

NOTES & COMMENTS

2007

January

31st - Mr. E. G. J. Canagasabey resigned as Headmaster.

February

1st - Mr Jacques Huyghebaert took over the duties of the Headmaster on the invitation of the Bishop and the Board until a new Headmaster could be appointed. In November 2006, Mr Huyghebaert had made an in depth study of the problems faced by the School and had made a proposal to keep the school open and viable. He now had the task of putting his proposal into practice himself.

April

- Three Horses arrived at the School as gifts from Mr Jacques Huyghebaert. He named them Faith, Hope and Charity as he said these qualities were what the School needed to survive.

June

1st - The Revd Marc Billimoria was appointed to succeed Mr E. G. J. Canagasabey with Mr Jacques Huyghebaert continuing as Advisor to the Board of Governors on the revival of the School.

11th - The Lord Bishop of Colombo instituted and installed the Revd Marc Billimoria at a special Service in the College Chapel of St. Francis of Assisi in his capacity as Visitor to the College and Chairman of the Board of Governors, in the presence of a large gathering made up of Anglican clergy, heads of other Church Schools, old boys, well wishers, parents, staff and children. The Service of Institution & Installation was followed by General Assembly at which the Revd Billimoria was introduced to the entire School by the Bishop. Revd Billimoria in his speech outlined his vision for the School and something of his plans for the future. The assembly was followed by Lunch served in the Dining Hall for all.

27th - Annual Cultural Day of the School was held in the Foster Memorial College Hall. This event was the first of its kind where Sinhala, Tamil and English items were performed, rather than separate cultural events.

- The 1st General Meeting of parents with the new Administration was held in the College Hall at the end of which the long feud between the Grade 10 and Grade 11 students was finally brought to an end. The last inter-Class fight was on this day.

July

10th - Pastoral Visit to the School by the Bishop-Visitor. He was accompanied by the Manager of the School, Mr Christo Gonawala. 16 boys were Confirmed by the Bishop in the first Confirmation Service held in the Chapel in 10 years. This was followed by General Assembly after which the Bishop met with the Grade 11 Class of 2007, the Academic & Support Staff. The Bishop and the Manager spent the rest of the day walking around the School to get a first hand look at what needed to be done for the developing of the infrastructure.

31st - The STC Board of Governors visited the School and spent the time after their meeting walking around the School to follow up on the Bishop's visit of the 10th.

August

- 3rd - The annual Inter House Swimming Meet for the Dr R. L. Hayman Memorial Challenge Shield was held at the College Swimming Pool. Read House emerged victorious.
- School closed for the Second Term vacation.

September

- 3rd - School reopened for the Michaelmas Term
- 11th - A special General Assembly was held in the College Hall to felicitate Mr W. M. Sumanapala, Mr A. Razak and Mr M. Alam on their retirement from the service of the School after 26, 29 and 17 years respectively. The Assembly was followed by lunch.
- 12th - The following were appointed School Prefects for the year: V. V. S. Amandakoon, W. K. M. N. D. Bandara, D. H. S. A. Jayasinghe, M. M. Priyadharshan, A. Prasath, R. A. D. C. Ranatunga, and B. W. N. L. Tillekeratne. They took the Thomian School Prefects' Oath before the Headmaster at Assembly with their right hands stretched out over the College Flag. R. A. D. C. Ranatunga was appointed Head Prefect of the School. 3 House Prefects and 10 House Monitors were also appointed.

October

- 4th - Patronal Festival of the College Chapel of St. Francis of Assisi. The special Service of Thanksgiving was held at 8.00 a.m. with the Ven. Dhiloraj Canagasabey, Archdeacon of Nuwara Eliya as Preacher and Celebrant. The service was followed by the traditional fellowship breakfast.
- The Grade 11 Class of 2007 felicitated the teachers on account of International Teachers' Day
- The annual Prize Giving of the School for the year 2006 was held in the College Hall with Dr Frank Jayasinghe, a former Headmaster of the School and Sub Warden of S. Thomas' College, Mount Lavinia as the Chief Guest. A number of distinguished old boys and visitors were present. The Archdeacon of Colombo representing the Bishop presided.

