

JAFFNA CENTRAL COLLEGE
OLD BOYS' AND GIRLS' ASSOCIATION
(UNITED KINGDOM BRANCH)

OFFICIAL SOUVENIR 1991

JUNE 15, 1991



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COLLEGE HYMN

Lord of our life, on this glad day,
Praise we Thy name, and humbly pray
That grace divine and godly fear,
May crown the labours of the year.

Thy best and highest glory, Lord
Help us to seek; Thy strength afford
With noble toil and joyous praise
Gladly to fill our round of days.

Let Central's sons afar who dwell
In distant homes, the chorus swell;
Bless Thou their toil and bind as one
Those present here, those long since gone.

Teach us to serve the land we love,
Steadfast for Truth, all things to prove;
Bid us in dark or light to stand
In honour firm, a chosen band.

Teachers and taught may wisdom guide,
Through all the years with us abide;
Let this our College ever be
Home of one pure fraternity.

FROM THE EDITOR

THIS SOUVENIR is presented to you, the members and well-wishers of Jaffna Central College Old Boys' and Girls' Association(UK), who are of all ages and interests. The one over-riding exception to this infinite variety of tastes and dislikes, achievements and failures seem to be the affection you feel for *your* college, Central.

The souvenir contains articles and letters which complement or even contradict one another, written by people who had or have various forms of contacts with Central. They are longing to change things for the better; striving to preserve what they already value. No attempt has been made to conceal the naked facts which they endeavour to reveal. If the opinions expressed here make one support, either financially or morally the restoration of Central, then the purpose of the articles and, indeed of this souvenir is met.

Things are moving so fast in Jaffna and at Central that one can hardly keep abreast with the changes. To inform the members of the changes, we hope to publish a newsletter from time to time in the near future. If you have any interesting ideas about such a newsletter please contact any member of the Executive Committee.

On behalf of the Executive Committee, I would like to thank the advertisers for their financial contribution and the writers for their intellectual contribution to publish this souvenir. Personally I thank Vijai, Navam and Shangar without whom it would not have been realised.

T Kirubarajan
Editor

MESSAGE FROM OUR PRESIDENT

I AM DELIGHTED to send this message of good wishes to the Annual Souvenir of JCC OB&GA (UK). This year becomes a memorable year for the Association and particularly for the Sports Committee who gave all the encouragement to the Central team which entered the Festival of Cricket for the first time and became the champions to win the trophy. I must Thank and congratulate every member of the team for his contribution, Dr D J Duraisingham for initiating, Mr S Sivakumar for organising that day's event to a success and all the Centralites and well-wishers for their encouragement. Our team played most of the Sri Lankan OBA cricket teams in London and beat almost all of them. We have won the Sri Lanka Cricket Festival Trophy once again last month.

The Executive Committee is very enthusiastic and organised two social functions to raise funds. The funds are secure in the building society account and when peace is restored in the country and the situation is normal, the money will be utilised as the College authorities and the Jaffna OBA instruct us. To comply with these, it is my earnest desire to appeal to the Centralites to come forward to join the JCC OB&GA (UK), strengthen the membership and increase the fund with your generous contributions to support the present and future generation at Central.

We had a joint function with Vembadi with the intention of raising funds for both schools but it did not come up to our expectations.

We had a successful year and I must make a special mention about the good work done by our secretary Mr D C Jeyarajah and the treasurer Mr V Sivakumar and thank all the members of the committee for their cooperation.

Let me wish the incoming committee all the best and a very successful year.

S D Balarajah
President

A LETTER FROM THE PRINCIPAL

LIFE STYLE OF JAFFNA CENTRAL changes today very rapidly as its environment gets subjected to continuing changes. Nothing is permanent in Jaffna and therefore Central is not an exception. The pattern or the nature of interaction she requires for the future needs a healthy change for which she may expect her children to contribute honestly to enable her to give us shade and comforts by her flag of chock and blue in plenty.

Your appreciation regarding the present progress of Central towards the members of the staff, Board of Prefects is appreciated here. I have announced over the general assembly of your stretching hand from the UK and I hope that you may hear from the Prefects soon.

Your worry about the access for inflow of Pounds to Jaffna Central is reasonable in terms of *today*, but again the predominant factor is not the money in Jaffna but money's worth. For there are no building materials available in Jaffna for us to patch up Central first and foremost before we give wine with the versions of *Play Up Central*.

Thank you for your deep concern of your loving school. Let me then wind up this letter on behalf of Jaffna Central, underlying our motto of *In Gloriam Dei Optimi Maximi*.

N K Shanmuganathapillai
Principal
Jaffna Central College
14 May, 1991

WHEN THE FUNDS ARE LOW....

WHEN THE WAR IS OVER, whenever it may be, and whoever the victor can be, there will be Central, victimised by the horrendous onslaught now in progress. A small organisation like ours cannot undertake the mammoth task of restructuring the damaged buildings. That has to be done by organisations like Asian Development Bank who donated Rs 600,000 to put up three new buildings in 1990. However we can fulfill less demanding needs such as books, computers, laboratory equipments, furniture etc. Please donate generously to the Jaffna Central College Restoration Fund with which we bought a photo copier for Central last year, and made arrangements to send £500 to buy books for the Advanced Level Reference Library.

Central needs neither rhetoric words nor reminiscences of the past at this critical juncture; deeds not words. It needs a helping hand extended to it. Let us be that helping hand. When we appealed last time, the response was very poor.

We can assure that your are contributing towards a worthy cause and that the money you donate will be utilised for the upliftment of a generation of needy students when the situation permits us to do so.

PLEASE CONTRIBUTE GENEROUSLY



If you are Old Centralites please join the Association as members. Life membership costs £50, which in the future can be paid in ten installments at £5 a month. (subject to approval at the forthcoming AGM). Membership fee for one year is £3 which will be increased to £5 if accepted at the AGM.

