



THOMIANA

Newsletter

September 2021, Volume 24 Issue 3

S. Thomas' College Old Boys Association
Australia Branch Inc. PO Box 2337,
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142nd Battle of the Blues Will Covid spoil the Party

“THE ROYAL — THOMIAN”, which has a rich and colorful history spanning across 142 years, is also the second longest uninterrupted cricket series played in the world; second only to the annual encounter played between St. Peters College, Adelaide and Prince Alfred College, Adelaide, Australia, that began just a year earlier and the Australia vs England Ashes Series just two years before. The Big Match, which is traditionally played in March, continued even during the two world wars and is currently threatened by an invisible enemy – Covid-19.

The Big Match, played in the highest tradition of excellence, mutual respect, camaraderie, sportsmanship, and friendly adversaries on and off the field, has stood for almost one and a half centuries. When asked to comment on the relationship between the two schools, Bogoda Premaratne, former Principal of Royal College, remarked *“There is no Royal without S. Thomas’ and no S. Thomas’ without Royal.”*

The 142nd encounter was initially scheduled for the second week in March (11th to 13th) to be played at the SSC. It was subsequently postponed to 6th to 8th May 2021 to be played at the Mahinda Rajapaksa International Cricket Stadium – Sooriyawewa, Hambantota; with the limited over “Mustangs Trophy” match to be played in a T20 format on 10th May. The matches were to be played without spectators in compliance with the Covid-19 restrictions and health & safety guidelines mandated by the Ministry of Health. The teams, coaches and support staff along with umpires and match officials will follow bio secure environment (BSE) protocols, under the supervision of Southern Province & Hambantota Regional health services. This arrangement would have broken the 142-year-

old tradition of the match being played outside Colombo and also without spectators. However, numerous gatherings were planned in Colombo with the game being live-streamed. There was no clear indication if other traditional events, such as the Cycle Parade was planned, as the Match was postponed two weeks prior to the event as a result of a few Thomian cricketers being diagnosed with Covid-19. However, overseas OBA events went ahead with altered formats, including live interviews with past players and match highlights from previous years.

There was excitement once again when the Ministry of Health approved the request by the Joint Organising Committee for the encounter to be played from 9th to 11th September 2021 at the same venue and under the same conditions of the postponed event in May 2021. The approval was given on 31st July 2021 leaving just over 5 weeks to finalise the arrangements. However, the excitement was short-lived, with the rapid escalation of the Delta variant of Covid-19, compelled the Organising Committee to postpone once again, with the health, safety and welfare of all involved, quite rightly, taking precedence.

At present, the Rt. Hon. D. S Senanayake Memorial Shield is at home in Mount Lavinia following the memorable win in 2019 under the captaincy of Sithara Hapuhinna and it is becoming more likely to be there for the foreseeable future.

The respective Cricket Advisory Committees and the Joint Organising Committee is continuing to work tirelessly and exploring all the options. Changing the format to a shorter duration is understood to be one of the considerations for 2021. Whatever the outcome, all credit goes to those involved, both Royalists and Thomians, in the planning and execution of this event.



Message from the Thomian Skipper, Shalin De Mel, *"The current setback is and will not be the last challenge to the "Battle of the Blues." However, if history has taught us anything, it is that the true bond between Thomians and Royalists will overcome any obstacle in their way. I would be failing in my duties if I did not mention the fact that, the Head Prefect of Royal College along with my friend the Royal College cricket Captain, both showed their support by checking up on me and the rest of the Thomian team."*

We are now in the "home-straight", with the fourth quarter of 2021 just beginning and the pandemic showing no signs of easing. The question in our mind is - Will Covid spoil the party or will the "Royal Courage" and the "Thomian Grit" prevail?

Esto Perpetua – Floreat!

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Views expressed in articles contained in the Thomiana are of the respective authors. They may not necessarily concur with those of the Executive Committee

CALENDAR of Events

Due to Covid restrictions in Victoria several events are currently in limbo. Tentative plans are in place to combine some events this year.

- Carol Service & Family Night - Saturday 4th December 2021
- Annual General Meeting - February 2022

OBA Fundraising Event – Melbourne Cup Draw 2021

Due to the cancellation of our normal fund-raising events and OBA activities in 2021 due to the current Covid-19 pandemic and the resulting restrictions, the Executive Committee has decided to proceed with an opportunity in connection with the Melbourne Cup scheduled for 2 November 2021, similar to the event in 2020.

Participation is open to all Old Boys, families and friends. If you are interested in supporting the event, please contact:



Melbourne Cup Draw – 2021

2 November 2021

Tickets per Draw: 24
Cost of Ticket: \$ 25

Prizes:

1st Prize: \$ 150
2nd Prize: \$ 75
3rd Prize: \$ 50

Peneeth Goonawardena: 0404 213 166; Peneeth@gmail.com
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The President's Message



Dear fellow Thomians,

I hope that each and every one of you are keeping safe and well, through these challenging times.

Sadly, we lost Frankie David during this time who was a former president of the OBA and a much-loved member amongst us all. Our thoughts go out to the family.

The EXCO have continued to conduct meetings online and we have decided that all events till December will be cancelled. This is to respect the current health and social distancing guidelines that have been implemented by both Federal and State governments.

As the vaccination rates increase hopefully, we will get to some sort of normality soon. I would encourage our members to protect themselves and their loved ones by ensuring that they are vaccinated.

The current situation is affecting us all in different aspects and if myself or the EXCO can assist in any way please reach out.

We encourage our members to support our sponsors by utilising their services whether it be purchasing some takeaway food or any other service which will keep those businesses going in these trying times.

Please keep safe and we will all get through this and looking forward to being able to catch up with everyone at the next OBA event.

Esto Perpetua!

Peneeth Goonawardena

Editor's Note

Dear Thomians,

Welcome to the Spring edition of the Thomiana.

This edition mainly focusses on articles covering information of our OBA, Old Thomians and of College for you to cherish. Also, a brief summary of the only event, the Seniors Lunch which was well patronised. Unfortunately, due to Covid lockdown we had to cancel the Transfiguration service.

The EXCO are continually reviewing the current health guidelines and will keep you informed of any upcoming events. Also, if you would like to include any articles for the Thomiana please let us know.

I would like to thank immensely Upali (Pancho) Gooneratne who has helped me with this edition and thank all those who have contributed and written articles for the Thomiana.

Esto Perpetua!

Vasikaran Ratnarajah

www.stcobaaust.org.au

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/STCOBA/>



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S. Thomas' College Old Boys Association Australia Branch (STCOBA)

STCOBA Australia Branch is based in Melbourne. This was the first Thomian OBA to be formed overseas. The founders were a group of old Thomians who migrated to Australia after their primary and secondary studies at S. Thomas' College in Sri Lanka in the early 1960s and 1970s.

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

OBA NEWS

Seniors Lunch – 10th July 2021

After months of uncertainty, the Seniors Lunch went ahead on Saturday 10th July 2021, at the RSL in Springvale. Due to ever changing Covid restrictions and guidelines, the overall attendance was restricted to 80. There was an overwhelming response from the Seniors which resulted in a “full-house” for the event. Breaking away with tradition, the lunch was a stand-alone event due to the difficulties in coordinating with the Transfiguration Service as in previous years.



The RSL Club proved to be the ideal venue for the occasion with a large hall, ample parking and a Sri Lankan chef who was accommodating to meet the “taste buds” of the attendees. The 3-course meal included grilled Barramundi and Lamb Shanks as the main course; and a surprise serving of fried rice with chili sauce, compliments of the Chef. There was live background music with opportunity for dancing but the members preferred to catch-up with each other after such a long time in lockdown.

There was a raffle conducted after lunch and drawn by one of our respected Old Thomian, Rupert Ferdinands. The event ended with the signing of the College song. Feed-back from several members was very positive e.g.

“Please convey my Thanks and Congratulations to the President and ExCo and helpers of STCOBA AUS Branch, for the excellent Seniors’ Lunch Event put up for us last Saturday at the Springvale RSL. Lovely Venue, Lovely Food, Nice soft Music and Great Fellowship” – Godfrey Senaratne

“Let me Congratulate you and your sub- Committee on an excellent seniors lunch hosted for the membership. It was a well organised, and executed event. Congratulations once again to one and all on the Exco” – Nalin Dassenaik

“A well organised and enjoyable function that would have been appreciated by all who attended. Well done” – Selva Kanagasabai

The Ex-Co wishes to thank all members who supported this event.

Stefan D’Silva Lunch – 26 June 2021

The Past Presidents and Ex-Co Members Group of the STCOBA hosted a lunch, at Palms Restaurant, Glen Waverley on 26 June 2021, for Stefan D’Silva, a prominent Old Thomian who was visiting Melbourne. Several members of the current Executive Committee, including the President Peneeth Goonawardena, attended the luncheon.

