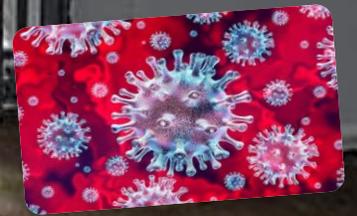


FLOREAT

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September - 2021



**STAY SAFE & FOLLOW HEALTH GUIDELINES TO
AVOID THE RISK OF COVID-19.**

EDITOR

GEORGE FERNANDO



FLOREAT CONCEPT AND DESIGN

LOCHANA PREMARATHNA



The Boake Memorial Gates (featured on the front cover)

The Boake Memorial Gates at Royal College Colombo comprise of three sets of gates for the entrances to the main building along Rajakeeya Mawatha in Colombo. Erected in 1937, the gates stand as a symbol for the College's traditions and culture.

The gates were built in memory of Rev. Dr. Barcroft Boake, who served as headmaster of the Colombo Academy, the forerunner to the Royal College Colombo from 1842 to 1870. His son Rev. W. H. Boake bequeath £250 in his will to the Lord Bishop of Colombo to be used at Royal College in the memory of his father. This money was used to build a set of wrought iron gates which were named the Boake Memorial Gates, replacing the wooden gates that had been installed when the

new Royal College building was built in 1923.

The gates were made under the supervision of Kenneth de Kretser, CMG; the Director of Public Works and they were designed by Wynne Jones. The opening ceremony was held on January 13 1938, by Miss Carpenter-Garnier the sister of the Bishop of Colombo, who was in fact due to open the gates however had fallen ill.

The gates are made of iron and fastened to brick pillars. There are three sets of gates with each larger main gates flanked by two smaller side gates. The main gates are adorned with the pre-1954 crest of the College. One of sides of the gates include inscriptions in memory of Rev. Boake. The side gates remain open throughout the year, while the center gates remain closed except for rare occasions. The school's War Memorial is located between the center gates and the main entrance of the College Main Hall.



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President's report

Dhammika Perera

It has been six months since we had our delayed 2019/20 AGM. In February 2021 during this Covid pandemic period, at a first ever Zoom AGM, I was elected the President of RCOBAA. Having served on the committee for the past nine years, holding various positions including Treasurer, Vice President and Senior Vice President, I feel very privileged and honoured to be elected the President of RCOBAA.

Our lives had significantly been disrupted since early 2020. In February 21 we were hopeful that we were gradually coming out of the Covid pandemic. We had many plans for 2021. It is so unfortunate that we are yet to see any light at the end of the tunnel.

In a typical year we would hold approximately seven events including the flagship annual Dinner Dance, the traditional Royal-Thomian Cricket Match and Stag Night, the popular Seniors Luncheon and the Indoor Cricket Tournament. We were fortunate to hold the traditional Royal-Thomian Cricket Match and the Stag Night on the 30th of April 2021. This was my first two events as the President. No doubt these two events are favourite events of our membership base.

We also successfully organised the 6-A-Side Indoor Cricket match on the 11th of July 2021. We had over 100 members participating in this popular event. It is not surprising the cricket tournament was played with a competitive spirit which brought out all the energy which appeared to have been locked away with the on and off Covid restrictions in Melbourne. It was great to see our members having a great time.

We had begun planning for the annual Dinner Dance to be held in August 2021. In July 2021 we had to postpone the dance to October 2021. This was due to the sudden lockdown imposed in Melbourne. We had an astonishing response from the members. 450 tickets were reserved within 5 days. I am thankful to all those who responded and reserved tickets in such a short time frame. Your enthusiasm, loyalty, and commitment to RCOBAA is what keeps us motivated to serve RCOBAA. Considering the continuous uncertainties with lockdown restrictions in Melbourne, it is now becoming unlikely that we can have the dinner dance in October 2021. Having said that the dance committee is yet to make the final decision. If we do decide to not go ahead with the dance in October 2021, it will be prudent of us to postpone the dance to next year. We will personally keep those who have reserved the tickets informed.

I would like to take this opportunity to pay tribute to three distinguished old Royalists based in Sri Lanka who left us recently due to the deadly COVID virus. Mr Rajendran Rajamahendran, a successful businessman, Mr Mangala Samaraweera, well respected politician and Mr Saman Amarasinghe, former cricket umpire and ex-President of the Association of the Cricket Umpires Sri Lanka. I would also like to share a thought with all those affected by the pandemic and a prayer with all of you to stay strong and survive through these challenging times.

Floreat editor, George Fernando and Floreat Concept and Designer, Lochana Premarathna have published another extraordinary issue of the Floreat. I am confident that you will enjoy reading it as much as I did.

Please take good care of yourselves and be safe.



Royal-Thomian Cricket Encounter - Melbourne 2021



Old Royalists and Thomians in Melbourne broke the shackles with the end of COVID restrictions to witness another saga of the Royal-Thomian spectacle keeping the unbroken tradition of over 30 years alive in Melbourne.

Three separate games of cricket were played concurrently, and very high standard of cricket was witnessed by the many old boys, families and friends. It was joyful and happy atmosphere although the results did not go our way. In a close game RCOBAA over 40's lost to our rivals and in the open game the Thomians got the better of us in a hard-fought battle. As a consolation, our over 50's romped home with an easy win. RCOBAA thanks all the players who put 100% and played the game in true Royal-Thomian spirit.



We would like to thank our main sponsor OYOB and photographers Yohan Pasqual and George Fernando for the lovely pictures. The Eddie Gray memorial trophy was awarded to Hasitha Samarasinghe.





Open Team



Over 40s Team



Over 50s Team



HELP REQUIRED - PROJECT SEARCH

PROJECT SEARCH is the acronym for “SPOKEN ENGLISH AT ROYAL COLLEGE HOSTEL”.

The project is the brainchild of Nihal de Run who is fulfilling a long-held wish of Padmasena Dissanayake (66 Group) to improve the English-speaking skills of the students who come from the rural areas of Sri Lanka to domicile at the RC Hostel whilst completing their education.

These students have successfully gained a scholarship following an island-wide examination and selected Royal College as their first choice. However, they hail from rural homes and rural schools where English is generally not spoken at home or in their village. A good knowledge of English is essential for their general education and later at tertiary levels.

Nihal de Run has recruited thirty volunteer tutors in Australia, UK, and the USA and Padmasena Dissanayake has allocated 42 students out of 59 in the batch to their respective tutors. We need more tutors to satisfy the demand.

The Tutors are mainly Old Royalist retirees and pre-retirees who tutor two students each over a Zoom session conducted once a week. Some family members of old Royalists have also embraced the idea and tutor two students each.

The programme has had enormous appeal amongst the year 9 students participating and their parents are most grateful for the upstanding and crucial service given.

Nihal has a goal of recruiting up to 50 tutors and hope that some of our Floreat readers will show interest in this noble and worthwhile project by contacting him on email: nihal@derun.net.au Phone: +64 419 382 142.

One of the best batches at RC -The 49 Group

D.S.Sivapragasam (Canada)

Royal College is undisputedly the best school in the island. All parents clamour to get their children into Royal, but not all of them are lucky enough. Everyone thinks of other public schools as second best. Royal and St. Thomas' (Mt. Lavinia), are the most prestigious, like Eton and Harrow of England.

Royal was founded in 1835 by the then British colonial government, mainly for the education of the sons of the Britishers, under the principalship of Dr. Barcroft Boake, a product of Oxford University. Though the school was initially called The Colombo Academy, it came to be known later as Royal College. On the panels of the College Hall are the names of those who distinguished themselves in the field of intellect.

Also, in the College Hall hang the portraits of those who rendered yeoman service to our country. Some amongst them are C.A. Lorenz KC, the Acting Queen's Advocate, Sir Ponnambalam Ramanathan, Acting Attorney General and his brother Sir Ponnambalam Arunachalam of the Ceylon Civil Service, Dr. C.A. Hewavitharne and his sibling Anagarika Dharmapala. Of the politicians of recent times were two heads of state - Sir John Kotalawala and President J.R. Jayawardene, while H. Sri Nissanka Q.C., a well-known criminal lawyer and one of the founders of the SLEP. Their portraits also adorn the Hall.

About 75 years ago, 96 boys entered Royal College. They came to be called the 49 Group. According to statistics, it is perhaps the best batch that Royal turned out in recent times. It is said that 32 of them became medical doctors, most of



them consultants, while nine entered the legal profession, 2 of them becoming President's Counsel, 2 others becoming Judges of the Supreme Court, three entered the Ceylon Civil Service and 18 became Engineers.

It is estimated that about 60% of this Group became professionals, but while in school, each one of them fought for the last place in class! But when they commenced their respective disciplines, they shone over the products of other schools.

Some surgeons of the 49 Group are, Ranjit de Silva – who captained Royal at cricket, Priya Samarasinghe, Geoff Vanden Driesen, Gamini Goonethilake and S.R. Ratnapala, whilst some of the well-known physicians are: Henry Rajaratnam, J.B. Pieris, Gamini Jayakuru and Brendon Gooneratne, the latter distinguishing himself in Australia. His wife, Yasmin Gooneratne, a Professor of English in Australia, has several publications to her credit.

Another wife of a member of the 49 Group is Professor Lalitha Mendis, who reached the pinnacle of the medical profession. She was the Dean of the Faculty of Medicine, and the Director of the Post Graduate Institute of Medicine. She is the wife of the late Dr. Lalith Mendis.

The other physicians are, Danilo de Kretser, Tissa Cooray (W.H.O.), N.T. de Silva (UK), H.S. Karunasekera (UK), Leslie Muthukuda (UK), Dan Perimpanyagam, Yasa Rajapakse (UK), Disampathy Subasinghe (UK), V. Dharmapalan (New Zealand), and the late R.S.B. Wickremasinghe – who was the Director of the M.R.I.

Of those who took to Law, are two well-known President's Counsel - Jayantha Gunasekera (former Secretary of the Bar Association) and Chula de Silva. Two other lawyers - S.W.B. Wadugodapitiya and P. Edussuriya ended up as Judges of the Supreme Court, whilst A. Balachandran worked in the U.N. T.K.N. Thilakan (District Judge) and Kumar Ponnambalam both died a few years ago. Alavi Mohamed, a Barrister also died recently, M.N.B. Peiris is a civil lawyer, in Colombo.

Harsha Wickremasinghe, D.G.P. Seneviratne and Dr. B.S. Wijeweera entered the prestigious Ceylon Civil Service.

Of the engineers that come to mind are Professor C.L.V. Jayathilake (a Vice Chancellor of Peradeniya), Dr Susantha Goonethilake, S.C. Amarasinghe (former GM of the Electricity Board), Dr Sri Bhavan Sri Skandarajah, H.S.B. Abeyesundara (Chemical Engineer), L.H. Meegama, C. Ramachandran and Bandula Yatawara.

Perhaps the cleverest of them all was Chelvanayagam Vaseeharan, a Maths prodigy, who was to be appointed Professor of Mathematics.

In this class, were two leading businessmen, namely the Cambridge educated Upali Wijewardene of the Upali Group, and, Lal Jayasundera, Chairman of Hayleys. Ratna Sivaratnam headed another conglomerate – Aitken Spence, whilst K. Manikkavasagar was a Director of Glaxo. Arjuna Hulugalle and Upatissa Attygalle are successful businessmen.

V.H. Nanayakkara and P.H.J.S. Ariyapala both Bachelors of Science, joined the staff of Royal College.

There was the very talented artist/architect Laki Senanayake, a partner of Geoffrey Bawa, whilst A.A. Wijetunga and K. Sivapragasam became Senior Assessors in the Inland Revenue Dept. K.L. Gooneratne was a talented architect.

Late Bimal Padameperuma functioned as Chairman Engineering Corp, and D.C. Wimalasena was Chairman, Petroleum Corp.

T.D.S.A. Dissanayake, a prolific writer, first served in the U.N. Later he was our Ambassador in Indonesia. There were two members of this Group to whom life was a ball! They were Aru Sellamuttu and Ranjit Kiriella. Nimalasiri Fonseka, a bright spark in school, lives the life of a squire in England.

Lionel Almeida and the late Tyrrel Muttiah took to planting and were ruggerites. W.K.N. de Silva is a proprietary planter. Bobby Perera was one time Director of Quickshaws. Mahinda Gunasekera who is permanently domiciled in Canada, does much for our country by countering false propaganda.



These classmates are a very close-knit family, though half of them live overseas. The 49 Group, depleted as it is, gets together during the Royal-Thomian cricket encounter and the Bradby Shield. Sometimes they meet more often, to welcome members coming home from abroad, for some reason or another.

It is at such gatherings that they reminisce about their schooldays, some wild and some even wilder! Only the pleasantest memories remain, and old yarns are told and retold, with salt and pepper added too!

Masters then came to teach, in full suit (coat and tie, mind you), and some driving their own cars. They instilled in this impressionable group of youngsters all that Royal stood for; so much so that even today, they instinctively take the acceptable course of action in any matter.

The feeling of brotherly love is strong in the 49 Group. A few years ago, with great emotion and bonhomie the 50th anniversary of the Group was celebrated for 3 days in a luxury hotel in the South. Almost all the members (from here and abroad) attended this occasion. On the last night of this grand get-together, the College Song was sung lustily, with a tear in the eye. Apart from being top achievers in their respective disciplines, they had "Learnt of books and learnt of men and learnt to play the Game."

Here's hoping that the 49 Group will meet for many more years, to reminisce and rejoice, over a meal that cheers!

Well done S. Thomas' Esto perpetua

T. D. S. A. Dissanayaka Member of the Royal College Class of 1949

Published by The Island Sri Lanka 25/2/2001

Editor's note:

This brilliant article by T.D.S.A. Dissanayaka was written 20 years ago and needs to be read again.

In February 2001 S. Thomas' College Mount Lavinia celebrated with great enthusiasm its one hundred and fiftieth anniversary. The celebrations commenced with a poignant Service of Thanksgiving at their Chapel followed by breakfast on the quadrangle, where Thomians young and Thomians old, Thomians staunch and true rally round their college flag.

That in turn was followed by a Special General Assembly and luncheon in the traditional Thomian style of rice, dry beef curry, (the recipe of which is known only unto God and Thomian cooks) pol sambol and parippu. It was truly a splendid beginning for the month-long celebration which included the Thomian Fair, a gala dinner at the Hilton and to culminate with the annual Royal-Thomian Cricket Match to be played later this week.

At the Service of Thanksgiving there were just four Royalists. They were The Right Reverend Kenneth Fernando, Bishop of Colombo of the Church of Ceylon and statutorily the Chairman of the Board of Governors of S. Thomas', The Reverend Duleep De Chickera, a former Sub-Warden and Chaplain, J. P. Obeyesekera, best known in Thomian quarters as the husband of Siva Obeyesekera who organized yet another Thomian Fair, and myself. We were so moved that we decided to make our own little contribution, from Royal with love!

To those readers who are not familiar with the traditions of these two famous schools, it must be added that those of us at Royal have a special place in our hearts for S. Thomas'. That fondness is only second to our fondness for another school, namely Ladies College! During the twentieth century it was difficult to find a boy at Royal who did not have a special affinity to some nice girl at Ladies College. It is difficult to quantify those platonic relationships, statistically. However, statistics do reveal that a staggering one-third of Royalists had opted for wives from Ladies College! That long and unending list includes both J. P. Obeyesekera and myself!



S. Thomas' can indeed be proud of their numerous achievements from 1851 to 2001. To my mind their greatest achievement is, that with unflinching regularity they have produced real gentlemen. Their second greatest achievement was that though a Christian School (it was founded by The Right Reverend James Chapman, the first Bishop of Colombo of the Church of England) it has moulded Buddhists, Hindus, Muslims and Christians to rise above religious prejudices and to have an abiding love for Mother Lanka. Thirdly, they have produced an unending line of top professionals from every conceivable profession. That endless line is second only to that of just one school!

Considering that S. Thomas' (like Royal) was set up by the British to educate us, shortly after they had conquered us, it is interesting to observe how some Thomians responded to that period of colonial servitude. In 1915 the British executed Captain William Henry Pedris of the Town Guards for treason. A scion of a wealthy family in his last moments he was handcuffed and tied to a stake. Then a British Major from a Marathi Regiment from Bombay approached him and ripped off his epaulettes, signifying that he was stripped of his commission. When the Major attempted to apply the blindfold, he was brushed off with Thomian grit at its best, with Captain Pedris saying defiantly in Latin

Dulce et decorum pro patria mori est

(It is sweet and glorious to die for my country)

Then came the orders "Load" "Aim", "Fire".

That Thomian grit was reflected during World War I when Second-Lieutenant Basil Horsfall of the First Battalion Lancashire Fusiliers was based in France near the border with Belgium. In 1917 the German Army which was embattled at Ypres in Belgium somehow broke through British lines and trapped many Regiments, including the Lancashire Fusiliers. When his Company was facing certain extermination, Second Lieutenant Horsfall with total disregard for his own safety knocked out several German machine gun nests. He continued to do so even when he was mortally wounded and bleeding profusely, till a German sniper finally got him. He was posthumously awarded the coveted Victoria Cross, the British decoration for valour, their highest decoration for gallantry the only such medal ever won by a Ceylonese.

Such supreme courage was displayed in 1941 by Pilot Officer Dugal Abeysekera, the Captain of Cricket in 1940. He was recruited by the Royal Air Force as a Flight Cadet and left for training in the UK, shortly after the Royal-Thomian cricket match of that year. As a wartime measure, he was commissioned as a Pilot Officer after one year of basic training. He was then assigned to a Squadron of Spitfire fighter aircraft and was based just outside London. When the crucial Battle of Britain was fought in 1941, he volunteered for action, although he had inadequate experience for combat. He flew several sorties till his Spitfire was shot down. His Squadron Leader reported that no parachute ejected from the stricken aircraft. He was posthumously awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross.