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A PEEP INTO THE PAST¹

N S Rathnasingham

Former Principal, Jaffna Central College

JAFFNA CENTRAL COLLEGE is one of the oldest educational institutions in the North. It was started at a time when the educated were few and the literacy rate was low. The advent of the Christian missionaries at the dawn of the nineteenth century was really a boon to the people of the sandy and arid Jaffna peninsula. Though the missionaries had difficulties at the beginning, due to the conservative outlook of the people and the natural resistance to any change especially the introduction of another religion, gradually the Jaffna man realised the benefits of a school education and the free vernacular schools became popular. Then the missionaries established central institutions where English and more subjects were taught. Jaffna Central College is such an institution established by the Methodist Mission in 1834. It has a splendid record and is able to look back with pride on its achievements in the field of sports, studies, character formation and the general upliftment of the people.

In 1934, Jaffna Central celebrated its centenary and in a special book titled *Centenary Memorial Edition*, the history of the College was given in detail. The fifty years that followed (1934-1984) has to be written in detail for posterity to know how Jaffna Central kept its flag flying amidst fast and far reaching changes that occurred during that era.

I am personally aware and closely associated with the history of the College for more than two decades of that period as teacher, supervisor of the Middle School, Vice Principal and Principal. But it is impossible to cover in detail in an article of this type, the entire period under review. However, some of the interesting incidents, important personalities and noteworthy events that boom large in my memory are sure to serve as a basis for any future historian who decided to trace the history of the college or interpret the events in their true and correct perspective.

¹Reprinted from the 150th Anniversary Souvenir of the College published in 1984

The period under the principalship of Rev P T Cash is generally regarded as the Golden Era of Jaffna Central College. It coincided with equally famous period at other leading colleges - at St Patrick's College with Father Long, Rev Bicknell at Jaffna College, Rev Peto at St John's College and Mr A Cumarasamy at Jaffna Hindu College. It was thus a Golden Era of Education in Jaffna as we had the best of schools administered by giants of education and manned by a devoted staff imbued with a missionary spirit - a spirit to serve. There is no doubt that this was an advantage and a favourable start, our students enjoyed under the denominational system of education.

Rev P T Cash was succeeded by Mr J W Arudpiragasam who had been at Central from 1929. He was the first national principal to take charge of the school and within a short period of three years he did much for the development of the school. He completed the Centenary Block and the science laboratories.

In the forties, the Assisted Schools increased in number and, many existing schools expanded and were upgraded as Grade 1A and Grade 1B schools. When *Big Schools* increased in number, the character and composition of the Jaffna Schools Sports Association (JSSA) which was in charge of the soccer and athletic competitions also changed. Some of the old Big Schools found it difficult to continue as members of the JSSA because of the alleged discriminations against them. They resigned from the JSSA, but Jaffna Central College decided to continue its membership and took part in all competitions. Mr T I Abraham, our veteran Prefect of Games was responsible for this decision. It was a decision based on principles and also with an eye on the chances available to Jaffna Central in the absence of the other old Big Schools. His diplomatic decision paid dividends and Jaffna Central continue to be the champion in soccer and athletic for a decade or more. Later this position was lost to other schools which over the years have become *Big* themselves.

In 1952, when I joined the staff of Jaffna Central, Rev C A Smith was the principal. He was appointed principal in 1945 and was in command when two great changes took place. The first was a political change. Ceylon was granted independence in 1948 and became

a free nation within the Commonwealth of Nations., The other change was a revolutionary move in education which shocked even the developed world. In 1945, free education was introduced by an Act of Parliament. It made education from the kindergarten to the end of university education free for all students. As a result of independence and free education, the student population more than trebled. Schools were faced with problems of accommodation. additional buildings, extra staff etc. We were fortunate enough that Rev C A Smith, a great builder was at the helm of affairs at Central during this period. He was not only a builder, but also qualified in wood work and more economical than the Jaffna man. He completed many buildings at minimum cost and purchased the neighbouring compound for further expansion. His dream came true and in that compound two buildings have been already put up. There is room for at least two more buildings.

Rev C A Smith was ably assisted by these senior teachers - Mr J C Charles, the Vice Principal Mr A E Tamber, and Kalaippulavar K Navaratnam. I consider it a great privilege to have worked with these three unique personalities. They influenced my life in a great way and their students may have much more to say.

Mr J C Charles was an able administrator who acted for the principal on many occasions and for long periods. He was a gentleman of etiquette and exemplary manners.. He installed those good habits into his students. He had his own attractive way of putting things across. Even a negative reply was well couched in pleasant words and administered with a gentle touch and a broad smile.

Mr A E Tamber was a soft spoken gentleman full of tact and wisdom. As president of the All Ceylon Union of Teachers (ACUT) and as an expert on educational matters, he brought fame and honour to himself and to Central with which his connections run to three generations. He was much sought after by politicians because of his influence, advice and the spirit of compromise which helped them to solve many problems. His philosophy of life was unique and progressive and influenced many who were fortunate enough to come into contact with him.

(continued on page 11)

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(continued from page 9)

Kalaippulavar K Navaratnam was well known in India and Ceylon as an exponent of Saiva Siddhantha Philosophy and Tamil Culture. The title *Kalaippulavar* was conferred on him for his contribution to Dravidian Art and Culture. When I produced a scene for a school drama, he insisted on my producing a full drama and gave me all encouragement to do so. It resulted in putting on board two or three dramas which brought out the artistic and histrionic talents of the students. He pioneered and popularised the teaching of commerce at Central and was really the Father of Commerce Study in Jaffna schools.

