

Mr.Sarath Suraweera
Superintendent of Police,
D/2/2/1, Manning Flats,
Colombo 08

March 15,2001

Mr.Upali Jayawardena,
Hon.Secretary,
S T C G- O B A
No.27,42nd Lane,
Colombo 06

Original by- Registered Post
Duplicate by Hand

Dear Upali,

S.Thomas College, Gurutalawa – O B A
A G M February 24,2001

1. The Objects of the OBA are:-
 - (a) to rally round the College all old boys and well wishers of the College who desire to uphold and assist the College in every way they can;
 - (b) to enable old boys to keep in touch with the College and with one another and,
 - (c) to afford guidance and encouragement to the younger generation.
2. We write this letter with particular reference to the above AGM and the state of affairs of the College in general, so as to enable you to table this at the next meeting of the Executive Committee. Extra copies are made available for easy reference of all Executive Committee Members.
3. The affairs of the College, i.e the standards of academic and sports achievements, discipline amongst students, staff and minor staff, the facilities in the dormitories and toilets are reported to have declined considerably.

4. It is said that certain classes and even time devoted to “Prep” are sometimes not supervised as Masters responsible reside outside College.
5. It is also said that Hockey has not been played for over 2 years. Yet at page (6) of the Head Master’s report, certain contrary reference is made. Perhaps some mischievous elements may be trying to create dissension and disharmony in the Administration by spreading false information.
6. It is also said that students are fighting amongst themselves at crucial periods on the academic calendar.
7. It is also said that staff and minor staff have formed different groups and show animosity to each other.
8. It is also said that certain facilities provided for very young students are deplorable.
9. The OBA itself has failed to give the due support it could have given to the Head-Master and the College. He must not be made to feel isolated. No useful purpose is served in criticising him. We must in whatever way we can lend him all our support and give him the confidence he needs and the backing of the OBA. There is pressure on some Old Boys to take a grater interest in the day to day activities of the College and endeavour to put things right apart from interesting themselves in Building Projects.
10. The OBA has no mandate to run the School. It can and should assist the College and particularly the Head-Master. To do this the OBA must first put its own house in order.

The AGM must be conducted in a more professional and businesslike manner and with greater finesse. At times what transpires does not seem to interest any one and there does not seem to be any order. Accommodating all the Vice-Presidents of the OBA at the Head Table may assist in the conduct of the affairs of the Meeting in the required manner.

A notice should be carried in the usual place in the Daily News paper intimating the appointment of the new office-bearers of the OBA at the last AGM

A separate advertisement should be carried in the local news paper in a prominent place requesting those who have not enrolled to do so and those who have changed their addresses or have had no communication from the OBA for some time, to immediately communicate with the Secretary. The Secretary should thereafter respond forthwith.

If the Secretary has any problem in attending to affairs of the OBA promptly, an old boy is prepared to make a fully equipped Secretariat available with immediate effect and at no extra cost. The Secretariat could be kept open and manned during normal working hours. Obtaining Application Forms for enrolment, payment of subscriptions, obtaining literature, souvenirs etc, and issuing receipts could be carried out at such an O B A Secretariat much more efficiently than by an individual or two who may have important business interests and also be on the move. It will also facilitate obtaining particulars to compile the Directory. No administration expenses will be charged to the OBA.

11. The Register of Members appears not to have been properly maintained and updated over the years. This is an essential ingredient of the OBA. This must be attended to early and thereafter regularly updated.
12. (i) The Secretary should be required to submit his Report of the year's events and activities, together with details of attendance during the past year of all Executive Committee Members at Meetings. Those who have no time for the affairs of the OBA and College, should be discouraged from seeking office.
(ii) All Vice- Presidents must be required to submit through the Secretary, Reports of activities and participation during the last year, for the members to consider whether they are suitable and deserve to be re-appointed.

