



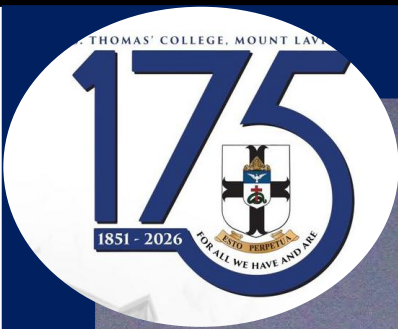
THOMIANA



May 2025, Volume 28 Issue 2

Publication of S. Thomas' College Old Boys Association, Australia Branch Inc.

PO Box 2337. Mt. Waverley, Victoria 3149, Australia



Esto Perpetua



LUXURY

AS TIMELESS AS THE ROYAL - THOMIAN LEGACY

An electrifying rivalry, a spectacle of revelry, a symbol of brotherhood, a time-honoured tradition, whatever you choose to call it, there is no denying that the **Royal-Thomian Big Match** is so much more than just a cricket encounter. The stuff of cricketing folklore, it is the home of a rich cricketing heritage that nourished the country's sport and its countrymen's love for it, transcending schoolboy triviality to cradle Sri Lanka cricket's fledgling dreams.

It is difficult to believe that Ashley Walker could have ever imagined the depth and breadth of what his simple letter to the sub-warden of S. Thomas' College, proposing an inter-college clash with Royal College, would make way for; the longest running uninterrupted cricket encounter in the world, over 100 schoolboys fed into the national team and a match marked by such reverence that it inspires new generations every year, far beyond the hallowed halls of the two schools.

From the elegant strokes of Michael Tissera to the fearless grit of Duleep Mendis, the scything drives of D. L. De Saram to the graceful composure of Ranjan Madugalle, these encounters have lay witness to some of the game's greats since 1879.

Where school spirit merges with cricketing brilliance, we celebrate the timeless legacy, the enduring camaraderie and the enigmatic sentiment of the **Royal-Thomian Big Match**, where Sri Lanka cricket found its feet and **home** in years gone by.

Official Real Estate Partner
146th Battle of the Blues
Marina Square – Uptown Colombo
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Marina Square - Uptown Colombo was the proud Real Estate Partner of the 146th Battle of the Blues this year. Sri Lanka's first and largest harbour-front mixed development project, Marina Square - Uptown Colombo, offers breathtaking views of the ocean, awe-inspiring cityscapes of a rapidly changing city to savour every day. Located just 2km from the highly anticipated Colombo International Financial City (Port City) and 400m from the Port Access Elevated Highway, along with an extensive array of common amenities ranging from an infinity pool to barbecue coves, camping areas, walking and jogging tracks to a multipurpose court, squash courts, and rooftop skydecks, the landmark development promises to be a haven of convenience and urban luxury in the heart of Tomorrow's Colombo.

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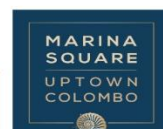
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S. THOMAS' COLLEGE OLD BOYS ASSOCIATION -AUSTRALIA BRANCH (STCOBA)



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

CONTENTS

4	President's Message	31	Reflections of STCML Before the War
5	Editorial	37	STC OBA Executive Committee - 2024
7	OBA News	38	Upcoming Events 2025
14	News from Sri Lanka	39	In Memoriam
16	Thanksgiving Service for Rev. Marc Billimoria	40	Photo Gallery – Annual General Meeting
20	The Path to Victory – RT 2025	41	Photo Gallery – Royal Thomian Cricket Matches
22	A Leeson learnt – Not too late to Share	42	Photo Gallery – Thomian Lunch
23	Sporting Heros of Yesteryear	43	OBA Membership Application Form





President's Message



Dear Thomians,

It is with much appreciation and great humility that I find myself having the honour of being elected as your President this year. We are also very fortunate to have a very talented, capable and devoted Executive Committee working alongside me. I wish to express my appreciation to Saman for his devotion to the OBA and handing over a vibrant Association, truly committed to furthering the welfare of the Thomian alumni in Melbourne.

We will once more strive to engage with younger Thomians, with events that is hoped will encourage a greater participation, and hopefully leading to a bolstering of OBA membership. The STC OBA Lunch is being planned for MAY 2025. This event will include a buffet lunch and entertainment. We expect a good turnout amongst our existing membership, non-member Old Thomians and well-wishers.

This year so far, we made a donation of cricket balls used at the 50 over Royal-Thomian encounter in Colombo. Thanks to the generosity of our members and supporters, we also made a donation towards the refurbishment of the Lower School Library.

It is with much gratitude that we acknowledge the efforts and support of our members, without which we wouldn't be able to conduct our events and make the contributions that we make. A big thank you to you all!

This year we have an existing array of events planned, which will be promoted in due course. Thank you once again for your support. Look forward to a great year ahead.

Esto Perpetua!

Sincerely,

Neomal Jasinghe

EDITORIAL

“Our greatest glory is not in never falling, but in rising every time we fall.”

We express our appreciation to those who provided feedback on the January 2025 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 21st February 2025 at the Notting Hill Community Centre. The meeting was held later than previous years, due to the availability of a suitable venue and the clash with Valentines Day. It was encouraging to see many younger members attending and participating in the discussions. It was also satisfying to note that there was a surge in new memberships following the AGM.

The Executive Committee for 2025 saw a major change at the helm, with the former Secretary, Neomal Jasinghe taking over as President with Saman Liyanage graciously stepping down after serving 2 years and agreeing to continue, serving as the Secretary. We wish to express our sincere thanks to the outgoing members – Dulith Gunaratne, Amesh Fernando; and welcome the two new additions – Janaka Dissanayake and Chariya Kurukulasuriya. The new streamlined team is now geared up for an eventful year.

Due to the delay in having the AGM, it was too late to include any events in Melbourne related to the Big Match in Sri Lanka. However, that didn't stop many old boys having their own parties

celebrating a memorable victory. Congratulation to our team, who were classified as the underdogs, for such a daring performance.

The Melbourne annual Royal-Thomian cricket matches were held on 16th February 2025, which was earlier than the previous years due do various commitments and availability of a suitable venue. The games were very close with the Thomians sneaking with two close wins out of the three matches. The social after the matches, was a sell-out which included a "Hopper Night".

The highlight for this quarter was the Thomian Lunch, which was held in May. The event catered to a sell-out crowd of Old Boys of many generations. A surprise guest at the event was the former Warden, Rev. Marc Billimoria, who came to Melbourne recently for further studies. We are hoping that his continued presence in Melbourne would encourage more of his younger students to join the OBA. We now have a home-grown artist to sing "Sweet Caroline" at OBA events!!

After much effort, the date for the 2025 Thomian Dance was finally confirmed for 26th July at the Pullman in Albert Park, Melbourne. This is the same venue as last year which has a capacity of around 600; hence, large enough not to disappoint anyone who wants to attend. The event was brought forward by approximately 3 months, in order to avoid the surge of Sri Lanka dances in early Spring.

On the membership front, we are encouraged by the increase in interest of the "younger" old Thomians to join the OBA. We have so far 34 new members, which is double that of the same time last year. It is evident that there have been a large number of Old Boys who have come to Australia, primarily for further education. Encouraging them to join have been challenging. However, the response so far this year have been good and it is hoped that a Membership Drive, planned during this year, would yield more results. We have now simplified the Membership Application Form to streamline the process.

The Lower School Library Renovation Project sponsored by the OBA commenced following the hand-over of the funds to the Acting Warden in March 2025. Proceeds from several events last year was channelled to this cause. It is understood that the renovation were completed in mid-May and we hope to provide more details in the next issue. We wish to thank our members for their generosity towards this project.

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

Upali Gooneratne
Editor





146TH BATTLE OF THE BLUES

Congratulations – You Made Us Proud



True Spirit of the Game



Royal centurion Rehan Peiris congratulates Thomian Dineth Goonewardene on reaching his century



OBA News

Royal – Thomian Cricket Encounter – 16th February 2025

Royal Avoids a Whitewash



Melbourne hosted its own Battle of the Blues on Sunday 16th February 2025 at the Greaves Reserve in Dandenong. In spite of the inclement weather and enduring “four seasons in one day”, all three games were completed and played in the true Royal Thomian spirit. Unlike the last two years, Royal averted a whitewash this year winning the Over-50s game; and that too by only a margin of 2 runs. The other two games were also closely fought with the Thomians falling over the line.

Overall, it was a memorable event.

Over 50s Game

Scores

Royal: 138/6 (20 Overs)
S. Thomas': 136/10 (20 Overs)

Award Winners

Best Batter: Jay Adihetty (Royal)
Best Bowler: Trevin Fernando (STC)
Player of the Match: Channa Gunawardene (Royal)

Over 40s Game

Scores

S. Thomas': 135/6 (20 Overs)
Royal: 133/10 (20 Overs)

Award Winners

Best Batter: Randall Joshep (STC)
Best Bowler: Sidat Medonza (STC)
Player of the Match: Randall Joshep (STC)

Open Game

Scores

S. Thomas': 163/4 (35 Overs)
Royal: 160/10 (35 Overs)

Award Winners

Best Batter: Dulith Gunaratne (STC)
Best Bowler: Naveen Withanpathirna (Royal)
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.



Annual General Meeting (21st February 2025)



The Annual General Meeting (AGM) of the STC OBA Melbourne was held at the Notting Hill Community Centre on Friday 21st February 2025 at 6.30pm. This was a week later than the corresponding meeting of the OBA in Mount Lavinia; primarily, due to the unavailability of a suitable venue. The attendance was far greater than the previous year, with around 85 including spouses.

The meeting noted that in 2024, the OBA was able to undertake their regular activities for the membership; and in addition, a Family Night was also included in May, to attract the younger generation. There was also discussion on the annual Dance which continued to attract a large gathering of Old Boys, but met with challenges with

sponsorships. Support of the general membership in seeking additional sponsors was sought. Consensus was reached for channeling of funds collected for renovation of Bishop Chapman's grave to the Lower School Library Project.

Saman Liyanage, the outgoing President thanked the membership for their support over the years and expressed his gratitude to the Executive Committee for their sacrifices in ensuring that the OBA remained strong especially in the post-Covid era.



Neomal Jasinghe was elected as the new President of the OBA. The former President, Saman Liyanage volunteered to serve as Secretary; and there were no other significant changes to the existing Committee. The President in his address thanked the membership for the opportunity of serving in this position and the members of the Executive Committee for their commitment to the OBA.



Mark Nanayakkara, a former Secretary of the OBA, received the President's Award for 2025. Mark, has served in the Executive Committee in many positions and his dedication to our alma mater was acknowledged.

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

Neomal Jasinghe – New President of OBA (Melbourne)

Neomal started his schooling at Prep School for the first two years, before completing the rest of his schooling at Mt Lavinia. He is of the NCGE 1975 Class group. During his school years, he was a distinguished swimmer, representing Sri Lanka from the age of 12, and representing Sri Lanka in swimming since then, throughout his tenure at College. Neomal was the Swimming and Water-Polo Captain in the years 1978 & 79. He was on the Royal-Thomas Tent Committee for the Centenary Match in 1979, was editor of the Souvenir in 1980 (the 101st Match), and Tent Secretary in 1981. He led a College team of 5 swimmers to win the Sri Lanka Swimming Nationals in 1977 (a feat only replicated once since). He also held many Sri Lanka swimming



records during this time, and Captained the Sri Lanka Men's swimming team whilst at College. After leaving College he worked at John Keells and Mercantile Brokers before setting up his own Produce Brokering company. Neomal migrated to the UK in 1987 and Managed Travel agencies during that period. In 1995, Neomal and his family moved to Australia and has since called Australia home. Married to Geetha, they have three children Sasha, Ryan and Kiran. Neomal was Vice President of the STC OBA Melbourne in 2016 and Honorary Secretary in 2024.