Besides these three there were other senior teachers about whom I would like to mention. Mr K C Jacob of Kerala was a special post holder and an advanced level teacher in Mathematics. He was a man of principles, simple, unassuming and worthy of emulation. Punctuality and discipline were his trails. He was a good Christian who did his best and left the rest to God the Almighty.

The next senior teacher I should mention is Pandit V R Sarma. He was a great scholar in Tamil and Sanskrit and well known for his erudite learning both in his own country - Tamil Nadu - and Ceylon. His assembly talks were eagerly attended both by the staff and students. He always had something interesting and novel to say and said that in his own inevitable way. The others whom I can recall are Mr V V Rajaratnam and Mr S Mahalingam. Both of whom retired after functioning as vice principals. Mr K Theivanandampillai who was also vice principal and now an associate professor in a Malaysian University. Mr & Mrs J S Ariaratnam of whom Mr Ariaratnam was vice principal for a short period. Later he went on promotion as principal of Velanai Central College. Mr E T Rajaratnam who after marriage left us to join a college closer to home. Mr S Kulasaegarasingham who retired as lecturer in English at the Technical College, Jaffna; Mr S D Jeyasingham who retired as the principal of the Technical College Jaffna; Mr W B A Allegakoen who was appointed as Education Officer in charge of Counselling Service; Mr & Mrs Mathiaparanam of whom Mrs Mathiaparanam taught mathematics and Mr Mathiaparanam the classical languages; Mr L W Ponnuthurai the art master; Mr Kanagasabai the Head Master of

the Primary Section; Mr & Mrs Kumarasundaram both trained teachers and Mrs K Thuraiatnam of the Primary School.

The staff was united and functioned as one body. When the students increased in number Rev Smith selected a few young loyal old boys to serve their Alma Mater. Mr V D Jeyaratnasingham, a renowned sportsman now serving in Brunei; Mr E S Tambiah, the popular sports master; Mr Ram Kumarasamy, a talented musician and now a business magnate; Mr Viji Kumarasamy now on a UNO assignment in Papua-New Guinea; Mr R A Tambirajah who migrated to Australia; Mr P Manoharan who became the chief chemist at the paper factory; Mr K Thiruchelvam now serving in Nigeria; Mr K Kandasamy yet on the staff of Central; Mr M Paramanandam, an author of books now serving in Brunei; Mr S Alagarajah presently the chief clerk of the College; Mr K Manickavasagar a leading member of the Sri Lanka Library Association; Mr K Kulendran who obtained his M.Sc. and took up an administrative post in Nigeria were some of the old boys who were appointed by the mission on the recommendation of Rev C A Smith. Besides these old boys a few young teachers were also appointed to strengthen the staff. Mr V Balasundaram to teach Chemistry - the present Principal, Mr R K Rajaratnam to teach Zoology - he also functioned as vice principal for a short period. Mr & Mrs Sivapragasam of whom Mr Sivapragasam is an artist and sculptor who has won all Ceylon fame, Mr A Arunasalam, a tactful disciplinarian, Mr K Manickavasagar who joined the Department as instructor in charge of Social Studies.

Mrs T Chelliah and Mrs E K Richards are some of whom I remember. There may be a few whom I have omitted, but space and time and perhaps lack of memory prevent me from mentioning all the names.

Rev C A Smith was succeeded by Rev D T Niles. He was a Centralite and the world wide recognition he achieved as a writer, preacher and theologian elevated the name of Central to international levels. Even after his death very important visitors from the World Council of Churches came to see the College that nurtured such a prodigy.

I have already referred to the introduction of free education in 1945. Another significant change in educational policy took place during the stewardship of Rev D T Niles. In 1956 legislation was enacted that

the medium of instruction should be the mother tongue of child. It will be interesting to note that in the case of children of mixed marriages mother tongue was interpreted as the language of the child's father. Some parents felt that this was unjust piece of legislation and left the country. Rev D T Niles along with other leading educationalists in the North - Mr A E Tamber, Mr Handy Perinpanayagam and Prof K Nesiah, welcomed the change. They championed the cause of education in the *Swabasha*. It is the *Swabasha* campaign which led to *Sinhala Only* act in 1956.

Rev D T Niles believed in decentralisation of power and administration. He separated the secondary section into two units as the Middle and Upper schools. He appointed three supervisors to help him run the college. Mr T I Abraham as supervisor of the primary school in addition to the Head Master - Mr S S Veluppillai, Mr N S Rathnasingham as supervisor of the Middle School, and Mr K Theivanandampillai, the vice principal as supervisor of the Upper School. Sports Meets, Prize Givings, admissions and time tables were all separately arranged or held by each section. As Dr Niles had to be out of the island very often in connection with his work as South East Area Superintendent of the WCE, the sectional administration was very helpful for the efficient working of the College. During the long absence of the principal, Mr A E Tamber maintained the *status quo* as acting principal. Dr Niles was an honorary principal and did not draw any salary from the Department of Education.

Rev C A Smith too did not draw any salary as principal. The salary provided by the Department was credited to the school building fund. So we can just imagine the amount that would have accrued to the Building Fund during the ten years he was principal at Jaffna Central. He drew the salary and allowances paid to him by the mission as a missionary. We have to be thankful to Rev C A Smith not only for his invaluable service but also for his generous donation by the way of his salary.

During the principalship of Dr D T Niles, another revolutionary change to the school system was being debated and discussed. The government was planning to *take over* all private schools.

(continued on page 31)

REPORT OF THE SPORTS COMMITTEE

1990 - 1991

THE PERIOD UNDER CONSIDERATION has been one of outstanding success.

Last year, making a debut in the All Island Old Boys' Festival of Cricket, under the able leadership of former college captain and centurion in the *Big Match* in 1982. We carried away the Trophy beating Old Royalists in the finals - Congratulations to Paul and other members of the team. It will not be out of place to mention the outstanding contribution of Mr S Sivakumar to get the team into a winning combination.

