr. Vevil De Kauwe (90 years)



DR VEVIL DE KAUWE recently celebrated his 90th Birthday in Perth with his family and friends. He was a graduate from the Colombo University and was in the academic staff at STC Mt. Lavinia during the 1960-70 era. He was well known for his ballroom dancing and was the most sought-after dancing instructor in Colombo. He was the creator of the “Lunar Trot”; and was the youngest SL examiner of Federal Association of Ballroom Dance Australia and New Zealand.

After migrating to Australia, he obtained a medical degree at the age of 47 years and also completed a Diploma Obstetrics and Gynaecology at 55 years; and continued his medical practice in Perth till his retirement. Mr. De Kauwe has been a member of the Melbourne OBA for many decades.

Congratulations, Sir, on this tremendous milestone and wish you all the happiness in the years ahead.

Mrs Audrey Goonetilleke (100 years)

Mrs. Audrey Goonetilleke is the widow of Claude Goonetilleke, a loyal member of this Association for many years, who passed away in 2010. Whilst in retirement, he used his engineering skills to produce fridge magnets depicting the Thomian crest, as well as iconic Australian landmarks such as the Sydney Opera House and Harbour Bridge, which he donated to the OBA for fundraising purposes. In appreciation of his support and Audrey’s ongoing connection with this Association, a group of our senior members hosted her for lunch, a few weeks after her 100th birthday in February this year.



L-R Trevor, Niddy, Rajan, Audrey, Jarit, Upali, Nalin, Selva

Audrey was born in Colombo and at 10 years moved with the family to Nuwara Eliya where she attended Good Shepherd Convent and completing the Senior Cambridge. Being keen on a teaching career, she successfully completed the entrance exam at the Teachers Training College, but at 16 years she was adjudged too young due to the minimum entry age being 18 years. Instead, she opted to assist her dad in running the John & Co Photographic Studio.

The family migrated to Australia in 1976 and Audrey continued her career with Townsend Colortech, a photographic laboratory and then with Steven Lumley Insurance Brokers; and ending her working career with World Vision. Since retirement, she undertook voluntary work at Elizabeth Gardens. She has maintained an active lifestyle as a “Jolly Pensioner” going on outings arranged by the local council, participating in Probus activities and spending weekends with her daughter Lila. She is still active and in good health; and drives to the shops, visits friends and enjoys gardening.



Wishing you many more years of good health, abundant happiness and peace of mind. Happy 100th Birthday!





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Committee Member



Dulith Gunaratne
Committee Member



Lalindra De Silva
Committee Member



Mandula Fonseka
Committee Member

HE DID IT HIS WAY

Tribute to Warden Neville de Alwis

June 15th 2003 was a sad day for many Thomians and the members of the family of Neville de Alwis. Warden Emeritus of the College, as the mortal remains of that great man were laid to rest after a ceremonial Thomian funeral attended by a throng of mourners from all walks of life. To many of us saying a last adieu and farewell to Warden Neville, who entered rest two weeks short of his 66th birthday, was akin to saying goodbye to a Father and a Mentor, and so it was apt that the funeral took place on Fathers' Day.

The moving ceremonial Thomian funeral, was a final tribute to a great Warden and a fine human being.

As I reflected on the whole day's proceedings, the services, the Bishop's moving eulogy, the newspaper tributes, the vast throng who flocked to the home and to the Chapel and filled the cemetery, as well as the many tributes that accompanied wreaths and posies, the one thing that struck me was that all this reflected just how much Warden Neville had meant to people and how much he had influenced people for good and been a blessing – how many lives he had touched.

All the buildings he had erected, all the infrastructural changes and innovations he had introduced all the modernization he had brought in while he was Warden fade into oblivion when compared to the number of lives that were transformed by this great man.

Though his life manifested the Godlike qualities of wisdom, love, compassion, humility, kindness and generosity, he was human and thus not perfect.

Yet even his imperfections are minuscule when compared with his greatness, his strength and his courage as a leader of men, family man and mentor. Perhaps this is why a number of those who had opposed him in life found it necessary to pay their last respects to him in death.

Warden Neville's many achievements in all spheres during his fifteen and a half years at the helm of affairs at S. Thomas' College are a testimony to his greatness as a leader. To claim that his was the

greatest of the four 'Golden Ages' of the College would be to do precisely what he never wanted done. In his farewell speech to the College on 30th June 1998 he said: "*Please don't compare me with past Wardens, simply enjoy and make use of what I am leaving for you and pass it on to those who come after you untarnished.*"

Although he never claimed that the College was his life, those who knew him and worked with him knew just how much this was so. S. Thomas' College was a part of him. STC flowed in his veins! His day began and ended with STC. For him STC was his 'Pearl of Great price'.

In spite of the fact that he received very little official recognition after he retired, he was not forgotten by most of those who had studied under him or served with him. The overwhelming evidence of this was seen at his funeral.

Enumeration of what he did for S. Thomas' College cannot be undertaken here, yet something needs to be said about the man behind the achievements. What attracted people to this simple, shy, unassuming man who bestrode the affairs of STC like a colossus for fifteen and a half years?

Warden Neville had a genial personality. The gruff, stiff exterior he often presented to us hid a warm heart, a sparkling wit and a sense of humour, which together with the fact that he cared deeply for people, made him a truly remarkable individual, with a great capacity for understanding their problems. Being a devoted family man, whose wife and children (and later his grandchildren) meant so much to him, he looked upon the Thomian community as one big family. His list of priorities was always "First the boys, then the staff and then everything else..." As the Lord Bishop said in his eulogy "Warden Neville was a people-oriented person". There are many that will bear testimony to this.

Warden Neville loved his students. In disciplining them he never thrashed them but loved them into submission. In his farewell speech he said thus: "I wanted love to pervade the entire campus. I wanted them to feel that this was a second home for them. I



wanted to see smiling faces . . . I never wanted boys to fear me, or fear coming to school. This was partly due to my belief that discipline should come from within and not to be enforced by the cane or any other form of corporal punishment. This does not mean that I neglected discipline in any way – the end was the same, the means were different.” Some purists saw this philosophy as a weakness, but his stress on the boys discovering self-discipline from within, did not mean that he never reprimanded or punished boys for various offences. He certainly did. Yet it was for their own good and only for that moment and for that offence. He never harboured a grudge and the next day would treat the miscreant as though the incident had never taken place. When he forgave, he ‘wiped the slate clean’.

His philosophy influenced the manner in which he handled boys considered to be “wayward”, “incorrigible” or “impossible.” He did so like the father in Jesus’ parable of the Prodigal Son. He took the initiative.

He had the flair for turning such boys around and guiding them on the correct course. Sometimes a brief chat was all it took for such boys to reform. No boy was too bad. His faith in them when all others had given up on them endeared him to such boys.

The tributes sent by many of these once wayward boys, now responsible citizens, are testimony that his method was effective. He truly exemplified the type of persons with whom God is pleased: “He has showed you, O man, what is good; and what does the Lord require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with you God.” (Micah 6:8)

This disposition also meant that he would always try to find ways of helping his boys to go through school with the minimum hassle. Having experienced the difficulties of attending STC due to financial constraints himself, he sought every opportunity to help those who found paying the fees a difficult task to stay in school with the minimum loss of dignity and self-respect. The many students of the College between 1983 and 1998 who experienced this quality of Warden Neville will testify to this fact.

Secondly, it was not just the boys but the staff, of all sections and departments, especially the support staff, also benefited by his concern for people and their welfare. He did much to raise the dignity of staff. He was responsible for many of the enhanced benefits that the staff of all ranks received, such as increased salaries, pension rights, incentives, bonuses, insurance schemes, and many other benefits. One outstanding feature was his staunch

advocacy of the right of children of the support (or minor) staff to be admitted as students. By doing so he proved that elitism had no place in the Thomian family.

Thirdly, Warden Neville had an abundance of the ‘common touch’. Everyone felt at ease in his presence. He exuded dignity and commanded respect, except perhaps from those who he had displeased for one reason or another, more often than not the disgruntled who had not got their own way. His presence anywhere was one of a quiet and dignified authority. He was not averse to being witty and knew how to put at ease those he perceived to be nervous in his presence! Staff of all ranks, students, old boys and parents all saw this quality in him. He was thoroughly approachable. It would take him a long time to make his way from his bungalow to the office each morning as he would stop on the way to chat with staff and boys and each individual who passed him on that short stretch would receive a friendly nod or a hearty good morning, not to mention an occasional stern reprimand for the support staff member who had forgotten to sweep the area or water the plants or indeed a ‘pulling of the leg’ of a staff member or two. Many literally adored him and would have done anything for him. His loyalty to them was admirable as was theirs’ to him.

Fourthly, he had a prodigious memory that was a tremendous asset to him and the envy of us all. He knew each boy in and out – their marks, their positions through school, their family background and their genealogies were all logged in his memory and were literally at his finger tips. I recall the staff meeting at which he noticed that a certain student had fared rather poorly in Mathematics and recalled that the boy had done much better in an earlier class.

