

S.THOMAS'COLLEGE, GURUTALAWA OLD BOYS ASSOCIATION
MINUTES OF THE 8TH (250TH) MEETING OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE
(2002/2003) HELD IN THE SRI LANKA ARMY OFFICERS MESS IN
COLOMBO ON NOVEMBER, 29th 2002 AT 6.15 P.M

Present: Mr. Geethal Mendis President
Mr. P.S. Duleepkumar Senior Vice President
Mr. B. Munasinghe Vice President
Mr. Shervon Fernando Hony. Secretary
Mr. Gamini Fernando Hony. Treasurer
Mr. Bandula Wanigasekera
Mr. Mahen Ranasinghe
Mr. Don Gazara
Mr. Nihal Wanniarachchi
Mr. A. Peitersz
Mr. Chandana De Silva
Mr. A.C. Lamahewa
Mr. Suresh Thiagarajah
Mr. S. Balaramesh
Mr. G.S.S. Perera
Mr. Lasantha Perera

By Invitation:

Mr. Lakshman Jayatilaka

Excuses:

The following Members notified their inability to be present at the Meeting, and had requested that they be excused.

Mr. Rizvi Jalill
Mr. Sunil Watawala
Mr. Sarath Suraweera
Mr. K. Bandusena
Mr. Prabath Jayasundera
Mr. P.J. Fernando
Mr. G.M.S. Samaraweera

At the outset the Headmaster indicated that he wished to make some comments. He wished to congratulate the Organizing Committee of the Dinner Dance for the grand show on November, 16, 2002. He said the function was organized in such a manner that all who participated were full of praise. The numbers present indicated the level of success. He was sure that all present had a good time. He thanked the OBA for the effort put in to raise funds for the development of the School.

2. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING:

The minutes of the previous meeting held on November, 7th 2002 had been previously circulated, and were confirmed on the proposal of Brig. Bandula Munasinghe seconded by Mr. Mahen Ranasinghe.

3. MATTERS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MINUTES:

The Hayman Museum:

The Headmaster mentioned that he had instructed Mr. Premadasa of his office to cause a search to be made in the built-in cupboard referred to earlier and elsewhere for Dr. Hayman's letters and would inform the Ex-Co if the letters were found. They would then be preserved carefully to be placed in the Hayman Museum.

The letters, photographs etc. which were available with Mr. V. Tharumaratnam are now with Mr. Mahen Ranasinghe to be handed over to Mr. Bandula Wanigasekera for purpose of making an Inventory. Mr. Bandula Wanigasekera indicated that as the contents were voluminous it would take some time to complete the Inventory.

Sports Club:

The Headmaster mentioned that he had submitted the application for registration of the STCG Sports Club with the Uva Provincial Council. He agreed to have the Prefect of Games pursue the matter with Mr. Ruwan Munasinghe's assistance and obtain the Certificate which will be issued in that connection.

Thomian Walk Share:

Brig. Bandula Munasinghe mentioned that although he had tried to make contact with Mr. Upali Jayawardene, former Secretary of the OBA, he had not been successful. Mr. Sanath Jayatilaka too had mentioned that he would try to make contact with Mr. Upali Jayawardene with a view to resolve this matter. Mr. Shervon Fernando, Hon. Secretary mentioned that Mr. Upali Jayawardene had telephoned him and undertaken to speak to the persons concerned in the Mt. Lavinia OBA and keep him informed. The Secretary was requested to keep in touch with Mr. Upali Jayawardene and keep the Ex-Co informed, so that the matter could be pursued, and the money due to the OBA recovered.

Outstanding Advertisement dues of Fellowship Dinner 2001:

It was revealed that a further sum of Rs. 2000/- had been received from an Advertiser. It was decided to keep this matter open as these advertisers were making payments from time to time; that any amounts not paid when the accounts were to be finalized at the end of the year could be written off. Mr. Chandana de Silva was requested to renew his efforts and recover any further monies that were forthcoming. Mr. Chandana de Silva

reminded the Ex-Co that he had attended all meetings of the Ex-Co and was very keen to do his best.

College History Books:

It was reported that the 32 History books removed from Gurutalawa had now been disposed of and the monies credited to the OBA account. The actual amount of the History Books involved was 32 and not 35 as erroneously referred to in some previous minutes.