That Thomian grit is ever present in the operational areas of our present Civil war, where to-date thirteen Thomians have been killed in action. For example, in 1996 Squadron Leader Thilina Kaluarachchi of the Sri Lanka Air Force repeatedly flew his MI-24 helicopter gunship through a hail of machine gun fire to evacuate our troops who were withdrawn following the battle at Mullaitivu. Already the Army had lost over 1,000 officers and men, the Navy had lost two Dvora gunboats with all crew on board. The Special Forces and Commandos who were brought in from Batticaloa and Minneriya on the orders of Major-General Srilal Weerasooriya RWP, RSP, VSV, USP, later as a Lieutenant General the first Thomian to command our Army, would perhaps have perished if not for the Air Force in general and a squadron of helicopter gunships in particular. Squadron Leader Kaluarachchi was deservedly awarded the Weera Wickrema Vibushana our second highest decoration for gallantry. In 1997 Mount Lavinia and S. Thomas' wept for Wing-Commander Thilina Kaluarachchi WWV, RWP and bar, RSP and bar, who was killed in action. Honoured as a war hero, both in life and in death, his military funeral was graced by the largest crowd ever seen in Mount Lavinia in living memory.

Since its inception in 1851 S. Thomas' was moulded in the best traditions of liberal education in the West, as was Royal since its inception in 1835. The curriculum was based on that of Eton and Harrow. However, the winds of change were blowing across the world, though the British were quite oblivious to it. To them the sun never set on the British Empire. Our patriots looked at the world differently. For example, a rebellious but truthful youngster named David Hewavitarne



at S. Thomas' was giving Warden Miller a rough time. In his wisdom his father moved him to a better school, where his younger brother Charles Hewavitarne, was developing quite a reputation as a scholar. It was rather unfortunate that young David Hewavitarne continued his rebellious activities unmindful of the Royal College motto "Disce Aut Discede" (Learn or Depart). He also had some minor vices such as smoking. Just once he got caught, was given a public caning and expelled. The experience was so traumatic, that it cured him of all minor vices for all time. In adult life David Hewavitarne was the personification of rectitude. As Anagarika Dharmapala he became a disciple of Lord Buddha in the true sense of the word and greatly helped to propagate the gospel of The Enlightened One.

Another great Thomian who helped in our cultural renaissance was E. R. de Silva. At S. Thomas' he was a quiet boy not known for scholastic brilliance. However, at the University College in Colombo (later the University of Ceylon and now the University of Colombo) he did brilliantly in Indo-Aryan Languages. He followed it up with a Doctorate from the University of London. In due course, Ediriweera Sarathchandra, as he was known in adult life, became a Professor of Sinhala at the University of Peradeniya. More importantly, he produced the magnificent ballet "Maname" in 1957. It had packed houses throughout the nation for over fifteen years, till he left for France as our Ambassador.

Thomian grit was a conspicuous feature when D. R. Wijewardene, N. K. Choksy Q.C., Jabir A. Cader and Dr. Sam De Vos made their pioneering ventures into the field of commerce. D. R. Wijewardene had perceived, during his days at Cambridge, that Ceylon had to have her own newspapers in her quest for Independence. Accordingly, in 1917 he set up the Associated Newspapers of Ceylon Limited (ANCL) which in a little over a decade eclipsed the British-owned "Times of Ceylon". Initially he encountered stiff resistance from British commercial interests who refused to advertise in his newspapers. Consequently "The Ceylon Daily News" ran at a loss for a number of years, notwithstanding the fact that it outsold "The Morning Leader". Sheer tenacity on the part of D. R. Wijewardene, who was primarily a patriot kept ANCL solvent. Then by the end of the nineteen twenties "The Ceylon Daily News" even outsold the British owned evening newspaper "The Times". It was only then that the British commercial interests made a virtue out of necessity and began advertising in "The Ceylon Daily News." Thereafter in life and in death D. R. Wijewardene was looked upon as the greatest entrepreneur Ceylon had produced in the twentieth century. That was till the advent of his brother's son Upali Wijewardene, my classmate at Royal College. N. K. Choksy made a fortune at the Bar and thereafter invested his wealth wisely in the manufacture of garments, then in its incipient stage of evolution. He chose an industry which the ladies refer to rather naughtily as the upliftment of the fallen. It is otherwise known as the manufacture of brassieres. Jabir A. Cader was a pioneer in the cinemas, initially with the New Olympia and then a chain including the Liberty. Sam De Vos made his fortune with Departmental Stores initially in Galle and then expanding to Colombo and Kandy.

Well done.

There is only one visible difference between Royalists and Thomians. At Royal the motto is "Disce Aut Discede." Accordingly, during the twentieth century well over a half of students from Royal entered Universities. The corresponding average for S. Thomas' is well below a quarter. Notwithstanding those considerations S. Thomas' has produced some truly brilliant scholars. For example, Ronnie de Mel came first in every public examination held in Ceylon, in his time. In 1947 he took a brilliant First in History at the University of Ceylon and was awarded a scholarship to Cambridge University. In 1948 he was placed first in the competitive examination to join the then prestigious and now defunct Ceylon Civil Service. In more recent years Professor G. L. Pieris won even more prizes than Ronnie de Mel, took a First from the University of Ceylon in Law, a Doctorate from Oxford, a scholarship to Harvard, became a Professor at the University of Ceylon at 34 years of age and Vice-Chancellor at 42 years of age. Somehow both abandoned their chosen careers for the lure of politics. Only time will show whether that was wisdom or folly.

Many a brilliant scholar from S. Thomas' became a permanent member of the academia. None played that role so well as Professor P. P. G. L. Siriwardene, the last Vice Chancellor of the University of Sri Lanka. Those who had the privilege of studying Chemistry under him, Sub-Warden D. A. Pakianathan and I are two of his many grateful pupils, revere him as the very personification of a gentleman replete with a golden brain and a heart of gold.



That Thomian grit was reflected even in the performance of their scholars. In 1942 S. Thomas' was evicted from their premises at Mount Lavinia as a wartime measure, to make way for a Military Hospital. Amazingly those who entered the University of Ceylon in 1942 and in 1943 were perhaps their most brilliant batches. They included Ronnie De Mel and five others who joined the Ceylon Civil Service, Professor P. P. G. L. Siriwardene and four famous Professors including Stanley Kalpage.

It is commonplace for those at Royal to combine studies with sports. Indeed, those who scored centuries in the Royal-Thomian or scored tries in the Bradby Shield matches with Trinity College or broke records in the Public Schools Athletics Meet were shown the way to go home, when they did not pass their examinations. Our motto "Disce Aut Discede" is enforced ruthlessly, to say the least. On the other hand, the concept of 'mens sane in corpore sano' (a healthy mind in a healthy body) is uncommon at S. Thomas. However, the glorious exceptions include Osmund De Silva who in his undergraduate years at the University College broke more Ceylon records in Athletics than even Duncan White and later rose to be Inspector-General of Police and A. J. D. N. Selvadurai who as an undergraduate represented Ceylon in three sports, Athletics, Cricket and Tennis. That was way back in the nineteen twenties. Since then, S. J. Thambiah, Captain of Cricket in 1948, Head Prefect and winner of the Victoria Gold Medal, entered the University of Ceylon on a scholarship, took a First in Sociology, a Doctorate from Oxford and is now a Professor at Harvard. P. T. Shantikumar, Captain of Cricket in 1949 came first in the Ceylon Civil Service examination in 1954, P. I. Pieris, Captain of Cricket in 1953 and a Cambridge Blue, who represented Ceylon for many years after his return to the Island, Rupert Ferdinands was Captain of our Davies Cup Team when he was still an undergraduate of the University of Ceylon in the early nineteen sixties and Mano Ponniah who represented Ceylon in Cricket during his years as an undergraduate of the University of Peradeniya and later won his Blue at Cambridge. In more recent years, Geffary Dulapandan Captained the Sri Lanka team in Swimming while an undergraduate at the University of Colombo.

The calibre of a school is often determined by its Principal and Staff. S. Thomas' was singularly fortunate to have been headed by educationists of the high calibre of Warden W. A. Stone and his pupil Warden R. S. de Saram for fifty of its one hundred and fifty years. They moulded their students as they deemed fit, in the best traditions of the British public school system. They never spared the rod to spoil the child and terrified successive generations of Thomians. On the other hand, they concealed a genuine fondness for their pupils. The parable of the lost sheep as enunciated by Jesus Christ was deeply embedded in their thinking. So was the concept that a Resurrection can come only after a Crucifixion. They have now returned to their Maker but their spirit lives beyond the grave, in the hearts and minds of thousands of grateful Thomians staunch and true.

By the same token S. Thomas' has been so fortunate by the dedication of their tutorial staff. Teaching has many rewards but none financially. Dedicated teachers are almost an extinct species today in Sri Lanka. It was not so in Ceylon in the years gone by. One of the Rolls of Honour at S. Thomas' are for teachers who have served for twenty-five years or more. That long list includes such famous teachers as The Rev. G. A. H. Arndt, C. H. Christie David, C. V. Pereira, E. O. Pereira, C. R. Wise, O. P. Gunaratne, A. J. Schaffter, Harold Jansz, Miss A. E. Bay, Mrs. Ruth Anthonisz, V. P. Cooke, The Rev. J. Y. Baranabas, The Rev. Canon A. J. Foster, Dr. R. L. Hayman, C. H. Davidson, S. J. Anandanayagam, D. F. David, B. C. D'Silva, C. S. Weerasinghe and The Rev. Canon Roy Boyer Yin amongst others. Regrettably that long list narrows down appreciably sometime after our Independence. Unfortunately, Royal College suffers from the same affliction, which imperils the moulding of character which is even more important than the imparting of knowledge.

The moulding of character at school can be achieved basically in the classroom and on the playing fields. S. Thomas' can be proud of the sportsmen they have moulded based on the theme,

He writes not whether you won or lost

But how you played the game."

Vernon Prins, Michael Tissera, Anura Tennekoon and Duleep Mendis were famous Captains of Cricket at S. Thomas' who went on to Captain the Ceylon/Sri Lanka team. To those who have the privilege of knowing them personally, as I do, they



have surpassed their capacity to excel in cricket with their immeasurable capacity to be the personification of gentlemen, both on and off the field. No commentary on Cricket at S. Thomas' is complete without reference to Thomian grit in the context of the Centenary Match of the Royal-Thomian. The Thomian wickets were falling like ninepins on the last day and the match was expected to be over before tea. Then Mahinda Halangoda and C. P. Richards were associated in a 91 run unbroken partnership for the ninth wicket. Many Thomians still say "Never in our history have so many owed so much to so few."

Tragically S. Thomas' like Royal has produced a string of Heads of Governments who have done much good and much harm to our nation. At the advent of Independence, we were both stable and prosperous. We were the envy of other nations in South-East Asia. Today nobody, except perhaps those of unsound mind, would envy our nation or deem it to be either stable or prosperous. Our Prime Ministers and Presidents, be they from S. Thomas' or Royal or elsewhere, be they from the male or the female of the species, have exhibited one pathetic flaw. They have systematically placed their personal interests and party interests ahead of our national interests. Down the ages and around the world, that has been a certain recipe for chaos and chaos we see all around us. Not surprisingly Sri Lanka has not produced one statesman since Independence. In that sense both S. Thomas' and Royal have also failed the nation. I do hope that deficiency will be set right in this century, and the sooner the better.

There is just one sphere of activity where S. Thomas' has completely eclipsed Royal. The benefactors of S Thomas' have been truly marvellous. They have stood by the school in dark days and in happier times. With them it has always been,

Ask what you can do for S. Thomas'."

This article is an attempt to summarize the many virtues and the few infirmities of S. Thomas'. On the balance, the overall performance of this great school has been truly marvellous. That rich heritage must be used wisely to enhance S. Thomas' in this century. Indeed S. Thomas' has made a magnificent start by appointing Dr. David Ajunan Ponniah as the new Warden. A supreme example of 'menssana in corpore sano' he stunned the massive crowd at the Royal-Thomian of 1967 when as a fresher he scored a century. Later that year he sailed into the University of Peradeniya at a young age, much to the relief of Royalists. He did his post-graduate work in the UK and sacrificed a certain Professorship in the years to come, to answer a call of duty by his Alma Mater in its hour of need. A true example of Thomian grit!

Today we live in an open society almost free of indigenous tyranny and have tasted the fruits of an open economy for nearly a quarter of a century. Yet such enlightened thinking has not yet percolated into the field of education. Bureaucratic controls have not decreased but increased on the private schools. It is so different in India and Pakistan, in Malaysia and Singapore. Sri Lanka must follow those examples and permit magnificent schools like S. Thomas' to blossom out to their full potential.

Thomians young and Thomians old, Thomians staunch and true, to those of us at Royal it is truly our privilege to salute you on your one hundred and fiftieth anniversary. May your foundations be not on concrete but on the teachings of Jesus Christ, as they have always been. May you continue to serve Mother Lanka in the magnificent way you have always done. May you continue to be our friendly rival, as you have always been.

WELL DONE S. THOMAS'

Esto Perpetua (Be Thou for Ever)

Esto Perpetua

Esto Perpetua

The Blue Black and Blue, forever!



MEMORIES OF OLD COLOMBO, OLD FRIENDS, AND TIMES OF LONG AGO

Hugh Karunanayake

The year 2018 saw the departure of two nonagenarian Old Royalists, Ian D T de Mel and Ana Goonesinha. They were each vying for the honour of being the oldest living Old Royalist when they were taken away, Ian in June 2018 and Ana in October of the same year. There are now two nonagenarian old Royalists both excellent sportsmen in their day now approaching the mid-nineties and have taken over the baton from Ian and Ana. The two I refer to are Hugh Aldons, the triple international living in Melbourne, and Summa Navaratnam, champion athlete and rugby player still coaching Royal College rucker players.

I did not know Ian de Mel and have not seen him either but managed to have a couple of transcontinental conversations over the phone which resulted in Ian recollecting his school days at Royal, in an article for The Ceylankan (Vol 19 No1). Ian was the Director of Meteorology in Sri Lanka a position he held with great distinction. Ana, the only son of Labour leader A.E. Goonesinha would have left Royal when I joined the school in 1946 as I cannot remember seeing him in school. I first encountered him in the late 1950s in the air-conditioned saloon bar of the Hotel Metropole in the Fort, which was probably the cosiest bar in the Fort apart from those at the GOH and GFH of that era. Ana was a regular there with his friend Rajah Gunasekera, both very nattily dressed in Fuji silk shirts and Dak trousers the most desirable outfits for young men of the time. Ana wrote about his days at the Colombo University which made very interesting reading and was published in The Ceylankan (Vol 19 No 1). Rajah played Rugby for Royal College in the late 1940s and was an Executive at CW Mackies.

The Metropole was a congenial pub and attracted some fairly well loaded bachelors especially on week- ends for drinks and dinner. The barkeeper D. G. Barnes was a genial man not averse to sharing his cocktail recipes. In fact, I cajoled him one evening to disclose his recipes for his John Collins and Bloody Mary, both of which could not be equalled in flavour in any bar in the country. I still make them when the mood permits! A John Collins (called Tom Collins by some) was the surest antidote for a hangover! D.G. Barnes was a portly, sarong wearing bar keeper, but quite capable of a conversation in basic English, much like his better-known brother D.G. William also known as Galle Face William (having begun working life as a room boy in the GFH) who became a leading light of the LSSP at the time and was elected a Senator.

Of those who were regulars at the Met were Ajit Saravanamuttu, then tea tasting at Liptons (after abandoning a potential great future in law) Mahen Vaithianathan former scrum half of the Royal College rugby team, a barrister who did not seek to spend time at the bar - that is the other bar. There was Brian J Lucas Fernando who was quiet, but reflective, and an amusing participant at the conversations around the bar. All who met at the Met were good conversationalists and not all agreed with each other. Ajit could be scathing but annoyingly sarcastic when at the losing end of an argument. He and Mahen were both increasingly intemperate with their language as the evening went on. Rajah also fell into this category. They were unable to handle a losing argument and with each drink their sense of reasoning seem to be deserting them. At the end of the evening however, friendships were intact, and the parry and thrust of argument all gone.

Mahen, the son of Sir Kanthiah Vaithianathan lived alone in his parental home in Charles Circus. He was a great reader and had amassed a good collection of old books on Sri Lanka. I saw him after many years, not long before he passed away when I visited Sri Lanka about 20 years ago. He wanted to bequeath his collection of books to the Jaffna Library that was rebuilt after its destruction of 1983, but I do not know whether his wishes were ever fulfilled. Brian Fernando also passed away in Colombo in the 1980s. He was a man who inherited enormous wealth lived a quiet life and was always a thorough gentleman. His father F. J. Lucas Fernando was an old Royalist but had to send Brian to St Joseph's as was expected from



Catholic parents after St Joseph's College was established in 1897. Most of Brian's friends were old Royalists and he seemed to lament the fact that he could not school there.

