



# THOMIANA



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



*Oh, what a night oh oh what a night..*

**Yes...it was, it really was such a night!!** Once again, the Thomian Ball proved to be "the event" of the year, catering to a sell-out crowd at the 5-star Pullman on the Park in Melbourne. Those fortunate enough to attend were treated to an event to remember, entertained by two popular bands, exotic decorations, sumptuous food, complimentary gifts; and of course, a wide selection of premium drinks, the effect of which was evident when singing the college song by over 120 plus old boys over a range of vintages.

**Wishing all our Readers and their families a  
Happy and Prosperous New Year**





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



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

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

**History of the OBA:**

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

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

**Mission:**

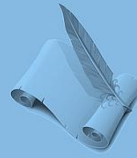
The main purpose, of the Thomian OBA, is to foster fellowship amongst Old Thomians in Australia and to raise funds that can be channeled to the Thomian fraternity of schools in Sri Lanka (Mount Lavinia, Kollupitiya, Bandarawela and Gurutalawa).

Esto Perpetua

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## President's Message



Dear Thomians,

*I trust this message finds you in good health.*

*On behalf of the Executive Committee, I extend warm wishes to you and your families for a Joyous and Prosperous New Year! As we embark on the 52nd year of the STC OBA in Melbourne, I would like to take a moment to provide you with an update on our plans for 2024.*

*First and foremost, I want to express my sincere appreciation for your unwavering dedication and support. Your commitment propels our association forward, enabling us to reach collective milestones. Together, we have achieved significant successes, and I am confident that our collaborative efforts will lead to even greater accomplishments in the future.*

*In the upcoming months, we have an array of exciting events and initiatives scheduled to fortify our community bonds and offer valuable opportunities for all. Your active participation and engagement are vital to the success of these endeavours, and I encourage each of you to actively take part.*

*Our calendar includes: Annual General Meeting, Members Only Night, Live Screening of the Big Match, Royal Thomian Encounter Melbourne, Transfiguration Service, Members Lunch, Annual Dinner Dance, Melbourne Cup Draw and Carol Service*

*Furthermore, we always welcome feedback and suggestions. Your input is invaluable as we strive to enhance the member experience and address the evolving needs of our community. If you have any ideas or concerns, please feel free to reach out to us. Your voice is important, and we are here to listen.*

*As we navigate the challenges and opportunities ahead, let us stand united in our purpose and commitment to excellence. Together, we can continue to make a positive impact within our association and the broader community.*

*Thank you for your continued support. I eagerly anticipate the ongoing success of our association under your leadership and collaborative spirit.*

Warm regards,

Esto Perpetua!

Sincerely,

*Saman Liyanage*

## EDITORIAL

*"New Year is another opportunity to see life with a little more caring, compassion, maturity, and beauty"*

Another year over and a new one has just begun .... on behalf of the Executive Committee (Ex-Co) of the OBA, we express our best wishes for a great New Year to all our readers in Australia and overseas and send all our love and good wishes for an awesome year.

The last year, 2023, saw a new incumbent as President (Saman Liyanage), who was no stranger to the OBA having served in the Ex-Co in several positions over the last decade; and many new faces in the Ex-Co, primarily from the younger brigade. The year was somewhat "quiet" compared to the preceding year, which was one of the busiest, commemorating our 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary.

Activities in the last quarter of 2023 included the key event of the year – Thomian Ball 2023 and the Carol Service. The dance catered to a capacity crowd, comprising a very high percentage of Old Thomians, reflecting a resurgence of the past where the "Thomian Dance was the place to be". We were encouraged by the positive feedback from the attendees confirming that the fundamentals of the dance were in place. Our thanks to the Dance Committee for their untiring efforts to keep the traditions alive. The dance impacted the Melbourne Cup Draw which had to be cancelled due to both events virtually overlapping. The final event was the Carol Service held in the Berwick Anglican Church, the

same venue as the Transfiguration Service. The performance of the 30+ choir was well appreciated by the record crowd attending the service.

Following the approval of the revised OBA Model Rules at the last AGM, the provisions were enacted with immediate effect. This led to the downsizing of the Ex-Co to 13 members from the previous 16 with the emphasis on establishing sub-committees, including members outside the Ex-Co, for OBA events. This new format functioned effectively with several former Ex-Co members actively supporting the major events.

With the easing of Covid restrictions, the Ex-Co meetings were conducted on a monthly basis at the Springvale RSL Club, which was also the venue for the Members Lunch. The new venue (Berwick Anglican Church) for the Transfiguration Service and the Carol Service will be reevaluated this year based on costs and location. The Ex-Co is likely to see some new faces this year following intended resignations and hopeful that "younger" members would raise their hands to serve in the Committee. The composition will be finalised at the AGM.

The AGM, scheduled for 9<sup>th</sup> February 2024, coincides with the AGM of the parent OBA in Sri Lanka and will be at the same venue as the previous years. The other events that are currently confirmed for the year include the

Members Only Night (23<sup>rd</sup> February), Royal-Thomian Live Broadcast on Friday 8<sup>th</sup> March and the Victorian Royal-Thomian cricket matches on 17<sup>th</sup> March. Preliminary discussions are in progress for the 2024 Thomian Ball and most likely it would be the first task of the new Ex-Co to finalise.

The membership of the OBA last year saw the addition of 28 new members which was significantly higher than the previous years; and this was evident with the record number of old boys attending the Thomian Ball. The Ex-Co is aware of the need to cater for the "younger members" and this would be reflected in the new events to the OBA Calendar.

As reported earlier, in consultation with the Warden, the OBA has ventured on an ambitious project to upgrade the Lower School Library. Considering the magnitude of the project we have reached out to the other OBAs in Australia and New Zealand for joint sponsorship. Our contribution for 2023 will be determined once the annual accounts are finalised.

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

*Upali Gooneratne*  
Editor



**OBA News**

**Chris Lawton - 92<sup>nd</sup> Birthday Celebrations at “Naval Headquarters”!!**

Chris Lawton Snr. OAM, former Secretary of the STC OBA in Melbourne, celebrated his 92<sup>nd</sup> birthday on 4<sup>th</sup> November 2023 at his residence in Narre Warren. For the information of our readers, Chris who was an ex-Naval Officer in Sri Lanka, has been affectionately called “Commodore” and his residence “Naval Headquarters”, by a core group of Old Boys who have been visiting him regularly over the last decade.

These regular visits (initiated by the late Frankie David, Selva Kanagasabai, Peter Schoorman and the late Sri Bawan) has been appreciated by Chris, especially since the passing of his wife, Monica. Each event normally includes a few drinks, Sri Lankan cuisine (preferred by Chris) and the usual banter!! On this occasion, “Bar-bath” and Pittu was the highlight.



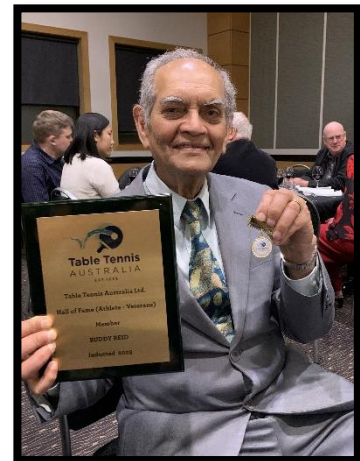
Front: Ronne Reid, Chris Lawton, Nalin Dassenaik, David Varney  
Rear: Selva Kanagasabai, Lynwood Stork, Peter Schoorman, Upali Gooneratne, Bandulal Molligoda, Rajan Hensman

*Our congratulations to Chris on this memorable milestone and God’s blessings for the years to come.*

**Dr. Buddy Reid – Induction to Australian Table Tennis Hall of Fame**



We are proud to report on a unique achievement of one of OBA’s loyal members – Dr. Buddy Reid. He was inducted to the Australian Table Tennis Hall of Fame in Canberra in November 2023 at a ceremony conducted at the conclusion of the national tournament. In the tournament, Buddy won a gold, two silvers and a bronze in the over 80s and was ranked #1 in the over 80s order of merit for the national competition.



Buddy captained Ceylon (Sri Lanka) in both Cricket and Table Tennis; and went on to represent Australia in Table Tennis, winning numerous National and World Veteran Titles, as well as captaining the Australian Veterans. A tremendous achievement for a surgeon by profession and is an inspiration to many.

*Our heartfelt congratulations to Buddy and may you continue to be an inspiration to us all.*



## Summer Vibes - Thomian Ball 2023



Following the exceptional dance in 2022 celebrating the OBA's 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary, there was a general realisation that the interest and demand for the following year would be somewhat diminished. With this in mind, the Dance Committee opted to go back to the newly renovated Pullman on the Park which had been the venue for many years. However, the demand for tickets exceeded all expectations, that resulted in several missing out. It was most encouraging to note the large attendance of Old Thomians of different vintages, which was by far the most in recent years.

The sell-out crowd were treated to a memorable evening, including pre-dinner cocktails in the foyer, a sumptuous 3-course dinner combined with an extensive range of complimentary drinks. The décor was stunning with the blue/black theme lighting in the hall coupled with matching table décor. All guests were recipients of a special gift of engraved Double Walled Glass set and the Dance souvenir. Similar to the previous year and by popular demand, the two local bands, *Redemption* and *Next Generation* provided the music for the night; and also included a special guest artist from the Voice - Sandra de Bono.

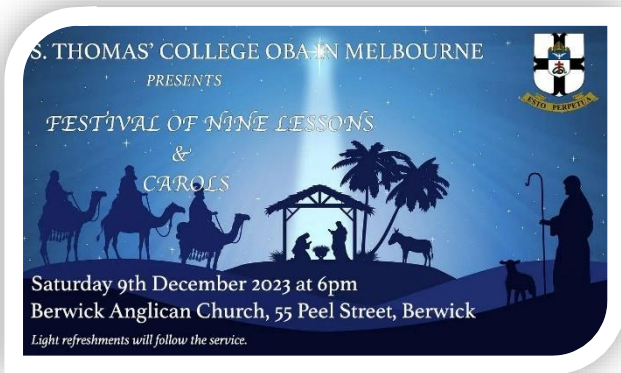
The night included a special auction of a painting "Indian Village Girl" contributed by Chutson Henrietta Wickramasinghe and a raffle with attractive prizes including a holiday in Sri Lanka with two return air tickets with compliments of Sri Lankan Airlines.

Corporate sponsorships played an important part in the success of the dance. Our appreciation to our main sponsor Tomorrow Financial Solutions (TFS) and Number 8 Property Group, and all other sponsors, advertisers and donors for their generosity.

