



# DOUBLE BLUE BULLETIN

Newsletter of Wesley College(Colombo) Old Boys' Union Australia Branch Incorporated

2005

ISSUE 1

## Message from the President

The cataclysmic disaster which struck on Boxing Day in December has continued to generate headlines. It has been termed the greatest natural disaster the world has ever seen. The news continues to show us images of the ravaged land and death and destruction.

To all of us who now live in Australia, but had our beginnings in Sri-Lanka, one of the worst affected countries, the images and news items are doubtless extremely disturbing and heart wrenching.

This destructive tsunami has caused immense damage to millions of people and left behind people with lives forever changed. The fiercely destructive tidal wave has also brought to the surface mankind's greatest quality - its humanity; excerpts from the "The Asian Tribune" – ".....On the 26th it was the Navy that mainly provided food and water to survivors. Kuchchaveli was isolated because of a broken bridge, and there the LTTE reportedly provided the naval men with food and water. At this point things were spontaneous. There was no agenda at work. On the 27th the surviving youth with help from the Navy searched for bodies. Sinhalese came from Kantalai bringing food and drink. The survivors in Kuchchaveli who were cut off were fed and refreshed by Sinhalese from Gomarankadawela, who came by an old interior route. It was help from Sinhalese neighbours that filled the gap. The story was the same everywhere along the government-controlled seaboard along the East. Many people testified to the courage and unselfishness shown by the Army in helping and rescuing people. A fisherman, who was himself rescued by the Army, testified that the Army helped all those it could and was uniformly kind to everyone. Along the seaboard of Trincomalee town and north of it, the Navy was the only body at hand to help the civilians (mainly Tamil and Muslim). Around 8th Mile Post (Kuchchaveli Road), in the wake of the turbulence the Navy asked the civilians to run inland to Agampodai Hill, and later in the afternoon brought food and

*water for them. Kamaraj, a toddy tapper who shinned up a coconut tree in Gopalapuram saw a navy man braving the flood and going in to clutch at two children. Then he saw another wave, which swept all three away. In Veloor, the corpse of a naval man clutching that of a child whom he tried to save was recovered. Similar reports came from coastal areas close to Batticaloa Town. Testimonies were of the Army going into the water, pulling out people and getting them to safety. In the Kalmunai and Thirukkovil areas the STF has been commended for leaving their arms behind, going out into the water, pulling people out and getting them to safety. They worked hard also at providing transport and basic relief. Food came from neighbouring Muslims and Sinhalese..50 lorries loaded with rice, sugar and cooked food arrived from Uhana, Amparai, Kandy, Mahiyangana and Polannaruwa with relief for the Tamil coastal villages north of Kalmunai. Owing to bridges and roads being damaged areas were isolated. These Sinhalese carried relief on their heads and shoulders and walked distances such as 5 miles to succour victims not reached so far" ....*

In Melbourne, at the MCG, crickets' greats from around the world put on a spectacle to raise funds for relief, "Murali" and "Warney" were not booed or derided instead both were given a rousing reception from all the supporters; John Howard welcomed "Murali"; signs and banners displayed by the spectators were warm in their praise of the generosity of the Australian public.

Let us hope that this new found humanity will prevail and as we Wesleyites so proudly sing – we now pray – may all Sri Lankans be together bound, bound by one fraternal band, and for our dear land they will be men of grit and industry, honour bright and loyalty, now that Lanka's call has sounded Ready, Aye shall all be found.

ORA ET LABORA

Trevor Collette  
PRESIDENT

## EDITORIAL

It seems futile to express good wishes for health and prosperity to all our members when our senses are still reeling from the images of death and destruction in the wake of the Tsunami which hit Sri Lanka and neighbouring countries at the end of last year.

It reminds me of how tenuous is our hold on life, when, at any moment it can end by natural forces such as this – and nature does not discriminate.

I still remember the coastline fairly well, having lived there for many early years of my life and learning to swim in the sea off Moratuwa and Lunawa.

Even in those days there were tourists visiting the beaches and fishermen's huts were built on the shoreline, their nets spread out to dry. The men attended to the Catamarans while the visitor lay in the sun, improving his tan.

The tourist and the fisherman took no notice of each other.

And so it may have been on Boxing Day, 2004 when Nature intervened. Men who were on the beach that day were united in death - a tourist, maybe a fisherman.

Our family received many telephone calls from concerned friends, asking whether we still had any family in Sri Lanka and wanting to know if they were safe.

And now we see, in the aftermath of this terrible tragedy, how the world responds to a national crisis. Millions of dollars have been gifted by people who perhaps never even heard of, or knew, where Sri Lanka or Aceh Beach is, until now.

There is a lesson we must learn from all this. We can never bring back those who have lost their lives, but we can live for them, treasure those we still hold dear, and add a richer meaning to what we loosely call living.

*Learn from yesterday, live for today, Hope  
for tomorrow*

- Editor

### **Your views/Ideas**

We encourage letters to the Editor on any issue.  
Articles of interest, Births, Anniversary etc.  
Suggestions and new ideas  
we would like to hear.

