



**Old Royalists'**  
Association in the UK  
[www.oldroyalists.org.uk](http://www.oldroyalists.org.uk)



## *From under the Tamarind Tree*

*Q4 - 2017 Issue*

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*This is the first issue of 'From Under the Tamarind Tree', the official newsletter of the Old Royalists' Association in the UK. The purpose of the newsletter is, to keep the fraternity of Royalists in the United Kingdom informed of the news and activities pertaining to our alma mater, and of course ORAUK.*



# Highlights

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- **Stubbs Shield back at Royal after 30 years**
  - Royal won the 100<sup>th</sup> Stubbs Shield after 30<sup>th</sup> years. This was the 19<sup>th</sup> occasion that Royal secured the Stubbs Shield, the highest among competing schools.
- **Royal bests STC at Tennis, Badminton, Basketball and Chess**
  - In chess, Royal swept all age categories and secured the Aturupane-Parakrama Challenge Trophy which was on offer for the first time. Royal leads St Thomas' 2-0 in the series which was launched in 2016.
    - Under 20 - 5.5 - 0.5
    - Under 17 - 4 - 2
    - Under 15 - 4.4 - 1.5
    - Under 13 - 6 - 0
    - Under 11 - 5 - 1
  - Royal won both Basketball and Tennis encounters between the schools while the water-polo encounter ended in a tie. The Thomians won the first leg 8-4 while Royal won the second leg 10-6. The Thomians' keep the shield by virtue of their win last year.
- **Royal wins the National Basketball Championship**
  - Royal won the basketball championship in National school games
  - Royal Cagers also won the All Island under 19 tournament, The team remained unbeaten right through the season.
- **New Zealand tour of Champion Royal Rugby team**
  - The Champion Royal Rugby team completed their New Zealand tour. A contingent of 30 players, 5 coaches, Master in charge, Senior games Master and the Principal went on the tour, along with a group of supporters. The tour was sponsored by a few corporations and Alumni Associations, ORAUK being one of them. The players included the entire squad of 2018, providing the boys a fantastic chance to learn the game from greats such as former All Blacks coach, Sir Graham Henry.
- **Shakespeare Drama Competition**
  - Royal reached the semi-finals of the Shakespeare English drama Competition, with ORAUK being one of the main sponsors of the English Drama and Theatre Society of Royal College.

- *Royal Dominates the Royal-Thomian Regatta*
  - *Royal dominated the waters of Beira by thrashing S.Thomas by 46-6 at the Royal Thomian regatta concluded on 28<sup>th</sup> of October, winning the event for the third consecutive year.*
- *Autumn Extravaganza 2017*
  - *ORAUK held their annual Autumn Extravaganza on the 7<sup>th</sup> of October 2017 at the Holiday Inn Hotel, in Elstree. The event was a massive success, with the participation of approximately 200, most of whom were, younger Old Royalists.*

## **Features**

### *Skanda's salutation to Eddie Gray*

*RCOBAA AGM - Eddie Gray Memorial Oration by the High Commissioner for Sri Lanka to Australia and New Zealand, His Excellency, Somasundaram Skandakumar.*

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*Royal College Old Boys in Australia Association (Victoria) held their Annual General Meeting on the 17th September 2017. The High Commissioner for Sri Lanka to Australia and New Zealand, His Excellency Somasundaram Skandakumar, delivered the Eddie Gray Memorial Oration before a distinguished audience of old Royalists of all vintages. The Oration is a traditional part of the Agenda of the AGM, and the High Commissioner's address this year was extremely well received and greatly appreciated by the many attendees.*

*After touching briefly on his association with Eddie, initiated in 1985 through the Sri Lanka Cricket Foundation of Victoria, and relating two anecdotes on the humorous side of the Gentleman's life which raised laughter round the crowded hall, the speaker focused on how the Spirit of Royal was scrupulously followed by Eddie Gray, throughout his life.*

*"When our first Prime Minister D.S. Senanayake fell off his horse and died in Eddie's arms, the blame fell on the Mare. Eddie was quick to point out that it was a seizure that led to the fall, which was confirmed later. In doing so Eddie adhered to our first lesson, "To distinguish between right and wrong and to stand up for what is right."*