Systems and Internal Controls – Professional Assignments:

Mr. P.S. Duleepkumar Senior Vice President mentioned that a detailed Report was being prepared by M/s S.J.M.S. Associates; that a summary in the nature of an Interim Report had been received by him which he was tabling. As soon as the detailed Report was received a sub committee would study the same and discuss the issues concerned with the Headmaster so that appropriate action could be taken at Gurutalawa.

Boarding House Diet:

The Headmaster mentioned that on his instructions the menu has been changed and “mallun” had been added to the diet. Other changes too had been effected to improve the nutritional value.

Leadership Workshop and Boarding Housekeeping:

It was decided to have a further Leadership Workshop conducted by Mr. Sujeewa Godage with the active participation of Mr. Mahen Ranasinghe at Gurutalawa in early January with the main objective of improving the tidiness of the Dormitories and the discipline of the students. Mr. Suresh Thiagrajah undertook to check whether the galvanized pipes required for the railings to be installed outside the De Saram Senior Dormitory to enable the students to dry their clothes on the hangers, could be obtained cheaper in Colombo.

Prick a Pin Cards for Student Participants:

Mr. Shervon Fernando handed over to the Headmaster 425 Prick cards to be distributed among the students before they leave for home for the December vacation. It is hoped that the collection would be adequate to purchase another T.V. for the students. Although the OBA was providing the necessary assistance for this it was to be an effort of the students working with the Headmaster.

Re Union Celebrations:

The Sub Committee has not yet submitted its Report. Mr. Duleepkumar mentioned that necessary arrangements should be made very early as a tentative date has been fixed for the AGM . Mr. Lakshman Jayatilaka undertook to inform the members of that Sub Committee to consider this matter without much delay.

Service of Remembrance and Thanks giving for Past Headmasters:

Mr. Duleepkumar mentioned that the Hym sheets were ready . Mr. Shervon Fernando was to print same. The Paper notice was to appear in the Daily News on Saturday. All were welcome to attend the service. Past Headmasters could be informed personally. He also reported that Fr. Elliot would be attending.

Library Inventory:

The Headmaster reported that the inventory was being prepared with the Accession Register supplied by the OBA.

Chief Administrative Officer:

The Headmaster mentioned that he had not submitted this proposal at the last meeting of the Board of Governors. His proposal to increase the Admission Fees from the year 2003 had not been allowed by the Board. It was agreed that as soon as M/s S.J.M.S. Associates submitted their detailed Report a letter would be drafted setting out the reasons why a Chief Administrative Officer was absolutely necessary for Gurutalawa at this stage. Several Old Boys had expressed their willingness to contribute towards his remuneration.

Maintenance fee charge

A request that a separate charge be levied from the students on account of maintenance would also be included in the letter to be drafted for submission by the Headmaster to the Board.

Funds due from Board of Governors:

Approximately Rs. 60,000/- is as yet due from the Board of Governors to the OBA. Mr. Bandula Wanigasekera undertook to pursue this matter with the Secretary of the Board of Governors.

Headmaster's Office Room in New Administration Block:

Mr. Mahen Ranasinghe reported that he has received the estimate for the partitioning and the alterations; that he would be visiting Gurutalawa very soon and discussing the matter

with the contractor and reporting back to the Ex-Co so that this matter too could be taken up with other matters requiring priority.

Provident Fund dues of Teaching Staff:

The Headmaster reported that the Warden had visited Gurutalawa on November 27 2002. He had arranged a meeting for him with the staff. Mr. Duleepkumar informed the Ex-Co that he had made certain submissions to the Warden and was awaiting a response.

Water facilities:

Mr. Suresh Thiagarajah had undertaken with Mr. Mahen Ranasinghe to supply a water pump of whatever capacity necessary at cost so that the problem faced by the staff in the old classroom block could be resolved. This matter too would be looked into by Mr. Mahen Ranasinghe on his next visit to Gurutalawa. Mr. Mahen Ranasinghe had spoken to Mr. Prabath Jayasundera who had agreed to supply the required water meter. It was necessary for the College authorities to speak to the Water Board Officials and have this matter expedited.

