

**GIRLS**  
**EDUCATION AT STC**  
**&**  
**MEMBERSHIP IN OBA**

**IT MAY BE PRUDENT FOR ALL CONCERNED TO BE AWARE OF THE FOLLOWING PROVISIONS.**

**A. The Saint Thomas' College Board of Governors Ordinance provides in its Preamble that**

Whereas by a grant James Chapman then Lord Bishop of Colombo being seized and possessed of certain land and premises forming the College of Saint Thomas the Apostle transferred, assigned and set over unto the Incorporated Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts and the Bishop of Colombo the said land and premises, to hold the same for ever in trust nevertheless for the following purposes; *First, for the maintenance of the College of Saint Thomas the Apostle for the education of youth;* second, for the training and theological instruction of students as candidates for Holy Orders and for their instruction in medical and surgical knowledge; Third, for the continuance of the native Orphan Asylum; Fourth, for the residence of the Bishop of Colombo; and Fifth, for the holding of the services of the church, and the due observance of its seasons and festivals:

**It also provides power to make rules as follows:**

10. (1) It shall be lawful for the board from time to time at any meeting specially called for that purpose and by a majority of the members present and voting to make such rules not inconsistent with this Ordinance as it may deem expedient for any or all of the following purposes:-

- a)for the constitution of the board and the term of office of its members and the custody of the seal;
- b)for regulating the time and place of its own meetings and the order to be observed thereat;
- c)for the conduct of the duties of the board;
- d)for the employment, appointment and dismissal of the warden, the sub-warden and other members of the staff of the college and orphanage;
- e)for the management, organization and curriculum of the college and orphanage
- f)for the conditions regarding the admission of students and orphans to the college and orphanage;
- g)for the charging and recovery of fees, and for the award of grants, scholarships, exhibitions and maintenance allowances
- h) for the keeping of accounts, the deposits of money, the custody of documents and the appointment of such clerks or other officers as may be necessary for the performance of the work of the board;
- i)for the appointment of a secretary and treasurer;
- j)for amending, adding to or canceling the rules in the Schedule; \*and

k)for providing for every other matter not herein specifically provided for but necessary for the management of the property and the affairs of the college and orphanage and the discharge of the duties of the board;

10(2) The rules in the Schedule\* shall be deemed to be the rules of the board and to have been made by the board under this Ordinance; and shall remain in force until amended, added to or rescinded by rules made by the board under this section at a meeting called for that purpose.

10(3) All rules made under this section shall be published in the Gazette.

**B. The Rules of the S.Thomas' College Board of Governors provide inter alia as follows:-**

Rule 10. S.Thomas' College, Mt.Lavinia and the Branch Schools shall be day and boarding schools for **boys** and shall be maintained and managed in suitable buildings provided and approved by the Board

Rule 22. Nature of instruction

The education imparted at S.Thomas' College, Mt.Lavinia, and the Branch Schools shall be in such subjects as are proper to be taught in a public school for **boys** and shall include religious instruction consonant with the doctrines of the Church of Ceylon.

Rule 24. The Board may amend these Rules at an Annual General Meeting or a Special General Meeting provided that at least 10 clear days notice of such amendment has been given to all members of the Board. The Board may amend these rules by a simple majority of members present and voting.

Whilst the Rules of the Board could be amended by it with a simple majority the Ordinance requires amendment by the legislature.

Having set out the legal position with regard to education of **GIRLS** at S. Thomas' College we now look into the question of **PAST STUDENTS WHO ARE GIRLS BEING ADMITTED TO MEMBERSHIP IN THE OLD BOYS ASSOCIATIONS.**

**C. The Rules of the OBA at S. Thomas' College Mt. Lavinia provide as follows:**

03. Membership shall consist of and include:

- (a) all members of the Association whose names now appear in the register of members;
- (b) Old Boys of S Thomas' College, Mount Lavinia, who have been students for a period of not less than six (6) school terms, and Old Boys of the Branch School at S Thomas' College, Gurutalawa, who have been students for a period of not less than nine (9) school terms  
Provided that the Executive Committee may; in its absolute discretion and without reason stated, enroll an old boy who has been a student of S.Thomas College for period less than the stipulated time.
- (c) The members of the tutorial staff of S Thomas' College, Mount Lavinia, who shall be staff members of the Association for the first five (5) years of their employment as members of such tutorial staff and who shall immediately on completion of the first five (5 ) years become members. A member of the tutorial staff who is no more a member of such tutorial staff before the expiry of the period of five (5) years shall cease to be a member of the Association.
- (d) Honorary Life Members not exceeding ten (10) elected at an Annual General Meeting.

**ONLY BOYS WHO HAVE BEEN STUDENTS CAN BE MEMBERS OF THIS ASSOCIATION.**

**D. The Constitution of the S. Thomas' College, Bandarawela OBA provide as follows:**

**MEMBERSHIP**

*Membership of the Association shall consist of Life Members and Honorary Life Members:*

***a) Life Members:***

- *All past students of S. Thomas' College, Bandarawela, formally known as S. Preparatory School, Bandarawela “ and thereafter known as “ S. Thomas' College Bandarawela “, who have been a year or more than one year, are eligible to be admitted after having reached the age of 21, or 5 year after leaving College, which ever.*

***(b) Honorary Life Members:***

- *They can be anyone who has rendered singular services to the College. Honora be elected at the Annual General Meeting of the Association with the recommended committees with a two third (2/3) majority of those present. The Head Master Office is a Life Member.*

**© *Other Members:***

- *Members of staff with more than 5 years service with the College could be members if they are proposed and seconded at the Annual General Meeting.*

**GIRLS WHO HAVE BEEN STUDENTS ARE ENTITLED TO BECOME MEMBERS OF THIS ASSOCIATION.**

Girls were admitted as students at S. Thomas' College Bandarawela then known as S. Thomas' Preparatory School, Bandarawela during the period of the Founder Headmaster Mr. W.T. Keble. In fact when Founder Members of the 62 Group of S. Thomas' College, Gurutalawa were in the Kindergarten Classes at Bandarawela in the years immediately preceding 1952 and thereafter several Girls were in class with them. The current ie. 2007/2008 OBA EXCO of S. Thomas' College, Bandarawela has Angela Seneviratne as its Social Secretary.

