

# HARTLEY COLLEGE



# MISCELLANY

A Publication of Past Pupils' Association—NSW  
2006

**FIAT LUX : LET THERE BE LIGHT**

## COLLEGE SONG

Hartley, thy sons are we,  
To thine honour, always wed,  
Nurtured, taught by thee,  
E'er thy way of life we tread.  
Lit at thy hearth our flames burn bright  
Always this light we shed,  
Service to our nation true and right,  
Thy portals ever lend.

Hartley for ever, that's o ur cry,  
Our motto never let it die,  
Hartley for ever, our motto ever let there be light,

Rise up all Hartleyites  
Our motto she doth call.  
Scholars and sportsmen vie,  
Schooled in her noble halls  
Follow our mentors, Proved and tried,  
They who our ideals guide.  
Hold fast your inner light of faith,  
That, over storms shall tide.

## கல்லூரி கீதம்

ஹாட்லி நின் மக்கள் நாம்  
நின் கீர்த்திக்கே என்றும்  
வளர்ந்து கற்ற நாம்-என்றும்  
நின் வழி நிற்போம்

நின் ஜோதியால் எம் ஒளியே  
எங்கும் விசிடுவோம்  
நாட்டுக்குச்சேவை மெய்-நேர்மை  
நின் வாசல் ஈயுமே

ஹாட்லி என்றுமே எம் சுலோகம்  
எம் இலக்கென்றும் அழியா  
ஹாட்லி என்றுமே அது எம் சுலோகம்  
ஒளி விசாடும்

ஹாட்லியீர் எழுமின்  
எம்மாதா அழைக்கின்றார்  
அவர் பீடம் கற்றோரே  
விற்பன்னர் வீரர் தாம்

நீர்வர் வழிநின்று  
அவர் லட்சியம் கொண்டு  
உம் வீர் உறுதி கொள்ளுவீர்  
எப்பயலும் போகும்

ஹாட்லி என்றுமே எம் சுலோகம்  
எம் இலக்கென்றும் அழியா  
ஹாட்லி என்றுமே அது எம் சுலோகம்  
ஒளி விசாடும்!!



## **Beginning of a New Era From the Heart of the Editor**

I am delighted to present our magazine: “**Miscellany**” on behalf of the Executive Committee of the Hartley College Past Pupils’ Association (HCPPA) based in Sydney. One of the great missions of the Miscellany is to cultivate an interest in literary works among Hartleyites and their extended family members. Our beloved College is one of the schools in Sri Lanka (Ceylon) that has been publishing its own magazine: **Miscellany** since 1931. This great tradition has nurtured persons like me to develop a keen interest in creative thinking and writing. It is still fresh in my mind as a 13-year-old boy when I wrote my first article: *Thamil Oru Vana Vilhakku* (Tamil is a Light-house) for publication in the Miscellany with great enthusiasm. At that time I was a pupil in Grade 8B and I could vividly remember handing over the article to Mr. Kanapathpillai Master who was the Editor for Tamil section of the Miscellany.

I would like to express my sincere gratitude to the Hon. Philip Ruddock-the Attorney General of the Commonwealth of Australia for sparing his valuable time in sharing his thoughts on the Australian Values and Norms. We are really privileged to publish his illuminating article in our magazine. Today we, Hartleyites are proud to be part of this great Australian society. I wish to pay tribute to my teacher and friend Prof S Sivasegaram for writing an intellectually stimulating article on the deepening crisis in education in our place of birth. Further, I have managed to source articles from some of the distinguished Hartleyites around the world, viz, Prof A Vellupillai, Dr David Gunaratnam, Mr P Balasingam, Mr Shan Shanmuganathan, Prof M Sivapalan, Dr M Sreetharan, Dr Vasikaran Samuel, Dr S T Seelan, and Dr S Sabesan.

I would like to convey our appreciation to my classmate and the present Principal, Mr N Theivendrarajah for his comprehensive message on the current status of our Alma Mater. It is heartening to receive and publish interesting contributions from current pupils of our college in this magazine. The topics they have chosen to write are most appropriate to the current situation at Hartley College. I am pleased to note the contributions made by offsprings of Hartleyites, Vythehi, Dharshika and Lucia. I personally believe it is the beginning of a new era in the annual publication of HCPPA.

Special thanks are due to our valued advertisers and sponsors who have provided generous financial support to make this publication a reality. The Executive Committee Members of HCPPA-NSW Branch have always inspired me to make my Editorial task an enjoyable one. Our Vice Patron, Mr K Kaneshalingam has always been a source of strength to me in performing my task as the Editor. On behalf of the executive Committee of HCPPA-NSW Branch I would like to say “thank you” to SAI Global for printing this magazine. I express my sincere gratitude to President Charles Somasundram and Vice Patron P Elango for their support and encouragement during the preparation of this magazine.

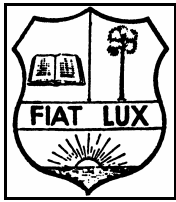
Hartley College has been one of the finest and prestigious learning institutions in Sri Lanka. It is always considered equivalent to a ‘grammar school’ in the UK, or a ‘selective school’ in Australia. The present High Security Zone (HSZ) set up by the Sri Lankan Army in and around our college is an impediment for any meaningful interactive learning process to take place in the school. We hope that the government would remove this HSZ sooner than later to provide a conducive environment for teachers to impart knowledge to pupils free of any hindrance. It is pertinent to recall the first Thirukural (a world renowned classic piece of Tamil Literature written more than 2000 years ago) here when we think about what Hartley College has done for us:

A, as its first letter, every speech maintains;  
The “Primary Deity” is the first thought in all the world’s domains

Hartley College is a beacon of light that dispels darkness of ignorance, selfishness and avarice

Yours Sincerely,

Kidnapillai Selvarajah (Selva)  
53, Bellamy St, Pennant Hills, NSW2120  
Email: KSelvarajah@hutchison.com.au



15<sup>th</sup> July 2006

## Message from the Principal of Hartley College

It is a great pleasure sending this message to your souvenir. I am very glad to see that HCPPA-NSW Branch is always in close contact with the college. We are very proud to say that Hartley College is continuing to maintain its glorious tradition. The cooperation I get from the members of the tutorial staff and the non-academic staff gives me encouragement to uplift the standard of the College to the expectation of all concerned. They are always ready to work for the benefit of the College. At the same time the discipline and the administration has improved immensely. Special mention must be made of Mr.M.Rajaskanthan, Deputy Principal, for his cooperation and advice in carrying out my duties and running the College without any interruption.

Admission of students to Hartley College is based on a selective examination and new pupils are advised to maintain the tradition of the College and to obey the rules and regulations. As far as the examination results are concerned especially in G.C.E A/L Examination, a very good performance has been shown in Mathematics. In the G.C.E A/L Examination 2005 out of 123 students who sat 64 were selected for admission to various Universities. This is a good performance and we are all proud of it.

Sports and games have improved tremendously with the help of all branches of HCPPA. The help they give physically and financially to improve the sports and games are encouraging and with that help we are moving forward. In the last Annual Athletic Meet, the students have shown their talents well and were praised by all. Coaches have been appointed for Soccer, Cricket and Volleyball to train these teams and improve the performance of our school teams in tournaments. With the introduction of Chess in our school, the students keenly participated in the competition including at national level and we found their ability is no less than other schools. To improve and develop chess, we need further assistance. The performances of the PT Squad and Athletics have improved and the teachers in-charge take much interest and do equally as other schools. By participating at the District and Provincial level, they have shown their talents by winning many trophies for our school.

The English medium classes are being conducted from Grade 06 to 09. To improve the standard of English, we have started an English Activity Room. It is functioning well and English teachers take great interest in coaching the students to improve the proficiency in the language. I found that students are very keen to learn English. The Hartley Trust is helping us in various ways. They inquire as to the needs of the College and fulfil them as early as possible. It's Chairman, Mr. Shan Shanmuganathan is very much interested in the development of his Alma Mater and often talk to us to ascertain the needs of the College. Hartley Trust has given nearly Rs 110,000 to purchase furniture and Microscope to refurbish Biology Lab recently. In addition to this, the HCPPA-Colombo Branch and other PPAs around the world including the NSW Branch keep in touch with us and are ready to help with progress of the school.

In an assembly held at the college to bid farewell to the Principal, Mr.V.Pathmanathan and the deputy Principal, Mr.N.Gunaseelan on their retirement from service, the President of the Colombo HCPPA, Mr.S.Balachandran honoured them each, by draping golden shawl (cloak) around their shoulders according to our customs. Three students who got three "A"s in the G.C.E A/L Examination 2005 were awarded gold medals by HCPPA-Colombo. We always appreciate Mr. Mathivanan for his valuable help to the College through HCPPA, Colombo Branch. The HCPPA (Parent body) meets regularly and I attend these meetings to brief them on the needs of the school.

Geometry Competition for students from grade 09-11 has commenced to encourage pupils to do well in Geometry and thereby improve overall skills in Mathematics. Prizes will be awarded to students, by Mr M. Thiruneelakandan, Secretary-Colombo HCPPA. We have developed the library and more books are being added to the library. Students are keen to use the library when they are free. I have personally observed keen interest in using the library by our students.

We have already started a Computer-Learning Centre and students from grade 06 to G.C.E A/L use this Centre during their computer period. I would like to say special thanks to HCPPA-NSW Branch for donating computers and installing them. This Computer Centre is named in memory of Mr. P. Venugopal, the late Principal of the College. The Tsunami had caused extensive damage to the College, which is situated very close to the sea. The worst affected was the Biology Lab. The total value of the damage was estimated to be around Rs 1,778, 200. It has been estimated that 129 students who were affected by the Tsunami were given relief by various NGOs.

A Field Study Centre was opened recently in the college. This is the only centre in the Jaffna peninsula. The Purpose of the centre is to encourage students in the field of Science. Schools that don't have laboratory facilities can also use this facility. The education Department is responsible for the operation and maintenance of this centre. The teacher in charge of this centre is Mr.S.Kokularajan, a member of our tutorial staff. I am proud to say that Hartleyites, when they leave school and seek employment in Government Departments or Private Sector, shine wherever they are. If we happen to go to any of these places, we are sure that at least one Hartleyite will be working there and if he knows that we are from Hartley College, he is ready to help us and make our work a smooth process. We are always proud of this unique Hartley phenomena.

