

A THE OBA AND ITS EX-CO, THE REGISTERS AND RECORDS- THE CURRENT SITUATION.

1. From 1942 to date almost 8,000 students have been admitted to Gurutalawa.
2. The OBA of Gurutalawa was inaugurated on February 21, 1959. Over 70 Old Boys were present on that day.
3. The Objects with which the OBA was formed were :-
 - (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.
4. Consider the fact that now, almost 42 years later, there are still only between 80-120 or so Old Boys who attend the combined Re-Union and AGM each year at Gurutalawa, and that of the pre '58 era there are less than 10 Old Boys attending.
5. Presently, the Audited Accounts of the OBA are made available at the time Members troop in to the Meeting Hall for the AGM. The Accounts if they are to be adequately considered or studied should after discussion with the Auditors be made available at least a week or 2 before the AGM.
6. The Secretary performs a very responsible task, but he does not submit a Report. He should be required to submit his Report to the General Membership on the activities during the past year. The attendance of Members of the Ex-Co at their Meetings must be disclosed in the Secretary's Report so that persons who have no time for Ex-Co. or OBA work could be identified and permitted to attend to their own business matters and not be re-elected to the Ex-Co.
7. The Head Master is the President of the OBA. This gives the obvious clue as to the affinity the OBA and the School should have towards each other. What purpose is to be served by the Head Master presiding at Meetings of the Ex-Co or AGM ? What purpose is to be served tabling his Report on School activities at the AGM of Old Boys. The answers are clear. There is an important role the Old Boys are expected to play in the life of the College. This is recognized even in laws passed by our legislature over 70 years ago. Thus his Report and all other papers should be made available well in time so that the AGM could be made the forum of **genuine discussion**

8. The office of Vice President is meant for serious work. Projects must be entrusted to them. They must be required to submit Reports of their stewardship, and held accountable for some share of work done during their period in office. This requirement will enable the Members to consider, what contribution, if any, is being made by each of them and whether they deserve to be re-elected.
9. So also members of the Ex-Co, should be entrusted with different aspects of development work etc and be made to feel they are participating in a genuine effort and not in a pre-fellowship con-chat of short duration prior to retiring to a club for the evening. The primary objective must be identified and not lost sight of.
10. The timing of the AGM at Gurutalawa immediately before the Fellowship is not conducive to any serious discussions or deliberations.
11. The draft Minutes of the last AGM if circulated in advance will save a lot of valuable time spent in laboriously reading it in person and hence could be adopted as correct unless members move amendments in the House.
12. The AGM should not be restricted to a charade for the purpose of re-electing to office the same individuals over and over again while the rest of the membership is reduced to mere spectators. A minuscule coterie individuals keep proposing and seconding each other in a pre-planned manner and sit tight for the rest of the year. This odious practice needs to be changed.
13. **AT THE LAST AGM THE SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT WHEN THERE WERE SIGNS OF DISPLEASURE AMONGST THE MEMBERSHIP AND QUESTIONS WERE RAISED, UNDERTOOK TO IDENTIFY THE MORE IMPORTANT PROJECTS AND TO INFORM THE MEMBERSHIP. ALL WHO WERE PRESENT AT THE AGM WILL RECALL THIS. TO DATE THE MEMBERSHIP HAS BEEN KEPT IN THE DARK. THIS IS NOT SATISFACTORY.**
14. There is no proper security, registration or admission for the AGM, the Fellowship and the Dinner that follows thereafter.
15. At the last AGM, it transpired that several old boys who are not even members of the OBA and who were present at the AGM offered themselves for election to the Ex-Co when in the nick of time, the correct situation was detected.
16. At the Fellowship that followed thereafter, we witnessed a stranger who darted into the hall run away with a bottle of whisky whilst old boys were watching helpless.

17. At the Dinner it was found that strangers were seated in the Dining hall with us actively participating in the event without even having paid or obtained tickets for the meal. We witnessed that Members who had paid for the event and who came in later were deprived of a complete meal.
18. Another disturbing factor to which we were privy to, relates to the students who are required to go home on a compulsory Mid - Term being enforced by College to accommodate Old Boys attending the AGM and Re-Union. We witnessed students waiting (with their travel bags etc. on the road, at the entrance to College) until the departure of the Old Boys after breakfast on Sunday to return and take residence. Some of these students need to travel by Public Transport to very far off places and the parent has to make the trip both ways. Some Parents have questioned the reasonableness of this enforced Mid-Term Holiday. Although it may be possible for the School to provide temporary alternate accommodation elsewhere on the Campus during the Old Boys Re-Union Weekend, the "consumption of alcohol" and the "antics of the Old Boys" during Fellowship, after dinner, at the poolside etc, etc. apparently are not considered good for the students to witness. These matters too should be addressed and a satisfactory solution found.
19. We pointed out most of these shortcomings to the Secretary immediately we returned from Gurutalawa by way of a letter consisting together with the annexures, 26 pages. **We included our suggestions recommendations and offered to put these in to practice without any financial burden on the OBA** i.e. Registration procedure for AGM, Issue of membership cards etc.etc. We have invited attention to these and subsequent matters by letters dated June 19, July 31, August 8, August 29, October 4 and November 6, 2001. To-date, almost 150 pages of correspondence have reached the Secretary both by Registered post and in addition by Hand Delivery. To-date we have not received the courtesy of a reply or even an acknowledgement.
20. We proposed that Membership Cards be issued immediately, suggested the manner in which the Numbers should be entered, having in mind the previous cards said to have been issued. We proposed that the Members' Register be done afresh entering the Membership Numbers also as mentioned earlier. We suggested that the Directory of Members be completed early as otherwise the Data will be rendered outdated and useless.
21. We suggested that serious consideration be given about the holding of the AGM in Colombo and not at Gurutalawa, that the matter be open for discussion so that all shades of opinion could be discussed and a

considered decision taken on the matter. The Rules require that a Re-Union of Old boys be had at Gurutalawa each year. The AGM is required to be had at a convenient location, not necessarily Gurutalawa. By holding the AGM in Gurutalawa the vast majority of Old Boys are sidelined/marginalized. We must respect their age and physical ailments and if need be atleast discuss the attendance by Proxy, so that deliberations are more productive and representative.

22. We suggested that informal meetings and discussions be held in Colombo so that the interest of those who cannot or do not travel to Gurutalawa could be cultivated, and generated, having in mind that generally only around 10 Old Boys of the Pre 58 era attend the AGM/Re-Union at Gurutalawa.
23. We suggested that receipts be issued promptly for all payments made.
24. It would appear that none of the members of the present staff (particularly Tutorial) of over 60 members have joined the OBA. Some have served for over 20 years. Their absence from OBA activities leaves a big vacuum and perhaps is one of the reasons why standards at College have dropped to such alarming levels, unchecked and unnoticed by all of us. Leaving the tutorial staff out in the cold and gallantly handing over a packet of money to be shared amongst the minor staff (who have during the recent past not only consistently followed a policy of confrontation with the administration but have fleeced and torpedoed the very foundations of College) immediately after the Fellowship and Dinner does look ridiculous. This coupled with the fact that the work done by the tutorial staff does not appear to be appreciated adequately are matters that need urgent rectification, if thought fit.
25. We suggested that Newsletters be issued more regularly to keep the Membership informed of various activities at Guru.
26. As many members and even those of the Ex-Co suggested that there be a Secretariat manned at least during normal working hours so that the affairs of the OBA could be carried on more effectively and until such time as one could be put in place offered all of the facilities and resources of our Secretariat for the use of the Secretary, particularly because the post is Honorary and if the Secretary is to carry out his duties in such a way as to develop the OBA and assist College a fair amount of expenditure is incurred by way of Postage, Stationary, Fax, Telephone, Travelling etc etc We offered those facilities and resources available at our Secretariat for the use of its Secretary with a good heart so that he could attend to the affairs of the OBA more efficiently and also suggested that the Secretary be reimbursed for his expenses

so that the important work of the OBA is not prejudiced for want of funds.

27. Reflect then upon the following Minutes of the Ex-Co. as regards our sincere offer of help : -

Ex-Co Meeting on July 28, 2001

“ Mr. Rizvi Jalill, Vice President brought up a matter by Mr. Lakshman Jayatilaka that his office is available for the use of the OBA. Mr. C S Ratwatte, Senior Vice President and Mr. Upali Panditharatne, Vice President agreeing with the Ex-Co said that it is the discretion of the Hony. Secretary. Also it was mentioned that from the inception of the OBA in the year 1959, the Hony. Secretaries worked from their respective offices, and the need does not warrant for other offices.”

Although the factual situation even personally observed by a vice President of the OBA even currently is contrary to what is stated, the tone and spirit of the rebuff is quite clear.

28. Almost all of our suggestions were backed by cogent reasoning and offers of assistance both material, financial and manpower wise so that no prejudice or financial strain would come upon the OBA. Yet all our genuine and sincere offers have been spurned, and ridiculed.
29. In order to facilitate the work of the Secretary and new Members we devised a fresh Application Form amalgamating the existing Form with the Data Sheets eliminate duplication and to obviate the need to fill up two separate forms giving similar information and submitted same to the OBA for urgent consideration. There was no response. **WE TRANSMITTED APPLICATIONS OF NEW MEMBERS ON THESE FORMS. SUCH APPLICATIONS THE SECRETARY INFORMED US, COULD NOT BE ACCEPTED BECAUSE THEY WERE NOT IN THE FORMAT AS APPROVED BY THE AGM OF THE OBA HELD ABOUT 04 DECADES AGO.**

30. This triggered a very strong letter from our Secretariat which is quoted below:-

“

1. I am handing you herewith a further 09 Data Sheets from No.248 to No.256 which I have received to date together with a list thereof marked “A”. We have inserted these particulars in the Directory in our Computer.

I also enclose herewith 2 complete lists marked ‘B’ & ‘C’ of Members to whom letters addressed have been returned undelivered by the Postal Authorities. It would

appear that these Members have left their addresses and have not communicated with the OBA as regards their change of address/present addresses.