The teacher concerned had no recollection and went away to consult his records and it turned out to be so! One did not need a telephone directory when he was around, all you needed to do was to give him the name and back came the number in reply. Appearing before him for interviews was a daunting prospect as his memory provided him with a mental file on each individual and there was nothing that could be hidden from him.

This greatly assisted his administrative abilities and taught us the value of knowing the background of people. Facts and figures, about cricket for example, a game he loved with a passion although he had never played it himself, were at his fingertips. Kumar Boralessa and Pelham Juriansz



describe him as a “Walking Wisden” He knew more about Thomian cricket than many who had played the game. He used to admit that for him cricket was King! Yet he gave as much patronage to other sports as well. He would have been a great asset to the committee writing the history of the Royal-Thomian Cricket match in time for the 125th game.

Fifthly, there was his acumen for always selecting the right man for any job. I recall the student who was known to have the makings of a fine actor and would have perfectly suited the lead role in a major production, but was reluctant to give it a go. Warden Neville convinced him to just try it once, and as expected the lad performed brilliantly, going on to be one of the finest actors ever produced by S. Thomas’ College. He recognized gifted people when others did not and he harnessed their talents for the greater good.

But to me his most remarkable and inspiring quality and what I shall most remember about him was his faith in God in the face of all obstacles. He was a Christian who had a childlike faith. It was this faith that sustained him – a faith grounded in the ‘High Church’ tradition of Anglicanism. He often recalled the words of Bishop Jabez Gnanapragasam who had once told him: “a Christian may be knocked down, but never knocked out! In his farewell speech to the school he said that this gave him a lot of strength. “This has stood me in good stead. I have never bowed to pressure, however powerful the individual may be”. “In the same speech he went on to read W. E. ‘Henley’s INVICTUS’, on the ‘unconquerable soul’. Verse two exemplifies Warden Neville’s experience.

*In the fell clutch of circumstance
I have not winced nor
cried aloud.
Under the bludgeonings
of chance
My head is bloody, but unbowed.*

This was an amazing quality in the man. Other men would have turned and run from some of the problems that Warden Neville faced with courage, integrity and conviction.

Though he was hurt by some of the things that he had to face, he was by no means daunted by them. His personal motto was from Horace ‘*Aequam mentem rebus in arduis servare mentem*’ – ‘Remember to keep a calm mind in difficult situations’.

He also taught us how to react to criticisms. His maxim was “Dogs may bark but the caravan still

passes on.” With the bouquets for his achievements, he received his share of brickbats, yet nothing ever deterred him from the goals he had set for himself for the benefit of the College. This strength inspired those around him to stand firm, in spite of unpopularity, in spite of opposition. His strength was the impetus that made us stand with him. He inspired us and will continue to inspire us.

This great man did much not only as Warden, but also as a decent human being. As I said in my sermon on the 15th anniversary of his Institution and Installation, it was a combination of ‘vision’ and ‘divine volition’ that enabled him to do so. It was his farsightedness and his vision that spurred him on every step of the way. He taught us the value of always working with a vision and the equally important value of always thinking ten years ahead when taking certain momentous decisions. He fulfilled the vows he made at his Installation in January 1983, vows he renewed annually at a special service on the 19th of January.

The Man he was and the life he lived are like a stamp that must be imprinted for generations to come on the School he loved and served so well. What he has done must never be forgotten. In one of the prayers used at his funeral we prayed “that nothing good in this man’s life will be lost, but will be of benefit to the world; that all that important to him will be respected by those who follow; and that everything in which he was great will continue to mean much to us now that he is dead.” We need to say a loud ‘Amen’ to that.

Warden Neville de Alwis fought the good fight, finished his race and kept the faith. While offering our condolences to his wife and family who shared his joys and sorrows, it is now the turn of those who loved and respected him and sat at his feet, to emulate the noble example of the ‘Man for All Reasons’ who certainly did everything HIS WAY! As he always used to say, “History will be the best judge” of his remarkable life and times.

Ave atque vale magister magistrorum

Requiescat in pace

Editor’s Note: This article by Rev. Marc Billimoria (Old Boy of STC & former Member of Staff.) was first published in the Daily News of 25th June 2003 and reprinted with his consent.





145TH BATTLE OF THE BLUES SADEV SOYSA – THE ONLY SHINING LIGHT!!

According to many sports writers, the 145th Battle of the Blues will be recorded as arguably one of the drabest of draws ever played out in its history, as the Thomians were found guilty of opting to chase personal milestones rather than forcing a result, when the third and final day of their big match cricket encounter ended. This encounter, will now be best remembered as the '145th Battle of the Yawn', a match that the Thomians played never to win. With the onus on them to force a result, S. Thomas' College went into a surprise defensive mode and chose to end



the match as a stalemate, much to the relief of the Royal College cricketers whom they had to beat in regaining the coveted D.S. Senanayake Shield that they had lost last year.

Sri Lankan President Ranil Wickremesinghe, an old boy of Royal College, whilst watching the match at the grounds jokingly described the ongoing proceedings best, when he said "The Thomians managed to snatch a draw from the jaws of victory."

Amidst this doom and gloom on the Thomian approach and performance an unlikely hero, in the name of **Sadev Soysa** emerged. Fresher Sadev Soysa produced his best performance of the season top scoring with 83 runs as S. Thomas' posted 297 runs after being invited to bat first on day one of the Match. This was in addition to another 33 runs in the second innings (total 116 runs) and received the Best Batter Award for the match. A week later, in the 47th Mustangs Trophy, he proved once again that he was no mug with the bat by recording the highest score of 65 runs in the Thomian innings, winning the Man of the Match award and enabling the Thomians to win by 30 runs.

An interesting interaction by an Old Thomian (Vidusha Nathavitharana) with Sadev during the Royal Thomian Match in the previous year, when Sadev was a Steward, that was published in LinkedIn, highlights the calibre of this young star.

"I don't generally do 'brag' posts : but this young man warrants a boast : and a lesson in resilience, courage, and also, downright determination.

I met Varnika Soysa's young son Sadev last year at the big match - where he was on Steward Duty. He was trying to sell his quota of souvenirs. Clearly, quite 'sloshed' and in our usual 'ribbing' mood, I jovially told him to sell me a souvenir next year as I already bought one (which wasn't true !).



He replies "I will not be here next year"

"Why? Don't you have another year or two left to go?" I inquired and cheekily asked him "Failing O/Ls in true Thomian style are we?"

The young man laughs... and points to the pitch... and tells me "I will be there"

I laughed - honestly not taking him seriously. He noticed it. And told me quite sternly..

"Watch me uncle... I will be out there... Not here"

"No point" I kept ribbing him... "You'll be out for a duck..."

"At least a 50 uncle : at least a 50".

For a young man who was dropped out of the side that year, this was a bold claim. I laughed - and let it be at that... I bought a souvenir - and forgot all about it...

This year, young Sadev hammered a 80+ in his maiden Big Match - and won the best batsman award... The proud father tells me how he put his head down and worked at it daily - and the grim determination he worked towards this momentous achievement that I am sure will be a memory he will cherish a lifetime...

Many times, when faced with rejection and failure, we cower ; we falter ; we give up : worst of all, we lose that sense of 'spunk' we generally have. Being able to come back from a defeat, from a set back, from a disaster, is what truly makes character : and there really is no shortcut to it apart from falling down, and getting back up... No matter what, being able to still believe in yourself is the cornerstone of success : in the field, in the class, in the workplace, and in life..

It also shows how important it is to have those around you to prop you back up, help you back on your feet, and never lose hope in you... There will be enough to 'talk down' on you (like I did - albeit jokingly of-course) - so, having the few that truly believe in you, and give that little pep talk is essential too... A proud father moment for sure Varnika Soysa !



L to R: Vidusha Nathavitharana, Sadev Soysa, Varnika Soysa and DDL Fernando

Editor's Note: Our thanks to Vidusha Nathavitharana for his contribution to this article.

FORTHCOMING EVENT



S. Thomas' College, Old Boys Association,
Australian Branch Inc.



TRANSFIGURATION SERVICE

DATE: Saturday 3rd August 2024

VENUE: St. Aidan's Anglican Church,
39, Wallarano Drive, Noble Park, Vic 3174





Great feats have been performed on the field, but memories are made all around it.

The Royal Thomian Big Match is possibly the most anticipated event of the year in the Sri Lankan school calendar, looked forward to by both young and old, male and female, and even those who have no connection to either school. It is the second-longest uninterrupted cricket match series in the world, and it is the only schoolboy cricket match in Sri Lanka to be played over three days. For a nation that lives and breathes cricket and worships its heroes, it comes as no surprise that Big Match season unleashes unmitigated levels of frenzy unto Colombo's streets.

In all this, the Roy-Tho has come to represent far more than just a schoolboys' cricket encounter – from the infallible excitement of those attending the match for the very first time, feeling in their bones that they're about to witness something special, to the seasoned veterans returning year after year to feel the height of camaraderie and to take with them alcohol-induced hazy memories of the greatest times of their lives.

Most of this togetherness and the "living of the best life" take place in the infamous tents. Many have heard these names in passing – Mustangs, Colts, Stallions, Thoroughbreds, Stables, and all sorts of others – but for an outsider looking in, they remain a mystery and to be frank, make up part of the allure and feeling of mystery that surround the exclusive boys' club aspect of the event.