It is my wish that "FIAT LUX" enlightens us all on the need of the hour and spur us to work for peace and harmony.

N Theivendrarajah



**The Hon. Philip Ruddock MP**  
**Federal Member for Berowra**



**The Australian Values and Norms**  
**Hon. Philip Ruddock MP**  
**The Attorney –General,**  
**The Commonwealth of Australia**

It is a great privilege for me to be invited to share my thoughts on the Australian Values and Norms, for the annual publication of the Hartley College Past Pupils Association (HCPPA) based in Sydney. I believe HCPPA is celebrating 15 years of dedicated services to Hartley College, an educational institution based in the Northern part of Sri Lanka. I consider this as an important milestone in the history of HCPPA and I am pleased to write this article.

Australia is an immigrant nation. Today this is the most defining characteristic of who we are in the world. During the past 50 years in particular, immigration has been fundamental to the building of modern Australia and it is very much part of the fabric of our nation. We boast countless examples of individuals from various ethnic groups, who have made Australia as their home and contributed so much to the economic and social prosperity of our nation. Australians have prided themselves on their successful immigration policy and there is always a sense of national pride with new citizens each year having been added to our rich heritage of cultural diversity on a daily basis.

The Australian values and norms have gone through revolutionary changes from the beginning of our nation. Today Australia is one of the most ethnically diverse societies in the world. From its ancient humble indigenous origins to the British colonisation followed by waves of European and then international migration in the 20th century, our nation has become a home for people from around the world. We believe there are now more than 200 different languages being spoken in homes across Australia. Each new wave of migration has had a profound impact on the Australian way of life.

As a truly multicultural nation, we recognise that everyone has the right to identify with a cultural identity, whilst at the same time bracing our Australian values. We live under a democratic legislature and obey the laws it makes. In doing so, the rights and liberties of all Australians are protected. We all know that cultural diversity is one of the greatest benefits of immigration to Australia and we consider cultural diversity as our national resource.

We have a government that is always accountable to public scrutiny and changes peacefully through secret ballots. We are an open society where inheritance and heredity do not govern a person's economic opportunity. Hard work brings economic prosperity to individual Australians. We have a tolerant population, able to accommodate change and accept difference. An individual is free to write, to think, to worship and to get involved in any entrepreneurial activity as long as they do not impinge on others and it is within the law.

Australia is renowned as a sporting nation in the world and we cherish the sprit of high level of participation from our athletes. The participation of community sporting activities by Australians of all ages is an integral part of our way of life and national identity. Our sports men and women are confident people and they always strive for the success of our nation.

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We are a secular State and as such, it protects the freedom of all religions for worship. The components of a fair go and strong sense of justice are always associated with our core values. The foundation of our economic and social prosperity has been built on these core values and norms.

I take this opportunity to express my sincere thanks to the Executive Committee of the HCPPA in particular the Editor-Selva of the Miscellany taking an interest for me to write an article on this timely topic.

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*Editor's Note: On behalf of the Executive Committee, I would like to say "thank you" to the Hon. Philip Ruddock MP for sparing his valuable time to write this article. The Hon. Philip Ruddock became a member of the first Howard Government in 1996 when he was appointed Minister for Immigration and Multicultural Affairs. His portfolio expanded to include Reconciliation and Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Affairs in 2001. In 2003, he became the Commonwealth Attorney General. Born in Canberra in 1943, he took Arts and Law Degrees at the University of Sydney and worked for a number of years as a Solicitor and then a Partner with the law firm, Berne Murray & Tout before entering Australian Parliament in 1973 as the Member of House of Representative for Berowra (formerly Dundas and Parramatta). He also held a variety of Shadow-Ministerial portfolios.*

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### Past Presidents- HCPPA-NSW Branch

The Hartley College Past Pupils' Association was formed in 1991 by a group of enthusiastic past pupils of Hartley College. With the humble beginning in 1991, the Association has grown over the years. The main objective of this association is to foster and maintain fellowship amongst Hartleyites and their extended family members who are living in Australia other than Victoria. The Association has been assisting its Alma Mater to develop the school further with the help of other similar Associations around the world both financially and materially. This year, HCPPA-NSW branch is celebrating its 15 years of existence. The Executive Committee of this Association is elected at the AGM normally held in June/July of the year. As the Association is reaching a milestone of 15 years of existence serving its Alma Mater we believe it is appropriate to name the Past Presidents of this Association who have rendered yeomen services:

30 June 1992 – Mr Ponniah Elango  
 30 June 1993 – Mr Ponniah Elango  
 30 June 1994 – Mr Ponniah Elango  
 30 June 1995 – Mr Ponniah Elango  
 30 June 1996 - Mr P Arunothayam  
 30 June 1997 – Mr P Arunothayam  
 30 June 1998 – Mr V Mathivanar  
 30 June 1999 – Mr N Karunakaran

30 June 2000 – Mr M Jega Rajan  
 30 June 2001 – Dr S T Seelan  
 30 June 2002 – Mr V Sugumar  
 30 June 2003 – Mr V Sugumar  
 30 June 2004 – Mr Charles Somasundram  
 30 June 2005 – Mr Charles Somasundram  
 15 July 2006 – to be elected

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“As a dispersed person in different parts of the world, we must first fit into the societies in which we find ourselves, accepting their values and norms. Then we must preserve our cultural values, respect for elders, sanctity of the institution of marriage, and our arts of music and dance. Parents must ensure their children speak our mother tongue whilst mastering English language or any other language of the society we live”: **Late Mr K Pooranampillai-the Principal and the modern architect of Hartley College**

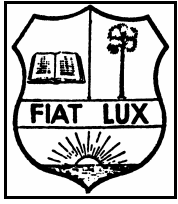
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**Freedom of Tamil Women in Society:** According to many world-renowned historians, Tamil women of the Sangam age seem to have enjoyed considerable freedom in choosing their mates, as in other matters. The women do not seem to have been rigidly secluded and participated actively in the social life of the community. This was especially evident in the rural areas where women worked in the fields and gardens along with men, equally sharing their hardships. This has made naturally enhanced their social status so that they were not looked down upon as a liability in the society as was the case with most of the other nations of the time.

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## HARTLEY COLLEGE PAST PUPILS ASSOCIATION NEW SOUTH WALES BRANCH, AUSTRALIA

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4 Harcourt Close, Castle Hill NSW 2154, AUSTRALIA  
Telephone: (02) 9894 9861 Email: [www.svl@bigpond.net.au](mailto:www.svl@bigpond.net.au)



15 July 2006

It is with pleasure I welcome our chief guest, fellow Hartleyites and other distinguished guests. This year we are celebrating the fifteenth anniversary of our branch with much delight and enthusiasm. Our editor K Selvarajah has invested his valuable time to produce a Miscellany that is reminiscent of our school publication.

I am proud to say that in this fifteenth anniversary year your branch is strong, vibrant and ready to serve our Alma Mater with renewed determination. I salute and honour the founding members who started this branch in 1991 and many other senior Hartleyites who continue to play a vital role in the branch affairs.

We have worked closely with the Trust and other global branches in developing our school. The three Vice Patrons have provided guidance in the conduct of branch affairs and helped to narrow the gap between many age groups in the NSW membership.

During the year we remitted in excess of \$6,000 to our school projects. The single project of significant proportion is the Computer Self Learning Centre. We spent \$5,300 acquiring and installing twenty computers. We are indebted to A Srikumar who performed miracles and made personal sacrifices in making this project a reality. G Thirukumran co-ordinated it from Sydney from start to fruition. I thank Srikumar and Thirukumaran for their contributions. I also thank all those members who contributed generously to this project.

We sponsored the travel expenses of our school PT Squad to travel to Colombo to participate in the national championship event. Our school team was placed fourth at the national level. We have committed to fund a further \$1,400 for staff room furniture and intercom facilities at our school. In September 2005 we shipped seventy books collected from the 2005 annual dinner function.

Once again we achieved unprecedented success in recruiting twenty-five life members during the year. I thank K Selvarajah for all the hard work in contacting potential members and inspiring other committee members on this matter.

The Benefit Show is another success story to report. We managed to raise \$1,800 for our development projects this year. I thank all the committee members who worked tirelessly selling tickets and members who supported the project.

We hail from a school with great sporting traditions. The annual cricket match between our branch and the Jaffna Hindu OBA was played in October 2005. Our team won the match once again. We have an enthusiastic sports secretary in B Kuganesan who organised a Tennis Day for Hartleyites for the first time in our fifteen-year history.

Our members have provided home cooked meals for the annual dinner function for many years. In appreciation the committee has decided to give them a break and opted to go for commercial catering arrangements this year.

I thank all the committee members for the good work throughout the year and their families for their continued support.

Signed

Charles Somasundram

President, Hartley College Past Pupils Association (NSW), Australia

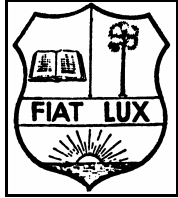
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**HARTLEY COLLEGE PAST PUPILS ASSOCIATION  
NEWSOUTHWALES BRANCH, AUSTRALIA**

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Secretary K. Paskarajothy (Paskey)  
551 Victora Road, Ermington 2115 Australia  
Tel.-02- 9 638138 0 Per-0402 2811 972, W-0419 261 375

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**SECRETARY REPORT FOR 2006**



15<sup>th</sup> July 2006.

VANAKAM

Dear Friends and Colleagues

I am delighted to present the fifth consecutive report as the Secretary of the Association. I am really proud to be part of the Executive Committee of our Association during the last 5 years and I consider this as a golden opportunity for me to serve my beloved college.

The annual Cricket match between Hartley Old boys and Jaffna Hindu Old boys was held during the long Weekend in October 2005. This time we saw a resurgent Hindu College Cricket team and they refused to surrender the game to Hartley College until the last delivery. I am happy to report that Hartley College has won the match again and retained the trophy. I would like to see this event as a mega event in the coming years.