In the other matches played last year, we beat St Patrick's, Jaffna Hindu, St Thomas' Mt Lavinia, Ananda and lost only to St John's, Jaffna. S Sivakumar was the captain.

This year we started in brilliant fashion winning the All Island Seven-a-side Tournament for the second successive year, beating Old Royalists once again in the finals.

Under the capable leadership of T G Singham who played a captain's innings in the finals against Old Royalists, we won the Trophy and won the admiration and envy of thousands of spectators, who graced this occasion. This year, P Prahalathan who was last year's captain was not available for selection as he was busy with his examinations.

Former college captain K Thomas was the most outstanding cricketer of the Tournament and has scintillating Caribbean style batting coupled with his all round performances won him many new friends and admirers. His record score of over 150 runs for one dismissal will have a lasting memory not only in the minds of the Old Centralites, but also in the minds of the vast crowd at the Maori Grounds.

All rounder A Maheetharan, showed his mettle in all the matches and opening with Thomas he created a new record for any wicket in the Tournament by scoring 125 runs without being separated against Old Anthonians, Kandy in the first encounter.

We entered the semi finals by beating St Anthony's, Kandy and St Thomas', Mt Lavinia by one run in a thrilling finish.

A brilliant throw by Murali to run the last Thomian batsman out to clinch victory for us, brought reminiscences of the tied test between Australia and West Indies, 30 years ago, when the last Australian batsman was run out by a direct throw.

In the semi finals, we beat Nalanda, without much effort and qualified to meet Royal in the finals. In the finals, a brilliant innings by the skipper T G Singham and good bowling by Mano Dharmaraj sealed the fate of Royal. Thomas' six behind the wicket reminded the spectators of West Indian all rounder of yesteryear Larrie Constantine.

Though Thomas was outstanding with Maheetharan and skipper T G Singham, who deserve special mention, one should not forget the team work, team spirit and the contribution made by other members of the team, namely, Wijenathan, Thamilaagan, Prabakar, Dharmaraj and Sri Ranganathan. It is worth mentioning that Thomas, Prabakar, Murali, Thamilaagan and Dharmaraj represented our team in the Festival last year.

A special bouquet to former college captain and present skipper G Anurudran who did an excellent job as manager and coach. I hope that the Old Centralites will rally round to host the team at a special function soon.

We hope to play matches against Jaffna Hindu, St John's and St Patrick's.

I wish to thank the other members of the Sports Committee namely, V Rajasingham, T Mahendran, S Sivakumar, G Anurudran, T G Singham, S D Balrajah, D C Jeyarajah and V Shivakumaran for helping with the selection of teams and other encouragements. Our sincere thanks to Mr Pushpanathan of Rathbone Travels, who sponsored our team for the Cricker Festival and Mohan Raj family for their hospitality on the day of the match.

In conclusion I wish to thank one and all for keeping the Central flag flying.

Dr J C Duraisingham
Chairman, Sports Committee

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THE STRUGGLE TO SURVIVE

K Kandasamy

Deputy Principal, Jaffna Central College

IT IS A GREAT PRIVILEGE and a heart breaking experience to give a brief summary of what *Central* has undergone during the last ten years. Unfortunately as we are geographically situated very close to the Jaffna Fort, the destruction of the buildings is inevitable. The mental agony to the administration, staff and the students to keep the school going is beyond imagination. Up to the time of the peace accord too, we were affected in various ways owing to the confrontation. Every day it was a day of anxiety and tension. Parents hesitated to send their children to school. In October 1986 one of our school prefects was fatally hit by a bullet while he was on duty in one of the class rooms. It was during the this period that the school was affected almost every other day due to the repeated shelling from the Fort. However such damages were repaired over-night and class rooms were ready the following day for normal work. In this connection I would like to mention that due to the initiative and enthusiasm of the Prefects, sand bags were erected around the class rooms and other vulnerable spots of the school. This saved many a life.

But on arrival of the Indian Peace Keeping Forces, the confrontation reached its peak and the damages were very heavy. In any case, once the situation had settled, we started renovations. I will be failing in my duty if I do not mention here that we were able to repair the damaged buildings and put up new blocks with the help of the Asian Development Bank to the tune of more than half a million Rupees. Utilising this money we renovated the old buildings and built new ones as given below.

- Two new blocks for the Primary Section were put up
- One two floor building for the Middle School was built

- A new biology laboratory was built
- The second floor in the Tamber Commemoration Block was converted into a modern hall with all the amenities to accommodate the whole school
- A library for the Middle School and a reference library for the Advanced Level students were established
- The Rigg Hall was repaired and we were about to re-open the Hostel
- A set of new toilets was built

When we were progressing in all aspects and Central was climbing up to its former glory, the number on roll that was considerably low during the previous years started increasing. Public examination results were gradually improving and the students from other institutions were anxious to join ours. In the field of sports we were coming up to our former status and even played *The Big Match* against St John's. On the academic side, young, energetic and dedicated teachers were added to the staff.

The appearance of the school was envied by the public and it was even rumoured that the school building might be taken over by the Jaffna University. The ceremonial opening of the new buildings was held in February 1990 and the school was progressing well.

Before I proceed further, I remind myself of the saying *mountain toiled and brought forth nothing*. To the astonishment of every one who had toiled to bring *Central* to its former glory, unfortunately within a period of three months, in June 1990, troubles started again and this time without any exception all the buildings were heavily damaged, some beyond any repair.

I am sure the old boys of the school will help to rebuild the institution. Hence I give below some of the damages done to Central during the last few months.