- (iii) The Audited Accounts of the Association is best circulated amongst the membership in advance. An effort must be made to persuade the Auditors to expedite their work. Availability of Accounts in time may perhaps reduce waste of time at the AGM and also enable the membership to properly peruse/ scrutinize the Accounts in advance and make a worthwhile contribution.
 - (iv) The Head-Masters Report which is very important as the progress of the College during the year is being outlined must also be circulated amongst the members in advance to enable a proper study and analysis of same.
 - (v) The draft Minutes of the last AGM could also be circulated in advance, and unless there is any amendment, the minutes could be taken as correct and adopted.
 - (vi) Thus if the Audited Account, The Reports of the Head-Master, The Hon. Secretary, and the Vice Presidents are circulated among the members together with the Notice of Meeting/Agenda 3 weeks in advance valuable time spent in a prolonged and boring reading thereof as well as perusal at such notice is obviated and constructive criticism is facilitated. Distribution of these papers immediately before the Meeting is totally unsatisfactory.
13. It has been reported that outsiders are found within the Hall during the AGM, the Fellowship that follows and even the Lunch after the Cricket Match and the Dinner after the AGM. Perhaps the Assistant Secretary and one or two other Committee Members could be at the entrance of the Hall especially before the commencement of the Meeting. New members could also be registered at this time. It would also help if members on their arrival at the College or at the earliest convenient time thereafter were to “register” themselves at a particular nominated place- say a Register kept on a table at the entrance to the Junior Dormitory block. A sample is enclosed. Marked “A” This will also help compilation of the Members Directory.

It is with much reluctance and a sense of shame that the under-signed wish to mention that at the last AGM and Get- Together one such outsider was spotted darting out of Foster Hall with a bottle of whisky which had been brought in by one of the Old Boys for the

Fellowship. In fact the outsider was given chase. This is all the more reason why certain security measures ought to be taken for the AGM including having only authorized personnel for assistance with identification tags within the Hall premises prior to, during and after the AGM and until the Fellowship is over, and also have a Registration Desk, Identity Cards and closed doors.

14. Laminated Identity Cards with the Membership Number could be issued immediately to facilitate identity and entrance for Meetings etc. In view of the very poor response of the Membership experienced in finalizing the Directory, no useful purpose may be served, at this initial stage, in endeavours to affix the photograph of the member to the Identity Card. **An old boy is willing to bear the expense in this connection.** A sample is enclosed. Marked “B”
15. A Directory of the names and addresses etc, of the membership is long over-due. The Directory will facilitate old boys keeping in touch with one another. After all this is supposed to be an objective of the OBA. After 4 decades and more our OBA is still struggling to put out a directory of Members. Unless a start is made with even the barest details now available, this valuable information will not be available to the membership. **An old boy is willing to bear the expense of printing and postage of this Directory.** A sample is enclosed. Marked “C”
16. Many distinguished Old Boys as well as Founder Members apart from others amply qualified and competent in so many walks of life who were once actively involved now shy away from activities due to various reasons. The desire for personal glorification and pompousness must be eliminated.
17. Every effort must be made to bring back into active participation those respected and distinguished Old Boys who have ceased to do so and enroll new members for the purpose of participating in the development of the College.

18. No member whether on the Executive Committee or not, must be made to feel that genuine inquiries made by them about the College and the affairs etc, are unwelcome, particularly at the A G M. The practice of a few selected members monopolizing the activities (proposing and seconding all Resolutions/Nominations for Posts etc) should be tactfully avoided. The entire House must be made to feel they are participating. This ugly phenomenon has been criticized adlib over the last few years. In fact some Junior Members felt they had no say in what had transpired. The Chair and those at the head table, actively could do much to avoid this. SO also it would be a healthy practice to draw fresh blood into the Executive Committee from time to time and continue to draw on the experiences of those who have held office previously. The participation and better representation of Juniors is important.
19. As there appears to be wide spread factionalism in the staff and minor staff who are needlessly drawing the students in to problems that do not even indirectly concern them, and in which, the staff/minor staff seem to be having a selfish interest, the Old Boys must be careful not to be drawn in to or become the mouth pieces or pawns of interested parties without first making independent inquiries. Thus, complaints and information given to Old Boys by minor staff and other interested parties must be carefully assessed and inquired into, before accusations are made at the AGM.
20. In making improvements to the Buildings and other facilities care must be taken to preserve those structures which have sentimental and Heritage value and also avail of the unquestionable expert advice both on structure as well as financial that is abundantly available amongst such a galaxy of distinguished Old Boys before venturing forth. It would be sad if the face of the College which we are so accustomed to should disappear altogether to given way to **modernisation**. We do not have to look far in the Thomian Family to see the result of such so called “progress”.
21. Whether the college can boast of a history of academic excellence is questionable. To achieve such high standards now will not be easy.