Our association has funded the Computer Lab for the use of students at Hartley College, Point Pedro. I personally believe it would strengthen the teaching capability of IT at our college. On behalf of the Executive Committee, I would like to express our heartfelt thanks to those who have generously provided financial support to implement this project successfully.

I would like to mention one of the phenomenal progresses we have made during this year. We have enrolled 25 new life members during this financial year. We have seen a great interest in joining our association by Hartleyites living in Australia.

Our annual benefit show to raise funds for school development activities was a great success. It was well attended by Hartleyites living in Sydney with their extended family members.

I would like to express my sincere thanks to all the Committee Members and their spouses for organising fabulous meals and enjoyable Committee Meetings.

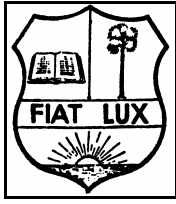
A big NANDRI to all our members of the Association for their continuous support.

Yours Sincerely,

K Paskarajothy,

Secretary-HCPPA-NSW Branch





**HARTLEY COLLEGE  
(POINT PEDRO)  
*Past Pupils' Association***

**NSW Branch, Australia**



15<sup>th</sup> July 2005

**Treasurer's Report for the Year 2005/06**

We have had a successful year in so many fronts. In the current financial year ending 30<sup>th</sup> June 2006, our accumulated funds increased to \$14,500 amidst completing various projects.

We have funded a major project for setting up and running a computer laboratory at Hartley College, Point Pedro. This has been the biggest project completed by our Association in recent years. We have established a fully-fledged computer laboratory with a client-server environment including printers and adequate educational softwares. This project cost us around \$5,300. However, if the input of voluntary human resource component were added to this project, the project would have cost much more. We have raised funds through our members amounting to \$4,400 towards this project and the balance \$900 was contributed from our development fund. In fact the whole of Hartley community has been mobilised to achieve the desired outcome. It gives me great pleasure to mention the names of two members who have rendered yeomen services to make this project a great success and they are: Mr A Srikumar and G Thirukumaran.

We have continued to enrol life members and we have had great success this year. As of 30<sup>th</sup> of June twenty five new life members have joined during this financial year. We transferred \$3,400 to match the new life membership fee into the fixed deposit. The total fixed deposit stands at \$8,400. Our Editor, K.Selvarajah is leading this membership drive with lot of enthusiasm to bring the Hartleyites into the fold of HCPPA-NSW Branch.

As an ongoing yearly event we screened "Gajani" at Fairfield Cinema. This event delivered a collection in the amount of \$2,750. We incurred an expense of \$1,000. The balance \$1,750 is added to our development fund.

Apart from these, we organised various social and sports events such as cricket match, Tennis, and BBQ with the help of our gregarious social secretary B.Kuganesan. Our last annual dinner attracted more people than previous years. Ticket sales revenue amounted to \$2,300 and we managed to break even with the expenses.

We have also contributed \$765 to Hartley College PT Squad travel expenses through HCPPA Trust half of that expense was shared by HCPPA Victoria branch.

I conclude my message by thanking all Hartleyites, their families and well wishers for their active participation in the community activities and social events. I also take this opportunity to thank the committee members for their efforts in keeping the Hartley community together.

K. Visakulan  
Treasurer

## **The Deepening Crisis of Education**

Prof S Sivasegaram  
Faculty of Engineering, University of Peradeniya

I would have preferred to write in Tamil, but I guess that the readership by and large is more comfortable in the acquired language than in the mother tongue. Moreover, the need to provide the manuscript in time, combined with my unfamiliarity with the Tamil keyboard with the added problem of incompatibility between its various types, have further deterred me from submitting in Tamil. I considered sending a handwritten Tamil manuscript, but my fears about publishing in Tamil, based on my recent experiences in publishing articles in Tamil, have persuaded me otherwise.

The foregoing may remind one of some of the tragic aspects of education within the Tamil community as a whole, and particularly in Sri Lanka. Given the colonial context in which the Indian sub-continent was modernised and Sri Lanka's unique record of over four centuries of European colonial rule, the development and scope of education in Sri Lanka has been conditioned by the needs of its rulers. While exposure to English to a greater degree than in many other Third World countries proved an advantage by way of access to modern thought and knowledge, it seriously undermined the role of the mother tongue in social development.

English was acquired by us as the language of the colonial master, and education in English helped the educated to serve the master well. With our philosophy of education guided by such circumstances, it has been hard to free ourselves of the colonial mindset. Yet there was, not long ago, a period in which faith was revived in our language and our ability to achieve with it great things for ourselves and for mankind as a whole. Probably many of us are conscious that the mother tongue is the most effective medium for education and that education in the mother tongue is most desirable for the emotional development of the child. However, pragmatic considerations at the level of the individual have worked against advanced education in the mother tongue.

Discrimination against the minorities is given as a reason for middle class Tamils preferring English to the mother tongue for higher education, especially in the professions. But this fails to explain a similar attitude among the Sinhala middle classes. I think that both Sinhala and Tamil nationalism have historically been lacking in anti-imperialism, so that we value things foreign more than our own and are far more accommodating towards foreigners than towards each other. We secured nominal freedom from foreign domination but our minds have remained enslaved, and we continue to be slaves to neo-colonialism. Irrespective of nationality our middle classes take a bleak view of the future for their mother tongue as well as their society. We live in a failed society, to whose failure we have contributed, and many of us see escape as the only form of success.

The injustice of standardisation initiated in 1970-71 continues to be a painful memory to the Tamils of Jaffna. Standardisation was a blow to education, especially in Jaffna, and was slightly softened by the introduction of the district quota system in 1973 and by further modifications to the system of university admissions in 1977. However, events since 1983 have ensured that standardisation and district quotas would make only a marginal difference, as the war has driven away many of the dedicated teachers and families with a good educational background, and many reputed schools including Hartley College continue to be in a run down condition.

However, many of our problems relate to education policy. Our education system was initially a continuation of what was left behind by the British, and attempts to make it address issues of social and economic development have not borne fruit. Worryingly, education increasingly addresses the interests of the upper layers of society and to some extent a vociferous section of the middle class. Higher education in the mother tongue was effectively abandoned by the early 1970s, and since 1978 education in the English medium has made a comeback, again to serve the interests of an elite. Now free education is being systematically dismantled under pressure from foreign funding agencies.

It should be remembered that, despite major shortcomings, there was much to say for education in Sri Lanka in the middle part of the last century. Free and universal education made middle and

higher level education accessible to a large section of the population, although in an uneven manner. Serious efforts were made to develop and modernise a national curriculum, which sadly has over the past two decades taken an ugly political twist. Some of the attempts to modernise education amounted, however, to aping the West and have mostly been abandoned. There have been some good ideas such as teaching the basics of technology to schoolchildren which were not backed up by adequate resources. Poor investment in primary and secondary education has left Sri Lankan education in deep crisis for over three decades, and most of what is being done at every level is to whitewash our failures.

At the centre of the crisis is the failure of the state school system following the subversion of school education by private tuition, now a thriving industry. Encouragement by the state of a new breed of private schools called 'international schools' has further undermined the system of education. The expanding classroom and the inflation of leading government schools to student population as high as 10 000 are a direct result of the lack of investment in education. Much of this could not have occurred in a society, which sees education in terms other than examination performance and comfortable jobs. As a community, we have been passive about everything that has happened to education, especially the rapid decline in its quality. Middle class parents protest only when something affects their own interests. Today, what matters to most school leavers and their parents is a university degree and not learning or personal development.

A Jaffna Tamil parent would readily recognise the degeneration of the school education system in terms of the role of the school. The school is no more a part of the community, and does little to develop the personality of the child. It does not inculcate good social attitudes or discipline in the child. The teachers and students are overworked, but with no benefit to the student. Worst of all, school has ceased to be fun and learning has been deprived of joy. I suspect that much of this is because of the decline in community spirit.

The government and those in charge of higher education on its behalf seek to produce more and more graduates for mere political gain. Yet, opportunities for higher education in Sri Lanka now lag behind several Asian countries, while the country cannot provide employment to a large section of its graduates. The question is asked whether we are producing the right kind of graduates, but not whether we have the right kind of investment in education. Higher education is now driven by market forces and not by national needs, and businesses look for salesmen rather than skilled personnel. We have several educationists who advocate producing graduates for employment abroad. Planning and policy do not take into account the cost to the country by way of loss of skilled personnel and the real cost of training.

Those responsible for decisions concerning higher education have been more responsive to the demands of electoral politics than to national needs. For example, a college of technology was set up in Moratuwa in 1966 since the country was short of middle level technologists besides skilled technicians, but it was transformed into a university in 1974 with the stroke of a pen, merely to deflect a political problem. That would seem forgivable compared to the current proliferation of universities and faculties without adequate financial resources. Nearly four years ago, it was proposed that one hundred students be admitted to the Faculty of Engineering in Jaffna, with no buildings, no equipment, no academic staff and no proper programme of study in place. That proposal nearly went through but was halted as a consequence of an exposé in one of the Tamil newspapers.

The number of engineering graduates has rocketed from 150 per year in 1970 to around 1000 now, in addition to a comparable number of graduates in information technology, but at the cost of quality. The number of technically trained people has not risen to match, nor has industry advanced in a matching fashion. The medical profession on the other hand has resisted government demands for an increase in intake to the medical faculties, despite a rapidly increasing demand for health services. It would be an understatement to say that the educational policy of the country is chaotic. To say that it does not exist would be kinder.

Adopting the policies of free trade and open economy in 1978 not only spelt disaster to local industry but also damaged social attitudes and professional values. Successive governments have continued to be addicted to the notion that development needs foreign investment or preferably

foreign aid and, as a result, policy decisions concerning education, employment and economic development are made in far away places. Nothing could be more disastrous, as we have seen in many Third World countries, and foreign aid and foreign investment have killed local initiative and devalued local skill.

