

**REMEMBER? by ROGER HATCH**

It started as an idea of a few with vision  
Then grew into a lifelong mission  
The idea to create a school by the sea  
Which turned into a blessing for you and me  
For numerous boys entered through those gates  
And well rounded men left, prepared to meet their fate.

We were given a flag of beautiful blue and black  
A crest that stands out even when the flag is slack  
We were given an anthem called the college song  
A song which we sing true and strong  
It sends a chill down every boy and man  
For it's the calling of a brotherhood – The Thomian Clan.

We entered in shorts, carrying a bottle of drink  
Looked down on by seniors as the missing link  
In orderly lines we moved around  
Staring in awe at the Big Club ground  
We were aware that we had entered Hallowed gates  
Closer we huddled and held hands with our mates.

The teachers stood tall with voices of thunder  
With a shout they would tear us asunder  
Our lives were sacrificed to timetables  
Our innocence testified to by our uncarved tables  
Umbilical cords cut and made to fend alone  
The making of a Thomian began...right to the bone.

Remember PAT that insufferable twat?  
See Pat Sing, See Pat Eat, See Pat do that?  
Remember 6+4 and carry the one?  
Remember some mad bugger who had a Hot Cross Bun?  
Remember Rufus the cock of the farm?  
Remember the prayers to keep us from harm?

Remember the terror when we heard that clink?  
It was the Head mixing his drink !  
Under those stairs in that dark space he lurked  
Quiet and high till his chain we jerked  
Then like a nightmare he would appear with a cane  
And the piss would flow like a drizzle of rain!!!!

Remember the lunch interval? Football in the dust?  
Tasty Achcharu from a bowl of rust?  
Crispy rolls and Portello by straw  
Gal Seembala and mangoes raw  
What poison we ate; were we ignorant or bold?  
No screwed up immune system and not even a cold.

Flanders Field had noxious fumes; we all know that  
But no fume equalled the gas of the big clubs Lat  
A hundred stood in line waiting to leak  
One required lungs strong as teak  
A gulp of air and a dash to the bowl  
Breathe in there and for you bells would toll.

Remember the Cartman – Basheer by name?  
Who in his own way earned his fame  
What wares he had to dazzle us boys  
Gum, Chocs, Birdcalls and the most wonderful toys  
Remember the Bombay Mittai man with tinkling bell?  
Remember the Yo-Yo that hurt like hell?

Everyday had excitement for us we reasoned  
Rubber bands with paper pellets seasoned  
Seembala seeds loaded to a wooden zip gun  
A hit to the back of the ear would stun  
Remember the ‘Flick’ with finger-tip?  
The best place to hurt was between ass and hip.

The years rolled on and we found our feet  
With confidence we claimed our table and seat  
We had our patch on the Big Club Ground  
And under those trees nobody pushed us around  
We formed our friendships into a fiercely loyal gang  
We lived each day with a bang.

Then came March and the excitement grew  
For THE BIG MATCH had the school all askew  
There were tickets to get and bus rides to book  
We bought our Flag, Rattle by hook or by crook  
What a beauty our Flag with Silver dust on the crest  
That Blue Black and Blue Gollywog on our chest.

Remember the Boy's Tent on the Oval grounds?  
The Royal Tent out of bounds?  
How we booed and cheered as the case may be  
Seniors leading us much to our glee  
We saw our Clan; Past, Present and Future under that tent  
We smashed the overhead tukarung roof till it was bent.

Then came the time to the Lower 4<sup>th</sup> we went  
Under a ton of books we were bent  
A new place a new life a starting of age  
Far away from all as in a cage  
Gone were the kid gloves and the tolerance of fun  
We now had Senior teachers who caned our bum.

Life suddenly took on a different hue  
This was the world where you earned your due  
This was the beginning of a serious life  
Follow the plan or you ended in strife  
Just around the corner lurked the O'Levels we heard  
Study and pass or be a turd!!

The Upper 4th we entered in a daze  
The toilets in front of us smelled of Jayz  
The staffroom perched on that slight hill  
Eyed by our 'watchers' at the window sill  
No more Monitor's books could we carry  
It was file paper with an index to tally.

Our batch had evolved into characters of a play  
We had a joker, a genius, a carver and a lover of a fray  
We had the generous, the crafty, the arty and the brave  
We had the neat, the pig sty and the man from the cave  
No matter what mantle was carried by all  
It was all for one – and one for all.

The 5<sup>th</sup> Form was the best for the rioters of our batch  
It had an air of bedlam that we all jumped up to catch  
What a bloody party every single day brought  
What a deadly game to riot and not be caught  
We enjoyed ourselves and kept everybody at a hop  
The target of every college cop.