*"When he got off his Police vehicle to punch a man who was harassing a beggar on the street, he upheld our second lesson, viz to "Emulate the strong but never forget to protect the weak".*

*"In his blessed and blissful 64-year marriage to Yvonne, he lived up to our third lesson that "Every right implied a corresponding responsibility."*

*As Head Prefect of Royal College and thereafter as the first Ceylonese head of the Mounted Police and Officer in Charge of the Fort Police, he discharged his duties with impeccable integrity, upholding our fourth lesson, viz "Greater the authority, greater then had to be the accountability.*

*"When he stepped aside in the boxing ring in a crucial international bout to allow his opponent to pick up his fallen gum guard and went on to lose the bout, he lived up to our next lesson, that "It was not the winning that mattered but how one played the game."*

*The High Commissioner added " Indeed he played the Game of Life as well to perfection and I have no doubt that the greatest scorer who called time on his life, welcomed him to his heavenly abode with open arms."*

*"Finally, gentlemen, let us reflect on the portraits that adorn our sacred Hall of Fame. Those distinguished men are remembered even today for two things; their intellect and their integrity. Yes,*

*there is no greater asset that a man can cherish than his integrity, and Eddie's was impeccable."*

*"As a further tribute to him, I like to mention that our lives are divided between needs and wants. Being human our wants will continue to change but basic needs will always remain the same, represented by food, water, clothing, shelter and peace."*

*"Our Country invested in us in our early education and there could not be a better way to reciprocate that blessing than to make our own meaningful contribution to that process of peace, because no nation can aspire to fulfil the true potential of its independence unless that independence embraces each of its citizens equally."*

*"Our loyalty to our school is reflected in a crucial line in our College song, 'We kept thy fame inviolate'. Our National Anthem has the line 'Eka Mawakage Daruwo' while our National flag has four Bo leaves representing Karuna, Metta, Muditha and Upeka, essentially love and compassion."*

*"Loyalty to one's country must necessarily reflect commitment to these precious values as well, so let me conclude by quoting a very famous journalist Oliver Stone in his farewell address at the US Writers Guild Awards 2017, 'Find time to be by yourself to listen to your inner silences. Try to find the true meaning to your life on Earth, and, never give up on your struggle for peace, decency, and telling the truth'".*

## ***Special Feature crafted specially for Royal Brethren in the UK.***

***"The Spectre of Royal" by Malinda Seneviratne***

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*(Malinda Seneviratne (Group of 1983) was the former editor of 'The Nation'. He is a poet, critic, journalist, translator, political commentator, and activist. Known for his outspoken political views, his opinion pieces are among the most widely read in English in Sri Lanka. His poetry collections and translations of Sinhala texts have also been widely read and acclaimed, and have been frequently shortlisted for the prestigious Gratiaen Award, which he won in 2013.*

*Malinda is the son of Mr Gamini Seneviratne, also a former Royalist and a civil servant, and the late Mrs Indrani Seneviratne who taught English Literature and Greek and Roman Civilization at Royal College, Colombo. She was a livewire at Royal in 70s and 80s, contributing to many facets of College life and ensuring her charges achieve highest standards academically or otherwise.*

*Malinda wrote this piece especially for this newsletter.)*

*If you were a student at Royal before 1971 and returned to old haunts afterwards, you would have surely wondered why the college grounds looked smaller. Sooner or later you would have noticed a long building that stretched from West to East, from near the hostel to the swimming pool.*

*“A monstrosity!” you would surely tell yourself.*

*If you entered Royal after 1971 and after leaving school came back and strolled towards the Tamarind trees you might wonder why the college grounds looked larger. You would soon find out that most of that ‘monstrosity’ has been demolished. “The monstrosity,” had been put up for a carnival. What were ‘stalls’ for the carnival were later used as classrooms. Monstrosity architecturally speaking though it was surely a set of preferred classrooms during the cricket season, although the view was of a lesser order than offered by classes above the Prefects’ Room.*

*If you left before 1978, you would know of an institution called Royal Junior School and that its primary function was to ‘graduate’ 14-15 year old kids into Royal College. If you joined after 1978, it might come as a surprise that a Royal Junior School actually existed. Even if you did know the history of amalgamation, the chances are that you would not know of a school song that was different from ‘School where our fathers’. You would know of Hartley, Harward, Marsh, Boake and Reed, but if you were asked about Bradby, Perera, Reed and Sampson, you probably wouldn’t associate the names with Houses.*