Link for Dance Photos: <https://bluetulipscreative.smugmug.com/Events/Summer-Vibes-2023-Thomian-Ball-/n-pMNpmC/i-smBwTSS>



**Festival of Nine Lessons & Carols**



STC OBA Carol service 2023 was held at the Berwick Anglican Church on Saturday 9<sup>th</sup> December at 6 pm. This was the final OBA activity for the year and the committee was keen to finish well with a grand service. The attendance exceeded our expectations.

The choir comprising of old Thomians and ladies with Thomian connections had weekly practices since early September and concluded with the rehearsal in early December. The Choir was directed by Herbert (Felix) Bartholomeusz and accompanied by the talented organist Ashan De Silva. The choristers had great fun and fellowship with light refreshments after practices.

Dr Rev Ruwan Palapathwala, an old Thomian, conduct the service. In addition to the special English carols there was one Sinhala and Tamil Carol sung with pride and emotion by the whole congregation supported by the choir. The service was followed by light refreshments and the presentation of gifts to the chorister and kids. The collection taken at the service was distributed between St. Aidan’s church (in appreciation for their help in choir practices) and the Deaf and Blind School in Ratmalana, Sri Lanka.

Our appreciation to the organizing committee comprising of Rayesh Gunasekera, Lalindra De Silva, Amesh Fernando, Praveen Bandaratilleke for coordinating the event. Also, a thank you to Vasikaran Ratnarajah for the assistance provided.

**NEWS FROM BRANCH SCHOOLS**

**STC Bandarawela – Thomian U17 Cricket Team Makes History!**



In an exhilarating showdown, S. Thomas’ College, Bandarawela, made history by winning the Sri Lanka Schools Cricket Under 17 Schools Division III Tournament 2023, which took place on October 31, 2023, at the De Mazenod College Grounds, Kandana.

With determination and skill, the STCB U17 team secured their place as Champions, triumphing over Sri Sumangala College, Hikkaduwa, with a margin of 60 runs.

**Scores:** STCB: 171/10  
Sri Sumangala College: 111/10

**Prep School – Healthcare Screening for Staff**



The S. Thomas' Preparatory School Batch of '98 organised a special Healthcare screening program for members of the school staff recently. Partnered and supported by Hemas Hospitals, the screening program was well received and most staff members availed themselves of this facility which is done on an annual basis by the Batch of '98. In light of



the escalating costs of health and medical care, this project is indeed a virtual lifesaving initiative.





# The Power of One

*“Have faith in the boys you teach, even the most difficult ones. Understand them, love them, sympathise with them and expect great things from them – S.J. Anandanayagam (Warden 1970 – 1977)”*

As soon as I read those words in “A Selection of Special Speeches” published in the Thomiana, I had to sit down, reflect on them and express my thoughts on the reality of those words as they were applied to me by so many teachers at S. Thomas’ College.

My thoughts first went to my foundations in the Lower School with Agnes Bay, Father Barnabas, Joy Jacob, Nalini Jayasuriya, DF David and JHS Peiris to name a few. In the Middle School there was VP Cooke, LAH Arndt, CS Weerasinghe, VLC Walatara, FJ Senaratne, RFA Mendis, DN Pereira, KN & DS Jayasinghe and DS Jayasekera. In my mind too were the 3 musketeers as we fondly called them, in Ashuboda, Jinadasa and Coperahewa.

I thought of Revd. Bower Yin, Revd. LGB Fernando, Father Baldwin and Wilson Muttiah that gentle giant of the 16<sup>th</sup> Colombo Scout Troop! And then in the Upper School my mind went to Brookie D’Silva, RA Asirwatham, EN Devadason, OA Abeynaike, Vivil De Kauwe, Quintin Israel, VD Burder and so many others who grace the “Hall of Fame’ in my mind and under whose tutelage I was privileged to learn.

Then there were my Wardens from RS de Saram to CH Davidson and Revd. SJC Selvaratnam. But then my thoughts came back to the man who spoke those words that had helped me reminisce in the first place – S. J. Anandanayagam himself!

I joined College in form 1A in 1955 and left at the end of 1968. They were thirteen long years – probably a bit more than the average student but due mainly to a hiatus in Year 10 and the long suffering of senior teachers who nevertheless showed faith in me during that season of my life.

What struck me about the quote that inspired these thoughts, was that those words were not only just spoken but lived out as well, though I might not have seen it

then. I honestly cannot remember Pythagoras’ Theorem or Maxwell’s Corkscrew Rule or my Latin declensions, but the greatest gift I take out of my time at S. Thomas’ is the influence that so many teachers had in shaping my growing up years and equipping me for life itself.

‘Ana’ as I will fondly call him was one of them!

Ana was Upper School Headmaster in my Upper 6 and Col Form years. I remember when I entered Upper 6 B, he was my Physics teacher and one to be revered. We were prone to keep our distance with him not only because of the stature of the man but because he had a reputation for the most painful caning in the school. I know that for sure because I got whopped by him a few times and I can vouch for the intense pain it brought!

I suppose the only way I could get back at him was to write about his mannerisms and sayings in my own little ‘red book’ and I can assure you that the quotes I had of him were nowhere near as noble as the man who has just inspired me to write! We had fun at his expense but never dared take him on openly.

I remember him with his thumbs under his armpits tapping his “pecs” and bellowing in that powerful voice of his that “these two points are rather very important!” I remember him walking to the blackboard with his hands on the waist of his trousers telling us, “now boys I want you to take this down!!” I think a few generations of Physics students will remember those because no one dared correct him. He was biblically speaking ‘fearfully and wonderfully made’.

I suppose I didn’t do much to build his confidence in me either. I failed my O’Levels in ’63 and went from Upper 6 B to Col B2 and then to a newly formed Col B4 after my results arrived in March of the following year. I failed my exam again in August and then again in December of ’64 only to make more history in the newly



formed Col B5 – formed just for the likes of me – as if Col B4 was not enough!

We were housed in the ‘takarang shed’ created for us between the ‘lavos’ and the kitchen! It was only the brave that ventured out there to teach us and when they did, they usually rewarded us with free periods; after all there was nothing more to teach us seeing we had studied it all over the 3 years! Our free periods, particularly in the afternoons consisted of ‘working the line’ from the kitchen to the classroom. The ‘line’ incidentally consisted of passing coconuts and jam tarts (if we were lucky), that worked their way into the classroom.

Well it was no surprise that I failed again in August of ’65 – my fourth attempt! My next step was to ‘sit’ again in December and then probably grace the halls of Pembroke!

My reputation at that stage wasn’t too flash either. I had been reported for my behaviour at the December ’64 exam. Four or five of us were hauled up before ‘Poeta’ and he read the riot act to us because of comments made by the chief invigilator about our atrocious behaviour, that he had never seen or experienced anywhere in his lifetime as a teacher!.

I remember that exam. It was a Physics paper on New Year’s day! First someone (not me) threw a snake into the exam hall. The next thing we knew was that the sareed supervisor was standing on the desk and there was absolute mayhem. That brief period of time I think changed the results of some of us from a ‘Fail’ to a ‘Pass’ if you know what I mean! I think it was Roger D’Silva who gallantly saved the lady by carrying the snake out of the hall. It was accompanied by crackers in the hall because some of us were still in party mood after the night before. Just for extra measure we deflated all four tyres of the chief supervisor’s car. It was not good to say the least and I am not proud of it!

To my utter surprise I received only one week’s detention for my behaviour in all of this, though suspension was on the cards. I suspect I may have been favoured, because of the credit my father had built through being one of the distinguished judges at our annual PE house competitions.

Well all that to say that ’63-’65 were among the worst years both in my studies and my behaviour. I was headed nowhere. That is how I saw it. That is what I believed. That is how I lived it!

In October ’65 Ana met me as I was going into class after the lunch interval. The meeting was just outside the

Physics lab in the new science block. I can to this day picture the scene. I can even smell it, given the H<sub>2</sub>S that usually wafted through the building! His words to me were, “Brohier, what do you plan to do with your life?”

“Good question sir,” I said to myself, because I had never given it any such thought. Then, still in a state of shock I blurted out, “well sir, I hope to get through my O’Levels in December and I hope I can come back to College in the next year after the results are out.”

Ana’s next sentence absolutely stunned me and changed the direction of my life forever. In his typical, thoughtful fashion he said to me, “you know, we don’t like to lose boys like you!” Then he went on to tell me that if I did well in my term exam at the end of the year, that I could ask my dad to make a special appeal and that he would speak on my behalf and consider keeping me in College for another year.

“We don’t like to lose boys like you!” That statement rang in my ears as I went home from College. In fact I have never forgotten those words. I was surprised! Shocked to say the least!! “How could he make a statement like that about me?” I thought, “given my track record in College? Someone at least believes in me in spite of all the stuff I have done. Someone has faith in me,” and something clicked in my head that day!

I remember buying some basic text books and studying from scratch, but with a new motivation. I ‘cut’ classes which was not a surprise, but this time I studied from 12 to 15 hours a day, even more. My mother thought I was out of my mind but from the position of 32<sup>nd</sup> in class I came 2<sup>nd</sup> at the term exam. In fact my dad didn’t have to make any appeal after all. My report at the end of the year simply said, “promoted to year 11” and it was in Ana’s distinct handwriting! I stayed on. I breezed through my O’ Levels that year and never looked back both in my studies and in the Offices I held in College from that point on.

I know the school motto at Royal is “Disce Aut Discede” translated “Learn or Depart.” How thankful I am though for “Esto Perpetual!” Without it, my life could well have taken a different course.

For me, that one simple conversation was a watershed in my life. The man I least expected to have faith in me, actually saw what I was capable of. He believed in me when I didn’t believe in myself. He expected better things from me and was not afraid to articulate that and stick his neck out for me in spite of the shocking commentary of my life leading up to that life changing event.



That simple word of encouragement not only had an impact on my life then, but has served as a model that I have used over the years to encourage and believe in many others who were just like me. It has served and impacted me in my role as a Youth Ministry Director; Training Director for Youth Leadership in the Asia/Pacific region; Church Leadership Consultant, Coach and Mentor to many across this nation of Australia and as a Pastor in my church in Geelong.

I cannot remember the formulae and the experiments with Bunsen Burners and Calorimeters but I can remember the influence of one man who made a

difference in my life and not just for me, but for the generations I have had the privilege of influencing.

I believe that is the influence STC has left on my life. I believe that is in fact what education finally is all about.

“Have faith in the boys you teach, even the most difficult ones. Understand them, love them, sympathise with them and expect great things from them.”

In the true spirit of S' Thomas' may we continue to pass the baton on to others that the likes of S.J. Anandanayagam faithfully passed on to us.

Esto Perpetua!