## WESLEY COLLEGE 1907



This institution is under the management of the Wesleyan Mission in Ceylon and was opened for the purpose of higher education on March 2 1874, in the premises still occupied in the Pettah adjoining – and in fact, with the Girl's High School enveloping – the Pettah Church, the oldest of the Mission's Churches in the island, having been built in the year 1815. The first Principal was Rev. S.R. Wilkin, now engaged in ministerial work in England.

Although at first only able to receive a few day-scholars, the College rapidly increased in numbers, and for the last ten years has had five hundred scholars annually. With this number the limit of accommodation has been reached, and the erection of larger premises on another side has become necessary.

In its educative work the college is subject to the departmental code of the Government and annual inspection by the Government Inspector. It was, during its earlier history, affiliated with the University of Calcutta, and a respectable number of its students figured honourably in the record of that Alma Mater.

In 1902, a new site within the municipal limits of the city, but in an open and healthier part, was purchased. Here, during the years 1905/6 a very handsome set of college buildings has been erected, having a frontage of over 300 ft., with dormitory and other accommodation for a hundred resident pupils. The new premises are expected to be fully ready for occupation in January 1907. To keep pace with the great advance in science study required by the affiliation with London University, chemical laboratories are included in the design of the new building.

Source: "Twentieth Century Impressions of Ceylon"  
Edited by Arnold Wright – Published in 1907.

*Many thanks to Old Wesleyites, Harris Anthonisz in NSW and Vernon Nugara in Victoria for sending me this information. A happy coincidence, much appreciated.*

*NOTE: Take another look at the picture. Notice the architectural feature above the two central towers?*

*I would be interested to know what happened to them, as they do not appear in more recent photographs.*



**WESLEY COLLEGE OLD BOYS' UNION  
(Australia) CELEBRATES TWENTY-FIVE  
YEARS**

We nearly missed it.

During a committee meeting last November someone wanted to know the date of the very first meeting. Nobody knew. We hunted around old files, annual reports, minutes, etc until finally, there it was – the first meeting was in Melbourne on 25<sup>th</sup> November 1979, following an earlier discussion between Cecil d'With Barbut, Rodney de Kretser and Keith de Kretser to form an Association of Old Wesleyites. And now here we were, on the same date twenty-five years later, planning next year's events.

The very first office bearers were Cecil d'With Barbut, Gerald de Zilwa, Keith de Kretser, Nelson de Silva, Rodney de Kretser, Glen Reimers, Ronald Campbell, Neville Ludowyke and Arthur de Silva.

The first occasion, on 1<sup>st</sup> February 1980 was a Dinner Dance to commemorate the visit by Mr & Mrs Cedric Oorloff. From this small beginning, when communication was by word-of-mouth or telephone, we have moved with the times and kept up with technology – we now have our own website.

It is always good to think back to when we started, and the strong growth that followed – but times have changed, and we must face the challenge of finding newer ways to attract a new generation – younger, and possessed of skills and ideas that were still on the drawing board back in 1979.

This will happen. Already there are old Wesleyites in Melbourne whose fathers were at school the same time as some members of the committee. They must take over and guide the OBU into a new era. We invite all old Wesleyites who are interested, to nominate for position on the committee. This is an opportunity to pass on to another generation the tradition and values that have sustained Wesley College and inspired so many young students for well over a century.

**Reflections of my past 25 years with  
the OBU**

By Keith de Kretser

It seems like only yesterday when a small group of Wesleyites met to form the first Overseas Branch of the Wesley College Old Boys' Union in Melbourne, Australia. In 1979, the Trinity College OBA informed Cecil d'With-Barbut that Mr Cedric Oorloff (Wesley's Principal 1950-1957) wished to meet many Old Wesleyites as he could when he visited Melbourne in 1980. This was the catalyst that brought the Old Wesleyites "Down Under" together. Mr d'With-Barbut happened to work with Rodney de Kretser and myself and we discussed plans to host Mr and Mrs Oorloff when they arrived in Melbourne. Until then, the Old Wesleyites did not have an association in Melbourne but we were a significant group scattered across Melbourne. A date was set for the inaugural meeting and three of us contacted all the Old Wesleyites we knew, to inform them of this meeting and the plans to form an Old Boys' Union.

It was a special day. Attendees were requested to bring their own eats and drinks. There were 14 Old Wesleyites present plus many apologies from those that could not attend. The Keeley Park Scout Hall in Clayton was the venue and as each car pulled up the thought raced through everyone's mind, "I wonder who that is?" It was a great feeling to meet and greet men who were rallying with a common interest and purpose. If my memory serves me correctly, the following Old Wesleyites were present at that first meeting:

Cecil d'With-Barbut, Gerald de Zilwa, Nelson de Silva, Rodney de Kretser, Upali Perera, Ronnie Campbell, Arthur de Silva, Glenn Reimers, Neville Ludowyke, Norman de la Harpe, Arthur d'With-Barbut, Lucien Fernando, Robin Reimers and myself. The group covered many eras and it was fascinating to hear stories of old about the principals, teachers, administrative staff, the servants and even their own personal experiences.