The Fernandos lived in a house called "Norwood" the second house on the left as you enter Layards Road from Dickmans Road. It was a single storied enormous house spread over a large area and originally built by F.J. Lucas Fernando Snr. It had a large side garden and about an acre of bare land which was used by washer families to dry their laundry. Facing the house from the road on the right-hand side was the billiard room with a full-sized billiard table. There were two well maintained tennis courts on the property. Each evening friends of Brian and Jayantha would gather for snooker or billiards. They had a butler whose name I cannot recall who used to call old Lucas "Big master" and Brian, "Master Brian." Beside the house was a large garage which housed the family cars including a Cadillac, a Jaguar, a Morris Oxford, and Brian's Morris Minor. The Cadillac was fitted out with a mini cocktail cabinet replete with crystal decanters and tumblers, the unit built into the rear of the front seat of the car.

The family consisted of Lancelot, Brian, Jayantha, and Ula the sister who married J. P. R. Fonseka - Govt Meteorologist of the time, in around 1955, and lived in her home given as part dowry in Elibank Road where the family owned several other houses. Old Lucas referred (within the family) to his son in-law as "pambaya" and Brian as "yakadaya". The youngest son Jayantha excelled in sports encouraged by the brothers, but the father never witnessed him play, even at the St Peter's College annual cricket match against St Joseph's where Jayantha captained the St Peter's team.

The Lucas Fernando family home "Norwood" in 1907 (left), and the Fernando family also in 1907 with Lucas (Snr) standing in middle Lucas (Jnr) the son and heir seated on the floor. (Source: Arnold Wright "Twentieth Century Impressions of Ceylon, London 1907)

F. J. Lucas Fernando (Jnr) was educated at Royal College, and a Proctor by trade but never practised his profession. He had no need to do so. He owned over 3000 acres of coconut plantation, mostly in the Kurunegala and Kegalle areas and large house and property holdings in Havelock Town and Kotahena. He was a typical misanthrope and did not like to socialise and never attended either a wedding or funeral, content to live out his life in his home. He had one or two friends who dropped in almost daily to have a chat. One of them was D.L.Jayawardene nicknamed Hujjay who chatted with the old man daily and shared a drink.

Lucas' favourite drink was Jamaica Red Heart Rum which he used to shandy with orange juice. The house was full of expensive and beautiful antiques including two massive Louis IV style chandeliers which were rarely switched on. Old Lucas was parsimonious despite his enormous wealth. During his time the main hotels in Colombo were the GOH, Galle Face Hotel, and Mount Lavinia Hotel - none of which he would visit. Lucas married Phoebe the eldest daughter of L.H. Peiris of Kandy who was married to the youngest daughter of 19th century millionaire Sir Charles Henry de Soysa. Despite their wealth, Phoebe contracted consumption during the war years and was sent for treatment to India where she passed away. Since then, Lucas had led a reclusive life, hardly ever stepping out of his house. No one in the house had to shop for groceries as everything was ordered by the butler and delivered to the house. Lucas had accounts with the big departmental stores of the time like Cargills, Millers, Colombo Apothecaries, Cold Stores, and even Hunter and Co! He would sometimes perhaps once in three months visit his estates and on one such occasion, I joined him together with Brian.

We left on a Saturday morning and reached a place called Uhumiya in Kurunegala. We stopped at the large coconut estate called Gondamanne and his Superintendent was there by the roadside to greet us. The three of us alighted from the car and walked alongside the Supt on the road which ran through the property. From the time we alighted, old Lucas was in a belligerent mood. He pointed at certain coconut trees as we walked, drawing attention in Sinhalese to defects he could identify. All this was carried out in vituperative language which was a great shock to me. I had never heard him use such obscene language before. After walking for about a mile we got into the car and visited another property where the conductor was awaiting us together with another man. Old Lucas got off the car, and spoke to the other man quite sternly, whereupon the other man fell on his knees and worshipped him. Apparently, he a watcher on the property was guilty of stealing a few coconuts. The man was sacked on the spot and was asked to collect his belongings and leave. It was a



pathetic sight to see the man and his wife with their little son placing all their worldly belongings into a cane 'vattiya' and walk out of the estate. That image is still etched in my mind as a very sad memory.

On the way back I asked old Lucas who I called uncle, (as was the custom in those days) as to why he had to use the language he used. He seemed to think that that was the only language they understood and if one gave the slightest indication of leniency they would steal. Lucas said "putha we have to look after what we have, otherwise we will be reduced to nothing". He related the story of his father who inherited considerable wealth but engaged in some speculative ventures which nearly bankrupted him. Consequently, the downturn in fortunes made friends and relatives distance themselves from the family, but his father by sheer hard work and determination increased his land holdings considerably. He then permitted himself some luxury and imported a pair of Spanish Lipizzaner prancing horses that raised their front legs when trotting and was an attractive sight. The old man used to sit in his landau drawn by the pair of stallions with the son by his side, as they did their Sunday afternoon drive through Galle Face where the assembled folk in those days were mostly Europeans. As the landau passed through Galle face Green many European men would doff their hats respectfully. Lucas Snr. snidely remarked to his little son Lucas Jnr. seated by his side "putha, oya thoppi ussanne apita nemai, eya ussanne asvayo dennata". In other words, the quality of the horses indicated wealth, and what they were doing was acknowledging wealth! What a perceptive observation which seemed to have impressed Lucas Jnr., so much that his guiding philosophy in life seemed to be "conserve every penny"! Lucas Jnr. passed away around 1957 and the task of running the family enterprise fell on the three sons.

Lancelot the elder son of Lucas was educated at Cambridge and was the pride of old Lucas' life. While studying at Cambridge he wrote to his father saying that he needed a car. The problem however was that Lancelot could not drive. That fact would not deter old Lucas as he learnt that another kinsman Sir Wilfred de Soysa's son Lalith (late member of CSA) was bought a new Wolseley for his use as a student in Cambridge. One-upmanship was in play when old Lucas bought a brand-new Jaguar for use by Lancelot complete with a paid liveried British chauffeur! After completing his studies Lancelot returned home and worked as a Senior Executive at Gordon Frazer and Co. He was later instrumental in persuading his two brothers to buy outright H.W. Cave and Co. They ran the business successfully until tragedy shattered the family. Lancelot died tragically in 1963 when he was shot dead by Asst Manager at Cave's - Vicky Abeywardene who committed suicide immediately after, by drinking a glass of sulphuric acid. Apparently, Vicky an old hand at Cave's was insolent to the newly installed General Manager Jennings and was warned by Lancelot. Matters came to a head when Vicky after an argument with Jennings had slapped the latter. Lancelot promptly sacked Vicky and the result was the double tragedy. I attended Lancelot's funeral at Kanatte which was held on the same day as that of his killer Vicky Abeywardene, also from a seemingly staid middle-class family. Brian and Jayantha have since passed on, and with them passed a lifestyle that is seldom encountered today.

Michel Abeysekera – The brave entrepreneur

Nihal de Run



Few would give up a secure employment position at a nationwide bank to become an importer and reseller of garments to the retail industry. Michel Abeysekera did that in 1996. He started from scratch with very little capital.

Michel and his brother Stefan are the sons of Vernon Abeysekera, a doyen of Royal College and the first editor of the RCOBAA magazine, FLOREAT.

Michel and his wife Lesley have three children, Keshia, Maya and Jehan. In recent times they have added two grandchildren to the family and are



expecting another soon. Lesley was a teacher and Michel's father Vernon a civil servant in Sri Lanka. Michel was comfortably employed, however, he wanted to build a business of his own.

He started without a lot of capital but with a lot of courage and determination to succeed. His longstanding friend and classmate Ashroff Omar gave him a 'leg up' by consigning garments from Brandix plc for resale in Australia. It started off with a bang and getting the stock, finding space for storage and distribution and meeting deadlines became the daily challenge for Michel and his team.

Michel wanted to diversify from commodity style garments to fashion garments. In search for growth and better margins, Michel took the business into previously uncharted waters, by setting up a supply chain division in China. He soon moved into new premises, hired more staff, added designers and technicians for mass manufacturing in overseas factories. This required a whole new range of skills such as dealing with wholesalers and national brand buyers and above all, getting markets for the products whilst managing an ever-growing team.

During this time, Michel was enticed by influential people in the trade to join the board of the Australian Fashion Council. He was appointed President in 2010 and held the position for 3 years. He did this with enthusiasm and aplomb, but it stole valuable time from his core business. Soon he was working 28 hours in a 24-hour day.

Michel then established his own brand, CYLK, and his retail stores with a flagship store in Chapel Street, Prahran. The major expansion looked good from the outside, but troubles loomed. Direct Retail in the fashion end of the big cities came with many high-risk capital-intensive challenges. This rapid diversification put pressure on the business and the retail side haemorrhaged money profusely. A review of the strategy beckoned.

Financial restructuring became essential. He closed the retail division, sold the wholesale business, and launched a new business based on his patented technology which focussed on injury and antenatal recovery.

Supacore Healthtech was launched and has been able to assist many well-known sports stars recover such as LeBron James, Lionel Messi, Tim Paine and many players in the AFL, NRL and EPL. This re strategizing pivoted the business into the Healthtech category where the major customers are physiotherapists, performance managers, chiropractors, and obstetricians. Today, the business has expanded globally with a focus on online marketing where debtor issues are non-existent. Michel and Lesley's business is now growing exponentially.

Having been through the rigours of starting a new business and facing the obstacles and pitfalls of an entrepreneurial enterprise both Michel and Lesley have learnt the importance of innovation and having a capable team to rely on. Lesley and Michel now run a lean business with a small team of professionals enjoying sound growth. Michel also sits on a few advisory boards assisting young entrepreneurs with their start-ups. Today, they live in semi-retirement but have learnt from the 'University of Hard Knocks' that fortune favours the brave and those that hang in there long enough reap the rewards.

I congratulate Michel and Lesley and wish them every success for the future.



The life of a “Cricket Ball”

Darrell Liversz

Colombo bound



I was brought into this world in 1961 at a Kookaburra cricket ball factory in Melbourne, Australia where the world’s best cricket balls are produced. At the end of the production line after a meticulous quality assessment, I was picked to join an exclusive batch of cricket balls to be shipped to a sports store in Colombo, Sri Lanka. Arriving in Colombo, we were taken to a sports store in Chatham Street. This was a street famous for merchandise outlets that included sporting goods, clothing, jewellery and even restaurants. At the top of the street was the famous clock tower commissioned in 1857. In the store we were unpacked carefully and displayed in a glass showcase. We looked beautiful; all smooth, shiny red and glowing, six of us in a box. The six of us with

our name “Kookaburra” smartly printed on one side, had become good friends being together during our journey from Australia.

One day a sales person at the store opened the showcase and picked out four boxes. I was in one of them. He wrapped them up and instructed a courier to deliver them to Royal College. It was quite warm in the delivery van but we soon reached Royal College where we were taken to the storeroom of the groundsman whose name was Noor. Still in our boxes we were placed in a cupboard and locked up with a huge padlock on the door. It was very dark inside the cupboard and even though my friends and I were in the top box it was quite claustrophobic. However, being good friends, we were able to encourage each other which helped to overcome our unease.

A chosen ball

A few days later, late in the afternoon of 15th February 1962, Noor opened the cupboard and retrieved the box that I was in. He hurriedly took the box to the Royal team dressing room and opening it he told the Royal cricket captain Darrell to choose the ball he wanted to use when he took the field. Since Darrell was also the opening bowler for Royal, he looked us over in the box. We were all looking nice and shiny. The fresh air was a welcome relief after being locked up in a cupboard for so long. He picked my friend next to me and held him in his hand, gripped him with his fingers, turned him around and tossed him in the air a few times. He gave me the impression that he was not satisfied with my friend and returned him to the box. Darrell then reached out, picked me and held me in the same manner and without even tossing me in the air, gave a nod to Noor and told him that I was the one he had chosen. Noor then shut the box and took it away before I could wish my friends goodbye. I knew there was a strong possibility that I would never see them again.

Reid Avenue destiny

Darrell looked at me again and gave me a good polish and handed me over to the umpire who inspected me briefly and promptly shoved me into the pocket of the white coat he was wearing. It was very uncomfortable because I had to rub up against paraphernalia the umpire had in his pocket. A small note pad, pencil and some very smooth round small stones - six of them. I was unexpectedly jolted in all directions inside the umpire’s coat pocket while he walked out onto the field amidst loud applause and the cheering of the spectators. He reached in and pulled me out of his coat pocket and threw me to Darrell who was leading the Royal College team onto the field. Royal was playing St. Peter’s College and batting first had been dismissed for a paltry 113 runs.



My introduction to cricket

I was able to look around briefly and take in my first exposure to a cricket field. It was oval in shape and looked beautiful and green. I could see the red bricked school building away in the distance and parked cars on Reid Avenue that bordered the cricket field on one side. In the middle was a rectangular strip called the pitch of much shorter grass rolled flat. At each end were three upright wooden stakes planted along a white line called the bowling crease. Persons were moving into positions around the pitch. They seemed to know exactly where they were going. They were called fielders that formed the rest of the cricket team.

Then, I walked two other persons holding pieces of wood called bats and some sort of padded protection around the front of their legs. They quickly occupied positions at each end of the pitch. These persons were called batsmen and represented St. Peter's College. Their names were Adithiya de Silva and Ravi Fernando. The batsman at the far end of the pitch looked around and took his stance crouching over his bat looking towards us.

Performing my duty

Darrell who was captain and opening bowler, held me in his hands and began measuring his run up from the College end but due to an unexpected change in wind direction, decided to take the other end and so gave me to Chanaka to open the bowling. Chanaka stood at the start of his run up and this is when I heard the signal from the man in the white coat. "Play" said the umpire and Chanaka started to run forward. I felt quite comfortable, resting firmly in the fingers of his right hand. Passing the man in a white coat and approaching the three wooden stakes with gathering speed he planted his right foot behind the crease and brought his fully extended right arm over his shoulder whilst his left foot slammed down onto the pitch in front of his body. With a snap of his wrist, I rolled smoothly out of his fingers and I was hurled towards the batsman at the far end. I was now on my way and commenced my active career in cricket. Leaving his hand and flying through the air gave me the feeling of absolute elation until I hit the pitch and whacked into the face of the bat that was held rigidly by the batsman. It was the biggest jolt I had experienced. I rolled slowly onto the pitch and was picked up by one of the close in fielders who carefully tossed me to the hands of Darrell, who then passed me back to Chanaka. After about the third delivery the batsman used a little more force and hit me towards mid field and started to run quickly exchanging places with the other batsman. There was the sound of slight applause as St. Peter's had opened their account by one run. The black scoreboard just outside the boundary line displayed 1 run. This went on for a few more deliveries and I was getting used to the jolts of hitting the pitch, bat and rolling leisurely along the turf when the umpire yelled out "over".

Darrell picked me up and carried me to the top of his bowling mark. I felt safe again as he kept rubbing my bright side on his trouser until it was gleaming again. Darrell held me in a similar way to Chanaka except he aligned my seam slightly to the right between his index and middle fingers and with my bright shiny side on the left. I also realised that he was shining only one side of me. Darrell must have informed the others about this because very soon I found the whole team shining the same side whenever they handled me while my other side was allowed to get rough and worn out. I understand that this helped Chanaka and Darrell to maximise their swing when they bowled me. However, Darrell regularly made adjustments to his grip which seemed to vary my flight path through the air before reaching the batsman. Similar to Chanaka he bowled six more deliveries until the umpire called out "over" again. Every six deliveries the umpire called "over" which seemed to continue with monotonous regularity.

I was in Darrell's hands again and in the fifth delivery of his second over the batsman Adithiya de Silva did not offer a stroke. I swung in late and he was clean bowled. This was the first time that I had hit the wooden stakes. There was applause because it was the end of an over in which no runs were conceded and so was called a wicket maiden over. Tyrone Le Mercier was in next and the scoreboard read 6 runs for 1 wicket. Chanaka and Darrell continued bowling me down the pitch; taking turns six deliveries at a time. When Darrell sent me down to hit Tyrone Le Mercier's pads there was a loud unified shout of "how's that?". The man in the white coat raised his index finger and Le Mercier walked back to the pavilion. The score board read 10 runs for 2 wickets.



A co-conspirator

By now I had figured what Darrell's bowling strategy was and enjoyed being a co-conspirator. His modus operandi was to pitch the ball outside the off stump and make it appear that I was going to continue straight on. Then very late I changed course and dipped in sharply towards the stumps. I enjoyed observing the look of surprise on the batsman's face.

To loud applause from the Peterite camp, I walked their captain Richard Heyn while Darrell looked on holding me gently in his hand. Richard took his guard like the others did, glanced around the field, settled into his stance and looked straight at us. When he was ready Darrell gripped me firmly and started his run up and bowled me towards Richard. I floated happily through the air with my seam pointing straight up, my shiny side on my left. Thinking that I was out of his reach wide outside his off stump, Richard endeavoured to leave me alone. However, much to his surprise I dipped in and knocked back his off stump, clean bowling him with the first ball he faced. The cheers and applause from spectators all around the ground were pretty exhilarating, and I felt that the applause was for me as much as for Darrell.

I was back in Darrell's safe hands, and he continued rubbing my bright side on his trouser until I was gleaming again. Then, I walked Richard's brother David Heyn. In two consecutive deliveries, two wickets had fallen with the score at 10 and David took his stance to face me to prevent a "hat trick". He managed to block me for the rest of Darrell's over and along with Ravi Fernando they managed to block me for about five more overs without scoring any runs. I was now in Chanaka's hands and as he ran up to bowl, Ravi seemed to lose patience. He stepped out and swung his bat at me. It was the hardest that I was hit but it did not worry me much. I was hurtling high through the air towards the boundary, feeling like the Kookaburra bird I was named after at the cricket ball factory. I was preparing myself for a bumpy landing but when I started to descend, I saw a fielder running underneath me and slightly ahead. It was Darrell. Just as I was about to overtake him he glanced up at me over his shoulder and with a twist of his outstretched right arm he reached up and grasped me with his fingers. I was safe in his hands. The ground exploded in response to this wonderful piece of outfield cricket. A disappointed Ravi Fernando walked back to the pavilion to be replaced by Tissa Jayaweera.