While the mystery adds to it all, there's no harm in taking a quick dive into the past and an insightful look into the walls, tarps, and pillars that lay witness to all this sporting solidarity.

MUSTANGS

Mustangs is the oldest tent, celebrating an impressive 106 years in 2024. It was formed by a group of four old Royalists and two old Thomians. It serves as a gathering place for distinguished gentlemen who have likely witnessed the match for more years than many of us have been alive.



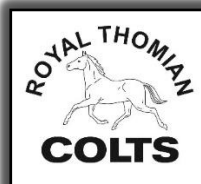
A Mustang is defined as a wild, unruly, and masterless horse, a meaning, it would seem, that has resonated with the founders of the tent, to take the liberty for some horseplay in their old age. Only elders are qualified to enrol in the Mustangs tent, which emanates a grandiose nature from deep within as it hosts all the high-flyers, senior old boys of Royal and S. Thomas', making the tent very exclusive.

The Mustangs was the only private tent in the Big Match for a long time. This changed in 1975 with the addition of the Colts Tent. The Mustangs colours of pink, grey and black was chosen by two of its founding members – Fred Wirasekera and Wilmot Perera. They even had a custom-made Mustang tie from a well-known company in the UK (Sulka in Bond Street).

The Centenary celebrations of Mustangs in March 2018 included many special events including a Kiribath breakfast on the first day of the match, attended by the Principal (Royal College) and Warden (S. Thomas'). After breakfast the two captains came over to the Mustangs Tent to collect a specially minted Gold Coin, from the oldest and most senior member Retd. Air Force Commander Air Field Marshall Paddy Mendis, to be used at the toss. A group photo of the Mustangs members was also taken.

COLTS

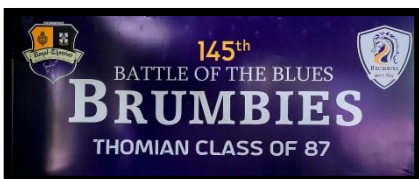
The Royal-Thomian Colts tent was founded 49 years ago (1975) by a group of young Royalists and Thomians and is now one of the most vibrant fixtures at the Big Match. The Colts has become synonymous with uninhibited revelry and merriment, experienced in the secure confines of a members' tent.



The tent, however, signifies more than fun: It is a vibrant affirmation of the friendly rivalry, deep respect and camaraderie that characterise the Big Match. From its beginnings at a small enclosure at the Oval, the tent now accommodates 500 young Royalists and Thomians.

Memberships are carefully vetted by a committee to ensure a gathering of the like-minded. Entertainment is provided by a house band, a papare band, and a DJ, with popular artistes making guest appearances as well. The tent is now air-conditioned and a number of support staff including helpers assist in making the experience as comfortable as possible.

BRUMBIES



Brumbies came to be way back in 2010, when the '87 batch was invited as sponsors, to sit together as one batch for the first time at the sponsors' tent. The following year, as they were unable to accommodate the entire batch, Brumbies was born.

Equipped with their very own DJ, eight-piece papare band, and all the modern "necessary" amenities of a Big Match tent, the Brumbies seats hold around 275 at capacity.





Over the years, families have begun to join and while it is predominantly a Thomian tent, there are a number of Royalists as well.

Brumbies, with their elevated location, are the first to have started dance nights inside a tent, something that has caught on since they did.

STABLES



As the oldest tents – Mustangs, Colts, and Stallions – are for boys, leaving their wives, girlfriends, and family with no place to hang out, the Thomian class of '79 decided to include a tent where they could seat their families. It bridges the gap allowing everyone to be a part of this grand tradition.

While it was originally started by Thomians, there's a majority of Royalists occupying it at present.

Speaking about Stables, Stables tent committee Chairman cum Secretary Leslie Wirekoon said that they're quite proud that they have not had a single fight break out at the Stables; he also clarified that seating in the tent is by invitation only.

STALLIONS



Once you've aged out of Colts, natural progression dictates that your next stop is the Stallions. The tent was started in the mid-90s by the same group that started Colts – six Thomians and six Royalists.

Stallions has an age requirement of over 40, and essentially came up to facilitate those who were coming out of Colts but weren't quite ready for the Mustangs.

The camaraderie between the Royalists and the Thomians within the tents is well known; and the saying goes: "Colts is the arrival lounge, Stallions is the business executive lounge, and Mustangs is the departure lounge."

The committee at Stallions functions in such a way that they have no permanent president, and instead have all general secretaries and appoint a president for each individual meeting. The tent currently hosts around 450 seats, with 250 for each school and limited to members and their guests.

BRONCOS

This tent was formed by the Royal College batch of '91 and is the second tent to come up as an exclusive tent for a single batch, initially started off as a space from the HSSBC pavilion. They received their own space in 2007 and started with the tagline "Simply the Best" and renamed Broncos in 2015.



Broncos was the first tent to bring down professional cheerleaders from Europe. However, this practice has since been banned. Broncos have contributed largely to the glamour of Royal-

Thomian as they brought down such professional acts, foreign DJs and also their wall-to-wall sophisticated sounds system.

OTSC



This is the second oldest tent at the big match, with a capacity of 590 seats that hosts people of all ages, including children and families. The tent is located at the SSC grand stand upper-floor and the tickets can only be purchased by members.

The OTSC (Old Thomians Swimming Club) started in 1956 to assist college aquatics, and today it has a fully-operational clubhouse in Mount Lavinia with over 750 ordinary, associate, and life members, a pool, grounds, and gymnasium facilities.

The tent is one of the largest in the stadium and is considered a family tent, inclusive of live music and even featuring guest artiste performances.

THOROUGHBREDS



Established in 2010, the Thoroughbreds tent embodies this spirit with open arms, providing a haven for Old Boys of Royal College and S. Thomas' College (age 35 and above). It pulsates with life, colour, and engaging entertainment, fostering a vibrant fraternity amid lively chatter, captivating performances, and vibrant decor.

Thoroughbreds started as an option for those over 40 to enjoy the match after leaving Colts and does not have an upper-limit on age. The Thoroughbreds are the pioneers of many of the entertainment elements you see at the match, like bringing in Bollywood dancing and providing alcohol FOC. They also have a sushi bar inside the tent. To be a part of the tent, you must be nominated by a member.



Editor's Note: This was compiled from several articles including one from Dimithri Wijesinghe



TRUTH WITHOUT HURT – PART 2

By Jayakumar Thangavelu (STC ML 1955-1963), Ex Deputy Inspector General, Sri Lanka Police

This is a 3-part series of a frank account of the immeasurable challenges faced by an individual who spent his entire career in the Sri Lankan Police Force from 1970 to 2007, and survived to tell his story. Part 1 was published in the Thomiana January 2024

A SENIOR POLICE OFFICER'S PERSPECTIVE OF INVESTIGATIONS INTO POLITICAL CRIMES

2. ATTEMPTS TO KEEP ME OUT OF THE UDALAGAMA COMMISSION

2.1. On the said Udalagama Presidential Commission being appointed, the IGP was requested by the Commission to nominate some officers to be interviewed in order to select a suitable officer to Head the Investigation Unit of the Commission. Understandably the position contemplated by the Commission would require an officer with vast experience in criminal investigations and trilingual skills.

2.2. The IGP on 19.01.2007 nominated five DIGs which included a Tamil officer, and six Senior Superintendents of Police (SSPs). Though the Commission had requested the IGP to nominate me as a candidate to be interviewed, the IGP has stated that I was to retire in 2007, whereas the term of the Commission could extend beyond December 2007 and hence he did not nominate me. Curiously two officers nominated by the IGP were scheduled to retire a few months before me. I also learnt that the Tamil DIG who was considered for the position, had declined the nomination citing perceived threats.

2.3. Moreover, I had more criminal investigational experience than the other officers nominated. Of my 40 years of service in the Police, I served in the Criminal Investigation Department (CID) for over 20 years, from the rank of Probationary Sub-Inspector up to the rank of SSP. Subsequently upon my acquiring a Law Degree and becoming an Attorney at Law, I served in the Police Legal Division as Deputy Director, then Director and retired as DIG Legal Range.

(My investigational experience consistently avoiding torture and the appreciation expressed by hard core criminals whom I interviewed are detailed in paragraph 3 below.

On my own initiative I followed a one month seminar at the International Institute Of Human Rights, Strasbourg, France in 2002. I also published an article in August 2005

on Police Torture, captioned – “Equal Access to Justice – where should it commence to ensure Human Rights” This is available on the internet).

2.4. However I was interviewed subsequently by the Commission and appointed Head of the Victims and Witnesses Assistance and Protection Unit (VWAPU). I sought and obtained the permission of the Commission to recruit my handpicked officials as ultimately it was my responsibility for providing security to victims and witnesses. Accordingly I recruited some of my Police Boxers and others who worked with me long years, in whom I had absolute faith and trust.