- The roof of the Romaine Cooke Hall which is of sentimental value was completely damaged and a major portion of the upstairs concrete flat has come down. The library that was housed there is there no more. Almost all the books were either burnt or soaked in rain water beyond redemption.
- The newly converted modern hall in Tamber Block which was opened only three months earlier was destroyed together with all furniture and fittings.
- Cash, Centenary, Smith and 150th Anniversary Blocks, Primary School new buildings, Physics and Chemistry laboratories housed in the Centenary Block, Biology laboratory housed in the new block were damaged with all the equipments.
- The Rigg Hall upstairs roof, windows, doors etc. were damaged while the old dining hall, kitchen, servants' rooms were completely erased off.
- The set of toilets built by March 1990 were destroyed.
- The College Bus purchased in 1954 by Rev C A Smith was smashed beyond any repair.
- The score board donated by an old boy is no more.
- The play ground supposed to be the best in Jaffna is full of weeds and pot holes and the parapet wall around the ground is also damaged.

In spite of the shelling and other confrontation that would have cost their lives, some students and employees of the school removed the the important documents, certificates etc. to safer places.

The new principal Mr N K Shanmuganathapillai who took over in November 1990 is no stranger to Central. He is a fully fledged Centralite who was a student here between 1945 and 1955. He is the next Centralite to become the principal of Central after Mr A E Tamber.

He is very enthusiastic and much interested to develop the school with the cooperation of the energetic staff, School Development Society, Old Boys' Association, parents, students and other well wishers. However the development is possible *if and only if* peace and harmony prevail.

Minor repairs have been done and the debris cleared to have the classes as well as possible. Cricket practices have also been started. In spite of all these crippling difficulties more than 90% of the students attend school.

Before I conclude, may I appeal to all *Centralites* where ever they are and especially to those in the UK to rally around their Alma Mater and to assist morally, financially and any other way possible.



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JAFFNA CENTRAL DOES IT AGAIN IN LONDON!

A Tarcisius
BBC Thamilosai

JAFFNA CENTRAL OBA, UK, won the championship again this year - second year in succession - in the Sri Lankan Cricket Festival held on May 27, 1990, in London, to the delight of nearly 10,000 Sri Lankan fans!

It was a series of a 7-a-side, 6 over matches; 12 teams, in four groups; and each time tripped up or down at the end of 2, 3 or 4 combats!

In Round 1, Jaffna Central, in her knock against St Anthony's, Katusgastota, amassed 125 runs without losing a wicket. K Thomas, a former College captain, faced 18 balls and scored 75 runs. His dazzling 50 was in 2.1 overs. St Anthony's replied with 40 four 3 in 6 overs!

In Round 2, Central's bout with St Thomas', Mount Lavinia was a close fight. Central scored 69 for 2, with Thomas 29 n.o. and Mahee 32. St Thomas' scored 68 for 4 - S Rajkumar was 31 n.o.

In Round 3, - the semi final - Central faced Nalanda, a formidable team with Kirti Ranasinghe, a formed Ceylon cap, leading the Nalandians. Central scored 72 for 1 in six overs, with Thomas 35 n.o. and Mahee 37. Nalanda's reply was 35 all out in 4 overs! Kirti Ranasinghe scored a stylish 24. Thomas captured 2 wkts for 16; Wijenathan took 2 for 10.

In Round 4, - the finals - Jaffna Central met Royal, as they did last year. Put into bat, the Centralites slammed a quick 79 for 3. Thomas knocked a quick 30 with 4 sixes and a 4. Singham played a captain's innings, with 35 n.o. including a lightning 3 sixes and a 4 in one over. Royal replied with 51 for 5 in six overs. Vagheesan scored 19. Mano Dharmaraj captured 3 Royal wickets for 3 runs!

K Thomas' brilliant batting and skipper Singham's wicket-keeping and his field setting, the day through, sealed the victory for the Centralites. Ganesan Anurudran, a former Central captain was the overall organiser for Central.

12 Teams participated in the Day's Tournament: St Peter's, Mahinda and Zahira; Royal, Trinity and Ananda; Nalanda, St John's and St Joseph's; and St Anthony's, Central and St Thomas'.

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

NEWS FROM JAFFNA OBA

- J OBA is publishing a regular newsletter for the members
- J OBA is planning to furnish the Middle School library
- The damages sustained by the school since June, 1990 is estimated to be about Rs 20m

WITH COMPLIMENTS FROM



SCANS GROUP

WILL TIME TELL?

S Sabeel

Old Centralite (1975 - 1987)

AT A TIME when it is believed that nothing more recent than the Smith Era should be tackled as memoirs, it may not be a pleasant task to write about the events that happened very recently, between 1985 and 1987. Here in this article I am trying to recount the important events that shaped the course of Central during that crucial period. These are not the reminiscences that I may like to remember forever, though it may be wrong to forget them. For, *those who do not remember the past are condemned to relive it*, says Santayana. The events recounted tell the struggle at Central which has been going on since the mid eighties, unnoticed and perhaps, unrealised by most of those outside Central. No doubt my own prejudices, which inevitably spring from the experiences at central and make-up creep through the paragraphs and the interpretations will be disputed by many.

Obviously Central has been under going untold difficulties since the mid eighties when the attacks and counter-attacks became widespread. Our proximity to the City Centre, which we² previously enjoyed in the form of the Public Library, Duraiappa Stadium etc., became a severe disadvantage for us. When the Municipality Office, General Post Office, Subramaniam Park, Ashoka Hotel and other sites were abandoned due to the continuing shelling from the Fort and aerial bombing, Central was alone left as a buffer between the army in the Fort and the people in town. As a result Central had to suffer the wrath of the army and take the brunt time and again.

