



# THOMIANA



May 2023, Volume 26 Issue 2

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



## WE MOVE ON

## .... AND THE TRADITIONS GO ON!!

*The 144<sup>th</sup> Battle of the Blues is done and dusted!! Congratulations to Royal, who were undoubtedly worthy winners. The Hon. D.S. Senanayake Shield left the Warden's office and is now in temporary residence in Reid Avenue, awaiting its return. To the gallant Thomian team – “you had a rough day in the office”; hold your heads up high and move on. To those players who have a chance for a “second bite of the cherry” next year, it's time to regroup and sharpen your swords for the 145<sup>th</sup> Battle. To the Old Boys and supporters, it may have been a bitter pill to swallow but mixed with bit of “Thomian Spirit” it couldn't have been that bad!! If it's any consolation, the Thomians won all three games in the annual Royal-Thomian Cricket Festival in Melbourne on 26<sup>th</sup> March 2023.*



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



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

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

**History of the OBA:**

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

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

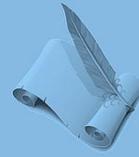
**Mission:**

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

Esto Perpetua

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## President's Message



Dear Thomians,

I am honoured and grateful to have been elected as your President this year. I am fortunate to have a talented Executive Committee working alongside me, and I would like to express my appreciation to Peneeth for his four years of dedicated service to the OBA, including his leadership during the pandemic years. I would also like to thank the outgoing Committee members for their contributions and welcome the new members.

Our primary focus this year is to encourage younger Thomians to join the OBA and participate in our activities. We are off to a great start, thanks to the Royal Thomian Live screening event that raised funds for a Bowling Machine for College. It was heartening to see many young Thomians attend the event and offer their help to get more involved. We raised \$3,038 during the event and from your generous donations, which was adequate for the purchase of the equipment and the shipping costs was sponsored by Pramu Rodrigo.

We are also committed to raising funds for the refurbishment of the lower school library, and we will set aside surplus funds from the Annual Dinner Dance to support this cause. We will be making an appeal to the membership to contribute books or technological items such as iPads and laptops once we assess the requirements.

I am pleased to announce that this year's Annual Thomian Ball will take place on November 11, 2023, at the Pullman on the Park, Wellington Parade (Near the MCG). We would be grateful for your support in attending the event and helping us source sponsorships, Dance Souvenir advertisements, and donations for the silent auctions.

I would also like to ask members to consider finding internships, work experience, or employment opportunities for Thomians who are in Melbourne to complete their studies.

We have an exciting line-up of events planned for the year, which we will be promoting in due course. Once again, I want to thank you for your support, and I look forward to a great year ahead.

Esto Perpetua!

Sincerely,

*Saman Liyanage*

## EDITORIAL

*“Blessed are those who can give without remembering and take without forgetting”*

We express our appreciation to those who provided feedback on the January 2023 issue of the Thomiana. We are encouraged by the positive comments and will endeavour to refine the publication incorporating many of the suggestions.

This year’s activities kicked off with the Annual General Meeting (AGM) on 10<sup>th</sup> February 2023 at the Mount Waverley Youth Centre. For the first time in almost 3 years there were no official Covid restrictions covering social gatherings. The attendance too came back to normal of around 75. It was a pleasant sight to see several spouses in attendance.

The Executive Committee for 2023 saw major changes with the election of a new President, Saman Liyanage, succeeding Peneeth Gunawardena who volunteered to continue as a Vice President. We wish to express our sincere thanks to the outgoing members – Asfan Thajudeen, Rayendra Karunaratne, Mark Nanayakkara, Vasikaran Ratnarajah, Navodh Fernando, Niral Fernando and Rajindra Bibile for their services and welcome Mahes Heenetigala, Joe Rajadurai, Lalindra De Silva and Dulith Gunaratne. The size of the Executive Committee was reduced from 17 to 13 under the new OBA Rules adopted at the meeting. The

new streamlined team is now geared up for an eventful year.

We had to reschedule our program to accommodate the Live Screening of the second day of the Big Match in Sri Lanka. The event was a tremendous success even though our performance at the SSC was much to be desired. The event raised funds for a much-needed Bowling Machine to help our cricketers.

The Melbourne annual Royal-Thomian cricket matches were held on 26<sup>th</sup> March 2023 with the Thomians winning all three matches and in a first, a century was scored in the Open Game by Jeevan Mendis. – I guess it was sweet revenge for our loss in Sri Lanka!! Several of our members visited Sri Lanka in March and participated in numerous functions associated with the Big Match. A special tea party was hosted by the Warden for the overseas visitors which was much appreciated by those who attended. A series of photos sent from several members are included in the Photo Gallery. Our Assistant Treasurer, Milinda Liyanage, took the opportunity of his visit home to participate in a 435km Cycle 4 Ceylon fundraising event for the Green Memorial Hospital in Manipay, Jaffna and donated Rs 250,000 for the cause. Our congratulations to Milinda for this effort.

After much effort the date for the 2023 Thomian Dance was finally confirmed for 11<sup>th</sup> November at the Pullman on the Park, Melbourne. This is later than normal but the Committee wanted to ensure that there were no overlapping functions that would impact the event.

On the membership front, we are encouraged by the increase in interest of the “younger” old Thomians to join the OBA. So far, over 22 have joined this year compared to 14 during the whole of 2022. New membership is vital to “keep the ship afloat” and it is hoped that the concerted effort by the new Executive Committee will be successful.

The need to cater for the younger members has been recognised and our Calendar of Events for 2023 will include an event solely for this category. The details of the event, scheduled for July, will be circulated to the membership in due course.

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

ESTO PERPETUA

Editor

*Upali Gooneratne*

## Introducing the OBA Executive Committee - 2023



**Saman Liyanage**  
President



**Peneeth Goonawardena**  
Vice President



**Chris Varney**  
Vice President



**Rayesh Gunasekera**  
Vice President



**Joe Rajadurai**  
Secretary



**Shehan Jayetilleke**  
Treasurer



**Milinda Liyanage**  
Asst Treasurer



**Upali Gooneratne**  
Editor/Membership Sec



**Amesh Fernando**  
Webmaster



**Mahes Heenfigala**  
Committee Member



**Praveen Bandaratilleke**  
Committee Member



**Lalindra De Silva**  
Committee Member



**Dulith Gunaratne**  
Committee Member

## OBA News

### Annual General Meeting (10 February 2023)

The Annual General Meeting (AGM) of the STC OBA Melbourne was held at the Mount Waverley Youth Centre on Friday February 10<sup>th</sup> 2023 at 6.30pm. In the absence of any Covid restrictions, there was increased attendance of 77 including spouses.



The meeting noted that 2022, marking the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the OBA in Melbourne, was one of the most successful years in terms of events and fundraising. In spite of COVID impacting several regular OBA activities, all the events went ahead as planned. The surplus funds generated were donated to several worthy causes including Smart Classrooms (Mount Lavinia), urgent projects in all our member schools and a local charity, Monash Children's Foundation. The meeting formally adopted the new OBA Rules which was revised to comply with the Model Rules for Associations in Victoria.

Saman Liyanage was elected President of the OBA after the incumbent, Peneeth Goonawardena voluntarily stepped down after serving in the position for 4 years; and agreed to continue as a Vice President. The new President thanked Peneeth for his service to the OBA especially during the Covid period and appreciated the opportunity to serve in this capacity. The President also thanked the members who were stepping down from the Executive Committee (Asfan Thajudeen, Rayendra Karunaratne, Mark Nanayakkara, Vasikaran Ratnarajah, Rajindra Bibile, Niral Fernando and Navodh Fernando).



Kumar Hensman, a long-time member and a sponsor, received the President's Award for 2023 for his dedicated service and continued support of the OBA.

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

More photos in Photo Gallery (Page 30)

**Saman Liyanage – New President of OBA (Melbourne)**



Saman was a product of Prep School and Mount Lavinia; and was in the Class of '74 Group. After leaving College, he completed Chartered and ICMA certifications initially at Ford Rhodes and then moving to Jamaica working for Touche Ross (Deloittes). He then moved to Antigua to work for KPMG, Price Waterhouse, and Cable and Wireless. He had the opportunity to meet with Brian Lara on the day (18 April 1994) he broke Gary Sober’s record and keeps Lara’s autograph with pride.

Saman migrated to Australia in 1994 and took up residence in Melbourne with his wife, Dushy and daughter, Natasha. He was an active member of the Melbourne OBA for many years before joining the Executive Committee as Assistant Treasurer in 2015 and then serving as Vice President for 4 years from 2019-2022.

**Royal Thomian Live Broadcast (17 March 2023)**

This event was organised at short notice, responding to a request by the Warden for assistance in procuring a Bowling Machine. In spite of this, the response was more than anticipated, with an attendance of around 75 on the night. It was good to see a contingent of Royalists attending the function, who no doubt, were thrilled to see their team’s performance at the match.

In addition to the spirits that were flowing freely while watching the game, the guests were entertained by continuous Biala music in the background.

A sumptuous Hopper Feed was provided by our new found caterers – Wara Sri Lankan Catering. The event concluded by the singing of the college songs by Royalists and Thomians.

With the funds raised on the night and subsequent donations by our membership we are well on track to completing this project.

Photos in Photo Gallery (Page 31)

**Thomiana .....we 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:*

Upali Gooneratne: [u.gooneratne@iicc.org](mailto:u.gooneratne@iicc.org)

**Royal-Thomian Cricket Festival in Melbourne (26 March 2023)**



The Matches were played at a new venue - Strathaird Reserve in Narre Warren.