**We have not been able to ascertain the position in the Rules of the S. Thomas' Preparatory School, Kollupitiya OBA.**

**E. The Rules of the S. Thomas' College, Gurutalawa OBA provide as follows:**

**Membership 4**

- (1) The Association shall consist of Life Members and Honorary Members, referred to herein as Members.*
- (2) Old **Boys** of S. Thomas' College, Gurutalawa ( referred to in these Rules as " the College " ) Old Boys of S. Thomas' College, Mt. Lavinia, and past and present members of the teaching staff of the College, may become Members of the Association on application and payment of a prescribed fee, as fixed by a resolution adopted at an Annual General Meeting and which fee is presently Rs. 500/-.*

**PROVIDED THAT:**

*Applicants of the Tutorial Staff have served at least one full academic year at College.*

The Gurutalawa OBA at a Meeting of its EXCO took up the question of admitting females who are past students of the College as Members of the OBA and it was decided

that their sex should not be a bar to admission. News Letters of the OBA have expressed this matter in the following manner: -

**In the Newsletter No. 3 of October 3, 2002 it is reported as follows:**

**Females as OBA members.**

*A considerable number of members on the Tutorial Staff at Gurutalawa are now females. In fact the Supervisors of the Primary & Middle School are females who have served at Gurutalawa for 20-25 years. So also it is possible for female students to obtain admission and pursue their entire education upto the O/L examinations at Gurutalawa. In fact there have been students who have done so. The Ex-Co considered whether it would be appropriate to permit enrolment of female teachers and female students as Members of the OBA . Such enrolment was approved.*

**In the Newsletter No. 4 of January 01, 2003 it is reported as follows:**

**Females as OBA members**

*The OBA is open to all Old Boys and the Teaching Staff of Gurutalawa. At the time the Rules were drawn up there were no female students studying in College. Nor were there female teaching staff. This has changed drastically during the last 2 decades. In fact presently the Supervisors of the Primary School and Middle School are both female Teachers who have been in service at Gurutalawa for over 20 years. So also there have been female students who have completed their entire school education at Gurutalawa. This matter was discussed by the Ex-Co and it was considered perfectly in order for such Teachers and students to join the OBA as allowed by the Rules. Some already have done so.*

**YET. IT WOULD APPEAR THAT THE RULES MAKE REFERENCE ONLY TO “BOYS”. IT MUST BE REMEMBERED THAT THESE RULES WERE ADOPTED AT THE AGM OF FEBRUARY 24,2003. THIS PROBABLY WOULD HAVE BEEN BY INADVERTENCE AND AN OVERSIGHT. PERHAPS IT WOULD BE APPROPRIATE TO MAKE NECESSARY AMENDMENTS IN THE LIGHT OF THE IMMEDIATE PAST HISTORY AND SUBSEQUENT EVENTS TO THE AGM REFERRED TO ABOVE.**

It is not a secret that Mrs. Seetha Jayasekera who holds a Master’s Degree in Education has been teaching at Gurutalawa for over 25 years. As such students who have passed out of Gurutalawa during the last 25 years would have received some part of their moulding as men and women in the Thomian tradition through her. She is presently the Senior Supervisor. So also Mrs. Chinthia Dias who has served at Gurutalawa for the last 25 years and Mrs. Manomani Wickremage who has been teaching at Gurutalawa for the last 22 years. All 03 Senior Staff Members have been Members of the OBA for the last several years.

According to the Headmaster at Gurutalawa the Board of Governors has given him clearance to have up to 50 Girls as students. Right now 20 out of them are boarders accommodated in a dormitory called “ Blanchard” in the Keble Complex with a separate Matron. Those who were students at S. Thomas’ College Bandarawela will recall that

Mrs. Blanchard was the Music Teacher in the very early years and she was housed in the “Cottage” up on the hill.

We have also been made to understand that Ladies College in Colombo are helping the Headmaster at Gurutalawa with various aspects of the “Blanchard Dormitory”/Keble Complex. Incidentally the current number of students on the role at Gurutalawa is 550. The Headmaster also informs us that steps are afoot to provide a Netball Court and other Sports facilities for the Girls who have so far been deprived of same. It would interest those concerned to read the article written by Shamindri Marasinghe, the daughter of Mr. J.W. Marasinghe who spent the greater part of his life at Gurutalawa as Dr. Hayman’s shadow assisting him as his Secretary in the Office as well as Coach at the swimming pool and in Master in Charge of Scouting, the activities Dr. Hayman was very much involved in and closest to his heart. He was also the First Dorm Master of Keble.

It would also interest Old Boys to note that Shamindri is the First Girl to have completed her entire education from Kindergarten up to G C E O/Level at Gurutalawa. Her younger sister Shalini too studied for 08 years at Gurutalawa.

They have created history by becoming the First Two Old Girls of Gurutalawa to join its OBA. One can be certain that their numbers will increase as time goes on.

LJ  
Colombo  
November 12,2007