Lower School Library Project – Contract awarded for Renovations



Saman Liyanage presenting the cheque to the Acting Warden, Asanka Perera

For some time, the Executive Committee of the OBA, having seen some concerning images and following visits to the Lower School Library, recognised the urgent need for action. When the new Committee took the helm in 2024, there was a strong and shared resolve to take this project forward and see it through to completion.

Following a few communications to the wider membership, a commitment was made: the surplus from the Thomian Ball and other fundraising efforts throughout the year, would be directed towards the relocation and renovation of the Lower School Library.

When the then Warden, Rev'd Marc Billimoria, visited us in May 2024 and addressed members at the felicitation lunch hosted by the OBA, he affirmed that the Lower School Library had been earmarked as the Melbourne OBA's flagship project.

We are delighted to report to our members that we have fulfilled this commitment—thanks to the unwavering dedication of the Executive Committee and the tremendous support of our community. Our sincere gratitude goes out to all who attended and contributed to the Thomian Ball, Family Night, and the Melbourne Cup Draw. Your participation truly made this possible.

We're pleased to share that recent updates from Mount Lavinia indicate the Lower School library project is on track for completion by May 2025. Photos and further updates will be included in the next edition of Thomiana.

Thank you once again for your generosity and belief in this cause. You can be proud knowing you've helped shape a better future for the next generation of young Thomians.

STC Museum Donation



Ronnie Reid took the opportunity, during his visit to Sri Lanka in March 2025, to make a presentation to the new STC Museum. It was the three stumps he had collected from each of the Big Matches he played from 1957 – 1957.

A lovely gesture by a Thomian cricketing icon. Wonder anyone else have three set of stumps as Royal-Thomian Souvenirs!!



Thomian Lunch – 17 May 2025



The photo above says it all ... probably the largest gathering of Old Thomians at an event in recent years. This event, previously called the “Members Lunch”, had the perception of being open only to members of the OBA; and re-naming it “Thomian Lunch” to attract all Old Thomians proved to be a great idea.

It was so refreshing to see Old Thomians from different generations come together on this occasion; and most encouraging of all was that 22 attendees, mostly younger Thomians, signing up to be members of the OBA in Melbourne.

The luncheon was held on Saturday 17th May at the RSL Club in Springvale, attended by around 140 Old Boys and spouses, with the former Warden, Rev. Marc Billimoria and ex-staff member, Mr. Ananda Weerasekera as guests.

The proceedings commenced with Neomal Jasinghe (President, OBA) welcoming the guests and acknowledging the presence of a large number of younger Old Boys, mainly recent arrivals as students. Neomal also gave an update on the Lower School Library Project, financed by the OBA, Melbourne, that was recently completed; and thanked the membership for their generosity towards this worthy cause.

This was followed by a sumptuous lunch provided by the Sri Lankan Head Chef at the RSL, John Fernando, including an array of Western and Asian dishes, with some special delicacies (string hoppers, Mani Pittu, Baabath Curry etc.) to satisfy the Sri Lankan palates.

The Raffle draw included multiple prizes – liquor hamper, STC merchandise package and a copy of the *Thomia* (2 two volume history of STC written by Richard Simon). The highlight of the event was the singing of the College Song by this group of “young and old” Thomians. The Executive Committee wishes to thank all those who supported the event, especially the sponsor – Silverline Finance Services.



Reflections of the event from a younger member – Dulith Gunaratne.....

What a privilege it was to meet Barney Reid (sir), one of the greatest all-rounders to ever play for S. Thomas' College, Mt. Lavinia. A true Thomian icon, Barney Reid is part of a cricketing dynasty that rewrote the record books and inspired generations to follow.



The Reid family—Claud, Ronnie (Ronald), Buddy (Barclay), Johan (Tiny), and Barney (Bryan) himself—all played First XI cricket for S. Thomas' between 1955 and 1968, making them one of only two families in college history to have five brothers represent the school (matched only by the De Sarams' in the 1800s). That is not just a record; it's a legacy.

Barney, a left-arm seam and spin bowler, played from 1963 to 1965, and led the bowling attack with skill, discipline, and sharp late swing. He was part of one of the most feared Thomian teams, often compared to Bradman's Invincibles, and was also a talented batsman and table tennis player. After migrating to Australia, he played for Melbourne Cricket Club, became a qualified umpire, and coached cricket in both Australia and the UK. (I encourage you all to comment all the records and milestones I missed)

I was humbled to receive the same batting shield awarded to Barney's brother, a shield steeped in tradition and one of the oldest and most prestigious shields in college. It was handed to me by another Thomian legend, Ashley De Vos.

Also, it was a real joy to reconnect with Father Marc Billimoria, our past Warden and a gentleman I deeply respect, and to catch up with many fellow Thomians and batchmates. These events bring out the heart and soul of what it means to be a Thomian—shared heritage, respect, and brotherhood.

To all young Thomians: come to these gatherings. Know your history. Shake hands with your legends. And carry the baton forward with pride. Most importantly, this is your chance give something back to College.

Esto Perpetua.

FORTHCOMING EVENT



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



TRANSFIGURATION SERVICE

DATE: Saturday 9th August 2025
VENUE: St. Peter's Muruumbeena,
371, Neerim Road, Carnegie, Vic 3163



Introducing the OBA Executive Committee - 2025



Neomal Jasinghe
President



Peneeth Goonawardena
Vice President



Chris Varney
Vice President



Lalindra De Silva
Vice President



Saman Liyanage
Secretary



Shehan Jayetilleke
Treasurer



Milinda Liyanage
Asst. Treasurer



Upali Gooneratne
Editor/Membership Sec



Rayesh Gunasekera
Committee Member



Vasikaran Ratnarajah
Committee Member



Mandula Fonseka
Committee Member



Janaka Dissanayake
Committee Member




Chariya Kurukulasuriya
Committee Member



Forthcoming Event

Thomian Dance 2025



THOMIAN BALL
2025

Fine dining, timeless music and unforgettable company come together!

Saturday
26th July
6:30 pm to 1:00 am
Pullman Albert Park
65 Queens Road, Albert Park

Dance to the tunes of Dynamics
& Summer Breeze

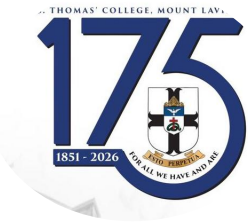
Early bird \$165 valid till 31st May
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News from Sri Lanka

Gearing Up for the 175th Anniversary



"You belong to one of the best schools in the world, a school with splendid traditions and a most honourable name and I charge you to try and hand down those traditions and that name to those who come after you untarnished and unimpaired. Be proud of being Thomians and make your college proud for numbering you among its sons. Remember that whatever you do or where ever you go your life and your actions will reflect either credit or discredit on the college you were trained and to which you owe so much. You have learnt the best lessons in the world at STC, I trust not only English, Classics and Mathematics, but true manliness and truth, courage, purity and all those things that make a man and a gentleman. Try never to forget them, but be men and gentlemen always.

WARDEN BUCK.

Over a century and a half, of pride and service to the nation, S. Thomas' College Mount Lavinia will be celebrating its 175th Anniversary in February 2026. Like the serpent keen and wise, and harmless as the dove, the alumni or the old boys of STC have risen to positions of power and influence in this country, making the country proud. Though the 175th anniversary is next year, a number of events will be held this year to usher in this historically significant occasion.

In a recent interview with the Daily News the Acting Warden, Asanka Perera, outlined the significance of this momentous occasion and the preparations in place in the coming year. A summary of the interview is outlined below.

Founded on the 3rd of February 1851 by the Rt. Rev. James Chapman D.D., the first Bishop of Colombo, S. Thomas' College began its journey in Mutwal and later relocated to Mount Lavinia in 1918. This move marked a new chapter in the school's history, ensuring it continued to grow while remaining true to the vision of its founder. Today, S. Thomas' College, Mount Lavinia, along with its branches in Kollupitiya, Gurutalawa, and Bandarawela, stands as a beacon of holistic education, faith, and community service.

Reflecting on this legacy, the words of Bishop Chapman resonate powerfully: "Though unseen, when founded on true faith, hope is never unreal. Enduring works are often of humble beginning."

The Choral Evensong will take place at Christ Church Mutwal, a location of profound historical significance. Once serving as both the Chapel of the school and the Cathedral of the Diocese during the College's early years, the church is an emblem of S. Thomas' enduring spiritual roots.

"This celebration is not just a tribute to our past, but a moment to unite the entire Thomian family, Mount Lavinia and our branch schools, in gratitude and hope for the future. It is an invitation for all who share the



Thomian spirit to join us in this historic moment of reflection and renewal,” said Acting Warden Asanka Perera.

“The 175th anniversary is a massive event for college. Not many schools have celebrated such an anniversary. We will be getting the support and involvement of the various OBAs abroad, from UK, USA, Canada to Australia where we have many branches. So, it will be Thomians coming together as we celebrate 175 years,” he said.

He further explained that 175 years is a significant landmark. But we cannot keep living in the past, we have to think about the future. “How do we use the past, but go into a future, so that 25 years from now when we celebrate 200 years, STC will be in the cutting edge of education. We have a steering committee headed by Mr. Senaka De Fonseka, one of our staunch old boys. He chairs a committee for the 175 years’ anniversary. Under him the committee will take responsibility for organizing all these events. So, we want to have a grand celebration. I have spoken to the boys at assembly and spoken to them about the significance of this milestone, so the boys know about our history – what STC has been, and also where STC should be in the future, and plan for the next 25 years,” explained Acting Warden Perera.



He added that everyone at STC needs to think very positively about how they as STC can help society. “We are celebrating 175 years, but how do we become a positive influence in our own society? There is a committee that handles social responsibility and legacy. We at STC are proud of what we have achieved, and what our old boys have achieved. But as I said, the past is the past, the past can help us, but we need to define our future. We need to look at it on a very serious level, as to where we want the school to be. There are so many external forces like AI and improvements in technology, and if we don’t consider these external forces and plan for the future, we will get left behind” he pointed. The acting Warden finally that he envisions STC as a trailblazer in every field from academics to extra-curricular activities.

“We will be using the entire gamut of ‘what makes S. Thomas’, S. Thomas’, and celebrate it. But what I have mentioned are still plans in the pipeline and we have not committed to this as yet. On the actual anniversary day itself we will have a special chapel service in our chapel and a special assembly. We will have an oration of sorts. There will be a gala dinner. The OBA dance of 2026 will happen.”

STC officially launched its 175th Anniversary celebrations with Special Thanksgiving Choral Evensong service on Wednesday, February 5, 2025, at Christ Church Mutwal (Gal Palliya), attended by old Thomians, students, parents, and well-wishers. The Choral Evensong, led by the College Choir, included prayers of thanksgiving, music, and reflections on the 175-year journey of S. Thomas’ College. The service was a tribute to the founders, the institution’s history, and the many generations of students and educators who have contributed to its lasting impact.



The Choral Evensong marks the beginning of a year-long series of events and celebrations that will honour the College’s legacy and reaffirm its commitment to shaping future generations.