**Over 50s Game**

Royal won the toss and decided to bat first. The Thomians had a good start dismissing 3 of the Royal batters early for less than 20 runs. However, the Royalists fought back and posted a challenging score of 190 in their allotted 25 overs. For the Thomians Leon Lewis was the pick of the bowlers with 3 wickets.

The Thomians started their innings in a quick manner but lost some wickets in the middle. Some excellent batting by Mahen Siritunga and Trevin Fernando kept the Thomians in the hunt. However, it was Michael De Kretser who took the Thomians home in the final over with a fantastic knock under pressure.

**Scores**

Royal: 190/9 25 Overs

S. Thomas': 191/8 25 overs

**Award winners**

Best Batter - Shan Juranpathy - Royal College

Best Bowler - Leon Lewis - STC

Player of the match - Michael De Kretser – STC

**Over 40s Game**

The Thomians won the toss and decided to bat first and got off to a flying start with Dilusha Nanayakkara and Yohan Gunasekara. However, they lost some vital wickets in the middle overs but valuable knocks from Sidath Medonza and Jeremy De Silva ensured that the final score was a competitive one of 152 in 25 overs.

The Royalists got off to a solid start and kept in touch of the required run rate. Chanaka Guanwardana took the first wicket which allowed the Thomian Spinners to come back into the game. Asfan Thajudeen, Sidath Medonza and Dilusha Nanayakkara kept the Royalist down with regular wickets and allowed Peneeth Goonawardena to come in and wrap up the game with a few quick wickets for a gutsy win for the Thomians by restricting Royal to 141.

**Scores**

S. Thomas': 152 all out 24.4 overs

Royal: 141/8 in 25 overs

**Award winners**

Best Batter - Yohan Gunasekera - STC

Best Bowler - Peneeth Goonawardena- STC

Player of the match - Sidath Medonza- STC

**Open Game**

The Thomians won the toss and put the Royalists into bat, and they got off to a solid start before the first wicket was taken by Chenutha Wickramasinghe. The Thomians spinners led by Ravindu Kodithuwakku, Kishan Munasinghe and Sajana De Silva kept the Royalists in check with regular wickets. A couple of the Royal batters managed to then settle themselves and with some lusty blows kept the score moving along at a good rate. Rashmika Opatha was introduced to the attack and he managed to get a couple of wickets at the end and the Royalists were bowled out for 205 in the 40<sup>th</sup> over.

The Thomians opened the batting with Shiran Rajakaruna and Ravindu Kodithuwakku. Ravindu got out for 21 which brought Jeevan Mendis to the crease. Both Jeevan and Shiran kept the scoreboard moving along before Shiran went out for a well-played 66.

However, the star of the show without any doubt was Jeevan Mendis who just tore the Royal attack apart and ended up making a scintillating century (probably the first in a Melbourne encounter) which was brought up with a massive 6. There has not been a more dominating performance at the Melbourne encounter than this knock which was enjoyed by all that were present. The Thomians passed the Royalists 2 wickets down in the 28<sup>th</sup> over.

**Scores:**

Royal: 205 all out in 39.5 overs  
 S. Thomas': 206/2 27.4 overs

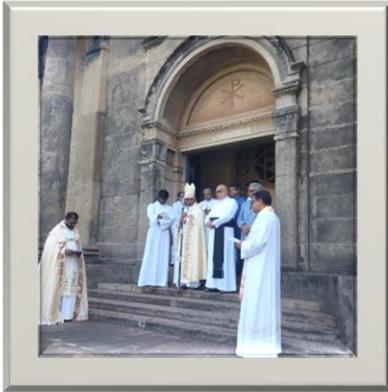
**Award Winners**

Best Batter - Jeevan Mendis STC  
 Best Bowler - Ravindu Kodithuwakku - STC  
 Player of the match - Jeevan Mendis- STC

The Randy De Silva Memorial trophy for the best Thomian performance at the Royal Thomian encounter in Melbourne went to none other than Jeevan Mendis.

The trophies were presented to the winners by a well-known Thomian cricketer and past OBA President Arasu Saravanamuttu. (Photos in Photo Gallery – Page 31)

**Warden Rev'd Marc Billimoria commenced his 3rd term in Office**



The Lord Bishop of Colombo, Chairman of the STC Board of Governors, blessing the College at the end of a special service for the staff and students held in the Chapel of the Transfiguration to mark the commencement of the Rev'd Marc Billimoria's 3rd term in office as Warden of S. Thomas' College.

The service of Holy Communion for the school community was conducted by the Lord Bishop assisted by the Chaplain of the School, the Ven Sam Ponniah, the Rev'd Canon Joshua Ratnam and Bro Lionel Peiris SSF. The Rev'd Niroshan de Mel, an old boy of the College and currently Vicar of the Church of St Michael and All Angels, Polwatte as well as Chaplain of Bishop's College, preached the sermon.

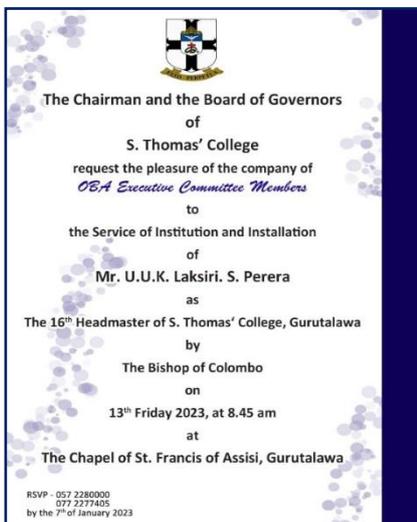
The Warden and his family were given a blessing by the Lord Bishop after which an oil lamp symbolizing new beginnings was lit by representatives of the school community including members of staff and students representing the different faith communities that make up the student body. The newly appointed Manager of the School, Mr. Maithri Wickremesinghe, was also present on the occasion as were some members of the Board of Governors.

The Rev'd Marc Billimoria was instituted and installed as the 19th Warden of the College on 6th January 2015 and commenced his second term of office in January 2019.

On behalf of the Old Boy fraternity, we wish the Warden all the success as he embarks on a new term

Source: STC OBA Mount Lavinia website Posted on 9th Jan, 2023

**New Headmaster at Guru**



The Institution and Installation of the new Headmaster, Mr. Laksiri Perera was held on 13th January 2023 by the Right Rev. Dushantha L Rodrigo (Bishop of Colombo). Mr Perera, a former Major General of the Sri Lankan Army, is the 16th Headmaster at STC Gurutalawa. He is a product of S. Thomas Preparatory School and Ananda College, Colombo. Mr. Laksiri Perera joined the Armed Forces in 1988 and retired after a distinguished career in July 2022. The previous Headmaster, Ven. S. P Nesakumar, has taken up a new position as Director and Chaplain of Karuna Nilayam, a home for the elderly and orphans, in Killinochchi.

The new Headmaster's first message was as follows:

*Welcome to S. Thomas' College Gurutalawa.*

*Gurutalawa is our smallest school and yet our largest residential School. For most of our boys this campus will be their second home.*

*Another distinct characteristic of Gurutalawa is its environment. Its scenic location and the natural beauty of its surroundings is a bonus. Use the environment for the growth and development*

of the whole child in our care. Encourage outdoor activity. Re-introduce the outward-bound course that was synonymous with Guru. Organise hikes and Camping and Cross-Country runs. Rebuild the reputation of the past that the boys from Guru were respected for their resilience and toughness. Our location is also an invitation to develop an environment friendly Campus. The advice of environmentalists and work towards becoming a model for caring for the environment.

Our location in the mountains allows us to offer opportunities available to only a few schools in the country. The school offers unique extra-curricular activities such as Horse Riding, Swimming, Squash, Hiking, Cricket, Soccer, Hockey and an outdoor education that takes advantage of our spectacular surroundings.



We encourage parents to take an active part in your student’s education by communicating with teachers via email and taking part in Parent/Teacher Conferences. Working together with you as a team S. Thomas’ Gurutalawa can provide a positive, productive, and challenging school experience for all students.

Our goal is to challenge each child academically, help them grow emotionally and socially, and guide them into become independent thinkers. Students are encouraged to display good behavior and respond respectfully to everyone in our school while making good choices that will result in positive outcomes. I am proud to be the principal of such a fine school with dedicated teachers and staff members. However, the best part is that together with the community and parental involvement, we are moving students toward their individual goals and preparing them for an ever-changing future.

The school’s success depends on the partnership between students, staff, parents, teachers, administrators, and community members. Active parent participation is vital to a rewarding experience by all. With our efforts, we can make great strides toward helping our young people reach their potential and become respected citizens of our community. We can expect increased independence and acceptable models of behavior with a collaborative effort spanning in and out of school. Together we can foster a safe environment that produces students with strong, compassionate character capable of competing with the best of the best in a diverse world.

If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact me at school or composing an email.

The OBA in Melbourne conveys its best wishes to Mr. Laksiri Perera on his appointment. (Photos in Photo Gallery – page 34)

**FORTHCOMING EVENTS**

Save The Date!

Thomian Ball 2023

Saturday 11th November

DON'T MISS OUT!

## STC – AN UNAUTHORISED HISTORY OF LANKA’S GREATEST PUBLIC SCHOOL

Richard Simon's 'history of Lanka's greatest public school', is an epic poem!

Epic, in its reach; poetic, in its lyricism, this towering, magnificent opus is a pearl, of both history and literature. "STC" touches the soul and core, of historiophile, linguaphile and bibliophile; Christian, Lankan and, above all, Thomian.