2.5. A DSG was appointed ‘Advisor’ to the VWAPU,

2.6. Since the concept of Victims and Witnesses and Assistance and Protection was a novel concept in Sri Lanka, the Commission decided to train three officials of the VWAPU in Sydney, Australia. The members selected were I, as the Head of the Unit, the DSG who was Advisor to the Unit, and the Officer-In-Charge of the Unit, a Chief Inspector of Police. After having obtained the requisite visas and making the travel arrangements in late August, 2007, just three days prior to our departure, there was a message from the Presidential Secretariat, that if Public Servants were to utilize Government funds for this training, such persons should have at least 2 years service remaining in Public Service. I realized that this order was in particular targeting me, to prevent me from attending the training seminar, as I had only a little more than four months left before my retirement in December 2007.

2.7. Furthermore I knew that if I did not attend this seminar, I would have to agree with every suggestion of the Advisor, and if I was to act independently I had to follow this seminar, or resign. Since this course would also have enhanced my knowledge in this sphere, which was closely related to criminal investigation I informed the Commission that I would personally fund the expenses involved.



2.8. It would be relevant to mention here that around the same time DIG Lafir, who had only one more week to retire, went on a two weeks scholarship to Hong-Kong. He subsequently returned after one week of his retirement and remained totally retired. Whereas I had almost four months left after my return from the training course and furthermore I was mandated to serve the Commission until its conclusion.

2.9. Hence the strange decision of Presidential Secretariat was mind boggling. However, Mr. Lafir is well known in the Police as a very honourable and competent officer who did not indulge in politics or other mean activities.

2.10. In the course of my duties, on the directions of the Commission, certain vulnerable victims and witnesses were relocated by me, some in foreign countries and some locally. But the Commissioners, in strict adherence to the principle of "Need to Know" never ventured to ask me where I relocated the vulnerable persons. After having coordinated with foreign embassies I sent some of these witnesses overseas and some I relocated locally in areas heavily populated with people of similar ethnicity and social standing, so that they could mingle with the local public without arousing suspicion. I did not take even my driver for these local relocations knowing well that he could be pressurized through various means such as promotions / transfers etc, whereas I was now retired and without any authority in the Police. I went on these assignments with my Deputy to the VWAPU Mr A. Nawaz, Attorney-at-Law and a Deputy School Principal.

2.11. However in mid-September, 2008 I received information that at a top level meeting of Security Forces and Police Personnel chaired by a top official of the Defence Ministry, a Member of the Panel of Counsel from the official Bar assisting the Commission, had informed that I was holding some victims and witnesses incommunicado and was coaxing them to give evidence inimical to the interests of the State. In response the top official had entrusted the task of eliminating me to a unit of the security forces.

2.12. Since this source had previously given me information of the impending assassination of a prominent personality, I totally believed in what he said and on 15th September, 2008, I addressed the Chairman of the Commission Hon. Justice N.K.Udalagama letter tendering my resignation, as Head of the VWAPU citing financial constraints and that I wished to pursue my Profession as a Lawyer and also the fact that I was not even in receipt of my pension. But in fact I orally informed the Commissioners of the threat

to my life being the real cause for my resignation. The Chairman requested me to remain until the Commission found a suitable replacement, and directed me to avoid coming for the proceedings and to confine myself to the office. This information of the threat to my life was further confirmed by another dear friend, an ex-policeman a very close relative of a Cabinet Minister.

2.13. I strictly adhered to the advice of the Hon Chairman of the Commission in not attending the proceedings of the Commission and believed that threat would cease when the top official learned that I had tendered my resignation and that I did not attend the Commission proceedings anymore and was waiting to be replaced.

2.14. Nevertheless I reasonably fortified my house, and took precautions of having reconnaissance carried out by my staff covering the route I was to take. I lived down a dead end which had only five houses.

2.15. On 2nd October, 2008 my neighbours around 6:30 am informed me that the dogs down the lane had barked very loudly at 1.15 am and when they came out of their houses they saw two persons near my car. These persons had walked off casually on seeing the neighbours coming out. Another youth said he had seen two persons by my car around midnight on two occasions the same week and one who was fair was there on both occasions and left on seeing him. The neighbours had also noticed suspicious motor cyclists down the dead end.

2.16. This convinced me that my threat would remain even if I relinquished my services with the Commission and I believed that I necessarily had to be with the Commission as at this stage it is only the Commission which could provide me protection, and on 4th October, 2008 I addressed the Chairman of the Commission describing the events of the wee hours of 2nd morning and withdrawing my resignation

2.17. In consequence, the Chairman of the Commission addressed the Inspector General of Police on 9th October, 2008 annexing my letter dated 4th October, 2008 Stating that;

"The Commissioners are of the belief that the threats perceived by Mr.Thangavelu result from the obligations of Mr.Thangavelu to the Commission in his capacity as the Head of VWAPU. The VWAPU is entrusted with the functions of providing assistance and protection to victims and witnesses, who are assessed as vulnerable to threats by interested parties to prevent them from testifying before this Commission. There have been instances where witnesses have been threatened with



death if they came before the Commission. Such witnesses have been provided protection by Mr.Thangavelu. And as a consequence of such responsibility to the Commission Mr.Thangavelu exposes himself to threats of a similar nature.

"In the circumstances this Commission urges you, as a matter of urgency, to provide adequate protection to Mr.Thangavelu and to have this investigated by the Criminal Investigation Department.

"It would be appreciated if the Commission is apprised of the progress with regard to the two urgent issues described in the preceding paragraph."

2.18. The IGP never inquired from me about providing security. An ASP recorded my statement and that was all. None of the witnesses was questioned.

2.19. Instead, the Police Department still insisted on the return of my service pistol and declined to release my pension due from December 2007, despite the Chairman of the Commission addressing the I.G.P. by his letter dated 12th June, 2008 urging him to authorize me to retain my weapon quoting the above threats faced by me.

2.20. Moreover at the time, the retiring DIGs were entitled for such privilege and in fact even a retired SSP enjoyed this benefit.

2.21. I also informed top Diplomats of two Foreign Missions about the threat to my person. One Diplomat asked me whether I desired this information be revealed to the top Defence official. I said "Yes, this official should not runaway with the idea that this killing too could be portrayed as Accused Unknown".

The Commission terminated its proceedings in April, 2009.

3. MY INVESTIGATIONAL EXPERIENCE AND ELICITING INFORMATION DEVOID TORTURE

3.1. I was recruited to the CID by the renowned and distinguished investigator the late Senior DIG Mr. Tyrrel Goonetillake. He instilled in us the discipline of investigating crimes without torture and had very long discourses and on the job training on the skills of investigating avoiding resort to torture. He abhorred torture and stressed that anyone stooping to torture was no good as an investigator to remain in the CID. As a young Sub Inspector in the CID, I also had the privilege of assisting, Inspector O.K. Hemachandra (Retried DIG), in the investigation of a case of rape and murder of a school mistress. He educated me on his personal practical experience as a young Sub Inspector, on the

futility of perpetrating torture in the course of investigations, which ultimately was an exercise in vanity and a show of power.

3.2. It is with this training and experience and the consequential confidence and skills of investigational aptitude, that I ventured to investigate serious crimes including terrorist related crimes both locally and internationally. These included the atrocities committed by both the LTTE and the JVP. Since I did not perpetrate torture on any of my suspects I have neither been targeted for harm, nor ever threatened.

Eliciting Information without resort to Torture

3.3. I had the privilege of addressing about 100 Inspectors on "Investigation techniques to minimize violation of Human Rights at a Police training programme conducted by the United Nations Development Programme(UNDP) in early July 2005.

3.4. When I asked these officers their opinion of Human Rights, especially the aspect of torture, they said that they had to resort to use of force to solve cases owing to the following reasons:-

- Sense of shame and loss of face if they fail to solve the case by recovering the weapon of the offence or the fruits of the crime, where there were several eye witnesses testifying against the suspect.
- Lack of resources- personnel / vehicles, equipment etc. to pursue their investigations;
- The period of custody of 24 hours was insufficient.
- Pressure from Superior officers to solve the cases, with the implication that the consequences of non-compliance or failure to successfully complete investigations within the time limit would result in unfavourable reports to their personnel file or other strictures, which would adversely affect their career prospects.

3.5. After listening to their response I posed the question whether they had ever carried out acts that could be classified as torture, or whether they had heard of torture being perpetrated on members of the privileged classes such as politicians, their off-spring, the rich and persons of high standing in society, notwithstanding accusations or evidence to attest that such persons had been concerned in murder, sometimes multiple murders, fraud involving millions of Rupees, rape and other such serious crime, or whether force had been used on such persons to extort information or



evidence relevant to the crime committed – whether force, or physical intimidation had been used to obtain information on the weapons used for the murders or to trace the stolen/ defrauded loot.

The answer was 'NO'.

When I asked them whether I was incorrect in saying that in almost all the instances of torture in Police custody, the victims were the poor, the destitute and the defenseless, they sheepishly admitted it was so.

The answer was 'YES'.

3.6. The irony of the situation is that torture had been directed against the weakest sections of society – the poor, the destitute and the defenceless, who were in need of the most elaborate protection from the State.