**Richard Brohier**

*Richard was at STCML (1955 – 1968) and Head Prefect. He is an ordained Minister and Leadership Development Coach & Faculty Member – Asian Access. He is currently the Pastor (Seniors Ministry) at the Kardinia Church in Geelong, Victoria.*

## FORTHCOMING EVENT



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

### NOTICE OF ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

DATE: Friday 9<sup>th</sup> February 2024

TIME: 6.30 p.m. Registration; Meeting commences at 7.00 p.m.

VENUE: Mount Waverley Youth Centre,  
45 Miller Crescent, Mount Waverley, Vic 3149



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## TRUTH WITHOUT HURT – PART 1

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

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

### ***A Senior Police Officer's Perspective of Investigations Into Political Crimes***

In addressing this subject, I put down my experience of forty years in the Sri Lankan Police, where I retired as Deputy Inspector General, Legal Range, of which twenty years were spent in the Criminal Investigation Department, where I had the privilege of starting under Tyrell Goonetilleke, the renowned investigator, as my mentor. My experience in political crimes began with the Tamil insurgency in the 1970s, through the Sinhalese youth (JVP) insurgency of the latter 1980s, the commissions of inquiry in the 1990s, to the last phase of the war (2006 – 2009). Contrary to popular perception, it is my experience that the overwhelming majority of the police officers are well-trained, capable and if left free of interference by politicians and senior government officials, would do an honest job in investigating and interdicting crime. I had shunned politics and worked according to my professional and religious conscience. In doing so I once confronted a Supreme Court judge who maneuvered a commission of inquiry towards a political verdict and in another instance defended at the Human Rights Commission two police officers who tried to check criminal behaviour by a Minister's son in the face of abusive language by the Minister which should have been disallowed in that forum. Nevertheless, I got my due promotions and was never penalised by the department. My career with the Commission of Inquiry into serious violations (2006 – 2009), headed by Justice Udagama, continued into my retirement. I submitted my resignation to the Commission upon receiving and confirming instructions for my elimination instituted by some senior government officials on account of my witness protection activity. On finding that my resignation did not stanch the active threat to my life, I explained to the Commission and withdrew my resignation. From then on, until the Commission wound up in 2009, my dynamic protection activity had been greatly impaired; it had largely become a matter of protecting myself.

Consequent to certain adverse observations by the United Nations, as mentioned below, in its report titled – 'Observations of United Nations', on the Domestic Inquiries conducted by Sri Lankan Tribunals, which included the UDALAGAMA COMMISSION, there is

much discussion for and against the creation of a hybrid court to investigate alleged war crimes.

As the Head of the **VICTIMS AND WITNESSES ASSISTANCE AND PROTECTION UNIT (VWAPU)** of the said UDALAGAMA COMMISSION I consider it my duty to defend the honour, integrity and capability of the Commissioners of the said Commission who were highly respected, proficient, diligent, independent and equal to any task expected of any International Tribunal. I was the Deputy Inspector General (DIG) in charge of the Police Legal Range when I was appointed to head the VWAPU.

I have to state that though the failure of the Commission to conclude its findings cannot be denied, yet the fault lay not on the commissioners but a few state officials, clothed in absolute power and impunity, who thwarted the activities of the Commission.

But I wish to stress that any future inquiry into the alleged violations should not be with a view to imposing penal sanctions on any individual, but with the aim of arriving at the truth, identifying the miscreants and granting of adequate compensation to the victims.

Moreover, this would be the desire of the victims too, viz: to ascertain the truth with regard to their loved ones, identify the miscreants and to be granted reparation.

### **OBSERVATIONS OF THE UNITED NATIONS**

In the recent past the United Nations has criticized Sri Lanka on our dismal Human Rights record. Attempts made by the then Government to appoint Commissions of Inquiry, which included the Presidential Commission of Inquiry appointed in November 2006, known as the 'Udalagama Commission', "tasked with conducting investigations into sixteen cases, but only completed investigations into seven, including that of the ACF and the Trincomalee 5 case, which it said absorbed most of its resources" (*vide paragraph 1211 of the U.N. Human Rights Council Report No.A/HRC/30/CRP.2 dated 16 September 2015*).



IIGEP (International Independent Group of Eminent Persons) was present during the hearings and repeatedly expressed concern over the lack of impartiality in the proceedings. IIGEP decided to terminate its mission in April 2008 because it considered that credible investigations into the cases assigned to the Commission were impossible, citing as reasons: the conflict of interest of the Attorney General's role; lack of effective victim and witness protection; lack of transparency and timeliness of the proceedings; lack of full co-operation of State bodies; and lack of financial independence of the Commission (*vide paragraph 1212 of the U.N. Human Rights Council Report No.A/HRC/30/CRP.2 dated 16 September 2015*).

Furthermore paragraph 1278 of the said Report mentions, *inter-alia* ". . . Sri Lanka should draw on the lessons learnt and good practices of other countries that have succeeded with hybrid special courts, integrating international judges, prosecutors, lawyers and investigators. Such a mechanism will be essential to give confidence to all Sri Lankans, in particular the victims, in the independence and impartiality of the process, particularly given the politicization and highly polarized environment in Sri Lanka. It will be important that the international community supports these initiatives and that they also continue to monitor these developments, to take further actions that may be required at the international level should there not be concrete results".

### MY EXPERIENCE IN THE COMMISSION

I experienced firsthand the interference of certain state officials, who first attempted to completely shut me out of the Commission, and when this failed then attempted to dissuade me from continuing in the Commission and finally when all these attempts failed, conspired to exterminate me.

However inspired by the quotes of Pastor Martin Niemöller and of Rev. Martin Luther King Jr., viz:-

*First they came for the Socialists, and I did not speak out—Because I was not a Socialist. Then they came for the Trade Unionists, and I did not speak out—Because I was not a Trade Unionist. Then they came for the Jews, and I did not speak out—Because I was not a Jew. Then they came for me—and there was no one left to speak for me—* a famous statement and provocative poem written by Pastor Martin Niemöller (1892–1984) about the cowardice of German intellectuals following the Nazis' rise to power and the subsequent purging of their – chosen targets, group after group

*"We will have to repent in this generation. Not so much for the evil deeds of the wicked people, but for the appalling silence of the good people"* – Martin Luther King Jr.

I feel that my conscience would militate against me if I do not inform the public of the issues I faced in the Commission and I also consider it pertinent to expose the unequal and unfair treatment meted out to the poor and destitute of this country vis-à-vis the politicians and their off spring and the rich and the mighty.

Policemen complain that if they do not abide by demands of Politicians in Power, even when such demands are unreasonable, they face the predicament of being transferred out and being harassed, where they have to look for houses in the new districts they are posted to, find schools for the children and transfers for working wives etc. Policemen affected by this have been those in the ranks up to Asst. Superintendents of Police.

Those above the rank of Superintendents cannot be heard to dole out such excuses since officers of this rank, once they are provided quarters in Colombo, they cannot be required to vacate such quarters, even if transferred out of Colombo, nor can they be demoted.

I presume I was accepted by officials in the Law Enforcement Arm of the State, as one who stood up to what was right, which at times, embarrassed top State Officials, Policemen Senior in Rank to me and even Politicians. This is the reason why State Officials clothed in absolute power and impunity, who intended to thwart the activities of the Commission, wanted me kept out of the Commission.

I have been a boxer from my school days at St. Thomas' College, Mt. Lavinia, where I captained the school boxing team at the age of fifteen. I have been the Champion at the Stubbs Shield meet for schools in Sri Lanka, for several years in different weight classes. Having joined the Police, I became National Champion for several years, Captained and coached the Police Boxing Team and was President of the Amateur Boxing Association of Sri Lanka in 2002. Since I was a Sportsman, I had the privilege of associating closely with other Sportsmen and Officers of the Armed Forces, as well as several prominent public figures.

In presenting the facts to the Public, my explanations would appear very lengthy, sometimes irrelevant and even somewhat overweening, yet I have to follow this process, since I am mindful that I would be targeted by very eloquent speakers and talented debaters, with an agenda of vilification, through various accusations/criticism, insinuations and aspersions. I am



compelled to discuss the following facets of my career, in order to counteract any criticism, or doubts in the minds of the readers because I may not have a fair opportunity of reply.

1. Ire of State Officials, Policemen senior in rank and Politicians against me
2. Attempts to keep me out of the Udalagama Commission
3. My investigational experience and eliciting Information without resort to torture
4. Investigations relating to LTTE crimes;
5. My straying into LTTE stronghold in Karadiyanaru
6. Investigations into JVP related crimes and the voluntary information provided by them on past and impending serious crimes
7. The Paranagama Missing Persons Commission
8. A comparison between the Udalagama Commission and the Lalith Athulathmudali and Kobbekaduwa Commissions
9. Serious injury suffered in grenade explosion at Kolonnawa oil tank installations

#### **1. IRE OF STATE OFFICIALS, POLICEMEN SENIOR IN RANK AND POLITICIANS**

In this context I present the following incidents in my career where I had the misfortune of earning the wrath of State Officials, Policemen Senior in Rank and even Politicians owing to my adherence to the Rule of Law in my engagement in certain grave controversial incidents, of which some are:

**1.1.1.** I was placed in the dilemma of having to give my opinion, in 2003 as the DIG Legal Range over a petition sent by some DIGs over the promotion of one of their batch mates as Senior DIG, (who later became the IGP), whilst there was a case in the Supreme Court pending against him. This petition had been sent to the National Police Commission (NPC) through the IGP. The case in Supreme Court was filed by the Snr DIG to quash the order of the Samarawickrema Commission which was appointed in 1994 by Her Excellency Chandrika Bandaranaike Kumaranatunga, which Commission had recommended the filing of an indictment against the DIG, in the High Court of Batticaloa and recommended the withdrawal of his civic rights, for certain General Election Law violations in the Eastern Province in 1994, which the DIG had committed in favour of the ruling party prior to 1994. However subsequently after the change in Government in 2002, the indictment filed was withdrawn by the Hon

Attorney General. But the DIG's appeal to the Court of Appeal to quash the order pertaining to the withdrawal of civic rights was unsuccessful. Hence, he appealed to the Supreme Court.

**1.1.2.** In the meanwhile, the IGP referred the petition to me, for my observations, went overseas for two weeks on an official assignment. Surprisingly in the interim period that the IGP was away, this particular Snr DIG was appointed Acting IGP by the very Executive who ordered the Commission of Inquiry.

**1.1.3.** There is a wrong notion conceived by the general public that Policemen fall into the category of UNPers or SLFPers. This is erroneous. It is only a selected band of Policemen who qualify as political policemen. And it is these policemen who change their allegiance with the changes of government and thereafter at the bidding of the politicians in power at the time.