22. Indiscipline is not something new. Yet the tone and degree prevalent appears to be of a high order. This situation must be arrested and the causes identified and eliminated.
23. As was evident at the Meeting as well as before and after, there is so much of good-will towards the College amongst a large section of old boys who are willing to help in cash and kind as well as giving their time, knowledge, advise, & expertise. These old boys may not want to hold office in the Executive Committee for a host of reasons. It would be a pity not to utilize what they have to offer or to distance them or discourage them directly or indirectly. This is a loss for the OBA and more especially to the college which we can ill afford. There is bound to be difference of opinion from time to time about many matters. Those must be ironed out. Those, particulars presiding or assisting at meetings and in the Executive Committee should use tact in defusing situations. After all when over 100 old boys travel over 100 miles to attend Meetings, they do so for the love of the College and to give back in small measure what they feel they owe so much. This good-will must be utilized for the well-being of the College. These old boys could be appointed/nominated in an un official capacity to serve in the sub-committees, and their energies harnessed towards the welfare of the College.

A group of old boys have already come forward to under take the painting, white-washing and sundry repairs to all four Junior Dormitories in the old quadrangle. A copy of a letter dated March 19,2001 addressed to the Hon Secretary is annexed marked “D” Old Boy who are generally accommodated in these dormitories during the Annual Get-Together have seen for themselves the pathetic state they are in, as compared to the conditions during Dr.Hayman’s era.

Similarly, there are several groups of other old boys who are waiting to help in cash, labour, material and expertise. They should be contacted and their generosity gainfully utilized towards the welfare of the College. If the Executive Committee is delaying it’s deliberations as regards identification of the projects which require urgent attention, then, a circular could be sent to members

requesting them to give their response as regards the nature and manner in which such assistance is offered.

24. The general consensus appears to be that the Head Master be allowed to concentrate and devote his time towards, particularly academic activities. This may be even more appropriate in the case of the nominee whose name was disclosed (going by his own comments). It is therefore worthwhile considering the appointment of a Deputy Head-master with appropriate background to be in charge of Administration, Discipline, Human Resources/Personnel, utilization of vehicles etc,etc. The Accountant or officer overlooking finance/petty cash must be directly answerable to the Deputy Head master. (He need not necessarily be designated as such. If need be this matter must be properly presented to the Board of Governors).
25. The following unofficial Sub Committees are suggested to assist the Executive Committee. Amongst the many activities they may be entrusted with perhaps the under mentioned could also be considered. This could consist of Active Members who are ready and willing, when necessary, to visit the College in groups of 3-4 weekly in order to monitor all activities and re port back to the Executive Committee for necessary action. These activities should be on a strictly unofficial and advisory capacity. It must not seem that the O B A is trying to run the college.
 - a) Membership Drive – to establish and maintain a close rapport with college leavers. Each active member to enroll / or bring along atleast 2 new members for the next AGM.
A close rapport could be maintained with school-leavers to whom Application Forms for joining the OBA can be made available with the 3rd Term's Report, so that at the end of the stipulated two year period, they could enrol themselves.
 - b) Academic Improvement - to stand by the Head-master in the recruitment of teaching staff and adjustments in the curriculum with special emphasis on modern trends. Preference to be given to old boys with necessary teaching skills.
In view of the history of indiscipline and unrest which may perhaps have been instigated by disgruntled members of the

staff, fresh recruitments must be very carefully scrutinized. The OBA should be able to render valuable assistance to the Head master on this vital aspect. It is necessary to see that the school library is keeping in touch with current events and is adequately equipped. The College Magazine which was being regularly put out every term in association with Mt.Lavinia, appears to have disappeared from the life of the College. It's revival should be encouraged and a section giving "News of Old Boys" as in the past would be welcome. If one were to check on how many old Boys send their sons to College the result will be revealing. The reasons are obvious. Some re thinking of criteria for admission of students may be necessary. Filling up vacancies on the staff and the roll of students in a hasty manner will definitely prove that quantity is being had at the expense of quality.