Police Post:

Mr. Lakshman Jayatilaka informed the Ex-Co that the OIC of the Welimada Police had recommended the establishment of a Guard Room at Boralanda; that efforts to have the Guard Room in Gurutalawa itself were being renewed. In this connection Mr. Sarath Suraweera who had sent a fax which was tabled would speak to the persons concerned in the Uva Police Division and Brig Bandula Munasinghe would take necessary steps in Colombo.

English Language Teaching:

Brig Bandula Munasinghe had at the Meeting today made available a large volume of books from Asia Foundation together with some Audio Visual equipment . The Headmaster expressed his delight at the quality of the books etc. It was suggested that Fr. Nihal Fernando the Chaplain should be delegated to look after the equipment etc.

Mr. Mahen Ranasinghe mentioned that the contractor had not taken into account certain realities in submitting his estimate with regard to the repair of the Deputy Headmaster's Bungalow for the use of the new English Teachers from the British Council. It would be necessary to meet him once more and finalize the estimate at the site itself as the matter was urgent. He would do so on his next visit to Gurutalawa.

Bio Gas Project:

Mr. Mahen Ranasinghe mentioned that as soon as transport arrangements were made by Mr. Rizvi Jalill, Mr. V. Tharumaratnam's equipment would be taken to Gurutalawa and work on the Project would commence. Mr. Tharumaratnam would reside at Gurutalawa

with two of his workmen. He would have to make necessary arrangements with regard to procuring his meals from outside as the College kitchen would be closed during the holidays. Mr.Tharumaratnam had accepted the offer of Mr.Don Gazara to occupy his house at Kirklees, during installation of the Biogas Plant. Mr. Duleepkumar mentioned that the formal application for the Ashden Award had been submitted and he had on behalf of the OBA given a reference to Mr. Tharumaratnam. Other references had been given by Mr. D.L.O.Mendis and another person from Singapore. Mr. Mahen Ransinghe mentioned that it would be possible to obtain a facility of 400 US\$ per kilo watt generated from the DFCC and that he was pursuing this matter with an Old Boy who was at DFCC.

Resource Teacher:

Mr. Bandula Wanigasekera said that he would draft the advertisement to be inserted in the News Papers for a Resource Teacher as soon as the necessary material was supplied by the Headmaster.

Chairs donated by Mr. Kaleel Majeed:

The Headmaster reported that the balance chairs donated by Mr. Majeed had been transported and delivered to the school by Mr. Rizvi Jalill.

Financial Position of College, Bank Overdraft and Interest due to HNB:

Mr. Bandula Wanigasekera reported that he had drafted the letter of appeal to be sent by the Headmaster to the Manager of the Hatton National Bank in Welimada requesting for an adjustment of the rate of interest. He would hand over the draft to the Headmaster at the end of the meeting. Mr. Bandula Wanigasekera requested the Headmaster to keep him informed so that both Mr. Gamini Fernando and Mr. Bandula Wanigasekera could follow up this matter from Colombo. The Headmaster reported that the overdraft was now approximately Rs. 2.4 million . He also reported that about 1.6 million fees had to be collected from students; that the deficit per month was about Rs.150,000/- - Rs.200,000/-.

The next meeting of the Board of Governors was on December, 20th and he would renew his request for an increase in the Boarding and School Fees. At the moment there were about 428 students in school. To date Applications have been received from 60 students for admission. He wished to increase the student population to about 650.

The Headmaster reported that he requires an Accountant.

Laundry Facilities:

Mr. Don Gazara mentioned that the heavy duty washing machines were being refurbished prior to being shipped to Sri Lanka and he would have these installed by end of February or the 1st week of March. He also mentioned that it would be possible for these machines

to take in a load of 18 kilos per wash. It should be possible to levy some charge for the use of these machines which would offset the additional electricity consumption.

5. TO DISCUSS THE PROGRESS OF THE SUB COMMITTEES:

Report of the Sub Committee for Projects:

Mr. Mahen Ranasinghe reported that he was in constant touch with Mr. V. Tharumaratnam as regards the Bio Gas Project; that as soon as Mr. Rizvi Jalill arranged transport, the necessary equipment could be sent to Gurutalawa; that he would follow immediately thereafter and arrange for the storage of the equipment; that he would inspect the remaining staff quarters and other areas that required attention and report back to the Ex-Co without delay so that the Ex-Co could decide which of the items should be identified as deserving priority for necessary attention.

