

TWENTY YEARS IN THE LIFE OF HCPPA, NEW SOUTH WALES

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In 1991, a group of Old Hartleyites, residing in and around Homebush met and decided that the time was ripe to form an Old Boys association. Following this inaugural meeting, the constitution was drafted and thereafter the necessary steps were put in place, resulting in the establishment of HCPPA, New South Wales branch. Special mention should be made here of two members of the committee, Messrs P.Elango and S.Thiruloganathan, for their efforts in drawing up an uncomplicated but very effective constitution.

During the formative years of our Association, the main objective was to organise regular get-togethers for the members and their families. Every year two events were arranged; one during the summer and the other during the winter. The summer event was an outdoor activity at a park, from mid-morning to late afternoon. The males, both adults and children played softball cricket and the Ladies tried their skills at netball. This was followed by a sumptuous lunch – a veritable feast! The winter event was an evening get-together. Cultural programs involving music and dance followed by few speeches, was the norm. And true to our tradition, the dinner was an indulgence with mouth-watering food, to say the least. We offer our sincere thanks to all the Ladies who had to spend a lot of their time and effort to come up with such good food, year after year.

In 1996 the committee of management decided to publish a newsletter, to inform the members of its activities and of news about the Alma Mater. The inaugural issue came out in August of that year. And it was named as *Palmyra*. For the next 3-4 years *Palmyra* appeared at irregular intervals! However, with the creation of the post of editor, the newsletter was published, twice every year. We owe a lot to the editors for their time and effort in collecting, formatting and editing the material for publication. Not an enviable task, to say the least.

During the period, 1991 to 2009, the task of communicating with the Principal of Hartley College was not an easy one. The times were such that the Principal and the staff were overstretched. This did not deter the committee of management from doubling their efforts at linking up with the Alma Mater. We were fortunate in having individuals, both inside and outside the committee, who somehow found a way, to link up with the Principal and get at the required information. We salute them for their untiring efforts.

A significant development in the life of HCPPA (NSW) in the past five years or so is the

new crop of young and energetic committee members, with the will to play a dynamic role in the betterment of Our College. We wish them well; and hope that many more would come forward to continue our service to Hartley and the community at large.

In 2005, our current Secretary, Mr. A.Srikumar undertook the task of establishing a Computer Laboratory at Hartley. It was an arduous assignment considering the fact that he had to transport 20 second-hand computers, from Colombo to Point Pedro, in the first instance. He attended to all the necessary arrangements and accomplished the mission. He still continues to manage this project.

Our last President, Mr.G.Thirukumaran was instrumental in forging a link with the Principal of Hartley, using the electronic medium, at a time when the power supply at Point Pedro was erratic, to say the least. He did it. Now we are in regular contact with the Principal. The example set by Thirukumaran is being continued by our current President, Mr.S.Yoganathan.

In 2010 when the committee of management was exploring options for fund-raising, to meet the future needs of our Alma Mater, Mr.R.Krishnakumaran, stepped forward with his plans for a cultural event. This resulted in Kalai Chuwei 2010. It was a huge success as an event and the financial rewards were way above our expectations! We thank Krishnakumaran for planning and implementing the event. We are into the second year of Kalai Chuwei and hope to make it an annual feature.

In the last 25 years or so, Our College had to endure a lot of difficulties. All of us are more than aware of what happened to Hartley, during the above period. Thankfully the situation has changed for good. Now the period of rebuilding of Hartley is well under way. This is where, we as Old Hartleyites, can and should play an effective role, in the welfare of our Alma Mater. We appeal to all those Old Hartleyites, who are yet to become as members of HCPPA (NSW), to do so in the very near future. This would automatically make them as members of a large extended family, with many familiar faces and some new ones. And what is more, this would pave the way for camaraderie and a sense of belonging!