

# The Johnian

## St John's College Jaffna Celebrating 178 years of Educational Excellence

### Editorial

Fifty- nine years on, memories of my school days – of growing up before moving on have stayed and come flashing by.....and may have to be recounted someday. During my younger years I recall the most exciting time I had at school, a perfect time, completely fascinated with school life, inventing , reinventing and always improvising.

Whether we remained steadfast on our scholarly path or whether we stray from it into a chaotic wilderness depended entirely on the effects of our learning experience and the schools we attended. The leading school I attended – St John's College Jaffna and teachers who taught me have had the greatest influence and left an indelible mark in my life. These are what I value and cherish in my life next to my parents.

My teachers and schoolmates at St John's have become lifetime friends, a source of encouragement, a reliable helper, a confidante, a trusted companion. Talking of Friendships it reminds me of what Ananda - a disciple told Lord Buddha that he thought having good friends on the path was half of the path itself. Lord Buddha exclaimed, "Don't say such a thing, Ananda! Friendships like these are the entire path ".....

Winston Manokaran

**Editor**

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*"Decked with shady palms and trees,  
Fringed with rich mahoganies,  
There beneath a glowing sky,  
St John's uprears her crest on high."*



### Coming Events

A six a side Cricket Carnival featuring 16 teams representing Cricket playing schools in Sri Lanka having an Old Boys Association in Melbourne. St John's will be represented. To be held on 28 January 2002 at Sydney Pargeter Ovals (Melway Ref: 91B2 – entry through Power Road).

### The Tree In The Winter

My father seems so strong.  
Not big or huge.  
Just stable and strong.

He seems to be anchored  
His roots run deep.  
Drawing no attention to himself.

He is like a tree in the winter  
Often overlooked  
Standing strong  
Quietly anchored  
Always silent

Yet deeply communicating  
There is no uncertainty  
Really no reason to notice.  
Unless you are observant of reality.

If you are looking for color and drama  
The tree in the winter is not even seen.  
How unfortunate  
It contributes so much to go unnoticed.  
I'm glad I took the time to see the tree,  
so much like my father.

### Some Random Thoughts.....

Laughter is the brush that  
sweeps away the cobwebs of  
the heart.

Beauty is everywhere. When  
was the last time you noticed?  
~~unknown

Love does not make the world  
go round. Love is what makes  
the ride worthwhile.  
~~Franklin P. Jones

As you go through your day  
know God is with you...Tonight  
sleep in peace as God is awake.  
~~unknown

# Ninaivil Nirainthavai

by

Preman Rajadurai

I am lying down at home in Melbourne Australia and letting my mind walk through the past, my happy days at St Johns College Jaffna. The following scenes flash through my mental screen. These are random thoughts and no specific sequence is considered.

## Beginning of a School Week

Its Monday morning and another school week begins, it is 8.15 a.m. and Mr K Pooranampillai our enigmatic principal begins his long walk from the principal's bungalow to the office. The students on his path would have to greet him and also have to make sure whether during the weekend we have on our best behavior ie what is expected of a Johnian. The sunny morning and the clean air whistles through the mahoganies and we the students gather in the majestic Robert Williams hall for the morning assembly. The bright sun gleams through the ancient windows of Robert Williams Hall. The Principal begins the assembly with a message (in typical English Grammar school style) which stimulates our young minds to achieve higher goals in life. I can still vividly remember the Watergate Scandal, which shook the American presidency and how Mr Pooranampilai related it to us. He subsequently directed us to read magazines like the Newsweek, Times and made sure there were enough copies in the library. The current affairs class which Mr K Pooranampilai started instilled in me a life long interest in politics /Economics/Law.

## A day in the Handy Memorial Library

Well its another happy afternoon at St Johns College and our Pure Maths teacher Mr K Ganeshalingam is absent and we have been asked to go to the library for the period. Lo and behold we have first contact with our new librarian Miss AH. At the sight of the Advanced level boys the new librarian seems to shudder, but her determination to keep her boys under control is evident in her face. My dear friend JM is equally determined to have a laugh and stir up the new librarian. I pre warned him of the risks involved as Mr KP would not tolerate any signs of disturbance in the library. But JM would not have anything of it, he walks unto the young librarian and demands that he is planning to do research in electricity and he want all the books relating to the subject, much to the amusement of all us. The librarian faithfully brings about five books and gives it to JM. His reply was "well this is not sufficient" and instructs the librarian to request the principal to stock more books so that he can do his research. Well ! Well! I thought the matter has been settled, but after a few minutes, the principal request JM to see him in his office. On JM's return to the library I noticed, his face was red with pain, when I asked him as to what had happened he replied that MR KP promised to get more for books for his research. However this story didn't convince me, as a matter a casual interest I asked Miss SS who was the principal's secretary as to what had happened, to my horror I found that my friend had been caned by him for six times and the library was made out of bounds for two weeks. Poor he could not complete his research, but this very same enterprising young lad rose to become a captain in the Merchant Navy and commanded many a large freight liner.