Report of the Sub Committee for News Letters:

News Letters:

The draft of the News Letter No. 4 was being finalized. It is hoped to dispatch same to the Membership by mid December. Images relating to the Dinner Dance would be included together with the Accounts of the function, and OBA accounts upto October 2002 and perhaps even November 2002.

College Magazine:

The first proof of the College Magazine is expected on December, 3rd. The Headmaster was requested to prepare and submit his own Report together with the Report of the Chaplain, Reports of the Dorm Masters and House Masters, Reports of the various sports activities at all age levels, Reports of all clubs and societies etc. etc. so that they could be included in the College Magazine. It was agreed that the newspaper article on the Diamond Jubilee of the school written by Mr. Duleepkumar and the Sinhala and Tamil translations would be included in the Magazine. It was pointed out that the smallest issue of the College Magazine that was available had approximately 60 pages whereas the material hitherto submitted added to only 30 pages. It was hoped to have the Magazine ready to be distributed to the students and staff in early January. Approximately 500 copies were to be printed. It was suggested that Mr. Duleepkumar's article translated into Sinhala and Tamil could be included in the Magazine to augment the material.

The Report was tabled.

Report of the Sub Committee for Membership:

Membership:

There were 812 members on the Register as at date out of whom 639 members were on the mailing list. The addresses of 173 were still being sought. 5 Members had joined since the last meeting. One of them were Mr. Harish Nilaweera who was a Solicitor practicing in U.K, who had recently visited Sri Lanka and made a generous contribution together with another Old Boy Mr. G.N.R. de Silva also of U.K. towards the Development Fund of College. It was also reported that two Old Boys had submitted their Applications with Money Orders towards the Life Membership Subscription Fees and that although Money Orders were not a designated mode of payment they were accepted without trying to be legalistic about procedure. The money orders were handed over to the Headmaster for necessary attention at the Gurutalawa Post Office.

Updating Register of Members:

The Register of Members continues to be updated . All intimations of change of address are immediately noted and acknowledged in writing.

Members Directory:

5 copies of the Directory were being handed over to each Member of the Ex-Co present today to enable them to dispose of them. In view of the fact that a 2nd Issue of the Directory had become necessary the price at which the 1st Issue will be henceforth sold has been reduced to Rs. 100/- for the balance copies. The 2nd Issue of the Directory should be ready by early January and could be distributed at the AGM and Re Union Celebrations at Gurutalawa at the end of February 2003 or even before.

The Report was tabled.

Report of the Sub Committee for Rules:

Mr. Bandula Wanigasekera mentioned that the suggestions submitted by Mr. Jeoffrey Gunasekera had been considered and would be incorporated in the draft Rules. Any further suggestions that would be made would be considered and incorporated if it was felt they were useful. The Membership will be informed in the next News Letter that any further amendments could be made without delay so that the final draft could be circulated with the Notice of Meeting preceding the AGM and that no amendments could be permitted at the meeting itself because on a special motion to be moved at the commencement of the Meeting the new Rules would be put to the House and adopted before getting onto the other items on the Agenda including election of Office Bearers etc.

Mr. Lakshman Jayatilaka brought to the notice of the Ex-Co the fact that the OBA did not have a copy of the updated Rules even at the time of the last AGM on March 2nd 2002; that the Senior Vice President had extracted from his Archives amendments which had been made to the Rules in 1992 which were not available with the previous Secretary; that taking those amendments into consideration a Consolidation had been done; that it would be useful for all concerned if a copy of the Consolidated Rules were tabled and made a part of the Minute Book, for the benefit of our OBA and future Executive Committees. This would ensure that the Rules will not be misplaced. Furthermore it would be useful and appropriate to circulate the current Rules too to the Membership when circulating a draft of the proposed New Rules, since the OBA does not incur any expenses in this connection.

He also brought to the notice of the Ex-Co that on the question of Co-opting members to the Ex-Co there had been no uniform practice or procedure obviously because nobody seemed to have paid any heed to the Rules which probably were not available with the persons concerned; that varying numbers had being Co-opted during the past years. The Minutes do not show that members were co-opted during the years 1997 & 1998. In the years 1999, 2000 & 2001 two members each have been co-opted. Since 1992 the correct number to be co-opted is 05.