Thus, we probably need to redefine not merely our development goals but also our notions of development so that our economy is not overly sensitive to the whims of global market forces and manipulations by the economic powers. We should remember that the issues of the national question and war are inseparable from the issue of economic salvation.

Education has for too long been a means of personal advancement in competition with the rest of society. It needs to be freed from the whims of market forces and be integrated with the interest of society as a whole at each level, and be made readily accessible to the broad masses. The Sri Lankan society is in a state of turmoil for too long. But there is hope. Through our crises may emerge a new vision and a new society.

**Editor's Note:** Prof S Sivasegaram, PhD is the Head of the Department of Mechanical Engineering, University of Peradeniya, Sri Lanka.

### அண்மையில் தற்போதைய பாடசாலை நிலைமை பற்றி ஆசிரியர் பரணீதரன் எழுதிய ஒரு மடல்

பாடசாலை தற்போது விடுமுறைக்காக மூடப்பட்டுள்ளது. விடுமுறை விடுவற்கு முன்னர் 10 நாட்களாக மாணவர்கள் அரசஊழியர்கள் வேலைப்புறக்கணிப்பில் ஈடுபட்டதால் பாடசாலை நடைபெறவில்லை. கல்விப்பொதுத்தராதர சாதாரணதரத்தில் கல்வி பயிலும் மாணவர்களின் நலன் கருதி எமது பாடசாலையில் இவ்விடுமுறை காலத்தில் காலை 8.30 தொடக்கம் மதியம் 12.30 வரை விசேடவகுப்புகள் நடைபெறுகின்றன.

தற்பொழுது நகர்ப்பகுதியில் சனநடமாட்டம் ஓரளவு பறவாயில்லாமல் இருக்கிறது.

பாடசாவை கணனிக்கூடத்தில் நான்கு மொனிற்பர்கள் வெளிறிக்கொண்டு வந்துவிட்டது. மாணவர்கள் பார்க்க முடியாத அளவுக்கு வேற தவறுகள் ஏற்படவில்லை. பொதுவாக சில கணனிகளின் மென்பொருள் அண்மையில் திரும்பவும் புதுப்பிக்கப்பட்டன.

அதிகளவு மாணவர்களால் விரும்பப்படும் அறையாக அக்கணனிக்கூடம் இன்று மாறிவிட்டது. அங்கு பாடங்களை எடுப்பதற்கு நான்கு ஆசிரியர்களிற்கு கால அட்டவணை வழங்கப்பட்டுள்ளது. நீங்கள் கஸ்டப்பட்டது வீண்போகவில்லை என்பதை கருத்தில்க்கொள்ளவும். இச்சிந்தனையை வடிவம் கொடுத்தமைத்த பெருமகன் நிச்சயம் எங்கள் ஈழத்தில் இருக்க வேண்டும்.

மற்றும் காலம் தாமதமாக எமது புதிய அதிபரினால் கடிதம் ஒன்று உங்களுக்கும் மன்றசெயலாளருக்கும் அனுப்பப்பட்டது. அவை கிடைத்திருக்கும் என நினைக்கிறேன். நீங்கள் அனுப்பிய விலாசத்திற்கு கொழும்பில் வைத்து நான் அனுப்பினேன்.

நான் இப்போது ரெட்கேட், பெடரேர் போன்ற மென்பொருள்களை கற்றுவருகிறேன். மேலும் எங்கள் கல்லூரி இணையத்தளப் பராமரிப்பிற்காக நிறைய காசினை வருடம் தோறும் செலவழிக்கிறோம். அதற்கு குறைந்த செலவில் 2500 ரூபாவுடன் இதனைப்பராமரிக்கலாம் என கூறுகிறார்கள். தற்போது எங்களிடம் இருந்து வாடகை பெறும் அந்த நபர் 7500ரூபா கேட்கிறார். இப்பொழுது அந்த நபர் அவஸ்திரேலியாவில் உள்ளார். உங்களால் தொடர்பு கொண்டு அதனைக் குறைக்க முடியுமா? அவர் விரைவில் ஊரிற்கு வந்துவிடுவார்

வேறுவிடயங்கள் தேவையாயின் அது பற்றிக் கேடகவும் நாங்கள் பதில் எழுதுகிறோம்

தமிழரின் தண்ணீர் தாகத்துடன்

பிரியமுடன்  
ஆசிரியர்  
ப.பரணீதரன்.

## History of Education in Sri Lanka

### Ponniah Elango-Vice Patron

Education in Sri Lanka could be divided into three eras - pre-colonial, colonial and post-independence. The educational system of pre-colonial Sri Lanka was primarily designed for a small elite in a society with relatively low technology. The vast majority of the population was illiterate or semiliterate. Teaching and learning was the job of religious order - Buddhist monks and Hindu priests. They would teach privileged students in the temple schools. The schools are located either in the temples or neighbouring them. The system is known as "Gurukulam."

The curriculum was very basic, the learning of the alphabet and memorization of elementary religious literature. The pursuit of higher education typically was reserved for men dedicated to the pursuit of religious vocation and almost exclusively memorization and commentary on the scriptures. This knowledge was passed by word of mouth. Absence of mass print media restricted wider dispersion of knowledge and resulted in varied interpretation and parochialism within different lineage of Gurus (mass knowledge dissemination became possible only with the invention of Gutenberg movable printer in the 15<sup>th</sup> century) and hence the growth of various sects. Often students are indoctrinated with their Guru's thoughts and interpretation only and wasted their efforts in debating students of other Gurus.

There was no formalised technical education. Technical training for architects, sculptures, engineers and craftsmen in various trades was generally the preserve of closed corporations, castes, or families. Knowledge was often passed down from fathers to sons. This gave rise to the origin, preservation and growth of the caste system.

Let me briefly explore the abominable concept of castism present among the Hindu Society to large extent and the Buddhist society to a lesser extent. The caste system as it is practiced today is a later introduction into Hindu religion. The word caste itself is derived from the Portuguese word 'Casta' which means pure or chaste. In the Indian lexicon the class division is called "Varna". Varna originally meant attribute, but was later came to be wrongly interpreted as colour.

Writing of Hindu scriptures is of two categories *Shruti* and *Smriti*. *Shruti* means, "that which is heard directly" and refers to scriptures which have been directly revealed to humans by the gods. Examples of *shruti* include the Upanishads and the Veda. The term *smriti*, however, is "memorized tradition." Examples of this include the *Puranas*, *Manusmriti*. *Shrutis* are of early age than *smritis*

The *shruti* texts make very rare mentions of the Varna system, without providing explicit definitions. The *smriti* texts are more explicit in their categorisation of the classes and framing rather strict rules about this system.

The varna system according to *shruti* allowed movement between the various varnas. It is noteworthy that many great (non-Brahmin) sages became Brahmins. Vishvamitra was a Kshatriya king before he became recognized as a great Brahmin sage. Valmiki once a robber became a great sage while Veda Vyasa was the son of a fisherwoman. A hymn from the Rig Veda says:

"I am a bard, my father is a physician, and my mother's job is to grind the corn.....".  
(Rig Veda 9.112.3)

Though historians do not agree on the specific period, the social system later became hierarchical and based upon birth, leading to the evolution of several sub-castes as we know of today. This was perpetuated by the so-called higher castes, by keeping the larger masses from the so-called lower caste illiterate and ignorant. That is why the *manusmiriti* prescribes such heavy sentences as cutting off the tongue, or pouring of molten lead in the ears, of the Shudra who recites or hears the Veda. Rig Veda became available to common man only after the publication of it in the latter part of the 19<sup>th</sup> century under the guidance of Max Muller. By

this time Rig Veda had been thoroughly misinterpreted, many times over, and these interpretations had crept into the text that is available today.

Three major European powers, the Portuguese (1505 – 1658), the Dutch (1658 – 1796) and the British (1796 – 1948) ruled Sri Lanka – then called Ceylon – for nearly four and a half centuries. They all came to Ceylon to trade but became rulers to gain monopoly of their trade. This was assisted by the internecine rivalry between the various rulers of Ceylon of that era (a case of cutting one's nose to spite the enemy) - *The events after independence proves that we still have not come out of this mindset*. The Christian missionaries followed the rulers into the colonies to proselytise. In effect these powers came to Sri Lanka with sword in one hand and bible in the other.

This colonization brought European-style education to Sri Lanka. They wished to implant their values and traditions. Portuguese and the Dutch rules were oppressive and intolerant. They carried out forcible religious conversion and established school system mainly to foster their religion and the religious culture among the growing Christian community. Catholics underwent worse persecution under the Dutch rule than the Hindus & Buddhists. This is because of the animosity between the Protestantism and Catholicism in Europe during that period. Free practice of Catholicism was possible only, after the defeat of the Dutch.

While the British adopted measures that made for the general welfare of the people of Ceylon, and their rule may broadly be described as benevolent, they showed an initial and continued reluctance to become too deeply involved in the supply of education. This service was largely left to religious bodies to supply. The British administration was content to exercise supervision and to give general guidance without assuming complete control. Their early period – until 1825 - is known as Missionary Period as so many Christian Missionary Societies were active in the field of education during this period, starting schools in all provinces of the country. Education was put under firmer footing only after the establishment of Department of Public Instruction in 1869 based on the recommendation of Morgan Committee report.

Due to the religious nature of the education, the educational institutions operated under the watchful eye of the Catholic and Christian clergy. During the Portuguese and Dutch occupation, the state of affairs was not favourable for Indigenous Educational system to thrive. The 16th, 17th, and 18th centuries saw the decay of the ancient system of learning under the combined onslaught of foreign domination, missionary activity and internal dissention. Though this could be perceived as a negative aspect, this European system of education went beyond the portals of Ceylon and opened the world before their students. Interesting part of that story is to see how far foreign missions with a religious message, which was hard to deliver in a country where two highly philosophical religions like Buddhism and Hinduism thrived, succeeded in their primary objective of winning converts and in their secondary purpose of founding schools. Again the prevalent caste system among the Tamils and Sinhalese played a major part.