2. Some members have inquired from me about the Directory and seem to have got the impression from written documentation of your Ex-Co that I had undertaken to complete and print the Directory. This is incorrect. I had only done what I could, to collect the Data from Members in Sri Lanka and abroad, by contacting them personally, by letter, by telephone, fax, and e.mail and transmitting such data to you. As I have explained in writing, the layout, format, cover, design etc,etc, are matters for the Ex- Co in the absence of a Sub-Committee for such matters, to finalise and thereafter get printed. Of course the longer you delay, the more out-dated the Data will become, with changes of addresses and members passing from the living to the land beyond as has happened several times over during the last one year , since you initiated this project. If you need any other Material or Data or Information which is available with me I will be happy to transmit same to you. You are most welcome to it.
3. As regards your telephone call to me to inform me that "somebody" had told you that some Applications forwarded by me to you of Old Boys who wished to join the OBA could not be accepted because they were "not in the Format as approved by an A G M" held about 4 decades ago, I reiterate that I have no words to express my disappointment and revulsion at the attitude displayed by that "some-one". Further more I cannot excuse you for this display of ineffectiveness.
4. You have been in College with me; I have known you to be a good and simple man. Our friendship is one thing. But you are also the Secretary of the OBA. That office is a very responsible one. You should be able to advise yourself or where necessary get advise from a competent person. You should not be "somebody's" mouthpiece. Surely if there is some minor flaw you can contact the Applicant direct and ask him to drop in and delete any "unwanted" or "irrelevant" material or Data or get his permission to do it yourself. To reject it outright is so childish, puerile and self defeating. Is it that you have too many members in the OBA- or your Ex-Co does not want to have people who question them. If the Application is defective, then decency demands that in the final analysis you communicate with that Applicant and state the grounds on which you are rejecting same. I can assure you that such letters will get all the publicity they richly deserve.
5. The OBA had arrived at a stage when almost 300 members had been side-lined, ignored and left in the dark about its activities. Even today an old boy phoned me and subsequently met me in connection with his Data Sheet and mentioned that he has not heard anything from the OBA for years. This is a common lamentation. On this I speak with authority as during the period June – end of August 2001 there have been hundreds in touch with me with this same grouse with the current and past Ex-Co's. I have written to you so many letters, advising you to take corrective measures.. You and your Ex-Co have chosen to ignore this. I have personally made contact with several of them and brought some of them back into the activities of the O.B.A.
6. In addition, although the formation of Sub-Committees for various projects, essentially for the development of the college, was discussed and later undertaken by the Senior Vice President at the last OBA in February, the members have been kept in the dark todate of any steps taken in that direction. My friends and I would like to associate ourselves with those Committees and give them all the help and encouragement, to see that College is benefited.
7. I have written urging the appointment of these sub-committees, one of them being the one relating to the Membership Drive. On my own, I have communicated with Old Boys in Australia, U K and Canada in order to have enrolled as many Old Boys as possible for the sake of the College. I am in touch with them and keeping them

advised about the developments in College as well as the OBA. I have also arranged to obtain information relating to the Old Boys from the College office to enable them to be contacted so that they can be persuaded to join up. In this scenario, for you as the Secretary to inform me that Applications cannot be accepted, for such a trivial reason or should I say excuse, is **unfair and unreasonable.**

8. If you were to peruse the Old format of the Application itself,(copies of which I turned out and gave you) together with the **Amended Format read with your Data Sheet,** you will see for yourself that there is no extraneous data and that it is a combination of the original Application with the Data Sheet. This will only save you unnecessary expenditure by way of Postage and wastage of time and energy. Common sense demands that you accept it, although I fail to see for what reason our O.B.A decided the name of the spouse was also required for the Directory. Our O.B.A as any body can see is a far cry from such social service Organisations as the "Lions Club"et al. Furthermore, it is absurd **to imply that you need another General Meeting of the Membership to approve the Format of an Application** (to join the OBA). Please do not tell this to others who know something of these matters as you will be the laughing stock.
9. Today Statutes passed by our Legislature and the **RULES FRAMED BY THE JUDGES OF OUR SUPREME COURT** lay down Forms but strict compliance is not called for. **An additional piece of information does no harm and certainly is no disqualification.** I note that whoever who advised you appears to be an even greater Legal authority than those who have interpreted statutes and Regulations in our Superior Courts. We would certainly like to meet this Individual or "Somebody" who must be very knowledgeable in this field of Civil Law!!! Please do introduce him to us. **THE SUPREME COURT ENTERTAINS EVEN A POST CARD TO INITIATE FUNDAMENTAL RIGHT PROCEEDINGS ALTHOUGH THE RULES CALLED FOR A PETITION SUPPORTED BY AN AFFIDAVIT.**
10. The persons who applied for Membership are also eagerly awaiting a communication from you as to why their Applications are not even acknowledged. In fact they are very concerned about the delay. You should not wait for the next AGM to announce their admission. Once I mentioned to you this practice should change. Is Nero Playing the Fiddle while Gurutalawa is burning or is your Association so crowded that there is no room to accept new members.
11. I wish to emphasise and reiterate that the Office you hold is one of great responsibility and importance. You are directing operations of an Association which is required to play its proper role in the destiny of hundreds of Young Thomians at Gurutalawa. Your duties are not confined to organizing a Picnic in February and a Dinner in October every year. You should not let your self **be pushed around in this manner.** You should be able to make up your mind and if there appears to be any difficulty, go about with tact so that you do not hurt people's feelings or act in a manner detrimental to the OBA or it's objectives.
12. In a recent letter to me a Very Senior Old Boy who was actively involved in the affairs of the OBA, even in its formative stages over 40 years ago (when you and I were still students in College) has said that the Ex- Co of the OBA should not be **A ONE / TWO MAN SHOW** and other members **"YES MEN"**. This is the sorry picture your Ex- Co is projecting right now.
13. In this context you would do well to read the following remarks made by no person other than Dr.Hayman to refresh your memory. I hope you will pay some heed to his words, and put some sense in to the heads of those whose advise you seem happy accepting.

Dr. Hayman said thus on February 21,1959 at the inaugural meeting of the OBA

"Gentlemen

"-----"

" Our business here today is to establish an Old Boys' Association for past members of the staff and boys of the school. **ONE OBJECT IN DOING SO IS TO HELP OLD BOYS TO KEEP IN TOUCH WITH ONE ANOTHER AND WITH THE SCHOOL.** How this is best to be effected will be the task of the Executive Committee to decide. One suggestion that has been made is that in addition to the holding of an Annual Old Boys' Day, **THE ASSOCIATION SHOULD ESTABLISH A REGISTER OF OLD BOYS ADDRESSES AND THAT THOSE WHOSE NAMES APPEARED ON THAT REGISTER SHOULD RECEIVE AN ANNUAL NEWSLETTER FROM THE SCHOOL.**

THE OTHER MAIN OBJECT OF THE ASSOCIATION IS TO RALLY ROUND THE SCHOOL ALL OLD MEMBERS WHO WISH TO UPHOLD AND HELP IT BY EVERY MEANS IN THEIR POWER".

14. Please also refer Rule No.02 of the OBA, which I quote for your ready reference.

"2. The Objects of the Association shall be –

- 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 ."

DR. HAYMAN'S WORDS ARE, AS YOU WILL SEE IN BUILT IN TO THIS RULE

Please be good enough to convey the above to your "some body" and enlighten him..

15. In this context I ask you to look to your conscience and see **WHETHER THE MANNER IN WHICH**

- a) the OBA has maintained the Register of Members.
- b) encouraged Old Boys to rally round the College and uphold and help it by all means in their power.
- c) kept informed the Old Boys of the situation, progress and events at College (Particularly the deterioration of all standards and facilities etc) by any News Letter.
- d) helped Old Boys to keep in touch with one another and the College,

is in keeping with the ideas expressed by the founding fathers.

Have I not repeatedly told you, you are ignoring the main objective of the OBA. Have you not, by your conduct rejected all our offers of help for College and the OBA itself.

I have been personally in touch with hundreds of Old Boys since June 2001 and can tell you that they are utterly disgusted with the manner in which the affairs of the OBA are being run by your Ex-Co. They try to distance themselves from the Ex-Co and the OBA because no offers of help are accepted for reasons best known to you all.

THE CURRENT GENERATIONS OF THOMIANS WILL HOLD YOU RESPONSIBLE FOR YOUR FAILURE TO DO WHAT WAS EXPECTED OF YOU ON THEIR BEHALF BY THE FOUNDING FATHERS OF THE COLLEGE.

PLEASE DO NOT FORGET THAT THE OBA IS THE TRUE CUSTODIAN OF THE TRADITIONS OF THE COLLEGE. IT MUST PLAY ITS PROPER PART AND ROLE.

Don't you see that it would be a sad day for the OBA if Old Boys who knock at its door are to be turned away because of asses, who wish to strut around in a pompous manner to boost their egos.

I am sure this description does not fit you. You are too nice a person.

I would like you to table this letter so that my sentiments in this regard are recorded. You can be sure that I am making copies of this letter available to all those Old Boys who have expressed their concern about the manner in which the affairs of the OBA are being handled or mishandled ”.

There was of course no reply or response.

31. When an Application is submitted to the Secretary, with the Membership Fee, there is no acknowledgement either of the Application Form or the Fee. The only and the first intimation an old boy has of his admission is if / when he receives a Notice of the AGM or some Circular from the Secretary. If not, there is no courteous intimation. This procedure can certainly be changed for the better. Our suggestions has not been accepted.
32. The Secretary had called upon Members to submit their Data Sheets in or about August 2000 to compile a Directory of Members. As at March,2001 only 53 Members had responded to the Secretary's call.
33. In order to help the Secretary to compile the Members Directory we called for the Register of Members. What was given to us was a Computer Printout of names with addresses as the current Register of Members. There were 435 names out of which 3 were deceased. 07 were repetitions and 2 had no addresses. This appeared to be a list of names and addresses prepared for purposes of sending out Notices to Members and stored in a computer i.e. a mailing list and not the Register paper. **THIS IS THE DOCUMENT THAT HAS BEEN CONSIDERED AND HELD OUT AS THE REGISTER OF MEMBERS FOR THE LAST SEVERAL YEARS, WHILST THE REGISTER PROPER HAD BEEN ABANDONED.**
34. On receiving information that a particular Member had died, the practice appeared to have been to have the name deleted from this Mailing list. **So the name of that deceased member gets deleted off the Register for all time. He goes out of the scene without leaving a trace. This is a sign of disrespect, and an insult.**
35. The Register of Members was subsequently made available to us. We found that it had not been maintained for the last 10 –15 years or so. Approximately 684 names appear therein. Some names are repeated 3-4 times. Some have been deleted without explanation. There has been no uniform procedure to note a change of address. The endorsement “deceased” had been made against names of approximately 53 Members. At least another 47 Members are deceased though no such endorsements have been made.

Approximately, 33 names have been entered in pencil on a separate side without addresses. It is not clear why they are entered thus. **Some names are entered for the first time, without any addresses.** It is inconceivable that an Application Form and fees had been submitted for admission without these particulars.