*If you were a scout in the seventies and eighties, you might remember that there was a small hole on the right column as you came up the stairs from the Scout Room. You might remember ‘KCU’ carved under this hole. You may not know that it stood for the man who made that little hole in the wall where scouts would leave messages for one another long after he left Royal. KCU stood for Karl Cezanne Uduman.*

*Even if you were a scout, you may have had no notion of this hole, the initials or the man. You would have nevertheless good memories of the Scout Room. However, if you wandered into school today and was persuaded by nostalgia to take a look at the Scout Room, you would find it gone. If you asked any schoolboy what happened to the building he would no doubt tell you ‘there was never such a building here!’*

*Time passes, things change. Old buildings are torn down, new ones come up. The Grade 1 building is gone. Years ago, there was no ‘Skills Centre,’ but now there is. No ‘MAS Arena’ or even MAS back in the day, but these are proper nouns that are familiar to present day students. Where there was Race Course Avenue, now there’s Rajakeeya Mawatha. Rugger is not played where cricket is played and the season doesn’t start in May but in April. There’s a part of Royal College on the other side of Reid Avenue now.*

*It's a different era and a different school. Today, you might lament the passing of the great teachers, the absence of 'Kadalai' or the fact that some parts of the school are unrecognizable. So too will today's students lament notable absences if they return to Royal 20-30 years from now.*

*But the school of our fathers is the same school of our sons and their sons as the case may be. And this is not because the Tamarind Trees are still there or because the Boake Gates still stand or because from Rajakeeya Mawatha the edifice looks unchanged, except that the parapet wall is taller than it used to be. It's not because the school song hasn't changed. The colors are still blue and gold. We still have the same houses, Hartley, Harward, Marsh and Boake, even though we really don't have a strong house-system or house-culture. Royal is still part of the Royal-Thomian and is in part defined by that encounter and by the opposing school. It's the same with respect to the Bradby Shield and Trinity College.*

*There's something that endures despite the passing of years and decades and it's not any of these things. It's something you really can't put a finger on. The 'something' that makes the school unique and unchanged at the core even though part of the outer covering is unrecognizable to those left a long time ago.*

*Take a walk around the 'new' school and you'll still remember people and moments. That's nostalgia obtainable by transformations that left something familiar untouched. Reminiscing makes things bigger and brighter than they really are. There's a child that lives in all of us that gets reborn in 'childhood spaces'. It can't be too different for those from other schools when they revisit the theater where their childhood was played out.*

*Royal however is Royal and in ways that it will never be St Thomas' or Walala Central College. Arguable St Thomas' and Walala Central College cannot be Royal and in fact may not even want to be like Royal.*

*There is history and privilege that account for certain things. Royal still sets the pace. Royal still innovates. Other schools still try to emulate Royal. But that is not what makes Royal the school that it is. It's like love — recognizable but impossible to define. Define it and it will be open season for replication and the consequent obliteration of uniqueness. Define it and it becomes less intangible and therefore open to purchase or destruction.*

*Ask a Royalist what 'Royal' is all about and he will struggle to come up with a definitive one-liner. Ask a non-Royalist and he or she would also struggle. The one would end thinking 'no, that's not what it is,' and the other might caricature.*

*What matters then is that it is felt, it is known and it is not translatable to the language of words. Let's just call it a spectre or a spirit that stays with us but does not perish with our deaths.*

## **KEEPING HER FAME INVIOLETE!**

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*The ORAUK has been supporting co-curricular and extra-curricular activities of Royal College, since its inception as the organisation representing Old Royalists in the United Kingdom. We have contributed well over £130,000 towards various projects of the college.*

*Some of the highlights over the last five years are,*

### **Refurbishment of Chemistry Labs (2015 and 2017)**

*ORAUK sponsored the refurbishment of two of the Chemistry Labs contributing GBP £6750 (of the total Budget of about £20K) towards projects over the last two years. The labs had not been refurbished for more than 25 years and were in a dire state where the safety of the schoolboys was at risk. The first lab was refurbished with state of the art facilities and was the very first facilities of its kind, among schools in Sri Lanka. The second lab was renovated by repairing existing teak tables, with added safety features, a new floor and paint.*



