



# 100 YEARS AT MOUNT LAVINIA



Warden Rev. Marc Billimoria

**ISHARA JAYAWARDANE**  
‘100 years at Mount’ captures the pride and privilege associated with being a Thomian. It is a book that captures the glory of one of the best schools in the country.

“I am extremely happy that we have been able to complete this task in time for the centenary celebrations this year. It is all the more commendable because the young gentlemen who have been part of the project have been extremely busy with starting off their lives at University or workplaces and have yet found time to engage in research and writing,” said Warden Rev. Marc Billimoria. Billimoria frankly confesses that never in his wildest dreams did he ever imagine he would be commissioning a passionate group of old Thomians to complete the last 25 years of history, updating what he started in 1993, to have a book covering 100 years.

“I feel deeply satisfied about the project because I know the late Warden Neville de Alwis, who invited me to compile ‘75 Years at Mount’ in time for the celebrations of 1993 would have been so glad that the project he started has been completed in this way.

So many attempts had been made



Oshanthaka Cabral

prior to 1993 to update the College history after W. T. Kelle’s magnum opus of 1937 but it wasn’t until Warden de Alwis requested me to undertake the task soon after I left school and joined the academic staff that the task was completed. ‘75 Years at Mount’ was not perfect. Having studied History for my degree after having worked on the book I can see so many shortcomings and flaws. So I welcomed the chance to put certain things right this time and ‘75 Years at Mount’ has been revised and slightly expanded as well. It has been an attempt to have within one volume a chronological account of the story of STC at Mount Lavinia and with the last 25 years being added by my young colleagues. I believe we have achieved this goal,” said Rev. Billimoria.

The College is 167 years old this year and of its 100 years have been spent at Mount Lavinia. The institution has grown in numbers and in other ways. “Our reputation is intact and the demand for admission to STC grows every year. We are not a perfect school and I dare say no school today can boast that it is perfect but we are trying our best to be faithful to our Founder’s Vision and to the ethos that we



have inherited. Tradition is dynamic and so the Thomian tradition continues to evolve. All in all the school is doing well,” stated the Warden.

The Book ‘100 Years at Mount’ is in two main parts. Part 1 is to compile ‘75 Years at Mount’ fully revised and expanded slightly by Rev. Billimoria himself. The Book also contains photographs of all the Bishops of Colombo, Wardens, Sub Wardens, Heads of Sections from 1918 to date as well as of the various buildings. As appendices there are important lists of names as well.

“In this task I was assisted by Senaseviratne, one of the young gentlemen on the Committee for Part 2 who had an outstanding academic and extra-curricular record at College.

Part 2 contains the last 25 years in



Sidath Gajanyake

chronological order and this section has been compiled by a committee led by Sidath Gajanyake and Oshanthaka Cabral two outstanding recent products of the school,” said Rev. Billimoria.

He is nostalgic when he recalls the days, 25 years ago, when he worked on ‘75 Years at Mount’. “In revising ‘75 Years at Mount’ and being involved in the rest of the book with the Committee I was reminded of the process of getting ‘75 Years at Mount’ out in 1992/1993. The role played by my late mother Margaret Billimoria in typing out the handwritten script on a battered Olivetti typewriter, of



Darren White

my mentor the late Warden De Alwis reading and correcting the proofs, of my trips by bus to Arnold’s International Printing House at Union Place to meet K. L. de Alwis who handled and overlooked the printing, interviewing a number of prominent old Thomians and the many late hours spent in the Archives at the College Library. So many memories come flooding back. I do hope the young gentlemen who have been involved in this task, will have as many memories to speak of later.”

“Our book is not a perfect work. I was very conscious of this in 1993 and this time round too of all us are conscious of this fact. We leave it to others to do a more analytical history at some point in the future. We also acknowledge, as I did in 1993, that there are bound to be many lapses and omissions, none of which are intentional or done with any intention to hurt anyone. We hope that we would be forgiven for any mistakes and omissions in this book and that if there are such things that they be brought to our attention so that we can put things right in future editions,” explained Billimoria.

**Co Author Oshanthaka Cabral**, an old boy of St. Thomas’ College and a teacher of English Literature at College. He is currently reading for his BA (Hons) at Kelaniya. Cabral is extremely enthusiastic about the book coming out and considers it a great honour and privilege to be one of the Co-Authors of the book.

“Firstly we had a history on Mount Lavinia written by Father Marc Billimoria, when he was in the staff in 1993. The task was

given to him by Warden Neville De Alwis for the 75th Anniversary of the school in Mount Lavinia. When planning to celebrate 100 years this year, about two years ago, Warden Billimoria commissioned this task to us.

Then we formed the team that consists of myself and **Co Author Sidath Gajanyake** who is currently studying for his LLM and his Attorneys while teaching Law at college and working in Vega Innovations. The rest of the committee members have also all left school and are pursuing their own individual careers,” said Cabral.