**1.1.4.** After the incumbent IGP left overseas on his assignment, the Acting IGP telephoned me three days after his acting appointment, calling for my report on the petition against him. He strictly instructed me to ensure that the report is favourable to him and had nothing adverse. My conscience did not permit to comply with this and I addressed the incumbent (Permanent) IGP, who had referred the petition to me, that the Police Commission would not have promoted the acting IGP as Snr DIG, had he disclosed to the Police Commission, the pending appeal filed by him in the Supreme Court, to quash the withdrawal of his Civic Rights. Thus, he violated the legal doctrine of "uberrima fides".

**1.2.** Then there was this case of a pistol toting son of a Cabinet Minister who was known to terrorize patrons in Night Clubs. After the assault of one Mr. Senasinghe by this pistol toting son, who had pistol whipped the victim on his head causing grave injuries to the victim, injuries that required multiple sutures to his head, in 2006; CI Dissanayake OIC Bambalapitiya reporting the pistol whipping to Court obtained a remand order on the assailant.

**1.2.1.** The same day around 12 noon the CI called me, as DIG Legal Range, and told me that the IGP had abused him firstly for reporting facts to court and more for mentioning of the pistol whipping and grievous injuries to Court and moving for remand. The IGP had ordered him to make another application to Court moving for bail on the suspect.

**1.2.2.** I told the CI that he had taken the correct course of action and advised him not to move for bail and said that I would support his action in Court.



**1.2.3.** Three days later the CI and his ASP, Mr. Palitha Siriwardena (now SSP) telephoned me and said “Api atharamangwela” meaning “we have been abandoned”, as the Cabinet Minister has complained against the said CI to the Human Rights Commission (HRC), for wrongful arrest of his son and for submitting false facts to court to have his son remanded.

**1.2.4.** The CI and ASP said that the IGP, DIG Colombo and SSP Colombo were not only not prepared to represent them, but also severely reprimanded and abused them

**1.2.5.** I told them that I, as DIG Legal, would appear for them before the HRC.

**1.2.6.** At the HRC inquiry, where I represented the CI and ASP who were present, I countered every argument put forward by the Minister’s lawyer. Midway the Minister requested the permission of the Commissioner to address the Commission. Thereafter the Minister began casting malicious remarks in Sinhala against the Police. I told the Commissioner in English that the Commissioner “should not permit the Hon Minister to cast such disparaging remarks against the Police”. The Minister then responded that he had not come there as Hon Minister but only as A.B.(giving his name). I then told the Commissioner, if this was the case, then the Commission ‘should warn A.B. not to cast such libelous remarks against the Police”. At this comment of mine, the Minister stared at me, and on my gazing back into his eyes without flinching, he immediately left and the inquiry terminated abruptly.

**1.2.7.** That same evening, when I was in my office, an SP called me and said that the IGP had received a telephone call to his office from an SSP about my appearance at the HRC for the Police officers.

**1.2.8.** I was informed that the IGP had become furious, saying “eyata mona kekkumakdha thiyenne mekata idhiripathvenna” meaning “what is the pain he (referring to me) suffers to cause him to appear on behalf of the Police Officers, at the HRC. With some other DIGs present endorsing the IGP’s stance, the IGP had ordered the DIG Colombo and SSP Colombo to send him a report concerning my appearance before the HRC.

I was however aware that he would not dare to take action against me because such action would prove his conduct mala fide.

**1.** The Inter – Ministerial Coordination Committee on Promotion of Sri Lanka’s image abroad.

This Committee chaired by the Secretary Ministry of Foreign Affairs (S/FA), resolved to give adequate

publicity to the recirculation of the guidelines of His Excellency, The President, dated July, 2006, – to the Security Forces and the Police – on the awareness of Fundamental Rights of Persons arrested and/or detained.

**1.3.1.** I as the DIG Legal was charged with the responsibility of educating Police officers at a Divisional Level, on the Police Departmental Circular No. 1926/2006, which embodied the directives of His Excellency, the President. An Additional Solicitor General (ASG), who later became Attorney General, agreed to address the participants on the concerns of His Excellency, the President on the ramifications internationally of non-adherence to Human Rights norms.

**2.** At such meetings the ASG stressed, inter-alia, the requirement of satisfying the test of reasonable suspicion as espoused in several Supreme Court decisions, when arresting persons on suspicion. We addressed senior Police Officers in Colombo and Ratnapura Divisions, amongst whom were DIGs, SPs, ASPs and OICs of Police Stations and Crime Branches

**3.** During the tea break at the meeting with officers of Nugegoda Police Division in the first week of May, 2007, an Asst Supdt. of Police, who after securing a promise of anonymity from the ASG and I, posed the difficulty that though he was aware of the necessity of such degree of suspicion prior to arrests, the Police Officers had been warned by a top official of the Ministry of Defence that no reasonable suspicion was required to arrest any Tamil who did not have a permanent residence, or permanent job in Colombo and that such persons should be arrested and sent to the Boossa Detention Camp. In fact, when a DIG posed the issue of reasonable suspicion, this top official, in anger, had told the DIG to look for another place, failing which he would find another place for the DIG

**4.** After the tea break the ASG explained to the gathering that an illegal order, even if it be from a senior officer, if executed, would be at the peril of sanction of the officer executing such illegal order. The ASG also undertook to bring this issue to the notice of the relevant authorities.

**5.** At the Inter–Ministerial Coordinating Committee Meeting of 8th May 2007, I mentioned the concern expressed by the ASP to the Secretary, Foreign Affairs.

**6.** At this juncture a Deputy Solicitor General (DSG), who was on the Committee loudly protested that the concern expressed by me was not relevant to that forum, and that it would be appropriate only at a meeting conducted by the Ministry of Human Rights and





furthermore that it was an internal matter which had to be addressed by the Inspector General of Police. I informed the Secretary, Foreign Affairs, the reason why I brought it up at this forum was because it was this Committee which required me to conduct the relevant training program, and because of my sincere belief that prevention of such incidents would be better than corrective measures after a breach.

7. In view of the opinion of the Deputy Solicitor General, I addressed a letter to the Inspector General of Police the following day, with a copy to the Secretary / Foreign Affairs, the Additional Solicitor General who addressed the Police officers with me, and to the relevant Deputy Solicitor General, who had protested regarding my concerns.

8. The Additional Solicitor General telephoned me the following day and said that the Deputy Solicitor General had checked from him the veracity of my utterance at the meeting described above, to which the ASG had answered in the affirmative. This was followed by a telephone call to me from the Secretary/ Foreign Affairs, who commended me for having addressed this issue.

9. Consequently, having realized that our addressing Police Officers on Human Rights issues would be in contradiction to instructions being issued by the top official of the Ministry of Defence, which virtually nullified and ridiculed our efforts, the ASG and I ceased carrying out this task. Thus ended the noble mission of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

**Part 2 will be published in the next issue of the Thomiana (May 2024)**



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

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

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# BOYHOOD



*Nestled near the ocean, surrounded by trees.  
As boys did we grow up, in the school by the sea.  
It's majestic portal, to little minds as we.  
Were accepted and absorbed, to that school by  
the sea.*

*Friendships were made and bonded.  
That would last throughout the years.  
Though we fought and made up.  
Grimed faces streaked with tears.  
Basking with pure camaraderie,  
For all and one to see.  
Those halcyon years, we boys did spend.  
In the school close by the sea.*

*We grew from boy to manhood.  
Smart in thought we'd be.  
Through days that dawned. Our thoughts did  
spawn.  
Much learning ahead had we.*

*Masters and teachers that were in number.  
Great they were, never let us slumber.  
With fervour and zeal, each class they took.  
And some did dodge, by hook or crook.  
But learn we did, someday we'd see.  
The value of books, in the school by the sea.*

*The chapel a shrine, of beauty and art.  
The service on Wednesday was a Christians' part.  
Half hour of rest, to the others impart.  
Where devilry was cooked, many innocents a lark.*

*We learnt of books, and learnt of men.  
These lines from Royal's song I'll pen.  
That being said and all too well.  
The blue black an blue, in our hearts would swell.  
Proudly fluttering, in a gentle breeze.  
An awesome sight, we never would wheeze.  
The flag we boys, would hold so dear.  
To others would instill a wave of fear.  
Thus, we projected for all to see.  
We were boys from the great,  
The school by the sea.*

*In sport we excelled, many trophies won.  
Thanking our coaches, who made us run.  
The track, the pool, and rugby field.  
Stalwart cricketers, the school did yield.  
The Royal Thomian match of yore.  
Enjoyed by many, now folklore.*

*Time caught up, it's our penultimate year.  
Now close at hand, we would not cheer.  
Out of its gates, we shall then go,  
Now men from boys, so long ago.  
The world ahead through which we'll pass.  
Face adversity, pass with class.  
Strong bodies and minds, in our eyes we'd see.  
The value of our boyhood, in the school by the sea.*



## HONOURING OBA'S MOST SENIOR MEMBER – TISSA GOONATILAKA



An impromptu phone call from a total stranger (Ranjit Sirimanne, an Old Royalist) living in Sydney resulted in identifying the most senior member of the STC OBA branch in Victoria. Tissa Goonatilaka has been a member the OBA for many decades or at least since our membership records were computerised; and being a resident outside Victoria was classified as an Interstate Member. Ranjit, a close friend of the family came across the last issue of the Thomiana, during a visit to St. Paul's Aged Care in Northbridge, NSW where Tissa is now a resident; and this prompted him to inform the OBA of this proud Thomian who celebrated his 98<sup>th</sup> birthday in 2023.

Tissa was a product of STC Mount Lavinia, having joined in 1938 and was a boarder in Chapman House which gave him the opportunity to experience 'College life' to the fullest. It is understood that the quality of the 'boarding food' and the discipline was not too dissimilar to subsequent generations! As with most boarders, Tissa was a keen sportsman having won colours in Boxing and also representing College in first XI Cricket, Hockey, Swimming

and Diving. Unfortunately, the Second World War broke out, which interrupted his education; and in 1942 had to leave College prior to completing the SSC and relocate in Kandy. Tissa subsequently completed his secondary education at Dharmapala College, Kandy.

Tissa was a scout at College and that led to his first interaction with Dr. R. L Hayman who was the scout master and also the sub-Warden. Attending scout camps were memorable especially as a boarder; and has fond memories of erecting tents, singing around campfires and those unique "scout chants"! Dr. Hayman was one of Tissa's mentors and had a close association with him over the years; and supported various fundraising events including the swimming pool at Gurutalawa. It was fitting that STC Gurutalawa celebrated its 80<sup>th</sup> year in 2022.