November

- 2nd to 4th A Rugby Football coaching camp was held for the Under 11, 13, 16 & 18 pools conducted by Mr M. E. Chryshantha Perera and his team of coaches from Colombo
- 16th - The 1st ever Valedictory Assembly & Service was held to bid farewell to the outgoing Class of 2007. The Ceremony included Warden Buck's Farewell to Thomians, eloquently read by Mr Panini Edirisinghe, the Valedictory Address by the Headmaster, the Reply on behalf of the Valedictorians by the Head Prefect, Prayers and Blessing by the Chaplain, and the Commissioning of the Valedictorians by the Supervisory Staff. The Oriental Singing Group sang a special lyric written by valedictorian Ruchira Kasun for which the tune was composed by the Master in Charge of Music, Mr Dushan Sugathapala. The final item of the agenda was the handing over of the National and College Flags to the outgoing Head Prefect and Senior Sacristan who carrying the flags led the valedictorians out of the Hall for the last time to a haunting melody played over the PA system that brought tears to many

an eye. The Class of 2008 formed a guard of honour on the steps of the Hall and at the foot of the steps the Flags were taken over by two representatives of that class to symbolise the handing over of leadership of the student body to the incoming senior class. The valedictorians then took leave of their teachers in the traditional manner with betel leaves. A group photograph of the Valedictorians and the Staff was then taken and brought the monring's programme to an end.

- A formal sit down dinner followed at 8 p. m. at which more speches were given by other valedictorians.

30th - Mr Patrick Hall, an English Language Teaching Consultant resident in Sri Lanka visited the School to advice on the development of teaching English as a 2nd Language.

December

- 4th - A special Seminar was held for the Tutorial Staff on the new 'Thomian' systems that were to be introduced in 2008 and was conducted by the Headmaster and the Coordinating Supervisor.
- 6th - The annual Festival of Nine Lessons and Carols at which the Guest Preacher was the Revd Asiri Perera, Methodist Minister of Bandarawela. This was followed by the Community Christmas Dinner and the Christmas Party and Variety Entertainment Programme. Santa Claus arrived on Charity, the largest of our horses.
- 7th - The School closed for the Christmas Vacation

2008

January

- 7th - Staff Holy Communion Service, Fellowship Breakfast and Staff Meeting
The following appointments were made: Mr. G. Nesaseelan as Coordinating Supervisor, Mr. V. W. Dikkumbura as Sectional Head of the Lower School, Mr. K. M. T. Pushpakumara as Sectional Head of the Middle School and Mrs. S. Jayasekera as Sectional Head of the Upper School.
- 8th - School reopened for the Lent Term
- 10th - House Meetings were held for the 4 houses to plan for the Inter House Athletics Meet
- 12th - A special Service of Thanksgiving and Remembrance for the life and work of Mrs Violet Mary Hayman was held at the Chapel of the Transfiguration, S. Thomas' College, Mount Lavinia. The Headmaster, the Chaplain, the Coordinating Supervisor, Mr Panini Edirisinghe and the School Prefects attended the service that was also attended by members of the STCG OBA and others.
- 15th - Thai Pongal or the Aluth Sahal Mangalya was celebrated with a special Service in the College Chapel, led by the Chaplain and the Headmaster. The Farm animals were blessed thereafter.
- 23rd - The following were appointed School Prefects at Assembly: A. W. S. T. Gomes, L. L. K. K. Rajapakse, W. K. M. L. S. Bandara, B. U. Pethum, G. M. Mallawarachchie & C. P. Olegasegeram.
A. W. S. T. Gomes, the 1st Willie Jayatilleke Scholar, was appointed Head Prefect.
L. L. K. K. Rajapakse was appointed Deputy Head Prefect & School Athletic Captain
C. P. Olegasekera was appointed Senior Sacristan

February

- The annual Inter House Road Race was held and L. L. K. K. Rajapakse of Hayman won by a big margin.
- 15th - The Annual Inter House Athletics Meet for the D. A. Seneviratne Memorial Challenge Cup was held at the College Grounds. Brigadier Bandula Munasinghe (Retd.) was the Chief Guest. Hayman House emerged as the Champion House.
- 16th - The annual reunion day of the STCG Old Boys' Association.
The traditional Cricket match between present boys and old boys was played at the Grounds followed by Lunch and in the evening the Annual General Meeting at which the Headmaster delivered his first address to the OBA outlining his plans for the School and inviting the old boys to rally round and support the various projects and activities.
- 19th - An excursion to the Ambewela Farm and Haggala Gardens was organised for the 'Sunsetters' – boys and girls who do not go home for the Mid Term vacation.
- 23rd - Annual Inter-Thomian General Knowledge Quiz held at S. Thomas' Preparatory School organized by the Thomian Society of Colombo. The Gurutalawa Thomians did well to emerge victorious in first place.