Then to the Lower 6<sup>th</sup> our crazy batch ascended  
Everybody prayed that our evil was mended  
We tried ! God knows that's true!  
But what can one do when we are a motley crew??  
So we went through that year full of gall  
Paying less attention to the syllabus and more to Odeon's call.

Upper 6<sup>th</sup> was when the magic of agriculture took us by storm  
For the product of a leaf produced Matterhorn  
This captivating and slender rolled beauty of white  
Made us find every secluded corner to light  
With an initial cough, cloud of smoke and a squandering of our meager wealth  
We were told by the pundits of our batch....menthol is good for the health.

Then came the OL's and we were filled with dread  
Cramming 8 years of school while lying in bed  
Then came that ID card with our photograph that caused fright  
Then came the notice.....at Mount centre your exams you will write  
In that centre collected our incorrigible band  
Writing our O'Levels with fag in hand !

What a grand bunch of teachers we had  
Each with eccentricities to warm the cockles of a lad  
Some were terrors with a history to match  
Some laid their sights on taming our batch  
Some caught our attention and had us enthralled  
Some had the horror of their nicknames called.

Remember the beauty of that singing room?  
Melody from her fingers and chest in bloom?  
We fought to be the first in the chorus line  
Hormones astir and eyes on that neckline  
It was the dawning of a realization then  
Those mounds of promise would make us boys into men.

Remember the guy with the directional flaw?  
Curls on his head and gritted teeth in his maw  
A step to the left and a step to the right  
Racing in the wrong direction with all his might  
How we waited in ambush to scream that name  
So that he whirled and slapped some guy who wasn't to blame.

Remember that treasure who was the king of scouts  
He walked the corridor saying... move you louts!  
Steady gait and pith helmet on head  
He was brilliant - every one of us said  
When he was angry we held the wall at his beck  
Those foggy bifocals made him cane us on spine and neck.

There was that corporal short and dull  
Polished shoes and crew cut on skull  
He was the keeper of the books  
Tried to intimidate us with his looks  
Pity we weren't adults then for it would be fun  
To see him try a pack drill, one on one.

Dear God, bless that lovable cigar chewing man  
Rumpled clothes but what élan  
Entering class he would declare  
James Bond is here...beware!  
What a smile and what patience he had  
For we were horrors in his class ..every lad.

Good Lord ! Here comes beige suit and dark tans  
Square jaw and enlarged facial glands  
He sliced our ass with a fine art  
If we forgot Amo Amaas Amaat  
On Report, Conduct Report he was in charge of all  
Smashed us after school in 5c ...one and all.

Remember that gem and the master of story time  
We huddled all quiet... you could hear the fall of a dime  
He told us of ghosts, witchcraft and held us enthralled  
We never moved till he ended.... even when the bell called  
I remember him - national suit, smart and neat  
He was the only teacher who held me glued to my seat

Remember the friend of us all?  
Mr. Jinadasa, to us you always stand tall  
What a friend to us you were through thick and thin  
Advised us and helped us no matter what sin  
No nickname we gave you and no disturbance did you see  
Our attention, our respect and our loyalty was for thee.

Remember that mischievous hare?  
He would enter class and present a dare  
On that blackboard he would caricature draw  
It was the fastest insult you ever saw  
Not a word, not a hum and only a drawing stared at one  
Everytime I saw that egg...I knew I was done.

Remember my friends that gentleman who wore his pants high?  
That long fat thing hanging along his thigh?  
Is that real? Is that really what we see?  
It was ..... we know.... 'cos we tapped his knee !  
When allowed, he showed much charm  
He caused nobody pain or any harm.

Remember that maestro of organ fame?  
Tall, wiry and lanky in frame  
High above the pews he would play  
We would sing in unison before we pray  
Clutching register he would glide with head down  
If you knew him well....he would rather smile than frown.

Remember Sir Godfrey, the knight of the Gate  
Smiling with patience awaiting the bedlam to abate  
Then with genius he would talk us down  
For that tolerance even now he wears our crown  
Another good man and a Thomian to the bone  
He should be voted to ascend the College Throne.

The cream of educationists laboured for our cause  
Teaching, correcting and moulding without pause  
We didn't know then but we do know now  
They gave us our future with the sweat of their brow  
Thank you Sir and thank you Miss  
Its in honour of you that I pen this.

These are but a few to whom I have given note  
Jokes aside on them we dote  
I leave to others to place in ink  
Of all who formed us....the Missing Link  
Wherever we go or congregate  
Burned in our hearts...Our Mates, Our Teachers and our College Gates!