Stefan, who excelled in Rugby while in Sri Lanka, has been actively involved in supporting College over many decades. He played rugby both for college and Havelocks Sports Club (1976-1977) prior to migrating to Australia. As Stefan often says *“I may have migrated – but I never left (Sri Lanka)”*. True to his passion for Sri Lanka and his school, Stefan returned to help his long-time friend and coach Quentin Israel in 1989. Stefan’s experience in marathon running, as a training instructor, triathlons and other forms of training was invaluable to STC. Stefan spent three months at college and returned again in 1991 and 1992 to give his best to college for three months at a time. He kept in touch thereafter (2003 and 2004) and sourced a Coach from NZ. He

also took Wallaby winger Rob Egerton over to coach College. More recently he was invited to be the Director of Rugby in 2018. He held the position to the end of 2019. He led the quest to have the Small Club Grounds designated a rugby training ground and that came to fruition in 2019 and was inaugurated with the Quentin Israel Junior Rugby Carnival 2019. His passion for the scientific, holistic development of our youth (and the sport within the school) remains strong.

Ex-Presidents, Frankie David and Selva Kanagasabai, and current President, Peneeth Goonawardena, welcomed Stefan and thanked him for his services to our alma mater; and presentations were made on behalf of the group and the current Ex-Co.



Frankie David - Ex-President STCOBA



On 12th August 2021, we lost our dear friend and colleague, Frankie David, who passed away peacefully. He has actively supported the OBA for over four decades and served as the President from 1992 to 1994. Frankie frequently boasted, “*Machan, I must be the only bugger who was sacked from the Ex-Co by Brookie (Ex-President) for not attending meetings and later to be appointed as President*”.

Frankie’s funeral was held on 19 August 2021 at the Good Shepherd Parish Catholic Church, Wheelers Hill, Vic and was live streamed due to the Covid restrictions. At Frankie’s request the College Song and a rendition of the “School by the Sea” was included in the service. A recoding of the service can be viewed via the link <https://vimeo.com/587643657>.

“Not even death can break the bond we had. You were an amazing person. May you Rest in Paradise”.

Walter May (1929 – 2021)



Wally May, an active member of the OBA from Western Australia, sadly passed away in Perth on 16th August 2021. He was an outstanding student at Richmond College Galle and at STC ML. He joined STC in late forties and understood to be at the invitation of Warden De Saram.

Wally was a shining star in the field of sports, especially in cricket and athletics. He held the opening batting record with Pat Toussaint at the Royal-Thomian which was not bettered for a couple of decades. In Athletics, he held Public Schools records in 440 and 220 yards.

“In the end it is not the years in your life that count. It is the life in your years” – Abraham Lincoln. May his soul Rest in Peace.

Thomianawe value your opinion

In order to structure the newsletter to meet the preferences of our readers, we invite comments and suggestions on ways to improve the publication. Your feedback on the format, overall content, quality of articles, topics and interest in the newsletter is appreciated. Please send your responses to:

Vasikaran Ratnarajah: vasidaisy15@gmail.com or **Upali Gooneratne:** fgooneratne@iiec.org

LIVING IN COVID TIMES.....

I was having a chat the other day with my friend [Professor Leon Piterman](#). Now Leon, former head of the department of General Practice and Family Medicine at Monash University in Melbourne, is one of the most intelligent and knowledgeable medical doctors that I know. However, unlike a lot of very intelligent and knowledgeable medical doctors, Leon has that rare talent of being able to explain complex medical and health matters in a way that sensible people without any medical background can clearly understand.

Our conversation that day was mainly about this COVID pandemic we find ourselves living through – and Leon's new book '[Living in COVID Times](#)' which was launched earlier this year in Melbourne. Leon's thought-provoking book contains a collection of essays written over these past eighteen months in which he reflects on the extraordinary situation we have all had to face as a result of the COVID pandemic. It is a book written by someone with the knowledge and experience of a medical doctor – who is also a teacher and a philosopher with a wide understanding of the world.

Most of us first heard of this new virus named [COVID 19](#) around January 2020. Since that time the pandemic caused by this virus has spread throughout the world, challenging the Spanish flu of 1919 in not only its reach but also its magnitude, morbidity and mortality. New diseases in small doses the medical profession can handle – we have time to identify symptoms and signs, we have time to work out pathogenesis and progress. We can observe, study and undertake research that allows us to find vaccines and cures. But the COVID crisis occurred virtually overnight, catching us unprepared for its impact not just on the state of health and the economies of our societies but also on our own individual emotional and mental states.

As Leon states in his book, 'We are now victims at the mercy of an unseen and hitherto unknown enemy. We all know that despite the suffering and loss of lives and livelihoods, this too in due course will end. But at what cost?' What will a post COVID world look like? Human beings need a level of predictability in their lives to survive and thrive. The COVID pandemic has brought home to us the fact that nothing is certain. Our leaders as well as society at large have an enormous challenge: do we stay locked down to prevent the spread of this virus and save lives, or do we lift the lock-down to prevent economic meltdown and social unrest?

It is clear that changing human behaviour is one of the most important ways in which we can slow down the spread of this virus and control this pandemic – but changing human behaviour remains one of our most difficult and enduring challenges. The successful implementation of public health measures requires trust in our scientific leadership and behavioural change on a massive scale.

Whether it is lockdown, curfew, quarantine, social distancing, mask wearing or getting vaccinated – to be successful, all these require compliance by the vast majority of the population. Too many folk these days are vacillating without vaccinating!

In democratic societies, those who get their information from dubious sources fail to understand the gravity of the situation and claim that [human rights are being abrogated and individual freedoms are being curtailed](#). They refuse to understand that individual wants must be subjugated to the common good. We need to replace individualism with collectivism.

One way of bringing a semblance of certainty into our lives during these Covid times is to take each day as it comes – set goals for each day, enjoy the outdoors for a limited time, maintain a regime of physical fitness either outdoors or, if that is not possible, indoors. We need to focus on the present (utilising mindfulness or meditation techniques) and reach out to friends and family via phone and digital media to mitigate the effects of physical isolation.

This COVID pandemic has brought fear, anxiety, sickness and death into our complacent 21st century lives, ruining our economies and threatening the very existence of our generation. However, it has also provided us with the opportunity to re-evaluate and recalibrate the priorities in our lives, clarifying and then prioritising those issues and those people that add meaning to our existence. We need, Leon says, to turn despair into hope – in the firm belief that this too will pass.



Author: Sanjiva Wijesinha (STCML 1956-1967) is an associate professor at the Faculty of Medicine, Monash University, Melbourne.



Organising the Big Match: A Former Thomian Chairman Looks Back

by

Sri Sangabo Corea

What it means

No one will dispute the fact that the Royal-Thomian Cricket Match is one of the most eagerly awaited SPORTS & SOCIAL events in Sri Lanka's calendar. No other event has generated such excitement and electrified the environment as this encounter has done year after year for 142 years! When the two colleges played their first match in 1880 never did they even imagine that they were starting a tradition that would be continued in unbroken succession for 142 years!! Today, this match, played between two premier institutions has blossomed into one which is the cherished dream of every Royalist and Thomian who venerates their College mottos, Disce aut Discede and Esto Perpetua.

There is a popular saying ...

... that if a visitor to Sri Lanka has not seen the Perahera in Kandy and the Royal-Thomian Cricket Match in Colombo, cannot claim to have been to Sri Lanka!

The Centenary Match

I came into the Royal-Thomian Centenary Match Joint Organizing Committee as the treasurer when two veterans – Alex Wijesinha was Chairman and Tissa Gunaratne was Secretary. Most of the work connected with the match I took upon myself because the Chairman and Secretary were senior members who I thought should be spared from handling some arduous tasks that demanded physical exertion. The whole atmosphere was electrified when news started coming in of the unexpected number that was due to arrive from all over the world to witness the match. The numerous problems we normally had to encounter when organizing this annual match was bad enough and to cope with the additional problems that were steadily increasing with the centenary match to say the least, was unimaginable.

Royal-Thomian Centenary Fair & Exhibition

In addition, I was also appointed the Joint Secretary of the Centenary Fair & Exhibition which was run concurrently with the match, at the Royal College grounds.

It is said that ...

... many things in Sri Lanka come to a grinding halt on match days because VIPs in the Public and Private Sectors have to be at the match and that includes *Judges *Lawyers *Doctors *Engineers *Chairmen of Companies most of whom have plotted and planned to be at the match which comes only once in a year!

Responsibilities

Having to cope with the vast influx of Royalists, Thomians and well-wishers coming to witness the match, was a challenge that was astronomical. As I was a fresher in the committee, I willingly undertook to handle some of the time-consuming field operations that were assigned to the Chairman and Secretary which also involved physical exertion. Hiring additional chairs was a huge problem because every year when chairs were returned after the match a good many were in repairable damaged condition and most suppliers were reluctant to hire chairs for the big match. Dealing with tight-fisted Mudalalis was a gruelling contest much more difficult than winning the match! In my search for chairs, I had to park my car at one end of Maradana and walk the entire length and breadth of the bazaar and do the same in Slave Island, Wellawatte, Dehiwela and Mount Lavinia going up to Moratuwa. At the end of each day, I felt as if I had run a marathon!

Invasions into the field



One thing that bothered the committee was to prevent spectator invasions into the playing area and holding up play. In order to achieve this, the committee summoned the stewards of both colleges, the police and the security force to a meeting at which the precautions taken by the committee were announced. Speaking on behalf of the committee, I stressed the importance of solving this problem and explained the

strategy that needed to be put into operation. We were going to install a public address system designed to reach the entire length of the spectator occupied areas warning spectators that all those who invade the playing area will be arrested by the police and sent to police headquarters and released only after the match was over and reminding spectators that a large crowd has come from overseas to witness this historic match to be played without interruption. This message will be relayed over the P.A. System at regular intervals. The stewards were requested that it was their prime duty to anticipate and help the police to handle any spectator who has vacated his seat and is planning to invade the playing area. If there is any such incident the stewards will be held responsible for not performing. The strategy worked!