The British managed to keep the supply of secondary education within narrow limits. On the one hand it would have been futile to promote secondary education of quality on a large scale when there was little possibility of absorbing more than a limited number of people in the learned profession, in administrative services and in commercial enterprises. On the other, the concept of a state taking on the obligation of welfare in the contemporary sense was alien to British traditions of that period and is the doctrine of later date.

I will leave the discussion on the growth of education under the British and the effect of late 18<sup>th</sup> century religious resurgence and the early 19<sup>th</sup> century autonomy / independence movement on the educational development of Sri Lanka to another occasion.

**Editor's Note:** Ponniah Elango- is the founder President of the HCPPA-NSW branch and a Vice-Patron of the Association. He has been invited to deliver the keynote speech at the annual AGM/Dinner this year.

## Annual Athletic Meet of Hartley College: 2006



Hartley College marching band music group



PT squad in action



Principal and Chief Guest



Hoisting National flag by Chief Guest Prof M Nadarajasundaram



Members of Hartley College Chess Club



Athletic competition is in progress

## Shared Vision and Collective Intelligence

Dr David Gunaratnam  
Faculty of Architecture, University of Sydney.

During the last year annual get together of the Hartley College Past Pupils Association of NSW, I briefly explored the significance of “Shared vision, Shared Values and Shared Experiences”, to us as Hartleyites and members of the Association. The importance of shared vision was illustrated through the lives of two migrants, Ram Kirpalani and Andrew Carnegie, both of whom became very successful businessmen in their country of adoption and both pursued vigorously their visions for the future. Ram Kirpalani’s business empire, however, collapsed a few years after his death, whereas the Institutions Andrew Carnegie established, continue to flourish even to this day, 87 years after his death.

There are possibly a number of factors that can be attributed to this difference in outcome. The main difference, however, is that Andrew Carnegie’s vision for the future was/ and is shared by others, who were dedicated to not only pursuing but also enlarging that vision. Carnegie Mellon University, which was formed in 1967 by merging the Carnegie Institute of Technology that Andrew Carnegie established in 1900 with Mellon Institute of Industrial Research, has been consistently ranked 1<sup>st</sup> for graduate studies (PhD) in Computer Science for the past few years, along with institutions such as Massachusetts Institute of Technology and Stanford University. Carnegie Mellon is affiliated with 13 Nobel laureates, including the mathematician John Nash, who was the subject of the award winning movie, *A Beautiful Mind*.

Hartley College also evolved and flourished over the years as a result of the shared vision of its founder, Rev. Dr. Peter Percivel, its principals, teachers and, both past and present students. When Rev. Dr. Peter Percivel established, what was then called the Wesleyan Mission Central School in 1838, he only had access to limited resources and only received financial support from London after School had been established for a few years and shown to be viable. It was his determination and dedication to his vision that saw him through the difficult early days of the School. Since then the School has evolved into a College excelling in a number of areas, and mostly functioning in a relatively stable internal and external environment, with number of the principals having long tenure that allowed them to enlarge the vision, with the help of dedicated teachers, through strategic initiatives.

Last ten to fifteen years has seen Hartley function in a less than stable environment internally, with frequent changes of principals, and an uncertain and at times hostile environment externally. It is to the credit of the principals, teachers and students that during this period the College has continued to perform despite the disruptions and degraded facilities. During this period, however, we have also seen the emergence of Past Pupils Associations around the globe with access to resources, both intellectual and financial, and dedicated to the shared vision for the College. It is the significance and the role of these evolving Associations in pursuing the shared vision that I wish to explore under the second part of the title – Collective Intelligence.

Some of the significant developments in Computer Science, Engineering and Architecture have been inspired by processes in nature. Social insects, in particular ants, have provided inspiration for designing Intelligent Systems assembled from locally interacting software or robotic agents in Computer Science, for solving complex (combinatorial – that is involving combinations) optimisation problems in Engineering, and for generating novel forms and patterns in Architecture.



Ants and ant colonies have been studied to see how they are organised for the complex behaviour seen in activities such as foraging for food and nest building. These complex behaviours, with seamless integration of the different activities, were achieved not by having a leader or supervisor directing events, as the movie *Antz* portrays, but by self-organisation arising from simple and local interactions between ants, motivated presumably by shared goals.

Experiments on ants foraging behaviour have demonstrated the ability of ants to find the shortest path between food and the nest. Based on the processes the ants use to achieve this, a technique referred to as *ant colony optimisation* has been developed and successfully applied to solve combinatorial problems in a number of disciplines, including engineering.

The classical combinatorial problem is the Travelling Salesman Problem (TSP), which is used to benchmark the performances of different approaches to solving this class of problems. In the TSP, a salesman has to visit a number of cities and has to work out the shortest route that will allow him/her to visit all the cities only once. The number of combinations of routes to be considered increases dramatically as the number of cities increases, and methods based on exhaustive enumeration of all possible routes would be computationally prohibitive. Approaches based on processes in nature, however, allow this class of problems to be solved efficiently and effectively. Problem solving behaviour arising from local and simple interactions of a number of entities is referred to as swarm intelligence, which is one manifestation of collective intelligence.

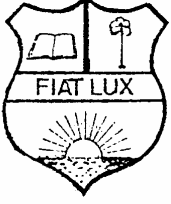
Processes based on collective intelligence are bottom up approaches, and do not have a hierarchical organisational structure, with an associated chain of command, to achieve any goal. Desirable behaviours and results emerge as a consequence of local interactions motivated and mediated by shared goals and visions. One way of mobilising the expertise that exists within the HCPPAs, for improving the performance of the College in one or more areas, is to adopt a project-based team approach for implementing strategic initiatives. The members of the team can be distributed geographically and in different HCPPAs but can come together to work on specific projects based on their expertise. Effective communication is an important requirement for this approach to succeed, and it is now possible even if members of the team are distributed in different parts of the world.

Most of the projects initiated and implemented so far by the HCPPAs have focussed on upgrading facilities and establishing scholarships, which are based on financial resources. Intellectual and skill-based resources, in the form of expertise in a number of disciplines as well as sporting skills, which are available within the membership of all the HCPPAs have not been fully mobilised for formulating and implementing strategic initiatives. The more recent and successful IT project, initiated, planned and implemented by few members of the NSW Association, is a move in this direction and should provide the motivation for planning and implementing other such strategic initiatives.

It is hoped that the success of the IT project and the concepts described in this article would provide the impetus for the members from the different HCPPAs to direct their focus also on strategic initiatives in pursuing their shared vision for the College.

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**Editor's Note:** Dr David Gunaratnam, PhD is a Senior Lecturer at the Faculty of Architecture, University of Sydney. He is an old boy of Hartley College, Point Pedro. He is a well-known authority in soft computing techniques.



**HARTLEY COLLEGE (POINT PEDRO) PAST PUPILS  
ASSOCIATION VICTORIA BRANCH AUSTRALIA**

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Mahendran

Vice-President: Mr.C.

Secretary: Mr.N.Nanthakumaran

Treasurer: Mr.M. Madanasenarajah

The President  
Hartley College Past Pupils Association (NSW) Branch  
Sydney

15<sup>th</sup> July 2006

Dear Mr. President,

On behalf of the Victorian Branch it gives me immense pleasure to provide this message on the occasion of your Annual General Meeting and Dinner. We old Hartleyites can justifiably be proud of the enormous contributions that the overseas past pupils associations of Hartley College in countries like the U.K. Canada, Australia have made and continue to make, not just providing financial assistance to our alma-mater but more importantly spreading our school's message "Fiat Lux" in many parts of the globe. Over the past few years the activities of many of our past pupils associations have begun to attract the attention of the mainstream communities in the countries in which they operate and certainly your branch is one of them. Hartley is no longer only a national icon. Its reputation as leading educational institution in Sri Lanka is spreading fast among the many countries, which have become home to many old students of Hartley, thanks to the good work done by the respective past pupils associations.

Dark clouds are again appearing in the country of our birth, which can only mean that associations like yours and ours would have to redouble our efforts to meet new threats to our alma mater. I have no doubt that the Hartley spirit will give us strength and courage to meet the new challenges.

I wish your function success and would urge you to keep up the good work.

Fraternally yours

K.Palasubramaniam  
President, HCPPA, Victoria Branch

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**New Life Members of HCPPA-NSW Branch**

We have enrolled 25 new life members (a record in the history of our Association) during the financial year and we have seen a great interest among Hartleyites in joining our Association to serve our college. The details of new life members who joined the Association during the financial year are:

- |                      |                             |
|----------------------|-----------------------------|
| 1. G Baskaran        | 15. B Selvanantham          |
| 2. A Gnanendran      | 16. Prof E A Selvanathan    |
| 3. S Gobinath        | 17. Prof M Sivakumar        |
| 4. J Jeyakumar       | 18. Dr S Sathanathan        |
| 5. R Krishnakumarn   | 19. T Shanmuganathan        |
| 6. M Nadanakumar     | 20. R Sithamparapillai      |
| 7. S Paramaguru      | 21. T Thampapillai          |
| 8. K Panchalingam    | 22. P Thirunavukarasu       |
| 9. Dr D Rajasooriyar | 23. S Thillainathan         |
| 10. M Rajendran      | 24. Dr Vasikaran Samuel     |
| 11. M Raveendran     | 25. Dr R K Wickramachandran |
| 12. K Ratnavel       |                             |
| 13. Dr S Sabesan     |                             |
| 14. T Sathiyamoorthy |                             |

**Editor's Note:** We would like to see more interest in coming years among Hartleyites to join HCPPA-NSW

## **Beginning of State Oppression of the Tamils in Ceylon (Sri Lanka)**

Prof A Veluppillai  
(Arizona State University, USA)

I am delighted to write a note on a subject dear to my heart. I have briefly discussed some of the State oppression techniques adopted by various Sri Lankan governments to deprive the basic rights of the Tamils in Ceylon.