This book is not a chronicle of STC history. Keble and Billimoria served that purpose amply. Neither is it intended to evoke feelings of nostalgia in Old Thomians wishing to relive the 'best years of their lives'."

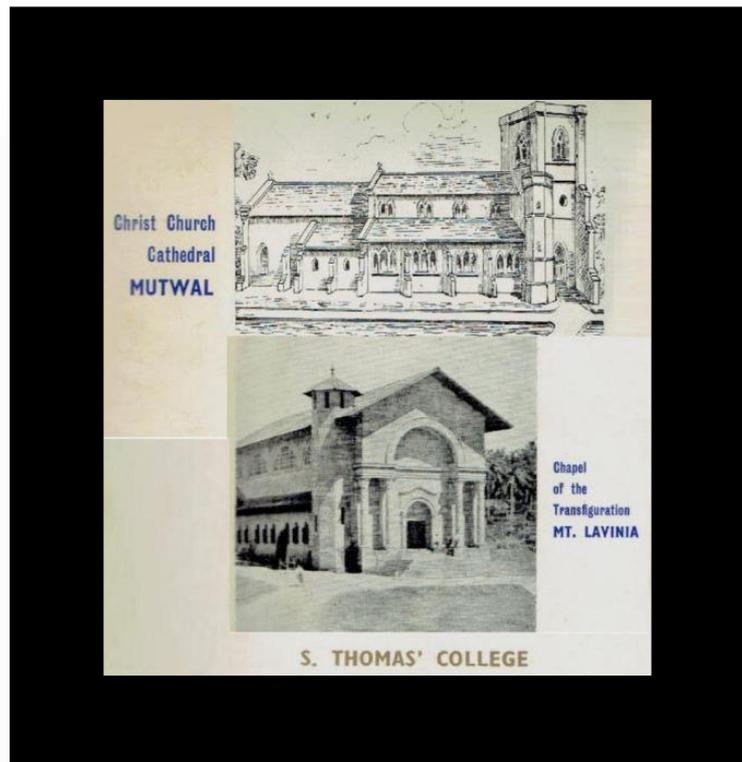
It is more ambitious.

The story begins in 1801, the year "modern, Western-style education" was established in British Ceylon. Fifty years of Lankan history precedes the foundation of St. Thomas' College. This pattern - Thomian history presented against a backdrop of Lankan history – prevails throughout.

"STC" examines, in great detail, the profound effect "historical and political events affecting the country" had on the College. It records how St. Thomas' changed "- often reluctantly..." as "the habits, customs and hopes" of the country's rulers and her people changed.

Simon's "STC" is packed with inspiring and satisfying information about the many Thomian 'sons' who influenced the history of the country, beginning with the [attainment] of "mature estate" of its first alumni! The reader is reminded: "Of independent Ceylon's first five Prime Ministers, four were Old Thomians...only the most obvious of many conduits through which the influence of Thomians flowed out into the country as a whole." Warden de Saram's proclamation, on Old Boys' Day, 1949, was oft justified. "...whenever a thing is done for the first time in Ceylon, it is a Thomian who is called upon to do it"

The STC OBA's service to and influence on College affairs, is thoroughly documented; her story told in lavish prose. The reader will watch the Association grow, from Warden Miller's "desire" (1886) and humble beginnings – formed "with a view to the strengthening of the ties which should bind a man to the place where...he has learned...the most valuable lessons of life" – to the potent force for good it soon became and remains to this day.



Richard Simon joined STC 'Prep' in 1964. He was six years old. He moved to STC Mt. Lavinia in 1966 and continued there until 1978. Simon was an active member of the Debating, Drama and Parliamentary Societies and a frequent literary contributor to the College Magazine.

As a historian, Simon has published well-received histories of the John Keells Group (2006) and the Ceylon Tea Industry (2017).

"My particular interest is in the social, cultural and commercial history of the British period in Ceylon", Simon affirms.



Richard Simon

Other published books Simon has authored include Sri Lanka: *The Resplendent Isle* (Singapore, 1989, Times Editions) and Sri Lanka: *The Island from Above* (Colombo, 2014 & 2017, D.S.R.). His short fiction has been published by Penguin India and Himal Southasian. For the past four decades, Simon has been engaged in writing and editing books and articles about Lanka's history and culture. He was particularly closely involved as editor in Howard Martenstyn's very successful *Marine Mammals of Sri Lanka* (Colombo, 2013, Citrus).

His research in Britain for this book included stints in the Bodleian Library, Oxford, the archives of St John's College, Cambridge, and the archives of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel. At Mount Lavinia, Simon worked for five years (2014-19) in the College Library, reading every extant issue of the Magazine, as well as various Thomian Fair and Royal-Thomian Souvenirs. He spent some time at S. Thomas' Prep as well, going through their old magazines and records. Corinne King - of VIC, Australia (daughter of the late D.N. Pereira, long-serving teacher at STC) helped fill in many of the lacunae in the College Magazine collection.

Simon is a "researcher, who takes fresh perspectives on traditional conclusions" - a 'myth-buster'.

Yet, he does not contrive to be one. An excerpt from his Preface reads:

"For the first seventy-five years of its existence, the name of my old school was customarily rendered as 'St. Thomas' College' in keeping with the spelling and stylistic conventions of the day. For reasons that are... (...explained in Chapter 39), a new convention was adopted in the mid-1920s and remains in use to this day."

"Thomians young and Thomians old", will embrace Simon's history and applaud him for telling it. They will be comfortable, though "This book is about St. Thomas' College...nearly half of its chapters are not about the school at all." They will affirm, as the author does:

"[Lanka] has enjoyed great profit of St. Thomas' College; and the rarer and more threatened the ideas and values the school enshrines come to be in the future, the more valuable a resource it will become." (Epilogue).

They will treasure 'STC'.



**David Sansoni OAM**, was at STC Mt. Lavinia, 1960 - 1971, Stone House. David, a Christian, was a School Prefect and represented the school in 1<sup>st</sup> XV Rugby (Coloursman), Debating and Drama. He is the Choir Director at St. Paul's Church, Castle Hill NSW. He is now retired after a 45-year career in Transport/Logistics (Shipping). David was awarded the Order of Australia Medal (OAM) in 2018, "for service to the community".



## “Friendly Rivalry” - A View from the Opposition!!

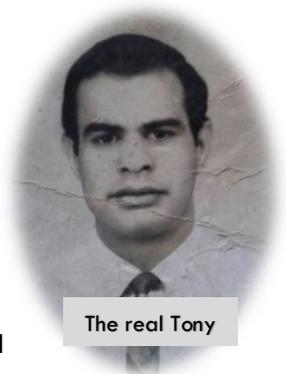
*“I was back again facing Roger (D’Silva) on 98 and the then Thomian captain, Randy Morrell, walked up to me and said - Mallie, not everyone gets an opportunity to score a hundred in the Royal – Thomian; but carefully.”* These are the famous words in the autobiography that my ex-classmate, Vijaya Malalasekara, wrote. May he rest in peace. This incident formed a very close friendship between two great rivals!! This is the “friendly Rivalry” I give below!! Randy THANK YOU!!

I will start my “preamble” about the “friendly rivalry” that existed between the two schools during my time at Royal in the 50s and 60s; and hope and pray even now, one will never understand but continue to maintain the intrinsic rivalry that both schools cultivated and showed others, on the sports field and in whatever the schools partook.

Hi, my name is Ranjit Sirimanne – yes, a “Sirimanne” from Royal College!! Most Thomians would associate this name with my cousins, Tony and Neville, who excelled in Rugby and Rowing for S. Thomas’ respectively. You may recall that Tony was an excellent scrum-half and it appears that this position has been a Sirimanne trait with my dad, Tony and myself all playing in the same position while at school. So much so that one of my friends at the Royal Hostel gave me the nickname “Tony”, which has stuck with me throughout my life rather than my other names – Ranjit, Felix or Siri (Some other names cannot be published!!)

I had the opportunity of playing Rugby against Tony after leaving school. I was captaining the 2<sup>nd</sup> XV Kandy Sports Club side and playing against the mighty CR&FC in which Tony (the real one) was scoring many tries at will. Both being scrum-halves I was marking Tony and we decided to call each other “Tony” and both packs were confused as to which “Tony” was putting the ball into the scrum. Later on in Sydney, we became very

close family friends until his untimely passing. I am sure that many Thomians who knew Tony would agree that he was a thorough gent both on and off the field. May he rest in peace. Neville and his family too came to Sydney and was an integral part of our family circle.



The real Tony

My first encounter with a Thomian was when I was an altar server at St. Paul’s in Kynsey Road, Borella. They were the LaBrooy brothers – Keith and Robin, who were senior in age to me. There was no rivalry in the eyes of the Lord!! Most of the Thomians I met as rivals during my school career was in the sporting fields, namely, Basketball, Athletics and mainly Rugby. The names that come to mind are Wendel Flamer-Caldera, Bumpy Jayasekera, Rodney Murray and the late Cholmondeley Henricus (May he rest in peace!!) These great Rugby players went on to represent Havies and CR&FC immediately after leaving school. Wendel became a family friend whilst he lived here in Sydney. Rodney Murray became a distant relative by marriage, as his cousin Roy Winter (deceased), another Thomian from Gurutalawa was my brother-in-law. I recall a “Jayasinghe” who was a Thomian athlete, who beat me in the Mile run at the schools meet. He subsequently played with me in the Kandy Sports Club 2<sup>nd</sup> XV Rugby team – we had him on our “wing” but he never had the chance to run as we never had the ball!! Also, Thomians in my vintage may recall Rodney Ingleton, another giant of S. Thomas’ who captained Ceylon and the CR&FC in Rugby. He was the Finance Director at W.D.& H. O. Wills the first company I worked for after migrating to Australia in ’74.