36. Membership Numbers had been allocated during the early stages. That practice had been abandoned thereafter.
37. On comparing the abandoned Register with the perfected Register or Mailing List we found that almost 305 Members in the Register do not have their names in the Mailing List, and are thus left out.
38. There were 45 Members in the Mailing List whose names did not appear in the Register.
39. To put the icing on the cake there are 2 Members who had fairly recently served on the Executive Committee of the OBA and whose names did not appear either in the Register or in the Mailing List. **There are several others who claimed in their discussions with us, to be Members but whose names did not appear in either the Register or the Mailing List.** They had perfected and handed over Application Forms with the prescribed fees, attended the AGM's and Re-Unions at Guru and even the Dinners at the Mount Lavinia Hotel over the years. Some had subscribed more than once. But their names did not appear on the Register or Mailing list. They did not receive any communication from the OBA.
40. We first personally visited almost 175 addresses in the CMC area and Colombo suburbs as given in the Register of Members in order to have Data Sheets filled up. By our said visits we were able to have perfected over 30 Data Sheets of such Members in the Register whose names did not appear in the Mailing List of the Secretary.
41. We who personally called over at the addresses of many Members in and around Colombo faced the brunt of the verbal attack which was directed against the OBA, its Ex-Co and Secretary. Apart from the many adverse remarks made by very Senior Old Boys, we have in our possession, so many letters written by other Senior Old Boys which show that they have got sick and tired of our OBA. In fact, a young Old Boy of the 1990's has written in very recently to say that he did not know there was an OBA for Gurutalawa. Looking into our records, one cannot say that these complaints are exaggerated or unjustified.
42. Many inquired as to whether the OBA was still functioning, who comprised the Ex-Co, why a paper notice has not been inserted informing the composition of the Ex-Co, that the only intimation of its existence were two notices published every year, one as regards the

AGM and the second as regards the Fellowship Dinner. As one was sarcastically mentioned, all that the OBA seemed to do was to have a picnic at Gurutalawa in February and a Bash at the Mt. Lavinia Hotel in October. Several instances of Members accosting the Secretary and complaining of the lack of communication, information etc. has been brought to our notice. There was an Old Boy who had met the Secretary on several occasions and asked for an Application Form to join the OBA. Although the Secretary had promised to send this Form, he has failed to do so. On seeing an advertisement that we have placed in the Newspapers this Old Boy contacted us and we had the Application Form delivered at his residence within hours and we are pleased that such Application Form is now having been submitted by us waiting processing with the Secretary. He has also joined our Group.

43. Almost without exception all complained that they have been kept in the dark about the situation at Gurutalawa, its progress, developments and requirements.
44. There were so many complaints that one cannot contact the Secretary unless numerous attempts are made. Thus obtaining Application Forms, making payments or subscriptions, obtaining literature, souvenirs etc. is not possible in an acceptable or desirable manner.
45. Several complained that the only communications they seemed to be getting from the Secretary were notes for contributions and even when such contributions were sent, no receipts have even been sent. We had to look guilty, because this has happened to us too. Some of the Old Boys were Professionals and those in their late 60's and 70's. Truly we were made to squirm like worms.
46. From February to October, they said it was a question of making arrangements for the Dinner in October.
47. From October to February, it was mostly a question of adjusting accounts of the Fellowship Dinner and making arrangements for the AGM picnic at Gurutalawa in February of the following year.
48. We also sent a circular letter dated July 27,2001 to 185 members in the outstations after extracting their addresses from the Mailing List. 14 Letters were returned undelivered by the Postal Authorities.
49. Similar letters dated August 08,2001 were sent to 109 Members in the outstations after extracting their names from the Register of Members 23 letters were returned undelivered by the Postal Authorities.

50. At the request of the Secretary, lists of these 2 categories were handed over to him as he wished to delete these names from his available records.
51. We completed our task begun on June 19 by July 31st and submitted to the Secretary 162 Data Sheets which we had collected with detailed schedules, lists, and a Draft Directory of Members on hard copy as well as 2 diskettes.
52. **After these were transmitted to the Secretary, to our knowledge, at least 4-5 Members who had submitted their Data Sheets have since passed away.**
53. From July 31st to end of December, 2001 we were able to collect approximately a further 85 Data Sheets through our efforts which have all been transmitted to the Secretary.
54. Just peruse the undermentioned extracts from the minutes of the Ex-Co as regards our numerous letters and reminders to put the house in order and help College.
- A. We wrote to the Secretary soon after the AGM on March 15, 2001 referring to various matters and making several proposals. The letter was signed by;
1. Nihal Wanniarachchi
 2. Jabir Junaid
 3. T. Sundarajah
 4. Sarath Suraweera
 5. Lakshman Jayatilaka

The letter had been tabled at the Meeting of the Ex-Co on March 23, 2001 and the relevant Minute reads as follows:

“Mr. S.M Suraweera’s document was accepted and **is awaiting the study.**”

Annexure “D” to our said letter of March 15, 2001 was signed by:

1. Nihal Wanniarachchi
2. Sarath Suraweera
3. Rizvi Jalill
4. Jabir Junaid
5. T. Sundarajah

Lakshman Jayatilaka was not a signatory to this letter, which is referred to in the said minutes as follows:

"A letter signed by Old boys M/s. S.M. Suraweera, Rizvi Jalill, T. Sundarajah, Jabir Junaid, **Lakshman Jayatilaka** and Nihal Wanniarachchi to attend to all repairs and painting of the Junior Dormitories and Bathrooms were undertaken. The Committee decided to get a report ready in the near future."

- B We wrote to the Secretary once again on July 31,2001 and August 08,2001 inviting attention, and also offering the facilities resources and assets at our command which was unceremoniously shot down
- C. A minute appearing of the 237th Ex- Co meeting held on August 28,2001 states, as follows;
"OBA member Directory
 Mr. Luxman Jayatilake's letter regarding the proposal for OBA member's Directory. **The members appreciated his willingness to complete and print the Directory.** The Committee looks forward to discuss matters relating to his letter."

Lakshmn Jayatilaka never undertook to print the OBA Directory. All he did was to help the Secretary by collecting the data, at a time when only 53 members had responded and he caused personal visits to be made to homes, contact by telephone, letter, fax, e.mail, etc and collected over 250 data sheets and transmitted same to the Secretary with a draft Directory and a Diskette etc for finalisation of the format, layout, cover, design and printing itself by the Ex-Co.

- D. A minute appearing in the Ex- Co meeting held on September 27,2001 states as follows;
"Any other Business
 The Hony. Secretary brought up the matter with the members as regards to the Old Boys Directory and Mr. Lakshman Jayathilleke's proposals. The Committee decided to meet Mr. Jayathilleke in the near future and a date will be decided on and it will be intimated to the members."

In the News Letter circulated immediately prior to the Fellowship/Dinner of October 13,2001 the following reference is made;
 " Mr.Lakshman Jayatilaka is at present collecting data for the printing of the College Old Boys Directory. We thank him for the resources and time spent in this connection."

This News Letter is undated. It was received in early October. The task Lakshman Jayatilaka set for him was concluded, on July 31, 2001.

Therefore to say that we were collecting data in October 2001, is farfetched and unfair.

So this has been the progress made as far as the Directory and all our proposals are concerned. None of the persons in our group have received any written communication from the Ex-Co.

The Ex-Co of the OBA from February / March 2001 to date is apparently "awaiting the study" and still struggling to call us for a meeting to discuss these matters and wanting to appoint the Committees to go into them. O tempora – O mores.

55. Don't you think the Ex-Co has taken us for a bunch of Yokels. If this is not "bunkum" and "Tomfoolery", then pray what is.
56. Does not this smack of unreasonableness, to say the least. After all, what all of us should try to do is to cultivate our relationship with each other, and with College, rally round the College and assist College and also help the younger generations of Thomians. None can say the OBA has made a genuine attempt in this direction.
57. It cannot be said that the OBA has in recent years achieved any of its above Objects or made any serious effort to do so. In all of the above circumstances, it cannot be said justifiably that the objectives of the OBA have been receiving the attention of the Ex-Co. in the manner the Founders would have expected. It has not given the necessary or expected support to the College or the Head Master and he has been isolated. The manner in which the OBA has conducted its own affairs had deteriorated to such an extent that unless some corrective measures were taken, very soon all that would have been left of the OBA would have been the Ex-Co and a handful of Members. The Ex-Co of course keeps electing and re-electing itself and is quite content to go on like that whilst the majority of the Membership had been ignored and fallen by the way-side.
58. Over 175 Personal visits, over 294 circular letters, several Press Advertisements and our membership and Publicity Drives both in Sri Lanka and abroad have brought satisfactory results and a fair response. These steps were taken by us not for personal glorification, but because we found that the OBA was utterly oblivious and not responsive not only to the demands of the Old Boys of Gurutalawa but also to our repeated requests to clean up its act and do something for itself and for College before it was too late. Need we mention the number of people in the OBA and even in its highest echelons who expressed doubts whether college could ever be revived.

59. As no start had been made for well over one year towards the printing of the Directory, two of our Members who are Vice Presidents of the OBA volunteered in writing on or about November 01, 2001, to complete this job within 30 days of entrusting this project to them. That matter was unfortunately handed down to a sub Committee of the OBA at a meeting of the Ex-Co on
60. A final date up to 31.12.2001 was to be given to the membership for submission of Data for the Directory. The notice was prepared and when it came to the Address, Telephone No. as to where the information was to be transmitted objection was raised from the highest levels that as the "Registered Address" of the OBA was the Secretary's address, the address, telephone No. Fax, E-mail address of the Secretariat of 62 Group could not be given. When it was pointed out that none of the 3 Vice Presidents would in fact be actually available to take the messages and Data which members might wish to transmit the hierarchy relented to permit only the fax numbers of the '62 Group Secretariat. That the "Registered Office" of the OBA is the Secretary's address is also rubbish, and unfit for intelligent consumption.
61. The Directory of Members and the Membership Cards are in the meantime still due.

B. THE RULES OF THE OBA AND THE NEED FOR CHANGE

62. The Rules of the OBA have been the subject of adverse comment for some time. It is felt that some changes are necessary.
63. One School of thought is that the Rules should not be too detailed or exhaustive and shall be simple and contain only the main requirements. Perhaps this may be advisable. However, it is best that these matters be thrown open for discussion to the General Membership and obtain the benefit of all views and shades of opinion.
64. Whatever the outcome it cannot be gainsaid that the Rules as they stand today need some overhaul. Some of the matters that require attention are as follows:-
- (a) According to Rule 15 rules can be amended only at an AGM. It should be possible to amend Rules even at a Special General Meeting.
 - (b) According to Rule 11(2) any member can request the Ex- Co to summon a Special General Meeting. It is better that at least a minimum number of members, (say 20,) make this request.