The foregoing paragraphs on The Eliciting Information Devoid Torture is an extract from my Article 'EQUAL ACCESS TO JUSTICE – Where Should It Commence To Ensure Human Rights' published in the newspapers in 2005 (also available on the Internet)

Part 3 will be published in the next issue of the Thomiana (September 2024)



***Editor's Note:** Jayakumar Thangavelu is a retired Deputy Inspector General of Police in Sri Lanka. He had his entire education at S. Thomas' College Mount Lavinia, between 1955 and '63; and graduated in Law (LLB) while serving in the Police Force. He was a successful criminal investigator and a forceful participant in implementing better policing of human rights in Sri Lanka. He has investigated all types of serious crimes both locally and internationally and was awarded a Special Certificate from the Asian Human Rights Commission in Hong Kong, in January 2006.*

Jayakumar was also a much-feared boxer in his college days, commencing his career at the age of 14 of years and captained the college team at the age of 15 years, fighting in the Welter Weight - under 100 pounds. He won the Police 'Best Boxer's' Title in the Inter-Divisional Boxing meets many times and went on to claim the National Boxing Titles on four occasions

To All Old Thomians – We like to hear from you!!

We are reaching out to all Old Boys in Australia and Overseas - If you do have an interesting anecdote about your days at College or some interesting tidbits about the after-school life of a fellow Thomian (or even a teacher) or just remember the good old days as they used to be, please, send in your articles, photos, letters, poems, stories, etc. to the Editor: **Upali Gooneratne:** fgooneratne@iiec.org.

Membership Register

To all OBA Australia Members - It is vital that you advise us of changes to your contact details in order to ensure that this publication reaches you. Also, in order to maintain the membership records up to date, please contact the Membership Secretary of any changes (telephone number, address, deaths etc.). **Membership Secretary, PO Box 2337, Mt. Waverley, Victoria 3149.** Email: fgooneratne@iiec.org



SPORTING HEROES OF YESTERYEAR...



REID BROTHERS – The Famous Five

In this series, which commenced in the September 2023 edition, we aim to highlight the sporting achievements of old Thomians in the fifties and sixties era, who have migrated to the Land Down Under to call “Australia Home”; and have continued to support our alma mater through active participation in the Old Boys Associations in Australia. So far, we have highlighted the achievements of Rodney Ingleton (NSW), Maurice Fairweather (WA) and the two cousins from Victoria – Rupert Ferdinands and Denis Ferdinands. On a sad note, Denis Ferdinands passed away in January 2024 after a long illness, just a few days after the release of the January edition of the Thomiana. Fortunately, his wife Caryl had time to read the article about him to Denis to which he responded with a “Thumbs Up”. May his soul rest in eternal peace.

There have been a few instances where sets of brothers playing for their schools, clubs and with some of them going on to sport Sri Lanka caps. In this edition, we focus on five brothers who not only played 1st XI cricket for College (Mount Lavinia), but some went on to represent the national side and excel in a range of other sports also at the national level both in Sri Lanka and Australia. The **REID** brothers – Claud, Ronnie (Ronald), Buddy (Barclay), Barney (Brian) and Tiny (Johann) represented College in 1st XI cricket during the period 1955 to 1968.

Cricket was the only sport which all five Reid brothers represented College. In addition to cricket, several excelled in a range of other sports, especially Table Tennis (Buddy and Barney), Athletics (Ronnie and Tiny) and Rowing (Tiny). Eldest brother Claud was the first to take up the sport of cricket, progressing from the Under 12 age group right up to the senior team which he represented for one year. All had the honour of playing at the Royal Thomian and their achievements are summarized below.



Cricket - Achievements at the Royal Thomian

- One wicketkeeper (Claud)
- Four opened the Batting (Ronnie, Buddy, Barney and Tiny)
- Royal Thomian Batting Record (Ronnie 158 n.o.)
- Royal Thomian Aggregate Record (Ronnie 325)
- 2 Stephen Memorial Batting Awards (Ronnie 1956 and 1957)
- 3 Stephen Memorial Bowling Awards (Barney 1964, 1965 and Tiny 1968)
- Two opened the Bowling (Barney 1963, 1964 1965 and Tiny 1968)
- Two opened the Batting and Bowling (Barney 1965 and Tiny 1968)

Ronnie's score of 158 n.o. in 1956 was a Royal Thomian record which stood for 16 years until Duleep Mendis overtook it with an innings of 184.

Other Cricketing Highlights

Ronnie and Barney topped the Thomian Batting and Bowling Averages respectively for three consecutive years; with Ronnie in 1955 – 1957 and Barney in 1963 – 1965. Barney also held the Ground Record for a debut bowling performance with the figures of 8 wickets for 2 runs against St. Sebastian's in 1962. In addition, Ronnie and Barney



won the Schoolboy Cricketer of the Year Award in 1957 and 1965 respectively, with both representing Sri Lanka Schools team during the same years.

At the national level Claud, Ronnie, Buddy and Barney represented Sri Lanka President's IX. Ronnie and Buddy went on to represent Sri Lanka., with Buddy subsequently being appointed the captain of the national team against the MCC in 1968/69.

Barney returned to College in 2010 to take up the position of Head Coach of the cricket team. Joining only a couple of months before the Royal Thomian, he ensured that the team, which were the underdogs, was fully geared up to meet the challenges ahead of them; and their gritty performance at the Big Match was testimony to Barney's input.

Other Highlights

Claud: After migrating to Australia, he actively supported the OBA in Melbourne and played consecutively for 44 years in the annual OBA Royal Thomian Seniors and Open games. He received the President's Award in 2007 for his contribution towards STC OBA cricket.

Ronnie: In addition to Cricket, Ronnie represented the College in Athletics, Basketball and Rugby. He regarded Athletics as his favourite sport and held the College ground record for 440 yards with a time of 51.0s in 1956 and won the Public Schools (Pubs) in 440 yards the same year. This was the same year that he broke the RT batting record. Leaving school, he represented NCC (Sara Trophy Champions) and Ceylon (against Madras in the Gopalan Trophy) – albeit in a career cut short due to work commitments during his heyday while based in Trincomalee and Galle. Following his migration to Australia, Ronnie, turning 40, signed off his cricketing career in style with Blackburn North Cricket Club (Melbourne, Victoria) - topping the batting aggregate and averages for two successive seasons in the local Shield grade competition - just like he did all those years ago at STC!

Buddy: He was a double international, with Table Tennis being the other sport besides cricket. In cricket, in addition to playing for College and the national side, he also played for the University of Ceylon (where he was a medical student) and BRC. His 1st XI cricketing career at College lasted only one year, as a result of successfully gaining entrance to the Medical College. In TT, he went on to captain Ceylon in several overseas tournaments, including the Asian Games in Bangkok, the Asian TT Championships in Singapore and the international in Peking, China. Following migration to Australia, he held numerous National and World Veteran Titles in Table Tennis, as well as captaining the Australian Veterans. The pinnacle was the induction to the Australian Table Tennis Hall of Fame.



The Famous Five - On the occasion of Barney being adjudged the Schoolboy Cricketer of the Year (1965)



Reid Brothers – Buddy, Claud, Ronnie, Tiny and Barney celebrating Mum Pearl's 90th Birthday in Melbourne – April 2008



Barney, Buddy, Darrell Lieversz & Claud - launch of the documentary "Sri Lanka's Journey to Test Status" - MCG June 2017.

Barney: "There is a young man in Ceylon, who could bat, bowl – swing, spinners or even chinaman, just what a teenage Sobers would have been" said Brian Close, the former English Test cricketer, referring to Barney, when he went back to England, after a British Council sponsored coaching assignment in Ceylon in early 1965. During his time in school Barney also showed great promise as a Table Tennis player. He was the Captain of TT at College and represented Sri Lanka whilst still at school. He partnered with his brother, Buddy to win the National Men's Doubles



Championships; and with Srinu Lucas to win the National Mixed Doubles Championship. After completing his schooling Barney migrated to Australia and continued his studies in Accountancy at Melbourne University. However, he refused to stray away from cricket and began playing for the Melbourne Cricket Club (MCC). He is a professional cricket coach in Australia and continues to lend his services to various clubs in Victoria.

Johann: Tiny, being the “baby” of the family had an uphill task of matching his brothers, especially in the sporting arena. Taking advantage of his slim build and height, he too excelled in cricket and also, in athletics and rowing. Tiny won the Stephen Memorial Bowling Award in 1968; and he opened batting and bowling for College in the same year. On a sad note, Tiny passed away in August 2014 at the age of 66, after battling a long illness. During the latter years of his life, he was a Chaplain with the Salvation Army, where he completed his counselling course; and dedicated himself to helping others. An exceptional person, gone too soon!!

The cricketing careers of this famous brothers originated on the gravel paths of Harmers Lane, Wellawatte (Colombo 6); and the Table Tennis careers of Buddy and Barney began on this dining table at home and the full-sized table of Uncle Felix Rudolph next door. The College unveiled a photograph of the five brothers at the pavilion of the cricket ground during a second XI fixture of the Royal-Thomian a few years back.