He finally brought to the notice of the Ex-Co that even in the matter of representation in the OBA of S. Thomas' College, Mt. Lavinia there appeared to be some confusion again because the previous appointments made had been without any reference to the source which empowered such appointments. It is for that reason that the current Ex-Co refrained from making these appointments until a copy of the Rules of the OBA of STC Mt. Lavinia was obtained; that it had been very difficult to obtain such a copy because even the Office Bearers of that OBA did not seem to have one; that it was Mr. Bandula Wanigasekera who after a great effort succeeded in obtaining a copy from a Secretary of that Association who had relinquished office 12 years ago. As soon as the document was available in early June the necessary appointments were made on June 15th at the Ex-Co meeting at Gurutalawa.

The relevant provisions were read out which enabled our OBA to appoint one member on to their Ex-Co and another member to represent our OBA at their AGM. In the years 1998, 1999, 2000 and 2001 only One Member had been appointed. In the year 1997 no member had been appointed. This position is now rectified. For the reasons outlined above it would be useful to table a copy of the STC Mt. Lavinia OBA Rules and have it as a part of the Minutes for the benefit of our OBA and future Executive Committees.

A copy of the current Consolidated Rules of our OBA was tabled.

A copy of the Rules of the St. Thomas College Mt. Lavinia Old Boys Association was also tabled.

6. TO TABLE AND CONSIDER THE HEADMASTER'S REPORT:

- a. The Headmaster mentioned that his van had broken down in Colombo due to the Gear Box giving way when he had come to Colombo to attend the Thomian Nite celebrations on November 23rd; that it was absolutely essential to repair same and that Mr. Jayantha Hanthi had identified a Reconditioned Gear Box which could be purchased for approximately Rs. 14,000/- Rs. 15,000/- and that he would appreciate it if this money is made available urgently if possible even immediately. The matter was considered and after discussion it was agreed to make the funds required available.

- b. The Headmaster also mentioned the cases of two senior students who had fallen into arrears of school fees due to various misfortunes. He appealed to the Ex-Co to pay the arrears and make arrangements so that their fees for the year 2003 could be met by the OBA. He suggested that these monies be paid out of the Dr. R.L. Hayman and Fr. A.J. Foster Scholarship Funds. This suggestion was discussed in detail. Mr. Bandula Wanigasekera mentioned that a dangerous trend or precedent may be created by permitting or encouraging such payments. He also pointed out that this may induce other students to fall into arrears and depend on the OBA to bail them out; and some care should be taken in acceding to these appeals. Mr. Lakshman Jayatilaka brought to the notice of the Ex-Co that the case of one of the students had been taken up during the period of the last Ex-Co. Some members of that Ex-Co had jointly contributed towards payment of his arrears of fees of Rs. 37,000/-. Apart from that the Ex-Co had also resolved to pay Rs. 12,000/- out of the Dr. R.L. Hayman Scholarship Fund for one year from January 2001 to December, 2001 towards the arrears. He mentioned that whilst individual members were free to sponsor or assist any student in difficulty it would be incorrect to appropriate monies belonging to the above two funds towards alleviating hardship faced by any student in a situation where the criteria for the award of these Scholarships had already been laid down by the OBA itself. He tabled a copy of the Secretary's Report for the year ended December, 31st 1996 in which reference was made to this criteria which had been drawn up by Mr. Arthur Perera in conjunction with Headmaster Mr. Collin Ratnayake and unanimously accepted by the Ex-Co at a meeting held on October, 31st 1996. It would be incorrect to ignore the criteria laid down by the Ex-Co itself in this manner. The Minutes of that Ex-Co Meeting were now not available, the only record available being the Secretary's Report. After discussing this matter further the Ex-Co was of the view that the criteria referred to was, in the present context, impracticable and hence needed to be replaced with fresh criteria to be drawn up by this Ex-Co in consultation with the Headmaster so that the award of the Scholarships from January 2003 could be a reality. Mr. Lakshman Jayatilaka mentioned that he had prepared a draft of the suggested criteria which the Ex-Co could discuss with the Headmaster make necessary adjustments and adopt after finalisation for future use. After much discussion Mr. S. Balaramesh undertook to sponsor the fees of one student. This was greatly appreciated by the Members