According to script

As Fernando and Heyn had crossed over while I was flying through the air, Heyn, rather than new batsman Tissa Jayaweera, had to face me next. Chanaka ran in holding me firmly and directed me towards David Heyn who was a left hander. I hit the pitch beautifully and swung in late between his bat and pad hitting his middle stump with a jolt. Bails went flying and Heyn was out for nought. It was the end of the over and Maurice Decker walked to the wicket and stood at the non-striker's end. It was Darrell's turn and he followed the script I was all too familiar with by now. This time I was delivered at a slower pace that seemed to confuse Tissa. I swung in late and hit him on his pads and I rolled slowly to the ground. It was a nice soft blow and there was a loud appeal from Darrell and the close in fielders, which was upheld by the umpire and he was out for no score.

At this stage the umpires called for a drinks-break and I was placed on the ground close to the wickets under the watchful eyes of the umpires. The players refreshed themselves with a choice of lime juice or cool water. I took advantage of this short break by relaxing motionless on the soft grass.

I was back in Darrell's hands when Clifford Bartlet, the new batsman, conferred with Maurice Decker and together they approached the umpire and made an unsuccessful appeal against the light. Clifford now had to negotiate a whole over from Darrell. On the last ball of the over Darrell once again swung me in late and squeezed me between his bat and pad to crash me into the wickets. He was out for nought. Darrell ran up to bowl to Travis Fernando who was in next and, just as was the case with Clifford, I sneaked in between bat and pad and directly hit the stumps. He was the sixth batsman to fail to get off the mark. Seven wickets had fallen while the total was static at 10 runs. For a humble ball like me this was as good as it gets. No ball wants to be hit to all parts of the ground resulting in a leather hunt.

No sooner had Kevin Ruberu, the number ten batsman arrived at the crease than vice-captain Thiagu spoke with Darrell. To forestall another appeal against the light he suggested bringing on slower bowlers until the close of play. Darrell then replaced Chanaka and himself with Sugi Rajaratnam and Thiagu. Sugi and Thiagu held me in a similar way except Sugi



bowled left arm and was somewhat slower than Chanaka and Darrell. However, Thiagu held me tighter and sent me spinning towards the batsman at varying speeds to deceive the batsman. He seemed to throw me up in the air a bit more than normal. After three overs the umpire called “time”. That was the end of the days play with the score at 20 for 8 wickets. Chanaka had taken 2 wickets for 12 runs and Darrell had 6 wickets for 3 runs.

I was now in the hands of the umpire who carried me off to the pavilion. He showed me to the other umpire and they both marked their initials on one side of me with a permanent marker pen. He then placed me in a bag making sure that I was safe and secure for the night. It was very dark inside and I had no idea what was happening until the next day when I was taken out of the bag and saw daylight again.

Easier than expected

Looking back, I felt that things were not as bad as I had anticipated. Because the bowlers were on top, I rarely felt the full brunt of a thick blade of the bat. Instead, for the most part, I either hit the pad, hit the stumps or went straight through to the wicket keeper’s gloves. And whenever I was squeezed between bat and pad I gently nudged the top of the stumps to dislodge the bails. I wasn’t too tired or battered. I still retained my features and I was truly on a high.

Wrapping it up

The following morning turned into another bright sunny day. After the two umpires established that no one had interfered with my appearance, I was in Darrell’s hands to bowl the first ball of the day to Kevin Ruberu. After playing me down a few times Kevin reached out and played me gently towards Gowrie who was fielding at “short leg” a position quite close to the batsman. Gowrie, seeing that Kevin’s back foot was outside the crease picked me up quickly and threw me at the stumps but missed hitting them. Even though I had braced myself for a huge thump, I was glad in a way that he missed the stumps. However, he had thrown me so hard that I went scurrying to the boundary. Kevin was gifted four free runs which affected poor Darrell’s bowling average. Thereafter Kevin and Maurice played me down carefully reaching the boundary once more bringing the score on the board to 30. In Chanaka’s second over I hit Kevin on his pads and he was ruled out LBW. Then I walked the “last man” Rohan Abeyasundera who took his guard to face me. He blocked me defensively and I rolled down into the soft grass. Once again Chanaka sent me down to Rohan who shaped up to block me as he did before. However, he missed and I whizzed past his bat and collided with the stumps. It was a nice feeling; sending bails flying in the air. He was clean bowled for a duck and St. Peter’s were all out in their 1st innings for a total of 30 runs. Chanaka had taken 4 wickets for 14 runs and Darrell 6 wickets for 7 runs. Chanaka and Darrell led the Royal team off the ground back to the pavilion to a standing ovation.

My second life

Noor the groundsmen hurried on to the ground to ask Darrell for his choice of roller at the change of innings and was also eagerly looking to get his hands on me. However, I was safe in Darrell’s hands much to Noor’s disappointment.

Darrell then carefully placed me in his cricket bag and although it was dark and crowded, I felt safe and relatively comfortable. He took me home as a souvenir of the memorable game and proudly introduced me to his family and friends. He later inscribed in white ink, details of the game which included the date of the 1st Innings of St Peter’s being all out for 30 runs, and the names of those who played in the team. I was then placed carefully into a wooden shoe box where I proudly joined other souvenirs of games Darrell had played in. They included bails and other cricket balls of various names and very soon we all became one big family.

I was one of the luckier ones. Most of my friends were used at practice and battered into submission, eventually perishing unsung. But I was immortalised because I was the instrument by which a batting side was demolished in an unprecedented manner. And I achieved it with little sweat. A mere 30 runs were taken off me and I was used for only 141 deliveries.



Back where I began

When the shoe box was closed it was very dark but the friendly ambience inside made it quite a comfortable home for me and my friends. We could hear but could not see what was outside. Whenever Darrell opened up our home it was to show us off to his friends who seemed excited to hear stories about why we were chosen to be in the box.

I know that our little shoe box home has travelled far and wide with Darrell and his family when they moved from place to place. Beginning in Brownrigg Road, Colombo, Sri Lanka we spent years on tea plantations, then over to Ontario, Canada and finally to Melbourne, Australia. What a wonderful journey that started in Melbourne and ended back “home” in Melbourne where I was created. I now live approximately 15 kilometres, as the crow flies, from where I was created.



In Melbourne Darrell decided to get rid of the old shoe box and move us into a glass candy jar with a lid and placed it on top of a display cabinet in the lounge room of his home. This is so much nicer because, we are no longer in the dark and from our vantage point can see and hear much more than before.

I know that Darrell is no longer playing any cricket but hopefully a few of his grandchildren will play the game and add more friends to the jar. Other than that, I am not sure what our future will be. When I am no longer around, I hope that people will read my story and be captivated by it.

Long live cricket. The game where balls like me are made to do strange things and then carefully protected and preserved for future generations by the captain of a team which collectively brought out the best in me.

Brian Lieversz

Nihal de Run

The Lieversz name is synonymous with sports champions.

Brian's father Douglas (DWL Senior) was a Royal College champion at athletics, rugby and cricket. Brian's brother Darrell (DWL Jnr) was an outstanding athlete and cricketer in the early sixties and captained Royal at both sports. He went on to represent Ceylon as a cricketer. His sister Valerie was a schoolgirl champion athlete and later she represented Ceylon at hockey. Brian's mother Florence was also an accomplished tennis and hockey player. Sport ran in the blood and bones of this family.

Brian Lieversz is the youngest in the family. I personally regard him as the 'Silver Shadow' of the family. I say Silver Shadow because he is generally perceived as second to Darrell as an athlete and cricketer. His brother Darrell was his hero and mine too. Many think that he was overshadowed by his brother, however in reality Brian excelled and exceeded some of Darrell's achievements on the track and as a cricketer. He could bat better than Darrell but Darrell was a treat to watch bowling as he approached the wicket and dragged his rear foot across the batting crease.

My admiration is for Brian who took to Rugby and played commendably on the wing giving and taking solid tackles - something Darrell avoided as he saved himself for the track.



ATHLETICS

Brian represented Royal at Public Schools Championships in the high jump, 400 metres, 4x100, 4x400 metre relays and was Vice Captain of the team.

In the 400 metres, he ran third to K S Senaratne of Hunumulla Maha Vidyalaya who clocked 50.0 sec, the second-place getter was clocked at 50.2 sec and Brian 50.3 sec.

All three broke the record at that time and that record may still stand today. Ironically, Darrell held the record for 440 yards at that time but the event was reclassified under the metric system so Darrell's record will never be broken!

The Marlowe Reid Trophy is awarded to the Best Athlete at Royal. All three, father Doug, brother Darrell and Brian have won this trophy.



CRICKET

Brian represented Royal in the first XI team from 1965 to 1967 and opened the bowling in 1967. He was in and out of the team in 1965/66 because Royal produced some outstanding fast bowlers during that era and he had to bide his time until he became a spearhead and regular in 1967.

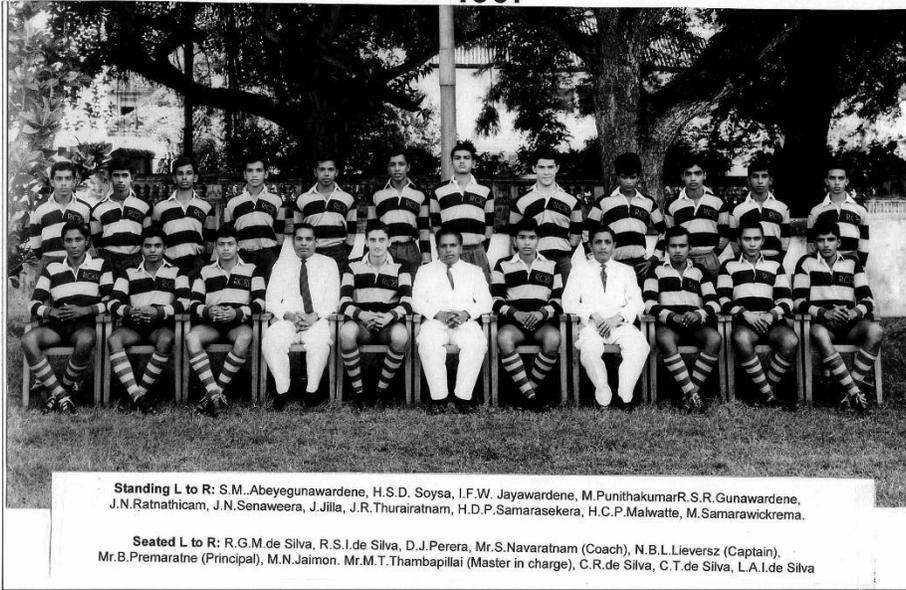
Three members of this famous family have captained Royal at cricket: Douglas, Darrell and his cousin Eardley.

RUGBY

Brian remembers fondly his great friend Nizam Jaimon, sadly now deceased, who like Brian was a great sprinter, wandering towards the Rugby practice grounds curiously observing the Ruggerites go through their paces. Mr Thambapillai knowing of their sprinting capabilities asked them to join in for some fun and games. The rest is history. They both made the first fifteen that year and took their places on opposite wings under Keith Paul's leadership in 1964. Brian went on to Captaining Royal in 1967. His father captained in 1925. Brian went on to play for Dimbula and the up-country team in the Capper Cup tournament.



ROYAL COLLEGE 1st XV RUGBY TEAM 1967



Standing L to R: S.M..Abeyegunawardene, H.S.D. Soysa, I.F.W. Jayawardene, M.Punithakumar,R.S.R.Gunawardene, J.N.Ratnathicam, J.N.Senaweera, J.Jilla, J.R.Thurairatnam, H.D.P.Samarasekera, H.C.P.Malwatte, M.Samarawickrema.

Seated L to R: R.G.M.de Silva, R.S.I.de Silva, D.J.Perera, Mr.S.Navaratnam (Coach), N.B.L.Lieversz (Captain), Mr.B.Premaratne (Principal), M.N.Jaimon. Mr.M.T.Thambapillai (Master in charge), C.R.de Silva, C.T.de Silva, L.A.I.de Silva

PROFESSIONAL LIFE

He started life as a trainee tea planter on Mattakelle Estate Talawakelle and worked himself up the ranks at Diyagama West, Waverley, Hellbodde, Hapugahalande, Opalgala and Pingarawa Estates.

He migrated to Australia for the benefit of his family and settled in Sydney before ultimately coming to Melbourne to be re-united with Darrell and other family members. For many years Brian worked for the Sigma Pharmaceutical Company and retired when they were absorbed into another group.

He suffered a great family loss when his first wife Margot, the mother of his three children Mark, Richard and Rochelle passed away. His second wife Celia and Brian share a common interest in art, as both are members of the Spectrum Art Group.

This article is to bring to the fore, a great triple colours Royal Sportsman - one of two great generations of the Lieversz family. Most importantly Brian is one who lived in Darrell's shadow in the early '60s but shone in the late '60s and Royalists will remember these famous boys who helped us to fly the flag high at the Public Schools Championships, the Royal-Thomian Match and the Bradby Shield.

To Brian I give the title of 'Silver Shadow draped in Blue and Gold.'

Humility is the Hallmark of a gentleman. Brian wins this title too.



Big matches forged many friendships off the field

Vijaya Malalasekera

Article taken from: Quadrangle December 31, 2018 Editor Sujith Silva

My first Royal-Thomian memory goes back to 1953 when Royal College was captained by Ubhaya de Silva; the Thomians were down I think 4 for 14 and then P.I. Peiris and Geoff Wijesinghe put on record partnership of 187 runs. The Thomians went on to win the match by an innings at the Oval.

P.I. Peiris was engaged in a fifth-wicket partnership of 187 runs with Geoff Wijesinghe while P.I. made a fine century of 123 runs, and Wijesinghe contributed with 64 in a total of 290.

In 1954, T. Nirmalingam was leading the Royalists and Ranjith (Bar) Weerasinghe led the Thomians. I remember Nirmalingam's innings of 69 runs. When he was run out for 69, the Royal scoreboard read 70 for 1. He opened with Selvi Perinpanayagam who was yet to score. It was the finest short inning I have witnessed.

Then we had a series of draws from 1955 onwards when Ranjith de Silva captained Royal; in 1956 under Fitzroy Crozier; in 1957 under Michael Wille, and in 1958 under Lorenz Pereira



Left: *Vijaya Malalasekera and Mano Ponniah opening batting for Cambridge University team 1967*

I remember in '56, Royalist Jothilingam getting a brilliant 121 runs and in '57 Michael Wille also scored 121 runs for Royal. Then Thomian Ronnie Reid scored 158 not out in 1956. Also, I still remember Michael Tissera in his very first Royal-Thomian as a 14-year-old in 1954 scoring 48 runs. In 1954, Tissera and Geoff Wijesinghe managed to put on a match-saving partnership for St. Thomas'.

In 1958, Royal was captained by Lorenz Pereira and S. Thomas' by Michael Tissera. I remember how Michael Dias (62) and Lalith Senanayake (56) thrashed the daylights out of Thomian star bowler Larif Idroos. Larif came into the game with a big reputation and one wicket short of getting 50 wickets for the season. Dias and Senanayake batted brilliantly. It inspired young Royalists to take up cricket. I remember in that game Nanda Senanayake opened batting for Royal.

In 1959 under Sarath Samarasinghe we had another draw (Ferdinands captaining St. Thomas'). In 1960 under Michael Dias, it was a draw but we could've won it if we held on to a vital catch offered by R.M. Fernando. In 1961, under

Nanda Senanayake, it was another draw but interestingly Nanda who made it to the side as our opening batsman entered the record book as a bowler as he managed to grab five wickets in that game. He was a damn good bowler, an off spinner.

My first year of Royal-Thomian was in 1962 under Darrel Lieversz and S. Thomas' was captained by Keith Labrooy. Anura Tennakoon made his first Royal-Thomian debut in that match. He managed to pull the Thomians out of trouble with a good partnership with Selvadurai in the first inning (for the eighth wicket after being 86 for 7. Anura made 28 and Selvadurai an unbeaten 68, and the Thomians ended the inning at 197 runs). In Royal's first inning, S.S. Kumar made a fighting 68 not out as Royal declared at 138/9. Royal had an opportunity to go for a win after the Thomians declared their second inning at 83/8 and had to chase 143 for victory the post-tea session on the second day.



Royal ended at 133 for 7 at the close, with Gowrishankaran scoring 61 runs not out and the game ended in a draw. I managed to score eight and a nought. I was just 16 years old and the youngest in the side. We came into the big match after beating a star-studded Peterite side under Richard Heyn.

Our wicket-keeper Siri Jayaratne set a record in the big match by claiming eight dismissals. We had a devastating combination of fast bowlers, (Darrel) Liewersz and (Chanaka) De Silva. They managed to bundle out the Peterites for 42 and 38 runs at Reid Avenue. Our side was an amazing side as we had only two recognised batsmen in S.S. Kumar and S.D. Jayaratne. Withane played as an all-rounder. All others were freshers. We had an amazing team spirit and we managed to win innumerable matches with low scores.

Funnily enough we were thrashed by Prince of Wales during a third-term game. We all rallied around Darrel and everyone was behind him. He was an outstanding sportsman, a brilliant athlete and a cricketer. I haven't seen such a team spirit in any side to date. We managed to achieve unbelievable results. We beat Ananda, St Peter's and St Benedict's. Ananda, another start-studded side, and they had to get only 82 runs to win and we managed to bowl them out for 76 runs.