Schoolboy Cricket Match

Wanting the credibility of the two colleges firmly established, I visited the SSC in the company of SSC officials to take stock of the facilities provided. I requested that all forms of cigarette advertising at the venue be removed during the three-day match. "If you have a problem removing the giant cigarette packs displayed on the scoreboard my request is that you mask the two packs with a cloth making sure that the covering will withstand the wind and the rain and explained to the officials that the Royal-Thomian being a schoolboy match must not expose schoolboys to hard-sell advertising material and that we as a responsible committee must set an example." The Minister of Health, Dr. Ranjit Atapattu, commended the organizing committee for setting an example.

Profits are Shared

Prior to the match I received a telephone call from the Director of Education – Colombo to call at his office. When I did, he handed a petition which he had received, stating that the Royal-Thomian Cricket Match had ceased to be a schoolboy cricket match and was more a fund-raising project. After reading it I explained to the gentleman that STC was a strictly private school, not assisted by the State and that as much as we earn, we also provide the best of facilities to the spectators and the two schools buy the best of cricketing gear at high cost to ensure that the boys are provided with the best of equipment. The profits which are shared equally by both schools go to finance the cost in travelling and paying the salaries of the coaches and the staff in the sports department. The Director accepted my explanation and we both came to the

conclusion that some mischief maker was trying to create problems for the schools. With that the petition was adequately dealt with.

Problems

On the first day of the match the security wanted me at the main gate, because a group of boys were trying to force their way into the grounds with a band. When I showed up the leader questioned me as to why, even with tickets they were not allowed to come in. "Don't you read the newspapers?" was my answer. "It has been stated that bands have to report to the Organizing Committee one hour ahead of the match when they will be shown their allocated area." Looking at my watch I said that that the stipulated time has long passed. The chief spokesman then asked me, "Do you know who I am?" When I said that I was not interested and he mentioned his father's name, with a broad smile I said, "Don't use your father's name in vain. If you don't leave, the police will deal with you" I said. Before I could turn to leave, he vanished with his followers!



A Tourist Attraction

The next call to the main gate was at the request of a British gentleman. He said that he was a tourist and had been told that if he hadn't witness the Royal-Thomian that he cannot claim to have been in Sri Lanka and asked how he could enter. I told him that tickets were not sold at the venue but in order to please him I would take him to the Invitees Enclosure as a Guest and accordingly inform the Principal and Warden about my decision. The gentleman enjoyed the match and told me that he was getting back to England the next day, armed with some interesting photographs he had taken.

Invitees Enclosure

The Secretary of a Ministry telephoned to say that his Minister was coming with his wife and two children and wanted invitations. I told him that the Minister and his

wife are welcome to the Invitees Enclosure but there is a problem where the children are concerned because no children are allowed in the Invitees Enclosure. It would be best for the minister to come with his wife and not bring the children was my advice. There was no come-back!

Thomian Grit

In the Centenary Match when Mahinda Halangoda and C.P Richards were at the wickets with a Royal victory in sight I was asked to give a telephone call to President J.R. Jayewardene and request his presence for the award ceremony. When I did, he wanted me to be at the entrance and take him upstairs. When climbing the stairs he asked me "How is the situation?" and I replied, "Very Bad". He laughed and said "That is for you!" After the award ceremony was over and he was passing me, he looked at me and nodded his head with a mischievous smile, which prompted me to say "Thomian Grit" and as he stopped to tell me something which doubtless would have been an unforgettable JRJ retort, a contemporary of his, intercepted to have a word with him and he lost that opportunity!

Popularity of the Royal-Thomian

I had just left Levers and joined Ceylon Tobacco Company when the new Chairman, who was a great cricket enthusiast had heard about my involvement in the match and at lunch asked me as to how he could purchase a ticket. I told him that tickets were not sold at the venue and as such he can come as my invitee and requested him to call me on the phone when nearing the entrance. I escorted him to the Invitees Enclosure and introduced him to those who were seated next to him.

A Foreigner's Impressions

In office after the week-end I received this interesting note

Dear Sange,

I feel I must write to you personally to say how much I enjoyed watching the action, both on and off the field at the recent Royal-Thomian cricket match. I am only sorry that other commitments precluded my attending more of the game than I managed to do. Unfortunately, work interferes with so many more interesting occupations!!!

I am sure that with your well-known sympathies the result of the match was a great disappointment but to a strictly neutral observer, I think of the many good features of the game, the spirit in which it was played

by both participants and non-participants was greatly to be admired.

In relation to the latter, I do not use the word "played" loosely as I am sure most spectators were exhausted at the end of the game than the participants, so actively and enthusiastically did they contribute to the atmosphere.

The victors, whilst obviously enjoying their moment of glory, were not over-bearing and the vanquished took their defeat with a grace and cheerfulness which I think stands as an example to sportsmen in many other countries and many other sports. I need hardly say that I thought the standard of cricket to be very high indeed. I am sure it is a great challenge to the Sri Lanka Cricket Board to try to translate this high standard at schools' level through to the national team. If this is achieved, and I see no reason why it should not be so over a period of time. Sri Lanka will surely be able to hold its own against the member countries of the I.C.C.

Having written the above, it is with a great degree of embarrassment that I realise, that due to the generosity of your committee, I was able to watch the game free. I feel that I must redress this situation and have pleasure in enclosing a small contribution to your funds.

Needless to say, I am already looking forward with eager anticipation to hopefully being able to attend the next "Battle of the Blues".

My thanks and congratulations to all who took part.

Surprises

Surprises are always welcome at the Royal-Thomian. In the 109th Royal-Thomian Cricket Match, captained by A. Bulankulame, when STC won by an innings and 72 runs everybody in the pavilion was taken by surprise when I pinned a metal badge as a souvenir on the blazer of Anura Bulankulame at the presentation ceremony. The badge was designed and produced by an enthusiastic Old Thomian – Gehan Fernando. Circular in shape, the badge featured the Thomian Crest in the centre with the inscription I WAS THERE IN '88 on top and THOMIAN VICTORY at the bottom. After I presented the Warden and the Principal their badges the rest were given freely to those who were scrambling for this novel souvenir which came as a surprise even to the Royalists who were in the Organizing Committee!

Someone shouted: "What a Pleasant Surprise"

Another shouted: "ONLY A THOMIAN CAN DO IT!"

THE MATCH OF 1964

by

Premalal Goonesekere [Source unknown]

Friday, the 13th March 1964. Oval time 10.20a.m. Shaw Wilson's lucky coin decided to rebel against its custodian and spin in favour of the boys from Mt. Lavinia. It was a known fact that the wicket had been prepared in such a manner so as to give a sporting chance to both batsmen and bowlers. Having called correctly I had a problem whether to bat or field. The team had previously favoured bowling first and then taking their chances, because we all knew that there was no way that our powerful batting line up could be demolished twice by any school boy bowling side that year. I fully agreed with them, but I was also not going to carry the can for inviting our opponents to bat on what looked like a perfect batting wicket, no matter how the strip would play later. So S. Thomas' elected to bat.

Royal started cautiously against our openers so much so that we in the pavilion were convinced that they were scared of us. Sugi Rajaratnam and Thalayasingham, one of the best pace combinations in school cricket that year, opened to a field of fine leg and third man each, to supplement their two slips and gully. In spite of this, we practically dug our own graves before the first hour was through. L. S. Perera, Kumar Boralessa and I were back in the pavilion before 50 runs were on the board, thanks to some reckless batting. Shaw's lucky coin seemed to be doing its thing after all, I thought glumly. Anura Tennekoon was at the wicket, his usual calm self and utterly deaf to a situation that had never occurred before to us that season. At the other end his new partner Sarath Seneviratne was fidgeting nervously. Poor Sarath had had a very lean season up to then and it was with some effort that external pressures to drop him were defied in order that he could play, simply because only the team and those close to it knew the tremendous potential he had. He proceeded to show the public how right we were and in the next two and a half hours or so with Tennekoon playing the supporting role for a change, blasted the Royal attack with contemptuous ease.

By lunch the Thomians were out of the woods and by 2.00 o'clock we were sitting pretty. In 113 minutes this pair added a fantastic 146 runs, the highest stand for the 4th wicket in the series to date, the 100 coming up

in only 78 minutes. Anura Tennekoon's technically perfect knock ended with his score at 78 when he was caught off the tiring Thalayasingham. The Royalists must surely be still regretting not having accepted the relatively easy chance he gave early in the innings. Sarath Seneviratne continued plundering the Royal attack, driving and cutting effortlessly until he reached, his nineties. Then he suddenly stopped, as if he had forgotten something. The 'Nervous Nineties' claimed yet another victim when Sarath, now fidgeting in the same manner that he started, spooned a catch to Macan Markar off Thalayasingham when he was only 4 runs short of the century he so richly deserved. Truly an unforgettable knock. Our target for a tea-time declaration was 250 runs and thanks to these two brilliant knocks we knew we could reach this easily. Young Sriyantha Rajapakse, taking advantage of the tired and confused Royal attack, made merry cracking a scintillating 41 not out and according to plan we declared at tea.