The majority of the international community seems to blame the Tamil side for not talking, negotiating and settling the ethnic conflict in Sri Lanka. They don't seem to understand the complexity of the problem. My view is that the Sinhala side has been so intransigent throughout that they do not want even to devolve any power to the Tamils. The Sinhala side wants to keep concurrent powers with the central government. The much-publicized Provincial Council System, introduced at the bidding of India, has not brought any devolution. Prof. G.L. Pieris, former Minister of Constitutional Affairs, declared in Parliament in 1995 that no real devolution is possible within the present unitary constitution. We have witnessed that the Sinhala chauvinism more and more has become assertive during the last two years that there is no basis for negotiating any durable solution for the suffering of Tamils. The latest theory of 'Mahinda Chintanaya' speaks about finding a solution within a unitary constitution. President Mahinda Rajapakse is talking about 'maximum devolution' within a unitary constitution. However, when he makes State visits to countries like India he agrees to solve the issue within United Sri Lanka not necessarily based on unitary constitution.

A solution within a unitary constitution is euphemism for cosmetic changes within the Sinhala Buddhist hegemony. To get fair justice for the Tamils, the Constitution of Sri Lanka needs to be structured differently and it is better to draft a new constitution rather than amending the existing constitution. The new constitution must be acceptable to the mainstream Tamil opinion and it should be based on the principles of power sharing as two nations within the united Sri Lanka. It is also vital to consider the situation of then Ceylon during 1940s and 1950s on certain matters with particular reference to lands when finding a just solution. It is a known secret and widely spoken when late G K Parthasarathy (popularly known as GKP and an internationally renowned diplomat) came to Sri Lanka just after 1983 communal rights as a special envoy of late Mrs Indra Gandhi –the then Prime Minister of India and asked for the census of 1948 for the districts of Amparai and Trincomalee to determine the majority community that was supposed to live in. This was one of the reasons for replacing GKP by Mr Romesh Bandari as a special envoy at the request of Sri Lankan government that was uneasy to face the truth of the origins of the ethnic conflict. Today, it is interesting note this is the same reason for trying to avoid the mediatory role of Norway that has a historic record of unbiased mediating of ethnic conflicts around the world.

The history of mainstream Sinhala political parties after the independence of Ceylon does not give any expectation for the Tamils that they can pin their hopes on one of the two main Sinhala political parties. Even though many people still argue that the United National Party (UNP) has done less evil to the sufferings of Tamils in Sri Lanka, it is the party mainly responsible for sliding the country towards Sinhala Buddhist hegemony, immediately after gaining independence from British monarchy. The UNP had a historic opportunity in 1977 when it came to power with a huge majority and introduced a new constitution with powerful Executive Presidency, it failed miserably to accommodate the aspirations of the Tamil minority though it has spoken eloquently the need to find a solution in its all election manifesto during the last 20 years.

It is now 58 years since then Ceylon attained independence from British rule in 1948. Oppression of the Tamils in various forms by the Sinhala dominated State commenced immediately after the independence. The UNP government was in power till 1956. It was not interested in building up a modern secular democratic society for the people of Ceylon. It was more interested in restoring the ancient Sinhala Kingdom and Buddhists temples. About 10% of the population, who were mainly Tamils living in the central parts of Ceylon, were deprived of citizenship and franchise, because they were considered recent arrivals from the Southern part of India during the British rule in the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. At the time of independence, Ceylon had approximately 70% Sinhalese and 30% Tamils including the Muslims. The depriving the franchise of a big segment of the Tamil population is the beginning of the oppression that reduced the share of Tamils in the political process significantly.

The Sinhala dominated State went a step further to increase its grip on the political process in Sri Lanka. The disfranchised Tamils were counted for the purposes of demarcation of electorates but were not allowed to vote in the General election. What this meant was electorates with majority or substantial Tamil population and with minority Sinhalese population elected members of Parliament with anti-Tamil platforms. Thus, this step of the UNP government seems to have set up the stage for the future politics of Sinhala Buddhist hegemony. Most of the Tamil members of Parliament supported the Sinhala dominated government on this issue, as they didn't want to raise a communal cry at that time.

At the time of independence of Ceylon, the Northern and the Eastern Provinces of Sri Lanka were just Tamil speaking provinces. The Sinhala populations even in the border districts were less than 10% of the population of those districts. The UNP government wanted to develop irrigation and agriculture and to settle people from over-populated districts. The Tamil speaking Eastern Province was found to be a sparsely populated region and in the name of development activities, they started bringing Sinhala people from other areas to this region to change demography of the region. Massive irrigation schemes were developed in the East and Sinhala populations were settled in different parts and slowly reduced the majority Tamils into a minority in certain areas. Trincomalee district was the main focus for Sinhala governments because of the strategic importance of its natural harbour. Further, seasonal migrant Sinhala fishermen were encouraged to settle in Trincomalee whilst providing all the necessary facilities for them settle permanently. The government owned lands in Trincomalee district were also given away to Sinhala private entrepreneurs merely for the purpose of bringing more Sinhalese labourers and thereby indirectly settle them in these areas. The Sinhala State has changed the demographic pattern of the East within short span of time. Today Sinhalese dominated State claims that the Eastern province is multi-linguistic and multi-cultural. From the perspective of Tamils, the Eastern province has to continue as part of the Tamil traditional habitat as Sinhala colonists after independence could not be rewarded for their aggrandizement.

It is to be noted here that this type of government sponsored Sinhala colonization had been slowed down after the ethnic civil war began in 1983. If the Tamils decommission their arms, it would definitely be a signal for large scale Sinhala colonization again. The talks cannot lead to any solution as the gap between the expectations of the Sinhala and Tamil sides remains and is widening. The international community, if it really cares for peace in Sri Lanka, it should come forward to impose some parameters on which peace talks must start. It is pointless insisting on the Tamil side starting talks with the Sinhala State so that at the end of the tunnel there could be a glimmer of hope, seems to be very unrealistic. The Tamils giving up arms and declaring that they will seek only a negotiated solution may end up in genocide of the Tamils as the solution for the ethnic problem.

The year 1956 was the first year Tamil blood was shed by the Sinhalese in the independent Sri Lanka. It also marked the historic 2500 years of the birth of the Buddha, according to historian records. The SLFP, which started as a splinter group of the UNP, came to power on the Sinhala Communal platform of making Sinhala as the official language of Ceylon. The Sinhala was made, as the official language in 1956 while reasonable usage would be allowed for Tamil language. Finding that there was a wave of support for the SLFP, the UNP also changed its policy from parity of status to Sinhala only. Many Tamils who trusted the UNP felt let down by the opportunistic attitudes of the UNP policy.

There has been an ethnic polarization from 1956 onwards. Both main Sinhala political parties joined in supporting Sinhala only as official language. All the sixteen Members of Parliament from the Northern and Eastern Provinces opposed this move. The Marxist political parties- the LSSP and the CP- joined in the opposition, prophesying the doom of United Lanka from ethnic polarization. Most of the Tamil Members of Parliament from the NorthEast were elected on Federal Party ticket, demanding the creation of a Tamil state within the united Lanka. They organized peaceful Gandhian type Satyagraha protest outside the Parliament building protesting against ignoring the claim of Tamil language to official status. The Sinhala hoodlums could not tolerate the protest of the Tamil leaders. The Tamil leaders were manhandled in Colombo. Some of them were injured and further Tamil blood was shed in Colombo. There were also instances of killings of Tamil civilians by footloose Sinhala laborers/ Sinhala colonists in sugar-cane plantations in Gal-Oya Scheme and Padaviya Scheme in the Eastern Province. However, there was no attempt to bring these Sinhala criminals against the Tamils in front of the Justice system.

What started in the year 1956 has been going on intermittently during the last 50 years, even though it has taken different forms to suit the timing of the oppression techniques. There was a huge explosion in 1958 when Sinhala hoodlums went on rampage against the innocent Tamils. After this communal riot, most of Tamils living in Colombo had to be ferried to their historical habitat of the North-East for their personal safety. The Tamils were made to understand that the Sri Lankan State was really a Sinhala State and the Tamils had to accept a subservient status to preserve peace with them. After watching these developments, B.H.Farmer, a Professor of Geography at Cambridge University, published a book under the title, 'Ceylon- A Divided Nation'. The country had been divided emotionally and sentimentally from that time onwards. The Sinhala people could not be able to produce real national leaders who could rise above narrow Sinhala nationalism with a vision and thereby unite the country for the past fifty years. Tamil people could not put up armed resistance for many more years. Political leaders of the Tamils had been trying to settle the issue by talking to the Sinhala leaders amicably on compromises. Each time, they were rebuffed. Could the international community point out how the situation is different now?

**Editor's Note:** Prof. A Velupillai, PhD is currently attached to the Arizona State University, USA. Previously he was the Head of the Department of Tamil, University of Peradeniya, Sri Lanka, and was a Guest Professor at the University of Uppsala, Sweden for 10 years. He is an old boy of Hartley College.

**God Muruga and Tamil Love:** God Muruga is always considered as not only an indomitable war God but also an embodiment of love that is part and parcel of our Tamil culture. The ancient Tamils viewed God Muruga as a hero of pre-martial union of love based on the actual customs prevailed in those days. It is to be noted that God Muruga had made courtship with Valli in pre-martial union. According to Tamil custom, courtship was essential to the pre-martial union of love leading to the culmination of happy married life. When Saraswathy a mum of seven boys, happen to read this magazine she could vividly remember her pre-martial union with Krishnapillai in 1930s.

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## **Grooming the Current Generation of Hartleyites**

As I write this introduction for the contributions made by the current pupils of Hartley College, I feel I am truly blessed. I believe HCPPA-NSW is probably the first Past Pupils Association in pioneering the idea of sourcing original articles from the pupils of Hartley College. The main objective of this exercise is to cultivate an interest in literary works among pupils of our school by providing opportunities. I am really honoured to be part of this pioneering effort with a view to grooming the current generation of Hartleyites in literary works. We have received 5 hand-written articles from the pupils of Hartley College. We are pleased to publish them in our magazine. : Editor

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### **Peace is what We Need in Sri Lanka**

S Rajeebhavan-Grade 10A

Nobody prefers war to peace, because during war, fathers bury their sons, and during peace, sons bury their fathers. This was what the famous Greek Philosopher and Historian Herodotus said about war and peace. The history of mankind is dotted with wars and disputes. From the beginning of human civilisation, man has fought innumerable number of wars and battles.