## Friday of a Cricket Season St Johns vs St Patricks

The morning is filled with excitement and we are in the Physics class of Mr T Thavaraslingam. Teaching of physics becomes secondary and everything from the toss, selection of the team are the issues of the day. I happened to be the opening batsman along with Balajothy during that season. A sense of anxiety and frustration grips me - will be in the team or will I be dropped?? Mr Thavrasalingam looks at me and realizes my fear and tells me "payapadathey you are my choice". Players are allowed to go home by 1.30 pm and we are expected to be back by 2 .30 pm and the team is announced by Mr S K Mahalingam at 2.45 PM. I could not believe it - yes I am in the team and

opening with CS Mills and Balajothy is going down the order as playing as an all rounder. SJC wins the toss and Thevapalan our captain decides to bat. OH WHAT A FEELING as I walk out with CS Mills to the middle, the joy of opening for SJC floods my mind and the applause still reverberates in my ears. A wonderful sunny afternoon in Jaffna and the SJC ground is filled with appreciative spectators from all walks of life. The old park road wall is a vantage point for spectators from bicycles and of course for Chundikuli girls as they finish school walk past at 3.45 PM.

## **A Saturday afternoon at the Y .M.C.A**

Chundikuli drifts into a lazy Saturday afternoon after a busy week most of the Jaffna folks are looking forward to the weekend snooze. But definitely not for the YOUNG AND THE RESTLESS in the suburb of Chundikuli. The cars and buses to and from Kachcheri bus stand are few and far between. And we gather at the YMCA table tennis room, fortunately this room is strategically located since while playing Table Tennis you can watch the movement of people outside. We have a good game of Table Tennis and any scoring issues are sorted by Brodie Master and his word is final. A nice cup tea at the YMCA canteen refreshes us for another round of table tennis. In case the table tennis bores us just come and stand at the porch of the YMCA. I assure you it is far better than walking down Chapel street in Melbourne. If there is a overflow of young men at the YMCA, well Thurairajah's cycle Kadai is there. As I walk in to utter excitement I see some of my senior friends trying out cigarette smoking, after all smoking was the done thing in those happy days in Chundikuli. We never thought of Cholesterol, Nicotine or heart attacks

## **Our College Crest**

**The Eternal God, Creation's Prima Causa  
the Big Bang that set the galaxies in motion  
and decreed, "Let there be light" – wisdom  
for Homo Sapiens to research, discern, share  
the latent laws of Nature and of life;  
the Light that lights humanity – revealing  
mysteries through philosophy, religion,  
and the sciences:- Moses and Manu\*,  
Socrates and Plato, Galileo with his  
Helio-centric theory, Newton the laws  
of motion, Darwin, the evolution of life,  
Faraday, Raman, Einstein, many more:  
all, inspired by that Eternal Wisdom,  
revealing her mysteries to the humble.  
"Lux in tenebris lucet"@, on the College Crest  
proclaims the power of light to conquer  
evil, with the Queen of birds – the eagle  
winging its flight to mountain heights,  
challenges Johnians past, present, future,  
strive to find the unfailing Eternal Truth,  
that in the school's hallowed precincts great,  
has been taught for ages by revered Gurus,  
whose total dedication to teach and share  
their wisdom with countless pupils dear,  
year in, year out, enlightening tender minds  
with Jnanam# great ,subtle, we remember.  
May the College with its Eagle Crest  
nursed by sturdy Mahoganies  
continue long, to foster noble alumni,  
faithful to what is just, right and true.**

– Rev A J C Selvaratnam

\* wise man @The light shines in darkness # wisdom

## Some Comments on "The Johnian Dream Team of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century"

by  
SMV Tissainayagam

### Bala Rajadurai

First of all let me offer my sincere congratulations to Mr SMV Tissainayagam on producing a near – perfect team from a pool of nearly 600 players (over 50 years). The quality of the article is a clear indication of his dedication to his alma mater in following the Johnian Cricket so closely to be able to produce a team, which I am convinced cannot be criticised by many. I feel that SMVT could do a better job than many professional cricket selectors and is probably good enough to serve on any international cricket team selection panel.