The timing of our declaration was received with mixed feelings, not by the team nor its coach/master-in-charge, Mr. Orville Abeynaike, but by some prominent old boys, who thought that we should have batted for another 20 minutes or so. Tempers were understandably high in the dressing room when I was bluntly told that I had made a mistake. To me all this advice was as useful as a hole in the head, since we had already conveyed our decision to the Royalists. Royal went in to bat after tea. We now had the opportunity to see how good our observations on the Royal batting weaknesses were. In the previous match-free weekend, the entire team were generously given off school on Friday by the Warden to watch Royal play St. Peter's College at Reid Avenue, this we did for two whole days seated in the Royal College pavilion. Every scoring stroke made by the Royal batsmen was marked on paper and then systematically analysed overnight for any areas of weakness. As expected there were plenty; the problem was how to exploit them.

Shaw Wilson and Kevin Sockanathan started briskly, true to form, a two here, a four there, a single here and a single there. But Sockanathan gave us the first breakthrough when he was caught off Balasingham, Royal 1 wicket down for 13. 'Porky' de Silva joined his

skipper and these two steadily brought the score to the forties and we then had our first bowling change, Chelliah in place of Reid. We had seen Wilson's weakness against a 'Yorker' pitched on the leg stump in their previous match and we also knew that Chelliah was the only bowler who could effectively bowl this type of ball. Good 'Ole' Chella did not let us down and produced the magical ball in his very first over to bowl Wilson neck and crop for 30. De Silva stood as if petrified till Mevan Pieris' first ball of his first over rattled his stumps and Anketell left a little while later. Royal were 52 for 4 and we had them reeling. But two dropped catches off Sugi Rajaratnam and Cedric Fernando cut us down to size before close and Royal ended the day at 96 for 4, just 66 runs to avoid the follow on. So from the very comfortable position we ended the day in a rather dicey situation.



*Standing—Left to Right—R. P. Samarasinghe, H. R. J. de Souza, L. Chelliah, H. S. M. Pieris, G. Balasingam, R. F. Mendis, N. G. Dias Abeysinghe, S. J. Rajapakse.
Seated—Left to Right—K. Boralessa, A. P. B. Tennekoon, L. S. Perera (V. Capt.), P. N. W. Goonasekera (Capt.), S. B. de A. Seneviratne, B. D. Reid.*

Saturday morning 14th March 1964 - the day of reckoning. The wicket had begun kicking up a bit of dust late on Friday and Royal, utterly confident of their position opted for the heavy roller to crack the wicket further. Little did they realise then that they were digging their own graves by this act. However if Royal scored their required 66 runs I was surely going to have a problem. Already the thought of a sporty declaration had sent shivers down the spines of some of our prominent supporters. So anyone could well imagine why I was praying that the right-royal telling off I had given the team in the College Prefect's room about our shabby fielding the day before would have had the desired effect, since there was no way we would afford another fielding fiasco.

Play began, and poor Shaw Wilson's problems commenced increasing in geometric progression. The hitherto unconsidered 60 odd runs to avert the follow on appeared impossible right from the time

Rajaratnam lofted a simple catch to Tennekoon at long-on, the latter having cleverly hidden himself from the batsman, so much so that, till he was caught Sugi was grinning from ear to ear thinking that he had hit the first of the many sixers he had planned. Although Fernando was still playing confidently some of the Royalists found the guile of Barney Reid a bit too much, ably supported by off-spinners, Perera and Rajapakse. Finally, to our utter relief Royal folded up 10 runs short of the follow-on, well before lunch and I had no hesitation in inviting Royal to bat again.

The wicket was turning appreciably but our opponents had wanted it that way by the use of the heavy roller in the morning. Wilson and Sockanathan commenced the Royal 2nd innings as if they did not have a care in the world. We had dispensed with our pace attack after a couple of token overs and runs were not freely available off the spinners. To apply pressure attacking fields were set, but none of these seemed to worry the two openers one bit and soon the first fifty run partnership by Royal for the entire match was hoisted, 60 runs to make the Thomians bat again, all wickets in hand and about four more hours to go. Our chances of winning the game were slowly but surely slipping further and further away. But we plugged on nevertheless, the bund had to breach sometime, and at long last it did. Sockanathan painfully resisting his favourite pull shot right through his gallant knock, spooned a simple catch to the leg-trap rather than play the stroke he loved so much. Royal were 55 for 1, Shaw followed soon after, caught behind off Reid. True to his sporting spirit, he never even bothered to wait for the Umpire's decision.

We had got rid of two headaches and we wanted no more. So the new comers 'Porky' de Silva and 'Grubber' Anketell were given the full works. Tightest of fields to back up the tightest of bowling and we knew we had them worried. Finally 'Porky' got fed up of this cat and mouse game and decided to rectify the situation. By using his feet to the spinners, especially Reid, he found that his score had trebled before you could call his name. 'Porky' was happy, at last he found a solution to end his misery. Our match winning chances depended a lot on Reid and I did not want him collared by any batsman. He was pulled off the attack and replaced by Sarath Seneviratne, with specific instructions to encourage 'Porky' to let off his steam and cook himself in the process. 'Porky', now with a vision of a Royal victory, danced down the wicket to crack the scoreboard clock off Sarath's bowling, missed and

found himself stumped. We had managed to remove a dangerous batsman, thanks to himself. Anketell followed a little later and the next to go was Fernando, trying to steal a run that was not there. Royal were 112 for 5 and the mood in their camp was anything but joyous. Hamza Macan Markar and Sugi Rajaratnam dug themselves well in, purely to save the game and defended gallantly.

The Thomian attack was beginning to feel the effects of a hectic day. Then it happened again. In the Peterite-Royal game we had observed Sugi's fondness for the back-foot drive past extra-cover, which he sometimes lifted slightly. At last Sugi obliged and trying to force Rajapakse, lobbed a simple catch to Perera. Our late Warden never had to regret giving that Friday off to watch the Royalists. Thalayasingham and Kurukuiasuriya came and went and Royal were 139 for 8 with well over two hours of play left. Only rain could save them now and even this was unlikely.

Win we finally did, but our opponents truly made us sweat for it in no uncertain terms. The 9th wicket stand between Macan Markar and Samarajeewa produced two of the most dogged knocks I played against. They took absolutely no chances. Samarajeewa was content in dropping the ball a foot in front of his bat, so much so that we were happier bowling to his senior partner, who at least was getting the odd run or two. At 4.30 Royal had very quietly built up a lead of 60 runs and we were slowly running out of time. To make matters worse Balasingham drops a 'sitter' off Macan Markar at mid-on.

Naturally, every one of us felt like throttling him at first but quickly changed our minds when it was known that the unlucky fielder was almost assaulted by the

distinguished old Thomians watching from the Mustangs Tent. The glorious uncertainties of cricket. You can say it again. Just when Royal College thought they had saved the game, they did not. All due to two absurdly uncalled for run-outs. Runs were the last thing they required at that time, yet they looked for them. Samarajeewa who was a solid rock of defence, tentatively answered a call from Hamza for a short single but was beaten by Seneviratne's sizzling throw from the covers. Two runs later Tommy Sivanesarasa suffered the same fate, when Macan Markar now attempting to farm the bowling, went for another risky run. The Thomian supporters erupted like a volcano and charged down the wicket to greet us. 70 runs to get in 50 minutes. Not the same as getting 210 runs in 150 minutes, it should be easier.

I had very few instructions to give the openers. Little did I imagine that Lasantha Perera and Kumar Boralessa would have taken me that seriously and the first two overs produced a blistering 18 runs, just the start required for the occasion. 52 to get and now we had 44 minutes for them, the time factor disadvantage had been eliminated in just two overs and there was no way Royal could stop us from winning now. The balance runs were wiped off in another 9.3 overs and after a poor first knock, I had the unique privilege of getting the winning runs by hooking Thalayasingham for four. We had won by eight wickets and with 10 minutes to spare.

Needless to say there was pandemonium from then on at the Oval. The 10 year old drought of draws had finally ended and the Thomians unleashed a spasm of emotion to celebrate the occasion



L to R: Suresh with President's Trophy, Premalal and Suresh

Editor's Note: Premalal Goonasekere was an outstanding sportsman. In addition to Cricket, he represented the school in hockey and badminton. He passed away in 1998. His son, Suresh, also captained the first XI Cricket Team in 1992 and won the Inaugural President's Trophy that year. Suresh too passed away suddenly in July 2021 in the U.K. This article was reproduced in memory of this great cricketing family.



Sri Lankan Olympic stars of yesteryear



Allan Smith

Versatile Diver at 1952 Helsinki Games



Norman Allan Smith participated in the 1952 Olympic Games in Helsinki, Finland in the men's diving events following a successful swimming career at S. Thomas' College, Mount Lavinia.

Allan developed a liking to diving during his time at STC and in 1947 he participated for the first time in the National Diving Championship but was defeated by Des Cotton. Since then, he was unbeaten for a period of 18 years and continuously won the Spring-Board and High-Board Diving Championships and displayed excellence in performances.