Duleep Chickera was a close friend of mine at Royal and played alongside me in the Basketball team at school. He later went on to be an Anglican priest and then the Bishop of Colombo. He spent a considerable amount of time at S. Thomas' as the Chaplain and Sub-Warden. I love to say that "it took a Royalist to put things right at S. Thomas'!!

Whilst living in Sydney since 1974, my wife and I met Tissa Goonatilaka, who I believe is the oldest living member of the STC Old Boys Association in Australia. At the time of writing, Tissa is 97 years old and still fit as a fiddle!! He has shared with me superb stories mainly about S. Thomas' Guru, his scouting experiences and about Dr. Hayman, the former Headmaster at

Guru. He is a tsunami of memories of an era which we and the future generations will never know!! Tissa and his wife Pauline became our "foster" parents as without them we would have struggled to work, socialize and progress with life here in Australia. We are eternally grateful to have

known them as they are and always will be the unsung Old Thomian and spouse who still loves his old school; and in my eyes, flown the "Blue, Black and Blue" flag quite high in his own way. Their son-in-law, Lakshman (Lucky) Mawalagedra is also an Old Thomian; and he and I have a common interest in Rugby, especially the Wallabies. We attend most games played here in Sydney and always have our opinion on which players should be dropped and be replaced by players of our choice!! I guess these fall on deaf ears where the Wallaby management is concerned!! Lucky too has flown the "Blue Black & Blue very high with his working career and we remain close friends – another "friendly rivalry" that has blossomed.

In the 80s, I met this unsung great Old Thomian Lalith Senaratne who had a travel agency (so he said) in Sydney. However, none of us dared to travel through him as he was known to change your itinerary at will. If you wanted to travel to New York there was a chance that you could end up in London; and his excuse was that he thought London was a better place to visit!! However, Lalith became my partner – in - crime, when we were given the responsibility of organising the first-ever *Royal-Thomian Dinner Dance* in Sydney. With a combined dance committee and help from the wives, the event was held at the Ryde RSL Club to a capacity crowd. We initially catered for 300 and ended up with 400 guests. It was a great night with the likes of Summa Navaratna and Geoff Weinman as chief guests and the

profits sent to both schools for sports equipment. This combined event continued for a few more years with even more success and was considered to be a much sought after event in Sydney. One year the event sponsored a Thomian cricketer for coaching under Geoff Lawson at the Sydney University Club. The guy was looked after by the families of the combined committee for a period of three months. We understand that he initially blossomed as a cricketer and subsequently dropped from the team for "running-out" too many of his batting partners!!

My interaction with two other Thomians – Jayampathi Bandaranayake ("Banda") and Anura Tennekoon started during our school days, when we as Prefects were in the joint Tent Committee that coordinated the production of the Big Match Souvenir. We subsequently worked for Ceylon Tobacco Co. Jayampathy as a Senior Manager & Anura as a "fellow" worker!!

So now you can see that my life has been and is intertwined very much with Thomians living and who have passed away. With all these names I have mentioned, I found that the values that Royal taught me was also evident with the Thomians I've met, and in some instances, even more than my schoolmates. I am honoured and privileged to have associated with these fine products of a Great School. The "friendly rivalry" continues even after so many years whenever we meet with stories trying to outdo the others!! I believe that Royal was one of the leading schools in Sri Lanka due to this rivalry with S. Thomas' and also Trinity.

I always say that the largest social event and the most prestigious schools cricket match was, is and always will be, the Royal – Thomian. With Rugby, it is the same with the Bradby against Trinity. These two events are looked forward to yearly by those who has either bowled or kicked a Ball, especially from other schools. So, without either of these two great schools, Royal would have never reached the mantle of a leading Government public school.

With many of my cousins attending STC led to much ribbing at family get-togethers where arguments arose as to which was the "better school", with cousins, uncles and even aunties joining in the fray. The best school is always the one that you attended. There are many families that have maintained their connection with their school, some dating back to the 19<sup>th</sup> Century. These family traditions were more at Trinity and S. Thomas' where enrolling was easier if one's father had been to the school in his time. Royal, of course, based admission more on merit than other considerations. I couldn't possibly end this missive without having that dig at the two rival schools!!



Renjit & Lucky at the recent Wallabies match in Sydney

The friendships that we forged between the two colleges made us better quality people later on in life when we had the luck to meet again. We could always rely on each other's integrity to be fair and honest in making decisions. I would like to make contact with the likes of Bumpy, Neville and Keith again (my email is at the end of this article); and this goes to any other Thomian who knows me.

That's what the intrinsic admiration and respect that the two schools fostered and always had for each other. Without one the other was never there!!

May I conclude by wishing the Thomian Old Boys Association of Australia all the best in their future endeavours & thanking you for Inviting me to write this article.

Floreat Royal College and Esto Perpetua S. Thomas!



**Ranjit Sirimanne**  
Email: [felix@obk.net.au](mailto:felix@obk.net.au)

**Ranjit Sirimanne** was at Royal College from 1957 to 1966 and was the Head Prefect in 1966. He was the Captain of Basketball (Senior and Junior) and also represented the school in 1<sup>st</sup> XV Rugby and Cadetting. He was a Corporal in the platoon that won the Herman Loose Trophy for the first time for Royal & was a Company Sergeant Major. Ranjit went on to play Rugby for CR&FC Bees in 1966 and Kandy Sports Club in 1967 to 1971.

Ranjit migrated to Australia with his family in 1974 and lives in Sydney

***Editor's Note:** An impromptu phone call from Ranjit Sirimanne to a member of the Thomiana Editorial Team, helped us to identify Tissa Goonatilaka, who at 97 years is probably the most senior member of the STC OBA in Australia. Our appreciation to Ranjit for this article highlighting memories of his "battle of the blues"!*

## *Friendly Rivalry – The Royal Spirit*

### **DONATION FROM A ROYALIST**

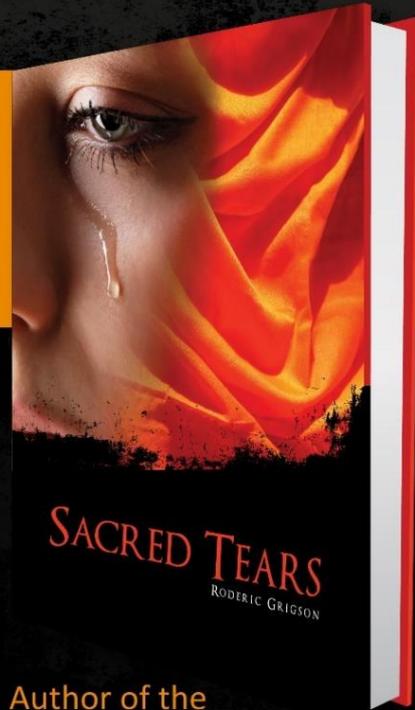
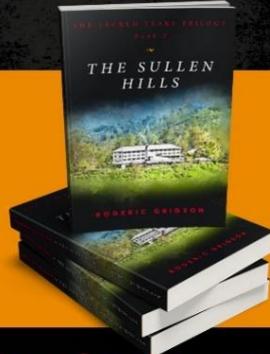
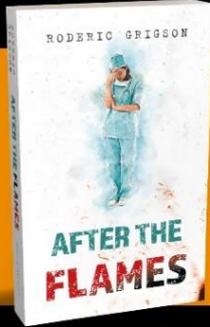


"A percentage of sales, a payment of Rs,500,000/- from Tribute to MS show presented and organized by myself held on 19th February 2023 was gifted to Staff Club of S. Thomas' College Mount Lavinia at STC Warden's office. Myself being a Royalist, this is the second time I gifted such payment to STC. It was 1.6 million in 2016. Myself being a pure Royalist, I love the standard of STC. From the entrance and wherever you go, I couldn't find a single piece of dirt on any roads, gardens and grounds. It was so clean and greenish all over. The corridors of buildings were damn cleaned. After meeting with the Warden, I said I like to meet the staff who maintain the school and went and spoke with them and commended, appreciated their services towards maintaining the high level of cleanliness. They all

were in one uniform which showed the class of organization. I asked them whether they like to join Royal College, but the answer was "Anee sir api kohomada me iskole daala yanne. Meka ape iskole" ( Sir, how can we leave this school, this is our school ). I was speechless and surprised. Once again, hats-off to the Warden and the entire staff of STC a job very well-done in keeping STC in this standard and so beautifully. Finally, I must also say "There is no STC without Royal and there is no Royal without STC" 🙏🙏🙏

**Chandimal Fernando**

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



Available for sale on Amazon and through the authors website [www.rodericgrigson.com](http://www.rodericgrigson.com)

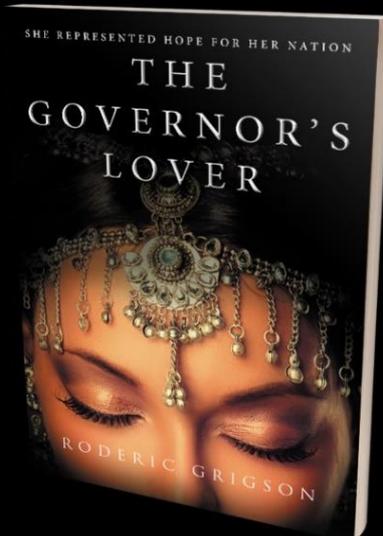
Sri Lankan born, Australian writer  
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# SACRED TEARS TRILOGY

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## THE ORIGINATOR OF THE “BATTLE OF THE BLUES”

To the present generation of Royalists, it might sound strange that an Englishman was originally responsible for the duel. Ashley Walker was one of those Empire-minded Englishman, who sailed East – not for business—not to make money—but to contribute to the game of cricket. He came to teach the Royalists of the 1870’s how to play cricket. How well he succeeded can be seen by the development of the game at Royal.