- present. Further details with regard to the total amount of arrears etc. were to be supplied by the Headmaster so that this matter could be considered further.
- c. The Headmaster also appealed that a sum of Rs. 300,000/- out of the funds collected from the Dinner Dance be made available to enable him to pay same towards the interest component on the Overdraft facility College enjoys with the Hatton National Bank. This matter was discussed in detail. It was pointed out that monies collected from the Dinner Dance were to be applied for College Development work. A list of matters requiring funding at Gurutalawa was tabled and read out. To apply this money towards adjustment of interest on an over draft facility may not fulfill the aspirations of the hundreds of donors and contributories including Old Boys and Well Wishers in Sri Lanka and abroad. A lasting solution was required to meet the financial crisis and a beginning could be made with the implementation of the Report to be submitted by M/s S.J.M.S. Associates. It was considered inappropriate to fritter away the funds collected by the hard work put in by several members of the Organising Committee and others as well as all well wishers who have contributed generously and participated actively, and that meeting shortfalls in the current account of the school was a matter which the Board was there to address.

LIST OF MATTERS AT GURUTALAWA REQUIRING FUNDING:

1. Dr. R.L. Hayman and Fr. A.J. Foster Scholarship Fund.
2. Cost of repairing, refurbishing furnishing and landscaping premises to be given to English Teachers, of the Primary School expected from the British Council and the British High Commissions.
3. Repairs to Staff Quarters.
4. Individual tables and chairs for class rooms.
5. Salary of a Resource Teacher to back up the English Medium Teachers during the year 2003.
6. Partitioning of Head Master's Room and one other room in the Administration Block.
7. Repairs to Swimming Pool Treatment Plant
8. Repairs and attention to water supply system particularly supply to the staff toilet in old class room block and attention to Ohiya Water Supply line.
9. Repairs to the roof of the Old Class room block (replacement of 93 roofing sheets)
10. Repairs to roof of class rooms in Primary Section
11. Beds and lockers (and study tables) for Dormitories.
12. Repairs to Badminton Court and cutting a trench to prevent roots of trees from causing further damage to the Court.
13. Repairs to Squash Court.
14. Expansion of Basket Ball Court to standard size and resurfacing.
15. Sports Equipment for Cricket, etc. and other games.

16. Repair to Old Dining Hall to be used as Students Common/ Recreation Room.
17. Purchase of Cooker for Pantry for bio-Gas cooking.
18. Audio Visual Equipment –DVD Player, VCR HI-FI Music System; TV, Software for Educational/Teaching programme.
19. Railing near De Saram Senior to dry clothes on Hangers.
20. Repairs to Water Tanks (2)
21. Cricket nets at Old Tennis Courts
22. Security Mesh Net to Protect Winchester Dorm Windows from Basket Ball and volley Ball Courts etc.
23. Repair to Laboratory roof (Urgent)
24. Repairs to Roof of Farm Sheds.
25. Repair to gutters in Accounts Department
26. Replacement of Diving Boards in Swimming Pool
27. Repairs to Foster Dorm and its Ceiling.
28. At least 10 Computers for an IT Unit.

7. CURRENT FINANCIAL POSITION:

The Hon. Treasurer tabled his report.

8. ANY OTHER BUSINESS:

1. Mr. Lakshman Jayatilaka tabled a letter written by Mr. Duleep Mendis wherein he had mentioned that Cricket equipment would be made available for the year 2003 by the Board of Control for Cricket in Sri Lanka to Gurutalawa; that in this connection the appreciation of the OBA should be recorded for the part played by Mr. Gerald de Alwis.
2. Mr. Lakshman Jayatilaka also tabled a report submitted by Fr. Dr. Mervyn Fernando who was accompanied by them to Gurutalawa on October, 31st . A copy of the report was also made available to the Headmaster for his consideration. It is hoped to initiate the programmes for students and teachers in the 1st term of 2003 in consultation with the Headmaster.

There being no other business the Meeting terminated

Confirmed as correct

Chairman