- c) Building construction, improvement, refurbishments, maintenance etc – whilst maintaining the old structures for heritage and sentimental reasons ensure new construction are executed with expert advice. Projects to be identified by Executive Committee on a priority basis.
- d) Sports - revive all activities and request old boys who are adequately skilled to coach/promote.
- e) General welfare/discipline of students, staff and minor staff-enforce with tact and let the idea seep in that the OBA is taking an active interest and acting as Watch dog.
- f) Financial Management- to eliminate all unnecessary wastage and inappropriate expenditure.
- g) General Advisory (to consist only of **very senior and elder members** to help guide the destinies of the college.

26. Too little has been done for too long. History has shown that imprudent management finally leads to the intervention of the State. **Let not that happen to STC Gurutalawa.** Whilst being mindful of the fact that the OBA has no mandate to run the College, we should not be mere bystanders whilst the college goes downhill. We must give all the encouragement and moral support to the Head Master and endeavour to take the Board of Governors along with us with Gentle Persuasion.

27. Where many material decisions are concerned it is the Board of Governors that has the final say. For quite some time many Old Boys have felt that the College is sidelined or given step-motherly treatment by the Board. This may be in direct contrast of the good relationship that existed in an earlier era. Perhaps there is not much that the OBA can do about the constitution of the Board. Yet, the voice of the College through its OBA can be made to be heard if that aspect is handled with tact. This is why a Committee for General Advisory matters is required.
28. Those Old Boys who have had the privilege of being in College during Dr.Hayman's era have a special relationship with the College.
29. Some of the under-signed were privileged to be in the Senior Form during Dr.Hayman's last year at College. A few quotations from addresses made at the Prize Day by the two Rollos, i.e Dr.Hayman and the Chief Guest the Lord Bishop of Colombo, Rollo Campbell, which may be of some interest and relevant to all that has been said above, as well as the recent past history of the College and what transpired at the last AGM are given in a separate Schedule marked "E" The emphasis and italics are ours.
30. The under-signed do not wish to hurt anybody's feelings and this communication is addressed in all sincerity having the welfare and the progress of the OBA and the College in mind and at heart.
31. A copy of this letter is being sent under separate cover to the Head Master for his information and necessary action in order to avoid delay, as we understand he will not be attending the next Executive Committee Meeting.
32. Further copies are being made available to other interested members so that they be made aware of the above thoughts and proposals to enable them to give their response and contribution. A host of old boys who have been in College at different periods are all awaiting to see what the Executive Committee will do as regards the load of goodwill that is generating towards College.

33. It would be greatly appreciated if the samples/drafts are approved so that they can be printed.
Please be good enough to address any communication in this regard to the above-named at the above address.

Esto Per Petua,

Yours faithfully,

Nihal Wanniarachchi
No.21,Sumanarama Road,
Mt.Lavinia

Jabir Junaid
No.3B,Aponso Avenue,
Dehiwela

T.Sundarajah
No.54/8, Galpotta Rod,
Nawala

Lakshman Jayatilaka
No.23,1st Lane,
Kirillapone
Colombo 05

Sarath Suraweera
D/2/2/1, Manning Flats,
Colombo 08

‘A’

S. THOMAS COLLEGE GURUTALAWA

OLD BOYS ASSOCIATION

PARTICIPATION REGISTER

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

&

CELEBRATIONS

‘B’

**S. THOMAS COLLEGE GURUTALAWA
OLD BOYS ASSOCIATION
MEMBERSHIP CARD**

NAME:.....

Address:.....