Ashley Walker went to Westminster College and then to Cambridge. He played in the Oxford – Cambridge matches in 1864, 65 and 66 and was awarded his “Blue”. Later, he played for Yorkshire in the County Championships.

Ashley Walker arrived in Ceylon in 1877, as a Senior Assistant Master at the Colombo Academy, as Royal College was then known. The Academy was then situated in San Sebastian Hill, Pettah. It is said that no student who played cricket was punished by him for being slack in his work. How Royalists would wish for

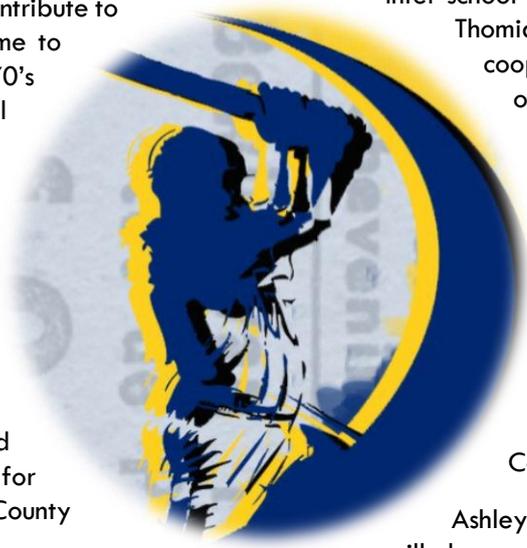
more of this type!! He has been called the “Father of Ceylon Cricket” and “father of Cricket at Royal”.

He was one who believed in friendship through cricket, inter-school cricket. So, he arranged the Royal Thomian match with the very willing cooperation of Rev. F. T Falkner, Warden of S. Thomas’ and himself was a Cambridge man.

In 1879, Ashley Walker captained the Academy, as Royal was then known, against S. Thomas’ College. The Academy won by 51 runs – Ashley Walker proved their undoing. At that time the Masters took part in the annual encounter. In 1884, Ashley Walker captained the Ceylon squad against the Australians.

Ashley Walker, a genial English gentleman, will be remembered by all Royalists for his contribution to cricket at Royal and for originating such a happy occasion where the rival schools meet in the friendliest atmosphere and where old timers can revive memories of by-gone days.

*Courtesy: S. S Perera*



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## CLASS OF 1960 CELEBRATES 70

Over the past two decades, the Class of 1960 has displayed a penchant for finding various reasons to 'have a bash'. Almost all members of this rather unique band of 'happy chappies' as they were once referred to by Mr. Godfrey Senaratne in a message he wrote in 2010, when they celebrated 50 years of joining STC - were born in either 1952 or 1953.

Having a very legitimate reason to celebrate, a few classmates put their heads together to plan an event in March, specifically to also accommodate some of the classmates who arrive in Colombo at that time of the year for a very obvious reason. It transpired that Monday 13<sup>th</sup> March was the best available date during 'match week'.



Mid-February, the writer received intel that our beloved Mr. GLC Senaratne and wife were due in Colombo in March. A quick call to Godfrey confirmed the information to be accurate, and he and Kajji were immediately invited to the function.

Michael Anthonisz represented Ceylon in Swimming while in school, and was Head Prefect in 1972. A Chartered Accountant by profession, Mike is also a renowned artist who was Chairman of the George Keyt Foundation until January 2023. Mike quickly set to work on a portrait of our Guest of Honour Mr. Godfrey Senaratne.

The affable Arun Dias Bandaranayake although a year senior in school has emceed all our events during the last two decades. He was delighted to hear that his 'favourite teacher' was going to be present. Arun's one liners when he's got the mike in hand are legendary – if one is quick enough to catch them though.

The welcome address was delivered by CR Jansz. who joined STC in 1960, and was a Rugby Coloursman. On leaving school he made his foray into the corporate world, and has done us all proud by heading several listed companies including DFCC Bank with distinction. He was recently appointed to the Board of Aitken Spence.



Godfrey then took the podium and recounted his long association with STC, both as a student and as a teacher. It was interesting to learn of his close family ties to both Royal and S. Thomas' and the circumstances that led to his admission to STC rather than Royal. He also touched on some little known important historical facts of College. At the end of Godfrey's speech, Mike Anthonisz presented him with the remarkable portrait he had done of this wonderful gentleman. Godfrey was visibly both surprised and moved. It was an emotional moment for all those present.



Music for the evening was provided by Manilal Perera and his outfit with Saxophonist Buddhika filling in during breaks. The piece de resistance was, however, the Speldewinde brothers - Kelvin and Jerome. There was pin drop silence when they took the stage, and the audience was kept mesmerized by what was a rare musical treat.

To a man all agreed that the highlight of the evening was undoubtedly the presence of, and the opportunity to meet with Mr. Godfrey Senaratne - the man who has left an indelible impression on all of us, and his charming wife Mrs. Kajanka Senaratne.

**Wimal Heenetigala**

## Ride 4 Ceylon Charity to Jaffna

*Milinda Liyanage, Assistant Treasure (2023), Melbourne CBA*

*[Ride for Ceylon is a four-day 475km bike ride held this year from 1-4 March 2023. The ride starts in Arugam Bay on the south-eastern edge of Sri Lanka and finishes in Manipay in the northern Jaffna Province. The ride is challenging but inspiring. The riders' cycle in pelotons to support each other – encouraged immensely by the beautiful landscape and the people of Sri Lanka that lifts the spirits enroute. There is no finer motivation than the great work in progress to restore the Green Memorial Hospital in Manipay.]*



This a story about me enjoying one of my leisure activities and doing some good for the Sri Lankan community in the Jaffna peninsula.

I had the privilege of joining the Ride 4 Ceylon charity bike ride from Arugam Bay to Jaffna along the east coast of Sri Lanka during the first week of March this year. As I was heading down to Colombo for the Royal Thomian cricket match this ride fitted with my schedule. Furthermore, I have never been to some parts of the east coast, so it was a good opportunity to see the eastern countryside of Sri Lanka. The only downside of the trip was that I had to take my bike and accessories with me, which was 20kg of my luggage allowance.

Who or what is Ride 4 Ceylon; they are a not-for-profit organisation that organise the charity ride every year, 2023 was the 7th year the event has been run. The funds raised through this ride is given to the Friends of Manipay Hospital fund that provide the necessary funds for the activities of the Green Memorial Hospital, Manipay. Dr. Jayantha Arnold is the trustee and cofounder of both originations.

There are a few Thomians in the Ride 4 Ceylon committee including my batch mate Sriomal De Silva, who by the way is the person that introduced me to the event back in 2019. There were also other Thomians from various parts of the world riding in the event.

This ride was my second, the first was done in March 2020 from Colombo to Jaffna along the west coast. The ride was four consecutive days doing about 100km per day. We started early before the sunrise around 6am and try to get to the destination between 10 and 11 in the morning. The riders are split in to 3 groups depending on the ability. As this is a charity ride, the organisation tries to cater for all abilities. We had 50+ riders and about 15 support staff. The registration for the ride included all meals, accommodation, mechanical support, insurance etc. Alcoholic drinks were at own cost.

The event kicked off in Colombo with a rider briefing dinner at Barracuda. This is where I was able to hand in the funds raised by me to the Dr. Jayantha Arnold (see photo below). Thanks to the generosity of my fellow Thomians



in Melbourne, friends and family, I was able to raise A\$1,000. I have seen firsthand how the previously generated funds have been utilised in the hospital and how it benefits the Manipay community.



The trip started with a journey from Colombo to Arugam Bay in a bus and ended up on a bus ride from Jaffna to Colombo. In between the bus rides, there was a 400+ km bike ride including 3 stopovers in between. The accommodation was excellent as we were mostly staying 4-star hotels (Amaya, Trico Blue, Jetwing Jaffna, etc). As the event organisers arrange a police escort, the entire 400+km ride was very safe.

The last day ride was memorable as we stopped and regrouped at Rio Ice Cream, before riding to the hospital in a parade. We had a wonderful reception from the hospital staff and were provided with scrumptious lunch.

I made a lot of cycling friends during this event, most of them are on my Strava (mobile App) now. We had participants coming from all over the world, including Sydney, London, Paris, Toronto and many different parts of Sri Lanka.

I am hoping to do the next year's ride as well. If anyone is interested in sponsoring me, please let me know. It is for a very worthy cause which supports a deserving community.

