

PRINCIPAL'S PRIZE DAY REPORT 2004

Venerable Chairman, Professor Hoole, Dr Mrs Hoole.
Distinguished Guests,
Old Boys, Parents & Friends

St. John's - nursed, nurtured and nourished by the dedication of an able band of missionary heads, magnificently stands today at the threshold of its 181st year of existence extending its frontiers in the field of education. It is observed that according to records of the college, the very first Prize Giving was ceremoniously held in the year 1891. From then onwards it continues to uphold and maintain this tradition giving it a pride of place in the life of the school. In this respect, we extend to you all a very warm and cordial welcome. Your presence this morning is a source of inspiration and encouragement.

Chairman Sir, your association and attachment to the church & the school are almost a decade and a half institutionalizing yourself admirably well in both areas. We are indeed proudly elated by your appointment as our new Manager and look forward to your continued contribution in your office.

It is indeed a distinct privilege to have in our midst today, Professor Samuel Ratnajeevan Herbert Hoole & Dr. Mrs. Dushyanthy Hoole as our Chief Guests on this memorable occasion.

Professor Sir, you stand here before us as a distinguished old boy and unique in every respect, being the only person in service in this country as a Fellow of the Institute of Electrical & Electronics Engineering with the citation; for contributions to computational methods for design optimization of electrical devices. In addition you hold a higher Doctorate in the field.

Having had your primary education at CMS Practising School Nallur, you joined St John's in grade five and from here entered the Faculty of Engineering, University of Peradeniya. At the final examination you obtained a BSc Degree in Engineering with honours. Thereafter, you continued to add a string of qualifications, securing MSc with distinction; Phd (Lond); DSc.(Eng) Lond FIE(SL) C.Eng.(SL).

Your services and experience abroad have undoubtedly brought you fame and international recognition. Prior to joining the University of Peradeniya as Professor of Electrical & Electronics Engineering, you had served at Harvey Mudd College in California (1987-99); Drexel University; PA Consulting Services; Ibadan Polytechnic (Nigeria) & Engineering Services & Management Consultants (Singapore).

Professor Sir, you have recently added another feather on to your cap by receiving the prestigious Presidential appointment as a member of the University Grants Commission of Sri Lanka and you head Government of Sri Lanka's Taskforce on Life skills for undergraduates, charged with planning & implementing special immersion programmes for all Sri Lankan final year Arts undergraduates in English & IT skills.

Mrs.Dushyanthy Hoole in addition to possessing Professor Hoole you too hold a doctorate from the University of Southern California specializing in Analytical and Organic Chemistry. Madam you are now an Education Specialist for Save the Children in Sri Lanka, working on educational reforms focusing specially on conflict zones.

We welcome you both most warmly among our midst this morning.

The period under review has been a rather eventful one, mixed with sorrow and sadness, at the

same time evoking joy and jubilation.

CONDOLENCES

We record with deep regret the passing away of four of our staff members – two of them while serving & the other two retired.

The Rev A J C Selvaratnam - Passed away peacefully in Melbourne, Australia. He was on the staff, former editor of the college magazine and chaplain. He was fully involved with the life of the school until his death. As the composer of the College Hymn for the 175th Anniversary & the Centenary Hymn for the Old Boys' Association, he leaves behind an indelible impression in the annals of the institution.

Major S Tharmalingam - He was a former Cadet Master and a very successful Geography teacher. As a former Chairperson of the PPA Canada he was interested in the welfare of the College even after leaving the staff.

Mr D M Somasundram - The sudden demise of Dutton, as he was affectionately called came as a rude shock to all of us. He was a versatile teacher capable of handling any subject. His high sense of humour very often kept his friends in a jubilant mood.

Mr R Jeyaseelan - Disappeared from our midst in the high seas under tragic circumstances. young and energetic, he was very much involved in the life of the school in addition to being a much sought after teacher of Economics in the A/L.

The school community extends its deepest sympathy to the families of the above members.

THE TRIPLE CENTENARY CELEBRATIONS

The month of March this year witnessed a hive of activities, as St John's celebrated one hundred years of the Battle of the North; the inauguration of the Old Boys' Association & the College Magazine.