Membership No;

.....
Secretary

‘c’

S. THOMAS COLLEGE GURUTALAWA

OLD BOYS ASSOCIATION

MEMBERS DIRECTORY

Name : Occupation:.....
Address (Office):
Telephone:E.mail:.....
Address (Home)
Telephone:E.mail:
Period in College:

Name : Occupation:.....
Address (Office):
Telephone:E.mail:.....
Address (Home)
Telephone:E.mail:
Period in College:

Name : Occupation:.....
Address (Office):
Telephone:E.mail:.....
Address (Home)
Telephone:E.mail:
Period in College:

Name : Occupation:.....
Address (Office):
Telephone:E.mail:.....
Address (Home)
Telephone:E.mail:
Period in College:

‘D’

T.Sundarajah,
No.54/8, Galpotta Road,
Nawala

September 10, 2007

The President,
O B A
S.Thomas College,
Gurutalawa

Subject: Painting, White-washing and Sundry Repairs to Junior Dormitories

Recently all of us were made aware that the New Dining Hall at Gurutalawa had been more or less completed by the inspired response of a few dedicated old boys of the School.

This noble and magnanimous service was an inspiration to all of us. In continuation of the above dedicated service, Mr.Nihal Wanniarachchi, Mr.Sarath Suraweera, Mr.Rizvy Jaleel, Mr.Jabir Junaid and Mr.T Sundarajah have decided to undertake the above project of painting, white-washing and sundry repairs to the Dormitories and lavatories of the Junior Dormitories etc.,.

The afore-named group of old boys looks forward for early approval of this project and a communication to that effect so that work may be commenced during school holidays which should be a convenient time for this purpose.

Please be good enough to address any communication in this regard to the above-named at the above address.

Thank you,

Nihal Wanniarachchi

Sarath Suraweera

Rizvy Jaleel

Jabir Junaid

T.Sundarajah

c.c: Mr.Upali Jayawardena,
Hony. Secretary
S T C Gurutalawa O B A
No.27,42nd Lane,
Colombo 06

“E”

Said Dr.Hayman:-

“..... *You (Sir) are well known to everyone in Gurutalawa, as a frequent and popular guest.* We are fortunate to have you as our School Manager, because you know school life from inside experience.....”

“..... So when you deal with Gurutalawa,whether it be as Chairman of our Board of Governors, or more directly as our Manager, you have brought to bear on our problems, a wide experience in the field of education. *I shall always remember gratefully the care and thoroughness with which you have dealt with our difficulties.*”

..... “First, *I wish to thank the teaching, the office, and the farm staff and also the servants for their loyal co-operation throughout the year. The possession of a happy, united and hard-working staff is more important than having good equipment and buildings. In this respect, we are certainly more fortunate than many Ceylon Schools. For example a visitor coming to Gurutalawa between 4.30 p.m and 6.00 p.m will find masters everywhere supervising the boys activities and games on the afternoon of any working day.*”

..... “Well, *here at Gurutalawa I think we can boast that every member of the staff contributes something to the life of the school, not only in the class rooms, but outside as well.* The second thing which I would like to speak about is our need to extend our buildings, and improve our equipment.”.....

..... “ I am very concerned that our dormitories are so seriously over crowded”

..... “If the school is allowed to continue on the present basis our numbers will rise though *I do not think that they should ever be allowed to exceed a total of Three Hundred and Sixty,* and if that happens the building of new dormitories and the provision of further accommodation in both the kitchen and the dining hall will become inevitable.”.....

..... “It seems wiser to try to “make do” with our present dormitories and to confine our building plans to such items as will be useful, whatever the future may bring to the school. I have two such buildings in mind: they are (1) a school hall and (2) a new science laboratory”.....

..... “Another urgent need is the provisions of a set of changing and drying room and showers”.....

..... “ A parallel necessity is the provision of adequate common rooms, where boys could spend time reading, writing or playing quiet games. Those who remember the common room in the early days of Gurutalawa, will realize how much the present generation of Thomians misses, now that we have none.”

..... “May I appeal to those who take up the task of running the college after I leave, not to neglect these matters, and even if they are not able to adopt my suggestions, to work out some other plan instead..”

..... “As regards the progress of the school, *I cannot pretend to be satisfied with the level attained in work.* It may not compare unfavourably with that in other schools at the present time, *but it is certainly far below the level we used to take for granted twenty years ago.*”

..... “ In games we suffer the handicap of having only a small proportion of older boys. The result has been that our junior teams have fared better in their matches than the senior ones.”