Please check out the following link <http://www.ride4ceylon.com> / and look at the Reviews section, you might see

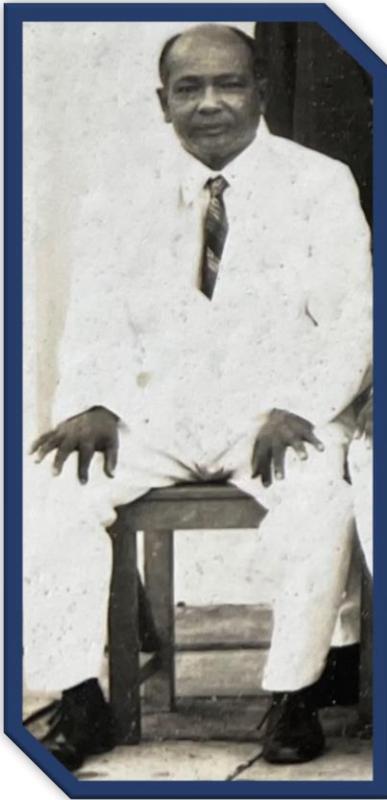
### *To All Old Thomians – We like to hear from you!!*

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

#### **Membership Register**

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

## Tribute to a Thomian Legend – Lassie Abeywardena



I don't think I would be incorrect if I wrote...Lassie was S Thomas' College...and S Thomas' was Lassie. In fact, one could say he was in a sense married to College. In the 50's we had some great Teachers (and some not so!). Even though not all were popular, they all were respected and/or feared as the case may have been. Lassie though not a *teacher* in the true sense of the word, was a mentor and a Junior (U 16) Cricket coach who moulded many of the boys into giants of Cricket... *no names no pack drill*...but you get the drift. I mean no disrespect, but the First XI Coach, Shelton Gauder, benefitted from Lassie's grounding and teaching of basic concepts of batting, as well as bowling. I remember Lassie at cricket practice in his long trousers and folded long sleeve shirt repeatedly throwing a ball to a batsman from three quarter way down the pitch to instil the correct stroke. I distinctly recollect watching a game on a Saturday on the Big Club grounds in the early 50's when the then U 16 team played against the First XI. I don't recollect the result, but I do remember that the U16 team performed admirably.

In ruminating on concept and content regarding Lassie, I touched base with a very old (we both joined College in 49 in Winchester under Rev and Mrs. Barnabas) colleague and who now resides in Miami, **Shirley Wijesinha** and in response he penned a few lines which I append below.

*Mr. Lassie Abeywardena, after the war (World War II) joined the staff of STC as a Boarding House master and worked in the College office.*

*His legendary status was achieved as the Cricket Master and Coach of Junior (under 16) cricketers. Many of the players who went on to play for the 1<sup>st</sup> XI and even to represent the Sri Lanka in the International arena attributed their successes to the grounding in the fundamentals of the game by Coach Lassie. He used to throw the Ball from halfway down the pitch at the youngsters forcing them to play back or drive. Youngsters learned to play with a straight bat from an early age - a technique that stayed with them through their subsequent years in the Game.*

*Coach Lassie instilled a confidence that could never be learnt from any Text Book on the game - and generations of Thomian Cricketers would forever be thankful to his wisdom and guidance no matter at what level of the game they played.*

*May the turf lie lightly over him*

*Shirley*

In passing, regarding the Turf referred to above... I am sure it must be quite disturbed (caused by turning the grave!!), by modern day batting strokes...e.g., reverse sweep, scoop etc.

Lassie worked in the College office and coached the U16 cricketers from about 4.30 to 6-6.30pm, 5 days a week...followed by a match on the Saturday. He gave freely and willingly of his time to The Alma Mater. I have no knowledge of Lassie ever having played cricket for College though he was also master in charge of other sports (Rugby and Athletics) as well. He was the House Master of Miller originally and later after amalgamation, with Chapman House, jointly with Mr. J Jesudasan. I don't think he even had a nickname, as most masters did, perhaps "Lassiya"!!!

In the course of a conversation with another good friend, who shall remain nameless (even though **She** is more a Thomian than some!!), but a magnificent and willing contributor to all things *Thomiana*, I learnt of another of Lassie's '*talents*', (for want of a better word). It appears that Lassie occasionally performed

duties as a dog shooter. I gather he was occasionally called on to 'euthanize' sick/ dying dogs. This was in the days before vets, and the swiftest way was to use a gun, which he apparently possessed. While this may sound terrible today, remember this was a different time and place and the most 'humane' way available to alleviate an animal's suffering.

Lassie was a short man of diminutive stature with a slightly high-pitched voice. But what he lacked in stature he more than made up in influence, guidance and advice. Lassie did have a soft and sympathetic side and I never saw him berate any one, and yet he was well respected. I recollect the fathers of two of my U16 team mates died and he took us to the funerals. He even took us up to a funeral of a Miller Junior dormmate who was interred in the family grave in Anuradhapura. I can clearly recollect the procession to a family burial plot but little else of the trip. I expect College would have met some of the cost but I am sure Lassie must have dipped into his own pocket to cover any shortfall. This was a time when we were given the princely sum of 50 cts/week as pocket money.

Lassie was a confirmed bachelor as were the other three boarding house masters (apart from Winchester), but he met a lovely lady late in life and I believe spent a few happy years with her.

As I said earlier, in the 50's we were lucky to have been taught and mentored by truly dedicated and enthusiastic teachers. In conversations with many fellow Thomians over the years on our/my days in that great *School by the Sea*, never a bad memory or harsh word was ever associated with him. Yes, we may have copped some form of punishment from him, for some indiscretion but it was obviously quite appropriate and deservedly so. In my personal opinion, Lassie the Man, was up there among the Best of the Best we were privileged to have as Teachers.

Esto Perpetua

**Maurice Fairweather (1949-60)**  
Winchester/Stone/Miller-Chapman

### ***Tributes from Former College Cricketers...***

*My first real coach was Mr. Lassie Abeywardena at U 16 level. He was an excellent coach to impart technique to his proteges. One of the finest things he taught me was to use my feet to spin bowlers. This proved invaluable to me when up against renowned Indian spinners like Bedi, Prasanna, Venkataraghavan in International Cricket. He also had a good sense of humour as he encouraged us to wear boxing gloves the night prior to an important match.*

**Anura Tennekoon (1954 – 66)**

*Lassie was one of three coaches (Mr. George Ponniah and Mr. Quentin Israel, the others) who I will always revere for abilities to, not just see talent, but also to nurture it. Lassie's diminutive size belied a strong personality (very rarely exercised), and, in his quiet way, imparted a ton of knowledge of, not just the game, but also of the innate abilities of the boys under his wing.*

*When I graduated - due age - from U.14 (Mr. GP's group) to U.16, I came under Lassie's wing for the first time. My Captain was Vasantha Weerakoon, a gentle left-arm spinner and brilliant musician and who is now Director of Music at STC, I believe.*

*I was a leg-break bowler at the time. One day at practice, Lassie pulled out a new ball and said, "Try this." Silly bugger that I was, I thought he wanted me to bowl my phockin' leggies with the new ball. As I was looking at the ball in my hands, feeling its oily, slippery surface (it was a bottom-of-the-barrel brand name "Corinthian????"), I gulped. This was one of my WTF moments. But, under orders, went to my leggie run-up when he barked, "No no no. I want you to bowl fast." I had never done this before, but rather than admit to everyone there (and face the typical derision from the buggers later on), counted out my steps (an arbitrary number based on eyeballing the distance from the top of the run-up to the bowling crease), I bowled my very first "fast" ball. Must have made an impression on the good Lassie 'cos from then on, I was U.16 opening bowler with the highly talented Azam Hameed at the other end. We did well*

that year and my grateful, heartfelt thanks to Fate for allowing Lassie to cross my path in the Yellow Wood of the hallowed Small Club Grounds!!

One day we'll meet again, Sir. And, when we do, I again look forward to more of your guidance, dispensed with that cheeky smile of yours.

Be Thou Forever!

**Dennis Chanmugam (1959 – 68)**

A man I will remember forever! For the longest time he lived in what I thought was a cute little studio apartment above the entrance to the Main Hall and was there until he got married and moved to a little house in the same compound as my parents lived in. He was also good friends and a drinking companion of my dad ("Rifle" Mendis) who also taught at STC back in the day. So, I have known him even before I tried out for U16 Cricket when I was 13 years old, along with Anura Tennakoon! I will never forget his amazingly shrill voice that barked out directions and advice! Back then I was a pace bowler and he took me under his wing. I can't remember exactly at what age, but thanks to Lassie's coaching and encouragement I opened bowling for U16 when L. S. Perera captained and Kumar Boralessa was the Wicket Keeper! This is hilarious but in my last year in U16 and hence my last year under Lassie's amazing tutelage, he had me open as a bowler and as a batsman!! And he also gave me the award for the Most Promising Junior Cricketer that year!! That was the magic that Lassie was able to perform in my life and my most fond memories of cricket at STC are of my U16 years under Lassie.

**Rabin Mendis**

Lassie was responsible for guiding many of us, who aspired to being "called up" for the first eleven practices. There are certainly countless numbers of us, who owe our success at Senior levels and beyond, some even at the National Level, to Lassie's coaching.

Some 58 years after graduating from 'Small Clubs' to the "Big Clubs" I know that the grounding I received over a short two years under Lassie contributed immensely to what I accomplished on the cricket fields of Sri Lanka and beyond, on East and Central Africa,

I also recall Lassie as a time keeper, stop watch in hand, at many levels of Track and Field meets.

**Manilka Wijesuriya (Prep 1954-56 and ML 1956-67)**

On the day before the 1967 Royal Thomian, we were gathered at the Tuck Shop with Orville and Lassie giving us inspiration to face the big match - most of us being freshers. Also present there, were a few Masters who were eager to wish us well. Mr. K. N. Jayasinghe, came and told us "Boys, watch out for the Royal Space bowlers". Lassie immediately retorted "I say Jayasinghe, get out from here men. You get Space Bowlers only at NASA"! The laughter that followed gave us a tremendous boost to go out confidently and face any Royalist who came from space, the next day!