In 1950, Allan represented the country at the Empire Games held in Auckland, New Zealand and qualified for the finals and was placed eighth. Thus, he became the first Sri Lankan sportsman to be selected for the final-round of an International Diving Competition. He participated in the Olympic Games held in Helsinki, Finland in 1952. Allan was also selected for the Asian Games in Bangkok, Thailand in 1962 and won a gold medal in the Indo-Sri Lanka Swimming Event in New Delhi in 1966, prior to retiring from competitive sports. He was subsequently appointed a Referee/Judge in several international Diving Competitions. His diving credentials was extended to an Official International/Olympic Diving judge. The Perpetual Sri Lankan Diving Championship trophy was named after him, the 'Allan Smith Trophy'. Disappointingly it is now named the Rajapakse Trophy. He also had a long cricketing career with the Burgher Recreation Club (BRC). Playing with David Heyn, the Reids, Jerry Woutersz and many others.

Allan engaged himself in training for over a decade amidst many difficulties, displaying the determination of an outstanding athlete. His routine training included waking up at 4.00 a.m. and running between Mount Lavinia and Bambalapitiya, a 50-metre speed run and two hours of training in swimming in the evening. Although he missed this training programme when serving in the outstations, he was able to obtain the required results by coming to Colombo a few days before the events and training for the events.

Since leaving College, Allan joined the Ceylon Army in the National Security Regiment. In this job he played a valuable role in navigating through the jungles and rough terrain that he knew like the back of his hand. He was one of the inaugural members of Field Service Department (FSD) which was formed by the best operatives from the Army, Navy and Airforce. He put his life at risk on many occasions. Once swimming across a crocodile infested river to set up a bridge for the men to cross and capture insurgents in the middle of the jungle. There were many stories of his legendary achievements, due to his modesty they only come to the fore by others telling the stories. He has been shot at on a number occasions, where people around him had died. He has been stabbed, attacked with swords, knives, guns, machetes, etc.

At one time he was attached to the security staff to the Prime Minister, the Late Sirimavo Bandaranaike the first female Prime Minister in the World, who he was fond of and with whom he had a close working relationship with during extremely dangerous times.

During the time he was in Army, there was a film with the actor Oliver Tobias being made in Sri Lanka, where the stuntman had to dive off Swami Rock (also known as Lover's Leap). This was the rock where many people who were broken hearted, leapt to their death. Allan was volunteered by his then Army Commander who said

“Smith will do it”. Allan agreed as long as it was just one take. Yes, he did it despite the stuntman chickening out.

Alan and his family migrated to Australia in 1975 and has been an active member of the STCOBA ever since, participating in several activities including the annual Royal-Thomian Cricket match in Melbourne. He kept playing cricket and for many years kept wickets at an ‘A’ Grade level for the Hampton Cricket club, in to his 70’s. Also played on Sundays for the Australia Ceylon Fellowship (ACF) Association and the Cavaliers. He worked at the State Insurance Office (SIO) for many years, where he captained their cricket team, prior to retiring at a tender age of 85 years.



Alan met his first wife, Aune Kaarina Lausmaa, a law student, when he went to participate at the Helsinki Olympics in 1952. They fell in love and he went back married her and brought her to Ceylon where they raised 3 children. Elizabeth, Kristina and Norm (Junior) – known to be “the best looking of the lot”. He subsequently remarried to Gina and had another son Adam Smith in 1981. He also faced a tragedy in his life when he lost one of his daughter’s, Kristina, tragically in a motor vehicle accident involving a drunk driver in 1982.

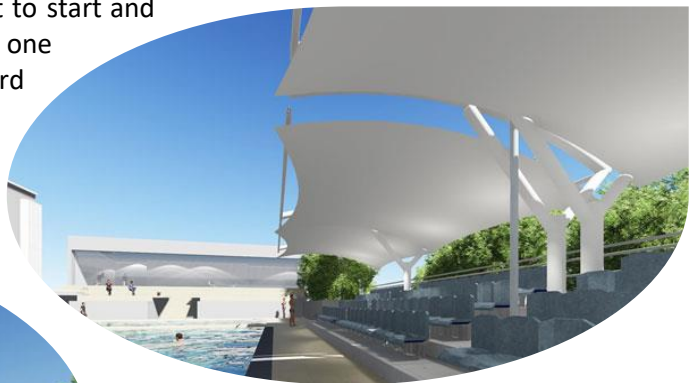
Allan is now living a quiet life, in these extremely strange COVID times, in a retirement home.

Nothing but the best—that’s what you always gave. And that’s what we’re wishing for you in your retirement.



Swimming Pool Refurbishment at Mount

The refurbishment of the swimming pool is about to start and will include a spectator stand (open pavilion) on one side with a capacity of 190 seats, Olympic Standard Spring Board (3 Meter Diving Board) and a state-of-the-art specialised gymnasium for the swimmers.



The funds required for the major components of the project have been raised and credited to the College Account and all payments are being made by the College.

It is understood that a few seats are available for purchase by interested parties. With a donation of Rs.75,000 you or someone special in your life can be honoured by having their name printed on a seat. For further information contact:

Viren Perera: +94773089886

Dinukh Fernando: +94777741521

Zafar Zainudeen: +94772017969

Ode to the Thomians in Victoria ...

Thomians here, are a great community, occupying important niches in this social, and economic fabric of this great land. With the great traditions that St. Thomas' has handed down for a century and a half, may each be:

A light in the darkness
A friend to the lonely
A guide to the baffled
A good Samaritan to the caste out
For when the music ends
The dance will stop
But life goes on night,
And the battle for right values shared
Esto Perepetua

Being a "soul friend" and trusted mate,
Sharing their ambitions and their dreams,
And challenging their hazardous schemes.

Quiet times in the lovely Thomian chapel
With David, painting the great evangel
Of the 'beardless' Christ to modern Lanka,
Were happy memories at Mount Lavinia.

Parish work was rich and blessed;
Couples counselled and married;
Choirs singing, chorales enthralling;
Homes visited and pastoral caring.

It was a team-ministry for us both,
When in god's name, we went forth:
To seek the tardy; the sick anoint;
Help the needy; greet the saint.

Nostalgic scenes flash across my mind,
Assuring me, God is love - very kind:
Choosing frail priest-evangelists,
To be ambassadors and apologists.

Here in many rural parishes we worked:
On Sunday morns the faithful gathered
In rain or freezing weather they met
The Lord who had paid humanity's debt.

But the greatest joy to Rathie and me,
Was to come to Stephens, Mt Waverley
And feel the presence of the Mysterium
Enveloping this wondrous Dei Domun.

May she grow from strength to strength,
From the corrosive power of sin exempt:
Be an oasis of joy and tranquillity,
In the midst of Melbourne's diversity

"Whom shall I send and who'll go for me?"
The lord asks, and longs to see
Youth respond as I did, years ago,
And went whither He pointed me to go.

The unfinished task of the church is there:
Folk have to be won, and souls need care;
The incense of praise has to be offered:
The host consecrated, the chalice hallowed.

To God the Father, the cosmic redeemer Son,
To God the sanctifier, three in one;
Be all majesty, glory, power and might,
Eternal God of life, of joy and light.

The Rev. John Selvaratnam
Warden 1965-1969

"a fascinating gripping read... fast paced...hard to put down..."

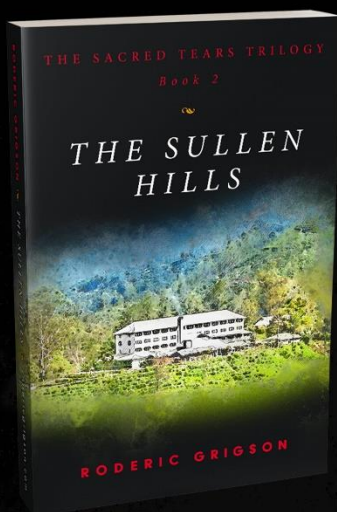
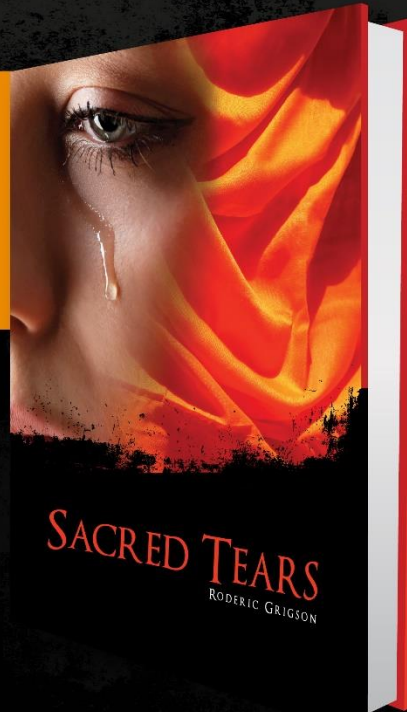


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Sri Lankan born, Australian writer

RODERIC GRIGSON

SACRED TEARS TRILOGY

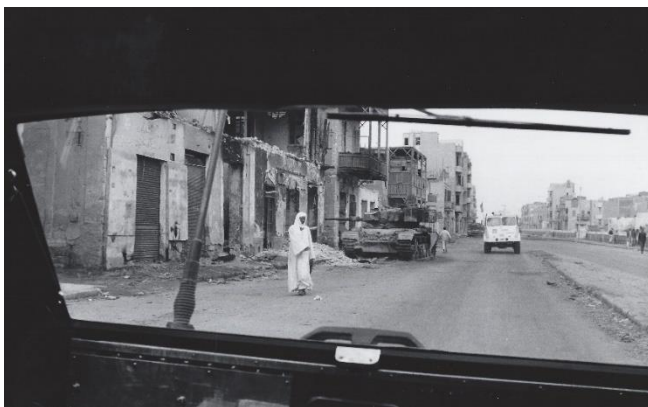




Marooned in the Sinai

PART II

A few days later, after flying from New York to Rome and then on to Cairo, I found myself being driven across the northern desert to UNEF headquarters in Ismailia, a mostly destroyed and desolate town on the Egyptian side of the Suez Canal. Being strategically placed on the waterway that allowed shipping to cross from the Mediterranean to the Red Sea, it had been the scene of heavy fighting during the Yom Kippur war between the Israelis and the Egyptians just a few years prior. The city was laid out in contemporary 19th-century style, with broad avenues, tree-lined squares, parks, and gardens, and had a gridiron street plan with a large number of destroyed and shell-pocked buildings, some dating from British and French involvement from when the canal was built.