In 1963, under S.S. Kumar we had a season with mixed fortunes. We had five coloursmen. I scored over 600 runs in that season. We lost to St Benedict's under Quintus Perera at Kottahena with Ranjit Fernando scoring a brilliant century before the milk break, 110 runs. That's one of the best I've seen. Then Neville Pereira ran through our batting line-up with his left-arm spin bowling. We did well against the Antonians at Katugastota where I managed to score 95 runs and Wilson got 110. Royal managed to put on 200 runs in one session on the second day. The match was drawn. We also drew with Trinity, Wesley and St Peter's and

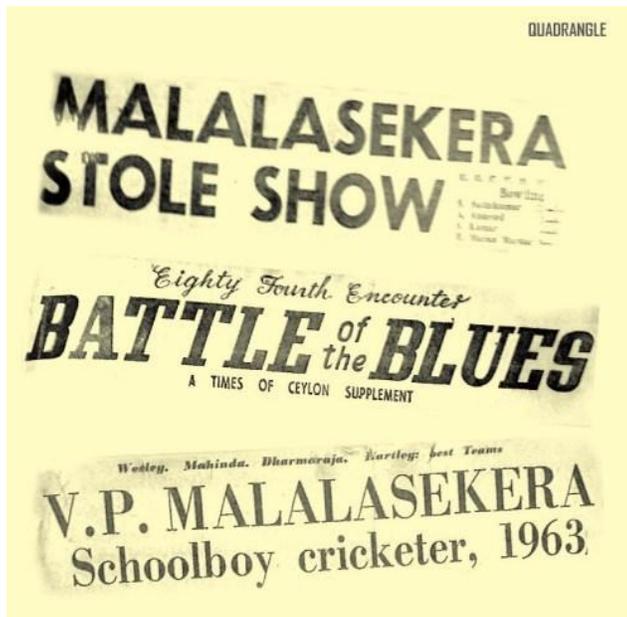
I was within runs. Then came the big match, S. Thomas' being led by Randy Morrel.

The Thomians put on 254 runs (254/9) on the board with Premalal Gunasekera and Anura Tennakoon and few others contributing with half centuries. When it was our turn to bat, we were 35 for 3 and I walked into the middle. Cedric Fernando and I managed to put on a 165-run partnership, which is a record for Royal for the fourth wicket to date. We declared the inning at 207 for 4; I scored 112 Cedric 47 not out.

It was an interesting inning. I remember hitting Thomian off-spinner L.S. Perera for 14 runs in one over, which included three fours. Then I hit Barny Reid for a six, into the commentators' box at the Oval. I scored 86 runs in boundaries. I remember how I got to my century. I was at 89 runs and Roger D'Silva was bowling. He bowled a bouncer and I hit that over midwicket for a four and moved to 93. The next ball, he bowled another bouncer and this time I hit that square of the wicket and got another four. I moved to 97. I took a single and Cedric too got a single. So, within the same over, I was back again facing Roger, on 98. Then Mr. Thomian captain Randy Morrel walked up to me and said "Malli not everyone gets an opportunity to score a hundred at the Royal-Thomian. Bat carefully."



Now, that's the spirit in which we played cricket. The next ball I hit Roger straight past mid-on; ball hit Gamini Panditharathne's boot and his "Gal Thoppiya" (Hat) and passed the boundary. I reached my century with that. My entire inning contained 86 runs in boundaries (20 fours and one six) and scored within 130 minutes. It is one of the fastest centuries in the series, for Royal College. Cedric and I scored 99 runs in 30 minutes after lunch. It was just one of those days – everything clicked.



The match ended in a draw as the Thomians declared their second innings at 115 for 9. Royal, chasing 163 to win, were at 120 for 6 at close. However, the Thomians broke the deadlock in 1964 as they beat the Royalists under Premalal Gunasekera's captaincy to record the first win since 1953.

I left for England in 1964 for my higher studies and played cricket for Cambridge University. I returned later and had two coaching stints at Royal College. Firstly, I was assisting Derrick De Saram in 1971. At the Royal-Thomian, Jagath Fernando was captaining College and Ravi Sathasivam was captaining St. Thomas'. Jagath scored a stylish hundred (160 not out) along with 97 runs by Gajan Pathmanathan who later got double Blues, one at Cambridge and one at Oxford. Then Ravi got a beautiful 54 runs for St. Thomas'. I enjoyed watching their batting. These were some of the best and stylish batsmen of that era.

Then came Duleep Mendis and he scored back-to-back centuries in the series (103 runs in '71 and 184 runs in '72). I left in '72 and returned as Second XI coach in 1982.

In 1983, I took over as First XI coach when Chulaka Amarasinghe was leading Royal. That year we beat St. Thomas' College by 10 wickets and it was the first time I witnessed Royal winning the Battle of the Blues as I was not in the country when the school won last in 1969 under Eardley Lieversz.

I remember in that match Royal was in trouble after losing early wickets (52 for 3). Rochana Jayawardena before he stepped out to bat asked me, "Sir, what do I do?" I said "You know well how to hit the ball. Just go out there and hit the damn ball."

Rochana just went out and started hitting all around while building partnerships with Malik Samarasinghe and Sarinda Unamboowa. In the process, he scored 145 not out and when we declared Royal had scored 249 for 8. Then we managed to bowl out the Thomians in both innings (81 runs and 188) with Rochana grabbing nine wickets in the match (5 for 29 and 4 for 44). It was a wonderful side, Sarinda Unamboowa was the wicketkeeper, fast bowler Chanaka Perera, Chulaka, Sandesh Algama, Heshan de Silva, Kapila Dandeniya, Nalliah Devaraj, Roshan Jurangpathy, and Gihan Malalasekera. My nephew Gihan was already in the side, so I refused to coach the First XI squad when I was offered it earlier. I wrote to Royal College Principal Mr. C.J. Fernando stating my unwillingness to coach, as I didn't want to compromise my principles. But he wrote back saying since he (Gihan) had already received College colours, my presence would not affect him or influence his selection. Therefore, he told me to take up the coaching role.

In 1984, we somehow managed to salvage a draw under Sandesh Algama. I gave up coaching in 1985. However, I continue to watch and follow Royal College cricket. The last year's (2016) Royal-Thomian encounter was a testament on how beautiful and uncertain the game of Cricket is. For two days, a result was not predicted and not even thought of. But on the third day, things turned dramatically and Royal pulled off a fantastic win. For me cricket was the ultimate winner, and not that St. Thomas' College lost the match.



After my retirement from coaching, I was involved with the Royal College Cricket advisory as the chariman. I stepped down some time ago giving opportunities to young ones to come forward and take up the responsibilities. I also made it a point to instil discipline and spirit of the game among players. In addition, giving them responsibilities, making them part of the decision-making process, especially the seniors so they could be groomed to be better leaders for the future.

I cherish those memories, to date, some are my best friends. Randy Morrell insists every time I tour Australia to make it a point to visit him or to meet up for a drink or a meal. We had some wonderful cricketers those days, and it was great to follow them or be in their company or even when they are in opposing teams. From Royal, the likes of Nirmalingam, Michael Dias, Michael Wille, Lorenz Pereira, Mahinda Wijesinghe, Daya Sahabandu, Sarath Samarasinghe, Nanda Senanayake, Lalith Samarasinghe, Harsha Samarajeewa. Then among the Thomians Michael Tissera, Larif Idroos, Roger D'Silva, Keith Labrooy, Sarath Seneviratne, Kumar Boralessa, Anura Tennakoon, Premalal Gunsekera. For Trinity Nimal Maralande, Malsiri Kurukulasooriya, Kanto Peiris, Sena de Silva, Raji, Errol Fernando; St Benedict's had Ranjit Fernando, Sunil Fernando, Felix Dias, Nihal Soyza; St. Peter's had Richard Heyn, David Heyn, Travis Fernando, Ravi Fernando, Tyrone Le Mercier, Adithya de Silva, and St. Joseph's had Hillary Marceline, Brian Perumal, Rufus Buultjens, and Placy Leanlage. Wesley had Darrel Mirando and Samsudeen.

These are some of the names that come to my mind of those great cricketers; brilliant sportsmen who played in the best spirit during their school days. It was a treat to watch them play or compete against them or with them. Some we played together later in our lives, like Thomian Mano Ponniah and I played for Cambridge and opened the batting. The cricket played by these guys are of different league and incomparable, especially to the modern age. I sincerely hope, the modern cricketers get this into their heads. It's not what you win, it's how you play and the friendships you build.

From Quadrangle website (www.quadrangle.lk)

Link to article: <https://wp.me/pamMfJ-29S1>

Three College Cricket Captains



Three Royal College Cricket Captains : Lorenz (left), Captain in 1958, Mike Wille (centre), Captain in 1957 and Fritz Crozier (right), in 1956.

These three illustrious former Cricket Captains of Royal College – Mike Wille, Lorenz Pereira and Fitz Crozier are best of friends and live in Melbourne. They meet once a month at Shavans Pinewood, Sri Lankan restaurant where they enjoy an excellent lunch and share many stories.



Probably the oldest photo of Royal College students

Rudra De Zoysa



I got a bit more information about the personalities in the picture from my brother Nilkanth who is a custodian of many facts about RCC. Next to my father to his right is a person called Poulter. I believe his son was one or two-years senior to us at College. In the centre is the Form Master, Mr. Vollenhoven who was affectionately called Papa Vollenhoven. Papa Vollenhoven's son played cricket for RCC in the 1930s or 1940s and toured with the first schoolboy team ever to go overseas (to Australia). To the right of Papa Vollenhoven is one Mr. Thiagarajah who ended up being the Chairman of the Monetary Board of the Central Bank of Ceylon. There are Malays, Indonesians, Sinhalese, an Englishman and Tamils in the class – so where is the so called 'discrimination'? Anyway, see how smartly all of them are dressed.



Dulanjan reignites diving career Down Under

Adapted from the article by Allam Ousman, The Sunday Times, April 25, 2021

Champion diver Dulanjan Fernando has shrugged off the disappointment of failing to make the cut for the 2018 Gold Coast Commonwealth Games by reinventing his career after moving to Australia to pursue higher studies last year.

The 21-year-old has reignited his dream of representing Sri Lanka at the 2022 Commonwealth Games after achieving personal best performances in springboard events at the Australian Age National Diving Championships held in Melbourne and Queensland this month. He won a Bronze at the Australian Open competition although he could not qualify for the Australian Nationals.

“My target is to participate in the Commonwealth Games and do my high performance. I can go to the Olympics but I have time. I am still 21. I am planning to train for another five or six years,” said Dulanjan confidently in an interview with the Sunday Times.

A talented all-round sportsman who excelled in cricket, swimming, gymnastics and water polo at Royal College apart from diving, Dulanjan was unkindly cut from the Sri Lanka contingent despite being selected for diving at the 2018 Commonwealth Games. Officially he could not be slotted in because Sri Lanka could not carry more than 300 athletes and officials though the latter as usual outweighed the actual number of participants who would be vying for glory.

“I got selected but unfortunately I couldn’t go because of politics. There weren’t enough slots apparently,” said Dulanjan who perhaps paid the price because his maternal uncle Mahinda Liyanage headed the swimming body at the time. The plea of the schoolboy to then Sports Minister Dayasiri Jayasekera also fell on deaf ears with National Olympic Committee officials also pacifying him to “try again next time”.

Many others in his place would have been disheartened and walked away from the sport after the injustice meted out to him by the highest authorities governing sport in the country. Dulanjan did take a sabbatical from the sport to complete his A/Ls and then enrolled with Deakin University in Melbourne to follow a degree in Sports Science. Even the eruption of the COVID-19 pandemic which allowed him to attend only four classes at the university, has not deterred his determination of going for glory at next year’s Commonwealth Games.

“I wanted to start my diving career again with these facilities. I didn’t have so many facilities when I was in Sri Lanka. I wanted to give a try,” said Dulanjan who joined Mel Am Diving Club. “They were interested in me. They asked me to come and train with them. I am diving now and training again,” he said happily after having taken part in three competitions in Melbourne and Queensland.

Competing in the 19-24 men’s category at the Victorian Age National Championship in Melbourne, he won gold in the 1m and 3m springboard events to qualify for Australian Age National Championship in Queensland where he came fourth in the 3m and second in the 1m events.

More significantly he achieved personal bests of 278 points (3m) in Melbourne and 287 points (1m) in Queensland. Dulanjan also won the Bronze medal at the Victorian Open Diving Championships.

“I have improved a lot. I am doing some big dives. In Sri Lanka we did all the hard dives in the hard way. We didn’t have facilities in dry land. In here there is everything,” said Dulanjan who wants to improve his dives in the 3m and 10m which are Olympic events.

At the moment he is doing forward 3 ½ inward 2 ½ backward 2 ½ reverse 2 ½. “I need to perfect those dives now. In competition I need to perform six dives – forward, back, reverse, inward, twist and an extra dive,” said Dulanjan who could not participate in the 10m event in the Victoria Nationals since he was a late entrant.



“I am improving myself, training four days a week. I can feel the difference. I am pretty confident in my category,” said Dulanjan though participating in competitions is a strain on him financially.

He spent A\$ 2000 from his own pocket for the Queensland event. “I don’t have any major sponsors. There are a group of Old Royalists based in Melbourne who are helping out with my training costs, who I am very thankful to. I have to balance everything on my own – studies, work and training. There are lot of meets coming up. In November I have to go to Gold Coast,” said Dulanjan who has written to the Sports Ministry and NOC for financial assistance to maintain his high-performance training.

Dulanjan Kaushalya Fernando emerged as a diving prodigy hailing from a family with a passion for aquatic sports. His uncle Mahinda Liyanage is a reputed diving coach while Dulanjan’s elder sister Eshana Fernando coaches Musaeus College.

A good athlete who took part in long and high jump, Dulanjan has been diving since he was in grade 4. He participated in backstroke events at National swimming competitions and had to give up cricket though he captained the Royal under-15 team as a wicketkeeper batsman.

Adjudged the most outstanding Royal College sportsman for two consecutive years in 2017 and 2018, he captained the school in gymnastics, diving and water polo leading the team to victory when they regained the D.R.L. Hayman Trophy against S. Thomas’ after five years.

He first represented the country at the 2015 Asian Age Group Championship in Bangkok, Thailand while his career peaked the following year. In 2016 he won three silver medals in diving at the Singapore Invitation National Championship competing in the 17-22 age category and also a silver and bronze medal in the South Asian Championship held in Colombo. A bronze medallist as a 14-year-old in his debut at the Nationals, the high point of Dulanjan’s career was being among the top eight at the Asian Championship in Tokyo in the 10m event.

Sri Lanka may have been unkind to their diving prodigy but moving to Australia could be a blessing in disguise to achieve his sporting ambitions.

(If anyone is interested in helping out Dulanjan as he pursues his diving in Melbourne, please contact Akvan – akvangaje@gmail.com)

Highest Batting Partnership at the Royal-Thomian Cricket Matches

Aslam Assen

On 14 March 1996, the ardent devotees of the great Royal-Thomian encounter witnessed something remarkable at the Sinhalese Sports Club Grounds. Royal, having been invited to bat first by the Thomian skipper, obliged duly by batting the whole day, something rarely seen in that era. It was not just the fact that they batted the whole day which made it special, it was how they went about it and erased most batting records in the entire Royal-Thomian series during the process.

Royal skipper Anushka Polonowita and his deputy Yasaswin Dharmaratne, both stylish top order batsmen, led from the front. Together, they established the highest batting partnership in the entire history of Royal-Thomian series which is intact to date. They joined together when Royal were in trouble at 31/2 and played cautiously till lunch at which they were 47/2. After lunch, both batsmen opened up and started scoring more freely and at tea, had a formidable 177/2 on the board (Anushka 77* and Yasaswin 77*). In the final session, they completely demolished the Thomian attack with their aggressive stroke play and finally when the partnership ended as late as 5:45pm, the total was 285. That 254-run partnership stands as the highest partnership in all the Royal-Thomian encounters to date. It was a delight to watch them bat together, they had absolutely no hesitation in running between the wickets and offered no chances to the Thomians who



tried hard to dislodge them. It was a complete journey of batting - absorbing all the pressure at the beginning, laying a solid foundation, and then dominating thereafter. During the process, skipper Polonowita made a gallant 165 runs while his deputy Dharmaratne made a solid 124. At the end of the day, Royal made a mammoth 387/6. This dominating batting prowess of Royal created many other records:

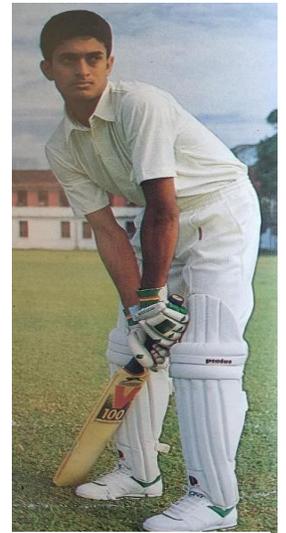
- * First and the only occasion to date, a Captain and a Vice Captain scored centuries in a Royal-Thomian.
- * First occasion of two batsmen scoring centuries in the same innings.
- * Highest total (387/6) in the series at the time.
- * Most runs in a day (387/6) by a team in the series to date.
- * Polonowita's 165 is the highest individual score recorded at the SSC in a Royal-Thomian.
- * Polonowita's 165 stands as the most runs scored in a day by a Royal batsman.
- * Dharmaratne's century was the slowest at the time and the 3rd longest innings in the series to date.