March

- 14th - The Headmaster took the School Prefects to Colombo for the Royal-Thomian Cricket Match at the SSC.
- 29th - The annual Cricket Match between the S. Thomas' Colleges at Gurutalawa and Bandarawela was revived after a break of many years and was played at Gurutalawa. The Bandarawela Thomians carried away the new Headmaster Patrick Gunawardene Memorial Challenge Trophy presented by the Headmaster of Gurutalawa by winning the match by 1 run.

April

- 3rd - The Sinhala & Tamil New Year Festival 'Avurudu Ulella' organised by the Upper VIth students was held and was a grand success. A live Musical Show in the Hall brought the day to a close.
- 4th - A special General Assembly was held to bid farewell to Mrs Manomanie Wickramage on her leaving to join the staff of Hillwood College, Kandy after 24 years of service at Gurutalawa.
- School closed for the April vacation
- 29th - School reopened for the Trinity Term.

May

- 3rd - The Board of Governors had a special meeting at Kithu Sevana in Colombo to discuss future policy and strategy for the four Schools that it administers.
- 15th - Open Day for Parents of the Lower School
- 16th - Open Day for Parents of the Middle & Upper Schools

June

- 17th - Annual Cultural Day Programme. Mr & Mrs Christo Gonawala were the Chief Guests. Mr Christo Gonawala served on the Board of Governors, representing the Staff of the three Branch Schools and as Manager of the School until March 2008. Various items such as Dance, Drama, Song and Speech etc in Sinhala, Tamil and English were performed by the students.
- 25th - The following were appointed School Prefects at Assembly: M. I. M. Arshad, M. A. Farook, J. Devaraj, R. B. Paranavithana, M. A. M. Roshan, A. H. M. A. C. B. Wadigamangawa.
- 29th - The Japan Goju Ryu Karate Do Kenwakai Association held a training camp under the patronage of Hanshi Akio Takahashi – Founder of Kenwakai. The Opening Ceremony was held in the College Hall and part of this was a Cultural presentation by our boys.

August

- The annual Inter House Swimming Meet for the Dr R. L. Hayman Memorial Shield was held at the College Swimming Meet. De Saram House emerged as champion House. Unfortunately the Chief Guest expected, Mr. M. P. D. Perera was unable to attend. Mr Lakshman Jayatilleke and Mr Sumedha Perera stood in for him and gave

out the prizes.

- School closed for the August vacation.

September

- 1st - School commenced for the Michaelmas Term
- 4th - A special General Assembly was held in the College Hall to felicitate Revd Fr Harold Cuthbert Goodchild, Chaplain Emeritus, on his 85th birthday. The Archdeacon of Nuwara Eliya, the Ven. Dhiloraj Canagasabey represented the Bishop and presided at the event, while the Vice President of the STCG OBA Mr Christo Gonawala and other members of the OBA, Fr Goodchild's family members and the entire student body and staff were present. The Headmaster gave the keynote address while the Archdeacon spoke on behalf of the Bishop and the Diocese, Mr Christo Gonawala and Mr Chryshantha Jayawardene on behalf of the STCG OBA, Mr G. Nesaseelan and Mrs Sita Jayasekera on behalf of the Tutorial Staff, Mr R. P. Premadasa on behalf of the other staff and the Head Prefect on behalf of the students. Presentations were made by the School, the OBA and the Students after which Fr Goodchild addressed the gathering with great emotion. The Choir then sang his favourite hymn and afterwards a large birthday cake in the shape and colours of the College Flag ablaze with 86 candles was carried in on the shoulders of 8 school prefects while all sang the birthday song. Fr Goodchild cut the cake assisted by his adopted family. The assembly concluded with prayers by the Chaplain the blessing pronounced by the Archdeacon. The lusty singing of the College Song and National Anthem brought the event to a close. Fellowship lunch followed. Fr Goodchild has spent over 40 of his 85 years in the service of STC at Gurutalawa.
- The finals of the Inter House Rugby Football Tournament for the Canon R. S. de Saram Memorial Challenge Shield was held on the College Grounds and was won by De Saram House.
- The College Under 18 Rugby Football Team emerged Champions at the Provincial Under 18 10 a side tournament but only Runners-Up in the All Island Division II 10-a-side Tournament Cup quarter finals at Bandarawela.
- The annual Inter House Badminton Tournament was held and the Challenge Shield was won by Hayman House.

