

KHC OSA UK Supporting Our Alma Mater

Kokuvil Hindu College, during our time in the late 50's and early 60's, when the political and social climate were at peace, was at the forefront in education, sporting and cultural spheres; we were at the higher echelons of academic institutions in Jaffna and in the Northern Province. We excelled in cultural activities, sports, in particular in soccer and cricket, and scouting, and our academic achievements were second to none.

Since then, quite a lot of my colleagues and schoolmates have moved on to bigger and better things all over, including major countries around the world – England, Canada, Australia, USA, Germany, France, Norway, Singapore etc. etc. The political turmoil in Sri-Lanka also facilitated the younger generation, who had the opportunity, to move out of the country.

Although, we left the country for various reasons, our thoughts and memories always were of the happier and enjoyable times we had at our school and the successes, however small, we achieved there. All the college cultural and religious functions, scouting camps and jamborees, sports meetings, inter-collegiate foot-ball and cricket matches, successful exam results, praises from teachers and the classroom romances are all memories we still continue to treasure. Some of us, who may not have achieved greater successes at school, went on to accomplish far greater things in our professional and personal lives later on, all because of the discipline, teachings and culture we inherited from our school, distinguished principals and illustrious teachers.

Whilst we all focussed on our own lives overseas, some of us continued to think about the welfare and future of our Alma Mater and wanted to make a contribution towards the continued success and improvement of academic and social standing of our college. The intervening turmoil caused by political events back home also made the need to support the college and its students more pressing. This led to the formation of the Kokuvil Hindu College Old Boys Associations overseas, the first one being the United Kingdom (UK) branch inaugurated in London, some 25 years ago. It is given that the KHC OSA Colombo was formed very much earlier than our UK Branch; they celebrated their Golden Anniversary on 04 March 1995.

The Columbian Orator, D. Everett in 1797 said:

"Large streams from little fountains flow,

Mighty oaks from little acorns grow."

In 1992, the young sapling from the little acorn started to grow and now stands mighty tall as a well- established organisation celebrating its 25th anniversary this year in 2017. We firmly believe that the organisation will continue to grow for the next 25 years and even beyond. The OSA's achievement of UK Charity Status in 2004 was one of the major milestones in its 25 year history and would go a long way to help the association meet its future objectives.

Although this article focusses on the contributions of the KHC OSA UK Branch, it does not in any way underestimate or undervalue the contributions made by the other KHC OSAs around the world who continue to support the well-being of our college in Sri-Lanka. It goes without saying that they all make an extremely valuable contribution to our college.

We are blessed that most of the original founder members are still committed members of the KHC OSA UK Branch and continue to actively support its progress and success. The original founder members of KHC OSA UK Branch are:

- a. N.A.Pirapaharan
- b. S.Kuganesa Chettiar
- c. N.Nanthakumaran
- d. K.Kugathanan
- e. N.A.Thivaharan
- f. Mr.N.Ranjitkumar
- g. Mr.T.Buvasundararajah
- h. Mr.S.Dushyanthan
- i. Mrs.Mala Kirushnarajah
- j. Miss. Essaivany Arunasalam
- k. Mr. S. Sachithananthan
- l. Miss K. Kunaratnam
- m. Mr K Kularatnam
- n. Mr.V Velthasan

Since the inauguration of the UK Branch, the OSA was able to support our college in various forms either by acquiring land or property to enhance the capability of the college, to provide infrastructure improvements and additional amenities/facilities for the students or by providing scholarships to individual students to support their academic undertakings. At this stage, we are duty bound to thank all the past and present members of the KHC OSA UK Branch, its Executive Committees, its well-wishers and benefactors who made unselfish contributions

throughout the past 25 years to boost the OSA's efforts in supporting our college. Amongst them, two groups of people deserve special mention because of their generous contributions to the betterment of our college and its students, namely:

- The UK resident old students of KHC who have donated their home and property to be used as additional facilities for the college, and
- All the benefactors who financed the various Individual Scholarship Schemes to help the careers of a number of deserving students back home in Kokuvil.