The 254-run partnership probably is the highest partnership recorded in all the big matches among other schools played in Sri Lanka. It was a privilege and honour to have witnessed this great partnership and the fact that it still stands as the highest after a lapse of 25 years, proves beyond doubt how special it was.



This batting performance was certainly not a fluke or a case of pure luck. Both these players had a great season with the bat and ball scoring heavily and taking many wickets for the college against very strong oppositions. The display at the Royal-Thomian was the icing on the cake and their performances did not go unnoticed.

The Royal College Old Boys' Association of Australia (RCOBAA) together with the help of generous old boys in Melbourne and Colombo organised a full summer season of cricket in Melbourne for Polonowita and Dharmaratne. Polonowita represented Moorabbin CC while Dharmaratne represented Monash CC in the highly competitive Sub-District tournament in Victoria. In addition, they both represented Raiders CC in the YWCA Sunday Competition. Both players had successful seasons in Melbourne performing exceptionally well for their respective clubs and winning accolades. They recall



this opportunity with gratitude and to date remember all those who helped them during their stint in Melbourne.

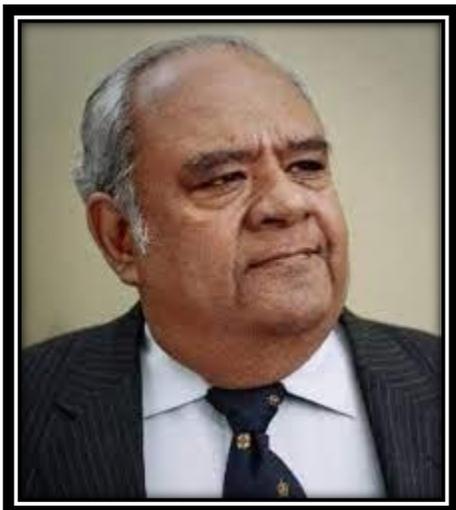
(Based on the past Royal-Thomian souvenirs and personal communication with the two players)



TRIBUTES

Sunil De Silva (30 January 1941 - 28 February 2021)

Hugh Karunanayake



My acquaintance with Sunil De Silva was mainly after he migrated to Australia in the early 1990s when I encountered him at a Sri Lanka Association dinner which he attended in formal attire replete with a curved pipe, (ala Sherlock Holmes) firmly placed in his mouth. We immediately acknowledged each other – he, recognizing me as a senior student from his old school and as a fellow denizen of a small town in Colombo called Pamankade. I of course had seen him first as a rather ro-tund young hosteller at Royal College in around 1951/52, given to streaks of impish behaviour. No signs then of the great future that awaited him. A few years later I observed him when his parents moved from Galle to Harischandra Mawata in Pamankade. I use the word ‘observed’ as I had not spoken to him yet but watched him with not a little amusement as he had his daily struggles with his father’s car a Simca Aronde. Harischandra Mawata was right in front of the bus stand from which I took a bus to the Technical College, and the infrequency of the bus service compelled me to observe Sunil and his car. He was invariably bare bodied wearing only a pair of shorts and was always either under the jacked-up car or peering into

the engine with its ‘bonnet’ up. Invariably, he would do a test run up and down that stretch of Havelock Road, always bare bodied!

Their house had an annex in which lived Chula Unamboowe (who was a year senior to me in Prep School but later moved to Kandy), his wife Ira, and their son Bradley all of whom I knew. Chula was a senior administrator in government service and a more dedicated public servant was difficult to find. Chula remarked that Sunil had all the making of a top motor engineer of the future! One day Ananda Senatileka who was a year junior to me in school, and also a ‘motor head’ arrived in his red Studebaker at Sunil’s and after some joint tinkering with Sunil on the Simca was departing, when he spotted me standing at the bus stand. I hopped into his car and during the short trip told me that Sunil was his cousin who had joined Aquinas for his A levels but was more interested in motor mechanism! Times and aptitudes have changed much since then, and I observed with great interest from Sydney, Sunil’s entry into the legal profession, and his meteoric rise therein.

The Ceylon Society of Australia was formed in 1997, and Sunil and Senani attended one of the early meetings in Sydney at which my wife Tulsi buttonholed him and gave him an application form for membership. He duly signed up then and there! He and Senani had since been regular and very interested members, and great friends too as an added bonus. On the late Tony Peiris completing his three-year term as President, Sunil was an automatic choice for the leadership role which Sunil fitted into with great aplomb and distinction. Our friendship grew and I had come to accept his great equanimity, his resolute character, and his warmheartedness without the slightest sign of affectation even in the face of unpleasant encounters with people of lesser make up. Never to resort to ‘*ad hominems*’ Sunil was a person who rarely was ruffled into provocation.

As President of CSA for some three years, he gave strong leadership and brought not only goodwill to the Society and its activities, but also his legal acumen and experience which supplemented the role, and which benefitted the Society immensely. He hosted some great lunches at his home then in North Ryde, and some splendid after meeting suppers at various restaurants in Sydney. He himself was an epicure beyond measure, and complementing that role was an insatiable appetite! Sunil however did not pressure Senanie to pander to his tastes, as he was a great cook himself. I recall the



delicious crab curry he cooked up for a few of us who visited him at Kariyong, and the meal and the conversation that went with it was of the highest class, not forgetting the matching wines he had thoughtfully selected.

Much has been said and written of Sunil as a Thespian, drama being his other love. I also recall his skills in carpentry in which he engaged in as a sort of therapy to take his mind away from the travails of mundane matters. Wherever he went Sunil was quickly recognized for his capacity to lead whether it be in Sri Lanka, Australia or elsewhere. He was President of the Sri Lanka Association of Sydney, the Royal College Old Boys Association of Sydney, and Trustee of the Royal College Union, and of course President of the Ceylon Society of Australia. Such leadership qualities come only to people with genuine concern for others, a quality which he seemed to possess in abundance.

To strike a personal note, even after I moved to Melbourne five years ago, we communicated by email frequently, and we were delighted by a visit that he and Senanie made to see us a couple of years ago. When I heard that he was due in Melbourne last January, to deliver the Eddie Gray Memorial oration to the Royal College Old Boys' in Australia Association. I lost no time in organizing a get together with a few mutual friends and booked a restaurant for the purpose. Alas, that was not to be, as a total lock down in Melbourne occurred - making his much-anticipated visit a nullity as interstate travel was not permitted. Sunil's passing came as a great shock to us, and our condolences go out to Senanie and son Sidat. May Sunil attain the supreme bliss of Nibbana.

Sunil de Silva - An exceptional personality

Kithsiri Senadeera (Sydney)

Sunil de Silva was a remarkable character. Sunil is one of the most versatile and affable persons I have met. He was a leading lawyer, stage actor, film actor, writer, public speaker, lecturer, mentor, carpenter, cook, and the list goes on. I sometimes wonder how a person possesses such versatility.

I met Sunil for the first time at an AGM of the Sri Lanka Association of NSW (SLA), in 1993. We became friends quickly for we had a common thread on history, sociology, political science, community services, etc.

We all know Sunil is an authority on Constitutional Law, Criminal and Civil Law, including Jurisprudence. As a young lawyer, he received guidance and advice from his close relation, the late Lalith Athulathmudali, an illustrious product of Harvard (HLS) and Oxford. He said that for his first degree (B.A. London), he offered Pali, Sanskrit and Sinhala, and graduated in 1961 with honours, and then, passed the LLB in just two years from the University of Ceylon. In my opinion, Sunil was also a social scientist; had a sound knowledge of ethnic groups, customs, social conduct of the social stratification and the caste system in Sri Lanka. When I wanted information on these areas, I usually called him, and he always had the answers.

Sunil was the first speaker of the North Parramatta Sinhala School public lecture program. I invited him to talk on a very relevant topic at that time - "The Constitutional Development of Sri Lanka" - on 22 Oct 1995 - when Professor G.L. Peiris was introducing a new constitution under Mrs Chandrika Kumaratunga. It was very well received by the audience with a healthy discussion. He was always willing to share his knowledge and experience with everyone without any reservation.

At one of the SLA "Winter Balls", I remember Dr. Nicholas Cowdery, QC, AO, who was the Director of Public Prosecutions in NSW for 16 years, as the chief guest of the event, spoke of Sunil with a deep admiration for his contribution to the Australian judicial service.

Sunil joined the SLA just after his arrival in Australia and remained an active member of the Association. He became the President in 1998/99 and Vice President on several occasions. According to my recollection, Sunil initiated the SLA 'Vesak Lanterns' project at the Lankarama Temple during his time.



Sunil was a very affable, would talk with anybody irrespective of race, religion or social stratum. What I appreciated most about Sunil was his humility and friendliness. He was ever willing to help anybody; his legal advice was free of charge. He had a marvellous sense of humour. For any question or remark, he had a quick and witty reply. Ability very few people possess.

I remember asking Sunil when he was going to retire. He said he will work to the 'end'. It was unfortunate that he had to retire earlier than expected due to health reasons. If not, he would have created history by being the Director of Public Prosecutions in NSW.

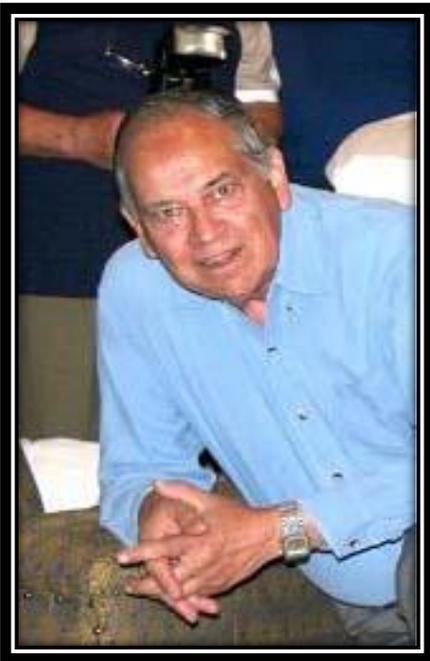
I saw almost all the 'Kolam Maduwa' stage dramas, which were staged with Ernest McIntyre, mostly at the Lighthouse Theatre, and also in SLA, Sinhalese Cultural Forum, and other stage shows. Sunil's hilarious acting on stage and cinema was enjoyed by young and old. If something goes wrong on the stage, Sunil will create his own act to suit the situation that makes the audience more enjoyable. This, I saw in a Cicil Fonseka's stage drama when Sunil lost his make-up – moustache - on the stage and several other occasions.

His wife, Senanie's organisational skills were a great asset to Sunil, and she stood by him all the time. His son – Sidat, was always there for his help and also took part in the stage with the father.

May your journey through Samsara be short and may you attain the Supreme Bliss of Nirvana.

Maurice Koelmeyer (5 November 1933 - 11 July 2021)

Darrell Lieversz



Maurice Ian Koelmeyer was born on 5 November 1933 the youngest son to Henry Robert and Violet Adelaide Koelmeyer.

The family resided in Kegalle where Maurice started his schooling. In 1945 he enrolled in Royal Collage Colombo with which he has a long association. He was involved with his friend Nihal Senivaratne in providing scholarships for disadvantaged kids to get an education and took a great delight when they graduated as doctors, lawyers and accountants. He was an ardent supporter of the RCOBAA in Melbourne. Maurice, along with his wife Bella, was a regular attendee at the dinners and other activities such as Senior's nights and Curry nights until old age caught up with him.

After leaving Royal College he was sent to London as a young man to live with his brother Rex the then diplomat from Sri Lanka to London. He attended Guys College to study medicine to continue his father's practice. This was not to be, as he was allergic to the cleaning agents, the antiseptics and anaesthetics and would pass out all the time. He wanted to join the Royal Air Force as a jet fighter pilot but being under 21 his mother would have had to sign off on this venture. During this time, he also worked for Smith and Co in London and managed the bookstore at Lords and

Wembley, where to his delight he would get to watch the cricket and football matches. He loved his sport mainly cricket and rugby.

Conscription was around then, and after many times claiming diplomatic immunity decided he would leave London to go back to Sri Lanka. Before leaving London, he was approached by Standard Tea Company with a view to getting into the Tea plantation industry.



Maurice started his planting career as a 'creeper' on Gouravilla Estate, Maskeliya in 1955. After his training of six months, he was employed as assistant superintendent on Gordon Estate, Udapussellawa. He continued working for Standard Tea Company and was transferred on promotion to other estates within the company. In 1968 he was appointed as Manager of Gouravilla Group until he left Sri Lanka in November 1972.

In 1957 he met and married Thelma "Bella" Mottau and had two children, son David, daughter Rochelle. He had two grandchildren Ashleigh and Geoffrey.

In Sri Lanka Maurice enjoyed fishing, hunting and spending time with his friends. After the events in Sri Lanka in the nineteen seventies he decided to emigrate to Australia. In 1972 he settled down in Melbourne. He was employed as a team member in the warehouse at Coca-Cola and was promoted very quickly becoming the team leader of the shipping office. He remained there until his retirement in 1996 at age 63.

In Australia Maurice was very fond of his holiday house in Loch Sport where he would entertain his friends and family especially his two grandchildren, teaching them the finer points of fishing and outdoor life. His love of music continued with his Jazz Club where he would regularly meet other members and enjoy many afternoons of good food, drink and Jazz.

Maurice passed away on Sunday 11th July 2021. **May he rest in peace.**

Maurice Koelmeyer (5 November 1933 – 11 July 2021)

Nihal Seneviratne

Maurice and I have enjoyed a rare 75-year-old friendship. From the time Maurice and I joined Royal College at Form 1, our form master was the renowned 43 group artist and cartoonist Aubrey Collette. Throughout our Royal College career, Maurice and I became very close friends and bonded extremely well.

It came to a time when Maurice decided to go abroad to the UK to England, with the prospect of doing his medical studies, and myself, proceeding to the law faculty at the University of Ceylon Peradeniya.

Sadly, the medical study program never happened - instead he was contacted by a prestigious London Sterling tea firm, "Standard Tea Company" whose local agent was George Steuarts in Colombo.

He returned to Ceylon and started as a young planter at St. Lennard's in Udapussallawa and later at Kotiyagala estate Bogawantalawa. After this, he became an assistant manager at Gordon Estate at Udapussallawa. He later became a full-time manager at Waltrim Estate, Lindulla and ended up as manager on Gonawila Estate in Upcott Maskeliya. In the mid-'70s he migrated to Australia. He started work as an assistant store's manager with Coca Cola.

Maurice comes from a respected family in Ceylon, where his two siblings were Rex, who was Ceylon's ambassador to Sweden, and Oliver a director of Chemical Industries in Colombo.

Maurice married Bella, whose father was Sam Mattau and was a respected translator of Dutch records at the archives in Nuwara Eliya and who was awarded a special honour by the Dutch government. Maurice and Bella had two children David and Rochelle and two grandchildren, Ashleigh and Geoffrey.

Maurice and Bella insisted that I stay with them in Melbourne each time I visited Australia. I recall Bella even pulling out an electric blanket for me at wintertime.

A few years ago, Maurice returned to Sri Lanka and insisted we go to Haputalle by train, going through 15 tunnels along the way. His planter friend, Jim Amarasinghe accompanied us. We stayed at Adisham for 2 nights, which was considered the famous bungalow built by the ex-Chairman of George Steuarts.



Maurice had a hideaway place at Loch Sport where he used to enjoy taking his friends and spending 3-day fishing at Loch Sport. My regret was that I was never able to join him at Loch Sport.

Maurice and I enjoyed a very close, warm friendship. I recall the times spent in both Melbourne and Sri Lanka. I had promised Maurice that I would entertain him once again in Sri Lanka and he had been very keen to do so. Unfortunately, he fell ill a few months ago. During that period, his dear wife Bella looked after him absolutely devotedly, going almost every day to see him at a home where he was. She would send her daughter when she couldn't go.

Maurice passed away fairly suddenly. Even though I was not present at the funeral, I watched the entire funeral on Zoom and I felt I was with Maurice and Bella at this particularly sad time.

I will miss Maurice but will continue to keep his memory alive. - **May he rest in peace.**

(Nihal Seneviratne, former Secretary General of Parliament, in Colombo. Both Nihal and Maurice are from the 1945 Group of Royal College.)

Dr. Brendon Gooneratne (23 March 1938 – 21 June 2021) – A Personal Recollection of a Friend

Anthony van der Wall

Printed here courtesy of the Ceylon Society of Australia journal – The Ceylankan



I was saddened to hear from Hugh Karunanayake of Brendon Gooneratne's passing. Hugh asked if I would write a tribute to Brendon in 'The Ceylankan'. It is my privilege to do so.

I first remember Brendon as BWM Gooneratne, amongst many other senior boys, at school in Royal College, some three to four years senior to me, a school prefect, cricketer and athlete of some distinction. As youngsters we knew initials but not personal names.

I also remember him acting in the production of RL Stevenson's "Treasure Island" produced by Form 3 Royal College in 1951, when I was in my final year at Royal Primary School.

I had however never met him until the mid-1970s in Sydney, Australia. I was meeting up with Tommy Kelaart to go to a cricket match at the Sydney Cricket Ground. Brendon was also in that group. It was a good day full of good conversation and laughter and a day from which a good personal and family friendship was built.

Jilka and I were living in Winston Hills and Brendon and Yasmine in Dunmore Road, Epping. He and Yasmine then moved to Cheltenham Road, Cheltenham and, quite by coincidence, our family moved to Cobran Road, on the bush side of the railway a few years later. While we were moving Brendon and Yasmine afforded us a lot of interim storage space when the shift to Cheltenham took longer than planned. This was a great help.