Courtesy: Daily News (3 February 2025)



**Service of Thanksgiving and Dedication to mark the end of the Rev'd
Marc Billimoria's tenure as the 19th Warden of S. Thomas' College,
Mount Lavinia**

**Sermon delivered by Bishop Duleep de Chickera
6th December 2024, Chapel of the Transfiguration**



The occasion

Our text for this morning is from the reading that we heard a little while ago. And calling to him a child, Jesus put him in the midst of them and said "Truly I say to you, unless you turn and become like children you will never enter the Kingdom of God."

As always, it is very, very good to be here. But today's mood is different. We can sense the difference. An excellent batsman has just finished a fine innings and as he walks back to the pavilion there is silence, the silence of sadness. And then, gradually, one by one, the spectators rise to their feet. The sadness is slowly replaced with admiration; gratitude. They were there when it happened. This is what will last.

The early Marc

I first noticed Fr Marc as a boy of this College around the time that boys are noticed as individuals. They do not leave the pack, but they begin to stand out. At that time, he must have been fourteen or fifteen years

old. His head was not as perfect as it is today... it was covered with black, bushy, curly hair. Then as now, when it was normal for boys to be boisterous, Marc stood out as a gentleman. He had his fun, but was courteous and gracious. Then, when his friends, his peers were changing girlfriends every month, Marc had one unwavering love. This was not for a pretty girl, though there were plenty of girls who would have loved to have become his special friend! Marc's love was for the School. He loved its traditions, its history, its architecture and he loved the happenings in this beautiful Chapel.

When Marc finished his 'A' levels after a very commendable career at the School, he simply transferred onto the staff. I don't think there was an appointment. It was assumed that he would be around, do some teaching, help out in the Chapel and be available to do things that were creative – he was a literary man. Hans was the tough one! He proved himself on the Rugby field, played the rough game with vigour and has become one of our most courageous voices for justice in this country. So,



between the two Billimoria boys, there was this wonderful balance of the best that the School offers. You can't have it all, you can't do it all, but that balance was represented in the two brothers.

Family formation

After a while, Marc went on to do his graduate studies in History, and then Manisha happened! Since both of them had no room in their worldview for bigamy, Marc had to decide – was it Manisha first or the institution? And of course, he chose right. People come before institutions. Just as Jesus affirmed the law must serve people; institutions cannot displace people.

After a while at S. Thomas' Gurutalawa and the shift to Mount Lavinia, people began to recognize that the Marc-Manisha marriage was definitely made in heaven! He was in an extremely stressful job, and she was a psychologist. Now this is not to say that their life together was one long counselling session! But Manisha most certainly became 'the rock' in Marc's life. When the children came - Shekainah, Shokeidh - they formed a little think tank in the home.

At the dining table, in the living room, this think tank became an editorial board, a censorship board, a grievance board, just as it happens in a lot of our vicarages. Marc was slowly becoming the Warden he became because of family and home. This is why this occasion is also about Manisha, Shekainah and Shokeidh. We thank them for walking alongside Marc and for being an integral part of the very fine innings that he has played.

The education covenant

Many of you present here were not around when the responsibilities of a Warden, or the head of our Christian schools, took form. This was a process. It began soon after independence. When the state quite rightly provided free education for all, denominational schools had to continue without state funding or become part of the state sector. Thanks mostly to that great visionary, Canon R S de Saram, schools like S. Thomas' decided to stay private and fee levying, but within the state educational system. Ever since, the unwritten rationale for continuation was

that our schools would remain private-fee levying and service oriented. Because we wanted to continue to serve the nation with a type of integrated education, we had to charge fees. Put differently, Wardens and Heads of our denominational schools clearly committed themselves to an unwritten covenant, of sustaining a type of education as a service by staying private. There was no other way. This distinction that our schools are private, service oriented institutions is crucial, since there is a tendency to associate the private sector with profits. S. Thomas' and our other Christian schools are that way unique. We are service oriented, not profit oriented and we chose to remain private to offer this service. Fees are charged to enable us serve our children and our nation.

This was not all. Running alongside this rationale was another objective. Our schools were to offer a parallel, complimentary system of education alongside the state system of education, so that each could learn from the other and together enhance the cause of education in the country. This is why we have remained within the state system, followed the state curriculum and prepared our students for national examinations.



Paynter's Painting

This remarkable Mural, Paynter's painted word, was done in 1964 at the invitation of Warden Selvaratnam. David Paynter was a missionary. His family worked with children. He was a theologian; he was a prophet. Aware of this educational covenant and rationale for the continuation of schools like S. Thomas', he spoke to future generations through his painting. If you probe the mural carefully, the options that Paynter placed before the School and the Church become evident. Look at Jesus' hands in the picture. They are deliberately placed in an awkward position. His left hand is saying 'hold back' while the right one encourages movement in another direction'. Notice the way Moses and Elijah are standing. They represent Paynter's options. Moses stands with confidence. He has it all; knows it all. What is necessary is to keep building and improving on the establishment depicted behind him. Elijah is tottering, unsteady; caught by the gusty winds of change. Behind him lies the vast unknown. Paynter's Jesus is saying enough of establishment, explore the beyond.



The message of the Mural is clear. When trends and tendencies draw School and Church towards establishment, we are to pause, remember our obligation to serve and explore yet better ways of doing so in yet uncharted terrain. This then is David Paynter's enduring word to school and Church. Nothing should obstruct the original covenant and rationale. The day this happens, we fail those who toiled and built and defined before us, as well as those who must benefit from this unique interpretation of education after us.

The inclusive Marc

When I knew him as a young priest, Marc came across as intelligent, liberal and open. He had a sacramental view of life in the Church. And yet he kept growing. Over the years I noticed a change take hold of the man. He becomes more inclusive and his world view had space for all people and plural points of view. How did that happen?

The answer is you, the boys. As Fr Marc discovers his responsibility as Warden by the boys of the school and of course, by extension the Support Staff, the Tutorial Staff, the Administrative Staff, he changes. He has to treat and care for all equally. There can be no favourites, no discrimination, among all his boys. They came from all faiths and ethnicity and included the still smaller communities.

This growth in inclusivity is reflected in the opening prayer said by Fr Sam. It was reflected at Fr Marc's induction when the various religions visibly participated for the first time at such an event. I also understand that there is going to be some of this inclusivity at this service as well. This is all quite stunning.

But not for Jesus. He was radical and reversed the ladder of learning. He declared that adults are to learn from children and return to the best in the child that they lose with time. Paynter fills in the gap. Adults are to acquire the curiosity of the child; it stimulates exploration of new ways of keeping the covenant

alive and feeding the rationale if we are to explore new ways of service. And then we encounter Marc bringing the child into the center of the educational discourse to transform the ways of the adult; the child, so full of curiosity and with little or no regard for establishment.

Here then are some surprising turn overs in our understanding of education. Jesus affirming the child as model for adults obsessed with greatness, Paynter's warning on the enticement of establishment and reminder that exploration is the core value of education, and Marc bringing the two together in inclusive transformation.



Closing comments

I'm glad that the Chapel is filled with schoolboys. Remember that you matter most in education and contribute immensely towards your own educational formation; and work hard to retain the priceless gift of curiosity as you move into adulthood.

Every Warden of this School including Fr Marc has had to wrestle with the tension depicted on Paynter's painting. Is it establishment or exploration? A hasty slide into establishment can be corrected if one remains conscientious. But exploration is to remain central without apology. And so when you remember Fr Marc, remember also that that he carried this tension for your sake, and be grateful. It was never easy but he stayed with his calling and did not give up. Remember also that this same tension will haunt those who follow, and do all you can to make their task a little lighter.

Finally, I think you may have arrived at the conclusion that I have reached. There are no great Wardens. Great Wardens are created by establishment and are forgotten no sooner establishment shifts its attention elsewhere. There are instead, exemplary Wardens. Those courageous enough to read the painting and live the text in spite of the drag of establishment. I have no doubt that Warden Marc, will be remembered as an exemplary Warden; the type of Warden who braves a path we cannot but follow.

Let us keep a moment of silence.





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The Path to Victory: Royal - Thomian 2025

By Cover Point

There have been many articles written from various Journalists and in the social media about the match of 2025. My reflection of the game will be on certain aspects which I will highlight that made the STC victory possible.

The first day of the game, the Thomian plan was to bowl first winning the toss and extract much help as possible from the wicket. It did show result with two early wickets, but scoring at a reasonable rate Royal weathered the storm and carried on till lunch without any further damage. Runs per over was about 3.6 as we were able to keep it under control. After lunch, the intention was to accelerate the score but then again during a brief period, we were able to curtail the scoring to about 3.9 runs per over. Credit to the bowlers who were varying the line and length and keeping the batsman guessing at times. It was only the centurion Rehan Peiris, who was able to score with a degree of freedom. It was during the last hour to tea that Royal was able to up the tempo and score at about 4.1 runs per over. Pieris was in full control and we were able to take wickets and not let the rest of the batting take command. After tea, Royal batted a further 24 overs a run rate of 3.95 which we were able to control when the declaration was made. The Thomians had to navigate a crucial 10 overs. The openers were positive and by end of the day we had reached 32 for no loss.

We now move into the second day where the Thomians had to reply with a score close to that of Royal if they were to declare and be safe in not giving Royal an advantageous lead. Our first wicket fell at the 23rd over at 69 with a run rate of 3.0. The second wicket fell at 92 runs at 2.96 runs per over, batting cautiously. At lunch, we were 121 for 2 a run rate of 2.88. We fell behind on the run rate, close to lunch, as both batsmen were taking no undue chances. After lunch, we had a good opportunity to accelerate the score but both batsmen had decided the score put on by Royal had to be closely matched, if they were to be competitive in the game. So, we continued slowly but steadily to move the scoreboard with no risks but lost the third wicket at 136 runs with the run rate further declining to 2.77. The fourth

wicket fell at 163 runs and by the time the fifth wicket fell at 191 runs at 2.85, we were in a reasonable position to challenge our opponents score, as Dineth Goonewardena batting with authority, close to a half century. But with the next 11 runs we lost 2 quick wickets, which moved us to a danger situation, with Royal in front with about 115 runs. The captain, Kavindu Dias, comes to the wicket to partner his Vice- Captain with the score at 204 runs for 7 wickets. Slowly but steadily the pair added a further 80 runs for the 8th wicket at 3.6 runs per over, when Goonewardena departed for a well compiled 119 runs. **To me, this partnership is the first game changer** for the Thomians, as they were able to move closer to the Royal total. If at this stage we gave Royal about an 80-run lead they would have been in the box seat, as they would have had more time to build up a sizeable second innings lead and put us under pressure. During the partnership Dineth Goonewardena was able to complete his century. We were able to close the innings at 302 runs with Kavindu Dias not out on 37 valuable runs thereby giving our opponents only a 17-run lead, at the end of play.

Royal started the second innings on the third morning with the slim lead and all at the grounds and the general followers of the game, would have had their opinions as to how the innings would unfold. Would there be a declaration, or could the Thomians do the unthinkable and restrict Royal to a chaseable score. Royal started well with first wicket falling at 71 in the 23rd over at 3.09 runs per over. The score was being pushed steadily when the second wicket fell at 119 at 4.01 runs per over. There were signs that our opponents were interested in accelerating the score. But credit to our bowlers, the third wicket fell at the same score of 119 runs. Lunch was taken with the score at 126 for 3 wickets, at 3.9 runs per over. After lunch if Royal were to make a declaration, they had to come up with a positive attitude; which they did so and in the process lost their century maker Peiris for a well compiled 53 runs, with the score at 153 and a run rate of 4.2. At this stage, the Royal skipper, Perera, was at the wicket pushing the score along with a well compiled 50 at a run a ball and was out



with the score at 201 for 6 wickets, to the off-spinner Darien Diego. **Now comes the second game changer for the Thomians**, when Diego was able to take another 2 wickets, including a hat-trick with the score at 201 runs. This now stifled the free flow of runs for Royal who would have envisaged another quick 20 more runs, before their declaration at 215 runs for 8 wickets. As the run rate had slowed, the ultimate declaration was made by our opponents. The target for victory was 233 runs in 42 overs, and scoring at 5.5 runs per over was a challenging task.

