

**S. Thomas' College, Gurotalawa
O.B.A.**

**(FROM "THE FIRST FIFTY YEARS - A HISTORY OF S. THOMAS' COLLEGE GURUTALAWA -
1942 - 1992" BY P.S. DULEEP KUMAR)**

The S.T.C. O.B.A. has played a significant role in the History of the College since it was inaugurated in 1959. The initial meeting was held on 21.02.1959 at the Mt. Lavinia Hall presided over by Dr. R.L. Hayman, Headmaster. There were over 70 Old Boys present. The Warden is patron of the Association and the Headmaster Ex-Officio President. The objects of the Association as adopted in the Constitution are:

- (a) To rally round the College all Old Boys and well wishers who desire to upload and assist the College in every way.
- (b) To enable Old Boys to keep in touch with College and with each other.
- (c) To afford guidance and encouragement to the younger generation.

Implicit in its raison d'être is the custodianship of the School's traditions. It was for this reason that Dr. Hayman discussed with some old boys the urgency of forming an association when he had decided to retire.

Since its inauguration the O.B.A.'s activities and projects are as follows:-

- 1960 - Contributed to the extension of the chaplain's quarters, its first project.
- 1962 - Ran a Gurotalawa stall at the Thomian Fair at Mount Lavinia. Commissions portrait of Dr. R.L. Hayman by David Paynter.
- 1963 - Undertook a project to build a Science Laboratory as a testimonial to Dr. Hayman's services.
- 1964 - Canon Foster dies. The O.B.A. makes funeral arrangements with help of Warden Davidson. Shares with Bishop Harold de Soysa the cost of the grave.
- 1965 - Took up with the Board of Governors permission to organize a Thomian Fair (Proceeds for the Laboratory).
- 1966 - Arranges and installs memorial tablet for Canon Foster in Chapel.
- 1967 - Created a Scholarship Fund in Canon Foster's name.

- 1968 - Held a Joint-Thomian Fair at the Race Course under the Chairpersonship of Mrs. Siva Obeysekere and took leading role in its organization. Bore cost of gravestone for Canon Foster's grave.
- 1970 - Assists in Supervisory and Architectural aspects of the Hayman Testimonial Science Laboratory built from proceeds of the Thomian Fair.
- 1971 - Organises Dr. Hayman's first return visit in connection with the opening of Science Laboratory.
- Mr. Arthur Perera takes over as Secretary of the O.B.A. from Mr. P.S. Duleep Kumar, Secretary since its inception.
- 1972 - Undertook Project to finance the Canon Foster Memorial (new) School Hall.
- 1973 - Organises visit of Dr. & Mrs. Hayman and Miss Joan Foster for the opening of the New School Hall.
- 1974 - Formal opening of Foster Memorial Hall by Miss Joan Foster during the Reunion Celebrations in February.
- Organises Thomian Christmas Fair at S. Thomas' Prep School to augment funds advanced by the School for the Hall.
- 1975 - Gave S. Thomas' Staff Guild part proceeds of Fair for construction of a much needed Staff Club House. Proceeds for Memorial Hall diverted to construction of Junior Class Room Block as College had met the costs.
- 1977 - Organised a pop-concert to raise funds for Building Maintenance of School. The concert was not the expected success due to the weather.
- 1978 - Organises 3rd visit of Dr. Hayman, Mrs. Hayman and Miss Foster to Sri Lanka. Dr. Hayman addressing the O.B.A. at the A.G.M. states that in addition to providing financial support the Old Boys should be alive to other problems the school would have to face from time to time.
- 1979 - Joins Mt. Lavinia in Royal – Thomian Centenary Celebrations, and helps in manning of College Stall. Proceeds went towards improvement of Laboratory & Health facilities.
- 1983 - Organises visit of Dr. & Mrs. Hayman once again to Sri Lanka. Dr. Hayman present at O.B.A. Celebrations in February 1983.
- Takes lead in organizing Public Dinner for Dr. & Mrs. Hayman at Mt. Lavinia Hotel on 08th March.