Tissa completed his tertiary education at Agriculture College in Peradeniya and then worked for the Department of Agriculture as a Colonisation Officer. Responding to an advertisement for investors in the Mount Lavinia Hotel, a deal was struck with the hotel to employ him if he agreed to invest. As a result, Tissa was employed as a Trainee Manager moving up the ladder to Resident Manager. It was Tissa who first employed Mr. Publis as a kitchen hand who is now a world-renowned Chef. He continued working in the hospitality sector joining the Hotels Corporation and later in Queens Hotel in Kandy.

Tissa married in 1952 and has four daughters; and migrated to Australia with his wife Pauline and two youngest daughters in August 1975 and settled in Sydney. The kind and caring nature of Pauline and Tissa have been acknowledged by many people who have "stumbled" in their journey of life in Australia. Tissa has maintained a healthy lifestyle and even at the age of 98, his daily routine includes a 2km walk. His advice to younger generations is to play sports as it would help in the future years.

The OBA is privileged to honour our oldest member and thank Tissa for his continued support of the OBA. We thank you for your frequent calls to the members of the Executive Committee over the years with words of encouragement. We wish you happiness and good health as you continue the life's journey.

ESTO PERPETUA

**Editor's Note:** We wish to express our appreciation to Tissa's family, Ranjit Sirimanne, Joyce & Tony Weiman for the information and assistance provided.



## SPORTING HEROES OF YESTERYEAR...



In this series, which commenced in the last edition, we aim to highlight the sporting achievements of old Thomians in the fifties and sixties era, who have migrated to the Land Down Under to call “Australia Home”; and have continued to support our alma mater through active participation in the Old Boys Associations in Australia. In the last edition we highlighted Michael Ingleton (NSW) and Maurice Fairweather (WA) and in this edition we focus on two cousins from Victoria – Rupert Ferdinands and Denis Ferdinands.

### Rupert Ferdinands



Rupert Ferdinands is a proud product of S. Thomas' College Mount Lavinia, where he had his early education from 1946 to 1956 and was a Head Prefect in his final year. From his early teens, he showed promise in many sports, representing College in tennis, table-tennis, badminton and soccer. However, by his own admission tennis was his first love and it was where he excelled the most not only as a player but also as a coach in later years in Australia. In 1957 he gained entrance to the University of Ceylon (Colombo). At University he received colours in Tennis, table-tennis, badminton and was chess champion on one occasion. In 1961 he graduated with a B.Sc. (Hons) degree from the Colombo University; and served in the mercantile sector for a period of 10 years prior to migrating to Australia in 1972.

Rupert first won the Sri Lanka National Junior Under 16 Singles Title as a 12-year-old, and continued to win the title till 15 years old when he won the National Junior Under 19 Singles title whilst still eligible to play in the U16s, and dominated the U19 title for the next 4 years.

He was selected in Ceylon's first ever Davis Cup team as a 16-year-old school boy, and thereafter played in almost every Davis Cup tie for Ceylon until migration to Australia in 1972. Ranked No. 1 in Ceylon in 1957, Rupert continued to be ranked No. 1 for over a decade. In 1957, 1963, 1969 and 1970, he won the Ceylon National Singles title, also winning 4 National Mens Double and 5 National Mixed Doubles titles! In 1957 and 1970, he won the National Triple Crown title at one and the same tournament.

At the age of twenty one in 1957 he was ranked No1 tennis player a ranking which he held for over a decade. In 1957, 1963, 1969 and 1970 winner of the national mens singles title. Also won four national mens doubles and five mixed doubles titles. Winner of the national Triple Crown title at the same tournament in 1957 and 1970.



On arrival in Australia in 1972, Rupert served as a apprentice tennis coach, and a year later he had no difficulty at all in qualifying as a Level 2 coach in 1973, and subsequently being accredited as a Level 3 coach. In 1975, Rupert was awarded the General Coaches Education Certificate by the Department of

Youth, Sport and Education of Victoria, Australia. Rupert was a Member of the Tennis Coaches Victoria (TCAV) Board of Management for over 15 years. During this time, he acted as Secretary of the TCAV during the temporary absence of the Secretary and was also its Vice President at one time. He was invited to speak at National Tennis Coaches Seminars in Australia, and wrote several articles on various aspects of coaching that appeared in Australia's TENNIS Magazine from 1985-1989.



In 1989, Rupert was appointed to a 5-man National Technical Committee for standardizing stroke techniques for teaching purposes for tennis coaches around Australia under the guidance of the National Director of Coaching. In the 1990s, he was sponsored by the Australian Government and the International Tennis Federation (ITF) on two separate occasions to proceed to Sri Lanka and conduct training courses for tennis coaches based on the Australian system.

Rupert's greatest contribution to the TCAV was undoubtedly his dedication to managing the TCAV Training School for tennis Coaches for over 15 years as Manager and Chairman of its Examination Panel. During this time, his Training School committee introduced several improvements that led to high standards in the teaching of theory and practical components. This, of course, was in addition to his normal 9-5 daytime job as Projects Manager at Standards Australia specialising in the medical and dental areas, and his own private coaching at several local clubs. Time for family life was always at a premium!

In 2008, Rupert was honoured as a National Sporting Hero of Sri Lanka by the Ministry of Sports, Sri Lanka for his achievements in tennis both in Sri Lanka and abroad. On 28th November 2010, because of his pro-active attitude and programs over the years, enthusiasm and dedication to the tennis coaching profession, genuine hard work, a lifetime contribution to the game of tennis, and been instrumental in the success of many young tennis players and coaches in Victoria, Rupert was inducted into the Hall Of Fame of the Tennis Coaches – Victoria at an Awards Night held at Kooyong Lawn Tennis Club. A very prestigious award and a rare honour indeed!



In concluding Rupert informs me that the most significant achievement in his tennis career was that on the 16<sup>th</sup> July 2008, the Ministry of Sports and Public Recreation in Sri Lanka awarded him with national colours as a National sports hero "in recognition and appreciation of his unwavering commitment to further the glory of Sri Lanka through participation and outstanding performances in tennis" at the international level. Rupert won a bronze medal at the 1958 Asian Games held in Tokyo. A sovereign gold medal and certificate was presented to him for his love of tennis and pride in representing the motherland internationally as one of Sri Lanka's "Sporting Heroes".

His second love was cricket and while stationed in Nuwara –Eliya was a member of the Dimbulla Athletic and cricket club representing them in the Sara trophy as a wicket keeper (with a tennis eye) and later on played for the Colombo cricket club.

Rupert has been a loyal member of the OBA in Melbourne for many decades actively participating in activities especially the in the annual Royal Thomian cricket matches.

Rupert spends his retirement in Rowville, Melbourne, with his wife Tammy (nee Wambeek) in a spacious home with its own flood lit tennis court, where he still does a little coaching. The sport truly runs in his veins and life would not be the same for him if he did not play a game or two every day!



## Denis Ferdinands

The nickname “*Denis the Menace*” was given to this gentle Thomian giant, Denis Ferdinands, who was considered to be the fastest bowler in school cricket in the 1950s. In the absence of technology, he was adjudged to be the fastest by cricket historian and doyen of Ceylon’s cricket writers, S. P. Foenander, in 1957. If speed was an issue to the batsmen, his ability to swing the ball both ways challenged the best of them. Yes, Denis bowled reverse swing 30 years before the Pakistanis “invented” it!

Denis was born in Ceylon (now Sri Lanka) in May 1939, during the second World War, and has vivid memories of Japanese planes hovering over the skies. After a couple of years at St. Pauls Milagiriya, he won a scholarship to STC Mount Lavinia where he had his entire primary/secondary education from 1947 to 1959. By his own admission, he felt he was initially a “good student” until sports intervened which impacted his priorities. Winning College colours in both 1<sup>st</sup> XI Cricket and Athletics is a testimony to this.



Denis was selected to the 1<sup>st</sup> XI cricket team in 1955, only at the age of 15 years with his height nearly 6 feet by then; and was in the team for the next 5 years and captaining the team in 1959. His best performance in the Big Match was in his final year taking 5 for 55, predominantly bowling reverse swing. He was no mug with the bat either, saving College with an innings of 30 not out in a last wicket stand with JKC Gunasekera in the 1958 Big Match.

This is an extract from the STC Cricket Report on the 1955-56 season - “*Further, one must remember Ferdinands, the paceman of the team and his contributions, a sick man at the beginning of the season, left out of the team in the games against Wesley and St. Benedict’s due to an attack of measles, he came into the side against Ananda and showed what a difference his pace bowling made to our pace attack. He is by far the fastest in the island today, he is always hostile and keeps worrying the batsmen with his pace and bumpers. The Royal skipper Crozier did his side signal service when he beat Piachaud’s toss and elected to bat on a plumb easy wicket made easier still by the previous day’s rain. The collapse in the period before milk was something unforeseen by even the most loyal of Thomian supporters. Here we saw most if not all, of the batsmen of repute back in the pavilion after only 90 minutes of play – unable to cope with the Thomian attack, spear-headed by Ferdinands.*”



I thought I heard a rocket zoom  
And crash into a thicket  
It turned out to be Ferdinands  
Smashing another wicket

(Royal-Thomian Match Souvenir 1957)

His cricketing career continued after leaving College, representing BRC in the Sara Trophy, where he led the bowling averages for two years and earning a place in the National side to tour India. Denis was also picked to play for Ceylon in a one-day game against Australia, led by Richie Benaud, who were enroute to England for the Ashes series; unfortunately, Denis split the webbing on his left-hand during practice and had to opt out. He left for the UK in 1962 on a student scholarship with Perkins Engines in Peterborough, where he continued playing cricket at club level. After attending trails, he was offered to play county cricket for Leicestershire; however, had to turn



it down as it would have meant moving to Leicester which impacted with his studies at the London Institute of Mechanical Engineers.

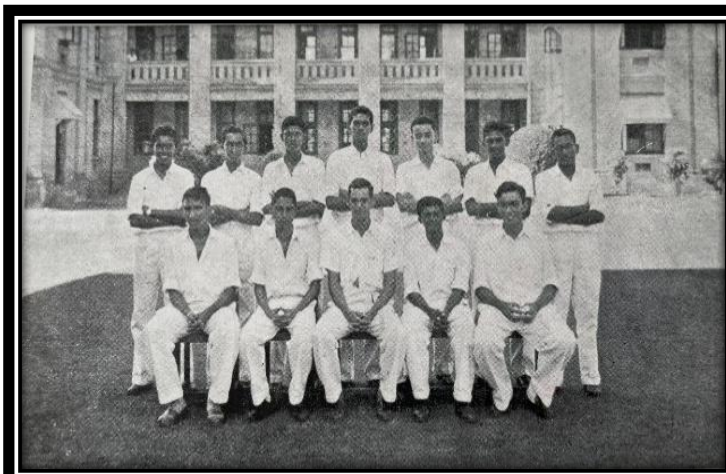
In Athletics, Denis excelled as a javelin thrower, and broke the Public Schools record in his first year, with a throw of 196 feet. This was achieved using a borrowed javelin from a Peterite as he thought that particular javelin was throwing well!

