



Thomians in Sydney celebrated their 21st birthday in fitting style

The STC OBA NSW celebrated its 21st birthday in fitting style at the Don Moore Community Centre in North Rocks NSW on Saturday, July 30th, 2016.

The party got off to a grand start when our veteran Comper MC Duke had the privilege and honour of informing the guests that Australia had just been defeated in the cricket by 106 runs at Pallekele in Sri Lanka. Thereby, bringing to an end a Test match that Australia should have never lost and Sri Lanka should have never won.

Loud cheers greeted the announcement and the Thomian Family Nite in NSW was on to a flying start. Nothing warms a Lankan heart as much as a Sri Lankan win on the field, and one against the reigning World Champions Australia using a bat, ball and spinning fingers to weave a web of confusion on the 2016 Cricket Champions was heartily savored by many.

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Reigning President Masefield spoke briefly to the guests; he thanked them for their support over the past twenty-one years. He also acknowledged the contribution made by Sponsors, Advertisers and the Flavour Of Ceylon who did the catering. The President saved his most sincere and effusive acknowledgments for the past and current OBA Committee members and their spouses whose ongoing support was such an important aspect that enabled the OBA to keep flying the blue black and blue flag year in year out since 1995. The consistency of OBA commitment to community life in NSW has been unmatched in the fields of dance, the carol service, and cricket over the past twenty-one years.

Thomians have come into committee, some have stayed on while others have stayed a while and left. Irrespective of an individual's tenure the goodwill and support that has been generated is never diminished as past members never hesitate to make contributions when requested. Their knowledge, experience, and expertise can frequently be relied on to bounce ideas or complete special projects. Past members of the STC OBA committee are never last seen heading west. They collective make a current resource that can often empower and encourage.

Therefore, when the call was made to gather and line up to sing the college song, there was a host of old boys from many vintages who came forward to sing. Standing as one, ably led by MC Duke, the guests were entertained to an example of Thomian passion and pride.

In keeping with the relative spirit of the OBA's youth, the committee had decided to enliven proceedings by inviting the guests to participate in a bold new initiative. It had never been done before in OBA or OGA circles in Sydney.

In the planning stages, it was fraught with risk due to all the unknowns. However, the committee made a collective decision and saw it through with style, flair, and colour. Each table was requested to choose a song from a list to be sung by them on stage before lights and judges Karaoke style. The words and music were provided while the singers provided the vocals, the posture, and the costumes. It gave the guests a wonderful opportunity to visit the music of their youth. Each table exhibited their talents with plenty of enthusiasm and good cheer. There was a range of high notes, low notes, flat notes and no notes that generated many laughs.

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Audience participation in a new class and style of entertainment. The competition was close, and the judges were kept busy having to make judgments on style, poise, colour, customs and behavior. A few tables embellished their act by running onto the stage with props that they hoisted at appropriate times during their acts. It turned out to be a talent quest in keeping with the times that is certain to be followed by others.

This has always been an event that is planned and organized by groups of committed and motivated Old Thomians who willingly give off their leisure time for the cause. They have never failed to try to do their best by managing scarce resources and making frequent appeals to the wider community.

Therefore, it is no surprise that they have to contend with a bad bounce of the ball from time to time. A case in point was another OBA first. It was an attempt to share a pre-recorded message from the Warden Rev Marc Bellimoria; the message did not come through too clearly. However, that was nothing more than a mere blip during a successful evening. As part of the planning effort, the entire OBA committee made themselves visible on the night. Despite their scarves and fancy top hats, they made sure they could be recognized.

There were numerous examples of team work exhibited by all committee members as they worked a well thought out plan of action. The décor was easily the best seen at a Thomian function in NSW. The tables were well laid and the seating adequate. The food was good with a wide variety of choices to try to cater to many different tastes and requirements.

Another first was a dedicated committee member who frequently went to each table wanting to know if they needed a service while keeping people abreast of the agenda. In this regard customer service has improved in leaps and bounds.

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The music was provided by the evergreen duo of Gordon Pereira and Roger Menzies ably complemented by DJ Neil who has been a regular at recent Thomian functions. They had a good reading of the audience especially as they had had a detailed viewing of the Karaoke and worked in tandem with DJ Neil to provide music that catered to the spirit of the occasion.

Master of Ceremonies was MC Duke who has been performing the task for the OBA for well over a decade. He kept the crowd informed using a style and wit that is now very much a part of the Sri Lankan community scene in NSW. His ability to read the mood of a crowd has been perfected, and he comes with an instinct for turning the average into the extraordinary. MC Duke began with the STC OBA as a trailblazer many years ago. Today Duke sets the standards.

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See the pictures –

<http://stcobasydney.com/index.php/gallery>

S.Thomas' College Old Boys Association NSW/ACT

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