The play ground had to be abandoned and the entrance shifted to the First Cross Street. The Rector of St Patrick's College kindly allowed us to use their play ground to practice cricket, foot ball and athletics. Thus, Central, once boasted to have the best play ground in Jaffna, was forced to depend on another college for play ground. Windows of the class rooms facing the play ground were sealed off. Every

²Here *we* generally refers to the students and staff at that time

other building was damaged by the indiscriminate bombing and shelling. When coming to school in the morning, one had to be fortunate not to have his class room damaged. The army used to shell only during and even if a class room was damaged the previous night, the debris would be cleared early in the morning and the class held as if nothing happened - well, almost. There was a strong will to survive among the staff and students, though the attendance was dwindling. Every attempt was made to convince ourselves and others that Central was functioning well.

Death at Central

However, on October 30, 1986 something that would make all our efforts to normalise the functioning of Central fruitless was to happen. *Ponnampalam Vipulanathan*, a Prefect who was on duty in one of the Ordinary Level class rooms was hit by a stray bullet apparently from the Fort. At that moment he was trying to assist the students who panicked after hearing a series of explosions outside. He was taken to the Jaffna General Hospital and after an unsuccessful operation he died. The future of Central was at risk now. Previously when only the buildings were attacked, the reaction of the students and parents had not been drastic. But things were different when there was a loss of life. Naturally parents were not willing to send their children to school and regular attendance has decreased to an estimated total of 500 from 2000.

Whether Central should remain in the same place and continue to suffer or abandon the site and move out to somewhere else was the prime question. If moving out, where to and if staying on, at what cost which could probably be another loss of life, it was further asked. After considering the pros and cons, it was decided to stay on at the same site. However College was closed for a week which served as a mourning period as well as a breathing space for Central and, other schools were closed for a day protesting the killing. It was a time of solidarity. Students from all other schools were present at the funeral and joined the protest march organised by us.

Many a resolution regarding how to mark and honour the sacrifice of Vipul as he was affectionately known, was made both at and after the funeral. Most of them were never realised. A year later, Prefects

collected Rs. 10,000 from old boys and well wishers and set up *Vipulananthan Memorial Scholarship Fund* in 1987, and a scholarship has been awarded since then to an Advanced Level student judged to be the best all-rounder.

Operation Liberation

Fortunately nothing that could have made the decision to stay on foolish and irresponsible happened during the following 18 months though not all the buildings were spared. Yet the political and military situation in Jaffna worsened and the future of Central was again in jeopardy. By April 1987, Sri Lankan forces were attempting capture Jaffna and Central again became a prime target for the shelling and bombing.

Damages caused by the bombings became too severe to sustain. The question whether or not to stay on at the same site was again raised. To decide, a meeting attended by the staff, student representatives, old boys and well-wishers was held. The irony was that the meeting was being held to decide whether central should continue to remain in its present site, yet the venue for the meeting was *not* Central itself! Since some attendants were afraid to come to Central, horrified by the incessant bombings, it was held at Navalar School. Further anxiety and panic was caused when a newspaper announced that Central was to be shifted to Stanley College and classes held there in the evenings.

The issue was discussed, and once again it was decided not to shift Central to any other place. Most of the staff, parents and students were in favour of the decision, however risky it might have been. The Prefects, who attended the meeting as student representatives volunteered to find means of protecting students attending school. They collected about Rs 6,000 from well wishers and bought sand bags which buffered vulnerable class rooms, especially those facing the Public Library from possible shelling. Though the presence of sand bags in class rooms created an atmosphere of barracks, it was very reassuring for the students and staff alike.

During the brief honey-moon period which followed the arrival of the Indian Peace Keeping Forces, all the buildings were given a new look and Central was on the right track once again. Every one was optimistic. The unexploded land-mines and shells in the play ground

were defused by the IPKF and we were able to use it again. Alas, the fighting broke out again in October 1987, and Central's position was back to square one. Buildings were damaged and the same old problems were looming over Central. By then I have left Central.

In spite of the hostile environment, Central has been making steady progress in all frontiers since 1985. Examination results were improving and the number of university entrants was increasing. Three students left for European Universities on scholarships awarded for their performance in the Advanced level Examinations. Energetic staff were there for the Ordinary and Advanced Level classes. A/L Science Students' Union published *Central Explorer*, a magazine prepared entirely by the students and devoted for science topics, the second of its kind among Jaffna schools. Sports Meet, cricket matches and foot ball matches were held regularly. A/L Students' Union Annual Lunch, Prefects' Social and other similar functions were held even amidst bombings. In spite of the crippling difficulties the staff, student and old boys cooperated to run the college as smooth as possible. It was a *hurt but not fallen* situation.

That is not to say there was not any shortage. There were not many up-to-date books in the college library, there was not any proper computer etc. for example. These shortages, in my opinion, the Old Boys' Association can rectify in the future.

History repeats itself - but only too soon and too often in the case of Central. The events that happened after 1988 are almost the same as before. Central is caught in a vicious circle of expectation, disappointment and destruction as are the people in that part of the world. When it would free itself from that circle, only time will tell.

CENTRALITES SPORTS CLUB, JAFFNA

There was an open letter from Centralites Sports Club, Jaffna. They would like to hear from Old Centralites, especially from former cricketers and need financial assistance to buy sports equipments. If interested, please contact Dr J C Duraisingham.

A LETTER FROM JAFFNA TO LONDON

Mr D C Jeyarajah
Secretary
JCC OB&GA
United Kingdom

Dear Mr Jeyarajah

BEING A CENTRALITE, it is my privilege to request you, the secretary of the OBA to join us and extend your support and advice to build up our school of repute as one of the best in the Island. Our Old Boys' Association, in its 85th year in operation, wishes to build a fully equipped library for the junior students at Central. We expect the support of all the old boys scattered all around the world.

Please give your details to us, and our details to our old boys in the UK and join us as a life member. The life membership fee is only Rs 100. Any voluntary contribution towards the library is accepted with thanks. Our bank account number is 9265 at Commercial Bank of Ceylon, Jaffna.