Although I could not boast more than 10 years of watching Johnian Cricket in action (includes 2 years of playing), it so happens to be that these 10 years are in the sixties, a period when the author's involvement was minimal as acknowledged by him in his article. When I started to write down my views on the Dream Team, I thought that I should be able to plug in the holes, if any, in the Author's Dream Team. I now acknowledge that the author's eleven cannot be challenged easily. However, in order to have a balanced team I opted to recommend **a tour party of fourteen players.**

The author suggested that the **twelfth man** should be N Naveenan (1971-1972). Although I am aware of the capabilities of Naveenan, whom I also had opportunity of coaching in the 2<sup>nd</sup> eleven team I am of the opinion that T Vipulanantha Moorthy (1964 – 1968) would have been a better choice. Vipul, as he was known won the best fielder's prize in all of the Big Matches he played ( 5 years in succession) and was also awarded the Daily Mirror's Best School Boy Fielder in the North. He was an excellent outfielder, a leopard in covers and a brilliant close in field. He was also a soccer player, vice captain of Jaffna Schools Hockey Team and a Public Schools Coloursman in athletics excelling in the sprints and jumps.

Having suggested a squad of fourteen players, a reserve wicket keeper must be included. I would place SM Mootatamby (1964 – 1968) next to V Sivananthan and far ahead of RCS Cooke or T Thevapalan. Mootatamby was a punishing batsman, who could bat higher up in the order and like Vipulanantha Moorthy also played soccer, basketball and represented the college in athletics at public schools level. Mootatamby later played for the Army but could not replace Dr HIK Fernando in the Sara Trophy Team, who was then playing for Ceylon.

Thirteen of the positions have been filled and there is a slot for one more to be included into the squad. I would probably fill this position with an off spinner. Both AI Somanader (right arm) and M Theivendra (left arm orthodox) are leg spinners and therefore an off spinner is justifiable in the squad. When I think of off spinners only two names come to my mind. Out of DJN Selvadurai, who is more of an off cutter and a bit fastish. and Jeya Vyravipillai, a genuine off spinner, I would prefer the latter. Jeya Vyravipillai (1963 – 1966) , a first year coloursman was a very talented all rounder. He excelled against a school boy cricket team from Australia led by Graham Yallop in

1963 and an Indian team led by Eknath Solkar. Vyravipillai was also one of the best short - leg fielders produced by St Johns in the 60's.

Therefore I will list my squad of fourteen to form the Dream Team as:  
(In Batting Order}

C Sooriyakumar  
T Kadirgamar  
D Canaganayagam  
RR Scott  
MBJ Tissainayagam  
M Theivendra  
EG Thevanayagam  
SK Mahalingam  
V Sivananthan  
SS Shanmugarajah  
AI Somanader

T Vipulanantha Moorthy (12<sup>th</sup> Man)  
SM Mootatamby  
J Vyravipillai

It is noteworthy that two of the above fourteen, Theivendra and Sooriyakumar captained Peradeniya University and Tamil Union in the Sara Trophy Cricket Tournaments. Two other Johnianas M Surendra (Peradeniya University) and Rajan Selvanayagam (BRC) also captained at this level of cricket but could not be squeezed into this Dream Team.

C Balakrishnan, who is the only Johnian to have represented Sri Lanka at test level, also fails to get into this squad of 14. Bala was a little unfortunate, in that the Satyagraha Movement, which cancelled the cricket season that year in the Northern Province marred his best year at school. However, C Bala's record in the University and for Bloomfield Cricket Club cannot be surpassed by any Johnian batsman and it wasn't surprising that he was picked to play for Sri Lanka against Australia and he kept the Johnian Flag Flying by responding with a half century in that match.

Please direct comments to the Editor

S Thanapalan Principal St John's College, Jaffna

My dear Tissi,

Thank you for the letter and the article "Johnian Dream Team of the 20th Century". It would certainly find a place in the 2001 edition of the college magazine.

When the article came to hand, though I was tempted to skip the pages first and who would be your captain, a some how I refrained from doing so and went through line by line. Believe it or not my choice too was M.B.J.Tissi as captain.