History provides a lot of evidence as to why people fought these wars and battles. Most of them were due to land disputes. When society is becoming more advanced, the causes for these disputes are difficult to understand and comprehend. Sometimes for petty reasons, nations began to fight against nations. The bigger countries imposed many wars on smaller countries to bring them under their domination.

We are now in the new Millennium, yet we do not see any sign of human disputes coming to an end. Today humans are clashing with each other due to communal or ethnic rivalries. In Sri Lanka the ethnic conflict resulted in a 25-year war. This war claimed thousands of innocent lives and caused immense destruction to property. Peoples including children are forced to displace from their original homelands. Though battles are fought between countries or various ethnic groups but it is always the people finally fight and destroy each other. The man uses his intelligence, skills, natural resources and modern technology for his own destruction. The unprecedented developments made in science and technology during the last 50 years has become a vital advantage to those fighting wars.

There should be mutual understanding among nations to solve their problems amicably. The major causes for disputes should be uprooted and poverty should be eliminated. Religious leaders should preach the value of peace to the mankind. Peace should be established in the minds of individuals at any cost. The teaching of the concept of peaceful co-existence should be introduced at school level and the human values and norms should be taught as a part of the curriculum in schools. The right of living for every human being should be respected.

Peace in Sri Lanka is what everybody desperately needs because we all have suffered greatly due to this ethnic war, which has been going on for more than two decades. Our beloved school is one of the victims of this ethnic war. During war times, people have lived in constant fear and anxiety. Adding to this misery, there was much mental agony. The trials and tribulations they have been undergoing due to this conflict cannot be expressed in words.

Peace is the need of the hour because without it there will be a severe economic hardship to everyone. At present, the war is no longer on due to the truce signed by the parties of the conflict. When there is a permanent peace in our beautiful island all ethnic groups could live in harmony.

The Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) signed by the two warring factions, viz, the Government and LTTE (Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam) with the intervention of the Norwegian government has brought temporary peace to our motherland. If this becomes permanent, Sri Lanka could flourish again in the world map as a wonderful place to live in. When more tourists come, the country earns more foreign exchange. Local industries and agricultural enterprises once again start to prosper and thereby bring the much-needed overall economic development to the country.

We all need to strive hard to achieve a lasting peace in our motherland and make our island as a pleasant place to live in. Let all Hartleyites join in this noble task.

## **Protecting Children's Rights**

S Sarathbhavan-Grade 8A

We are now living in the age of Information Technology and we are always busy in collecting, processing and storing data. Therefore we do not have enough time to pay attention to our social, cultural and religious surroundings. However, we know that there are certain groups of people who are abused and discriminated. Disabled people, beggars, women, children, old people, labourers and low-caste people are some who are discriminated not only in Sri Lanka but also in many parts of the world.

Children, who are considered flowers that spread their scent, are abused by elders who steal their innocence. A lot of poor, helpless orphans are found in our society. We could also see a lot of children earning a living for themselves and their families. They are sent to work for rich people mostly by their own parents who are looking for some income. Young children are always ill-treated by their employers. They are beaten, burnt and injured in many other ways for the smallest mistake they make.

Today we see children are employed in the drug business. They are used to distribute drugs to the public. The danger here is that they will also be encouraged to use drugs in the future. It destroys our future generation. Children are also forced to carry out robberies and plunder on behalf of elders and often, they are the ones who are caught and punished. Though it is illegal to employ children under the age of 14 years, they are abducted and forced to work in dried fish industry in coastal areas. In these places, they find themselves subjected to discrimination and humiliation. Sexual abuse of children is also prevalent all over the world.

The ethnic war, which is raging for many years, has disrupted the lives of many children in our country, especially in the North and East. Therefore there is a more emphasis on protection of children's rights. Thus education has been guaranteed to all children with relevant law that has made it compulsory for all parents to send their children under 14 years to school. Protection of children's rights also discussed at the 11<sup>th</sup> SAARC conference held in Colombo. However, despite propaganda carried out by the National Child Protection Authority, child abuse still continues.

Solving this problem is certainly not easy. To solve this complicated problem, much awareness is needed. The help of society, especially the Government, Non-governmental organisations, parents, teachers, religious leaders, media and police is absolutely essential to solve the problems of children and to protect their rights to build a strong, fortunate and healthy future generation.

We are the world  
 We are children  
 We are the ones who make a better day  
 So let's start giving  
 There is a choice for making  
 We are saving our own lives  
 So let's make a better day just you and me...

I hope Hartleyites would join with me in protecting the rights of kids and make this world a wonderful place for them to live.

## **How Can We Become as a Successful Student**

S Kogul-Grade 11A

We are looking for success in every of our efforts. The success is always the intention of hard work. If we all ask the question: what is the meaning of success? It is the satisfied end result of our action, which leads to great pleasure and enjoyment. For students like me, the success means good

results in our examinations and thereby makes our parents and teachers happy. When our attitudes and behaviours become suitable to the society I would like to call this also as success. So how we could become mastering in subjects to get a good performance in examinations and how we would become a suitable person for the society. It depends on many things and the personality of individual.

First and foremost we should have self-confidence whatever things we do. Then we need to have certain personal attributes to be a good person for the society. Therefore I would say that the individual personality and attitudes contribute in many ways towards achieving success. A student must be an honest person. He must always speak truth. He should be faithful to his teachers and fellow students. When students show the above characteristics it really puts them in a good position not only in the school but also in the society. And then every student must have self-control. This is vital and thereby prevents students getting involved in wrong doings.

Time management is one of the important things for any student. Punctuality is not only important for a student but also important for every human being. Therefore students should grasp certain ideas about time management and they should be in a position to convert these ideas into practical realities. A student must be patient in most of the circumstances. He should tolerate the wrongdoing of others. Once the Great God Jesus Christ said:

“If any one slaps you on one of your cheeks, then show him the other one”.

This clearly proves that tolerance is very important to students like me to achieve great things. We need to be obedient to elder people, teachers and friendly to our classmates. We should learn to respect others’ opinions and advises. We should always carry out the instruction of our teachers. When we make promises to others, they must be kept. We must do our school homework without postponing them whilst improving our habit of helping needy fellow students. Some students think that we can study without hard work. There is a proverb: A quite wave could not make a perfect

Hardworking is very important for success for students like me. Then there is another fact that as student you cannot lose your temperament. If you fail the whole examination or in a particular subject, you have to continue your study with your strengths with self-confidence

I am confident that Hartley College would provide the required environment to mould our character to be successful person in the society.

## **Learning English: A Bitter Experience but a Better Future**

S Gowshigan-Grade 11A

Learning English is a widely spoken matter not only in Sri Lanka but also in almost all non-English speaking countries. The British master has introduced English language with the colonisation of our country. They introduced many good things to our country such as building a good transport system, plantation of tea and rubber in addition to introducing their traditions in clothing and food habits.

If we concentrate on the introduction of English language in our country, English became the medium of instruction in our country. The country had an excellent infrastructure and facilities to learn English. Many of us mastered the language better than native English speakers. This has changed in the mid 1950s with a shortsighted government policy of Sinhala only and after going through bitter experiences during the last 50 years, English has been slowly introduced in the school as a medium of instruction.

During British rule, English was the language of administration and so was the case in every field. At present, because of the importance, it is being taught as a Second language in our country. Our School has always tried to improve the standard of English teaching to our pupils. Still most of our Universities use English as the medium of instruction. Further it is really difficult to find textbooks for Medicine, Engineering, Accounting and Law in our mother tongue and therefore to a certain extent we are compelled to master English at any cost.



Learning English is somewhat difficult as it differs in many aspects from our native language: Tamil. As for Tamil, it differs in pronunciation, grammar, accent and usage. Despite all these differences, students are keen to learn and master the English language for better future.

Socio-politically, English has become a link language between our two major ethnic groups: Tamils and Sinhalese. Learning English has provided plenty of opportunities for all of us seeking employment both locally and abroad. We talk with other language speakers in English as a Link language, it brings us so much of pleasure. Learning English would provide us a golden opportunity to access various information through Internet and media both print and electronics. Learning English though is a bitter experience for many of us, it gives a better future life.

Let Hartleyites pay due attention to master English Language to become a world citizen.

## **Our Mother Land**

K Nitharsan-Grade 13C

Illankai/Sri Lanka that is formally known as Ceylon is my motherland and I am very proud of being an inhabitant of this beautiful mango shaped tiny island. Though Sri Lanka is virtually a small spot in the world map it has many strategic importance to the world and its location in the world map gives it a major significance in numerous ways. The location has a special significance for both sea and air transport systems. Its scenic beauty has lured and still continued to tempt tourists from all corners of the world.

The wonderful island of mine is located in the Indian Ocean and it is known as the pearl in the Indian Ocean. The central hill parts of our country are a dream come true for the photographers due to its exquisite breathtaking beauty. The splendour of the merchant carpet of the tea estates that dominates the hill country, interspaced with many cascading natural waterfalls that descend from several mountaintops catch all eyes. Further, it fills with the natural beauty of the creation. The resplendent beauty of flora and fauna add colour to enhance the beauty of the island.

Several waterways flowing from the hilltops find their way in the ocean that surrounds my country. In this process, they provide the much-needed water to the inhabitants with a means of developing agricultural industry and constitute a tremendous asset to the peasants of the dry zone. The coastal belt of this land is studded with coconut trees that not only add to the scenic beauty but also provide opportunities for employment to our people whilst at the same time being of immense value to the overall economy of the country.

The climate of my motherland varies and one could opt to live in the climate of one's choice. The golden beaches offer opportunities for relaxation and fun to many of us. The hilly central part provides a cool climate for holidaymakers who could move away from the warmer climate elsewhere in our country. The island contains a wealth of attraction to the inhabitants as well as to aliens. There are ruined historic cities of the former Tamil and Sinhala kings, the temple of tooth in Kandy, the Botanical gardens in Peradeniya, the natural harbour of Trincomalee and whole other taste of attraction. Our country is also noted for gems in search of which people from other countries come to Sri Lanka. These gems are used to make jewellery.