Our run chase did not start very well, with our first wicket falling at 8 runs in the fourth over chasing victory in 42 overs, as already we were down to 38 overs with a further 224 runs needed at 5.8 runs per over. It was a high target for us to achieve especially when the run rate average in the first innings was only about 2.93.

bowling relentlessly, with boundaries and hits over the ropes. He compiled an aggressive 52 runs from only 32 balls, with three huge sixes and four boundaries, leaving the arena at 4 for 148 scoring at about 5.48 runs per over. His innings certainly gave us the momentum and belief needed for chasing the runs. We were now well placed for victory but needed concentration and responsibility in the middle to complete the task. We lost Gunasinghe quickly at 153 runs and in came the 15-year-old Reshon Solomons. **To me, his innings is my fourth and final game changer.** First innings centurion Goonewardena at this time needed a partner who could push the score along at a reasonable rate, so that there was no necessity for him to take undue risks. Solomons did immediately fit into that groove, stroking the ball into the gaps and moving the score steadily and outscoring his partner.



Sadev Soysa



Kavindu Dias (Capt.)



Reshon Solomons

But it could be seen that the coach had his own plan, with the change in the batting order, as Charles came to the wicket at first drop and attacked the bowling immediately. He scored a quick 26 runs, with 2 fours and a six and departed with score at 58 runs in the 15th over. The run rate improved to 3.8 and was on the upward trend. At the other end, opener Amaraweera was steadily keeping his wicket intact, pushing the score at a steady pace and was joined by Sadev Soysa. **Soysa's entry was my third game changer.** From the very first ball he made his intentions clear by attacking the bowling. The pair put on 57 runs when Amaraweera departed at 3 for 115 runs with a well compiled 48 runs, including 8 boundaries in 61 balls. Our run rate now had increased to 5.0 per over. Goonewardena, the next batter, did not take any undue risks but kept his innings moving forward with singles and two's. At the other end, Soysa was on the move, attacking the

His partner completed a cautious 50 runs came in 47 balls with only 1 boundary. Reshon too completed an attractive and attacking 50 in only 48 balls with 5 boundaries. In the end, the victory was complete with the youngster scoring the winning run. Thomian Grit and Determination prevailed.

Congratulations to all involved in the administration of STC cricket. I watched ball by ball on the Papare live stream and a game played by both teams with respect and good spirit, which reflects the Royal Thomian tradition for 146 years.



Arasu Saravanamuttu

STC Mount- from 1960-1972. College Prefect. Colours in Cricket 1971, Captain Hockey 1970- and Badminton Captain 1971.



A LESSON I LEARNED TOO LATE: BUT NOT TOO LATE TO SHARE

By Dulith Gunaratne

Batch of 2018 | College Prefect | Cricket Vice-Captain



My first time in Australia was in 2018. We came as a cricket team to Adelaide and Melbourne — a special gift from College after winning the All-Island Championship that year. I was lucky to serve as the vice-captain of that team. We

also ended up winning the Chappell

Brothers Tournament in Adelaide, staying at the Prince Alfred College boarding house.

The trip was incredible — full of memories, laughter, and a lot of teenage excitement. But looking back now, as a young adult living in Australia, there's something much deeper I want to reflect on. Something I didn't fully appreciate back then.



Before we flew over, the Old Boys' Association in Colombo had worked hard to raise funds for us. They collected money, gave us pocket money, and made sure we had everything we needed. To us, 18-year-olds at the time, it just meant seeing how many Nike T-shirts we could buy. We didn't really stop to think about the sacrifice and generosity behind it.

When we arrived in Adelaide, we were treated like royalty. It was the first time an STC cricket team had toured Adelaide, and our arrival actually marked the beginning of the Adelaide Thomian OBA chapter — a historic moment. They hosted a grand dinner, showered us with gifts, and even sent gifts back to our parents. We didn't spend a single cent. It was all pure generosity.

One moment that's burned into my memory: At Adelaide Oval, when we were trying to scrape together \$100 between 15 boys to buy some food, an old boy — noticing our College jerseys — walked up, smiled, and handed us \$1000. Just like that. We couldn't believe it. It was a real lesson in what the Thomian spirit looks like in action.

In Melbourne too, the OBA hosted us at a beautiful restaurant, and my own uncle — another proud old boy — slipped me \$300 for shopping. There are so many more stories. Like the 20 pairs of branded shoes donated to us by an old boy from the 1999 team, so that we could all walk out to the big match wearing the same gear. Or the time, back in 2017, when our bowling machine broke two months before the big match — and two weeks later, thanks to the



old boys, a brand-new machine arrived all the way from the UK. I strapped my pads back on and got back to work. At the time, I smiled and said thanks — but today, I wish I could have said even more.

We didn't appreciate it enough back then. Not because we were ungrateful — we were just young. But today, living and working here, trying to save every dollar, second-guessing myself at a supermarket checkout wondering if I should really spend \$5 on eggs — I realise the true meaning behind what the old boys did for us.

The reality is, S. Thomas' College is a fully private institution. We survive on school fees, and the unwavering support of old boys across the world. Their contributions are not small — they are



sacrifices of their hard-earned money, their time, and their love for College.

It's something every Thomian must grow to understand and appreciate. If you can, the very least you can do is join the OBA chapter wherever you live. Pay that \$10 or \$25 a year. Come to an event. Say hello. Give back in whatever way you can. Because one day, you'll realise — like I did — how much was given to you.

To the old boys who supported us back then — and to those who continue to give so much, expecting nothing in return — thank you. We see you. We remember you. And we will try to live up to what you've given us.

Esto Perpetua.

SPORTING HEROES OF YESTERYEAR...



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. In this edition, we invited two multi-coloursman to share their memories in the sporting arena — one who came from Prep School to Mt. Lavinia and the other from STC Gurutalawa to Mt. Lavinia.

BANDULAL MOLLIGODA — TRIBUTE TO MY SPORTING HEROES

What remains is the spirit of sportsmanship and friendship forged over a period of nearly six decades

When I was approached to write a few words, pertaining to my sporting activities at STCML and STC Prep, I was somewhat taken by surprise as I did not consider myself as an outstanding sporting identity. However, having agreed to the request, I decided to focus my trail of thoughts not entirely to my own deeds but rather to acknowledge some of the outstanding achievements of my team members and colleagues in various sports. Furthermore, it is also important to acknowledge sports personalities from other schools, who came in to contact with me in those formative years and thereafter. Many decades later, those early obscure and chance meetings on sporting fields have come to light to rekindle old and new friendships.

My first taste of representing STC was in 1955 Prep School U12 cricket team against Trinity College in Kandy. Prep School team was captained by Shaw Wilson and as I remember, other team members were Kumar Boralessa, Lakshman (LD) de Silva, Gavin Koch, Vasantha Amarakoon, Mohan (MNA) Gunasekera, Ian Wille, Gajan Balasinhram, Mudalisunderam and my brother, Nandalal. The Team was managed and

coached by Mr Obeysekera. In memory, the Trinity team consisted of Sunil Perera, Chulika de Silva, Lalith Thalakada, Nihal Gunasinghe and Lucky Karunathilake. In later years, they all went on to play in the Trinity first eleven team.

Sporting facilities at Prep School was not the best. However, the Head Master Mr J.T.R Perimernayagam and his wife provided all the support required for students to take part in sporting activities, of their choice. Cricket and Football training and home matches were played at “Bishops Meadows”, the back garden of the residence of the Bishop of Colombo. Our makeshift pavilion was under a huge banyan tree and I believe, that tree still exists in the premises of the current Cinamon Grand Hotel.

Notwithstanding the limited training facilities, STC Prep had the capacity to identify young talented cricketers, who went on to achieve great success at senior level at leading Colombo schools - Shaw Wilson (Capt. Royal College 1964), S.S. Kumar (Capt. Royal College 1963), Keith Labrooy (Capt. STC 1963), N. Abey Suriya (Capt. Wesley College), I.A Gunasekera



(Capt. Thurston College), Kumar Boralessa (STC 1963-64), Gajan Balasingam (STC 1964) and Ananda Medonza (STC 1961-62), winner of the F. L. Gunawardene batting shield.

I also had the opportunity of playing in the Prep School Football team, captained by Kumar Boralessa. I remember the match against STCML, which was played on Big Club grounds and I kept goals. To my horror, with few seconds remaining and the score locked in at nil all I let off a goal right through my legs for a Mount win. This incident did not go unnoticed as, when I joined Mount in 1956, I was constantly reminded of this incident by three protagonists (Premalal Goonesekera, Sam Abeysekera and Randy Morrell) who played in that match. Five years on and in 1961, we played together in the 1961 unbeaten hockey team. This time too I was keeping goals.

My transition to Mount in 1956, as a boarder in Chapman House 'A' was very welcoming and I soon blended well with the senior boys and I enjoyed my time at the boarding house. As boarders, we enjoyed each other's company and above all we had access to all sporting facilities at all times. Competition among individual players and house teams were fierce and competitive, enabling players to improve on their skills in all sports. All our free time was taken up with participating in sports such as hockey, tennis ball cricket, fives, basketball, swimming, badminton and athletics. It is a known fact that boarders made up a fair proportion of numbers in all STC teams at all levels. For example, 1961 hockey team, had nine boarders in the team.

Growing up, we all had our own sporting idols at College. Often, we attempted to follow in their footsteps or emulate their success in respective sports. I was no different. Growing up I always admired the sporting prowess of Dan Piachaud, Ronnie Reid, J.K.C. Gunasekera, Michael Tissera, Dennis Ferdinand's, D.D (Corky) Abeysekera, Rupert Ferdinands and P. S. Kumara, just to name a few. They were all multi-talented sportsmen always in the limelight during the college years, in so many sports. At the same time, one cannot ignore the sporting talents and achievements of the Reid brothers (Claud, Ronnie, Buddy, Barney and Johnan). They dominated the sporting scene at College and at national level for a good part of a decade, in multiple sports.

In swimming, STC always had a reputation of producing great swimmers such as Rodney Ingleton, Emilio and Enrique Moreno and Jan Vanden Driesen. They all made their mark at Schools and National Championships. In later years in Australia, Emilio and Enrique were great supporters of the STC OBA Melbourne. In boxing, Ronnie Jayathilake, Jeremy Vanden Driesen and Nihal Gooneratne had success at the Stubbs and Represented Sri Lanka.

In my first year at Mount (1956), I made premature attempt to seek a place in the U16 relay team. Three certainties were Maurice Fairweather, Herbert Wanigatunga and Robin Leembruegen. At the request of Mr Brookie D'Silva (coach), ten of us lined up for the 100 yds dash for the final spot. I only remember L C N de Silva (highly talented athlete) Hemanath (Kadi) Wickramasuriya, G D (Jadi) de Silva, Mohan Samarasinghe and Derek Kelly. Derek went on to win the race and grab the final spot and I was nowhere in the scene. In the Public Schools Meet, Maurice went on to win the 200 yds, second in the 100 yds and anchored the relay to win to the Junior Tarbet. Maurice was in Miller 'B' and I got along very well with him. I remember, going for morning runs with him on the beach, which helped me to get interested in athletics. In a way, I would consider him as my mentor when he convinced me to switch over to track events.