October

- 1st - International Children's and Elders' Day was celebrated. The Tutorial Staff presented bookmarks to all the students and provided ice cream for lunch while the School organised a special lunch.
- 4th - The Feast of St. Francis of Assisi & Patronal Festival of the College Chapel. The Guest Preacher was the Revd Christo Balraj, a former Chaplain of the School and presently Dean of Post Graduate Studies at the Theological College of Lanka, Pilimatalawa.
- 8th - The annual Prize Giving of the School was held with Mr Gerald A. W. de Alwis, a foundation old boy and former Manager of the School as Chief Guest. The Bishop of Colombo was represented by the Archdeacon of Nuwara Eliya who presided at the event while one of the Vice Presidents of the STCG OBA Mr Christo Gonawala,

represented the OBA. Service awards were given out to all tutorial staff of the School.

November

- 3rd - The inauguration of the revived Sinhala Literary Society.
- 15th - 'Sing-a-Long' in aid of the Turf Wicket Project of the School organised by Mr Gerald de Alwis at the BMICH. The Turf Wickets on the College Grounds are in need of complete re-laying.
- 21st - Valedictory Service and Assembly for the outgoing Class of 2008 on the same lines as the first such service held in 2007. The formal farewell sit down dinner was held the same night in the dining hall.

December

- 4th - Annual Festival of Nine Lessons and Carols followed by the Community Christmas Dinner, Christmas Party and Variety Entertainment evening. Also the farewell for the outgoing Chaplain, the Revd Andrew Gnaniah.
- 8th - School closed for the Christmas break.

2009

January

- 7th - School opened for the Lent Term with numbers reduced considerably due to the unavoidable fee hike.
- 12th - Special Staff Meeting and Seminar on the E5 Lesson Plans and Teaching method
- 23rd - The annual Inter-House Road Race was held and was won by A. Ratnapala of Read House. 40 participants from the 4 Houses took part.
- 30th - The annual Inter House Athletics Meet for the D. A. Seneviratne Memorial Challenge Cup was held with Mr Prabhath Jayasundere, a former Head Prefect of the School, as Chief Guest. Read House won the Cup while the senior Athletics Captain, A. R. B. Pilimalawa was adjudged Best Athlete of the Meet.
- 11th - The following were appointed School Prefects at Assembly: M. Gimhana, H. G. Nuwarapakshage, V. Wilfred & A. Wallace.
J. C. Rodrigues was appointed Senior Sacristan.

February

- 28th - The 50th Anniversary celebrations of the STCG OBA at Gurutalawa. The traditional Present Boys vs. Old Boys Cricket Match was followed by a special lunch. In the late afternoon and evening there was a Present Boys vs Old Boys Basket Ball match and a Old Boys vs Support Staff Volley Ball Match. Before the AGM the new practice Cricket Nets donated by Sri Lanka Cricket on the invitation of Mr Gerald de Alwis was declared open by Mr de Alwis who bowled the first ball.
- The 50th AGM was attended by a record number including three of the founder members – Messrs. P. S. Duleepkumar, Bradman Weerakoon and Gerald de Alwis. The AGM was followed by a time of Fellowship in the Hall and a formal sit down dinner in the Dining Hall. Speeches were made by the Headmaster, the first Secretary of the OBA Mr P. S. Duleepkumar and Mr Bradman Weerakoon.
- 5 commemorative trees were planted outside the Dining Hall, Library and Hall by representatives of the 5 decades of the OBA.