Denis met Caryl La Brooy in 1961 and they were married in 1964. From UK, they arrived in Australia in 1968 following Denis's parents, who migrated in 1964, convinced Denis that "grass is greener Down Under"! They are blessed with three children and four grandchildren (all boys). Two of his grandsons, Brodie and Jackson, recently toured Sri Lanka with their school (De La Salle College, Malvern); indicating that they may follow their grandfather's footsteps. The family initially lived in Melbourne's eastern suburbs (Glen Waverley). However, Denis' love of country life was too tempting and the family moved to Neerim South where they enjoyed the fresh air and friendship of the local community for a number of years. Very recently, they moved into a delightful unit in a retirement village in Officer where they are a lot closer to family and friends.



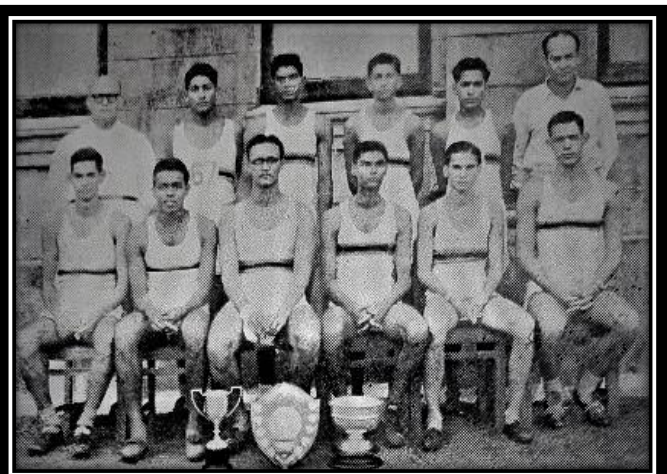
Denis & Caryl with the extended family including their children and grandchildren.

STC 1<sup>st</sup> XI Cricket Team - 1959



Front L to R: Neil Chanmugam, Errol Lisk, Denis Ferdinands (Capt.), Lareef Idroos, Michael Sproule, absent NS Gurusinghe.  
Back L to R: Bertram Thomas, R.N Fernando, A Wanduragala, Buddy Reid, Keith La Brooy, A.E De Silva, P.S Kumara

STC Senior Athletics Team - 1956



Front (L-R): Denis Ferdinands, J.K.C. Gunasekera, Errol Jacotine (Captain), Ronne Reid (V. Capt.), Cecil Scharenguivel, Lester Schokman. Back (L-R): The Warden (Rev. Canon de Saram), Ranjith Dambawinna (then K.D.P.R. Perera), D.W.S. Fernando, Ana Sinnathamby, Ranjit Boralessa, Mr. Brookie D'Silva (Coach).

**Editor's Note:** Our sincere thanks to Arasu Saranavanamuttu and Peter Schoorman for their assistance in sourcing material for this article. A special thank you to Ravi Rudra for his compilation of the Athletics and other sporting records.





## BITS 'N PIECES, THIS 'N THAT

**KITCHEN CABINET:** As if you were not already aware, early December 2001, Ranil Wickremasinghe took oaths as Prime Minister of the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka. Wickremasinghe is an Old Royalist but we will not hold that against him. On the contrary, Rajakeeya Vidyalaya stock soared in my eyes when he, the brand new Premier, hand-picked four Old Thomians to administer the four most vital Ministries in his Cabinet. K.N. Choksy, a legal luminary and Constitutional architect, heads the pivotal Finance Ministry. Tilak Marapone, Attorney General past and Graduate of Chemistry, is in charge of Defence. G.L. Peiris, Rhodes Scholar, Oxonian, Dean of the Faculty of Law, Vice Chancellor, author and much more, is entrusted among other things, with guiding the Industrial and Constitutional destiny of your birthland. Last not least, Rukman Senanayake, who learnt the rudiments of politicking at the feet of his uncle Dudley, holds the all important Environmental portfolio. Wild life enthusiast and noted conservationist, the scion of a famous political family, must be eminently suited to the job. Premier Wickremasinghe possibly has personal misgivings about not attending the better College, the one by the sea. To his credit, that has not prevented him from picking the best men from the best school.

“Esto Perpetua”, Ranil. May good fortune smile upon Sri Lanka.

Note: A further two “Mount” and 8 “Guru” Thomians are reported to have entered the Twelfth Parliament of Sri Lanka.

**TRADE UNION RUGBY:** After taking a 30-nil 1<sup>st</sup> XV beating at Royal hands some months ago, the author penned a piece for the benefit of ‘Thomian New South Welshmen’, informing them of the sorry plight befallen College Rugby. The sole purpose of that article was hopefully to alert overseas Thomians to band together to revive the sport. I understand that since that article saw print, some

quarters have taken it up as a forum to blame inadequate salaries paid out to custodians of Thomian Rugby, as reason for the embarrassingly barren Longden Place scoreboard. Whilst allowing that the salary question does need to be addressed, the contentious bone was the palpable lack of the most fundamental of Rugby skills, so evident in our 1<sup>st</sup> XV play. For some, to have merged an unrelated salary issue with the team’s inability to master all the basics, is mischievous doing. After all, a 30 to zero drubbing is a 30 to zero drubbing! It is difficult to accept that salaries would miraculously repair a 30 point deficit. If truth be told, fundamentals were lacking because they had not been imparted at Junior level. Let us not find excuses and scapegoats. It serves no purpose. Identify the problem and move to rectify ASAP.

**DREADED ZERO:** In ordinary cricket, the ignominy of not bothering the scorer is something that haunts one endlessly. In ‘Royal-Thomian’ cricket the above does not apply. A batsman who scores a polished 40 “odd” or a bowler grabbing 4 “fer” little, is appreciated till about the last Baila is sung on match Saturday. Even if theirs was a match winning performance, they do not even merit mention in future souvenirs. Not so, the legendary zeroists. To perform the incredible feat thrice, inclusive of twice in the same game, paradoxically elevates that player to near cult status. One such gentleman is my friend of over 4 decades, Sam. Come March, year after year, we are reminded that Sam, ducks notwithstanding, was still good enough to don the coveted College cap. Only 11 from over a thousand Thomians each year, are granted that singular honour. Duck or ton, it cannot be anything but a stupendous feeling of pride to walk out onto the ‘Wanathamulla’ or ‘Singhalese’ square with the Blue and Black headgear perched rakishly on a Thomian crown. Perhaps unfairly, while all other “40 odd” and “4 fer” heroes have faded into statistical oblivion the duckists are the ones that get





talked about. There are times when I console Sam by mentioning the names of some illustrious Thomian sons who form the 'Duck Club'. Some famous scorers of nothing, at the nations primary sporting event are, O G de Alwis, D L de Saram, D S Senanayake, A F & A H Molamure, P & S Sara, E Wanduragala, V P Cooke, R S de Saram, A J D N Selvadurai, C H Davidson, Robert Senanayake, A V Kanagasabai, Donald Fairweather, Roy Hermon, A Abeygoonawardena, L S Gauder, M O Goonaratne, Norman Siebel, Bertie Wijesinghe, Raja Proctor, C Sara, V G Prins, R Selvaratnam, K M T Perera, Upali Katugaha, T Jayalingam, Shanti Kumar, P I Pieris, Tony Witham, G L W Wijesinghe, Dan Piachaud, Ronnie Reid, Z A Cader, Michael Tissera, Ranjit Amarasekera, T C T Edwards, Randy Morrel, Maurice Fairweather, Kumar Boralessa, Roder D'Silva\*, Premalal Goonasekera, Dennis Chanmugam, Dijen De Saram, Jana Rockwood, Jayampathy Bandaranayake, Ajit Jayasekera, Tiny Reid, Mazah Rauf, Kamal Samarasinghe, L P de Silva, Dayalan Supramaniam, Johan Pieris et al. Indeed, august company.

\*Mention is made of only the zeroists who had pretensions to batsmanship. The possible exception being schoolboy bowler turned batsman, Roger D'Silva who scored a Club Cricket century for Dimbulla C&AC. The writer asks to be pardoned for any omissions to this list. Those who wish to be named will be gladly included. Please contact the Editors.

**COACH KNOWS BEST:** Ana Saranapala, sometime Sri Lanka National Rugby Coach had this poignant story to tell. Being a non-Thomian father of a Thomian son, Saranapala was somehow coaxed into coaching the College XV by that silver tongued devil, Warden Neville. Also involved in concurrently coaching the National side, Ana agreed to help for a prescribed period. On completion of his stint Saranapala unashamedly admitted to this writer that he gave of his best but had realized very early in the exercise that "a Thomian can only be coached by a Thomian." When pressed for more details he confessed that never had he come across a schoolboy more loyal and prouder than a Thomian. Consequently he reckoned, a Thomian will be willing to give that

much more to a fellow Thomian and receive that much more in return. In these days of "specialized coaching" this defies all standards of intelligent thinking. "Pick the best man for the job irrespective of school ties". Seems conventional wisdom and universal law. I ponder at times if conventional wisdom and universal law, indeed apply to us Thomians. We are different. Why else are we envied and admired?

**POLICE BRUTALITY:** Remember Thangi? The only lad to Captain the College Senior Boxing team while ineligible to wear long pants? Hailing from the seaport of Batticaloa this handsome Policeman with chiselled film star looks was a sensational Stubbs Shield boxer. At a swimming meet a few years ago Thangi's inability to restrain his 8-year-old daughter (weight 22 kilograms) who was in his care, from breaking free and mistakenly diving in to compete while a Girls Under 18 Butterfly event was in progress, proved that he should have shed brawn for brain much earlier in his career. I will not embarrass the man further by describing in detail the scathing reprimand he received from Mrs Thangi who had left the child for just a moment in her father's care. Nor will I dwell on the Cop resorting to bribery and corruption in the form of 'Portello' in a futile attempt to restore domestic harmony. Needless to mention the aerated water peace offering was rejected by fuming mother and sobbing daughter leaving debonair Policeman standing, complete with gap tooth and silly grin in plain view of all. This sight begged the question, if the Policeman was unable to restrain a 22 kilogram 8-year-old, what chance would he have with a murderous thug from Maradana? Having recently qualified as an Attorney at Law, the boxer turned lawyer, now mans the Legal Division at Sri Lanka's Scotland Yard. Just when medical science is denouncing boxing and trumpeting a connection between head blows and brain damage along comes another Thomian to confound the critics and prove everyone wrong!