This book covers the history of STC, in Mount Lavinia from 1918. The School shifted from Mutual to Mount Lavinia on the January 26, 1918. So from there onwards till the end of 2017 is covered in Part 2 of the book.



Vidath Samararatne

1851 – December 1917. We completed the book on January 26, 2018. It has been a great task because all of us as kids at College read the Warden’s book ‘75 years at Mount’.

“That really inspired all of us to learn college history. I remember when I was in Grade 9 they taught us College History. So by reading Warden’s book we understood what the school has gone through over the years in Mount Lavinia during the war and the ethnic riots. So we are very fortunate to be involved in

something like this as young people,” explained Cabral.

**Co Author Sidath Gajanyake** pointed out that they have painstakingly gone through the college magazines and that it has been a true labor of love.

“It covers ever year and we have



Senal Seneviratne

compiled the most important facts into the book. We have even interviewed many relevant people and got their comments. The book is divided into sections according to the periods of the Wardens of the College. That is how we have divided the main chapters. We want to document how times have changed with the different Wardens at College. We have also incorporated many of the main events that took place in College,” said Gajanyake.

**Committee Member Darren White**, says he was naturally drawn to this project having been involved with the College Magazine during his time at school.

“Doing this project has been a reunion of sorts with the other guys. I really am happy that we have been able to successfully complete the project because it means a lot to me and the others,” said White.

**Committee Member Vidath Samararatne**, claims he likes to

deal with historical facts and says he thoroughly enjoyed compiling the book.

“This book is a comprehensive history of the College and I really think that it will make great reading,” said Samararatne.

**Committee Member Senal Seneviratne**, said he was basically assisting Warden Billimoria with amending and editing the first section of the book which is the original ‘75 years at Mount’.

“I supported him in his research work. For me it was tough. I would say that because by the time I started this, ‘75 years at Mount’ was established as a source of history of STC and the amending process was tough because I had to be certain of the credibility of the primary sources and secondary sources,” said Seneviratne.

**Committee Member Warren White**, said that STC has done a lot for its students and that this was one way of giving back.

“Being involved with many facets of College is something really special because College has meant a lot to us and it still does. This is a way of passing this on to the future generations as well,” said White.



Warren White Pictures by Sarah Pinar

‘100 Years at Mount’ will be released on Tuesday, June 19 at 6:30 pm at the College Hall at S. T. C. Mount Lavinia.

Whoever wishes to purchase a copy can come can do so after the official launch. A distinguished old boy of the College Dr. Nimal Seneviratne will be the Chief Guest at the launch which will be in the presence of officials of the College, members of the Board of Governors and members of the OBA and PTA of the College.

the magazine says. The feature appears in the July issue of Vogue, on sale on Friday, June 8. [www.theguardian.com](http://www.theguardian.com)

## DUCHESS OF SUSSEX ON VOGUE LIST OF UK'S MOST INFLUENTIAL WOMEN

The Duchess of Sussex appears alongside the leader of the Scottish Conservatives, Ruth Davidson, and the singer Dua Lipa in Vogue magazine’s inaugural guide to Britain’s 25 most influential and aspirational female figures. Vogue 25 is a list of what the fashion publication says is “an extraordinary cast of leaders defining—and redefining—the way we live now.” The women range in age from 22 (Lipa) to 73 (Baroness Hale, the President of the Supreme Court). Among them are figures from the worlds of politics, the arts, fashion, media and sport, among others. The Harry Potter author JK Rowling, is one of the most recognizable names on the list, along

with the human rights lawyer Amal Clooney, Black Panther actress Letitia Wright, fashion designer Stella McCartney, the artistic director of the Royal Court, Vicky Featherstone, and the model Edie Campbell and Adwo Aboah. Also chosen are Katharine Viner, hon-in-chief of the Guardian, along with reporters Amelia Genteman, who exposed the Windsor scandal, and Carole Cadwaladr, who broke the Cambridge Analytica/Facebook story. Following her wedding to Prince Harry, the Duchess of Sussex is hailed by Vogue as a person who “captures the public imagination like no other this year.”

The magazine says the duchess — “one of the most recognizable women in the world” — has an influence that “stretches far beyond the ceaseless coverage of her style” — as a bi-racial campaigning feminist from America, she is helping to forge a new 21st century identity for the monarchy. Davidson is praised by the magazine as a “beacon, thanks to her reliable personality and progressive ideas” among a “sea of old-guard Tories.” The publication also cites the politician’s “spectacular gains for her party in the last Scottish elections,” as a reason for her position on its list. Lipa, who won two Brit Awards this year after being the first woman to receive five nominations on one night, is described by Vogue as a “culture defin-

er.” “Her hit New Rules, an anthem of female empowerment, laid out a blueprint for modern sex lives and has, to date, had more than a billion views on YouTube.”



Duchess of Sussex