**Ajit Jayasekera (1957 – 69)**

*Editor's Note: Our appreciation to the contributors to this article – Maurice Fairweather, Anura Tennakoon, Dennis Chanmugam, Rabin Mendis, Manilka Wijesuriya and Ajit Jayasekera. Thanks also to Ravi Rudra for compiling the initial article in commemoration of Mr. Lassie Abeywardena's 101<sup>st</sup> Birth Anniversary on 9 March 2023.*



## CENTENARY CRICKET ENCOUNTER

# THOMIANS ARE NEVER DEAD TILL THEY ARE BURIED

The Thomian team started practices for the historic Centenary Match, which was the first three-day game in the history of the Battle of the Blues, under Coach F.C De Saram, immediately after the 99<sup>th</sup> Royal Thomian Encounter. As the year wore out and the countdown began, the pressure began to build up. Immense publicity was given to the event and the excitement was at a fever pitch level. Many were the Old Boys who returned from distant shores to attend the Big Match. Illustrious Old Boys, many no less than Sri Lankan cricketers, would meet up after practices to give us encouragement and their words of wisdom.

The team was brought into College immediately before the Big Match for a two-week residential camp. The Sick Room was allocated to us for this purpose. Team spirit peaked and I well remember our determination to rally round the College flag in victory. Coaching was intense, morale high and clean fun prevailed. The boys would drive Coach De Saram's Mini-Moke around the Big Club Grounds while he slept blissfully unaware of our pranks. Three days prior to the match, both teams were invited by President J. R Jayawardene to dine at the President's House. Nervous though we were to meet the highest in the land, our youthful appetites were undeterred and we ensured that the kitchen of the President's House ran out of chicken curry on that historic night.

The Big day arrived and we left a sumptuous breakfast at the Warden's Residence in a hired bus to the Sinhalese Sports Club (SSC). We were introduced once more to President Jayawardene and other distinguished

guests, after which a march-past of Royal and Thomian Past Captains were held, reiterating the historic overtones of the Match. The SSC grounds were a kaleidoscope of colour and virtually bursting at the seams with perhaps the largest crowd of almost 30,000 accommodated at that venue. In my reckoning, it was undoubtedly the most colourful extravaganza ever witnessed in a cricketing encounter.

We had been told that the wicket was ideal for batting and we waited, hardly breathing, as Johann Pieris and Ranjan Madugalle, Captains of the two teams took the toss. The toss was won and our skipper Johann elected to bat. However, much to our dismay, wickets fell at regular intervals and we were all out for 154 runs. Ken de Alwis was the only high scorer standing out with 47 runs. Luck seemed to favour the Royalists who started out with a bang and scored 117 for 2 wickets by the end of the first day's play.

Undaunted, we started the second day, our plan being to restrain them below 200 runs. However, they continued in the same vein and piled up runs at will. The Thomian fielders contributed to this feat by dropping a couple of catches. I too was one of the offenders and dropped a catch off Sudath Pasqual at 15 runs and he went on to become Royal's highest scorer at 66 runs. The Royal team declared their innings at 321 for 8 wickets batting well past tea-time. The Thomians began their innings but bad luck prevailed and play was called off early when our opening batsman Suranimala Wijesinghe had to retire after being hit on the face off the bowling of Asantha de Mel.

At the start of the third day, we knew the odds against us were high but our determination prevailed. By lunch time we had lost 3 wickets and with Lakmal de Zoysa having scored 45 runs was indeed unfortunate not to get a well-deserved half-century. At the fall of the seventh wicket, I joined Umesh Idippily in the middle and we were 31 runs in deficit to avoid an innings defeat. Prior to my going in, my skipper reminded me of the catch that I had dropped off Sudath Pasqual. This spurred me onwards strengthening my determination to do well for the team. As I walked past the tents, I heard my father's voice advising to play my usual game. I relaxed and was fortunate to score a boundary off the first ball I faced off Kesara de Costa. We felt the best form of defence was to attack; and Umesh Idippily led the way by opening out and hitting some beautiful shots. He batted extremely well and we were unfortunate that he was stumped just before the tea break.

At tea, we could not have any major ambition than that of making the six runs necessary to compel Royal to bat again. Having made up our minds to embark on the "Mission Impossible" Chandrashan Richards and I strode out after tea to the centre amidst the cheering and jeering. As to whether we could achieve this target appeared very much in the balance, in the face of tremendous pressure being brought to bear by the Royalists. Even if the Royal supporters had lost faith, to the extent that their loyal fans had even constructed makeshift gallows to hang themselves in the "Mustangs" tent, Richards and I had not. I observed that the Royal players had now donned their College caps assuming an early victory. I felt it was opportune to keep the strike as much as possible since Richards was a fresher, but my attempts to shield him from the onslaught of the Royal bowling failed. For two consecutive overs, I scored boundaries off the last ball which resulted Richards facing a fresh over. Yet, Richards showed his prowess through his text-book style forward defence

and gave me the confidence to relax and play my own game. The importance of Richards' innings cannot be measured in runs. Playing his only second match of the season he walked into steaming pressure. So, it's a tribute to his guts and courage that helped us together steer S. Thomas' from an angry sea of trouble.

The atmosphere in the ground by now was electrifying with the milling crowd. We batted close to two hours and in the process established a series record for the ninth wicket. When I scored 66 runs equalling Sudath Pasqual, it was boundary to extra cover to reach 70 when the crowd broke loose. From every point on the ground, they stormed into the arena, the Blue, Black and Blue flags aloft. I only had time to grab a stump before running back to the pavilion. The whole team celebrated our performance; and the mood as though we had won the game, although in reality we avoided defeat. We were 252 for 8 wickets, with Richards on 20 not out and I, 70 not out with 14 boundaries. No longer the Thomian grit was to be a fable for we considered that it was virtue alone that contributed to a draw, which eventually contained all the joys of victory. The following day's newspapers had several headlines in "The Great Escape", "A Hundred Years for the Cricket's Dunkirk!", "Dropped Catch spurred Halangode to Heroic Stand", "Out of the wreck – two daring Heroes", "Even the ranks of Tuscany could scarce forbear to cheer".

My greatest strength was a combination of many things, namely the wisdom of my coaches, F. C de Saram and David Ponniah; men who taught us to play the gentlemen's game in its true spirit, the brotherhood and the oneness of my team mates and the Thomian grit that will never say die.

Esto Perpetua!!

**Mahinda Halangode**

### *The Two Heroes*





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## OBA Executive Committee – 2023

Title	Name	Telephone	Email
President	Saman Liyanage	0407 358 415	saman.a.liyanage@outlook.com
Vice Presidents	Peneeth Goonawardena	0404 213 166	peneeth@gmail.com
	Chris Varney	0407 630 351	chrisvarney10@gmail.com
	Rayesh Gunasekera	0410 047 088	rayesh_g@yahoo.com
Secretary	Joe Rajadurai	0412 064 812	jrajadurai59@gmail.com
Treasurer	Shehan Jayetileke	0421 878 057	Shehan17@hotmail.com
Asst. Treasurer	Milinda Liyanage	0458 998 850	milinda.liyanage@gmail.com
Editor	Upali Gooneratne	0449 024 294	fgooneratne@iiec.org
Committee	Mahes Heenetigala	0418 182 707	maheenet@gmail.com
	Amesh Fernando	0411 492 747	ameshf@gmail.com
	Praveen Bandaratilleke	0448 259 644	prayadrian@gmail.com
	Lalindra De Silva	0433 774 962	lalindrads@hotmail.com
	Dulith Gunaratne	0452 144 486	dulithgunaratne@gmail.com

### *New Members of the OBA: January – May 2023*

Name	Branch	Period	Name	Branch	Period
William Ward BELING	Mt. Lavinia	1967 - 1974	Devmal PALAPATHWALA	Mt. Lavinia	2005 - 2019
Nisura H Mario De SILVA	Mt. Lavinia		Laurian DE KAUWE	Mt. Lavinia	1968 - 1975
John William PEARCE	Mt. Lavinia	1957 - 1966	Kisara G. ATTYGALLE	Mt. Lavinia	2008 - 2021
Sasanka GUNASEKERA	Mt. Lavinia	1985 - 1998	Navinda WICKRAMASINGHE	Mt. Lavinia	1997 - 2010
Rae Joash DEVADASON	Mt. Lavinia		Dulitha ELLAWALA	Mt. Lavinia	2005 - 2018
Lakshan Ravinda PEIRIS	Mt. Lavinia	2012 - 2019	Nelaka WICKRAMASINGHE	Mt. Lavinia	2009 - 2023
Vishver SWAMINATHAN	Mt. Lavinia		Nimhan FERNANDO	Mt. Lavinia	
Suhane UDUMALAGALA	Mt. Lavinia		Dhanuja WIJERATNE	Mt. Lavinia	
Leshane KANDAGEDERA	Mt. Lavinia		Voshana NISSANKA	Mt. Lavinia	2005 - 2019
Dirk D'SILVA	Prep School	1970 - 1974	Jeevan MENDIS	Mt. Lavinia	
Michael de KRETSEK	Prep School	1976 - 1985	Sunith De FONSEKA	Mt. Lavinia	
Winu Akila De SILVA	Prep/Mount	1998 - 2011			