- (c) According to Rule 11(2) the Ex-Co has the discretion to accede to this request. It is better to remove this discretion and make it mandatory.
- (d) Rule 12 requires the accounts to be presented at the AGM. Provision should be made for the accounts to be circulated together with the Notice of Meeting instead of handing it over at the AGM.
- (e) Under Rule (10), 14 days notice is required to move any Motion or Resolution at an AGM. It should also be possible to move any motion or resolution in the course of any AGM except those that relate to an Amendment of the Rules.
- (f) Rule (9) (4) requires the Secretary to give 21 days notice of the AGM and the Agenda. If so, the notice required under Rule (10) must necessarily exceed 14 days.
- (g) The Head Master was made the President of the Association and a Life Member under Rule (7) when Dr.Hayman was Head Master. This is no longer appropriate, relevant or desirable. Currently, the Head Master ceases to have any interest in the College after relinquishing office. There are many matters that concern old boys, their Association and which do not relate to, affect or concern the Head Master. All Ex-Co Meetings are conducted in Colombo. To expect the Head Master to attend these Meetings or Preside thereat is inappropriate now. Furthermore, there may be several issues, which if taken up at the Ex-Co, AGM or Special General Meetings, may be embarrassing for the Head Master as they may reflect upon his conduct and work.
- (h) The Head Master could be made a joint patron of the Association together with the Warden of STC Mt.Lavinia under Rule (6).
- (i) There is no provision for the maintenance of a Register of Members. There is no provision for the issuance of a Membership Card. It is desirable to provide for same.
- (j) Copies of the Rules, Minutes of any Annual General Meeting or Special General Meeting or Executive Committee Meeting must be supplied to members on request and payment of charges.
- (k) There is no provision as to who should preside at Meetings of the Ex-Co. or AGM or Special General Meetings. **THIS SHOULD BE PROVIDED WITH THE USUAL PROVISION FOR ABSENCE,**

AND THE SENIOR MOST VICE PRESIDENT SHOULD PRESIDE IN THE ABSENCE OF THE PRECEDENT PERSON, UNLIKE THE UGLY AND MOST UNBECOMING SITUATION THAT PREVAILS NOW.

- (l) An Old Boy applying for Membership should be informed whether he is enrolled or not (and in the latter event, the reasons therefor) within say 40 days.
- (m) The Objects of the Association should be amended by the addition of the following object:-
“to assist the Board of Governors and the Head Master in every possible way in the Management of the school and to maintain its standards and traditions.”

It is felt by a very senior segment of the Membership that we should do something radical to change direction and assert the Old Boys Association’s right to be concerned with the administration of the School and to assist the Headmaster and the Board in this regard, that we must give serious consideration to change the aims and objectives of the OBA Constitution. If the objectives of the Association support this position then we could all agree on the steps and direction to proceed further.

- (n) It is desirable to provide/ensure that the members of the Ex-Co will be truly representative of all age groups, and that unless some special skill or contribution is available not to re-elect the same office bearers over and over again unless substitutes are not available.
- (o) The Rules require that at least 3 members of the Ex-Co to be elected in Feb. 2002 should be old boys who have left College after 1987.
- (p) The Rules also require that only one Member of the Ex-Co could be a person who has not studied at Gurutalawa or been a Member of the Staff of Gurutulawa. This probably is a reference to Honorary Members or Old Boys of Mt. Lavinia.
- (q) The Rules also provide that no Member of the Executive Committee should be a person who has not been (a student or a Member of the Staff) at Gurutalawa for a period of not less than 183 days. The general belief has been that an Old Boy is required to have been a Student at College for at least 183 days to become a Member of the OBA. This is to our mind an incorrect interpretation of the Rules, whatever was intended at the time of formulation.

- (r) The Rules should also provide that the New Ex-Co that is elected to office at the end of the AGM should through its new Senior Vice President at the first available opportunity, spell out its programme of work or projects. This is best done with an acceptance speech and before the usual get together is concluded. All members must be made aware why the New Ex-Co sought Office and they must be answerable to the membership and not misplace the trust reposed in them. After all this is not a family business.
- (s) The Rules provide for only 3 Vice Presidents. One does not know how the number was increased to 04. The available Rules do not support it. If the Rules were amended an updated one certified by the Secretary must be made available.
- (t) The Rules should also provide that all members seeking office in the Ex-Co should be personally present at the AGM. None should send their emissaries for sponsoring. Lately, proxy is utilized in the wrong situations.
- (u) The Rules of the OBA require the holding of an Annual General Meeting in every year on such date as may be fixed by the Ex-Co **AFTER DUE CONSIDERATION TO THE CONVENIENCE OF THE MAJORITY OF THE MEMBERS.** It is now relevant to question whether **THE CONVENIENCE IS BEING CONSIDERED AT ALL.** The majority are not present at the Annual General Meeting. Hence we should discuss whether the AGM should be held in Colombo to enable the vast majority of Old Boys to participate (whilst continuing to have the traditional celebrations at Gurutalawa). It is quite evident that the Older Old Boys feel it difficult to travel up and spend a day or two at Guru particularly amidst the present conditions. The AGM being the main Annual Gathering therefore should be at a venue convenient to the majority, taking in to consideration that hitherto there has been no way the Old Boys who do not travel up to attend the AGM at Guru can participate in its important deliberations or voting and **THUS A VERY VALUABLE PART OF THE DECISION MAKING PROCESS GOES BY DEFAULT** and a charade is enacted year after year in election of office bearers.
- (v) Whether the AGM (if held in Gurutalawa) should be on Sunday Morning instead of Saturday Evening immediately before the Fellowship and Dinner.
- (w) The Rules of the OBA also require the holding of a Re-union of

Old Boys at Gurutalawa on a suitable day as decided upon by the Ex-Co in every year. This has presently necessitated College giving mid-term holidays to almost the entire school. About 5 dormitories are vacated by students to accommodate Old Boys. Parents have not taken to this forcible process very kindly. Their having to come, most of them by Public Transport, from far off places, take their children away for 2-3 days and then bring them back is a fairly expensive process for them. This inconvenience and expense is blamed on the OBA. WE MUST TAKE COGNIZANCE OF THIS.

C THE 62 GROUP- ITS FORMATION PAST PRESENT AND FUTURE ACTIVITIES, NEWSLETTERS ETC

65. Sarath Suraweera, presently Superintendent of Police gathered a few of us in 1993, for the purpose of constructing a Stadium and Pavilion and thereby converting the grounds at Gurutalawa into a modern Sports Complex. (It was to be named after Mr.A C M Laffir who devoted his lifetime to sports at College). Sarath had the support of the then Ministry of Sports with several old boys including the Minister ready to give all assistance required.
66. The Old Boys involved were mainly those who joined Gurutalawa with him in 1958 and left in 1962. The group also included those who joined a few years before 1958 and who left Gurutalawa a few years after 1962.
67. The Project could not see the light of day because there were objections from the Board of Governors as well as certain sections of the OBA itself and hence was abandoned. These objections were to our mind born of petty -jealousies and fears that our group would be able to successfully complete a gigantic Project without the active participation of the OBA. Sarath Suraweera however, attended to some renovation etc of the existing pavilion and had it named after Mr. A.C.M. Laffir by having a plaque inscribed therein opened by Mrs.Hayman on one of her subsequent visit to College.
68. Since then a handful of us who were in college around that period have attended the AGM normally held in February each year at Guru.
69. Recently, many requests were made to a few of us on one of the occasions we were at Gurutalawa to take an interest and visit College **ON A NORMAL DAY.** As we ourselves felt there was an urgent need to look into matters **WE ENDEAVOURED TO SET THE BALL ROLLING UNDER THE AEGIS OF THE OBA WHICH IS THE OBVIOUS AND NATURAL THING TO DO.**

70. UNFORTUNATELY, WE CAME ACROSS MANY OBSTACLES AND OUR EXPERIENCES MADE US FEEL THAT THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE AS PRESENTLY CONSTITUTED DOES NOT WELCOME ANY OFFERS OF ASSISTANCE, ADVISE OR CONSTRUCTIVE CRITICISM, WHICH WILL BE FOR THE BETTERMENT OF THE COLLEGE AND THE OBA ITSELF. We came to this conclusion after over 6 months of procrastination by the Ex-Co of all that we have proposed.
71. We therefore decided to co-operate with the OBA where we could or were welcome and as far as the balance goodwill was concerned to divert it to College direct. Nobody can get hurt or find fault with our course of action.
72. On our visits to Guru for the AGM we had observed the manner in which the OBA conducts its affairs at the AGM, the Dinner etc thereafter and at the Re-Union as a whole at Gurutalawa. We also observed the conditions prevailing at Gurutalawa. We had received various representations from those at Gurutalawa with regard to the situation and conditions at college. To cut a long story very short it appeared that unless some remedial action was taken immediately college would have to close down because even the Tutorial Staff were about to come out in open rebellion against the Head Master, the College and the establishment as a whole. In fact there were several unpleasant incidents reported, mistrust created and illfeeling was rampant. It appeared neither the Manager, the Bishop nor the Board of Governors had any interest in the affairs or activities of College and/or were aware of the true state of affairs.
73. In this situation last year, a new Bishop was installed and soon thereafter a new Headmaster was also appointed. Both appointments seemed to auger well for college. We discussed matters and attended the installation of Mr. Geethal Mendis the New Head Master at Gututalawa and also the Prize Giving at which the new Bishop Duleep de Chikera was the Chief Guest. The Bishop is the Chairman of the Board of Governors. The new Head Master was reported to be a good Administrator. The New Bishop gave an assurance that Gurutalawa would receive his attention henceforth. As is well known the Board of Governors who are the ultimate decision-makers of the College are reported so far to have given step-motherly treatment to Gurutalawa, and been totally disinterested in its development and activities. **We were therefore somewhat encouraged by those factors.** We were pleased with the signals the new Head Master as well as the New Bishop were sending by word and action. Previously, the Board of Governors did not appear to be interested in Gurutalawa and the Headmaster was ineffective.
74. Consequently with the permission of those that mattered we initiated a fact finding mission which involved 3-4 days lodging at Bandarawela and, three of our members travelling to Gurutalawa daily, inspecting

the buildings, dormitories, toilets etc and interviewing a wide cross section of the community at College i.e members of the Tutorial Staff, Administrative Staff ,Minor Staff as well as Students and Parents in school and outside. We compiled a fairly comprehensive report which we had intended giving the new Headmaster expecting him to take some remedial action. By the time we concluded our inquiries and completed our Report we found that its contents were far too sensitive to be handed over to the Headmaster direct as it would not be secure in his office at College, and so we broke with protocol and met the Bishop who is the Chairman of the Board of Governors direct, bypassing the OBA which we had found to be absolutely ineffective lethargic, and not responsive to all our appeals and requests.

75. We mentioned to the Bishop that to our mind two matters that need urgent attention were the mobilization of the Teaching Staff and taking corrective measures with regard to regularizing finance. Introduction of a daily cash-flow return from the Accounts Department to the Head Master/Bishop will have an immediate impact on financial accounting. Regular frank meetings commencing without delay between the Head Master and the Senior Tutorial Staff collectively or individually and create the necessary confidence in them and bring the desired results.
76. Without a Head Master of the Calibre of Dr.Hayman, **resident in Gurutalawa**, it is a wonder that College has lasted even thus far. There have been reported murders of the Head Master and his wife; suicide of a Master; formation of Trade Unions and breaking out of strikes amongst the minor staff; and even students revolting and resorting to violence necessitating the entry of Police; vandalism and factional violence amongst the senior students etc,etc; It does appear that this horrific record will be difficult to match by any other school. It was in this scenario that we made a quiet entry to feel the pulse and see whether College could be resuscitated.
77. In our endeavours, we are fortunate to have had the unstinted co-operation, advice and guidance of no less a person than Mr.P.S. Duleep Kumar (who every body has always considered should have been the natural successor to Dr.Hayman) one of the Original 42 students at Guru in 1942 and deeply involved in the 1959 inauguration of the OBA and its affairs thereafter with some other pioneers. Several other very senior Old Boys have offered their support, advice and encouragement to us, in writing as well as in person.
78. Recently however, unfortunately the OBA appears to have lost sight of its objectives and the majority of the Old Boys do not get actively involved and the pioneers too have had misunderstandings and keep away.
79. A vast number of Old Old Boys and even very young Old Boys are joining our efforts to resuscitate College to what it was without getting

involved in unnecessary disputes in the OBA and its Executive Committee.