We were delighted to have the presence of a large number of old boys representing Jaffna, Colombo, Canada, UK, Australia, USA, Norway and New Zealand. The unique feature of the celebrations was the presence of the two Bishops from Colombo and Kurunegala.

The OBA centenary celebrations commenced on the 22nd with a service at 7.00 a.m., the preacher being the Bishop of Colombo. This was followed by a meeting in the Peto Memorial Hall chaired by the President OBA Jaffna. The old boys honoured the past Principals by garlanding their portraits. The Bishop of Kurunegala addressed the gathering. The Bishop also laid a foundation stone for a building complex to accommodate hostel staff. As part of the morning programme a trade stall was opened along with an exhibition of clubs & societies. An archives room was also opened by the Archdeacon of Jaffna.

A website introduction took place soon after lunch chaired by the President of PPA Canada. Thereafter the college students staged a folk dance. Tea was sponsored by PPA – UK. The Middle School children performed a drill display during tea. A seven a side football tournament was held among the various OBAs.

The evening function was chaired by the president of OBA Colombo. The highlights of the function were the honouring of old boys over 70; retired principals, vice principals, head masters, sectional heads, staff tutorial & non tutorial, the past & present presidents, secretaries & treasurers of the Old Boys' Associations, magazine editors and business managers (past & present).

The final event of the day was the release of the 2003 edition of the College Magazine. We wish to thank the editors who relentlessly worked towards its release in time for the celebrations. They were congratulated by the old boys for a well brought out edition.

The second day began with a hockey tournament among the old boys. At 10.30 a.m. a ballet was performed by the students of Chundikuli Girls' College. Soon after lunch a six-a-side cricket tournament took place. A relay event was organized for the past House captains. The over 50s too were recognized with a walking race.

The second day's tea was hosted by the OBA Jaffna. The primary school children entertained the gathering with a drill display. The celebrations ended in Jaffna with a formal fellowship dinner chaired by the president OBA UK.

The culminating feature of the Centenary Celebrations was a grand dinner organized by the OBA South Sri Lanka at Hotel Taj Samudra on the 27th of March, for which over 300 old boys gathered to honour their Alma Mater. We wish to congratulate the OBA South Sri Lanka for the excellent arrangements.

PROJECTS AND PLANS

One of our old boys Mr Vaseeharan Nesiah has planned a North Net Project to enhance the existing IT system both at Chundikuli and St.John's. The funds have already been collected, but we still have to wait as the details of the working system and the operational methods have to be carefully planned. Besides, the computer laboratories too have to be equipped further according to the growing needs.

ENROLMENT

The number on roll as at present is 1730, the break up being 371 in the primary, 432 in the middle and 927 in the upper school.

STAFF TUTORIAL

There are 72 members on the staff of whom 34 are graduates with 20 of them being post graduate diploma holders; among the rest there are 22 trained teachers with six more undergoing training at the moment in various courses. The rest are with GCE (A/L) and other qualifications.

JUBILARIANS

Mr. V. Ugabalasingam completed 25 years of unstinted service and joins the elite band of jubilarians being the eighth person to cross the landmark among those in service. He is a captivating orator and an authority in Logic and Scientific Method. We congratulate him and thank him for his continued service.

The following members have been absorbed into the cadre.

Mr V Kumanan (study leave)

Mr G R Thevarajan (study leave)

Miss S Balaganeshan (study leave)

While welcoming the above members to our midst, I wish to place on record our sincere thanks to

teachers who served us on a temporary capacity during this period.

STAFF NON-TUTORIAL

We wish to congratulate Mrs I I Pirapaharan from the office staff, who completed 25 years of efficient and loyal service.

RETIREMENTS

Mr K Arudselvam retired in December last year after 20 years of fruitful service. Punctuality was the hallmark during his period of service. Besides, he possessed a good sense of humour.

Mr P Arumugam, one of our minor staff retired in December last year due to medical reasons. He was one of those who reports for work before dawn to keep the place neat and tidy.