Initially, my participation in sports were restricted to house sports i.e. hockey, athletics, fives, cricket, basketball, Rugby and swimming. My first break in to school sports was when I was selected to the U17 Rugby team in 1959, as inside centre. The Team was captained by Lakshman Sirimanne. We had wins over Greenland's (Issipathana) and Thurstan but on the whole, we were the whipping boys for more established schools, like Trinity and Royal.

In 1959, we saw a resurgence of College athletics under the captaincy of Maurice Fairweather. Maurice went on to win 100, 220 and 440 and anchored the relays to win the Group Championships. In the Public School Meet, he won the 440 in record time and came second in the 220 carrying a strained hamstring. He also anchored the 100 and 440 relays to win the coveted Jefferson Trophy. Athletes in the two relay teams were, Mohan Samarasinghe, Selva Kanagasabai and Nihal Algama and Lakshman de Silva (who came second in the 880 yds). Another outstanding athlete was Lorenze D' Silva, who went on to establish new records in Shot Putt and Discus.



In the same year, my first attempt in athletics, I came second in the U16 Discus throw at the Groups and secured a place in the Public Schools Meet. For the remaining season, I switched over to run in the 440 and 880 in dual meets against St Joseph's and Trinity college.

More opportunities came my way in 1960. I continued to play U17 rugby under the captaincy of Kumar Fernando. In memory, the team consisted of Cecil Perera, Mohan Gunasekera, (RIP), Juni Cader, Sena (Pancho) Gooneratne, Maxim Flamer Caldera, Robyn Dixon (RIP) and Girja Rajapakse (RIP). The Team coach was the ever-popular Frankie David (RIP). This time around the team achieved better results leading up to the Trinity Match. From a personal point of view, I had a good season, notching up a few tries along the way.

My opportunity to play in the Senior Side came 4 days before the Trinity match, when I was chosen to play as Inside Centre to replace injured Nihal Algama (RIP). I teamed up with the captain Nihal (Baila) Samarasinghe (RIP), Mohan Samarasinghe, Maurice Fairweather and Ronnie Asirwathan to form a speedy back division and ever safe Lynwood Stork as fullback. Other players in the team were late great Tony Sirimanne, Roger Wanigasekera (RIP) Ranjit (Pancho snr.) Gooneratne, Gamini Weerakoon (RIP), Selva Kanagasabai, Garvin Koch, Lal Kumarasinghe (RIP), Alexis Ellawala and Cecil Perera, to name a few.

Although I was thrilled and happy to be in the side, I was somewhat apprehensive with the task ahead. As an inside centre, I was assigned opposite Tony Bultjens (RIP) who was considered, at the time, as one of the best Rugby Players produced by Trinity College. Other notable players in the Trinity side were Noel Brohier, Madugalle, Eric Roles (Captain), Jayantha Jayawardene, Jayantissa Ratwatte and Tissa Kodituwakku, to name a few. The match was played before a large crowd at the CR & FC grounds and much was expected from the Thomians. It was bad

enough to line up against a strong Trinity side, and to see them decked out in their iconic tri-colour jersey was sight to behold and enhanced the intimidation to another level.

Game was played at a hectic pace with both forward packs fighting out to gain ascendancy and both back lines showing speed and skills to break through opponent's defence. Finally, with the score locked in at nil all and five minutes of the match remaining a wayward kick by a Trinity player, found the welcoming hands of Maurice and the rest is history. Maurice sprinted 75 yards to score a brilliant try for a historic first ever Thomian victory over Trinity College. Tony Sirimanne converted the try to make it 5 - nil. Unfortunately, with three minutes remaining of the match, a tackle by Noel Brohier put paid to my rugby season with a fractured collar bone. But my single game of the season was good enough to earn school Colours. Unfortunately, I missed all post-match

celebrations as I was taken to the hospital for medical treatment.

I recovered from the injury in time for the Athletics season. I was targeting a place in the 4x440 relay team and all my pre- training paid off when I secured a place in the relay team. Leading up to the Groups and Public Schools, we were successful in winning the invitational schools relay shield at the Mercantile Meet and the famous Victoria Shield for Schools relays at the National Championships.



Moving towards the Groups and Public Schools, our most outstanding performer was our skipper Lorenze D' Silva. He continued to break records in Discus and Shot Putt and replaced Herbert in the 100 relay. At Groups and Pubs, we came second in the 100 relay and third in the 440 relay.

In the same year, Maurice captained the All-Island Schools Athletics Team to tour Australia. Maurice, Lorenze and Waruna Fernando (Javelin) were selected from STC. That year also saw the emergence of Darrell Lieversz as the most outstanding athlete. He



went on to win the 440 and 220 in record time and repeated the same result in 1961.

The year 1961, was another landmark year for College Rugby captained by Tony Sirimanne. STC was declared the leading team among schools. The forward pack of Roger D' Silva, Mohan Gunasekera, Garvin Koch, Cecil Perera, Juni Cader, Garrick D'Silva, Ronnie Jayatilleke and speedster Selva Kanagasabai. Often the forward pack was compared to a club team for their height, weight and agility.

We travelled to Kandy to play Trinity, who was waiting with glee to turn tables on us for their defeat in 1960. The match was played at the famous Bogambara grounds before a large gathering of spectators. After a hard-fought game, we managed to pull off a great win thanks to a brilliant late try by Ronnie Jayatilleke. The final score was 5-3.

Our next match was against Royal at the CR grounds. Much pressure was placed on us as the best team among schools. Two brilliant tries, one by Mohan Samarasinghe and the other by Lorenze D'Silva (playing on the wing) paved the way to beat Royal College, to register our first ever win against them. It was a fitting finale for a very successful Rugby season.

I had spare time in 61' and 62' to give a shot at senior Basketball having played for College as a junior. I believe the captain at the time was KDK Perera and DS Gunasekera and the Master in Charge, Mr Karalakulasinghe.

My most memorable moment in College sports were in 1961, when I was selected to play in the College hockey team as the goalie. I was stepping into a sport that remained unbeaten for seven years and maintained a very high standard. College hockey team had a reputation of being the best next to the National Team. The team consisted of brilliant players such as KDK Perera (Capt.), Sam Abeysekera, Ana Medonza, Mohan Samarasinghe, Premalal Gunasekera, L M Wickramasinghe, Randy Morrell, Rupe Rupasinghe, P Dias, Jabba Wanigasekera. All except Ana and KP Dias were boarders. We maintained our unbeaten record once again with victories over our arch rivals St Benedict, St Thomas' Matale and Royal. The end of season score line read 70+ goals for and 3 against.

The same year, I participated in the annual Fives Colours Competition. Each year 20 to 25 applicants played in a round Robin competition and four finalists were selected to play in the final round to qualify for colours. They had to play and beat a second year coloursman in a five-set match to earn colours. Invariably, in any given year only 2 or 3 players were awarded colours and luckily, I was one them. The tournament was overseen by the master in charge Mr Orville Abeynaike. Unfortunately, the Fives Courts are long gone but at the time, it was a popular game enjoyed by many students.

It was not the start we were expecting for the 1961 Athletics season. The first day of the Group Meet our Captain Mohan Samarasinghe was badly spiked whilst running the 880 yards. However, he decided to take part in the relays after urgent medical attention. In individual events, Roger D' Silva continued his domination in throwing events. We saw the emergence of A G Nihal De Silva as a distance runner and the best was to follow. From my part, in the 440 flat I came second to Darrell Lieversz who continued to dominate the 220 and 440. We managed to secure third place in both relays, giving us a chance to participate in the Public Schools Meet. My appearance at Public Schools 440 was short-lived as I pulled up due to a lingering hamstring strain during heats. We managed to scrape into both relays finals but fell short of a place.

The year 1962 was a defining year for me in Rugby. The College team fielded the same team minus key players, Selva, Ronnie and Maxim. In 1962, match against newly emerging, Zahira College was declared the school match of the season. The Match was played at Mount on a rock-hard surface before a large contingent of supporters from the Maradana School. Zahira College had in their team, fleet footed Majeed, Capt. Hamid and Speedy Mushin to name a few. As expected, it was a forward battle until ten minutes before time when Mohan Samarasinghe once again showed his running skills by scoring the winning try. The match against Trinity, played in heavy rain, ended in a 3 all draw. So did the match against Royal College, played for the inaugural Gunaratne Shield. STC finished the season as unofficial school's champions

Athletics, in the year 1962, unquestionably belonged to two individuals, Roger D' Silva and A G N De Silva.



Roger went on to stamp his athletics career as the best thrower of discus and shot putt. He went on to shatter the National record in the shot putt, which he held for many years, whilst AGN was the new face of distance running. Prior to Groups and Public Schools, it was a common sight to see AGN pounding the streets of Mount Lavinia along with his running mate, Ranjith Ranasinghe. His sheer determination and guts paved way for him to win the one mile at Groups and Public Schools in record time. Later that year, AGN went on to win the National Title in the same event. My participation in athletics was limited to the relays in 1962, along with AGN, Ranjith R, Tony Sirimanne, Roger, Chandi Asirwatham and Pathmanathan, we did well enough to get placings at the Groups.

In 1961 and 62, Group of us (Selva Kanagasabai, Tony Sirimanne, Mohan Samarasinghe, Roger and Lorenze D' Silva) attended the Outward-Bound School in Gurutalawa. This 14-day course was initiated by Dr R L Hayman, Head Master, STC Gurutalawa, based on its origins at Gordonstoun School in Scotland. The Coordinator of the course was Commodore (Boxer) Dassanaikie. It was a physically demanding course, ending with a 3-day hike over UVA Highlands.

In August of that year, to my great delight i was called upon to represent CR & FC in their iconic rugby fixture against CH & FC at the Race Course, Reid Avenue. Other two schoolboys were my captain Tony Sirimanne and Abdul Majeed of Zahira. The Captain of the CR team was Old Thomian Rodney Ingleton and included who's who of rugby at the time. CH side consisted of all Europeans. We were given a warm reception by the large crowd and all three stood up to the challenge and performed well. Final score line was 5-3 in favour of CH and Abdul Majeed scored CR's only try.

I went onto play for Outstations Schools in the Gratian's Cup, captained by Noel Brohier the very next day. Two weeks later, I was selected to play in the Combined Schools Rugby team captained by Hiranjan Perera of St Joseph's against Combined Universities. We were able to register wins in both encounters thus ending my sporting career at STC.

I wish to pay a special tribute to Mr Percy Perera for his unwavering support for the development of STC Rugby, which assisted future coaches to improve upon.

Acknowledgement also to Mr Lassie Abeywardena for his dedication to the sports in general.

At times, when I browse through my 62-year-old school leaving certificate signed by Warden Davidson, I reflect back on my sporting achievements knowing that I was a recipient of 6 colours (Rugby, Hockey, Athletics, Fives, Basketball) and including public Schools Athletic Colours.

I continued playing for CR & FC until my departure to UK and Germany in 1964 for Printing Technology Studies. On My return to Sri Lanka at the end of 1970, after an absence of seven years on the Rugby field, I resumed playing for CR Bees. In 1973, I was picked to play in the inaugural CRFU Trophy final against Havelocks Bambaras. The Bees went on to win the final captained by Malik Samarawickrema. By this time, I was playing reasonable Rugby for CR Bees and when the team was selected for the All-India Rugby Tournament in Bombay/ Mumbai, I was included in the team to play as a Centre. The team included two other Thomians, Bumpy Jayasekera and D.R Weerasinghe. Also in the side was Didacus De Almeida, with whom I first played for CR way back in 1962. Team led by Kamal Ratnapala, went on to win the tournament and I certainly cherish this moment as the highlight of my sporting career.