80. We have considered and discussed the Report with the Bishop and Pioneer Old Boys of 1942 and thereafter, of the calibre of Mr. Bradman Weerakoon, Mr. Ronnie Weerakoon, Mr. Duleep Kumar and Mr. Sisira Nanayakkara and several others. They have commended our Report and recommendations and indicated to us that they were fully supportive of our actions and were willing to give us all the help, if need be to change the Ex-Co and get in ourselves.
81. As far as the OBA is concerned we found that the same few individuals keep getting themselves appointed to high office at every AGM for some reason best known to them and were least interested in the OBA itself or the College. We say so as otherwise the OBA would not be in such a sorry plight and the situation in College would not have come to this.
82. The vast majority of the members of the OBA have been kept in the dark. They have no contact with the OBA. Our efforts to make the OBA alive and to expose the shortcomings with a view only to rectify and improve the organization have met with stiff and stubborn resistance from within, which is incomprehensible. Our offers of help have been spurned with malice and contempt by them. The documents in our possession prove the point in ample measure.
83. Therefore, in order that we can try to make the OBA a more dynamic organization, we are gathering around us as many Old Boys of Guru as possible so that the OBA and its Ex-Co is representative of all sections of Old Boys and existing members who are sincerely interested to help college and eventually to see an Executive Committee in place which is the best and most helpful to college.
- 84. We feel that the best team of Old Boys should once again lead the OBA until at least College is put back on its feet. OUR GROUP IS NOT INTERESTED IN SECURING OFFICE IN THE OBA. We feel there are people who are much more competent, capable and mature. We are trying to identify them and persuade them to come in. We have made some progress in that direction.**
85. Outside the OBA there are several old boys who do not wish to have anything to do with the OBA but wish to help college in their own way. They are joining our Group, and they find that they are welcome in to our group and we will together help college where the OBA is not interested, and/or cannot be made to take an interest.

86. We are also using the '62 Group so that all old boys can keep in touch with each other wherever they may be residing whether in Sri Lanka or outside.
87. It is no secret that the OBA of Gurutalawa is not effective and has recently proved to be a failure. We intend to change that.
88. Trying to make contact with and cultivate their interest in College and in one another and to reactivate people, who have lost touch with each other and College after almost 40 years is no easy task.
89. Our Group had very few of our vintage participating in OBA activities. Just one week before the Fellowship Dinner of the OBA in October 2001, we set in motion an effort to have as many of the old boys of our vintage as possible at the Fellowship Dinner. Our group was able to muster for the first time about 20 members who belong to our era for the usual OBA dinner in October this year. Normally the number was around 05.
90. We organized a Fellowship Dinner of our own just one month later i.e. on November 24, 2001 and we managed to increase the number to almost 60. This was organized in just 02 weeks and was a resounding success. We were able to felicitate two distinguished Pioneer Old Boys of the 1940's in appreciation of their service to the College, the OBA and the Country, i.e. Mr Bradman Weerakoon, and Mr P S Duleep Kumar as well as the only 3 Masters of our time who, to our knowledge, are still surviving and whereabouts known. All 5 of them were very moved by our gesture and the impressive plaques awarded to them rendered them speechless. On the same occasion, we prepared and issued a complimentary Directory of our Members. We also issued laminated Membership Cards to all the members. The Directory and Membership Cards took only 48 hrs. to be executed and completed. We went further and issued to all participants complimentary souvenirs. Every guest who attended the Fellowship Dinner commended us for the organization, efficiency and effort put in. Our Fellowship Dinner was a resounding success. It will be talked about for as long as those who attended to live. We quote below a few of the tributes received :-

" Thank You once again for your kind invitation, generous hospitality and the honours you and your Group conferred on me at your Fortieth Anniversary Friendship Dinner. Further, I was overwhelmed by the inscription on the magnificent memento plaque which I read only on my return from the Hotel. It really made me feel so unworthy. I also read your Welcome Notes and attached documents the next morning.

My mind boggles at the time, energy and expense you all have incurred. Truly your Group will herald the beginning of a new era in the history of S. Thomas' College, Gurutalawa"

- Mr.P S Duleep Kumar

" I wish to Thank You again for the honour you have given me and the other two teachers by inviting us for the get-together, for the opportunity given of meeting our former pupils and for the wonderful time we had on this occasions (including the tantalizing cabarets!). Please do not hesitate to contact me for any assistance your Group requires from me."

- Mr.Nimal Bhareti

" Many Thanks for the invitation extended to me to participate in your anniversary celebrations and the token of remembrance and felicitation presented to me. It certainly made me proud to have studied at STC Gurutalawa and to have had the privilege of teaching many of you in the '62 Group. The air of nostalgia and reminiscences were overpowering and brought back happy memories and made me elated to call myself a Thomian."

- Mr.L M Fernando

" I am sure, like myself all souls who congregated at the venue shared pleasant memories among themselves, which they cherished for more than 40 years and left the precincts with your desired strength, grace and the vision to last for another 40 more years."

- Mr.Sarath Suraweera

91. We will continue to meet, discuss and find ways and means of resuscitating college, reuniting the OBA and re establishing our relationship which was born in college several decades ago. We have already succeeded in bringing back to the OBA the most senior Pioneer member who had drifted away due to various differences of opinion in the OBA itself.
92. Our Group is going ahead with all its activities ignoring the petty mindedness of the Ex-Co.
93. We are presently engaged in a Membership Drive in Canada, USA, UK and Australia. We are encouraging as many old boys who are not members to join the OBA. Most of them do join. Some have reservations about the OBA and prefer to keep out of that establishment, whilst helping College independently, because of adverse reports they have received about the OBA.

94. Our Directory is updated as and when information / data is received, even daily. Thus when a request is made for a copy what will be available **is an up to the minute issue.** We have in fact put out the February 2002 issue. Our list of Members who received the updated, amended or new extracts by E.Mail regularly exceed 20. In fact each month there are at least 3-4 members who have not been heard of for the last 40 years joining up and offering whatever assistance required to develop College.
95. We have definitely acted as a catalyst and since October 2001 we have generated a greater interest and enthusiasm amongst Old boys as well as members of the OBA as a Ginger Group or Action Group as some Pioneer Old Boys have labelled us.
96. We have during the last 03 months sent out 03 News Letters to Old boys as well as members of the OBA to activate interest in the OBA as well as College. Our Press Advertisements, News items, Fellowship Dinner were geared to organise old boys as a force and to focus attention on the needs of College.
97. Some members of the Ex-Co on seeing our Press notices / Advertisement had inquired whether our group is trying to make out that the Ex-Co or OBA has not done anything. Our Answer was and is an emphatic. No – We do not say that. We say you could have done much more. In that you have failed. Be honest to admit it.
98. This type of rhetoric does not help the OBA or the college. We see no useful purpose in participating in that debate. Its better to go on with our activities.
99. From all reports we have had, the new Head Master is on the correct track and our Group is extending to him all encouragement, advise and support he requires or asks for.
100. We have emphasized to him that we strongly believe and have no intention in interfering in his activities or dictating to him and that that is not our role. He is fully appreciative of our sincerity and genuine concern for the College and the current and future generations of Thomians.
101. We have persuaded Senior Members of the Staff to work in close co-operation with the new Head Master so that he has all the support necessary in order to improve the conditions in College, particularly those relating to teaching and management. We are delighted with the current relationship between the tutorial staff and the Head Master which before September, **WAS EXPLOSIVE AND**

**MAY EVEN HAVE LED TO THE CLOSURE OF THE SCHOOL.
THIS HAS PERHAPS BEEN OUR GREATEST ACHIEVEMENT.**

102. We are hopeful that a mature, knowledgeable and concerned Ex-Co when in place would be of greater assistance to the Head Master and we too could divert all our energies towards the College through the OBA. We could continue with meetings and Fellowship etc. of our group.

103. **PROJECT FOR PAINTING OF JUNIOR DORMS**

- a. The painting of the Junior Dormitories was undertaken by members of our Group in February-March, 2001 by a letter dated March 15, 2001 addressed to the then Headmaster with copy to the Secretary of the OBA.
- b. The new Headmaster who had unearthed our letter of March 15, 2001 while going through his files wrote to us direct, a letter dated November 16, 2001 requesting that we initiate the project. We promptly responded and after discussion with him, undertook to attend to same during the December vacation.
- c. The painting commenced on December 21, 2001 having first delivered the paints and materials that were donated to College, and obtaining proper documentation. Additional paints that were required were purchased from Welimada.
- d. We engaged 13 professionally skilled painters from Colombo through the good offices of a well-known Chartered Architect. The painters were given accommodation and food by the Head Master which avoided undue delay in the accomplishment of the work. The workmen's food bill was settled by us and subsequently deducted from their labour charges. It was possible to attend to minor repairs, eg. replacement of glass window panes, minor carpentry and masonry work and the painting of the ceiling, walls, windows and door frames and sashes as well as the grills of the De Saram, Garnier and Reid (Junior Dormitories) and their night toilets. Necessary repairs were also effected to the asbestos roof which was found to be leaking, in some places. Work was hampered due to the very bad condition of the dorms and also bad weather. It was observed that grills of windows had been forcibly broken, removed and vandalized in general. It was not possible to attend to the Foster Dorm (Formerly known as Winchester), because of the very bad condition of the ceiling as well as the walls etc. which needed special carpentry and masonry work. This Dorm will have to be done later, separately. Work was concluded on December 26, 2001. The Dorms were handed over and the workmen left the College premises that evening.
- e. Young Old Boys Mr. M.N.M. Faizam, Mr. Mohamed Asnaf, Mr. Mohamed Illiyas, Mr. Prabath Jayasundera and Mr. Chammika

Thushara made very generous contribution in cash and paints. A few of our Members too contributed in cash and kind. The work was supervised by two of our members who took lodging close by.