This is also the time to express our sincere gratitude to the most enthusiastic merry band of regular volunteers here in the UK, who have devoted their time year after year to come and support the functions and events organised by the KHC OSA UK to ensure that the audience got the maximum pleasure out of the events. Their support has been crucial in the OSA's efforts in launching memorable events, in selling tickets, cajoling advertisers and collecting funds to help the OSA achieve its aims and objectives. The fervent involvement and the time spent by the next group of volunteers in facilitating and promoting the KHC OSA sporting activities such as soccer, cricket, netball and badminton within the UK Sri-Lankan sporting circles should also be recognised; their sporting successes over the years are also worthy of note.

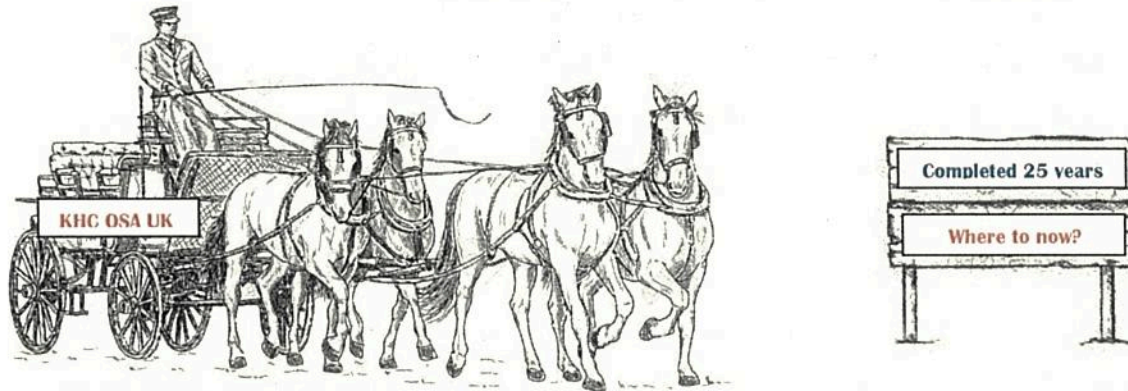
Above all, the OSA is indebted to the group of young artistes – dancers, musicians, instrumentalists – and their teachers, their parents and the young sportsmen and sportswomen who regularly contributed to keeping the Kokuvil Hindu College flag fly high in this green and pleasant land of England, and in the process enabled it to amass the necessary funds to support the most needed causes back home.

Lastly, we are also grateful to all the distinguished guests, including past principals, eminent professionals and businessmen, and ex-teachers, who adorned our events and functions over the years and provided their support to help us achieve our aims; their wishes and support did encourage the efforts of our committees and teams.

Now looking to the future, it is the wish of all concerned that the charitable activities of the KHC OSA UK should continue unabated. However, looking at the future landscape, we can see that the current membership is getting older and the younger generation which lacks the first-hand involvement with the college may not have the enthusiasm to continue into the distant future. We may even have to look at a different tack to lure the interests of the younger generation. In the meantime, it becomes the duty and responsibility of the current membership,

in particular the parents and the Executive Committee members, to promote and communicate the purpose, need and the value of continuing with the KHC OSA activities here in the UK to our younger generation

The collective efforts of a wide-ranging group of people have enabled us to come to this enviable position (Silver Anniversary) in the life of our Old Boys Association here in the UK.



This carriage has come a long way during the past Quarter of a Century but its destination is far beyond the horizon and will demand continued injection of enthusiasm, dedication, collaboration and cooperation from the present and future generations. I believe that our hearts are in the right place and hope that you are all up to the challenge!

S Selvaratnam

Eur Ing, MSc, CEng, GCGI, MIEE, MRAeS, MCMI, MCQI, CMILT, CMIIA, RAF