We find that our motherland is endowed in many ways with rich deposits of resources that are blessing to our people. We should protect these natural resources from exploitation. We need to strive hard to preserve the natural beauty of our motherland and maintain peace and harmony across the country. Let all Hartleyites strive to make our motherland a gift of the nature to live happily.

## Reminiscences of Hartley and Reflections on Life

Prof Murugesu Sivapalan  
University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign, USA

Many of us have studied in many places, worked in many towns, even many countries and formed allegiances to all these places and the people we have met along the way and worked with. Why is it then that the affection for and loyalty to Hartley College remains so precious and pleasurable even after so many years? Is it because the period we spent at Hartley was one of those critical periods in life, a hiatus between primary school and university learning, a period when we were conscious of life around us and yet were mostly free from its heavy burdens, and even the simple things of life tended to bring us a lot of pleasure.

*Fiat Lux* is the motto of Hartley and I believe it is very appropriate for the people of Vadamaradchi, because Hartley is indeed a beacon of light. It certainly used to be one of the schools where both Tamils and Sinhalese sat together in the same classroom to learn the meaning of life. My first few days at Hartley College are still fresh in my mind. I was just one of 5 students who were admitted to Grade 8 in 1965. I still remember the selective school examination we all had to sit to gain admission to Hartley. On that rainy day both the lower hall and the upper hall were full with potential students and the examination was a whole day affair, including a lunch break. And then later at the interview stage, I remember reading to then Principal Mr K Pooranampillai (popularly known as KP) and Deputy Principal Mr R M Gunaratnam in the Principal's office.

I had many difficulties adjusting to the new life at Hartley College. It was quite easy to be a good student with almost no effort at Vigneswara College, my previous school. You just go to school, have a good time, and education was a bonus. Now suddenly at Hartley College I was just an ordinary student. In my first two terms in 1965 I received only a Grade II pass and my father was concerned that I was not making headway in my studies. I still remember the day, we were playing during the lunch break around the lone "Naaval" tree, it was towards the end of the second term, my friend Sithamparapillai asked me, "Sivapalan, have you revised? I was a bit surprised, as I did not know the meaning of revision. He explained solemnly how he "revised" for exams systematically, with seriousness of purpose. I never knew such thing before. As I was getting nowhere in my studies, and also to please my parents, I tried the idea of "revision" in the third term a few weeks before the examination. Indeed, the revision did wonders for me, my marks shot up and I went up to Grade I. Principal KP gave me a high commendation on my report card and my parents were pleased. I realised, as many did before and after me, that if you want to make it at Hartley College, you not only must have natural ability but also have to work harder. Isn't that the story of our lives?

My early friends those days were Ganeshalingam, Rajanayagam, and Mahalingasivam. Because we used to take the bus together we became close to each other in many ways. The bus fare from Nellyyady to Point Pedro was only 8 cents and my mother would give me just 20 cents a day – nothing extra for sweets or ice cream. But those days if you gave the bus conductor 10 cents, he wouldn't give any change back claiming he did not have loose change. So when we happened to travel together, the three of us would form a partnership and would pool our money together and pay to the conductor just the 25 cents for 3 people and one of us would pocket the remaining 5 cents. That would be 10 cents for two bus trips and this saving was enough for the ice cream we craved (of course, the conductor lost a part of his livelihood). I remember sometimes spending the 10 cents I had for the return trip on ice cream and then walking the 4 miles back home!

Then there was cricket. I could still recall cricket matches played at Hartley College. Though I did not play much serious cricket we all dutifully went and watched on Friday afternoons and on all day Saturday the cricket matches played at our grounds. It was good stuff. Mr WNS Samuel was Student Counsellor those days and I recall vividly that some of our seniors were in the habit of posting the latest Test Cricket scores on the notice board outside Mr Samuel's office and we would read it during the tea break, and the scores would get updated during the lunch break. I would listen with fascination from a distance as some of our seniors waxed lyrical about cricket legends of yesteryear such as Bill Lawry, Ian Chappell, and Gary Sobers. We did not have a radio at home and I remember going to the house of my classmate Sivakumaran in Alvai to listen to test match commentaries on the radio. We would remain glued to the radio from early morning till afternoon on weekends and on holidays listening to Test Cricket commentary in English. It was wonderful

how I gradually became fluent enough to understand John Arlott and Alan McGilvray describe some far away game ball by ball. I gradually became literate in cricket and eventually became passionate about the game. As a bonus my English was improved too.

Thinking of English, I am sure many of Hartleyites in the mid-1960s would remember Mr Manuelpillai who taught us English in Years 9 and 10. He was a great teacher and learning English was a lot of fun. *Oliver Twist* was one of the prescribed textbooks and I remember Mr Manuelpillai literally acting out the various parts: when *Oliver Twist* asked for more, Mr Manuelpillai would ask for more, “Please sir, can I have some more?” and so on. He managed to get us all hooked into the story. But what I remember most is the grammar part – the whole class would take turns to do the exercises in the prescribed textbook. And this is the way it went – when it is your turn to give the answer, if you give the right answer, everything is fine, but if you make a mistake, it is the responsibility of the person next to you to stand up and give you a knock on the head with his knuckle. That is not all – if you make a mistake and the person next to you *does not* give you a knock on the head, it is the responsibility of the person next to him to give *HIM* a knock on the head. And so it went like a Mexican Wave – mostly fun – except that some of the guys took it too seriously, causing sore heads to some of us.

I had so many other wonderful teachers during my time at Hartley College. I still could name some of them with love and affection, viz, Thambapillai, Rajanayagam, Ratnavel, WNS Samuel, Kandasamy, Ahamparam, RM Gunaratnam, Kamalanathan, and Kanapathipillai. However, the greatest influence in my life was my Guru, Mr Ratnasabapathy, who came back to Hartley as the Principal in 1967.

Mr Ratnasabapathy was a teacher of Mathematics *par excellence* and I have to say that initially I found his expectations were far too high for me, so high that I felt totally helpless. Unfortunately for me, I was sitting in the front row of the classroom and for some reason he was drawn to me like a magnet, or put another way, I was in his firing line. He would make me stand up and fire question after question at me. He would ask a question and say “Neer, Sollum” (you, tell me!). Most times I would stand up but then had nothing to say, after a while it would become routine that I would only half stand up. Some of my classmates who are now living in Sydney will definitely remember and they should be in a position to recollect these experiences. It was sheer humiliation, even terror. It was not helped by the fact that we had two female classmates, Miss Tharmavarathar and Miss Arumugasamy, both of whom were sitting right next to me. At the end of the first term in my Year 11 in 1968, my Mathematics mark was a mere 22 while the highest mark was 96 obtained by my classmate Rajendra Marie who now lives in Sydney. My parents were getting seriously concerned. In fact they thought of pulling me out of Hartley and finding me a suitable job. Mr Sivapathasundaram, who was the zoology teacher at Hartley College and my uncle, intervened and discussed my case with Mr Ratnasabapathy. He implored him to give me another chance, which he did.

One day, Mr Ratnasabapathy cornered me in the corridor and instructed me to submit homework assignments to him. Considering Mr Ratnasabapathy’s style, this to me was a major break and I started submitting home works to Mr Ratnasabapathy but it was really hard struggle. Every weekend I would get on my bicycle riding to Uduppiddy or Thiccamm to meet my friends Kalanithy and Sivakumar. They were much brighter students. I would go to seek their help in doing many of the questions assigned. Fortunately, I continued to persist with my feeble attempts at doing those hard assignments, and Mr Ratnasabapathy uncharacteristically kept his patience with me. The marked assignments would come back with a lot of red ink and a generous smell of ash droppings from his cigar. But slowly and steadily my mathematics ability was on the mend, and my marks did begin to improve. By the time of my A/L examination in December 1969 I had become one of the best students in class. I scored handsomely at the A Levels and obtained one of the best results for Hartley College in the Jaffna district, and indeed in the entire country. That experience was a huge influence in my subsequent academic career. During my postgraduate studies at Princeton University, when I presented homework assignments or exams, my Professor, Bill Gray, once wrote to me that my way of presenting answers is more logical and thorough than he had ever seen in his entire academic career. Today I trace these good habits back to the red ink and cigar droppings in my homework assignments to Mr Ratnasabapathy, and to the head knocks in Manuelpillai’s English class.

So we are all justifiably proud to be Hartleyites. Whenever a Hartleyite did well in his

chosen professional sphere anywhere in the world whether be in university competitive examinations or in career promotions, Principal KP would make it a point to announce it in the school assembly. He would try to do it by making a connection between that successful person and a current student if one was indeed there. I could still remember when another Hartleyite Thayanithy broke all records at the University of Ceylon final examinations in Mathematics; KP would announce it in the assembly and then point to his younger brother Kalanithy who happened to be my classmate at that time. It was an inspiration to many of us giving us hope that Hartleyites can aspire to greater things in life, and in our chosen professional career. I still recall that we would be regaled with stories of Prof Eliezer and Prof Thurairajah and their exploits, and they became our heroes and role models. We took their successes and their life stories to our hearts and carried them to places where we went.

And so, we are custodians of a great legacy, **Fiat Lux**, inherited from Hartley College. But alas, today our brothers and sisters over there live under tremendous strain due to the ongoing ethnic war in our homeland. The same ethnic war that almost destroyed Hartley College including its precious library and forced persons like me to leave the country, has also presented to us many new opportunities to rebuild our *alma mater*. Many Hartleyites are now living comfortably in Western countries and must redouble their efforts to assist our beloved school through organisations like HCPPA-NSW Branch. We need to be ready to mobilise at short notice huge resources to rebuild our College to its former glory when the curse of the ethnic conflict in our homeland finally comes to an end, sooner than later, hopefully within our lifetimes. Thank you for the opportunity to write to this Miscellany. Let the good work of the HCPPA-NSW branch continue forever.

**Editor's Note:** Prof M Sivapalan, PhD, who is an old boy of Hartley College, is currently attached to the Department of Civil and Environmental Engineering, University of Illinois, USA. He is a well-known authority in catchment hydrology.

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