- f. Approximately 20 litres of Paint with the used Paint Brushes were left in the Head-Masters custody for use in future projects. A sum of Rs. 5311/37 was left over at the completion of the painting. A sum of Rs 3217/50 was paid out of this balance to John Keells Office Automation (Pvt) Ltd for the repair and service of the College Fax Machine which had not been working for several months and which we got down to Colombo for attention. A further sum of Rs.150/- was expended for the Fax Paper. The balance sum of Rs.1943/87 is available for use in future projects. The only Printer available in College for their computers, which had also ceased to function, was also got down and attended to by us without any charge. These 02 machines were thereafter delivered to the Headmaster to be put back to use.
- g. A Statement of Account was made available to every Old Boy who assisted in cash or kind (and also the Headmaster, for his information) within one week of the completion of the Project.
- h. The originals of all invoices, receipts, delivery orders etc. are filed separately and retained at the Secretariat available for inspection by any of our friends who made generous contributions.
- i. The work was executed under the overall personal supervision of Mr. Rizvi Jalill Vice President, OBA.
- j. Meanwhile our letter of March 15, 2001(together with various other proposals made by us in writing on the same day) has been bandied up and down at Meetings of the Ex-Co upto November, 2001 and was to be taken up at the Ex-Co meeting November 28, 2001 by appointing a sub-committee to go into same. Meanwhile we are yet to be enlightened by our OBA and it's Ex-Co as to whether and when they hope to consider and appoint a sub-committee to go ahead with the painting of the Junior Dormitories and the several other matters.

104. A coaching camp for Hockey organized mainly by young old boys as well as some of our Members is to be had shortly.

105. We were made to understand that the class room furniture (ie. Long Tables and benches for 3 students) were the same that existed in our time, i.e. in 1958. Perhaps even long before. They were so archaic and that system had been done away with in most of the rural Government schools everywhere in the Country. We are therefore to provide new desks and chairs for all the classrooms

by way of a gift to the College. That Project is already on going. – Prototypes of the Desks and Chairs that are on offer are to be displayed in College during the Old Boys Re-Union in February 2002.

106. We have also arranged to improve the landscape around the Chapel and the Swimming Pool and also provide flood-lit facilities as the new Head –Master is proceeding to generate interest in Swimming not only in School but also in that area. The tiling of the Pool and restoring the Diving Boards is also on course by the Head Master.
107. Also in the pipeline is a project to repair/provide new piping as well as new water pumps form the wells for all purposes.
108. We have also devoted some time towards the Membership Drive for the OBA. Over 300 letters have been sent to Old Boys who had left college in the early 1980's. We have had a very poor response which could be attributed to the 20 year gap as well as probably change of address etc. Not many letters were returned undelivered.
109. We had suggested that School Leavers be given Application Forms so that they could join the OBA. To this end we are working with the Head master to make that drive a success. A large stock of Application Forms was handed over to the Head Master for this purpose. **There has been no response from the OBA to our proposal in this connection.**
110. Press Notices will be inserted by us both in the Sinhala and English News Papers at least once a year calling upon Old Boys to send in their data and join the OBA, and informing them of the AGM and Re-Union.
111. In these endeavours we are happy that we have been able to secure the support of the Bishop, the Entire Tutorial staff of the college, the Staff of our time who are still surviving, the very Senior. and pioneer Old Boys of Gurutalawa and almost all old boys of Gurutalawa who were in college around our time. In fact even members of the Board of Governors have contacted us and expressed their support to us in our activities for the restoration of the glory of College.
112. We must add that our doors are open to everybody. All old boys who were in college from the 40's, as well as old boys who were in college in the 90's and to date have joined us in our efforts. The **Founder** Members of our Group however are those of the <58-62> era.

113. We MUST EMPHASISE AND STRESS THAT, OUR GROUP IS NOT A SPLIT OR BREAKAWAY OF THE OBA. WE ARE ENCOURAGING ALL OUR MEMBERS TO JOIN THE OBA. WE ARE PROUD THAT IN THE LAST FEW MONTHS WE HAVE ENROLLED TO THE OBA MORE MEMBERS THAN IN ANY YEAR SINCE 1959. WHERE THE OBA IS TOO SLOW FOR OUR LIKING WE ARE ON THE FAST TRACK TO HELP OUT COLLEGE.

114. There is no membership fee or formal Application Form. What we seek is a common bond of Thomian brotherhood, sincerity and loyalty to one another and to the college to which we owe so much and where we spent a small part of our childhood learning how to become men and gentlemen.

(NEWS) LETTERS

115. IN OUR FIRST NEWSLETTER OF NOVEMBER 2001 we said we hoped to in due course send out a (News) Letter with some regularity informing the Old Old Boys of the present trends and conditions and the Young Old Boys interesting portions of the past they may not be privy to. We also hoped to in a future, (News) Letter, make available a sketch of the Campus with important land marks properly itemized and identified as a large number of Old Boys may not have visited College for a long time and hence may not be aware of the ground situation as it exists now.

116. Amongst the other subjects we hoped to advert to were;-

- (a) the tutorial staff, the number and composition and their separate fields of instruction, whether, resident or otherwise, their involvement with extra curricular activities, their isolation from the OBA, welfare measures in place for them and a lack of appreciation of their services by the College and the OBA.
- (b) the students, the number, the background, their academic and sports achievements, discipline etc.
- (c) the school's curriculum, activities in terms of the present requirements of the authorities, the additional subjects that could be made available at Gurutalawa.
- (d) The sports that are now available, those that have been abandoned, the lack of competent coaching and the dangers caused to the College Grounds by its virtual abandonment.
- (e) The minor staff, the number and their militancy, lack of discipline, dedication, and loyalty, the problems posed to the College, by over-staffing and perhaps being pampered by the OBA who appear to be unaware of the actual situation.

117. These then were only some of the interesting aspects the future

(News) Letters were to touch upon. It was hoped that soon it would be possible to circulate this letter among a wider section of old boys whether Members of the OBA or not, to generate an interest which is hoped, would be to the eventual benefit and advantage of the College.

118. We came across large numbers of Old Boys (even members of the OBA) who are unaware of the identity of the Office bearers of the OBA. One school of thought particularly of the present Ex-Co, seem to be content with the idea that it is infra dig to insert a Paper Advertisement giving this information immediately after an AGM. Some are unaware of the traditional celebrations held annually in February in College. Others are unaware of the October Fellowship/Dinner held in Colombo. Some others feel, if the will or interest is there, Old Boys wherever they may be resident, will make it a point to make contact with somebody, check up and thereafter attend these functions and generally keep in touch. Be that as it may and without entering into any controversy about the pros and cons of these options, we have decided to fill in the vacuum and endeavour to bring both Mohamed and the Mountain together. A mighty task no doubt but we loose nothing by trying and we would have got the satisfaction that we have tried to do some good for the benefit of College.

THE FIRST LETTER THEREFORE WAS ONLY TO SERVE AS AN EYE OPENER AND INTENDED AS THE FIRST IN A SERIES OF SIMILAR (NEWS) LETTERS TO BE SENT TO AS MANY OLD BOYS OF THE COLLEGE AS POSSIBLE (WHETHER MEMBERS OF THE OBA OR NOT) WHO INFORM US THAT THEY WISH TO BE PLACED ON OUR MAILING LIST AND WHO SHOW SOME INTEREST IN OUR ACTIVITIES, WHICH ARE DIRECTED TOWARDS A)CONTINUING OUR FRIENDSHIPS BORN ALMOST 4 DECADES AGO AND B) PUTTING OUR JOINT WEIGHT BEHIND COLLEGE TO RESUSCITATE COLLEGE SO THAT WE CAN BE TRULY PROUD TO CALL OURSELVES THOMIANS.

119. We have thereafter done 02 other Newsletters and our present Mailing List covers almost 300 Old Boys mostly Members. We are re-establishing contact with our contemporaries who are resident abroad and each month a few more get added from them to our list.
120. Whilst our Newsletters have generated much interest in activities of the College and the OBA more new Members are also encouraged to join the OBA itself. Todate we have submitted through the Secretary over 35 Applications for Membership.
121. Whilst we are somewhat at a disadvantage not having access to Official Records of the College to give very accurate data and information in which Old Boys will be naturally interested we have

tried our best to give as clear and correct a picture as possible, and fulfill the tasks we set for ourselves when we initiated the News Letters. Whilst the response we have received from the Old Boys is most encouraging we are sorry we cant do more due to the reasons mentioned above.

122. The sketch is the best we have been able to get done with the limited access available. We hope it will be interesting.

D. OUR PROPOSALS TO RE-ORGANISE THE OBA AND ITS ACTIVITIES

123. Amongst the proposals we made to the OBA since the last AGM in February 2001, are the following:-
- a. After Election of new Office Bearers to insert a- Paper Ad or send a Circular Letter to all members.
 - b. Commence a Membership Drive with Paper Ads etc.
 - c. Approval of New Application Form (with data) for Membership.
 - d. To insert a Paper Ad for Members to inform their new and change of Addresses.
 - e. Change of Address of Member notification, recordal, and confirmation to be done in a professional manner.
 - f. Locate Members abroad.
 - g. Have printed forms and acknowledge receipt of Applications for Membership and also inform new Members of their admission in writing as soon as processing is over instead of notification at next AGM.
 - h. Draw up a new Register of Members with Membership Nos.
 - i. Publish the Directory of Members based on Data received, without delay.
 - j. Issue of New Membership Cards with Number.
 - k. To fix dates of AGM and Re-Union well in advance to facilitate travel arrangement of Old Boys from abroad, and business and personal arrangements of Old Boys in Sri Lanka.**
 - l. To have a constructive dialogue and seriously consider having the AGM in Colombo and the Re-Union of Old Boys at Gurutalawa.**
 - m. In fixing dates for AGM and/or Re-Union avoid clashing with sensitive dates of various religious communities.**
 - n. Notice/Agenda of AGM to accompany
 - a) Secretary's Report with details of Ex Co Meetings Attendance.
 - b) Reports of Vice Presidents of Projects undertaken progress etc, during year
 - c) Audited Accounts;
 - d) Head-Master's Report;
 - e) Draft of Minutes of last AGM

- o. Introduction of a Participation Register or Registration Desk at AGM.
- p. Helper Tags for Aides at Foster Hall for AGM and regulate entry.
- q. **A few not to monopolize the activities at the AGM i.e proposing and seconding election of almost all top office bearers, and seeking office continuously without getting others interested in OBA and College activities.**
- r. Appointment of Sub-Committees for identified subjects most important being Committee for Management with Head-Master as Chairman. Involve Old Boys who are competent to contribute towards this all important Committee.
- s. Invite all old boys who have drifted away to take active role, and sort out any matters unresolved.
- t. Have Regular News Letters, giving updates on College
- u. Have Regular informal Gatherings in Colombo mostly for the benefit of elderly Old Boys.
- v. Secretary to be reimbursed with expenses for Postage, Stationary, Fax, Telephone, Clerical etc.
- w. Inventory of gifts to be kept at College.
- x. Prompt Receipts for all cash donations received.
- y. Application Forms for Membership & Receipt Book to be available at College for February get-together, at Fellowship Dinner & all other functions.