Editor's Note: our sincere thanks to Peter Schoorman, Richard Brohier and Ravi Rudra for their assistance in the preparation of this article.



Celebrating the Golden Era of STC Athletics (1967 – 1971)

STC Athletics has been the unsung hero of the entire STC Sports Program during this era, though it had won more national titles than any of the other STC sports programs combined. This program, coached by the late Mr. Brookie D'Silva and then by duo of the late Mr. ECK Abeysekera and Mr. NM Perera has produced some of STC's best athletes, and together have won many National Titles, Relay Carnivals, Zone Meets, and inter-collegiate Dual Meets in the 60's. In

particular, this team, comprising of various athletes in both track and field events, won the National Title 5 times in a row from 1967 thru 1971, an unprecedented record feat, which to this day has not been equalled or beaten. Finally, a much overdue event was organised on 5th March 2024 coinciding with the Royal Thomian Match. The objective of the event was not only to reminisce and give credit to all team members and coaches, but also to remind the current generation of Thomians, whether in sports or not, that STC produced an elite group of athletes during this era, who went on to achieve such lofty heights. The event was attended by mainly Athletes of this era including spouses and other family members; and other sporting figures of STC. There were several tributes to the coaching staff (Mr. Brooke D'Silva, Mr. ECK Abeysekera and Mr. NM Perera) and a brief summary of some are provided below.



Summary of tributes from past Athletes



Great man, N.M. Perera. I am revealing this information because I was aware of how Mr. NM Perera came to STC as an Athletics coach. NM was coaching a school in Maharagama, Vidyakara Vidyalaya, which produced some good athletes in the 1960s. Brookie saw his dedication, coaching abilities and hard work and asked him whether he would like to come to STC. He agreed and resigned his government job at that school and came over and started coaching us. There was a hitch, though. Brookie could not get him a staff appointment in College for some reason, but for over a year, he coached us without being on the payroll. This pained Brookie no end and I suspect he funded NM during that period. After about one year, just before Brookie migrated, he managed to get NM on the staff. That is the sheer dedication of

the man and the sheer commitment to college shown by Brookie.

Mr. Brookie D'Silva was a Thomian Athletics Icon. A Colossus. He had served his College with dedication and honour for decades, first as a Student, an Athlete and then as a Coach cum Master in Charge. Being the Upper School Headmaster to boot, gave him absolute authority to call on any student to respond to rallying round the College flag in pursuit of Athletics glory for the Alma Mater. He was coming to the twilight of his career in the mid '60s, 1967 being his final year at College before he migrated to Australia. He had not prepared for this eventuality and not made a succession plan.... or so we thought. He had earmarked Mr ECK Abeysekera, a tall, upright Gentleman who was on the tutorial staff and who came with an outstanding record of sporting achievements in his younger days. He took a load off the broad shoulders of Mr Brookie D'Silva and immersed himself in coaching and doing the administrative work so essential to the smooth functioning of the college athletics machinery.

Before I sign off, a lasting memory I cherish is of Mr NM Perera, standing at the finish line at Police Park at the '67 Pubs, when Vijitha Jayasinghe ran the race of his life to win the 4 x 400 relay and annex the Tarbat, with tears streaming down his face and repeating the words "I am so happy" over and over again. He had done his duty by S. Thomas' College for which we all owe a deep debt of gratitude and he had done his duty by his Mentor, Brookie D'Silva.

Thank you, Sirs, Mr ECK Abeysekera, Mr NM Perera and Mr. T.R. Wilson.

Ajit Jayasekera (Athletics Captain 1967 & 1968)

I never met Mr ECK Abeysekera or Mr NM Perera after I left College but today, more than 50 years later, I stand here to eulogize them. So, they really must have made a deep and lasting impression on me!



In my time at College, Mr Brookie D'Silva towered as a colossus – both as a Science Teacher and as an Athletics Coach. He had a vision – that STC would achieve a supremacy in Athletics which would span half-a-decade. He knew that he could not be at College for all those years – because of a personal commitment to emigrate to Australia to ensure the future of his family. So, his vision for STC Athletics would have to be delivered by others – and it would become their legacy. In 1967 he personally selected ECK Abeysekera and NM Perera as his understudies and successors – and the three got the great project started when STC became Public Schools Champions that year.

NM Perera was diminutive and boyish in appearance – soft-spoken, self-effacing and always smiling – but he had a core of steel! He had trained in Melbourne with the legendary champions, Herb Elliott and John Landy – and he was always studying the techniques and styles of famous athletes from around the world.

ECK Abeysekera was tall, distinguished-looking and immaculately dressed in the classroom. His demeanour was always stern – it never changed outside the classroom. Although he was actually a very kind man, he never displayed emotion. Before he joined STC, he had been the Principal of a Government School in the outstations. At STC he was a Class Master and an excellent Teacher of English Literature. Although he never raised his voice – and certainly never resorted to corporal punishment – he was treated with great respect by even the most mercilessly disruptive students – who were like lambs in his class.

ECK Abeysekera and NM Perera were master tacticians whose focus was for their superbly trained Team to achieve supremacy in Schools Athletics. They kept performance records of all their Athletes and tweaked and fine-tuned



the training to ensure the best outcomes. They spent many hours on the Athletics Team – even during the holidays. Under their selfless leadership, STC became Public Schools Champions in 1968, in 1969, in 1970 & in 1971. This was their legacy – and it fulfilled Brookie D'Silva's vision for STC Athletics. All of us from the Athletics Teams of the halcyon half-decade of 1967–1971 fervently hope that STC will again experience another similar Golden Age of Athletics.

Teamwork, intensive training, self-discipline, self-motivation, the will to succeed and self-confidence – all qualities which we acquired consciously or subconsciously thanks to ECK Abeysekera and NM Perera – stood us in good stead for the rest of our lives. CS Lewis wrote thus about one of his School Teachers. 'My debt to him is very great, my reverence to this day undiminished.' I would respectfully borrow the same words for ECK Abeysekera and NM Perera. May their noble souls rest in peace.

Chris Thomas (Public Schools Athletics Colours, 1969)

Mr. E.C.K. 'Kingsley' Abeysekera ('Mr. ECK') joined the teaching staff of STC, Mt. Lavinia at the beginning of 1965, the year I made the transition from Lower School to Middle School. I was placed in Lower 4E and was privileged to meet 'Mr. ECK', as he introduced himself, as our English teacher. This was the start of an enduring and close relationship between us, both on and off the playing field. Our close relationship on the athletics field of STC began in 1966 when I was picked as a 12-year-old to represent the Juvenile (U14) 4x100 and 100 m individual events. While our legendary Coach, Mr. Brooke D' Silva ('Brookie'), primarily focused on the Seniors (U19) and Juniors (U16), he began to rely on Mr. ECK to assist him with our Juvenile team.

Mr. ECK had us practice the vital art of exchanging the baton (as instructed by Brookie), drilling us on this aspect through repetition and encouragement. He timed us with his stopwatch, which became his reliable aid, as he sought tirelessly to improve our performances. That year the Juvenile relay team, comprising the late D.N. Pieris, Hiran Soysa, Baker Arulanantham and myself, won all the major competitions – Relay Carnival, Group Meet, Dual Meet with St. Joseph's, and the 'Pubs' (Public Schools Meet). Needless to say, thanks largely to Mr. ECK, our baton changes were fluid and often flawless.



In 1967, Brookie's final year as coach, the Juvenile relay team comprised Kelvin Speldewinde, Rajpal Samarasinhe, Chulla Warusevitane and me. The training of the College athletics team was strengthened when Mr. N.M. Perera ('Mr. NM') was brought into the coaching team by Brookie. With the three-pronged combination of coaching, planning and motivation, STC regained both the Senior and Junior Tarbat Trophies at the Public Schools ('Pubs') meet. The Juvenile relay team smashed all the records at every meet they participated in – Relay Carnival, Group Meet, Dual Meet with Trinity, and the 'Pubs'.

Following in the footsteps of Brookie, Mr. ECK barred me from playing rugby, as he too believed that I would be exposed to injury. However, he grudgingly relented to my resistance on one occasion. In 1967, while doing some wind-sprints I got involved with the U15 rugby training at the College grounds. At the end of training, they announced the team to play St. Peter's on Wednesday. I was picked to play on the right wing, with Kelvin on the left wing, Chulla as a Centre and Rajpal at Fly-Half. A strong line up of sprint athletes. On the morning of the game the team names were printed and displayed on the Middle School Notice Board. However, I got a rude shock when I noticed at the end of the first period that my name had been crossed out by the Master-in-Charge of U15 Rugby, none other than Mr. ECK himself. I was disappointed and upset. I pestered and pleaded with him, he reluctantly conceded and allowed me to play that one game against St. Peter's at their home grounds in Bambalapitiya. However, Mr. ECK need not have worried, as I never saw the ball move down to the right wing for the entire game! As proof of just how much he really wanted me to avoid and be protected from injuries, he even pulled me out of an inter-house hockey game, as I was walking in with pads on to goal-keep! While I may have been upset at the time, I knew those decisions were made for my own benefit, and my admiration for Mr. ECK grew as I matured in later years and was able to see the bigger picture.