I spent a couple of nights at a squalid local guesthouse, the only one in the entire town at the time, and after a few days, moved in with a Scottish Peace Keeping Officer (PCO) who was willing to rent out a room in his apartment.

Not long after my arrival in Egypt, I received a cable from New York saying that I had finally been granted permission to enter Israel. I was not told how it happened but happen it did. Unfortunately, the cable also said, that the original position I had been earmarked for in UNIFIL had been filled and I had to remain with the UNEF for the foreseeable future. This did not bother me as much as I thought it would as I had

started to make friends in Ismailia and was beginning to enjoy living in Egypt.

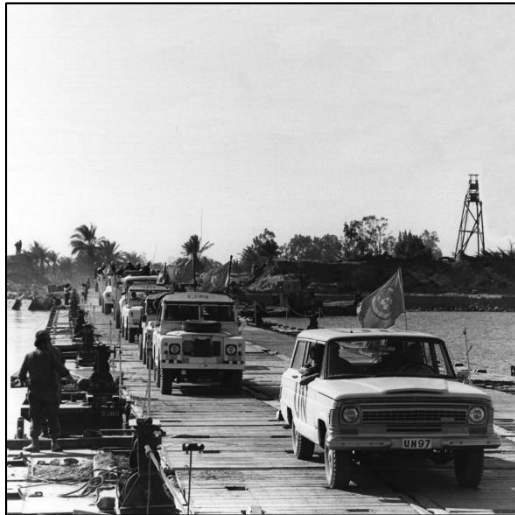
Over the first month, I settled into my job as the Field Inventory Officer for the entire peacekeeping command, which was based in Egypt. The UN had millions of dollars' worth of equipment spread across the whole region, and my job was to keep track of every piece of equipment worth over US\$200. To do that I had to visit every single military observation post, checkpoint, platoon and company base, and battalion HQ in the buffer zone to physically view each piece of equipment. I was also responsible for managing the transfer of material between incoming and outgoing battalions every six months.

It was a physically demanding and dangerous job, and I had to be on the road all the time, crossing the front lines between the Egyptian and Israeli armies camped in the Sinai Peninsula. There was a ceasefire in place, but the two forces were still technically at war, and both sides were very edgy. The Israelis had surrounded the 3rd Egyptian army in the Sinai at the end of the fighting, and the only way they could be supplied was by sending food and water in trucks across the Suez Canal. The UN forces occupied a demilitarised buffer zone between the two armies and monitored areas of limited troops and weapons on both sides of the territory.

Needless to say, I looked for the first opportunity that came up to visit Israel. I found out that UNEF staff regularly drove into Israel from Egypt, especially on the weekends, and some even had apartments in Jerusalem where their families lived. There was a strict rule that UN staff could only travel across the front lines and into the UN buffer zone in pairs so I asked around whether I could join up with someone heading into Israel for the weekend.

My first trip into Israel turned out to be a truly memorable one.

My Scottish roommate was planning to spend a long weekend in Jerusalem and was happy for me to join him, as he too was looking for someone to travel with. His name was David, and he had been a UN Peace Keeping Officer for many years.



We checked out a white, UN-marked Jeep Cherokee from the UN transport garage in Ismailia on the following Friday and crossed the Suez Canal on a pontoon bridge which the Egyptian military erected twice a day. The pontoon bridge went across for an hour around midday and again around midnight. The canal handled roughly an average of 70 ships of all types a day. Sea-going vessels using the canal generally sailed from south to north in the morning and then switched to sail from north to south during the next twelve-hour period. This gave the military a window of about an hour and a half at each changeover to transport troops and supplies across the waterway into the Sinai.

Crossing the Suez Canal, the Sinai desert, and the front lines between the two forces into Israel the first time was an experience I will never forget. The border post leading into Israel was operated by hard-eyed Israeli soldiers who refused to let me enter the country without

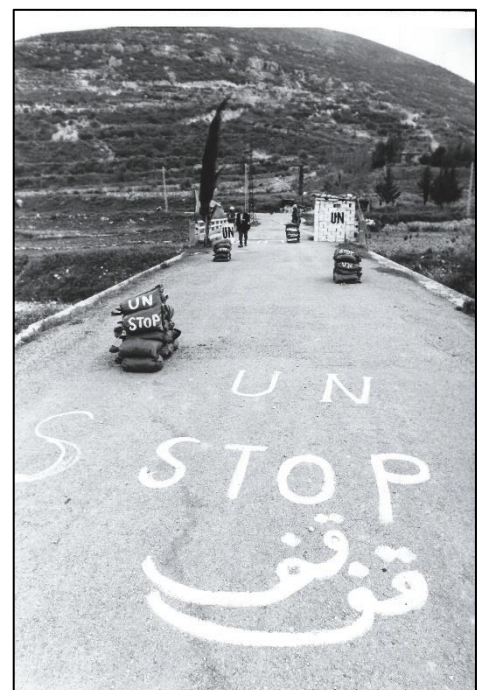
authorisation from their superiors in Jerusalem.

Here we go again, I thought to myself as the soldiers signalled for us to park by the barrier. It seemed I was the first Sri Lankan who had tried to enter Israel from Egypt, and they had no instructions on how to handle my situation. The officer in charge, a Lieutenant who spoke perfect English, could not tell me how long that authorisation would take. I explained that I had been given permission by the UN authorities in New York to enter the country and requested that I remain at the border post until the matter had been cleared. I had come this far and refused to back down.

I was able to persuade David to continue to Jerusalem without me, which he did reluctantly. He had reported my situation to UNEF HQ duty room on the radio and was given permission to leave me at the border and continue onto Jerusalem if he chose to. There was an established procedure the authorities followed in such cases and him staying with me would not change anything. We were informed that my situation would be reported to UN HQ in New York and be closely monitored by UNEF Command.

After sitting around at the outpost for about three hours, the authorisation finally came through. I could only imagine what had transpired behind the scenes to make it happen.

I had spent the time waiting to make friends with the Israeli soldiers who were quite bored and found me a distraction. A couple of them had gone



to school in New York, which gave us something to talk about. I found out from them that there were always taxi's dropping people off at the border and that I should have no problem getting to Jerusalem if I was allowed into the country.



walled city.

Next day was Sabbath Day in Israel, and I spent all day exploring one of the oldest cities in the world. During its long history, Jerusalem has been destroyed at least twice, besieged 23 times, captured, and recaptured 44 times, and attacked 52 times. It is the home to holy sites for Christians, Jews, and Muslims, therefore significant to over one-third of all people on earth. Serene, surreal, and intense are all words which jump to mind when describing the one-square-kilometre walled area, which was the Old City. I visited the Via Dolorosa (Way of Christ) and the Church of the Holy Sepulchre where Christ is buried, something I had always wanted to do.

That night I wandered through this amazing place, visiting the famous Arab souk, the Western Wall, and the Dome of the Rock. The souk is a Jerusalem landmark, the mercantile heart of this ancient city from at least Ottoman times to the present. The high arches and ceilings of the souk are a result of the same Ottoman generosity that gave the Old City its current walls, and no matter how many tourists are present, one gets the impression that the rhythms of the souk have remained the same for hundreds of years.

On Sunday morning, I walked on the ramparts around the old city, exploring its 4,000year-old history from above. The tiny, ancient walled city divided into an Armenian quarter, a Jewish quarter, a Christian quarter, and an Arab quarter, is still the most fascinating place I have ever visited. The north sidewalk passes over the Christian Quarter with the numerous churches and other Vatican buildings seen, sometimes right below the wall! From the wall, you can see the Church of the Holy Sepulchre and the Church of Flagellation and many others. The walk carries on into the Muslim Quarter, where mosques and minarets, as well as schools and playing fields, can be seen. Crossing over the New Gate, the Damascus Gate, the Herod's Gate and finally the Lions Gate, you pass by the Tower of David and cross over the Zion Gate. The walk covers the Armenian Quarter and ends at the Jewish Quarter before the Dung Gate.