Many decades later, all those achievements, records and trophies fade in to a distant memory, unable to recall the true significance of it. Some of our friends and colleagues have passed on.

What remains is the spirit of sportsmanship and friendship forged over a period of nearly six decades.



Bandulal Molligoda

STC Prep (1953-1955) and ML (1956-1962)

Editor's Note: Bandulal ("Mollie") who is now residing in Melbourne, migrated to Australian in 1974 and served in the Executive Committee of the Melbourne OBA from 1983 to 1996 as Secretary and Vice-President. He was the recipient of the President's Award for his services to the OBA.



KARU AMARASINGHE - REMINISCENCES OF A CAREER IN SPORTSAT COLLEGE AND BEYOND

"Don't be afraid of failure. This is the way to succeed." - LeBron James

From my young days I loved to participate in sports. When I joined STC Gurutalawa in 1959 and being a boarder, I had the opportunity of playing all the games I liked, like many of my friends. The games I played were, Basketball, Soccer, Squash, Badminton, Hockey, Swimming and Athletics. I also engaged in horse riding which I enjoyed very much.

At Gurutalawa, we had to be in the hall for prep at 6.30pm and "Bell Simon" a popular figure used to start ringing the bell at 6.25 and we had to be at prep before Bell Simon stopped ringing the bell. If not, we were punished. So, we had only 5 minutes to have a bath get ready and go for prep. The good fellow Bell Simon - when he saw us still running towards the hall, he never stopped ringing the bell until we reached the hall.

Of the sports I played, I liked Basketball the best. Whenever I had some free time, I used to be on the court with some of my friends practicing to improve our skills. Some of the friends I remember are, Mahendra Liyanage (Buckka), G.H. Karunaratne, B.D.D Wijewardena, Mario Fernando, Nath Kannangara, Zacky Dasterkeer, K.L.D. Perera, U.K.D. Jinapriya and Timothy Bridge - who went on to become Head Prefect of the College.

I believe in the adage "practice makes perfect". Sheer practice not only made me fit but I improved my skills-shooting, dribbling, side stepping, faking, jumping etc. and was made the captain of the senior team. Dr. R. L. Hayman who was head master and a sports enthusiast used to organize a trip to S. Michaels College Batticaloa every year to play against them. This was a most enjoyable event in our sports calendar. Our team was managed by Mr. Chinniah and coached by Mr. Thiagarajah. We did very well against all the teams we played against.

We also looked forward to our annual trip to Jaffna to play against S. Johns' Jaffna and S. Patrick's. Ethnic harmony was at its best during our days. We had no difference and did everything as one big

family. These trips should be organized by the school heads once again and set an example to the rest of the country.

In 1964, I was awarded college colours for Basketball. I also represented STC Gurutalawa in Soccer, Athletics and Rifle shooting; winning colours in both Soccer and Rifle shooting.

There is one incident which has not left my memory since leaving Gurutalawa. Under Dr. Hayman, we had lot of outdoor activities such as scouting, hiking, cross country etc. I believe the year was 1964 and we had a cross-country race in which I also took part with many others. After completing about 90% of the race, I saw my friend Sarath Nanayakkara who was familiar with the terrain and a good runner-leading the race, had fallen on the ground. I immediately stopped and asked him what the matter was. He said he had a cramp, so I massaged his leg, gave him some water and helped him to recover, which took about 10 minutes and continued the race. He beat me to second place but if I had left him on the ground I would have come first. Looking back on my sports career, these little incidents are the ones that are etched in my memory, more than winning medals.

After completing our O-Level exams, I and many of my friends joined STC Mt. Lavinia in 1965. Even in Mt. Lavinia, being a boarder, I had the opportunity of playing all the games I liked but Basketball took precedence. I captained the Basketball team in 1966 and were the finalists in the all-island tournament in 1967, where I was selected as the all-island Best Shooter. Whilst being at school, I was selected as an ALL STAR in Basketball and represented the country from 1971- 1975.

The incident I am going to narrate now is a bit hilarious but looking back it was a matter of life and death. Every Sunday after breakfast, we used to go and play Basketball till noon. After playing for about 2 hours, we are all exhausted but didn't have money to go to the tuck-shop and buy a drink. My pocket



money was only Rs. 10/=. I was the only guy who could climb a coconut tree and there were plenty of them around the BB court. At Gurutalawa we were taught how to climb and cut trees.

Every Saturday/Sunday, I climb a coconut tree or two and pluck all the Kurumbas, which was relished by all the friends. We did not know what to do with the mature coconuts, when BDD Wijewardena came up with a bright idea. He said that Mrs. Silva, who was running a boarding house, might buy the coconuts if we offered them to her at half the price. We with trepidation approached her and she readily agreed to buy them. Every week we made quite a lot of money to have a Thosai feed at Saraswathi Lodge.

One day, when I was on top of the tree, our Warden, Rev. Selvaratnam came out of his bungalow to go for a walk. All my friends, when they saw the Warden, pretended to be looking for a lost ball and quietly slipped away. The Warden, who takes about 4 minutes to take 2 steps, was walking up and down the road leading to the Tennis Courts. I had no way of getting down and after about 5 minutes of holding on to the tree my knees started knocking and I thought I was going to fall down and die; and said a prayer- Buddhan Saranan Gachchami! I couldn't hold on to the tree any longer with my legs shivering, so what I did was to climb right to the top of the tree and waited there for about half an hour until the Warden went back to his bungalow. I was quite comfortable at the top of the tree but was cursing the Warden for taking so long to finish his walk. I came down the tree with bruises all over my chest and legs because I had dropped the rope (called the "walalla" in Sinhala) which I used to climb the tree. I didn't go to the sickroom to get treatment as I and my friends thought the sickroom matron may ask how I got these unusual injuries. What an episode it was!

At Mt. Lavinia apart from Basketball, I represented the school in Rugby and Athletics. At the end of the Rugby season, I was selected to represent the

outstation schools along with my friends Hasitha Kannangara, Azam Hameed and Usama Suby.

I represented Copleston House in Water Polo-Hockey, Basketball, Athletics and Cricket. We always had a healthy rivalry against Miller Chapman House in all sports. When I was in school after a game of BB, on some days I used to run to Galle Face and back. I can remember taking part in a road race from Mt. Lavinia to Galle Face along with S.L.B Rosa, Wimaladasa Perera etc. and securing 10th place. The first 10 places were awarded certificates.

Another incident I remember was the 4 x 400 meters relay in the inter house sports meet. S.K. Jayasinghe (Late) of Stone House was the 1st school boy to run

the 800 meters under 2 minutes and was running the last lap of the race and I was last lapper for my house. Fortunately, I got a handsome lead when I got the baton for the last lap and thought if don't run the race of my life S.K. will beat me hands down. In fact, with everyone cheering me I managed to hold on to win the race by a whisker. S.K. passed away a long time ago but I still remember his smooth style of running. Good old memories.

At the end of the school Rugby season, Mr. Percy Perera, our coach, almost physically dragged me to CR&FC and made me a member. I started with the C Team and graduated

to the B Team but unfortunately, security of the country took precedence and in the middle of the rugby season I was mobilized by the Army, which put an end to my Rugby career.

At CR&FC, I captained the Basketball team and also represented the club in Hockey. I have happy memories of the times I spent with the club and meeting some wonderful people such as Reggie Bartholomeusz, Eric Roles, Mohan Sahayam & his wife Penny, Tony Silva, Tony Sirimanne, Haji Omar, Ronnie Shockman, Didacus De Almeda and Shiraz Fernando, to name a few.



At Bank of Ceylon where I was employed, I had the privilege of captaining in five sports, namely- Basketball, Rugby, Hockey, Athletics and the mixed Netball teams. I also represented BOC in soccer. One Basketball match, I will never forget, was the match we played against Old Bens in the Depot Police tournament. We had no Ceylon Caps in our team but the Old Bens team comprised of 5 Ceylon Caps- Cosmos Perera, Percy Perera, Noel Perera, Malsisi Perera and Milroy Perera. It was a ding-dong battle till the end and with about 15 seconds to go I was awarded 2 free throws when the scores were level. My hands were shaking when I took the first throw which I missed but somehow managed to sink in the second throw and won the match. Bank of Ceylon team comprised of Shanthikaran, Pingamage, Wasantha Abeysinghe, Issadeen, Tharin Peiris, Sivakumar, Olagasekeram, Benjamin, Pakyanathan and Halaldeen.

I have no doubt that Mr. Halaldeen a double international-Athletics and Basketball- was one of the best sportsmen produced by BOC.

I am told that the AGM, Francis Amarasinghe, was a lover of sports and played cricket for the Bank and SSC. He recruited leading sportsmen to the Bank and as a result, did very well in all sports during that era (late 50s to mid-70s). I understand that they had 8 school boy cricket captains in the 56/57 BOC cricket team.

I captained the BOC athletics team to India for an Athletics meet against Vijaya Bank of India and remember securing 2nd place in the 10,000 meters race.

Whilst I was in the Army, I captained the Soccer team of my Battalion and the Athletics team and also had the privilege of coaching the Army Basketball team.

I represented Sri Lanka at the Asia Pacific Masters Games held in Australia in 1998 and World masters Games held in Melbourne in 2000. I captained the Sri Lanka Masters Games team in 2002 held in the Gold Coast Australia and led the team to win a Bronze medal having won against Guam, who had a

number of American expatriates playing for them. This was the first Time a Medal was won by a Sri Lanka Basketball team in an International Event.

At one time, I was the Hon. Secretary of the Sri Lanka Basketball Federation and the Sri Lanka Badminton Association and was the manager of the SL Badminton team for the world championship held in Spain in 2003.

Even after my retirement, I continued with Badminton and Squash and sometimes was elated beating good players half my age.

My advice to all – HEALTH IS WEALTH- We live in this world only for a limited period of time and during that time it is important to live healthy and happy, you can achieve this only by choosing games and exercises to suit your age, coupled with a healthy diet. Age is only a number and do not ever think you are too old to exercise or play games. I have now, with age catching up, given up strenuous exercises but continue to do yoga and swimming.

All in all, I had a very enjoyable and a satisfying career in sports but more satisfying was making lifelong friends through sports who still keep in touch. I wish to ask my friends the following question -

DO SPORTS BUILD CHARACTER OR REVEAL CHARACTER?

I wish to conclude by reproducing a quote from a great sports personality:

“The only person who can stop you from reaching your goals is you.” [Jackie Joyner-Kersey](#)



Karu Amarasinghe

STC Gurutalawa (1959 – 1964)
and ML (1965 – 1968)





RECOLLECTIONS – STC MOUNT LAVINIA BEFORE THE WAR

Perspective of Dr. R. L Hayman

Part 1 of a two-Part article that appeared in
S. Thomas' College Mount Lavinia Jubilee Number 1918—1968

How I came to join the staff of the College is a long story. Briefly, this is what happened. Whilst doing research at Oxford, I was approached by a representative of Trinity College, Kandy and asked if I was interested in considering an appointment there. At that time, I had no intention of going abroad, and dismissed the suggestion without much thought. Later when I decided to work for a missionary society, it seemed best to choose one concerned with education in Ceylon, because I had known the then Bishop of Colombo, when he was at Oxford. So, I wrote to the S.P.G. and the society put me in touch with S. Thomas' College. My parents were against my choice on the grounds that they had spent a lot of money on my education, and that their efforts might well prove to be wasted. In order to reassure them, I put the matter to the S.P.G. and was told that Ceylon was a country working its way towards independence, and that it needed men who would train Ceylonese boys, so that in due course they would be fitted to take over the running of the country. For this purpose, the country would need statesmen, doctors, engineers, scientists, agriculturists etc. and S. Thomas' College was trying to provide an education, which would enable its boys to launch out on such careers. To this end, anything I could teach in England would be equally useful and acceptable in Ceylon. So, in the end my parents rather unwillingly allowed me to follow my wishes.