It also seemed sensible for Brendon to become our family doctor and we were very happy with our decision. On two occasions, outside normal GP duties, Jilka and I had to use Brendon for some emergency major repair work. I will recount my experience. During one of my twice weekly evening squash sessions with Tony Rankine a careless and over enthusiastic



racquet swing by me split my top lip in half. A visit to Ryde Hospital Outpatients' Clinic would have taken too long. After a quick call to Brendon, he operated on me on the floor of his study and library. Many injections and stitches later I went home. The result did not look pretty, and I anticipated a bad scar and perhaps a moustache to cover it. Today there is no trace of any such accident. His nurse at Trelawney Street, Eastwood told me at the time "Doctor is an excellent stitcher".

We found that we enjoyed one another's company and the many occasions we had together were embellished by the wonderful cooking of Yasmine or Jilska. The food was always wonderful but I think what we all enjoyed most was the conversation and humour. We would talk for hours, not necessarily in total agreement, but satisfied to respect the differences. No subject was taboo. Literature, history, sport and politics were all given an airing.

Brendon was a man of great intelligence and many talents. A sportsman with a good school and university career, medical doctor but one with a complete education taking in literature and the classics, often in the original and very widely read. He was also committed to preserving the world's plant and animal kingdoms. He founded 'Project Jonah' to stop whaling (and insisted on playing 'whale song tunes' to us during dinner!). He was active in protecting elephants and was rightly irritated when an early request to visit South Africa (in apartheid days) was rejected and later reversed if he was prepared to visit with an "Honorary White visa".

Brendon was forthright and I think inclined to push to get his own way; not the most popular way to success and as friends we were aware of this and needed to be forthright in our own ways to disagree or not comply. This never interfered with our mutual friendship. We also found Brendon to be very attentive and caring and I would like to share another personal experience to illustrate.

When the owner of a private firm I was working for decided to shut down his company I was without a job for some months. While I was evaluating what to turn to next there were the usual good wishes from friends and acquaintances which, of course, were appreciated. From Brendon I had a weekly personal visit or telephone call and notations about various jobs in Australian and Sri Lankan newspapers which he thought I may be interested in. Rather more than the average call to duty, in my opinion but typical of the Brendon I knew.

For family reasons Brendon decided to retire in Sri Lanka and was able to persuade Yasmine, Channa and Devika to join him. He was proud and happy to have bought or built two lovely homes there. Jilska and I have visited them in both locations. Sadness, however, is never far away and the death of their son Channa must have been almost impossible to bear. He remained a committed Sri Lankan, proud Royalist, proud of his family and in my mind loyal to his friends.

In today's strange Covid – 19 confined social scene, if it were only possible to entertain two visitors to dinner in our home at a time, then Brendon and Yasmine would be very high on our preferred list and what a pleasant evening would await us.

Brendon was a "character", with his idiosyncrasies – sometimes misunderstood – but I was happy to have known him and have called him a friend.



Gamini Edirisinghe - He stayed true to the blue and gold all his life

Nihal Seneviratne



Gamini Edirisinghe, 75, passed away very peacefully at his home in Kalyani Road, Colombo 6 a few days ago. His dear wife Roshi told me she had been preparing him for a morning bath when he suddenly felt short of breath and passed away soon after before the doctor arrived. It had been a very calm and peaceful passing. He leaves behind his wife Roshi, daughter Ramala and two very adorable granddaughters.

Gamini was the elder son of renowned optician Albert Edirisinghe and his wife Yasa. Albert had established a successful firm at Colpetty junction and also on Galle Road, Bambalapitiya, called Vision House in addition to many outstation branches. He

hailed from a respected family in Ganegama south, Baddegama.

Gamini and his father were dedicated Rotarians as far back as 1961. Albert was a founder member of Rotary Colombo West. In 1969, he was elected President and under his presidentship, his young son Gamini was inducted as a member by his father. Some years later, Gamini was elected President of the Club and in 2000, he was elected to the prestigious post of Governor. He continued to be an active member until sadly he suffered a stroke. Till then, he made it a point to attend every Rotary function including the Wednesday meetings.

Gamini's entire education from Primary to senior level was at Royal College. His devotion and commitment to the school was so great that he was present at almost every match, be it ruggar, cricket, or athletics, to cheer his old school.

In September 1986, Gamini was elected as convenor for ORGACO, then Secretary and finally Chairman. He was elected Secretary of the Royal College Union (RCU) from 1982-86 and was Trustee of the RCU from 2006 -2011. He was Vice President of the RCU from 2011- 2019. He resigned from the post in September 2020, due to ill health.

Gamini gave of his best to so many organisations of the RCU. He was Treasurer of the Royal- Thomian Cricket Match Committee and helped as Secretary of the RCU Constitution from 1987- 1990. He also worked as the convenor of the Parliamentary Consultative Committee from 1988-89 and was a member of the Finance Committee for 14 years from 1990 -2005.

Gamini was married to Roshi Kodagoda who was the first cousin of my wife. With this close relationship strengthened by our active participation in Old Royalist affairs, we became very close friends. How often Gamini and Roshi would ring and invite us to go out for a meal and enjoy a wonderful warm chat. When I was abroad, my wife would tell me how Gamini and Roshi would frequently visit and take her out for an evening meal.

At a very personal level, I would like to mention how Gamini asked me whether he could pay a call to meet Prime Minister R. Premadasa. Having inquired from the PM who agreed instantly, I accompanied Gamini to the Prime Minister's Office. Having warmly welcomed Gamini, his first question was 'Gamini what is the help I can give you'. Gamini's instant reply was 'Nothing at all, Sir, I have come only to wish you well in the future'. That was Gamini in his true self.

Whenever the family had their yearly outings, Gamini and Roshi were the first to say they were happy to join. One of the early times, about 20-30 of the family went by bus to Nuwara Eliya and stayed two nights at General's House in Nuwara Eliya. Many were the meals and outings we had together and so much camaraderie developed with all those who joined. We have such nostalgic memories.



Gamini and Roshi's daughter Ramala, an Investment Analyst is married to Jehan Fernando, an old Royalist himself and they are the loving parents of Arhana and Shamara. Gamini found immense pleasure in his grandchildren who truly enriched his life.

Above all, Gamini was a truly good human being. Simple and unaffected, he always found time to help those less fortunate than him. He was no respecter of race, caste, creed or religion and moved with others freely. Because of his family background, he was a devout Buddhist.

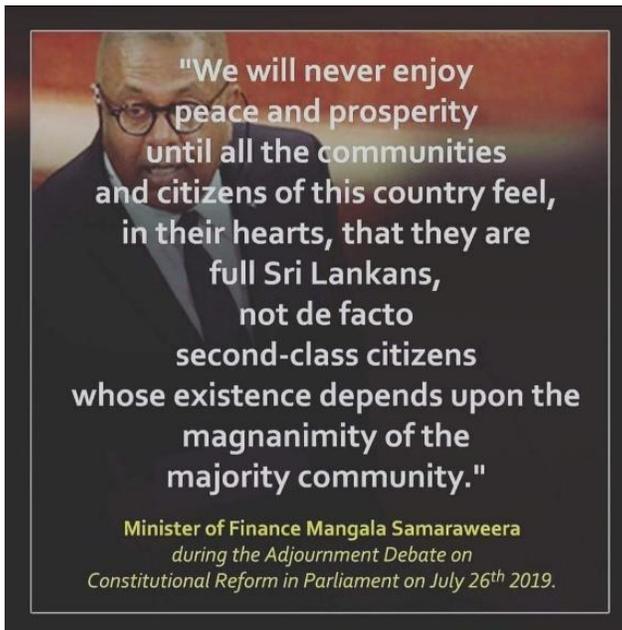
Just three score and fifteen, it was much too early for Gamini to pass away. I will truly miss his friendly personality and the warmth of our strong friendship. But his memory will live on for the future amongst Rotarians, old Royalists, and friends of whom he had a wide circle.

His dear wife, daughter, son-in-law, grandchildren and siblings, Thulani, Janaka, Mangala and Sharmali can rest assured that Gamini will be fondly remembered by all.

May he attain the Supreme Bliss of Nibbana.

***Mangala Samaraweera (21 April 1956 – 24 August 2021), a man
whom I truly believed in***

Somasundaram Skandakumar



I found it inexplicable Karma that such a wise and honourable politician was not only taken away prematurely, but equally painfully we were also denied the right to pay our respects as well.

In recent times, as Foreign Minister Mangala ensured that our international relations were at their best. His period as Finance Minister saw us register with long overdue financial discipline, two consecutive years of primary revenue surpluses in 2017 and 18, for the first time after over fifty years. In a brief stint as Sports Minister, he inspired Vijaya Malalasekera's Interim Committee to such an extent that we recorded our most successful years in International Cricket, with Integrity unquestioned! Prior to that as Minister for Posts and Telecommunications he pioneered beneficial reforms demonstrating his amazingly varied talents while, always preserving the Integrity of these Ministries.

Above all he was a very decent, humble, honest, and civilised human being and was blessed in consequence with a Midas touch as his ten-

ures will confirm.

"He was unique because throughout his political career, and against huge challenges and odds he stood firmly for all that was fair just and equal, upholding human dignity at all times."

We can therefore all stand proudly and say, "Here indeed was a true Statesman "

So let us console ourselves that fate took him prematurely, to enable an early rebirth through his good Karma, and a path thereafter in Politics that will see him as the Head of State of a New Sri Lanka within forty years! A prosperous era when



educated Parliamentarians will adorn that revered Institution, with country, ALL its people and self in that order as their priorities and a Parliament that will conduct its affairs with dignity making its people truly proud.

“Mangala” deserves that posthumous reward.

In the Interim Dear Sir, Rest in Peace

“A very Grateful Senior Citizen “

Editor’s note

Mangala Samaraweera was educated at Royal College and at Waltham Forest College, London. He was the first openly gay politician from Sri Lanka. He was the Minister of Finance from 2017 to 2019, and the Minister of Foreign Affairs, for two terms from 2005 to 2007 and 2015 to 2017. He formed a new political party called the Sri Lanka Freedom Party (Mahajana), after he was sacked as a minister by President Mahinda Rajapakse in 2007. This later merged with the United National Party in 2010.

He served as a politician for over 30 years until his retirement from politics in 2020. During his tenure as a politician, he was known for his political stance against the Sinhala Buddhism regime despite himself being a Sinhala Buddhist and despite Sri Lanka being a majority Buddhist nation. He also advocated for LGBT rights in Sri Lanka, despite Sri Lanka having not legalised LGBT rights.

He died on 24 August 2021 at the age of 65 due to COVID-19, despite being fully vaccinated.

Saman Amerasinghe (20 April 1954 – 01 September 2021), Old Royalist, teacher, coach, Master-in-Charge and sports administrator

Shyam Sideek



We lost another distinguished old Royalist, teacher, coach, Master-in-Charge and sports administrator to this deadly COVID-19 virus. The term true Royalist does not do justice to this gentleman who achieved greatness through sheer hard work, dedication and respect to others.

Saman Amerasinghe was never shy to speak his mind. His achievements are too numerous to list but we will try our best to cover most of them. We will miss his daily Facebook articles of prominent personalities including old Royalists and those who had served the country with distinction.

Having joined Royal Junior in Grade 1, Saman was in the debating team, cadet and senior prefect. After joining Royal as a teacher, he was appointed Under 11 Cricket Master charge in 1977. When the coach dropped out, he took on the dual role of Master-in-Charge and Coach and molded and guided the students just taking up cricket into a champion outfit, winning the flag in 1977 and repeating the feat for next two years inspired him to take on more challenges in sports administration.





Saman was Master-in-Charge of Cricket, Boxing, Basketball, Rugby and Acting Warden at Royal. He took to cricket umpiring and was the youngest to pass the umpires' exams, later becoming President of the Umpires Association, also serving as Umpires Educator and Match Referee.

After retiring from Royal Saman served in the Sports Ministry, as Secretary General of the Sports Council, as founder Chairman of Presidential Sports Awards and as Chairman of National Sports Council. He was the Director of the National Youth Service Council and Chairman / Director of the National

Sports Museum of the Ministry of Sports.

He leaves a loving wife Anuradha, daughter Irudini and son Inura.

May the turf lie lightly on him!

Tribute to Dr Tissa Wickremasuriya

U L Kaluaratchi

Taken from the Sri Lankan Sunday Island of 12 September 2021



It is just over a year since the sad departure of our very dear friend Dr. Tissa Wickremasuriya. On August 21, 2020, just a few weeks before his 80th birthday, he moved on, leaving his family and friends forlorn that he is no more. Tissa, to all who knew him and more endearingly 'Tissa Baby' to his mother and his siblings, was born at "**Carlton**", **Tangalle**, the ancestral home of the Wickremasuriyas, until it changed hands a few years back. He was the youngest of the seven Wickremasuriya siblings, the versatile progeny of leading lawyer of Tangalle Charles Wickremasuriya and Riseena, sister of the legendary Sri Lankan cricketer, 'Sargo' Jayawickrama. An elder sibling, Carl, after whom the ancestral home had been named, "**Carlton**", had died early. Tissa was the last of the rest of the brood of six siblings and was also the last to move on. Tissa used to proudly tell this writer that he was the 'Bada Pissa', a traditional description of the last born, hinting that he was his mother's pet.

traditional description of the last born, hinting that he was his mother's pet.

Tissa Visaka Abeysingha Weera Wickremasuriya, to give his full name, was also called, in his young days, as Colin, because he, young as he was, loved to imitate that famous Australian spinner, Colin McCool. He was treated as the mascot of the KKK (Kollupitiya Catchers' Klub) formed by his elder brothers and their friends to play cricket and have fun. That was in the early forties when his mother set up home at Pendennis Avenue (now Abdul Cafoor Mawatha) to enable her to educate her children at Royal. According to legendary sportsman, Summa Navaratnam, a close friend of the family and schoolmate of Tissa's elder brothers, the KKK was formed by such contemporaries as Tissa's elder brothers, Nihal, Sunil, Wimal, V.T. Dickman, Selva Nagendra, M. Kasipillai et al of similar ilk and, of course, Summa himself. Tissa more actively belonged to another KKK (Kolombo Katchers' Klub) in the early sixties, a club formed by Tissa and a few others like his classmate and former Royal cricket captain Sarath Samarasinghe (SS), Sidath Jayanetti et al with Tissa's prospective father-in-law, 'Uncle' L.C. Perera as the jolly patron. The club was formed to play fun-cricket at the then Brownrigg Park as the base.



According to SS, they once travelled all the way to Bandarawela to play a team of planters led by former Royal captain Ubhaya de Silva.

Tissa attended Royal from his Royal Prep days, where he was also known by his classmates as **'Wickarey'**, a shortened version of his surname. The nickname also appeared to aptly fit the funny and outlandish things Tissa was always fond of doing and saying! Once his mother wound up the Pendennis Avenue home Tissa moved on to Queen's Avenue, the residence of his maternal uncle Cyril Rodrigo, of Green Cabin fame. It is at this residence that Tissa first encountered two of the famous three legendary West Indian Ws, Everton Weeks and Clyde Walcott, when they were hosted by the Rodrigo family way back in 1949. There is a photograph showing little Tissa in the centre hanging onto the two Ws. An interesting sequel to this is another photograph taken on Tissa's 50th birthday in Barbados. Shanthini, his dear wife, pleasantly surprised him by inviting the same two Ws for the party. The historic photograph shows Tissa flanked by Walcott and Weeks to form another set of three Ws: Walcott, Wickremasuriya and Weeks!



Tissa entered Royal College in 1952, and apart from regaling his friends with his splendid company, he made a useful contribution to the general life of the school by participating in many school activities. The challenge before him was clear. All his brothers were achievers in professional life. The eldest George was one of the early Ceylonese planters to enter that profession, two brothers, Nihal and Wimal were practicing lawyers at Tangalle while another, Dr Sunil, was running his own clinic at Carlton itself. The one just above him, Dr. Rony, was a renowned petroleum scientist.

One remembers, while holidaying at "Carlton" in the early '60s, and enjoying the endearing hospitality of his mother, how a challenge was thrown to Tissa by his brothers to match their performances. Two brothers, Dr. Sunil and Wimal, resident at Carlton at the time joined by Nihal the other lawyer also resident at Tangalle and Tissa's cousin, Dr.Sena (son of the famous gynecologist Dr. George Wickremasuriya) threw that challenge at him. His brothers Nihal, Sunil and Wimal played cricket for Royal, while Sunil represented Royal at rugby as well. Tissa had to prove himself and prove himself he did. He represented Royal at Rugby in 1959 and 1960 playing in the third row as a flanker and scoring a memorable try in the Bradby Return of 1959. He finally went onto captain the All-University rugby team in 1967. He did play cricket too, opening batting for Royal with SS in a match against St. Anthony's College in 1959 under Royal skipper Michael Dias. He was also a very able debater and led the Senior English debating team in 1959. In the same year he was the secretary of the Senior English Literary Association and won the Senior Best Speaker's prize competing amidst very stiff competition; a competition judged by eminent lawyer, George Chitty Q.C. His smooth style coupled with subtle humour won the day for him. It is this same humour that rocked the audience much later at an Old Royalists' Rugby Dinner (ORRD) when he was proposing a toast to the Game. He was describing how the Royal rugby team, when travelling to Kandy by bus, always paid homage to Dawson's erection at Kadugannawa! In the same mode we heard him at a concert where he posed as a villager and declared that in his village the population was always constant because every time a woman got pregnant a man ran away!