## UPCOMING EVENTS - 2023

**February****Friday 10<sup>th</sup>****Annual General Meeting (AGM)**

6.30pm

Waverley Youth Centre

Miller Crescent, Mount Waverley 3139

**March****Friday 17<sup>th</sup>****Royal - Thomian Live Broadcast**

7.00 pm

Waverley Youth Centre

Miller Crescent, Mount Waverley 3139

**Sunday 26<sup>th</sup>****Royal – Thomian Cricket Matches & Family Day**

9.30 am onwards

Strathaird Reserve

38, Community Parade, Narre Warren South 3805

**July****Saturday****Nineties Night (Winter Bash)**

6.30pm

Date and Venue: To be confirmed

**August****Sunday 5<sup>th</sup>****Transfiguration Service**

Venue and Time: To be confirmed

**Saturday 26<sup>th</sup>****Members Lunch**

12.00 noon

RSL Club

23 Osborne Ave, Springvale, Vic

**November****Tuesday 7<sup>th</sup>****Melbourne Cup Sweep**

2.00pm

**Saturday 11<sup>th</sup>****Thomian Ball - 2023**

6.30pm

Pullman on the Park,

Wellington Parade, Melbourne

**December****Saturday 9<sup>th</sup>****Festival of Nine Lessons and Carols**

Venue and Time: To be confirmed



## IN MEMORIAM



*They remain in our memories forever*



**Cholmondeley Henricus:** Cholmondeley was initially at Guru and came to Mt. Lavinia around 1958; and represented College in Rugby, 2<sup>nd</sup> IX Cricket, Athletics, Swimming and Boxing. He excelled in Rugby and after leaving school playing for Havelocks FC and representing SL at the International Asian Games and All-India Tournament. After migrating to Australia in 1968, he continued playing Rugby for Croydon, Hawthorn and Box Hill Clubs. Cholmondeley had been visiting Sri Lanka frequently and engaged in charity work for less privileged families.



**Sunil (Foxy) Jayasekera:** Foxy joined College (Mt. Lavinia) in 1956. He played Cricket Under 14, Under 16 and 2nd XI and was in the 1st XI pool as well. He also played Rugby and Boxed for College. He was the Rugby Under 17 captain in 1965. He is the brother of Ranjit (deceased), Mohan and Ajit.



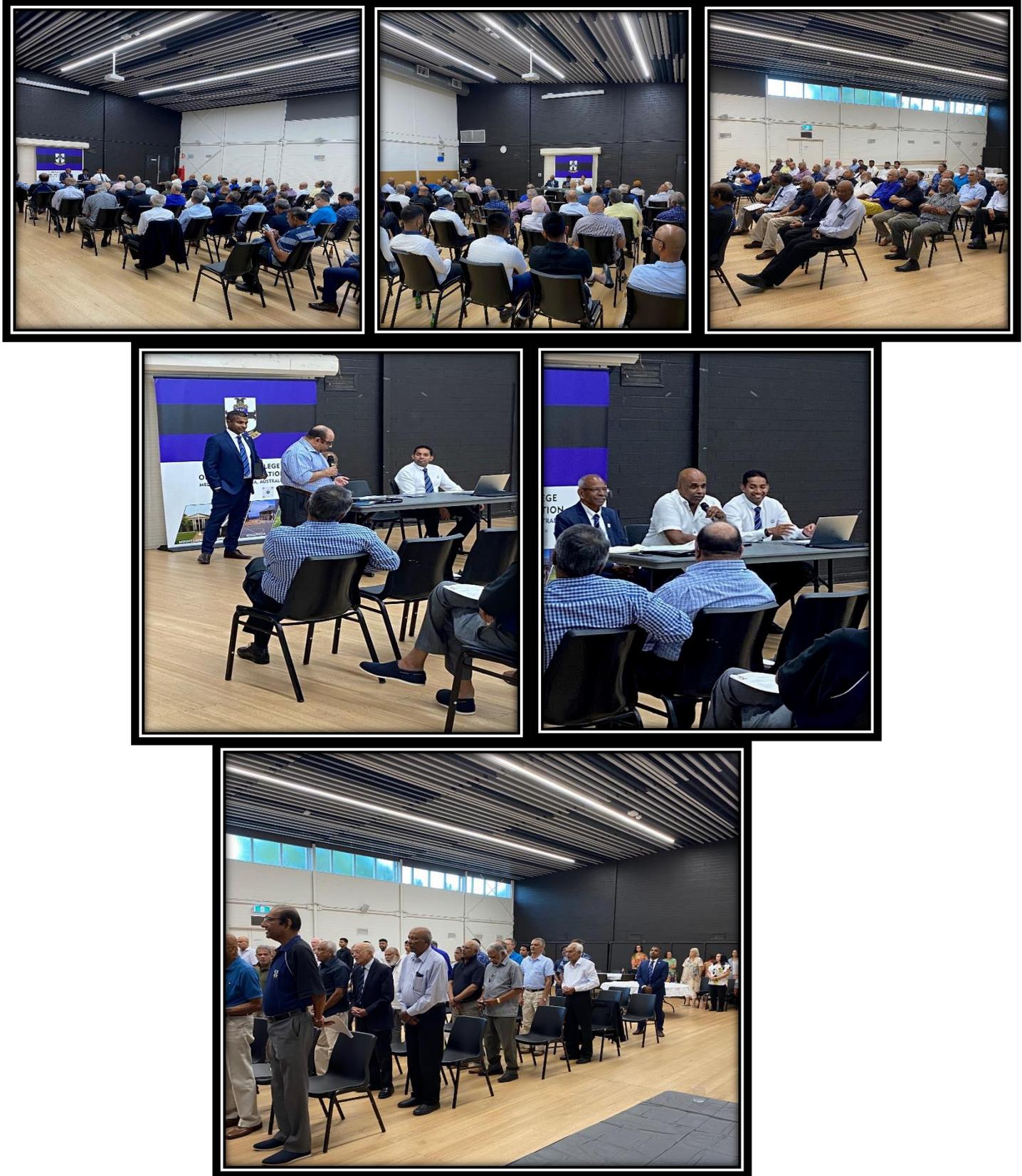
**M. Nazeer Rasheed:** Nazeer was a product of Prep School and Mt. Lavinia in the 1950s and early 60s; and represented College in 2 XV Rugby. A staunch Thomian and founder committee member of the Royal Thomian Colts Tent. Nazeer started his working career at John Keells Tea Department and switched to rubber brokering at C.W. Mackie & Co. Thereafter Nazeer moved to New York and he continued rubber brokering at Philip Billhardt Inc. He served as the President of the Sri Lanka Association of New York.



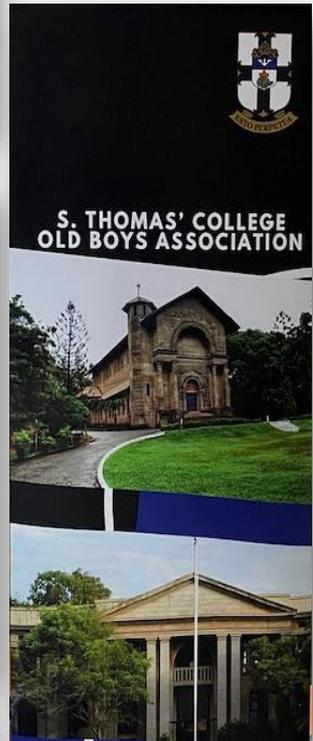
**Nihal (CNJ) De Silva:** Nihal was at Mt. Lavinia in the 50s-60s era and after leaving College, he joined a family business, Harris Ceylon Limited, where he excelled in the manufacture of paint brushes and painter's tools, until he retired as a Director of the firm. Nihal was a regular at gatherings of old Thomians, particularly at the Mustangs every year. He was a devoted Christian and a memorial service was held for him at the Calvary Church, Kirillapone on 1<sup>st</sup> April 2023.

**Esto Perpetua**

**PHOTO GALLERY: ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING (10<sup>th</sup> February 2023)**



**PHOTO GALLERY: ROYAL – THOMIAN LIVE BROADCAST (17<sup>th</sup> March 2023)**



**PHOTO GALLERY: ROYAL – THOMIAN CRICKET FESTIVAL (26<sup>th</sup> March 2023)**

Over 40s Game



Over 50s Game



Open Game



# PHOTO GALLERY: PICS FROM MOUNT LAVINIA

## “NEW LOOK” WINCHESTER HOUSE



**PHOTO GALLERY: PICS FROM GURUTALAWA & MOUNT LAVINIA**

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**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	Members: <b>\$25.00</b> ; Full-Time Students & Pensioners Concession: <b>\$10.00</b>		
Cash/cheque/MO	\$..... enclosed (in favour of S Thomas College OBA)		
Bank Transfer	I have credited <b>STCOBA's</b> account online at CBA, Mount Waverley <b>BSB 063-151, Account No. 1002-9468</b> , in the sum of \$..... having clearly recorded my name as remitter for identification purposes.		
Credit Card	<input type="checkbox"/> Visa <input type="checkbox"/> Mastercard <input type="checkbox"/> (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	<b>Membership Secretary</b> PO Box 2337, Mount Waverley Vic 3149 Enquiries: Upali (Pancho) Gooneratne Email: <a href="mailto:fgooneratne@iiec.org">fgooneratne@iiec.org</a> Tel: <b>0449024294</b>	<b>Committee Use Only</b>	
		Application Approved	
		Payment Recorded	
		Member Notified	

Subscriptions for 2022 were due on 1<sup>st</sup> January. If you have not already joined or renewed your membership, please use the above form.

# ALLISON MONKHOUSE FUNERAL DIRECTORS

**FOR PERSONAL ATTENTION TO FUNERAL ARRANGEMENTS IN  
KEEPING WITH SRI LANKAN AND INDIAN TRADITIONS**

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