Warden K. C. Mc Pherson was on leave at that time, and it was decided that W. T. Keble and myself should join him in Italy, and sail with him and his family to Ceylon. Keble had been the headmaster of a school in North Borneo, but after being invalided out, had to relinquish his post there. Our terms of appointments were for about three years or four years, if we chose to take short leave to England at our own expense after two years.

We arrived in Colombo harbour almost exactly 40 years from the day I write this, on a wet evening towards the end of December. Rain was coming down

in torrents, and though the ship's band strove mightily to render "Deutschland uber Alles" the noise of the rain drowned their music to all who were more than a few yards away. It did not seem a very auspicious welcome to the island. We cheered up, however, when the Sub-Warden, Reggie de Saram, came on board to meet us, and arranged for our transport to Mount Lavinia. Keble and I arrived in the dark, and were housed downstairs in "Thalassa", on the edge of the "Big Club."

When we got up next morning, we got our first view of the College. It was a bright day, so it was not long before we had seen briefly the buildings then existing. As far as I remember them, they included Winchester, and the comparatively new Cricket pavilion, which was the outcome of the efforts of Percy Cooke to collect the funds needed for its erection from Old Boys, both in Ceylon and overseas. There was a temporary prep. hall and a sickroom which was little more than a corridor with two beds and little equipment. There were the Junior Classrooms to complete the buildings between the "military road" and the railway. On the landward side of this road was the quadrangle with three sides completed: on the West the science laboratory, on the South the classrooms and on the East the chapel. On the North the work on the dormitories and the school hall was in its early stages, and the site was in a terrible mess. Cloughton and Chapman houses were in the building subsequently occupied by the dining hall, the library and the Warden's office.

When Warden Stone originally decided to move the College to Mount Lavinia, a plan was drawn up for a huge multi-storey block which was to house the dormitories, prep. hall, dining hall, Chapel etc. This design was carefully worked out in every detail, but had to be rejected because the funds available were not sufficient for its completion. Another plan was eventually approved, but though in many ways it had advantages, it was not studied carefully enough, and it contained mistakes and omissions which were to cost the College heavy sums to correct. For example, no bath-



rooms were provided for the masters in the wings, and the doors of the middle dormitories were unsatisfactory, and had to be replaced by sliding iron ones. The staircases leading to the up-stairs masters' rooms in the wings were inside those rooms and the ones below, and had they been built would have made the rooms very small. These were replaced by external spiral ones. For lack of careful scrutiny of the plans, the school was to pay a very heavy price, when the contractor's bills were received. Moreover, the standard of work was not entirely satisfactory, and when the building was completed, the hall roof and the flat roof over the main entrance both leaked. The school had failed to learn from its experience with the classrooms and science laboratory that great care is needed in the design of roofs and in their construction. Both the above buildings had to have a second roof erected over the original flat roof, but the flat part of the roof of the new block was cured of its leak by the use of special tiles invented by Mr. S. Mahadeva, and the cost was less than it might have been. While the dormitories were being built, the senior boarders were housed in Thalassa and another neighbouring house, whilst the juniors were in Chapman and Cloughton (later the dining hall), and in Winchester on the edge of the Big Club. Conditions for boarders were considerably rougher than they are now. No running water was available in the bungalows, and the boys bathed at wells. There was no electric light in Mount Lavinia. The cooking was done over open wood fires, and gas was not to arrive for several years. Electric torches were not so easy to get as they are today, and many of the staff preferred to move about the compound at night carrying hurricane lanterns. The servants' quarters were by modern standards overcrowded. Games were played under difficulties. The Big Club had originally been a coconut estate with the trees growing out of the sand. After removing the trees, the surface had been too soft for a proper game of cricket, and a layer of broken "cabook" had been put down to improve it. In consequence, it was uncomfortably hard for playing soccer. The junior club sloped down from the Galle Road to the Hotel Road, so it could not accommodate all the junior boys who were down for games. Keble organised teams of boys to expedite the levelling of the ground and the work was



completed more quickly than could have been anticipated. I had to take one very junior team towards Dehiwela, where they played football amongst the trees of a coconut estate. The presence of the trees formed a hazard which did not detract from the players enjoyment. Such sea-bathing was possible under the supervision of Father T. W. Gilbert, the school chaplain, and when he left, I took over from him. It was seldom possible except between December and the end of the first term. Even then it was a difficult matter to teach swimming in the surf, and it was creditable that a certain number of boarders did in fact become good swimmers, and many passed a fifty-yard test. During the Cambridge examinations, I once had five out of nine boys in difficulties at the same time, and earlier both the Sub-Warden and Mr. C. B. Pauliculle have had similar experiences. We were fortunate in that we never had a serious accident, but on occasions such as the above, it was touch and go as to whether the outcome would or would not be a tragedy. It was completely nerve-wracking for the master-in-charge to have to supervise as many as sixty bathers at the same time, when a large proportion of them were not able to swim.

In the classroom, teaching was rendered difficult by the noise of the pile-driver, which was being used to secure the foundations of the western wing of the dormitory block. Even at that time the West wall of the science lab was cracking, because the sub-soil on which its foundations were laid was sand. The authorities were determined that Cloughton house should not suffer the same defect. So, the foundations were to be supported on piles, and the crashes of the pile-driver became an accepted part of our lives. One could even reinforce one's statements by so timing them that each sentence was followed by a reverberating crash.

We found the boys no different to boys in other parts of the world. They enjoyed playing tricks on us, and were delighted when they "came off" as they often did with me. Keble was a much more difficult person to trick, and he generally came out on top in such encounters. I well remember my dismay when during my first period with my upper sixth arts-mathematics set, I asked each boy his name. Instead of just giving their surnames they reeled out the full string of all their names, and I thought that I should never be able to learn



them. Again, the oil lamps in the prep. hall had Argand burners, and the air supply for the flame came up from a hole in the oil tank and through the cylindrical wick. Some boy discovered that by inserting a loose ball of paper into the hole just before prep. started, they could make the flame slowly die down and ultimately fail altogether. There would then be a cry, "Sir, the lamps are out of order, can we have prep. in the dormitories" - which meant a much easier time for everyone than under normal prep. conditions in the hall. One boy was an adept at catching centipedes in a noose of thread, and on one occasion released a centipede during prep. just for the fun of seeing how the duty master would react to the situation. The only time I was the victim of this prank, I was lucky enough to bring the matter to a satisfactory conclusion with one rather over-violent stroke with a broom. The same boy once gave me a demonstration of how to noose a centipede, but it was an accomplishment that I never wanted to emulate. When the weather was wet the boarders always hoped for a "rain holiday", and used to run out of the compound to meet the day boys and persuade them either to return home, or to contrive to get themselves so wet that their form masters would refuse to admit them to class.

Thomians were adepts at giving nick-names. Mr. C. V. Pereira was proud of his pointed moustache, and the boys alleged that he kept it in shape by the application of soap - so he became known as "Soaper". When his son joined the school, in true biblical fashion they called him "bar-soaper". There were many such examples of Thomian wit, though other nick-names seemed to be hereditary, and most Goonetillekes were known as "Gompa", and Abeyasekeras as "Cabaragoya".

Like other schoolboys they had little difficulty in seeing through the outward facade to the true character of their masters. In 1929, Keble's predecessor, as house-master of Copleston house, boasted to me that his boys were so afraid of him that they would never dare to break rules. Discipline in his house was (so he said) no problem. On the second day of the Royal - Thomian Match, one of the house started to chat to me about the previous day's play and then asked rather

inconsequently, "Do you know Sir, what time I got back to my dormitory last night?". I replied that I imagined that it must have been about the time that the boarders were expected to return. I was surprised when he answered that he had actually got in well after midnight. So, I said. "But your house-master told me only the other day that you were all so afraid of him that you would never dare to break any rules ", and received the comment, "We like him to think that, but we know that he is too lazy to keep an eye on us."

Later, when the dormitories were completed, it was the rule to lock the dormitories after lights out, and breaking out became rather more difficult, though it still happened at times. There were bars in the windows, and in the fan lights. As originally fixed the bars of the latter were slightly too far apart, and it was discovered that a really small boy could still wriggle his way through, by going under the lowest bar. It was a year or two later, on one of the nights of the Royal Match, that I heard a noise in Miller Junior; and on going to investigate found that it came from the inmates, who were trying to help a diminutive Chapman house boy through the fan light. He had failed to get into his own dormitory, but hoped that the bars in my dormitory were a little more widely spaced. At the moment of my arrival on the scene he was well and truly stuck. In this matter of window bars, Miller senior and I had a constant war over one bar, which could be loosened and removed. Whenever I had it re-fixed the time would come, perhaps a month, perhaps a term or even a year later, when I would find that it had been loosened again. I doubt

whether the members of the house ever knew that when I had found the bar loose, and was awaiting its repair, I used often to wait on the stage of the Big School up to midnight, just to see if the boys would try to get out. I am glad to say that I never caught any doing so.

As I remember it, the discipline of the school was at that time pretty sound, and this bar loosening was more an expression of high spirits than of a craving for illicit pleasures for their own sakes. However, this is to anticipate events, and it cannot be denied that in 1929



the morale of the College was at a low ebb. I need not go into detail, but can cite as an example, the assault by a senior boy on one of the staff, over a grudge (real or imagined). Subsequently, the culprit defied the head perfect when the latter attempted to take him to the Warden. Both these boys later held high positions in the Ceylon police. The surprising incidents which followed would take too long to tell, but one outcome was a raid on Miller senior after lights out on one night. Apparently, some of the boys who got into trouble over the above incident, and who had been sent away from school, blamed their misfortunes on the Miller senior prefect, Clive Palipane. They believed, (I think wrongly), that he had reported them to the Warden, and was responsible for their troubles. Together with some old boys they got into the dormitory, but were disturbed before they could perform the intended beating up, and panicked and ran away. I followed them up to the Hotel Road, but my torch was too weak for me to be able to identify any of them before they drove off in a waiting car.

The fact that dissensions on the staff were talked of by parents, boys and Old Boys, undermined authority. Biassed reports of staff meetings appeared in the daily press on more than one occasion. No doubt a man of Warden Stone's calibre could have sorted things out, but it was not realised that the days for that type of despotism had gone.