E. OUR PROPOSALS FOR DEVELOPMENT OF COLLEGE AND ITS INFRASTRUCTURE ETC

- 124. We have discussed with the Director of S L F I who conduct a workshop on career counselling aimed particularly at the Teaching staff the possibility of inviting Teachers from Gurutalawa. This will enable masters/teachers to participate in such course which would help them in their careers **and also to counsel students** (who have problems similar to those reported from Gurutalawa)
- 125. We have also made contact with the High Commissions of Australia, Canada and U K with regard to obtaining personnel on their Youth Ambassador Programmes as well as their Volunteer Overseas Programmes.
- 126. We have also discussed the possibility of having the Senior Students i.e G C E (O/L) classes for a Residential Life Education Programme or Leadership Programme course at Subodhi at Moratuwa which normally lasts 05 days for which a nominal fee

is charged. This will enable students to have a better understanding of their environment.

127. There is also the possibility of obtaining the assistance of the YMCA at Bandarawela who will send the required expertise to do counselling of students even on a Regular basis.

All the above arrangements will be designed to assist primarily the students who are undergoing a difficult period due to problems at home as well as not too satisfactory an environment in school.

128. The above will not involve College in any financial commitments, and we shall pursue these matters if College is interested.

129. We are also actively pursuing the cleaning up of the wells so that they can be put back into proper use. Already some old boys have confirmed that they would supply the pumps.

130. Some other old boys have agreed to do up the Dorms. Some consideration will have to be given whether it is the Senior Dorms or the Junior Dorms that are to be given priority. Although the Senior Dorms are in a worse condition, the wanton damage, and vandalism will necessarily discourage any refurbishment until the house is put in order. The Junior Dorms were attended to during the December 2001 vacation by our Group.

131. The supply of a Call Box for the Keble Dorm which is totally cut away from the rest of the College is essential. So also a telephone system for the College to make communication easy from the Head Master's Office and Bungalow to the Senior Classrooms at one end of the College as well as the Keble Dorm at the other end of the college and the Security Points should then be possible without difficulty. The Head- Master has been provided with the details of the system including the Catalogues and await the re-location of his office as well as the Administration Block to discuss wiring and installation details. The system is valued at over Rs.125,000/- and is a gift from an Old Boy.

132. The provision of T V's and videos and repairs to the water tanks for bathing in the Keble Dorm as well as storage tanks are being looked into.

133. Arrangements are also being made to ascertain and supply

sports equipment etc, and a Hockey Coaching Camp in which very young Old Boys have shown much interest.

134. It is hoped the College would permit the necessary personnel to inspect these areas and discuss their requirements with the Head Master and the Master/s Officer/s concerned, so that proper estimates can be obtained and work could commence early.
135. We are also hopeful of arranging teachers and others on a voluntary basis to attend Week-End Camps for English, Computers etc,etc, and depending on the progress, usefulness and reception to organize further camps.
136. In addition a Medical Camp is being planned so that medical personnel could examine the general health of the hostellers, submit a report to the College so that parents can take remedial action in the interests of the students concerned. It would be good if the College were to insist on the Immunization Records of the children when they are admitted and keep them in the students record. So also to incorporate in the Report the height and weight etc., at the beginning and end of terms.
137. We endeavored to secure the services of a Chaplain for College, and had discussions with Rev. Fr. Lokendra Abeyratne the Parish Priest of St. Matheas Church, Moratuwa, Rev. Fr. Chrisantha Mendis, the Parish Priest pf St. Pauls Church, Milagiriya and Mr. Elmo Wijesinghe, the former secretary of the Ceylon Bible Society. In our discussion and correspondence with the Bishop too we tried to have this matter looked in to. For the moment the Bishop informs us a lay chaplain has been appointed. We are still hopeful that a person suitable and ideal for the currant situation at Gurutalawa could be engaged in due course.
138. It was observed that the Sound Equipment in the Hall was malfunctioning during the Prize Giving in early September last year. According to Mr.Alban Fernando the Ex-Head Master it had just been repaired. He suspected sabotage was the reason. If the system is in fact in need of replacement, this can be done.
139. We looked into the question whether the services of an Old Thomian with a good Track Record of Sports and Organisational Skills as well as Studies could be obtained as a Chief Administrative Officer. The most competent person we had identified was snapped up by the new Minister of Defense (also a Guru Thomian) the moment he assumed

Ministerial Office. **Several Old Boys of the 1940's as well as more recent are very keen that such a post be created and filled and some have even agreed to provide the finance for it. Even Mount Lavinia had advertised for this vacancy.**

140. One of the most important matters that Senior Members of the Tutorial Staff drew our attention to was the need to replace the Class Room Furniture with both Individual Desks and Chairs supporting the back (instead of the present benches). The difficulty experienced at Exams and End of Term Tests was explained. A small cupboard should also be provided in each Class Room. This is also being looked into and several Old Boys are willing to pool their resources towards this venture. A prototype of the Desk & Chairs proposed is to be on display during the February OBA weekend in Gurutalawa.
141. It was observed that the General Office handling Administration did not have a Photostat Copy Machine or Fax Machine. These are essential items for the school. In or about 1994, our Group had to take a Plan all the way to Welimada to turn out a photocopy. These items too can be provided. The Head Master has been given details of the Machine that has been offered as a donation by an Old Boy which is valued at Rs.125,000/- and the catalogues are with him.
142. We have discussed and arranged (should the College decide to accept the offer)with an Old Boy Mr.Chamika Thushara (of Thushara Stores) Welimada, who has agreed to **SUPPLY** and **DELIVER** at College **AT COST** all Hardware, Electrical, Sanitary ware, Mattresses, **GROCERIES**, Provisions etc, and at whatever regularity and **WITHOUT ANY DELIVERY CHARGES.** This will eliminate commissions and sending the College Van on numerous errands to Welimada, Boralanda etc, etc,. The system can be operated by Telephone confirmation and so can all adjustments. This could be tried for some months and continued if advantageous.
143. We have decided to gift several Trophies to be awarded for excellence in Academic as well as Sports Activities to students at the Annual Prize Giving in the hope that it will encourage students to greater heights
144. We have discussed certain losses in the farm which may be attributable to certain deficiencies in the animal food supplied and the manufacturers are willing to look into this complaint and do justice apart from agreeing to supply feed at greatly reduced cost and also make available their expertise at no extra cost.
145. We have also given serious consideration to the fact that Senior Members of the Staff particularly Tutorial, are hardly ever appreciated at Gurutalawa. No special award or gesture to our knowledge has been made **DURING THEIR LIFETIME AND WHILE IN SERVICE.**

A building being named after the demise can be bettered by the holding of a Special Assembly where appreciation is shown in words and by some special Token or Gift. This is a noble act. We feel this should also find a place and look to the College for co-operation to make it a reality. It would be a loss for College to let go of experienced and long-serving members of the Staff **at critical stages.** This has happened in the past, to the detriment of College. Regular paper notices show that the past students of prominent schools like Royal, Visakha, D S Senanayaka et al have made an Annual feature of treating the Retired and Present teachers to a days trip to enjoy themselves. Steps have been taken to have member of the Tutorial Staff join the OBA and contribute towards development of College, particularly as regards the student population and their needs

146. The road from near the Senior Dorms up to Keble needs re-surfacing. With the assistance of the students as a Shramadana scheme it will be possible to find the finances necessary to attend to this project.
147. The entrance to College too has been neglected and can be renovated to give it the appearance it richly deserves.
146. Old Boys are perturbed about college property being subject to deliberate malicious wanton damage by Senior Students or removed to residences of members of the non-academic staff. Hence, future delivery or gift of any article i.e. Beds and Lockers for the Dorms, Tables and Chairs for the Class-Rooms; TV's and VCR's for recreation or educational purposes, Books and Magazines for the library; Sports equipment, Photocopy, Fax, Roneo and Telephone equipment for the Main Office, Lab Equipment etc. etc., will be made only after corrective action is taken to remove and relocate persons who have been found to have misappropriated temporarily or otherwise College property from their present places of work to other stations where they will be rendered harmless and these articles that are donated are placed in the charge of responsible and Senior Members of the Staff who have an unblemished record in these matters and who will be answerable to the Head Master after the taking of a proper Inventory. There should be no room for Senior Students to deliberately cause any wanton loss or damage to any of the donations made or for members of the Non Academic Staff to spirit or pilfer them out of College premises in to their homes. **THUS IT IS LEFT FOR THOSE IN AUTHORITY TO TAKE CORRECTIVE MEASURES.**

F. CURRENT SITUATION, TRENDS & WINDS OF CHANGE AT GURUTALAWA

149. We have met the Head Master and discussed the present situation and trends at College. Based on the information he and those assisting him have given us, it would appear that slowly but steadily, steps are being taken to put matters right at College.
150. The Head Master intends to resume Tennis as a sports activity and the Courts are to be prepared for play once again.
151. Swimming has also received the Head Master's attention and rightly so. He has taken the initiative to develop the Pool by restoring the Diving Boards and tiling it and making it more up to date. We hope to assist by bringing the environs, particularly the landscape around the Chapel and Pool back to its former glory. The Inspector of Police at Welimada is apparently a competent Swimming Coach and the Head Master intends to get his assistance. He has also discussed matters with the Head Master of S.T.C. Bandarawela so that those students could also make use of the College Pool for their swimming on the days that the Gurutalawa students do not use it.
152. We understand that the Senior Dorms are also to be in stages repaired and the Board of Governors have given their consent in that connection.
153. According to the Head Master one cannot be too choosy where Admissions of new students are concerned **right now**. Apparently, 600 students on the roll should make it possible to bring the finances of the College to a break-even point.
154. A lay Chaplain who has been recommended by the Bishop has been appointed by the Head Master to look after the Chapel and service etc.
155. The Head Master has also been successful in recruiting an English Graduate Teacher for the Senior School who has received training in U.S.A. and Italy. He also intends to commence Elocution classes for Grades 4 – 8. shortly.
156. The Head Master is also hoping to start a Nursery for Roses and is on the look out for recognized persons who would be able to help him in that venture.
157. The area below the Old Dining Hall and in between the paddy fields has been cultivated with vegetables by the minor staff who have taken to it enthusiastically. The area is being put to use. The minor

staff are profitably engaged. They have been advised to do it successfully and some income will accrue to College, after the venture has got off the ground. Right now, looking at that area bring back to mind the old days when it was completely cultivated under the supervision of the late Mr. J. De.S. Jayasinghe.