**MOTHER HUBBARD'S CUPBOARD:** Is bare! As far as National cricketing talent goes, that is. Time was when Annesley, Ataya, Buddy, Ian, Lareef, Mano, Michael, Neil and Trevlyn at any one time were almost permanent fixtures. Later, Duleep, Kaushik,



Kapila and briefly, Anura Gunawardena, kept the flag aloft. Today our cricketing contribution is only through the managerial efforts of Air Commodore Ajith while Ataya is Chief Executive of the Board. When teased by non-Thomians of the lack of player representation, Thomians counter, stating our Advanced Level students prefer pursuing Accounting, Engineering, Law and Medicine instead of leather. As I write however, I am happy to report that schoolboy Jeevan Mendis the Royal-Thomian centurion of 2001, scored his maiden First Class fifty against visiting Zimbabwe in December 2001. He is also performing with distinction as Vice-Captain of the Sri Lankan contingent in the Youth World Cup being held now (January 2002), in New Zealand.

**OF MICE AND (REAL) MEN:** When the Lankan National cricket side's fortunes under non-Thomian leadership were plummeting south towards the end of the last century this writer hinted that Lanka can only be skippered by a Thomian. I proposed that we introduce the tennis concept of the non-playing Captain. But who? It was imperative that the candidate must have had previous experience at the job. Former Thomian Captains of Sri Lanka, A.C. Amath and D.L. De Saram I believe played in the '80s. That is the 1880s! Surely, these fine gentlemen are long since deceased. Doctor Buddy we understand has taken Australian citizenship and has thus disqualified himself. Michael is in business and Anura is now a cricket administrator. Duleep's burgeoning waistline may prove a hindrance, besides the Sebs may claim him as their own. Fret not, fellow Lankans (and Australankans), Thomians offer you the perfect choice. Bring Vernon Prins out of retirement, I say. Being an ex Cop he could instil some discipline into the side. Having seen him at the last Royal-Thomian, fit and well, I am not even sure he needs to be a non-playing Captain. He may be compelled to forego the short single in favour of boundaries and his near four score years possibly has made him a yard or two slower but I am told he still plays a great game of tennis. With the technological advancement of protective gear I am certain Vernon could still answer his team's call at the number six spot. Note: Since writing this, Sri Lanka, under the stewardship of a non-Thomian boy named Sanath from Matara, has crawled back

into cricketing contention. However, Mr. Prins is well advised to keep his flannels pressed and his bat adequately lined, just in case he needs to answer the call of his country.

**CORPORAL MUSCLE:** The writer boasts having "held the wall" before every single Warden, Sub Warden, Head Master and assorted Masters in an 11 year career on the Mount. There are none more qualified than this writer to provide a detailed pain threshold account of Corporal Punishment. Of the Wardens Poeta, Plantain and Ana, surprisingly Plantain inflicted the most discomfort. This was not a view shared by other recipients of the rattan honour and I know why. Having dedicated that part of my school life to irritating Rev. Selvaratnam, I believe I brought out the best in him when he brandished the cane. Of Sub Wardens Brooke, Ana (before elevated to Warden) and Frank, the honour goes to towering Mr. D'Silva who used his height and athleticism to great advantage. Head Masters Pol Weera and Peeraiyah (not called "Black tie" in our era) wielded formidable sticks but still failed to make an impression on my behind as did a certain man of the cloth. Only a lowly placed Master on the Staff pecking order, Baldwin was consummate "King Caner". As his medium of torture he eschewed the cane for his trusty foot ruler. If he hadn't thrown his lot in with The Man upstairs the very Reverend Daniel would have made a formidable batsman. His wrist work was a joy to behold. I have watched spellbound as he dispensed his own quaint brand of justice on fellow miscreants. "Come, face the music", was his war chant. Never one to resort to an excessive back lift, his precision stroke was made with seemingly minimum effort, with an excruciating outcome. Shades of Sathasivam, Ravi or Mahadevan, take your pick. It galled me that the loveable Baldwin, who was able to inflict so much pain was not labelled with a nickname during our school career. His prowess with foot ruler was matched only by his devotion to teaching. If you, dear reader, have understood but a fraction of what appears in this article credit goes to one man. Father Daniel, you are owed a huge debt of gratitude.



**THREE HARROWING DAYS:** To achieve a result (other than a draw!) in the Royal-Thomian centenary game, match organizers in their infinite wisdom decided to stage the pageant over three days. Except one, every encounter since has taken this format. Whether the objective of the experiment has been satisfied or not, the Big Match organizers have studiously stuck with their patented 3-day formula. Translated into overs, the 3-day game provides for 280. 90 apiece, the first two days and 100 on the third (inclusive of 20 overs in the last hour). Whether that many overs are needed to produce a school cricket result is debatable. In the days of Sarath and Premalal all 1<sup>st</sup> XI games began sharp twelve noon at Mount. If batting, our top order were expected to post a score in excess of 200 at “milk”. Batsmen were guaranteed a Skipper’s tongue lashing if they dawdled. Singles and twos were constantly looked for, while the fast and grassless Mount Lavinia outfield of then, assured boundaries off any stroke, sweetly timed and placed. Still no commonplace slogging was tolerated. Depending on the bowler’s run up, 16-18 overs were bowled routinely every hour, a far cry from today’s 13 or 14. Declarations came thick and fast and with them, decisions. Today, Royal-Thomian games commence at 10.30 a.m. and have not produced as many decisions as were expected of a 3-day game. Many feel the 2-day game should be brought back. If extra playing hours are needed, play could begin a half hour earlier. It would be nice to see youngsters cope with the early new ball movement in those conditions. Captains blessed with penetrative pace will be willing to gamble by putting opponents in. To compensate for fewer overs, Coaches, (on pain of removal by Warden Ponni), should insist on “getting on with it”. If the importance of rotating the strike and keeping the scoreboard ticking is convincingly conveyed, pupils will oblige. What is it with this solitary 3-day match anyway? All other 1<sup>st</sup> XI fixtures are 2-day affairs. The three day Royal-Thomian should be banished to the anachronistic heap of bad experiments in favour of a pulsating 2-day game. Besides, try as I did to mask it, my wife has realized that my ageing liver cannot withstand three long days (and Stag Nites) of battery.

**BOOK CRICKET MAN:** Jayantha hails from a family of book sellers. Having for a while plied his trade from the prominent book store opposite the Fort Railway Station his contribution to furthering Thomian camaraderie has however little to do with printing or publishing. It takes on far greater meaning. Come Royal-Thomian match eve, his home is open to all Thomians of and around his vintage. Being career diversified individuals we seldom get a chance to meet our College contemporaries. As a rendezvous, the SSC grounds being vast and enclosed, permits few openings. Jayantha affords us an opportunity to meet and greet old friends in more convivial surroundings. Now in its 22<sup>nd</sup> unbroken year this gathering of distinguished Old Boys (including some Wardens who refuse to vacate the dance floor) is a must in every Thomian’s March social calendar.

**ALI-FRAZIER, LANKA STYLE:** Late ‘50s and ‘60s joiners of STC will remember three epic boxing ding-dongs between JK and Jeffrey Vanda. The final score stood 2 to 1 in favour of JK but so closely and fiercely fought were those three bouts they could have gone either way. At the final bell, these gladiators would fall limply into each other’s arms leaving spectators bewildered, wondering if these were the same protagonists who were hell bent on maiming each other just seconds before. Some 30 years later, in March 2001 I walked into BOOK CRICKET MAN’s (see above) home. The first spectacle greeting me was JK and Vanda entwined in a “thadhey” dance. Given that we Thomians do not indulge in “that” kind of behaviour post leaving the portals of the Main Gate, I was inclined to forgive the two old combatants. As it happened, Vanda had just flown in from Canada for the Royal-Thomian match. The inseparables were just glad to see each other once more.

**PUT THE KETTLE ON:** Another boxing story, if I may. House Meet. College Hall. Polly was no boxer. Loyalty to his House prompted him to don gloves and take on the feared Regimental Sergeant Major, sometime called “Judo”, just so the latter would not go uncontested. “Judo”, a former Trinitian, appeared cornerside resplendent in scarlet satin trunks, boxing boots to match, a-hissing and a-snarling, throwing lightning combinations at



imaginary opponents. Polly a foot shorter than “Judo”, stood immobile on his stout Burgher bare feet, faded blue shorts in stark contrast. Raggedy Polly, stalked his opponent and pummelled him for 3 merciless rounds. That is, nine unrelenting minutes of flailing leather. Just confirms that, clothes make not necessarily the pugilistic man and Thomians care tuppence for reputations.

**THE GOOD THAT MEN DO:** College had some good ‘uns. Annesley, Ashubodha, Asiriya, Asparagus, Baldwin, Bambu, Bulto, Copparaya, Curly, Dos, Jackson, Jinaya, Lingus, Orville, Pepo, Rifle, Staples, Vinaasi. Granted, not all of them were giants in their noble profession. Some were scholars. Some were communicators. Others were kindly pacifists but overall bar none, they were decent human beings. What set them apart was their ability to, command respect, show dedication, be righteous, scrupulously fair and relate to us students. Genteel readers may argue that inclusions or exclusions need be made to this list. They can do so when they are tenaciously hounded

to contribute to this publication, as I have been, by the indefatigable but demanding Editors.

“ESTO PERPETUA!”



**Rohan Medonza** (‘THE 16<sup>th</sup> MAN’).  
 ‘1959-1960 *STC Preparatory School, Colpetty.*  
 1960-’1971 *STC, Mount Lavinia, (Wood House)*

*Editor’s Note:* This article written by Rohan in 2002 was reproduced with the consent of his wife Dushy to mark the 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of his untimely death on 18 January 2014. Our appreciation to David Sansoni (NSW) for facilitating the publication.



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## Thomian War Hero – Cedric Martenstyn

*He paid the supreme sacrifice for his motherland*

### Remembering War Heroes on 30th Anniversary of Sri Lanka Navy Special Boats Squadron Commander (VNF) Cedric Martenstyn- Co-Founder of SBS



Cedric Martenstyn was a very rich and affluent man. He owned a house in Colombo 7, valuable properties throughout the country, vehicles/ speed boats and ran the lucrative business of importing Johnson and Evanrude Out board Motors (OBM) and sold to local fishermen and fish businessmen. He was the local agent these OBMs and very popular product among humble fishermen of our country for their reliability and after sales service. He was fondly known as “Sudu Mahattaya” (white Gentleman) by humble fishermen and he will travel in his double cab to length and breadth of country to meet them and solve their problems on OBMs and to impart good knowledge on how to maintain their of OBMs well.