A difficult task to select an XI spanning over 96 years. The total number of players if they played for one year but considering less 500 besides the year it may be not consider.

A few who were knocking on the door but there have been others left out as well. The 99 by Vasanthan against Royal in 1980 was a gem of an innings after a shaky start. Though Naveenan was a class fielder, T.V. Theivendra should be T, his father is Theivendra.

I have myself not seen T.Kadirgamar, A.Canaganayagam, R.R.Scott and E.G.Th Theivendra should be T, his father is Theivendra. With your permission, may I make these changes.

In addition to the composition of the team, I agree with your XI for which you have given good reasons for their inclusion. Though I prefer Paramalingam for Theivendra. Three front line fast bowlers like in Australia and one spinner like Theivendra.

Names you have mentioned who have not been included in the XI, I am sure there are others who have been included. But, we can only choose an XI if its unlucky to be left out an XI.

I would like to know that last year and this year the big match was given full coverage for commentaries by the S.L.B.C. Islandwide. I filled English spot and again was offered for international coverage like earlier, but I declined due to school commitments.

Albourne O.B.A. is active again. The 2000 edition of the magazine should be released shortly and I shall send you one.

With best wishes and regards.

and line out your XI. I have refrained from doing so and went through line by line. Believe it or not my choice too was M.B.J.Tissi as captain.

It is indeed a very difficult task to select an XI spanning over 96 years. The total number of players if they played for one year but considering less 500 besides the year it may be not consider.

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You may be interested to know that last year and this year the big match was given full coverage for commentaries by the S.L.B.C. Islandwide. I filled English spot and again was offered for international coverage like earlier, but I declined due to school commitments.

I am glad that the Melbourne O.B.A. is active again. The 2000 edition of the magazine should be released shortly and I shall send you one.

With best wishes and

Yours sincerely,

*S Thanapalan*

PRINCIPAL.

/cdp.

S. THANAPALAN

Principal

St. John's College,

Jaffna,

Sri Lanka.

## Andrew Manokaran

I am a bit shocked that your team of the century did not have players that were from the 70's, 80's, 90's and even current years. I am sure you would want to rethink your team of the century..... There were a lot of great players, some of them even went onto train with the Sri Lankan team. When we were in boarding one name comes to mind..... Thirukumar son of the then vice principal. He was a great bowler. This shows that whoever selected this team is still living in the dark ages !!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

## No Coward Soul Is Mine

No coward soul is mine,  
No trembler in the world's storm-troubled sphere:  
I see Heaven's glories shine,  
And faith shines equal, arming me from fear.

O God within my breast,  
Almighty, ever-present Deity!  
Life-that in me has rest,  
As I-undying Life-have Power in Thee!

Vain are the thousand creeds  
That move men's hearts: unutterably vain;  
Worthless as withered weeds,  
Or idlest froth amid the boundless main,

To waken doubt in one  
Holding so fast by thine infinity;  
So surely anchored on  
The steadfast rock of immortality.

With wide-embracing love  
Thy spirit animates eternal years,  
Pervades and broods above,  
Changes, sustains, dissolves, creates, and rears.

Though earth and man were gone,  
And suns and universes ceased to be,  
And Thou wert left alone,  
Every existence would exist in Thee.

There is not room for Death,  
Nor atom that his might could render void:  
Thou-Thou art Being and Breath,  
And what Thou art may never be destroyed.

- **Emily Bronte** (This is the last poem she wrote)

APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP----->

OBA OF ST JOHN'S COLLEGE, JAFFNA  
(Incorporated in Victoria)

PERSONAL DETAILS

Name .....

Address .....

City ..... Code .....

Phone ..... Phone (Bus) .....

(Self - Old Student / Staff at College - Please specify periods)

(Spouse - Old Student / Staff at College - Please specify periods)

(Children - Old Students / Staff at College - Please specify periods)

Number -----

Paid Through .....

Subscription Details

Annual Fee \$15 per Year  
Life Member \$ 150  
Students, Pensioners \$5 per Year

Due on 1st January of each year.

Please forward cheque made payable to  
"OBA St John's College"

to

Tuline Ratnam  
64 Blackburn Road  
Doncaster East Vic 3109  
Australia  
T.No 9842 6896  
Email: t.ratnam@petrogas.com.au

I agree, if admitted as a member of the Old Boys  
Association St John's College, Jaffna to confirm to  
the Charter and by-laws of the Association.

-----  
(Signature)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Date)