*After the refurbishment of first lab*



*After refurbishment of second lab*

## *Annual Contributions towards Royal Rugby*

Royal Rugby has been benefitting annually from ORAUK and the teams have not failed to live upto expectations. Since 2010, Royal has won the league championship 4 times and also won the Bradby shield on three consecutive years. ORAUK also made a contribution towards the New Zealand tour of Champion Royal Rugby team of 2016. The tour took place in September 2017, with boys getting a flavour of top class Rugby experience, including coaching sessions, games against two top high school teams and the ultimate experience of watching All Blacks live.



*Royal Team with the All Blacks Coach, Sir Graham Henry*



*Royal Team after playing Kings College, Auckland*

*To those who toiled to mould us into men...*

ORAUK part sponsored the Drama 'MANAME' to raise funds for the much needed, Medical Assistance Programme, implemented in aid of retired Teachers of the College, by the Past Teachers Association of Royal College

### *Backing the willow-wielders since 2014*

Since 2014, ORAUK have sponsored a number of Royal Cricketers to visit UK and play league cricket, to gain much needed exposure to English conditions. The Cricketers were chosen based on their performances during the school season. The cricketers benefitting from the sponsorships were; Randev Pathirana, Thiran Dhanapala, Chamika Karunaratne, Himesh Ramanayake and the Royal-Thomian winning skipper, Devind Pathmanathan. These players also took part in the Royal Thomian and the FOC tournament. A few individuals and ORAUK provided funding for Cricket equipment to them at a cost of over £1000. This is an ongoing commitment from ORAUK to help Royal cricket to improve the standards and produce skilled and high-quality players for the national team.



*Thiran and Randev (3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> from Right) with the Royal Team at the Roy-tho*



*Hashen, Devind with their arch rival Thomian Skipper Madushan*

### *Uplifting theatre since 2012*

ORAUK annually sponsors the English drama society of Royal college in the Shakespeare drama competition, enabling the present day students, to bring their talents on stage and to develop their language skills and inter-personal skills. Over last five years, the college has won the competition twice.

## Royal College Sports Complex (Sky Pavilion) - 2012

ORAUK made its largest part contribution in their history towards this project, which was delivered at a cost of Rs 80 million. This has increased the seating capacity at the stadium by 2500, enabling approximately, 18,000 people to witness Rugby, Hockey and football games.

## Adding a punch to Boxing

ORAUK also makes contributions to Royal Boxing. It is heartening to see the Royal boxers winning the 100<sup>th</sup> Stubbs shield on the 10<sup>th</sup> of October. This is the 19<sup>th</sup> time Royal has won the shield, which no other schools in the country has achieved in Stubbs Shield boxing.

Memories from the 34<sup>th</sup> Blue and Gold ball, held at the prestigious Hyatt Regency, the Churchill, on the 22<sup>nd</sup> of April 2017.



For more photos and news on ORAUK, please visit <https://www.facebook.com/ORAUK/> and <http://www.oldroyalists.org.uk>



PHOTOGRAPHY BY PRANEETH HETTIARACHCHI

WWW.APISRILANKAN.COM THE GLOBAL SRI LANKAN COMMUNITY WEBSITE

*Some senior Royalists in action!*



*Some senior Royalists with our Patron Mr Gamit Amarasekera*



Mark these dates in your calendar....

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Please Mark your Diary, plan your holidays so that you can be there at the most looked forward event of ORAUK. **The B&G ball 2018**, will be held at the Hyatt Regency, the Churchill on the 28<sup>th</sup> of April 2018. This is our main fundraising event and we hope to see most of you on this day. Your patronage will help us to continue the work we do to keep her thy fame inviolate!

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**Editor's note :** If you have stories / feature articles from your time at Royal or indeed anything that could be of interest to Royalists, please send them to [Hemantha.edirisooriya@unilever.com](mailto:Hemantha.edirisooriya@unilever.com), [rashantha@hotmail.com](mailto:rashantha@hotmail.com), [sujithrw@gmail.com](mailto:sujithrw@gmail.com).