We wish them both a happy and peaceful retired life.

ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENTS

Year Five Scholarships

72 appeared, 19 qualified.

G.C.E. O/L December 2003

148 Students appeared and 136 qualified for advanced level studies, the percentage being 92.

The following performances are worth mentioning.

Nine Distinctions

Janahan S
Kajaruban P
Naviharan N
Niresh S
Nirushan S
Tharanitharan S
Thivaharan P

Eight Distinctions

Aravinthan A
Gobikrishna P
Pratheepan S
Raguraj S
Tharshnu Jarashanth S
Thivaskar V
Yukaventhira K

G.C.E A/L April 2003

174 appeared 92 qualified to apply for admissions to universities the percentage being 42.

At the above examination T.Bavananth obtained 3 A's in the Maths stream and was placed 3rd District

wise and 11th Island wide. Joining him with 3 A's in the same stream are R Thevamaran and N Sivaharan. K Piratheepan, P Premkanth, M Ravishankar and S Thivaharan obtained 3 A's in the commerce stream with Piratheepan being placed 1st in the District and 32nd in the Island.

Though there are names still being added on to a supplementary list, so far 28 students have gained admissions to universities to various faculties as follows:

Medicine	01
Engineering	08
Computer Science	01
Physical Science	05
Survey Science	01
Food and Nutrition	02
Bio Science	01
Agriculture	01
Management	07
Law	01

EXTRA CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

English Day Competitions

At the above competitions held by the Department of Education last year E P Shugirthanan won the second place in Copy Writing in the senior group at Provincial Level. R.Dean Jennifert from Grade 4 won the first place in Recitation at Zonal Level while M Pragash of Grade 13 won the first place in Oratory.

Tamil Day Competitions

In the Tamil Day Competitions organized by the Department of Education R Surasahithyan obtained the first place for Tamil Singing in the Junior group at National Level.

Scouting

We wish to congratulate S Abalaayan and T K Amalan on winning the prestigious President's Award in Scouting.

GAMES & ATHLETICS

Athletics - 2004

The Annual Inter House Athletic Meet was held on 31st January 2004 with Dr Pararasan Arulanantham & Mrs. Shanthi Arulanantham as Chief Guests.

In the Divisional Athletic Meet our athletes secured 18 first, 18 second & 7 third places. 12 first, 12 second & 7 third places were obtained at Zonal level. S Thevanathan in the under 17 age group was placed first in Javelin, Discus & Putt shot. At the District Meet they won 6 first places, 6 second places and 7 third places.

The Primary School Athletic Meet took place on the 17th of February. Rev E J Jebaratnam & Mrs Jebaratnam were the Chief Guests. Pargiter House with 160 points emerged champions.

Cricket

The Battle of the North Centenary Encounter was played on the 18th, 19th and 20th of March. A large number of old boys from here and abroad were present. At the closing stages on the 3rd day, when St John's were in sight of victory with 26 runs to make and 14 overs to go with 6 wickets in hand, a section of the over enthusiastic spectators invaded the field. As a result the Match could not be continued. The Principal of Jaffna Central College along with the judges and old boys, after carefully analysing the situation, arrived at a bold decision awarding the Match to St John's. We congratulate the Principal of Jaffna Central and the team for perhaps, one of the finest sporting gestures in the history of the game.

Our team reaffirmed their superiority by winning the limited over game that followed by a comfortable margin of 52 runs. In all, the first eleven played 11 matches and remained unbeaten winning 7 of them.

T C Andrew, M Mayooraan, S Krishnakumar and C Dinesh were selected to represent the Jaffna District under 19 team. Subsequently M Mayooraan was selected to represent the North East Provincial Team.

Under 16 and under 14

Both teams participated in the tournaments organized by the Sri Lanka Schools Cricket Association and the Jaffna District Schools Association. The under 16 lost in the semi finals.

Soccer 2003

In August last year our first eleven team participated in a Peace Soccer tournament organized by St Peter's College Colombo. During the season they did not fair well, unable to win a single match. The second eleven recorded just one win, and the third eleven could not register a single victory.