158. The Farm too which had not been doing well for a long time now under the supervision of Mr. Razeek, the present Farm Manager, is taking a turn for the better. Already a profit of almost Rs. 28,630/17 has been realized for the month of December, 2001. As at December, 26, 2001 there were 1,000 broilers of 15 days, 400 broilers of 30 days and 600 broilers of 40 days plus 160 broilers available for sale. In addition, there were 600 layers of 2 months, 300 layers of 3 months and 750 layers of 4 months and above. Approximately 350-375 eggs on an average were available per day.
159. All the requirements of Eggs and Chicken of the College were being supplied by the Farm. Interest was being shown towards College Farm produce even in Colombo. Orders were being received from Balangoda and Badulla for farm produce. Sales were being effected to Badulla and Balangoda regularly. Orders are also being received from Nuwara eliya as the Farm has made a name in that area for quality. The Manager proposes to increase the broiler capacity to 3,000. One day old chicks are ready for sale in 55 days, when it normally reaches a weight of approximately 3 ½ kilos. Chicken is sold at Rs. 95/- per kg. Live weight or at Rs. 145/- per kg cleaned.
160. There were 4 cows . Only one of them was milking. Apart from that calf, there were 04 other male calves who are to be put up for sale. There is also one middle-aged cow.
161. The Manager is of the view that instead of purchasing any more cows, it would be preferable to retain 06 of the present number and he is confident that the total requirement of milk for College could be supplied by the Farm shortly, so that purchase of milk powder can be done away with.
162. 250 grape plants which the Manager himself initiated will be ready for sale in mid-February in time for the A.G.M. for the OBA. He will also have ready for sale 50 Apple plants at the same time.
163. He has taken the initiative and planted carrots, beet-roots, beans, cabbage leaves in between the sheds housing cows and poultry.
164. He also intends cleaning the areas above the Farm in order to plant 50 plantain plants as well as some rose plants from the Kahagalla Govt. Farm, These plants are to be obtained free of charge.

165. The glass panes of the Winchester dorm facing the Basket Ball Court are all broken. There does not seem to be any purpose in replacing these glass panes unless a protection netting is installed to prevent the balls from the Basket-Ball Court causing damage.
166. The Pit of the toilet of the Winchester Dorm also needs attention as the concrete slab has caved in. Mosquitoes are breeding and this pit and it needs some quick remedial attention.
167. The Dhoby who used to come weekly is now no more. Clothes are given to the laundryman and washed above the spout near the former Rifle Range. They are then brought to the laundry Room, adjoining the Co-op Stores and ironed. Students are expected to collect their clothes from the Laundry Room. Clothes of students in the Koble dorm are sent to them in the hand tractor / trailer.
168. The Barber comes from Boralanda on 2 or 3 days of the week and students are free to see him at the Salon adjoining the Co-op Stores.
169. The last batch of A/L students sat for the Exam in 1999. There are no more A/L classes in the Sinhala Medium classes have been suspended due to disciplinary problems.
170. A Tamil A/L class was started in 2000. The students are all Day-Boys numbering about 12. Their exams will be in April,2002.
171. The Montessori which commenced in the Club House about 2 – 3 years ago had to be abandoned because of the very poor numbers seeking admission.
172. Presently students are not accommodated in the dorms house-wise. From year 1 – 5 they are accommodated in the Keble Dorm in different rooms according to their ages / classes.
173. The Foster Dorm (former Winchester) accommodates year 6 students. Year 7 – 8 are accommodated in the De Saram, Garnier and Reid Dorms. They then proceed to the new Winchester Dorm adjoining the Co-op Stores, where year 9 is accommodated. Year 10, 11 and 12 are accommodated in the Senior Dorms, i.e. De Saram, Reid, Garnier and Hayman .
174. Counselling for the Students has been introduced by the new Head Master.

175. The citing of the Basket Ball court immediately in front of the Winchester Dorm or vice versa has created a situation where the balls regularly break the window panes. This calls for some protective netting to be installed.

176. The normal bed-strength of the dorms are as follows:

<u>Dorm</u>	<u>Maximum Bed-Strength</u>	<u>Present occupation</u>	<u>Identification of Occupants</u>
Keble	-	-	1-5 yr
Foster	-	-	Yr 6
De Saram Junior	-	-	Yrs 7-8
Garnier Junior	-	-	
Reid Junior	-	-	
Winchester	30	30	Yr 9
De Saram Senior	26	26	Yr 9
Reid Senior	-	-	Yr 10
Garnier Senior	26	14	
Hayman	26	23	Yr 11
Chapman	-	-	
Davidson	-	-	

177. The Old class room block had been completely renovated some years ago. Walls have been plastered and windows and doors installed. Some lass rooms have been provided with new furniture but most items appear to have been vandalized. There are 10 class rooms in this block with a staff room in the center. These class rooms are occupied by students in years 9,10 & 11.

178. Using the new steps provided, one could go down to the road below. On the orchard side of the road are the Davidson class room block and the Simon Perera class room block, each having 5 rooms. These class rooms are occupied by students in years 6,7 & 8. One class room in the Davidson class room block is used by their Supervisor.

179. A Married staff quarters is available (presently vacant)immediately behind the Simon Perera class room block.

180. When there is a scarcity of water, i.e if the water supply from the natural reserve above the public road near the Chapel and the wells at the base of the valley near the paddy fields have run dry, the valve of the water supply line from Ohiya cited behind the S K Wickremasinghe class room block which is metered, is opened.

181. The Chummary which was occupied earlier by the bachelor tutorial staff like most other buildings, have been badly neglected. Three of its 6 rooms are occupied by members of the minor staff, i.e 2 drivers and another.
182. The new Tamil A/L classes which commenced in the year 2000 have 12 day boys, all of whom are expected to sit for the Exam in the year 2002. It is not yet decided whether to continue these classes or suspend them. The last batch of Sinhala A/L students sat for their exams in December 1999.
183. There were two Meetings of the Parent/Teacher Association since the new Head Master assumed office.
184. The parents have undertaken to colour wash the Primary School Class Rooms. Out of the 7 class rooms, 4 have already been completed.
185. The Head Master has completed the planting of 500 trees in the Tennis Court area as well as near the Laboratory.
186. The Head Master intends making available the School Campus for holiday camps to respectable organizations during the school vacations. It is expected to levy each participant a fee of Rs.225/- per diem for board and lodging.
187. The Head Master also intends to plant the 9 acre block with an additional 200 trees.
188. At the moment, generally, any student seeking admission to the College is taken in after a test which appears to be a formality.
189. We understand that a large percentage of the present population are from broken homes. Counselling of students has become necessary.
190. It was observed at the last Prize Giving, that students, particularly those in the Primary School, were not being properly disciplined.
191. The College requires approximately Rs.715,000/- per month to meet it's salaries, wages, EPT, ETF commitments. A further Rs.100,000/- or so is required to meet the electricity, gratuity and security service charges.
192. The cost of providing food for the boarders is also approximately Rs.525,000/-.
193. The Employees-Student ratio is 4:1. This appears to be on the high side. The teacher-student ratio is 12:1. The total tutorial staff is 39. The administrative and other staff is 13. The total minor staff is 56

which is generally felt excessive. It is said that only 25% of the students pay their fees on the due date.

194. The delay in payment of fees imposes a heavy burden on the College to meet its commitments.
195. It regularly needs to have recourse to bank borrowings by way of overdraft facilities.
196. The bank interest sometimes runs up to over Rs.50,000/- per month.
197. The Head Master has recently sought permission to fell 33 trees which have been identified. He has of course planted much more for long term benefit.
198. However, recourse to felling and selling trees is no solution to the financial ills. Apart from prudent financial management, serious consideration is required to be given to long-term development plans.
199. The social background of the present student population is vastly different to that which prevailed 4 decades ago. This is understandable. The standard of the tutorial staff is also quite different.
200. In order to attract a different segment of student population, and tutorial staff, better facilities by way of accommodation and food as well as attractive salary schemes should be in place.
201. In order to do this, it will be necessary to levy a very much higher boarding and school fee which will in turn necessarily mean the school has to be marketed to a different segment of society.
202. In order to get out of this vicious whirlpool, it may be appropriate to start the reforms and changes from the intake of Year 1 students.
203. Improving the accommodation and food for these students and also having in place very competent and qualified staff on a much higher pay could perhaps be the foundation.
204. The reforms could thereafter proceed upwards from Year 2 and so on, depending on the manner in which the financing of the project is undertaken or envisaged.

G. SUMMARY CONCLUSION

205. We all love the School which has given us so much.
206. We would like to give back to the school and to future generations of Thomians something in return to keep alive that Nursery which made us Men and Gentlemen.
207. Every aspect of life in School has deteriorated, i.e the staff, students, minor staff, buildings, services and facilities, accommodation food, games, sports and all extra curricula activities the teaching and discipline at all levels etc etc.
208. It is the Head Masters who runs the School and is generally held responsible for its improvement or deterioration.
209. There have been almost 10 Head Masters since Dr.Hayman left and each of them have had their own agendas, priorities and plans.
210. There has not been one coherent long-term, far-sighted development plan or projected objectives where education or facilities are concerned.
211. The Board of Governors has stood by while Head Masters have come and gone and have run the show without adequate assistance, advice, guidance supervision and control.
212. If College is to survive, let alone improve, it is of paramount importance that the deterioration be arrested forthwith and a well-considered plan of action be put in motion.
213. This can only be done by knowledgeable persons who are experts in that field.
214. We therefore need to harness all the expertise available amongst old boys and draw in additional know-how from outside if when and where necessary
215. For this, the persons concerned should be interested, committed, dedicated and loyal to the school. They should have the time to devote for this purpose.
216. The objective must be uppermost in their minds and not a side issue to which time can be devoted if and when available.

217. It is obvious that most people who should have been alive to this decline have failed in their duty.
218. The Board of Governors, the Head Masters, the managers the OBA and it's Ex-Co must all share the blame, perhaps the largest slice of blame should be taken by the OBA and its Ex-Co.
219. We do not wish to rake-up the skeletons of the past or go on a witch-hunt or waste time on a non-productive fault-finding missions. We need to think of the future.
220. Our task is to identify the short-comings, how and why they arose, seek the solutions and have implemented a policy based on long term development.
221. For these objectives which we have made our mission, we seek the active co-operation, understanding and encouragement of all old boys of the College of whatever vintage. Such co-operation and assistance could be by way of advice, actively participating the discussions and contributions by way of know-how, expertise, time, energy or finance. Any one or more of these is not much to give back.
222. It is necessary to strengthen the existing OBA. We should bring back to its active involvement and participation, all who have left in disgust over various issues which when one looks back, are certainly not the main issues that concern College and its students.
223. Let us not break-up the OBA or go our separate ways because we disagree. That has and will never be part of our agenda.
224. Let us learn to discuss matters, listen to each other's point of view, accommodate each other, and finally decided on a plan of action which is beneficial to College. This requires a spirit of give and take we must not seek office for the sake of personal glorification. We must learn to give every single member a chance to participate, to contribute, be heard and made to feel he is playing a very important role in bringing the College back to its former glory.. One man shows must be eliminated.
225. Let us all unite in one voice and spirit of Thomian Brotherhood.
226. We say to all, very load and clear we wish to protect and strengthen the OBA in prove our relationship, with each other and do our best to improve the bad situation College has got in to by a concerted and committed effort.

L.J
01st feb 2001