Both Mr. ECK and Mr. NM had hearts of gold. Their dedication and commitment to our team was of the highest quality. They always displayed calmness, integrity, loving kindness and cared deeply for our welfare. As the song goes, I wish I could have told them, more directly, of my love and appreciation. So many wonderful memories of those two precious and gentle of all gentlemen. They both have an indelible place in my heart and daily prayers.

Ravi Rudra (Public Schools Athletics 1966-72, Captain 1971)





“MOMENTS THAT MAKE MEMORIES OF THE BATTLE OF THE BLUES”

Cricket that had germinated among schoolboys of Britain received prominence in the 19th century when leading public schools such as Eton played Harrow as a big match and a few years later **in 1837**, the only two universities of that time, **Oxford and Cambridge played each other for the first time to be labelled as England's Battle of the Blues**. About the same time in Ceylon, an academy sprang up on top of San Sebastian Hill and a few years later in 1851, Bishop James Chapman, an Etonian cricketer himself, started S. Thomas' College (STC) on top of Mutwal Hill.

In 1878, the Academy (later Royal College) met STC on a stretch of green in the vicinity of Christ Church Galle Face, in what is known to be the earliest inter-school cricket fixture of this country and the **inaugural local 'Battle of the Blues'**.

Until the turn of the century, the leather ruled the willow in low scoring games. Royal's score of 9 runs in the 1885 encounter and the controversial manner in which the match ended is yet a talking point. During early times the school principals stood as umpires and warden Stone had shaded himself with a colourful umbrella.

Cricketers were clad in cream flannels, buck skin boots, and a hat, and carried a cap in their hip pocket to be worn only when bowling or after tea time. Players and spectators came across the lake in ferries, steam boats, horse and trap, rickshaw or by foot. The match soon became a key social event with ladies and gentlemen that formed the crowd dressed in rich garb. The principals ceased to be umpires in 1912, and gave way to distinguished past cricketers of the two schools.

The bat had now begun to speak and in 1914, the finest batting display until then was seen off the willow of S. (Thambiraja) Saravanamuttu, who in an innings of 87

runs, carpet drove and smashed anything short off the back foot with telling effect. When in full cry, he had spotted one of his brothers in a scuffle in the crowd and had dropped his bat and rushed into the crowd to his brother's assistance and until he returned, umpires and the Royal team took a breather. Such was the dominance of the Saravanamuttus of old times.

The series continued and not even the great world war could intervene. In 1918, S. Thomas' College shifted to

Mt. Lavinia and Royal had already done so to Thurstan Road. The Thomian cricketers of this period had to endure terrible hardships by exchanging the beautiful playing fields at Mutwal for an expanse of sea sand with weeds and crab holes scattered all over. That was the case until 1922 when the hill beyond Hotel



Road was cut and the earth used to give a layer of firm top soil.

The match had now shifted to the old Singhalese Sports Club grounds opposite St. Bridget's Convent. Cadjan huts and canvas tents provided shelter for spectators. The Thomian cricketers were hosted for lunch by Warden Stone and had to walk to the Mount Lavinia station to take the train to Bambalapitiya. From there the team clad in blazers went to the grounds in open rickshaws, cheered all the way. The Royalists on the other hand, after meeting their principal cycled to the grounds.

One of the most exciting games of the series was the 1923 encounter when Royal won in the last over of the match. In 1925 the left-handed Neil Joseph of Royal devastated the Thomian attack scoring the fastest century of the series in only 65 minutes. He followed up with another gem of a century in the next year. The long



series of 140 matches played so far have evolved greatly. Individual performances of merit and nerve racking moments are too many to mention other than to recall just a few of the very best.



F. C. de Saram

It was the Jubilee match of 1929 and Royal had to get 35 runs to win in just 12 minutes of play left. Sportsmanship and positive play reigned supreme and in those 12 minutes, Hermon, and Selvadurai had bowled as many as 6 overs without adopting time wasting tactics, and Royal won the match. **What mattered most was not who won the game but how it was played.** In this same

match Royal's FC de Saram made 72 runs in his debut, and two years later scored 140 runs before entering Oxford where he carved a new image for the country by scoring a superb century against the touring Australians and also making a thousand runs in the English county season.

Another Royalist whose contributions to cricket are written in letters of gold, is C. Ivers Gunasekera who made his appearance in 1938. He can be considered as the greatest all-rounder that represented the country, with many a century against international teams and outstanding leg spin that baffled the very best. **In 1943, the game shifted to the new Tamil Union grounds known as the Colombo Oval,** and Thomians won the match with KLM Perera and Sam Elapatha involved in a record breaking last wicket partnership of 114 runs. Not even the Second World War which had broken out in all its fury could interrupt the series.

In 1949, S. Thomas' needed only six runs to win with six wickets in hand when the last over was bowled by leg spinner Gamini Goonesena to Thomian skipper Shanthi Kumar, who to the surprise of all was ultra-cautious. In this same match the Royal skipper Channa Gunasekera displaying fine sportsmanship had called back the Thomian skipper after he had been ruled run out. So, did Kumar think he was obliged to settle for a draw? Goonesena later entered Cambridge and made a record-breaking double century against Oxford at Lords.



Gamini Goonesena

During the 1950s the matches played at the Colombo Oval, started each day at noon with a short milk interval at around 2 p.m. and a tea break a bit later. A nerve-racking match was witnessed in 1951. Royal declared

setting STC to get 191 runs and with 30 minutes of play left, only 37 runs were needed with 6 wickets in hand. Wickets then began to tumble and STC fell short of the target by just five runs.

In 1954, a match saving innings of 48 runs was seen from the bat of a Thomian fresher then only 14 years old to whom the great Gamini Salgado, then coach of Royal, had reason to present a book with the writing "For a great innings played, for a greater innings to be played yet in life. May you play that as well as you did in your first big match". What words of encouragement. What an impression even a small innings could make on a man that had made a century in his day. This is only one small example of the affection that prevailed between Royalists and Thomians. **The small boy so honoured was no less a person than Michael Tissera who subsequently shone as one of the all-time great batsmen and captains of Sri Lanka.**

Ronald Reid's record breaking innings of 158 made in 1956 and Michael Wille's century in the following year were simply magnificent. The two schools were now producing cricketers of very high calibre and spectator interest in the big match was escalating. In the 1960s the Oval was bursting at its seams with spectators.

In 1962, the Thomian captain Keith Labrooy made a sporty declaration at tea time, setting Royal 143 runs to get in 120 minutes. When the last over was bowled, Royal needed only 12 more runs with 3 wickets in hand but opted to play it safe. Thomian prayers were answered, and the match was drawn. Royal's Vijaya Malalasekere's hurricane century made in the following year, stands next to that of Neil Joseph. **The Oval had now seen 10 consecutive draws when the 1964 match was played. When the final innings started STC needed 70 runs to win in 50 minutes, and got it with 10 minutes to spare.** The feature of the match was undoubtedly the brilliant innings of 96 runs made by Sarath Seneviratne who in the following year too missed a well-deserved century by just three runs and could be labelled as the most unlucky cricketer of the series. Another fine Thomian batsman Anura Tennekoon stamped his class during the same period to later captain Sri Lanka and emerge as one of the finest batsmen this country has produced.

Duleep Mendis cracked a record breaking 182 runs in the 1972 fixture. "It was Champaigne batting at its scintillating best.... He propelled the ball at unbelievable speed..... cuts, graceful drives, towering pulls..... reduced the fielders to mere onlookers..... Friend and foe alike were held spell bound by a mastery display". Undoubtedly this innings can be rated as one of the very best in the series.





Duleep too brought great credit to the country hammering the very best bowlers in the world. The contribution of Royalists and Thomians to this country's cricket until full Test status was granted has been immeasurable. Not only runs had to be made but wickets also had to be taken. Some of the most successful wicket takers in international cricket were CI Gunasekere, Darrel Liversz, Mevan Pieris, Neil Chanmugam, Fitzroy Crozier and Daya Sahabandu.

In 1979, the series had entered its centenary and the match was to be a three-day encounter on the SSC grounds at Maitland Place. Thomians needed 167 runs to avert an innings defeat and when tea was taken on the third day, eight wickets were down for 161 runs. Then came the fight back of the century with Mahinda Halangoda and CP Richards weathering the storm. When Halangoda cracked a boundary in the last over to reach seventy, at the other end was Richard the lion hearted on twenty. The Thomian score stood at 252 for

8 wickets when the crowd invaded the grounds. Thomian grit was proved to be no myth.

Over the past 40 years the match has been played over three days at the SSC grounds on placid pitches. The Royal-Thomian is truly a historic event which has not only survived the passage of time but has grown in every respect to be the greatest sporting event of this country. Each year new faces arrive and new costumes as well. The ground invasions at regular intervals when wickets tumble and the colourful parades of dancing schoolboys round the grounds with loud bands providing the needed music are things of the past. It is a more serious game of cricket that prevails today with professional umpires in attendance. No more horse and trap, rickshaws and bicycles to parade on desolate streets of Colombo, and instead mighty processions of gaily decorated cars and trucks with flags a flying and bands a playing, provide the match fever and traffic congestions as well. The bonds of friendship and mutual respect that prevail among Royalists and Thomians in every walk of life is greatly due to this series of matches. The two teams sit for dinner after the match and the skippers make speeches having always a kind word for their opponents and strongly believing that there is no Royal without S. Thomas' and no S. Thomas' without Royal. May these two great schools continue to stand as a beacon of light to all around.