March

- A special Service of Thanksgiving was held at the Chapel of the Transfiguration, S. Thomas' College, Mount Lavinia to celebrate the 50th Anniversary of the STCG OBA. Following the Service and time of fellowship, the Hayman Foundation Trust was started with a meeting outside the Chapel.
- The Hayman Foundation, in memory of Dr R. L. and Mrs Mary Hayman, aims at raising a sum of initially 1 million rupees to generate an income for infrastructure development, scholarships and staff welfare.
- 14th - The Headmaster took the senior Cricket team to Colombo for the Royal-Thomian Cricket Match at the SSC grounds.
- 25th - The following were appointed School Prefects at Assembly: A. G. Indurangala, E. G. S. L. Pathmasiri, D. S. Chandrasekera and M. P. Wijesinghe.

V. Wilfred was appointed Head Prefect of the School while A. G. Indurangala, A. Wallace and M. Gimhana were appointed Deputy Head Prefects with specific duties.

April

- 7th - School closed for the April vacation.
- Ordinary Level 2008 results were released during the vacation and for Gurutalawa were among the best results produced in many years. 1 of our boys secured distinctions in all 9 subjects while another obtained 8 distinctions and 1 credit and another 7 distinctions and 2 credits – all three from the English medium batch. In the Sinhala medium the best results were 5 distinctions and 3 credits, while in the Tamil medium it was 3 distinctions, 4 credits and 2 passes.

May

- 4th - School reopened for the Trinity Term.
- 15th - Pastoral Visit of the Bishop Visitor and the annual visit of the Board of Governors for the special General Assembly to felicitate Mr Jacques Huyghebaert on his withdrawal as Advisor on Gurutalawa at the end of 2008. The Bishop presided at the event while the Headmaster welcomed the gathering and introduced the purpose of the event. Prof. G. L. Peiris delivered the key note speech on behalf of the Bishop and the Board of Governors while Mr S. R. Ratnapala spoke on behalf of the Staff and the Head Prefect on behalf of the student body.

The role played by Jacques Huyghebaert in the revival of STC at Gurutalawa will go down in history. The Headmaster in his speech conferred the title of 'Honorary Thomian' on him for his services that can never be adequately measured. Prof G. L. Peiris extolled his vision and virtues. Mr Huyghebaert in reply spoke of what had prompted him to take on Guru and made particular reference to the three horses and why he had named them Faith, Hope and Charity.

After the Assembly a half holiday was declared for the students. The Board members walked around the School and then there was a fellowship lunch at the Headmaster's Bungalow, followed by meetings with the Academic and Support staff of the School.

- 23rd - The 6th annual Uva Thomian Cricket Encounter was played at the Bandarawela Esplanade after a break of 20 years. The S. L. A. Ratnayake and E. St. P. Gunawardene Trophies were won by the STC Bandarawela Team, although STC Gurutalawa put up a valiant fight despite having started off as underdogs. It was a well planned and enjoyable event for all and will hopefully continue for many more years to come. The proceeds were to be divided between the two schools for the development of sports at the Schools.

June

- 4th - Investiture Ceremony for the newly trained STCG Scout Troop at STC Bandarawela by the District Scout Commissioner & Headmaster of STC Bandarawela Mr. L. A. M. Chandrasekera. 18 of our scouts trained by Fr H. C. Goodchild were invested with their first badges.
- 13th - The Inter Company Swimming Meet was held at Diyatalawa and two of our teams participated. The A team came 1st in the 50 M Relay event and the B team came 2nd.

- 19th - The annual Cultural Day of the School was held. Mr. R. M. Jayasekera, Divisional Director of Education for Welimada was the Chief Guest, but was unable to attend at the last minute. A high standard of performance was maintained this year too.

July

- 1st - Old Boy and former Assistant Manager under Mr Clifford Ratwatte was appointed Manager Administration of the School by the Board to assist the Headmaster with the administration of the School.
- 3rd - The annual Prize Giving was held with Mrs Nirmali Wickremesinghe, Principal of Ladies' College, Colombo as Chief Guest. As the Prize Giving of STC Bandarawela was on the same day a number of regular visitors at our Prize Giving were absent. Mr Lincoln Fernando, Manager of the School presided at the event. Mr Prabhath Jayasundered, a Vice President of the STCG OBA proposed the Vote of Thanks while the Head Prefect eloquently seconded it. There were a number of new Prizes awarded this year.
- 10th - The Institution and Installation of the Revd John Puddefoot as 17th Warden of our parent School at Mount Lavinia took place at the Chapel of the Transfiguration in the presence of a large and distinguished gathering including H. E. the President of Sri Lanka.
- 21st - The following were appointed School Prefects at Assembly: S. S. Kodippliarachchi, A. S. Kalpana, S. R. H. A. Ratnapala, J. C. Rodrigues, B. H. B. Sandakelum, A. H. M. S. R. B. Wadigamangawa, W. M. L. L. Weerakoon.