- Moots 10 year Development Plan for the School.
- Dr. Hayman passes away in England after his return on May 08th.
- Helps in organizing Memorial Service at S.T.C. Mt. Lavinia on May 12th the same day he is laid to rest in Bournemouth.
- 1984 - Mr. Bandula Vithanage takes over as Secretary of O.B.A. after an interim period of 4 years served by Mr. Sunil Watawala (2years) Mr. Nihal Waniarachchi (2years).
- 1986 - Organises visit of Mrs. Mary Hayman to Sri Lanka for proposed Canon R.S. de Saram Library Building.
- 1987 - Hosts Mrs. Hayman's visit to Sri Lanka and S. Thomas' College – her first visit alone – formally opens Library in Warden De Saram's name.
- S.T.C., O.B.A., U.K. donates Rs. 100,000/- towards cost of the library building.
- Organises felicitation dinner for Mrs. Mary Hayman at the Holiday Inn Hotel.
- 1988 - Moots Dinner-dance to inaugurate Golden Jubilee fund but repeatedly postponed due to prevailing conditions in the country.
- 1989 - Blue – Black Rhythm dinner-dance successfully held- the first ever dance organized and held by the O.B.A. – on May 12th at the Golden Ballroom of the Hotel Lanka Oberoi.
- Mr. & Mrs. J.B. Gunasekera are tragically murdered at Gurutalawa on 09.10.1989. Mr. Bandula Wanigasekera an old boy co-ordinates funeral arrangements.
- 1990 - Condolence motion is passed at a special general meeting of the O.B.A. on 25.02.1990.
- Golden Jubilee Committee is set up with Mr. Clifford Ratwatte a Senior Vice – President as the Chairman and with Mr. Arthur Perera as Secretary.
- U.K. O.B.A. sends further funds to replace electrical wiring system, renovate toilets and for the purchase of science equipment.
- Organises felicitation lunch for Mr. J.de S. Jayasinghe at the B.M.I.C.H.
- 1991 - Mr. Bandula Vithanage stands down as Secretary and is succeeded by Mr. Piloo Lakdawela.

- Mrs. Mary Hayman makes second visit to Sri Lanka to inaugurate Golden Jubilee programme over O.B.A. celebrations February 22nd, 23rd, and 24th.
- Organises felicitation dinner for Mrs. Mary Hayman 27.02.1991.
- Golden Jubilee Projects get under way:-
 1. Prize Draw competition.
 2. Blue Black Rhythm Golden Jubilee dance held at the Hotel Galadari Meridian on 14.12.1991.
 3. History of College, edited by Mr. Oliver de Soysa assisted by Mr. Selwyn Gunawardene and Mr. P.S. Duleepkumar.
- 1992 - 4. Golden Jubilee Dinner with Mrs. Mary Hayman as the Chief Guest held at the Hotel Galadari Meridian on May 12th, 1992.
 5. Souvenir sales including Picture folder of school.
 6. Gurutalawa Thomian Fair held at S.T.C. Mount Lavinia on December 11th & 12th under the Chairmanship of Mr. S.K. Wickremesinghe and with Mr. Arthur Perera as Secretary.
- The O.B.A. also accorded felicitation dinners to Mr. P.S. Duleepkumar when he was co-opted to the Board of Governors, to Mr. A.K. Chapman on his retirement as a teacher and to Mr. Bradman Weerakoon on his appointment as Secretary to the I.P.P.F.

Mr. Lucien W.A. Fernando has been the senior Vice President of the Association from March 26th, 1960. Mr. Clifford Ratwatte is the next senior Vice President and also has been a tower of strength to the Association together with Mr. Navaz Caffoor who has literally been the school's agent in Colombo for any and everything that needs to be done. Special mention must also be made of Messers. O.S. Perera, Kamal Nilaweera and Mr. Piyasena Obeysekera of the U.K. Association for their stalwart roles within the U.K., O.B.A. on behalf of the S.T.C.G., O.B.A. In recent times Mr. Kamal Nilaweera has made it a point to attend the re-union celebrations coming all the way from the U.K.

At present the Constitution provides for the following positions in the Committee:-

5 Vice Presidents, Hony. Secretary, Assistant Hony. Secretary, Hony. Treasurer and 20 unofficial Committee Members of whom five are to be co-opted by the Committee.

A feature of the Constitution is that an Old Boy of Mt. Lavinia is automatically eligible for membership of the Association. The membership fee is Rs. 100/-

The annual re-union celebrations take place by custom over the third week-end in February each year when the following programme is usually followed:-

Saturday

Cricket match vs. the present boys followed in the afternoon / evening by soccer and hockey matches also against the present boys. The highest individual score recorded by an old boy at cricket is 154 not out by S.R.E. Fernando.

Sunday

Holy Communion Service at the College chapel and the Annual General Meeting.

On Saturday there is a formal sit down dinner with speeches which is preceded by a Fellowship get together over “cocktails”.

P.S.D.