Basket Ball

The under 19 team participated in a tournament organized for schools by Hatton National Bank. They had to be satisfied with the runner-up spot.

Volleyball

The under 15 team was placed 3rd at Zonal level in tournament organized by the Department of Education.

Hockey

The interest shown by schools as well as clubs in playing this game has been on the decline. Our first eleven played two matches, won one and lost the other.

Mini Tennis

Five of our students represented the Jaffna District team for an all island tournament. The Jaffna team emerged all island champions beating Western Province in the finals.

INDOOR GAMES

Badminton

The Badminton team became runners-up in a tournament organized by the Department of Education.

Chess

The under 19 team became runners-up at Provincial level in a Departmental tournament.

Table Tennis

In this game too our team secured the runner-up position.

Scrabble

The Sri Lanka Scrabble Association headed by Dr Amarasinghe conducted a workshop at St John's on the 5th of September 2003 to popularize this game in Jaffna. The response was good and several schools participated.

THE COLLEGE HOSTEL

The Hostel continues to function efficiently under the care of the two Vice Principals. The Hostel wardens Mr A H Gnanarajan and Mr A Henry are handling the job with care and concern. Mr A Augustine is in charge of catering, and Mr M Apputhurai who has served the kitchen for more than 25 years takes care of their meals.

CLUBS AND SOCIETIES

There are various clubs and societies functioning at different levels in the school to train students in leadership, discipline and foster fraternity. Apart from this they learn the dignity of labour through shramadanas in the school and projects at community level.

The Interact Club participated in a Youth Exchange Programme in Colombo from the 15th to 18th of January 2004. The other schools that participated were Isipathana, Ananda and Methodist College.

The Hatton National Bank Students Savings Unit at school continues to function efficiently. B Shanthakumar was adjudged best student manager for 2003 and Mr T Nanthakumar won the award for the best teacher in charge.

The Scout Troop was placed first in the District collecting the highest amount in chip-a-job organized by the District Scouts Association last year.

The Prefects' Guild has proved itself a valuable asset in maintaining general discipline at school. They have always risen to the occasion during functions and other activities.

The Agricultural Science Club won the first place at an inter-school competition in singing to mark the Global Environmental Day. The club continues to do a good job of work through its vice patron Mr P M Karunainayagam in maintaining the school garden and other agricultural projects.

The Students' Christian Movement continues to organize the indoor games competitions enabling more student participation in sports and games.

The Astronomic Club, Catholic Union, Chess Club, Commerce Union, Computer Club, Cub Pack, English Union, Inthu Manram, Leo Club, Photographic Club, Science Union and the Tamil Manram organized various programmes for the benefit of the students.

The College Magazine would carry a detailed report of the respective clubs and societies on their activities and programmes for the year.

SCHOOL FUNCTIONS AT A GLANCE

2003

19th September the Science Day was held. Dr & Mrs K Thabotharan from the University of Jaffna were the Chief Guests.

Saraswathy Pooja was conducted on the 4th of October. Mr T Sivathadchanamoorthy was the chief speaker.

The Middle School Day took place on the 18th of October with a drill display and cultural programmes.

The Primary School Parents' Day & Prize Giving took place on the 25th of October. Mr K Ganeshalingam, Vice Principal emeritus and Mrs Ganeshalingam were the Chief Guests.

On the 10th of November St John's - Chundikuli Combined Carol service took place in the church

The Primary School Christmas Party was celebrated on the 24th of November. The children were presented with gifts and served with cakes and sweets.

2004

The Agricultural Science Club organized a felicitation programme to recognize its achievements on the 19th February.

The Scouts organized the Baden Powell Day on the 23rd of February with the District Commissioner Mr S Ehambaranathan as Chief Guest.

The Installation Ceremony of St John Ambulance was held on 8th of March.

St John's and Chundikuli combined together to perform an Easter Bajanai programme on the 11th of April.

The Induction Ceremony of Interact Club was held on the 23rd of April with the President of the Rotary Club Rtn K Surendran as Chief Guest Mr Sudar Mahendran was invited as Guest of Honour.