He had a loving wife and children. He was an excellent SCUBA diver, member of Sri Lanka Navy Practical Pistol Firing team and his knowledge on wildlife and snakes was amazing. Even though he was a member from affluent Dutch Burger community, of Sri Lanka, a small community which was not directly affected by ethnic clashes in our country, still he was true patriot of Mother Lanka who volunteered to protect Country and people from terrorists. He was an old boy of St Thomas College, Mt. Lavana and was an excellent sportsman. Founding father of Sri Lanka Army Commando Unit, Colonel Sunil Peris was his classmate at St Thomas.

I first met him when I was a very junior officer at Pistol Firing Range at Naval Base Walisara. I helped him to catch a poisonous snake in the Range. I think he carried that snake home in a bottle! That was Cedric!

We became very close friends as we both loved “Guns and fishing rods”. His experience and tactics in angling helped me to catch much bigger Paraw (Trevallies) at Elephant rock area at Trincomalee harbour. He was a dangerous man to live with at Trincomalee Naval Base Ward Room (Officers Mess), because he had various live snakes kept in bottles and fed them with little frogs!

Scientific name: *Systomus Martenstyni*

English name : Martenstyn's Barb

Local name: Dumbara Pethiya



Even though he was a keen angler, he was very keen conservationist on preserving endangered species both on land and water. He spends days in Horton plains and Knuckles Mountain Range streams to identify freshwater species in Sri Lanka. Do you know there is an endangered freshwater fish species he found in Horton Plains and Knuckles Mountain Range named after him after he was considered MIA, as an honor to his work!

Feeding time of snakes was an amusement to all our stewards at Wardroom at that time! They all gathered and watched carefully what Cedric was doing, keeping a distance to run away if snake escaped. Our Navy stewards dare to enter Cedric's cabin (Room) at Trincomalee Wardroom (Officers Mess), even keeping his tea on a stool outside his Cabin door. One day pandemonium erupted at Officers Mess when Cedric announced that one snake escaped from captivity! We both never found this snake, but that was the end of his hobby as Commander Eastern Naval Area at that time orders to “ get rid of all snakes ! No more snakes in Wardroom! “. Sadly Cedric released all snakes to Sober Island that afternoon. Our Stewards were the happiest that day ! THOSE WERE THE DAYS WITH DEAR CEDRIC!



He was an volunteer Navy officer, but still joined me (he was 47 years old then) to help SBS trainees (first and second batch) on Boat handling and OBM maintenance in 1993 when I raised SBS.

It was exactly 30 years ago!

Being an excellent Speed Boat race driver and boat designer, he drew the blueprint of first "18- foot Arrow Boat" and supervised building it at a private Boat Yard in 1993. This 18- foot Arrow boat was specially designed to use in shallow waters of Jaffna lagoon, fitted 115 HP OBMs and with two weapons he recommended; 40mm Automatic Grenade Launcher (AGL) and 7.62×51 mm General Purpose Machine Guns (MPMGs). Highly trained and highly motivated four SBS men were on board each arrow boat at Jaffna lagoon.

Same hull (deep V hull) developed during the tenure of Admiral of the Fleet Wasantha Karannagoda as Commander of the Navy by Naval Architects with knowledge gained through captured LTTE Sea Tiger boats, designed 23- foot Arrow boats and implemented the "Lanchester Theory" (theory of battle of attrition at sea in littoral sea battles) to completely nullify LTTE's superiority with small boats and deadly suicide boats. Thanks Admiral of the Fleet for understanding the importance of Arrow boat design and your mass production at our own boat yard at Walisara . Admiral of the Fleet, under whom I was fortunate to serve as Director Naval Operations, Director Maritime Surveillance and Director Naval Special Forces during last stages (2006/7) of the Humanitarian Operations, always used to tell us "You cannot buy a Navy- you have to build one"!! Thank you, Sir!



Launch of the "Cedric Boats" by the Defence State Minister



"Cedric Boats" in action

Back to main story, ...When I was selected for my Naval War Course (Staff Course) at Pakistan Navy Staff College at Karachi, (now known as Pakistan Navy War College relocated at Lahore), Pakistan, Cedric took over the command (even though he was an VNF officer) as Commanding Officer of SBS. Being one of the Co- founder of this elite unit, he was the most suitable person to take over as CO SBS.

He was loved by SBS officers and sailors. They were extremely happy to see him at Kilali or Elephant Pass, where SBS was deployed during very difficult time of our recent history- fighting against terrorists in 1996/7 time.

Motivated by father's Patriotism, his younger son, Jayson, who was an pilot working at UK at that time, came to Sri Lanka and joined SLAF as an volunteer pilot to fly transport aircraft to keep an uninterrupted air link between Palaly (Jaffna) and Ratmalana (Colombo). Sometimes Jayson flew his beloved father on board from Palaly to Ratmalana. Cedric was extremely happy and proud of his son. Young Jayson died of a possible LTTE Surface-to-Air missile attack on his aircraft. Cedric was sad, but more determined in fight against LTTE terrorists

Then the Navy Commander advised him to demobilize from VNF and look after his grieving family or join Naval Operations Directorate and work from Colombo which he vehemently refused. When I called him from Pakistan to convey my deepest condolences, said, he will look after the SBS boys and no idea to leave them on this difficult hour of our Nation. Such a HREO VERY FEW KNEW ABOUT!

By age difference, young officers, and sailors in SBS were of his two sons' age.

Sadly, Cedric also considered Missing In Action (MIA) in an helicopter crash off seas of Vettalikani with Lt Palihena (another brave SBS officer- KDU intake). He was returning to Pont Pedro after visiting SBS boys at Elephant Pass, Jaffna.

Cedric and Jayson goes down in our history as few father and son duo whom paid Supreme Sacrifice for the Motherland . MAY THEY REST IN PEACE!

### Admiral Ravindra C Wijegunaratne

Former Chief of Defence Staff and Commander of The Navy  
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SSM4-1030





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| Name                    | Branch      | Period      | Name                   | Branch      | Period      |
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| 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 |
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| Leshane KANDAGEDERA     | Mt. Lavinia |             | Voshana NISSANKA       | Mt. Lavinia | 2005 - 2019 |
| Dirk D'SILVA            | Prep School | 1970 - 1974 | Jeevan MENDIS          | Mt. Lavinia |             |
| Michael de KRETSER      | Prep School | 1976 - 1985 | Sunith De FONSEKA      | Mt. Lavinia | 1989 - 2002 |
| Winu Akila De SILVA     | Prep/Mount  | 1998 - 2011 | Chandan GURUSINGHE     | Mt. Lavinia |             |
| Joel DANIEL             | Mt. Lavinia | 2004 - 2018 | Mohan Samarasinghe     | Mt. Lavinia | 1951-1963   |
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*Calendar of Events - 2024*

**February**

**Friday 9<sup>th</sup>** Annual General Meeting (AGM)  
 6.30pm  
 Waverley Youth Centre  
 Miller Crescent, Mount Waverley 3149

**Friday 23<sup>rd</sup>** Members Only – Night Party  
 7.30pm  
 Waverley Youth Centre  
 Miller Crescent, Mount Waverley 3149

**March**

**Friday 8<sup>th</sup>** Royal - Thomian Live Broadcast  
 7.00 pm  
 Waverley Youth Centre  
 Miller Crescent, Mount Waverley 3149

**Sunday 17<sup>th</sup>** Royal – Thomian Cricket Matches & Family Day  
 9.30 am onwards  
 Strathaird Reserve  
 38, Community Parade, Narre Warren South 3805

**July**

**Saturday**  Members Lunch  
 12.00 noon  
 Date & Venue: To be confirmed

**August**

**Saturday 3<sup>rd</sup>** Transfiguration Service  
 10.30 am  
 Venue: To be confirmed

**October**

**Saturday**  Thomian Ball - 2023  
 6.30pm  
 Date & Venue: To be confirmed

**November**

**Tuesday 7<sup>th</sup>** Melbourne Cup Sweep  
 2.00pm

**December**

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



## IN MEMORIAM



*They remain in our memories forever*



**Prassana Nimal Wikramanayake, KC:** Nimal was one of the founding members of the STC OBA in Australia in 1972. He was an eminent lawyer, born August 11<sup>th</sup> August 1933, and attended STC Mount Lavinia. He was the only Asian born Kings Counsel in Australia. Nimal celebrated his 90<sup>th</sup> birthday in August 2023 and passed away on 20<sup>th</sup> December 2023 at a private nursing home where he was recuperating following surgery



**Ivor Geddes:** Ivor was a renowned athlete at STCML in the 50s excelling in the sprint events (220y, 440y, 4x110y & 4x440y); and key member of STC when they regained the Senior Tarbat Trophy in 1951 after a gap of 6 years and retained the Jefferson Trophy for Relays that they won in 1950. Under Ivor's captaincy STC again won both the Senior Tarbat and Jefferson in 1952. Ivor recently passed away peacefully in hospital in the UK.

**Esto Perpetua**

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

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



**PHOTO GALLERY: THOMIAN BALL – (11<sup>th</sup> November 2023)**



**PHOTO GALLERY: THOMIAN BALL – (11<sup>th</sup> November 2023)**



**PHOTO GALLERY: CAROL SERVICE (9<sup>th</sup> December 2023)**





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

ABN 18 114 799 661  
 PO Box 2337, Mount Waverley, Victoria 3149  
[www.stcobaust.org.au](http://www.stcobaust.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 &amp; Pensioners Concession: \$10.00</i>  |      |            |                 |        |              |  |  |  |             |  |     |                 |                               |  |  |  |
| 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                   | <table border="1"> <tr> <td>Visa</td> <td></td> <td>Mastercard</td> <td>(tick)</td> </tr> <tr> <td colspan="4">Name on Card</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Card Number</td> <td></td> <td>Exp</td> <td>...../..... CVV</td> </tr> <tr> <td colspan="4">Cardholder's Signature: .....</td> </tr> </table> | Visa |            | Mastercard      | (tick) | Name on Card |  |  |  | Card Number |  | Exp | ...../..... CVV | Cardholder's Signature: ..... |  |  |  |
|                               | 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 | <b>Membership Secretary</b><br>PO Box 2337, Mount Waverley Vic 3149<br>Enquiries: Upali (Pancho) Gooneratne<br>Email: <a href="mailto:fgooneratne@iiec.org">fgooneratne@iiec.org</a><br>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.*





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