With best wishes to you all.

S Ramakrishnan
President
JCC OBA
Jaffna

WHEN THE MINORITY KISSED THE MAJORITY³

Festival of Cricket 1990

THE FESTIVAL OF CRICKET ORGANISED by the Old Boys Association in the United Kingdom was extremely well-organised, friendly and civilised and apart from the excitement of the close finishes of the games itself, it offered an array of nostalgic moments.

The cricket itself was absolutely wonderful and from the very first match when Jaffna Central College trounced the cup holders Ananda, they set a cloud over the rest of the teams for the lads from Jaffna demonstrated the typical one-day game skills and went on to win all their matches and finally beat Royal in a heart-stopping, nail-biting finish.

The Jaffna team had some superb exponents of the game in V Paul Prahalathan, K Thomas and B Muralitharan who spared not anything loose or anything short.

The other members of the Jaffna Central side were Mano Dhar-maraj, S Prabakar, G Anurudran and N Thamilalagan all of whom played a magnificent and responsible role in taking the trophy by beating some of the better known schools that included in their teams many a former first eleven player.

It was the last ball of the game that decided the winner of the OBAs trophy. Royal, the firm favourites needed only three runs to snatch victory, and while excitement rose to fever pitch the Royalists chanted their college song and were ready to invade the field and the Jaffna Central supporters were still like the fur trees around the grounds that stood motionless on that sunny and breezeless day.

The man at the crease was none other than the Royal skipper Asitha Jayaweera who had to make a captain's stroke to win - but the determined Jaffna bowler produced a gem of a delivery that left the Royal skipper startled. It was victory for the Jaffna boys and the scenes that followed were so emotional that some of them tried hard to hold back their tears.

Jaffna Central supporters embraced everyone around and hugged and kissed them - most of them Royal supporters - and for me it was

³Excerpt from a Sri Lankan newspaper report by Reggie Fernando

a moment to remember for it is a long time since I saw anything even close to that.



DATES TO REMEMBER

July 27, 1991 Cricket Match: JCC OB&GA vs St John's OBA
Venue: British Gas Sports Ground
Twyford Avenue, London, W3

August 21, 1991 Cricket Match: JCC OB&GA vs J Hindu OBA
Venue: as above

September 14, 1991 Cricket Match: JCC OB&GA vs St Patrick's OBA
Venue: King's College Grounds
New Malden

WANT TO PLAY FOR JCC OB&GA?

Anyone who wishes to play for Old Centralites, please contact, either Mr S D Balarajah on 081 543 8210, Mr S Sivakumar on 081 778 9013 or Mr G Anurudran on 081 543 6392.

(continued from page 13)

The Buddhist Theological Society, the Hindu Board of Education, the Christian Missions and other private agencies who owned assisted schools discussed the take over move for about two or three years. Rev D T Niles was very much in favour of the take over. He was perhaps progressive in his vision or attitude and welcomed take over as part of the struggle of a hitherto under-privileged majority against the privileged minority. The take over was a much discussed topic in Jaffna as most of the schools were private schools and all would pass on to the Government when the take over is implemented. Out of 88 Big Schools, 140 Junior Schools and 252 primary Schools in Jaffna only nine were government owned schools before the take over. The Anglican Mission decided to retain two big schools - St John's and Chundikkuli Girls' College - and hand over the rest to the government. The Church of South India (American Mission) decided to run the Jaffna College and Uduvil Girls' High School as unaided private schools and hand over the other schools. It is very strange that the Methodist Mission did not make a similar decision to keep Jaffna Central College and Vembadi Girls' High School. Perhaps the progressive ideas of Rev D T Niles were responsible for handing over their schools in Jaffna. I agree with many of our old boys of Central that it would have been better, had the mission not allowed these two schools to be taken over. We could have maintained our standard, continuity, traditions and connections if Central had remained private. We could have over come our initial financial difficulties too as St John's, St Patrick's and other private schools did. Though some may argue that this change has its advantages, yet one cannot deny that the frequent transfers, shortages of staffs, delays in recruitments, red-tapism and political intervention do impair the smooth and efficient working of the Government schools.

Soon after the take over in 1962, Mr A E Tamber, the vice principal was appointed principal. He was deeply steeped in the traditions of the College and did his best to maintain them. He was heir to a great legacy and was satisfied with preserving it and not in attempting any radical changes.

Mr Tamber retired in 1964 and was succeeded by Mr E Sa-

balingham, a well known sportsman and vice principal of Kokuvil Hindu College. Mr E Sabalingam was principal of Jaffna Central College for seven years and did the maximum possible to maintain the image of Central as a leading College. He initiated work on the Tamber Commemoration Block and completed the ground floor and the first floor before he left. He built a shrine room for the Hindu students in the hostel. He negotiated with the Thiruketheeswaram Temple authorities and obtained a festival turn for the Hindu Society of Central. He organised the College band and obtained the service of Lt. Col. K Balendra to be in charge of the Band by taking him into permanent staff.

Mr V V Rajaratnam, the vice principal retired in 1971, and Mr E Sabalingam recommended that the writer (Mr N S Rathnasingham) be appointed vice principal and the appointment was made in January 1971. Within a month Mr Sabalingam was promoted to Supra Grade and asked to take over the principalship of Jaffna Hindu College. Mr E K Shanmuganathan, principal of Kopay Christian College who also was also placed on Supra Grade assumed duties as principal of Jaffna Central.

Mr E K Shanmuganathan continued the good work done by Mr E Sabalingam. He completed the top floor of the Tamber Commemoration Block which was left incomplete because of the transfer of Mr E Sabalingam. He also laid the foundation and completed the ground floor of the Middle School Block. Mr E K Shanmuganathan who was presently aware of the work done by Rev C A Smith as he (Mr E K S) was an acting teacher at that time, invited Rev Smith to declare open the Tamber Commemoration Block.