Mr A Rajagobal, retired Assistant Director of Education was the Chief Guest for the Tamil Day programme conducted on the 28th of April.

The College Day was celebrated on the 30th of April. A half a day programme was drawn up commencing with laying of floral wreaths at the graves of late principals. This was followed by a fancy dress parade by the Primary School children; road race for the Middle and Upper School children; volleyball match - staff vs. prefects and a cricket match among the staff. The day ended with an ice cream feed for the whole school.

PRINCIPAL'S COMMENTS

English and English Medium

Education the very bedrock of a cultured society should endeavour to absorb all the essential norms in life. Any education without the knowledge of English is, but a shadow and a mockery. To us, in Sri Lanka any effort to impart education without English would be an utter flop. It is no secret how English came to be neglected in our schools. At one time, there was a cry for bringing our national languages to the fore at the expense of relegating this Universal Language to the backwoods. This,

over the years created a blackboard jungle in our schools.

It is against this backdrop, we now see a speck of bright light in the horizon to revive the learning of English in switching over to the English medium in the post primary classes from grade 6. Though this is a belated dawn of wisdom on the part of the state, the students should grab this wonderful opportunity.

Learning this Global Language not only gives the benefit of another medium, but also broadens our vision and outlook by exposing ourselves to a world culture that eventually leads to the making of enlightened personalities. Today all over the world this language has become a master key to meet the challenges of ever widening opportunities, paving the way for a generation of students who became linguistically diluted, intellectually stunted and aesthetically barren.

As such we at St John's are all out to meet this challenge and doing our best to stream-line English language teaching programmes, despite the paucity of teachers in English and of English. This, we are determined to do for the educational advancement of our students.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I wish to extend my sincere thanks to our former Manager Ven J Sarvananthan for his valuable advice and guidance during his tenure of office.

Mr N Raviraj, an old boy and M.P. for Jaffna District, donated a set of furniture for a class room in the Primary School. We wish to thank him for his kind thoughts of his Alma Mater.

I wish to thank Mrs Shanthi Arulanantham for conducting a workshop for teachers in spoken English. It was of immense help to our teachers to enhance their ability.

The Old Boys' Association in Sydney and the Johnians 83 from the U.K. contributed a sum of money towards staff welfare to commemorate the Centenary of the OBA. I wish to also place on record my sincere gratitude to Old Boys' Associations in Jaffna, South Ceylon, U.K., Canada, Australia, The United States, Norway and New Zealand for their presence and participation in the Centenary Celebrations. Their care and concern towards their Alma Mater is very much appreciated. We earnestly hope that it will continue.

The internal auditor of the Christian Children's Fund of Canada Mr John Rajesh from Canada and the Field Director Mr Camilus Mendis from Colombo visited the school on the 22nd of June. A meeting of the project partners was also arranged at St John's on the 24th. We wish to thank them for their visit and also the CCFC for helping the school on its educational activities to a great extent.

The Janashakthi Insurance Company Ltd. has come forward to sponsor the Big Match for the next five years. We would like to thank them for the magnanimous sporting gesture, and in particular the Managing Director Mr C T A Schaffter who initiated this scheme.

Singer Sri Lanka, which is very much involved in promoting cricket in this country, has agreed to sponsor the Central – St John's Limited over game. We sincerely thank them.

The Old Boys' Association Jaffna felicitated me on my 60th birthday and presented a gold medal as a token of appreciation. The Teachers' Day was also organized by them on the 6th of October. On behalf of the school I wish to extend my sincere gratitude for the gesture.

My sincere thanks are due to the entire members of the staff for their fullest co-operation at all times on school matters. They too felicitated me to mark the 60th Birthday and presented a gold medal.

I wish to thank the two Bishops and members of the Governing Body for their valuable support and

guidance; the Director of Education and his staff for helping on school matters; old boys, parents and well-wishers; the donors of prize funds and endowments for their support in abundance.

Finally the invisible hand of the God Almighty that continues to guide and uphold the ideals of the pioneers of this institution.

Thank You

S Thanapalan

Principal