August

- 7th - August vacation began.

September

- 12th - The STCG Oriental Dancers participated in 'Kinnara 2009' organised by the Hewisi Band of STC Mount Lavinia on the steps of the College Chapel there. They performed a fire dance that was acclaimed by all as our boys were so much younger than all the other performers.
- 18th - The annual Inter House Swimming Meet, postponed from Term 2 due to the drought, was held at the College Swimming Pool with Dr Harsha K. K. Perera, an old boy and Swimming Captain of 1985 as Chief Guest. The Dr R. L. Hayman Challenge Shield was won by Read House while the Headmaster's Award for the Best All Round Swimmer was won by R. M. Buddhika of De Saram House. Dr Perera in his speech paid a special tribute to Rev Fr H. C. Goodchild and extolled the values of the need for a right balance between sports and academics that was once the mark of this School.
- An open Parents' meeting was then held in the College Hall where a proposal was made to revive the dormant PTA for the benefit of the School. A group of parents volunteered to spearhead the process.
- 26th - The College Hewisi Band participated in the Centenary Celebrations of the Church of the Ascension, Bandarawela, where they led the procession. Their performance was greatly appreciated.

- The College Horse Riding Club was represented by 9 of our riders at the annual Premadasa Dressage Competition held at the Premadasa Riding School in Colombo. Two members won 2nd place, while two won 3rd place at this prestigious event. The support of the Premadasa Riding School and the Equestrian Society to our Riding Club has been significant. STC Gurutalawa is the only School that has membership of the Society to date.

- 29th - The Golden Jubilee Celebrations of the Chapel of the Good Shepherd at S. Thomas' College, Bandarawela at which the Rt Revd Kumara Illangasinghe, Lord Bishop of Kurunegala preached and celebrated.

October

- 1st - International Children and Elders' Day was observed at the School. The Tutorial Staff created history by organizing a variety entertainment programme in which all the participants were teachers. The children enjoyed the event. Ice Cream for all the children from the staff followed a special lunch hosted by the School.
- 4th - Feast of St. Francis of Assisi and Patronal Festival of the Chapel. Revd Bro Lionel SSF, an Anglican Franciscan Priest, now resident at Devasaranaramaya was the guest preacher. After the traditional breakfast Bro. Lionel had a special time of discussion on the life and importance of St. Francis of Assisi and the Franciscan Movement. A special Chapel Bookmark was issued by the Upper VIth and distributed after the Service.
- 6th - International Teachers' Day was observed by a Variety Entertainment Programme organised by the students of the School for their teachers. Small hand made souvenirs crafted by the boys and girls were presented to the Teachers by the students.
- 16th - Our junior Oriental Singers who had been placed 1st at the Zonal Singing Competition in 2008 for a unique Peace Song, performed the song as part of the opening ceremony of the 124th annual Sessions of the Diocesan Council of the Diocese of Colombo.
- 23rd - The annual English Day Programme was held with Mr Hector Yapa, Director of English for the Uva Province as Chief Guest. A high standard was maintained despite the difficulties experienced by the teachers in the teaching of English as a 2nd Language.

November

- 12th - The Valedictory Service to bless and bid farewell to the outgoing Class of 2009 was held in the College Hall in the usual manner.
- The ceremony was preceded by the unveiling of the guide map of the School on a special board by the entrance to the School. The Map was designed and installed by the outgoing Upper VIth Class
 - The formal sit down dinner for the valedictorians was at 7.30 in the evening, but due to the critical condition of one of our juniors in hospital we decided to cancel the musical show that was scheduled.

December

- 6th - The annual Festival of Lessons and Carols was held in the Chapel. The choir trained by Fr H. C. Goodchild was able to sing some difficult carols such as J. S. Bach's 'Break forth'.
- 8th - The Community Christmas Dinner, Christmas Party and Variety Entertainment evening were held.
- 9th - School closed for the Christmas vacation.
- 11th - The final Staff Meeting for the year was followed by a special Christmas lunch
- 16th - The Support Staff Christmas Lunch.