During Warden McPherson's regime, two situations in particular stick in my mind. Mr. Caspersz, one of our mathematics masters, gained his external London degree, and celebrated the occasion with a party to which the staff were invited. The Warden offered Keble and myself a lift in his car, and we accepted his offer. The party turned out to be a very happy affair, and we were sorry when the Warden said that he had to leave. What he did not know was that his driver had also celebrated the occasion in the servants' quarters. We got into the car, and our host and his other guests came out on to the verandah to see us off. Appuhamy, the driver, let in the clutch, and the car surged forward dramatically, heading for a coconut tree. Just in time the brakes were applied, and the car resurged backwards at another tree. Again, in the nick of time we jerked to a stop, only to repeat the performance until one of the staff offered to drive us home. In the second incident, the Warden was the victim of someone else's mistake. The Divinity School was at the time housed in "College View", and it had been decided to shift it to "Bezaleel", a few doors up the hill. When signing the documents for relinquishing "College View" the documents applying to the Warden's residence,

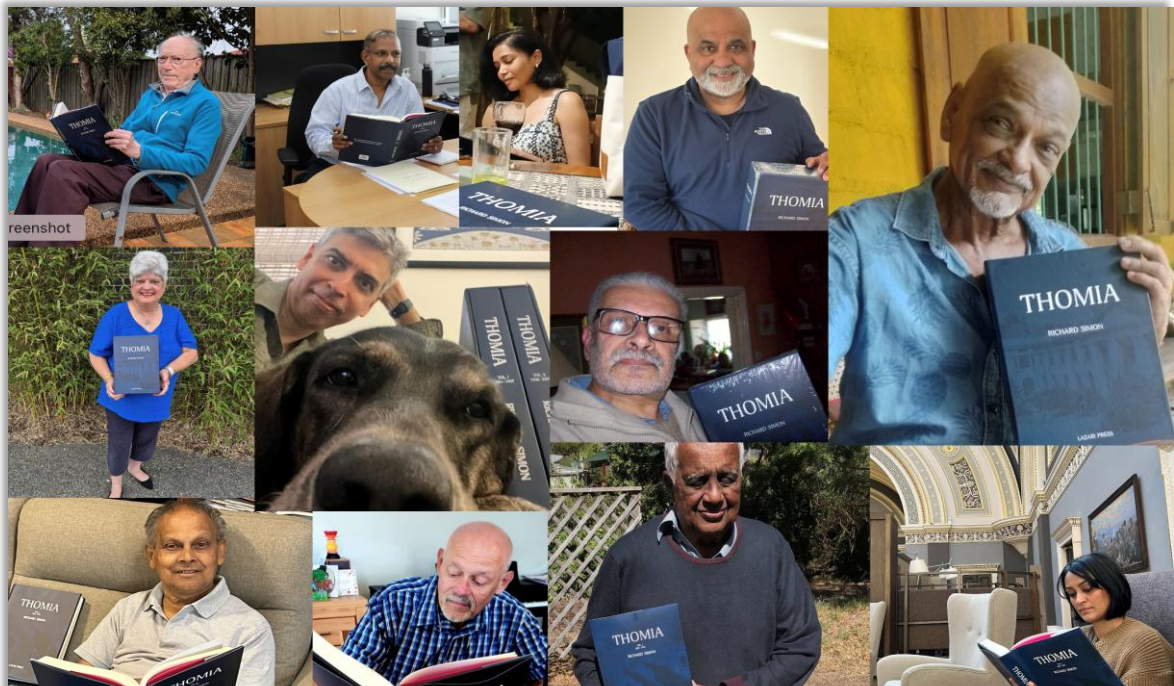
"Bertram House" were accidentally substituted. The error was not noticed, and "Bertram House" was let by the owners to a new tenant. The first that the Warden knew about it was when the new tenant demanded vacant possession of the house within 12 hours. After school that day, the Mrs. McPherson, their servants, The Rev. A.C Houlder, who happened to be their guest, the Divinity students, Keble, the sub-Warden and myself shifted all the Warden's possessions into "Bezaleel" before mid-night which was the deadline for the new occupants' arrival. Needless to say, the new occupants did not put in an appearance at the appointed hour, but had they come the house was ready for them.

Of the more serious incidents, the Jayatileke affair was one that I recall most clearly because I myself was involved, and it too had a fantastic side. However, it would take too long to describe, but a measure of its seriousness was the fact that it was only kept out of the police court by the ingenuity of D. S. Senanayake who, with Sir Thomas Villiers, and the Bishop were called upon to arbitrate.

Warden McPherson tried to introduce many new ideas, but to the ardent believers in the "way things were done in Warden Stone's time," they were regarded as suspect imports probably originating from Trinity College (where Warden McPherson had his first experience in teaching). Amongst these may be mentioned staff prayers, quiet afternoons for the staff, the reading to the staff of books on modern educational theory, and the support he gave to the maintenance of a staff library. It was he who called in short service European masters - Keble and myself, Bill Bishop and Christopher Wheat, of whom the last two have since made their names in the field of religion. Had Warden McPherson received better support he might well have made a considerable mark on the College history, but it was Warden de Saram who ultimately steered the College into peaceful waters, and under whom it blossomed and flourished. It is happy that Warden McPherson met with success and respect in his subsequent career. He now lives in retirement in Winchester, and still takes a lively interest in the College.

Part 2 of this article will be included in the next edition of the Thomiana (September 2025)





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Because if you haven't, you'd better hurry!

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A photograph of four professionals (three men and one woman) sitting on a dark leather couch in an office setting. They are all dressed in business attire. The man on the far left is wearing a blue suit and a pink tie. The man in the center is wearing a blue suit and a blue tie. The woman on the right is wearing a black blazer over a blue top and black pants. The man on the far right is wearing a dark suit and a red tie. They are all smiling at the camera.

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For Inquiries, please email Webmaster STC OBA (Australia): stcobaust.webmaster@gmail.com

New Members of the OBA in 2025

Name	Branch	Period	Name	Branch	Period
Kevin MARTIN	Prep	1963 - 1971	Clarence LEWIS	Mt. Lavinia	
Dushan Navishka YAPA	Mt. Lavinia	2015 - 2022	Dhanushka BASNAYAKE	Mt. Lavinia	
Meshach LINDON	Mt. Lavinia	2008 - 2016	Dulanja DE SILVA	Mt. Lavinia	
Ariththa RADDALGODA	Mt. Lavinia	2009 - 2022	Heshan PEIRIS	Mt. Lavinia	
Praveen FERNANDO	Mt. Lavinia	2005 - 2018	Chandima RATNAYAKE	Mt. Lavinia	
Lishan DE SILVA	Mt. Lavinia		Sahan WIJESINGHE	Mt. Lavinia	
Rohan GINIGE	Mt. Lavinia	1965 - 1980	Tilak ARUNACHALAM	Mt. Lavinia	1958-1970
Leon WIJERATNE	Mt. Lavinia	1985 - 1998	Hashil PERERA	Mt. Lavinia	2010 - 2023
Ravi DE SILVA	Mt. Lavinia		Senith DELPECHITRA	Mt. Lavinia	2015 - 2023
Sheahan DHASON	Mt. Lavinia	1980 - 1994	Hasitha DHARMASENA	Mt. Lavinia	
Shehan SELVANAYAGAM	Mt. Lavinia		Dusheik TILLEKERATNE	Mt. Lavinia	
Ramal PERERA	Mt. Lavinia		Ahmad MUKHTAR	Mt. Lavinia	2009 - 2022
Anura FERNANDO	Mt. Lavinia		Raneth HETTIYADURA	Mt. Lavinia	2011 - 2024
Palitha PERERA	Mt. Lavinia		Priyan DE MEL	Mt. Lavinia	
Aneesh KAMALCHANDRA	Mt. Lavinia	2009 - 2022	Idris JALEEL	Mt. Lavinia	2007 - 2020
Navishka KARUNARATNE	Mt. Lavinia	2007 - 2020	Revaan TISSERA	Mt. Lavinia	2002 - 2020
Duvini DE MEL	Mt. Lavinia	2003 - 2016	Waruna PEIRIS	Mt. Lavinia	



Calendar of Events - 2025

February

Sunday 16th



ROYAL – THOMIAN CRICKET MATCHES & FAMILY DAY

9.30 am onwards

Greaves Reserve

Bennet Street, Dandenong, Dandenong Showgrounds

Friday 21st



ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING (AGM)

6.30pm

Notting Hill Community Centre

386, Ferntree Gully Road, Notting Hill, 3168

May

Saturday 17th



THOMIAN LUNCH

12.00 noon

Springvale RSL

26, Osborne Avenue, Springvale, VIC 3171

July

Saturday 26th

THOMIAN BALL - 2025

6.30pm

Pullman Melbourne Albert Park

65 Queens Road, Melbourne VIC 3004

August

Saturday 9th

TRANSFIGURATION SERVICE

10.00 am

St. Peter's Muruumbeena

371, Neerim Road, Carnegie, VIC 3163

October

Saturday

THOMIAN FAMILY NIGHT

7.00pm

Venue: To be confirmed

November

Tuesday 4th

MELBOURNE CUP SWEEP

2.00pm

December

Saturday 13th

FESTIVAL OF NINE LESSONS AND CAROLS

6.00 pm

Venue: To be confirmed



IN MEMORIAM



They remain in our memories forever



Rupert Ferdinands: Product of St. Thomas' College, Mt. Lavinia (1946 to 1956) and former Head Prefect of the School, and been a resident in Melbourne since 1972. He was an B.Sc. (Hons) graduate, Sri Lanka Davis Cup player and Australian qualified tennis coach (Level 3). In 2008, Rupert was honoured as a National Sporting Hero of Sri Lanka by the Ministry of Sports, Sri Lanka for his achievements in tennis both in Sri Lanka and abroad. Rupert was inducted into the Hall of Fame of the Tennis Coaches – Victoria at an Awards Night held at Kooyong Lawn Tennis Club.



Dr. Eddie Jesudhason: Was at STC Mount Lavinia and left in 1953 to enter Medical College. He was a School Prefect and a Chorister. Eddie was an active member of the STC OBA in Melbourne for many decades and a family doctor to many. A memorial service to celebrate his inspiring life was held at the Glen Waverley Anglican Church on 14th April 2025



Prof. B. L. Tennekoon: An old boy of STC Mount Lavinia and won many academic prizes at College; and entered the University of Peradeniya and obtained a 1st Class Hons Engineering Degree. He won a Scholarship to the University of Cambridge and received a Doctorate. He retired as Professor of University of Moratuwa Civil Engineering Dept. He was also a founding member of the Sri Lanka Geotechnical Society, and has offered a yeoman service to his field of Engineering as a Researcher and for the country as an Advisor in many projects.

Esto Perpetua

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



PHOTO GALLERY: ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 2025



PHOTO GALLERY: ROYAL THOMIAN CRICKET 2025



PHOTO GALLERY: THOMIAN LUNCH (17TH May 2025)





S. Thomas' College Mt. Lavinia Sri Lanka OBA Australian Branch Inc.

ABN 18 114 799 661

PO Box 2337, Mount Waverley, Victoria 3149

www.stcobaaust.org.au

1

APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP

I desire to become a member of S. Thomas' College Mount Lavinia, Sri Lanka O.B.A. Australian Branch Inc. On admission as a member, I agree to be bound by the rules of the Association

Surname			
Given Names			
Date of Birth			
Address (Optional)			
	State		Postcode
Contact Details			
Email			
College Branch Attended	From	To	
Class Group			

Signature of Applicant: Date:/...../.....

2

PAYMENT DETAILS

Membership Fees	<p>Regulars: \$25.00</p> <p>Concessional(Full-Time Students & Pensioners) \$10.00</p>
Cash/cheque/MO	\$..... enclosed (in favour of S Thomas College OBA)
Bank Transfer	<p>I have credited STCOBA's account online at Commonwealth Bank Australia, Mount Waverley Branch</p> <p>BSB: 063-151 Account No: 1002-9468</p> <p>in the sum of \$_____ having recorded my name as remitter for identification purposes.</p>

Postal Address and Enquiries

Membership Secretary
PO Box 2337, Mount Waverley Vic 3149
 Enquiries: Upali Gooneratne
 Email: fgooneratne@iiec.org
 Tel: **0449024294**


Executive Committee Use Only

Proposer Name	
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Payment Recorded	
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