Mevan Pieris (STCML) - represented College and Sri Lanka in the 1965 – 1975 era. This article was published in Daily FT (5 March 2019)



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An Appreciation- Dhammika Jayasuriya



Dhammika Jayasuriya fondly known as DD and affectionately by many of his friends, sadly left us on the 4th March 2024 to be with his eternal maker.

Dhammika was a student at STC, Mount Lavinia from the batch of 1959 and attended the school from 1959 to 1970. He was a boarder in Copleston/ Claughton and in his senior years attended College as a day student being boarded close by in Sumanarama Road at the home of Priantha Serasinghe, an old boy. In his early years he showed interest in Rugby and Cricket. He represented his school at Under 17 Rugby and in his senior years played for the first XV for three years as a front row forward. In 1970, he was the Secretary of the unbeaten team Captained by D.R. Weerasinghe and was chosen that year to represent the Combined Schools side. A great achievement with competition from many other contenders. He was also Vice- Captain of the Second Eleven cricket team and played many games for the First Eleven in the 1969/1970 season.

On leaving school, he was attracted to employment in the plantation sector and soon he was able to obtain a creeping billet with an Agency house. His first billet was Wellandura Estate in the Ratnapura region. Soon he was able to demonstrate his skills and knowledge in the fields and the word was a buzz that a very capable young gentleman was on the horizon. It did not take long for his capabilities to be recognised and he was rewarded by being appointed as one of the youngest Regional Managers in SLSPC for the Galle region.

Retiring from planting, he was able to open his own company, an ISO related entity, which he administered until his demise.

Dhammika was a staunch old Thomian and it was always his intention to give back some of his time to the Alma Mater. He was instrumental in organising, with his committee, the first Old Thomian Rugby Dinner Dance in remembrance of one our outstanding coaches, the late Quintin Israel. This event goes on annually and funds raised are utilised for the development of junior rugby. Recognising his skill and knowledge, he was appointed a member of the College Sports Council. When I spoke to the Warden recently in Melbourne, he mentioned to me that we have lost a valuable member of the Council.

Dhammika was a trusted friend who had a very balanced outlook on any issue. Since leaving school, our paths went in various different directions. But again, I had the opportunity of continuing the friendship when he regularly visited Melbourne to spend time with his daughter and grandchild. Some of his class mates and I had the opportunity to be kindly invited for a dinner hosted by his daughter Hasanthi during his last visit.

Until we meet again, Rest In Eternal Peace.

Arasu Saravanamuttu.





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New Members of the OBA in 2024

Name	Branch	Period	Name	Branch	Period
Gerard ABEYSENA	Mt. Lavinia	1971-1976	Vidura MEEMEDUMA	Mt. Lavinia	
Rohan LATHAM	Prep/Mount	1964-1970	Rohan EDWARD	Mt. Lavinia	1973 - 1983
Dinesh RAJAYAH	Mt. Lavinia		Shehan DHANAPALA	Mt. Lavinia	
MNK DE SILVA	Mt. Lavinia		Trevin FERNANDO	Mt. Lavinia	
Mohan ARIARATNAM	Mt. Lavinia	1955 - 1965	Gihan FERNANDO	Mt. Lavinia	1985 - 2000




Calendar of Events - 2024


February

- Friday 9th**  **ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING (AGM)**
 6.30pm
 Waverley Youth Centre
 Miller Crescent, Mount Waverley 3149
- Friday 23rd**  **MEMBERS ONLY – NIGHT PARTY**
 7.30pm
 Waverley Youth Centre
 Miller Crescent, Mount Waverley 3149

March

- Saturday 23rd**  **ROYAL – THOMIAN CRICKET MATCHES & FAMILY DAY**
 9.30 am onwards
 Max Pawsey Reserve
 Fountain Drive, Narre Warren 3805

May

- Saturday 4th**  **MEMBERS LUNCH**
 12.00 noon
 Springvale RSL
 26, Osborne Avenue, Springvale, VIC 3171
- Saturday 25th** **Thomian Family Night**
 7.00pm
 Jan Wilson Community Centre
 Halton Road, Noble Park North, VIC 3174

August

- Saturday 3rd** **Transfiguration Service**
 Time: to be confirmed
 St. Adian's Anglican Church
 39, Wallarano Drive, Noble Park Vic 3174


October

- Saturday 12th** **Thomian Ball - 2023**
 6.30pm
 Pullman Melbourne Albert Park
 65 Queens Road, Melbourne VIC 3004

November

- Tuesday 7th** **Melbourne Cup Sweep**
 2.00pm

December

- Saturday**  **Festival of Nine Lessons and Carols**
 6.00 pm
 Date & Venue: To be confirmed



IN MEMORIAM



They remain in our memories forever



Denis Ferdinands: Denis was at Mt. Lavinia from 1947 to 1959 and was awarded College colours in Cricket and Athletics. Renowned for being the fastest bowler in school cricket in the 1950s, Denis played in the 1st XI team first in 1955 as a 15-year-old and captained the team in 1959. In Athletics, he was the Public Schools record holder in javelin throw. He migrated to Australia in 1964 with his family and lived in Melbourne. Denis passed away peacefully in January 2024 after a brief illness.



Dickie Juriansz: Dickie was at Mt. Lavinia in the 1950s and 1960s era and then graduated in Commerce from the University of Colombo. He joined James Finlay and Co. (Colombo) Ltd. in 1966 as a Management Trainee and went on to become Chairman and Managing Director in 1998 and continued in this position until retirement in 2020. He was also the Chairman of the Colombo Tea Traders Association (CTTA) and the President of the prestigious Colombo Club in 2013/14.



Canagasabapathy Sachithanathan: Mr. Sachithanathan (fondly known as "Sachi") was in the academic staff at Mt. Lavinia who dedicated his services for over three decades from 1949 to 1983. Following retirement, he migrated to Canada and passed away peacefully on 31st January 2024 just 9 months shy of reaching a remarkable milestone of a century. He leaves behind a legacy of wisdom, kindness, and knowledge that will forever be remembered by those who had the privilege of knowing him.



Trevor Rajaratnam: Trevor was a product of STCML and played 1st XI cricket in 1971 and later for the Colts Cricket Club. He served Sri Lankan Cricket as Treasurer, Vice President and Assistant Secretary. In addition, he was actively involved in the organization of the Royal Thomian Cricket Match. He was also a prominent figure in the Travel trade being the CEO of Mackinnons Travels (John Keells Group Company). The Sri Lanka's players wore black armbands during their next game as a tribute to the former administrator.



Dhammika Jayasuriya: Dhammika was at STCML from 1959 to 1970 and played 1st XI cricket in 1970. He was also a coloursman in Rugby and represented the Combined Schools as a front row forward. On leaving school, he was in the planting profession for a span of almost 30 years. Following retirement, he established an ISO certified management consulting company, providing services to the corporate sector. He is remembered by the Thomian fraternity for his loyal support for the College.



Mrs. Elizabeth Rose Tillekeratne: Mrs. Tillekeratne was a popular teacher of mathematics at STC Mount Lavinia from 1984 to 2001, and was Head of the Faculty of Mathematics/ Sectional Head of Lower 6th form. A memorial service was held at the College Chapel prior to burial at the Mount Lavinia Cemetery on 10th May 2024.

Esto Perpetua



PHOTO GALLERY: ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING - (9th February 2024)

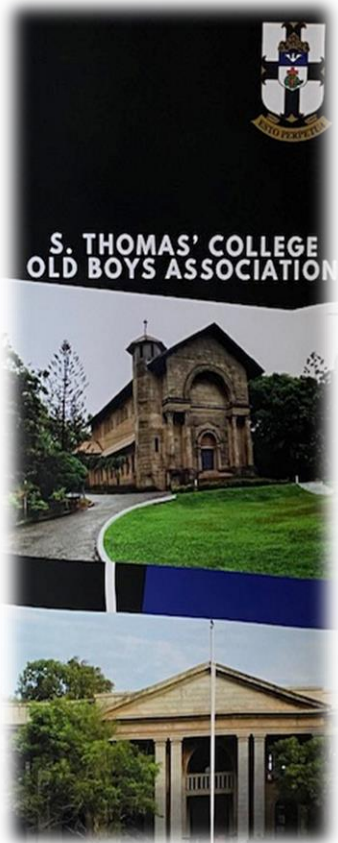


PHOTO GALLERY: NIGHT PARTY – (23rd February 2024)



PHOTO GALLERY: ROYAL THOMIAN CRICKET (23rd March 2024)



Youngest Supporter
Asher Jean-Luc Devadason (50 days)



PHOTO GALLERY: MEMBERS LUNCH (4th May 2024)



PHOTO GALLERY: MEMBERS LUNCH (4th May 2024)





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