

## Inauguration of the Bishop's College PPA in the UK

In 1989 during September *Chavi Yogeswaran (nee de Zoysa)* contacted via the phone *Anusha Ekanayake (nee Dias-Wickramasuriya)* whom she had never met but heard of her via a mutual friend *Mala Weerasena (nee Siriwardene - who was a Bishopian till she was 10 years old)*. *Anusha & Mala* both resided in Leicester. As *Chavi* was a resident of London it was decided that she will do the spade work initially. *Chavi's* mother *Praema (nee de Fonseka, also a Bishopian)* who was in London at the time was about to go back to Sri Lanka and she was going to contact Bishop's College Principal *Lindley Jayasuriya (nee Tennekoon)* to get the College's permission to start an association.

Meanwhile *Anusha & Chavi* tirelessly & vigorously pursued in contacting Bishopians they knew by phone to see the response. This was successful as they contacted others which had a ripple effect and it was decided to officially form an Association during the spring of next year as quite a few were scattered around Britain. *Anusha's* friend *Nedra Wijeratne (nee Wijesinghe)* who was residing in Nottingham called *Chavi* to say as she is a professional secretary that she would be delighted to give any secretarial\administrative support.

In Sri Lanka *Praema* met the Principal - who was very pleased and said for many years they wanted this to happen and that it was good news to hear that, at last, some enthusiastic past pupils were actively doing something about it. The Principal gave *Praema* the BCPPA constitution and other relevant material of the College for her to take on her return to UK.

Now, that the official go-ahead had been given by the Principal, *Chavi & Anusha* decided to set a date in spring and have an initial meeting in a venue in London. All the planning and discussions were done on the phone. So, the date set was **28<sup>th</sup> of April 1990** to have a meeting. *Chavi* found a suitable venue in central London i.e. *Fabian Society* in Westminster, London SW1 which was adjacent to St James's Park tube station. The venue was suggested by our Patron *Francis Don (Buddy)* - who is now the oldest member of our association. *Anusha, Chavi* and *Nedra* thought a tea would be appropriate and did the catering for the occasion. Cost of hiring of the room at Fabian society was also borne by the three.

It was an exciting and joyful day for *Chavi & Anusha* (as it was ONLY on that day that they both met for the *first* time as they are a decade apart in ages - never were together at College) and also to meet the others on the day who were: *Amritha Abeywardene (nee Weeraratne)*, *Amy Wickremaratne (nee Cassie Chitty)*, *Anoma Suganasinghe (nee Alahakoon)*, *Arnjali Rowe (nee Edirisingha)*, *Barbara Karnathigoda (nee Benjamin)*, *Chandra Tennekoon (nee Gunasena)*, *Chinta De Silva (nee De Pinto)*, *Dharshini Turnbull (nee Mendis)*, *Gitanjali Jeans (nee Amarasuriya)*, *Heather Sathiaraj (nee Kelaart)*, *Ingrid Anthony (nee Wickremaratne)*, *Jennifer Cader (nee Jones)*, *Katie Willat (nee Benjamin)*, *Mahima Rupasinghe (nee Mallawarachi)*, *Nancy Nunn*, *Neloufer Jayasinghe*, *Praema de Zoysa (nee de Fonseka)*, *Ranmali Wijesinghe*, *Rukmani Attygalle (nee Samarakody)*, *Ruwani Gunewardene (nee Weragoda)*, *Sandya Howarth (nee Weerasekera)*, *Sarojini Situnayake*, *Selvie Pullneyagam (nee Chitty)*, *Shevanti Sen (nee Wijemanne)*, *Sonali de Silva (nee Wijesuriya)*, *Sheila Fernley (nee Fonseka)*, and *Surangani Ranasinghe (nee Samarakody)*. For this meeting pp

from as far as Nottinghamshire, Leicestershire, Hertfordshire, Essex, Kent & Surrey attended and spanned an age group of 20s to 70s.

At the meeting, the Association was formed with a President (*Chavi*), Vice President (*Anusha*) Secretary (*Nedra*) selected and the Treasurer (*Dharshani*) volunteered and a committee of 13 (*Amy, Arnjali, Barbara, Ingrid, Katy, Jennifer, Nancy, Praema, Ruwani, Shevanti, Sheila, Selvie and Sonali*) also volunteered. The attendees insisted on contributing funds towards the cost of the room and food. The left-over Sri Lankan tea edibles were sold (which was the first fund raiser for the Association)! A week later, *Chinta* and *Praema* gave generous donations of £100 each for the association. An account was opened at Abbey Building Society. In the first two years, all expenses in running the association were borne by the Exco so as to build up a healthy financial position for the future.