David, who was doing his own thing, met me for lunch at the Jaffa Gate, one of the main entrances to the walled city. After lunch, David was driving me down to see the Dead Sea when the ultra-high frequency (UHF) radio squawked into life. Every UN vehicle carried a military band radio which allowed all UNEF field staff to keep in touch with the radio room in UNEF headquarters back in Ismailia. We had to report in every few hours so that field operations would know precisely where we were. We were informed on the radio that Egypt was going to lock down their borders the next day and all UNEF field staff in Israel were ordered to return to base immediately. According to the report that was read out to us, Egypt was playing hardball with the Israelis in the Security Council before peace talks getting underway, and the UN were stuck in the middle.

They were right. I was able to hire a Palestinian taxi driver whom I paid an exorbitant sum of money to drive me to Beersheba, a provincial capital about 50 miles away in the Negev desert. From there I took the regular bus service which ran from Eilat on the Red Sea, to Jerusalem, and hooked up with a relieved David at the hotel around midnight.

Jerusalem was everything I thought it would be. It was the fulfilment of a dream I always had, and all the difficulties I had faced trying to get here were just a memory. After a few drinks, we went straight to bed at the small hotel that UNEF staff used outside the old



This was going to be a significant problem for us. Monday was a public holiday back in Egypt, we planned to leave Jerusalem early in the morning and cross the canal on the military bridge erected in the early afternoon. Special permission in the form of an official travel document was needed to cross the Egyptian front lines after dark, and the only place we could get that pass was back in Egypt.

I was quite concerned by the situation we found ourselves in. Having already experienced problems with the Israeli authorities back in New York and at the border, I didn't want to rock the boat in any way and overstay my first entry permit which was issued for only a few days. Having already experienced some of the wonders of Jerusalem, I didn't want anything to ruin my chances of coming back into the country.

David did not seem to be concerned about what was happening. He told me not to worry, saying that he knew of a way we could get across into Egypt without an official pass. So, with his reassurances ringing in my sceptical ears, we set off from Jerusalem early that Sunday afternoon to drive back across the Sinai Peninsula to Ismailia. We drove south, stopping briefly at a second-hand bookshop in the outskirts of Jerusalem, where David rushed in and bought some books and magazines to take back into Egypt.

We drove down the coast road, past the Palestinian refugee camps at Gaza and came to the Israeli border post near El Arish as the sun was setting. The Israelis, always businesslike and efficient, checked our UN IDs and passports and let us through without any problem.

We drove to the UN post leading into the buffer zone, which was operated by Swedish troops. David knew the Officer-In-Charge; a Captain, who was on duty at the time. The camp was located by the road, and the Officer invited us into a tent to have dinner with him and his men. The meal comprised of steaming hot potato soup and slices of black bread, which I looked at suspiciously.

Was that old bread? I had never seen anything like it before. But the others were digging in, so I took a tentative bite and dipped it into the potato soup which made it a little bit more palatable. Coming from a country like Sri Lanka, where all the food was spicy and delicious, I had never eaten anything like this before.

We finished our meal, and it was well after dark when we finally left the camp. Driving through the desert at night



was like nothing I had ever experienced before. The sky was filled with stars. I had never seen so many in my life. Living in a big city does not allow you to see many of the distant stars and galaxies. The total darkness of the desert, without any ambient light, made much more visible. We drove through the UN buffer zone in the dark, following the narrow, tarred road shining in our headlights. After about an hour, we came to the UN checkpoint which restricted access into the buffer zone controlled by the Egyptian army. Driving into the Egyptian controlled portion of Sinai was much more dangerous. We had to first negotiate an extensive minefield. We slowly zigzagged through the unmarked field, following the tyre tracks of

vehicles that had preceded us. The wind was whipping up the sand in gusts and swirls exposing anti-tank mines as large as dinner plates on either side of us.

Continued in Part III in next issue of Thomiana



Rod Grigson is a published author who conducts creative writing classes and helps writers self-publish their stories. For details, see www.rodericgrigson.com

HOW TO WIN TRUST AND RESPECT OF YOUR BOSS

At one point or another in your career, you will report to a manager, the person you fondly - or not - call boss. The relationships that you create and manage, with both your immediate boss, and other company employees, are critical for your work success and career progress.

You're the person in charge of your relationship with your boss. No one will ever share as much concern as you do that the quality of the relationship helps you achieve your goals. At the same time, your boss has information that you need to succeed. He can't do his/her job or accomplish their goals without your help.

So, your manager shares a critical interdependence with you. If you don't accomplish your work, your manager will never shine for his or her overall responsibilities. You won't progress without the information, perspective, experience, and support of your manager.

Despite knowing this, managers do come in every size and with all possible levels of skill and effectiveness. Some managers are just plain bad bosses; others are unaware of what you need from them. Managing up is challenging, but ultimately, worth your time.

These steps will help you develop a positive, ongoing, supportive relationship with your boss - a relationship that serves you well, your manager well, and, as a consequence, your organization well.

- The first step in managing up is to **develop a positive relationship with your boss**. Relationships are based on trust. Do what you say you'll do. Keep timeline commitments. Never blind side your manager with surprises that you could have predicted or prevented. Keep him / her informed about your projects and interactions with the rest of the organization.
- Tell the boss when you've made an error or one of your reporting staff has made a mistake. Cover-ups don't contribute to an effective relationship. Lies or efforts to mislead always result in further stress for you as you worry about getting "caught" or somehow slipping up in the consistency of your story. Communicate daily or weekly to build the relationship. Get to know your manager as a person – he is one, after all. He shares the human experience, just as you do, with all of its joys and sorrows.
- Recognize that success at work is not all about you; **put your boss's needs at the center of your universe**. Identify your boss's areas of weakness or greatest challenges and ask what you can do to help. What are your boss's biggest worries; how can your contribution mitigate these concerns? Understand your boss's goals and priorities. Place emphasis in your work to match his / her priorities. Think in terms of the overall success of your department and company, not just about your narrower world at work.
- **Look for and focus on the "best" parts of your boss**; just about every boss has both good points and bad. When you're negative about your boss, the tendency is to focus on his worst traits and failings. This is neither positive for your work happiness nor your prospects for success in your organization. Instead, compliment your boss on something he does well. Provide positive recognition for contributions to your success. Make your boss feel valued. Isn't this what you want from him for you?

Your boss is unlikely to change; she can choose to change, but the person who shows up to work every day has taken years and years of effort on her part to create. And, who your boss is has worked for her in the past and reinforced her actions and beliefs. Instead of trying to change your boss, **focus instead, on trying to understand your boss's work style**.

Identify what she values in an employee. Does she like frequent communication, autonomous employees, requests in writing in advance of meeting, or informal conversation as you pass in the hallway. Your boss's preferences are important and the better you understand them, the better you will work with her.

Learning how to read your boss's moods and reactions is also a helpful approach to communicate more effectively with him. There are times when you don't want to introduce new ideas; if he is preoccupied with making this month's numbers, your idea for a six-month improvement may not be timely. Problems at home or a relative in failing health affect each of your workplace behaviors and openness to an improvement discussion. Additionally, if your boss regularly reacts in the same way to similar ideas, explore what he fundamentally likes or dislikes about your proposals.

Learn from your boss

Although some days it may not feel like it, your boss has much to teach you. Appreciate that she was promoted because your organization found aspects of her work, actions, and/or management style worthwhile. Promotions are usually the result of effective work and successful contributions. So, ask questions to learn and listen more than you speak to develop an effective relationship with your boss.

Ask your boss for feedback

Let the boss play the role of coach and mentor. Remember that your boss can't read your mind. Enable him to offer you recognition for your excellent performance. Make sure he knows what you have accomplished. Create a space in your conversation for him to praise and thank you.

Value your boss's time.

Try to schedule, at least, a weekly meeting during which you are prepared with a list of what you need and your questions. This allows him to accomplish work without regular interruption.

Tie your work, your requests, and your project direction to your boss's and the company's overarching goals.

When making proposals to your boss, try to see the larger picture. There are many reasons why your suggestion may not be adopted: resources, time, goals, and vision and, inapplicability for lack of pragmatism. It is good to weigh your ideas on impact to the organisation and convenience in implementability.

Maintain strict confidentiality.

In your relationship with your boss **you will sometimes disagree and occasionally experience an emotional reaction**. Don't hold grudges. Don't make threats about leaving. Disagreement is fine; discord is not. Get over it. You need to come to terms with the fact that your boss has more authority and power than you do. You are unlikely to always get your way

Never hold back pertinent information

Even if something you tell your boss may cast you in a worse light, omitting key details is a definite no, says Kristi Hedges a managing partner at Element North, a leadership development firm. "Tell it straight and avoid lies of omission," Hedges says. "Don't hold back information that may be hard to deliver, or feedback that [your boss] needs to be successful."

Be a Team Player

For many supervisors, the element of trust is also determined by how employees interact with their peers. It's important to work as a team and contribute where your help is needed rather than solely seeking attention for your own projects "There's a fine line between being ambitious and seeming to be out for yourself.

Go beyond the office

"Whether it's an occasional lunch with your manager or the casual non work-related conversation, by getting to know him or her on a more personal level, you build trust because you find more points of connection. Ask for feedback during these informal gatherings, which can also help you establish a more trusting relationship.

Demonstrate consistency

You can build trust by demonstrating a stable mood and composure, and reacting consistently to challenges" Hedges says. If you tend to have weeks of productivity coupled with days where you're less productive, aim to be more consistent

Don't over promise

It can be easy to commit to several projects just to find out you can't finish them all at the end of the day. "Poor follow-up trashes trust". Even if your boss isn't looking over your shoulder, make a point to meet any deadlines you've set for yourself and don't set the bar too high.