..... “A school is not merely concerned with the attainment of success in the scholastic and sporting fields. *One of its most important tasks is to prepare boys to take their place in life, when they leave school.* Not only must it do this by inculcating a spirit of toughness and determination, but also by teaching them (what I

find myself calling for want of a more exact term), the art of gracious living.”.....

..... “The maintenance of that degree of school discipline, which was regarded as normal in the past, has also become more arduous.”.....

Said Rev.Rollo Campbell:

..... “ I begin by asking a question. *How can you tell whether a school is a good school or not?* Well, of course, you can go and look at it; not on some special occasion when visitors are expected and things are rather different from usual, but on an ordinary working day. You can look at the school buildings, you can see how they are kept, whether they are in good condition, clean and tidy. You can ask about the teachers, how many of them there are, what are their qualifications, and how long they have been at the school. You can inspect the time-table and see what subjects are taught, and how much time is given to each. You can ask to see the results of the examinations, and you can find out how the school fares in sports and games. And you can watch the boys and girls as they go about their work and play; see whether they are happy and intelligent, good mannered and industrious, proud of the school to which they belong.

But the course a good school does not depend for its work on its size, or on the greatness and splendour of its buildings; nor is it to be judged simply on the results achieved in the examinations, or by

the success at games. I would not for a moment undervalue the importance of sound learning, of clear thinking and accurate scholarship; *but we must look to our schools to produce not only good scholars but good citizens, men and women not only of learning but of character. So if you want to know what a school is like, you must see what sort of boys it has turned out; you must look at the old boys of the school as well as the present ones.*”.....

..... “And that brings me to my last words. As you will know before another year has gone Dr.Hayman will have left us and the Gurutalawa which he has loved and served and so largely helped to build will know him and Mrs.Hayman no more. “To spend and to be spent in our work is our greatest and best privilege,” wrote Bishop Chapman, your Founder, to his brother-in-Law before he left England to come to Ceylon. If that be true, then Dr. Hayman has been greatly privileged, for of no one could it be more truly said that he had spent himself and what was his for the school to which he has given the best years of his life. He joined the staff of S.Thomas College in 1928 and from that day to this he has not ceased his labour, his care and diligence, to serve the school which he has made so wholly his own. It is not for me to attempt to assess what this country owes to Dr.Hayman , or even what S.Thomas owes to him; but at least we may claim that he has set a standard of devoted and self-sacrificing service that any schoolmaster might be proud to try to aim at. I have seen it said that his capacity for work is enormous. Certainly if he has asked

much of others, he has asked nothing that he has not first asked of himself and has set before others no ideal or standard that he has not himself tried to reach. For him the school has been first and foremost a family- a family in which every member mattered- mattered equally and was cared for in equal measure, and for each of whom he sought to find the appropriate outlet for his energies and interests.

..... “No one, I suppose, knows the full extent of Dr.Hayman’s gifts to S.Thomas.

*“But Dr.Hayman’s best and most enduring memorial will be found, not in the swimming-baths that he has given or the Fives courts and dormitories that he has built but **in the hearts and in the lives of boys for whom he has spent himself** with such lavish generosity; **and his best reward will be their gratitude, their affection and their trust and their trust and the knowledge that the traditions which he has sought to build here were being maintained and if is might be, enhanced in the days to come.”***

..... “The greatness of a school, as of a country, depends very largely on how far it is in love both with the past and with the future; mindful always of what it has received, yet never resting either in the past or in the present, but looking forward always to serve the future in faith and hope. Never forget that the advantages you enjoy here today you enjoy because of the service and the sacrifice of those who went before you, the service and sacrifice of

those who were ready to give the best of themselves and what was theirs for the sake of those who should come after them. You have a great tradition here at S.Thomas a tradition which you have inherited and of which you may be justly proud. Today that heritage is in your care. But *as you are the heirs of a great tradition, so too you are the heirs of a great task; and you owe it alike to the past and to the future, to those who have gone before you and to those who shall come after to hand on what you have received not less fair because it has for a time been entrusted to your keeping.*”