In 1980, Mr E K Shanmuganathan who was by now elevated to SLES Class II was called to the Head Office and the vice principal (the writer) was asked to take charge of the school. It was welcomed by all as I had been at Central for about thirty years and served as the supervisor of the Middle School for eight years and as vice principal for nine years. The evaluation of my attempts to put Central on the map and improve its performance in studies, sports and its state of discipline is for others to say. I would only add that with the help of the Ministry of Sports I was able to build eight tiers of steps to accommodate about 1000

spectators on the western side of the playing field. The two quadrangles were connected by an inside pathway making access and supervision easy. The first floor of the Middle School building was completed. A separate library for the Middle School was started and a science exhibition and Bahrathy Day celebrations were held. The Leo Club was inaugurated. I retired in December 1982 after completing my 60th year.

Mr V Balasuntharam who also counts about 30 years at Jaffna Central and who was vice principal during my period has taken over. His long connection with the school is really an asset and our expectations of his period are high. We wish him all successes.

Reminiscences of the past cannot be considered complete without the reference to *The Big Match* played annually between St John's College and Jaffna Central College. The annual fixture in cricket really commenced in the later part of the 19th century. Cricket was introduced at Jaffna Central in 1881. St John's followed soon and the first match was played in 1883 or 1884 with teams consisting of the principal, teachers and students. From then onwards *The Big Match* was a great social event when both schools met to celebrate the day with the game, lunch and tea for all. As the game became more popular the composition of the spectators became more varied and increased in number. Adjustments and alterations had to be made in the hours of play, methods of admission, manner of providing tea and lunch and the place of play too.

Now the Match is *Big* not only because it is the biggest match between two big schools but also because it draws the biggest crowd in Jaffna. Personally I wish it had remained a social event at which both schools' old boys and parents meet to celebrate the day and enjoy the match. A limited over match may be a beginning to restore the old spirit and avoid unnecessary tension build up and unwanted rioting. Most of the encounters ended with tame draws. A few matches took dramatic turns and exciting finishes. I remember a match that ended before most of the spectators turned up on the second day. They were shocked to hear that the match was over because Central collapsed on both innings. St John's had to persuade the Centralites to stay for the lunch as the lunch was being prepared. On another occasion St John's had 3 or 4 wickets to go and only a few runs to make a win. There was plenty of

time too, but a spin bowler from Central (now a doctor in the USA) scored a hat-trick and Central won by one run. Recently in 1982, on the second day, half the crowd left after lunch as the last pair from St John's side had gone to bat. They had to make over 100 runs for a draw. The conclusion was obvious since the last pair was shaky and many congratulated Central for the sure win it was about to achieve. But the last pair defended their wickets with determination for hours together and avoided a defeat to the surprise of all.

Jaffna Central was also one of the few schools to star the Advanced Level Students' Union and its Annual Dinner. I remember attending the first Dinner in 1952. I continued to attend the Dinner for 25 years and, because of this record I had to propose a toast when it celebrated its Silver Jubilee in 1976 with DIG R Sundaralingam as the Chief Guest - an old boy of the College.

Now we find that our Big Schools have to a great extent become victims of circumstances. The science laboratories of which we took pride of stand striped of the chemicals; libraries are burnt, ransacked or threatened with destruction, examinations are interrupted, regular attendance is almost impossible with hartals, boycotts etc.

Whatever the system may be - educational, political or social - our main plank to success has been, is and will be education.

May Jaffna Central College *keep her courage cool and clean and live in service and glad and free* for many years to come.

AGM 1991

The AGM of OB&GA planned for June 22, 1991 has been postponed and the members will be informed of the new date and venue in due course. We regret for any inconveniences caused by this postponement.

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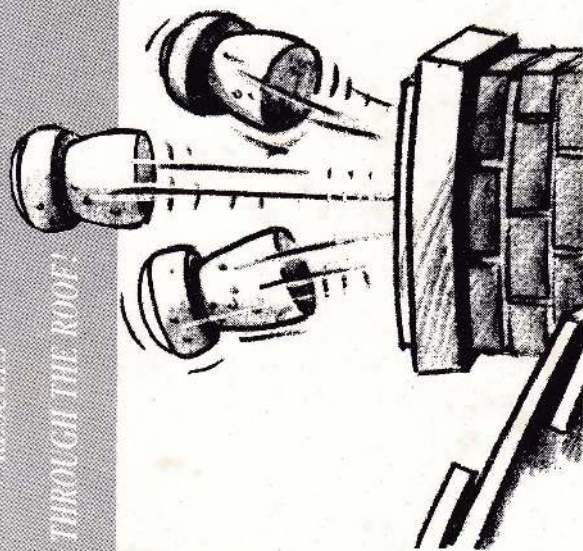
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The opinions expressed in this Souvenir are those of the writers concerned and not necessarily those of the Association.

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RESULTS

THROUGH THE ROOF!



CONGRATULATIONS

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	Best TAX Paper	J Blackburn
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COLLEGE SONG

Wet the ground and wind opposing,
Just ten minutes yet to play;
Play up Central, no reposing
On the gains of yesterday.
Now's the time for combined action,
Pass the ball from man to man;
Never selfish play no faction
Proved worth while since sports began.

Chorus : Central! rally for the school then,
Take the field with one accord;
Keep your courage cool and clean then
Central's flag must ne'er be lowered.

On the field of life when striving,
Keep your honour true and bright;
Play up Central, ever thriving
On the fruits of grace and light.
For your comrades of the old days,
scattered far though they maybe;
For your school, for her true praise,
Live in service glad and Free.