Be loyal to your company

If you are a valuable employee, you will definitely attract invitations to join other companies; other companies may approach you to find out about things in your company. If you feel you need to leave to promote your career, by all means do so. But good leadership skills demand that you never bad mouth your company or your boss in this process. These types of things get around and you will be branded as an untrustworthy person.

Be dependable

Your boss should be able to depend on you for any given task. He should be able to count on you to bring any given task to its logical end. Dependability is one of the key good leadership skills that you need to develop.

Ability to admit mistakes

You should be able to admit your failures. Your boss will appreciate, respect and definitely trust you if he knows that you are a person who owns up when he commits a blunder. Good leadership skills demands that you honest.

Be completely transparent in your work dealings

Be completely transparent in your work dealings with team members, those you manage, customers and superiors. Transparency and a willingness to share information is seen as a positive attribute that enhances the feeling of trust at work place.

Show respect

Good leadership skills will have you show respect not only to your superiors, but also your team members and those you manage. Showing respect to all – and not only to those from whom you expect something – indicates strength of character and earns everyone's trust and respect.

Author:**Dr. Nalin Jayasuriya,**

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Nalin is an old boy of STC Prep School and Mount Lavinia (1962 – 1968). He is a Business & Management Consultant and currently Chairman, McQuire Rens Global Consulting (Pvt) Ltd. He has led Consultancy assignments for the World Bank, Asian Development Bank, UNDP, Institute of World problems (USA) and Price Waterhouse Coopers.

TO ALL OLD THOMIANS

If you do have an interesting anecdote about your days at College or some interesting tidbits about the after-school life of a fellow Thomian (or even a teacher) or just remember the good old days as they used to be, please, send in your articles, photos, letters, poems, stories, etc. to the Editor **Vasikaran Ratnarajah**. vasidaisy15@gmail.com or **Upali Gooneratne**: fgooneratne@iiec.org.

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

Tribute – Ret. Air Vice-Marshall Laksen Salgado



SLAF No. 2 intake of officer cadets consisted of nine, along with few other in-service inductions. Of the nine, four were Thomians and Jayanath Laksen Chandri Salgado of “Preetheum”, Moratuwa was one of them.

Sala, as he was fondly called by his friends came in with an excellent school profile as one who had reached to represent Sri Lanka at the Indo – Sri Lanka athletic meet in his pet event 400 meters through ACE Athletic Club. Goes without saying that he had won his Public schools' colours, a college prefect, member of the Cadet Platoon, and also 2nd XV Rugby team.

Sala's father, Mr. Lloyd Salgado who was a proprietary planter was well known to my father who was one-time Supdt. Of Police of Moratuwa area. Later, even his brother in law Surgeon Dr. Wimal Gunaratne, who too was a public school athlete, was well known to

me. Cadet intakes were a result of post '71 insurgency expansion which the services underwent in its wake with the infrastructure required not being able to keep pace. In this context, the No. 01 intake which was of 30 cadets took priority in available resources thus the 'flyers' of our batch had to wait till they (No. 01) completed their phases, which applied to all other branches too.

Diyatalawa (DLA) which is renowned for its salubrious climate was felt to us during morning PT in our thinnest possible vest, not in the same nostalgia. One might say we built up a dreadful respect for the “Siberian winter” which we had only read about hitherto!

The stagnation in training facilities made Sala and the flying cadets to follow the training that unfolded mainly for Regt. Cadets under then Commanding Officer (CO), Wg. Cdr. Bren Sosa and the Officer Commanding Training (OCT) Sqn Ldr. Tony Direckze. A component of it (No. 1 Officers' Regt. course) was to do a jungle march to a Kuda-Oya area location in small batches and the flight cadets consisted one of them. It so happened that they reached the destination a day earlier than the other groups, perhaps due to a “flying navigational error” and had to take the “back bearing” to the DLA camp. This all-round training had perhaps stood in good stead in later service life when commanding stations etc. and for Sala in particular when he was the Director Operations with ground ops coming under it.

On commissioning, the three flyers were posted to No. 03 Maritime Squadron flying Cessna 337 aircraft under Sq. Ldr. Christian being the CO. However, unexpectedly they were converted to Jet Provost (JPT) fighter aircraft which came into its own glory with the '71 insurgency strike and interdiction sorties. Sala and the batchmates kept on flying this aircraft until it was phased out. It took almost another two decades for the SLAF to get back to fighter jet aircraft flying, post “OP Poonamalai” by the Indian Air Force dropping relief supplies over Jaffna, better known as the “Parippu drop”.

Sala, later qualified as a Flying instructor and he was selected to undergo No. 313 Qualified Flying Instructors (QFI) course at Central Flying School, Royal Air Force, Leeming, UK meeting a very demanding void felt in flying training which was long overdue. In his 7 years as a QFI, culminating the last 2 years as CO of the Flying Training Wing (FTW), generations of pilots had been churned out meeting the coveted RAF standards. He was the first to follow Air Warfare Course at the Air War College, Pakistan Air Force for over a period of a year. As a pilot, on his flyingmanship, what better opinion than from his own batchmate who later became a very senior Captain with the Sri Lankan Airlines. He opined that “Sala was an exceptional flyer who could be cool as ever for military flying”.

He, in his rising career had gone through the ambit of appointments as Eastern and Western Zonal Commanders, Director Operations and finally as the Chief of Staff. He was a recipient of the Ranawickrema Padakkama (RWP) very early in his career (1992), and without resting on his laurels on valour he continued with his operational contributions till the very end.

Laksen leaves his wife Erandathie and children Laksith and Shalindri. We are grateful to Sala's College friend HDK Silva for keeping us updated on his medical status, sparing us troubling Erandathie. Religious ceremonies were held at the Holy Emmanuel Church, Rawathawatte, Moratuwa and a service funeral under health regulations.

**OLD SOLDIERS NEVER DIE, THEY ONLY FADE AWAY
MAY HIS SOUL REST IN PEACE!**

Ravi Arunthavanathan (Batchmate)



NEWS OF MEMBERS

New Members of the OBA: June to September 2021

Name	Branch	Period
NANAYAKKARA, Dhanika	Mount Lavinia	2011 - 2021
NANAYAKKARA, Nikhil	Mount Lavinia	2012 - 2021
NANAYAKKARA, Tharen	Mount Lavinia	2012 - 2021

Obituaries - They remain in our memories forever!!

Frankie David - Ex President STCOBA	Walter May (WA)
Nimal (Chinka) Thenabadu (Class of 55)	Shehan Meegama (Class of 89)
Shri Wasalthilake (Class of 94)	Geoff Wijesinghe
Suresh Goonesekara (1 st XI Cricket Captain – 1992)	Dr. Basil Rebera (ACT)
Gamini De Alwis Seneviratne	Lal De Mel (Ex- staff)
Dr. Ajith Jayasekera	Aubrey Fonseka
Lakshman Seneviratne (1 st XI Cricket 1979)	Trevinne De Silva (Class of 2014)
Hanif Abdeen	Oliver Dharmapala
Vajira Wijewardena	Dr. Douglas V Arndt (NSW)

Esto Perpetua

PHOTO GALLERY

Seniors Lunch – 10th July 2021, Springvale RSL



Stefan's Lunch – 26th June 2021



STC Bandarawela Photos**Down Memory Lane**

Original Owner: Warden C.H Davidson; Next Owner: Ms. June Boralessa (former Lower School teacher)



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

ABN 18 114 799 661

PO Box 2337, Mount Waverley, Victoria 3149

www.stcobaaust.org.au

1

Application for Membership

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

Surname			
Given Names			
Date of Birth			
Address			
	State		Postcode
Telephone	Home/Work		Mobile
Email			
College Branch Attended	From		To
Proposer (Name)	Phone or Email		
Seconder (Name)	Phone or Email		

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

2

Membership Renewal / Change of Address

Membership Renewal		Change of Address	(tick)
Name			
Address			
	State		Postcode
Telephone	Home/Work		Mobile
Email			

3

Payment Details

Membership Fees	<i>Members: \$25.00; Full-Time Students & Pensioners Concession: \$10.00</i>		
Cash/cheque/MO	\$..... enclosed (in favour of S Thomas College OBA)		
Bank Transfer	I have credited STCOBA's account online at CBA, Mount Waverley BSB 063-151, Account No. 1002-9468 , in the sum of \$..... having clearly recorded my name as remitter for identification purposes.		
Credit Card	Visa	Mastercard	(tick)
	Name on Card		
	Card Number	Exp	/..... CVV
	Cardholder's Signature:		

New Members: Please complete Sections 1 and 3; Existing Members: Please complete Sections 2 and 3

Postal Address and Enquiries	Membership Secretary	Committee Use Only	
	PO Box 2337, Mount Waverley Vic 3149	Application Approved	
	Enquiries: Upali (Pancho) Gooneratne	Payment Recorded	
	Email: fgooneratne@iiec.org	Member Notified	
	Tel: 0449024294		

Subscriptions for 2021 were due on 1st January. If you have not already joined or renewed your membership please use the above form. We will always welcome you. So why not come, join us and support the Association

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