After passing out as a doctor Tissa served in his own hometown Tangalle, while also having a voluntary stint as a medical officer in the Navy before leaving our shores with his family to Jamaica to join the University of West Indies (UWI) as a lecturer. While there he also crossed over to UK and obtained his MCH and DTM & H from the University of Liverpool and later a Diploma in Mgt. Studies from the UWI. In his capacity as a lecturer in community medicine at the UWI he then



moved over to Barbados. His final stint in the Caribbean was in St Kitts' on a commonwealth assignment before returning to Sri Lanka to eventually join Asiri Surgical as its Medical Director.

Music was second nature to Tissa. He was an accomplished pianist, who could also lead the singing at the same time. His repertoire was as wide as it was varied ranging from perennial English favourites to popular Sinhala songs of yesteryear. He was quite adept at playing and singing rugby songs with gusto whenever rugby types foregathered around the piano. Whenever our university team played, our hosts were always eagerly awaiting the post-match Sing-a-Along led by Tissa on the piano. But such jollity was not confined to post-match fun only. One particular enjoyable evening, when dear friends Ken and Swyrie Balendra were hosting a group of Canadian tourists who were also rugby enthusiasts, Tissa rocked the place with some of the juiciest of rugby songs to the surprise and utter delight of the guests.

His talent also extended to composing lyrics in both English and Sinhala. His song *"Hang Down Your Head, Somarama"* describing the tragic murder of the prime minister of the day, S.W.R.D. Bandaranaike, in 1959 to the tune of Tom Dooley was a popular song of the day. Yet another favourite in our day composed by him in the early '60s was *'Apey Anduwa, Mahajanayage' Anduwa...* which was his way of describing the Govt. of the day.

Latterly for reasons best known to him Tissa was shunning the piano. However, after a long lapse he did get on the piano one evening specially to give his grandson Noah and his friends a taste of the musical stuff of our times. His fingers moved so easily on the keyboard that no one would ever have suspected that he had not touched the piano for quite some time. This writer was thrilled to see him back in form bringing back memories in a gush of the wonderful times we had together on and off the field.

With all his talent and achievements, Tissa never forsook the bucolic touch of that guy from Tangalle, often chewing betel as if to show that he had not lost his roots, occasionally interspersing his chats with a typically southern dialect.

Though death is the most certain thing in life, it is sad to reflect on the manner he had to depart, silently going through a terrible trauma from which, he knew as a doctor, that there was no return. With his departure we lost a very dear friend, a well-rounded, deeply concerned, human being, full of wit and humour. Had he been given half a chance at departure time, he would surely have sung to us one of his old favourites:

"We'll meet again, Don't know where, Don't know when, But we know we'll meet again some sunny day...."

We will always keep him close and dear to our heart! **-ULK**



RCOBAA Indoor Cricket Sixes 2021

What a fantastic day we had in our RCOBAA Indoor Cricket Tournament this year. 12 teams with the youngest batch who left college only a few years ago to our young at hearts with an average age of 50 years, played in one tournament in true Royal Spirit...

RCOBAA would like to thank all teams who took part in this year's tournament. Legends (Over 50s), Suicide Squad (1993), Anuhatharas (1994), Underwater Fire Carriers (1995), Port City Builders (1998), 99ers (1999), Munta Loose (2000), Jol Boys (2001), Rice Flies (2002), Covid-07 (2007), Lancers (2010) and Balls Of Fire 2.0 (2014).

Congratulations to our open game winners 'Balls Of Fire 2.0' from group of 2014 and Over 40s champions 'Port City Builders' from group of 1998.

These photos are a testimony of what a great time we all had!!!!

Link to the photo album: <https://www.facebook.com/media/set/?vanity=RCOBAVICAUS&set=a.4181889468598497>

Photo Credit: Randy Fernando photography





Open Game Winners
Team: Balls Of Fire 2.0



Open Game Runner-up
Team: Covid-07



Over 40s Winners
Team: Port City Builders



Over 40s Game Runner-up
Team: 99ers





A promotional banner for Bank of Melbourne. The left side features the Bank of Melbourne logo (a purple geometric pattern) and the text 'Bank of Melbourne'. Below the logo, the slogan 'You have the will. We have the way.' is written in white on a purple background. At the bottom left of the banner is a white line-art illustration of a city skyline. To the right of the banner is a photograph of two men in blue blazers standing behind a table covered with a white tablecloth. The table is set with various items including brochures, a purple gift bag, and other promotional materials. The background of the photo shows a building with a corrugated metal wall.



A Royal Tribute Remembered Yesterdays

The Masterpieces of Royal – Part 1

Published by The Sunday Island 13th December 2020

J. Godwin Perera



Emerging from the dim recesses of the past

I see this educated and dedicated cast

The teachers who shaped us like we were clay

Then filled us with knowledge day after day

This is a tribute to those teachers at Royal who in their own inimitable style implanted in our minds the learning skills and knowledge which in later years bloomed, blossomed and branched bearing diverse fruits, enriching institutions, professions and society. However, this task is undertaken with great trepidation. Reams have already been written by more eminent persons on both the college and teachers. This contribution of

mine is like a few drops of water being poured into an ocean. And that too, drops which are somewhat tainted, turbid and may even be troubling. Personal preferences and prejudices will be minced and mixed as thoughts get transformed into words. Extricating facts from fantasies, impressions from imperceptibles can be delicate and dubious. And there needs to be added a subtraction. Some of the masters would be given a miss (no pun intended!). Reading all that can be written can be tedious.

Hence two articles. So, let's begin with the first.

In the beginning were the words – RPS. And the words stood for Royal Preparatory School. But RPS was only a transition. A period of preparation. Hence the name of the school. Preparation to enter the hall of fame which was Royal College.

Sometimes nicknames are used, and most masters did have nicknames. But may the surviving kith and kin not take offence. Beneath the façade of a nickname was a genuine respect and affection.

The sequence in which the masters are mentioned here is not according to their entrances and exits into and out of my life as a student. It is rather a random sequence according to the mental and emotional impact created during the 'growing up 'years.'

The curtain opens and here enters Mr J.E.V.Peiris very affectionately called 'Bada Peiris.' For very obvious reasons. He was rotund and cheerful. He taught Geometry and with what innovation! He brought to class wooden models of isosceles triangles, right-angled triangles, a pair of identical triangles and holding them up at the appropriate time would, with a smiling face explain most lucidly the Pythagorean theorem. Why two triangles can be considered to be congruent and all the other theorems we needed to know. Geometry was a new experience. We (certainly!) absorbed this new knowledge like a sponge.



Quite a contrast was Mr M. M. Kulasekaram. Vice Principal. One is reminded of Oliver Goldsmith's description of the village schoolmaster in his poem 'Deserted Village.'

'A man severe he was and stern to view; I knew him well and every truant knew; Yet he was kind: or if severe in aught, The love he bore to learning was in fault.'

He taught Mathematics. No. He drilled it into our brains and there it remained. A wrong answer resulted in an excruciating pinch on the stomach. The welt would remain for a few days. A reminder never to give a wrong answer ever again. And yes, this must be said of him. He shone as a scholar and sportsman at Trinity College.

Mr S. Muthukumar taught Physics. Devotedly. Maintaining his equanimity even when provoked by a little bit of heckling asking for his daughter's hand in marriage. Sometimes just before the end of the lesson a hand would shoot up and good teacher that he was, Mr M would respond, "Yes what's it?" And the said student will reply very seriously "Sir can I please marry your daughter?" Mr M would blush. Really blush. And say, "Sit down you rascal." But let it be known he did have a very attractive daughter. It is hoped that she will read this. And yes. Blush.

Teaching us English Literature was Mr S. Sivaraman. He was also a cynic. He once recommended a prayer. 'Oh God – if there is a God, save my soul if there is a soul!' It was his ice breaker before moving on to Shakespeare's King Henry V.

Next in the batting order is Mr E.C. Gunasekera. Talk of Royal College cricket teams and you will find that through the years the name that keeps appearing most frequently is 'Gunasekera.' Most of these Gunasekeras are from the same family tree. 'EC' was also from this most distinguished clan. He had a double doctorate 'Discipline and Dedication.' This was what he instilled into every student who was fortunate enough (repeat – fortunate enough) to come under his tutelage. This adherence to the 'Double Ds' manifested itself very tangibly when he was Vice Principal and used the cane quite liberally. But between the caner and the caned there were no recriminations. The caner thought it was his duty to do it. The caned thought that he richly deserved it.

Regarding his nickname 'Kataya' I need to quote Lalanath de Silva, LL.M, who delivered the Inaugural E.C. Gunasekera Memorial Oration in June 2000. 'How and why that nickname came to be coined for him is a great mystery. I have gone to great lengths to discover its history but failed miserably.' So, may it be added – Let that part of history remain a mystery until someone can reveal the inside story. Interestingly 'EC' was also the Founder Master-in – Charge of Rowing.

Teacher at Royal for over a decade, Founder Principal of D.S.Senanake College and Gateway Group was Mr R.I.T.Alles. He was an educationist par excellence who endeared himself to all whom he taught. His dedication to the Education System in this country was once again fulfilled when he was appointed State Secretary for the Ministry of Education.

And now to Art. That pleasant smell of a newly opened box of Reeves watercolors can still be remembered. So can the mixing of different shades and delicately applying brush to page to transform it into a picture of a calm serene lagoon. This was supervised by Mr A.W.P. Jayatunge – the Art master. He was called 'Dynamite' aka 'Dyna.' According to very reliable sources this nickname was conferred upon him because he would 'explode' when the class became too boisterous. After 18 years of teaching to more docile students at Trinity College this new experience at Royal was just a trifle too much.

Scouting and Mr M.K.J.Cantlay are synonymous. Wearing the scout uniform was a pride. Pinning on the first badge – Tenderfoot, was a privilege. Getting further merit badges though very desirable was a knotty problem. Some badges had to do with knots. Not so difficult. Others had to do with doing a good deed every day. Well-nigh impossible! Many happy days and nights were had when we the scouts went camping. Ah! Yes, there was that campfire song 'Back to Gilwell – Happy land, Happy land.....' which we all sang with gusto. But none of us knew anything about Gilwell and why it was a happy land! But we didn't care. We sang.



Mr Emmanuel (Emma) M.J.S. Fernando had a dual responsibility. He was Master –in Charge of Boxing for over a decade and he also taught sculpture. He was my instructor in both these Arts. It was under his inspiration and initiative that a few of us were able to send our sculptural creations to Paris for an Exhibition. The reviews were excellent. We were grateful to ‘Emma.’ Very grateful. and proud of ourselves. Very proud.

Mr C. Kathiresan (Kathir) was amongst other things, Master–in-Charge of Hockey. Somewhere in the college archives there is a photograph of the Royal College Hockey team with the names of the team members. Conspicuous is – ‘Absent – Mr C. Kathiresan’. But Kathir does appear in one of the College magazines sometime in the 1950s. In it there were caricatures of some of the masters. And there was Kathir with one flap of his shirt collar turned up. Ah! this is what Kathir will be best remembered for. His creation of a new sartorial style. Being of an impressionable age many students, including self, imitated him. And Kathir was quite good looking too. Pity we could not emulate him that way.

The Masterpieces of Royal – Part 2

Published by Sunday Island 20th of December 2020

J. Godwin Perera

Note: The Covid 19 pandemic has changed our lives. There is now the ‘new normal.’ Just two examples are -working from home and online teaching and learning. Will we ever get back to the pre- Covid days specially where schooling is concerned? I fear not and I hope I am wrong. Because teaching can never be done through the remoteness of technology. There has to be that personal touch. That eye-to-eye contact. That combination of both heart and mind. And so, it is with a deep feeling of nostalgia that I write this article.



It’s a tribute to two great teachers – Vijitha (Viji) Weerasinghe and B. St. E. de Bruin (Bruno). Despite the numerous tributes paid during the past years to these two Great Teachers, why it may it be asked is it necessary to write about them again? Here is my answer as I quote Shakespeare’s Mark Anthony: ‘Here was Caesar! Whence cometh another?’

So too we can say of these two teachers. And more importantly we can also ask -will there be opportunities in the future for teachers to emulate these two ‘Greats.’ Were they the products of an era which will never come again? You came into our lives for a span of a few years. But within that time you left footprints in our hearts and we will never be the same again.’

Let us begin at RPS. Royal Primary School. At the Rajakeeya Mawatha entrance to RPS is the office of the Old Boys Union of Royal College or Royal College Union (RCU) as it’s called. Inside this office occupying his cubical for 10 years was ‘Mr Royal’ himself – Mr Viji (Vijitha) Weerasinghe, Vice- President and Advisor to the Union. But these 10 years were during the last years of his devoted service to Royal.

Mr Weerasinghe became a Royalist at the tender age of five-years when he began his studies at Royal Preparatory School. And for 14 years he was a student absorbing the ‘Royalness’ that the school and later the College had to offer. ‘Royalness’? Yes. To use the term ‘Royalty’ would be to insult Mr Weerasinghe. Because in his dedication to Royal he was humble as a person. He spurned plaques, platitudes, praises. What he did, he did for the love of it.

For the next 21 years he was a teacher. Later for six years he was Headmaster and then for nine years he served as Deputy Principal. Where else but at Royal? It was here that I had the privilege and pleasure of being taught by him. He did have a



nickname – ‘Duckie’. No doubt because at that time he was chubby. But I for one, can never recall any colleague of mine calling him by that name. And it was certainly not due to fear. But because he was so endearing.

In writing this tribute to Viji Weerasinghe I am indebted to Ms. Lakshmi Attygalle – Deputy Principal, Royal College and Malinda Seneviratne an old boy whose in-depth analysis of current affairs is published regularly in the print media and avidly read by many. Both have written tributes to Viji Weerasinghe. From these have I gathered much needed material for my humble tribute. There have been more, many, many more, who have written much more lucidly than I ever can. And it’s only Viji Weerasinghe who can earn such sincere and heartfelt respect.

‘Viji’ Weerasinghe taught us English Literature and Latin (which I skipped). Other than the prescribed texts he urged us to drink deep from the fountains of the masterpieces of English Literature. Authors such as Shakespeare, Dickens, Jane Austin, Emily Bronte. Poets such as Thomas Gray, Oliver Goldsmith, William Wordsworth.

Viji Weerasinghe was teacher, guru, mentor, to students, teachers, principals and even to old boys occupying high office in the public and private sectors. No, he did not crave to be so sought after. It was they who craved to seek after him. His advice to teachers exemplifies the man. ‘Do not forget that you yourself were once a schoolboy’ Oh yes! He did have a sense of humor. One small verse he repeated was connected to the suffragette movement. It went like this-

‘Two inches, two inches, two inches shorter
Same are the skirts of both mother and daughter
When the wind blows both of them show
Two inches, two inches, more than they oughter’

Many, many years after I had left college and was holding a senior position in a company, I was given the privilege of going on an all- expense paid trip to Europe with my wife and son, who was a student at RPS. It was to be a one-month trip and I had to obtain leave for my son. This necessitated my meeting Viji Weerasinghe who was Headmaster. As I tapped and politely entered his office he looked up and said ‘Hello JGP, so nice to see you.’ I was amazed that he remembered my name. And this is true of every student. He remembered each of their names.

I explained the purpose of my visit. Leave for my son was readily granted. But being the teacher he was, he instructed my son to maintain a diary of each day’s activities and show this to him after he returned to school. Viji Weerasinghe was Royal and Royal was Viji Weerasinghe. As he once remarked ‘Scholars need not change Royal. Royal should change scholars’.

And so as the poet has said ‘The moving finger writes and having writ moves on.....’ We come to B. St E. de Bruin affectionately called ‘Bruno.’ He was a brilliant, award winning student at Royal. He should have obtained a First-Class Honors degree from the University but did not. And so he returned to Royal as a teacher where he served for 18 years. He was scholar, sportsman, semantic. He taught English Literature. I well remember his classes where he vividly described the very heartbeat of Joseph Conrad’s ‘Heart of Darkness. He gave us plenty of homework. He would carry our exercise books (about 30 of them) to the Hostel where he stayed. There at night he would correct them, making notes in his neat, distinctive, handwriting and return the lot to us the next day.

Mr de Bruin was also Cricket and Athletics Coach and, in both sports, Royal led the field. He left our island’s shores in 1960 and finally settled down as Senior Mathematics Master in Cornwall College, Montego Bay, Jamaica. There were probably three reasons as to why he selected that school and country. Firstly, both Jamaica and Ceylon had a very similar tropical climate. Secondly, Cornwall College was a public school very much like Royal in which Cricket and Athletics were the popular sports. Thirdly – Coincidence. The motto of Cornwall College and Royal College were the same. Disce Aut Discede.

Here he taught for 35 years, endearing himself to students and winning the highest respect of the Government. He passed away at the age of 79 years in July 2003. The Jamaica Observer had this to say ‘He gained Cornwall College exceptional examination results. His influence at the institution exceeded the boundaries of Mathematics classes for he coached cricket, athletics, table tennis and rifle shooting.’ Mr de Bruin (How can I ever call him Bruno!) led a very austere life, shunning luxury and was completely unattached to the material things of life.



He was generous. Absolutely so. He used to help students with lunch money, books, school fees and clothes. His comforts and well-being came second to the needs of his students. As a teacher at Cornwall College remarked 'Many students took him as that of a father. Yes, Mr de Bruin gave of his life to his students. Day after day. In every way.

Much can be written about this most endearing person. So, it's best to sum up by quoting Dr. Brendon Gooneratne (To whom I am indebted for some of the material I have used in this article) 'He was the human being I knew who was closest to being a saint.'

Amen

<https://island.lk/the-masterpieces-of-royal-part-2-a-royal-tribute/>



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