

**THE DIARY OF MY MISSION WORK IN
SRI LANKA
Part Seven**

Date: 1st February 2009 - 28th February 2009. Pages: 1 - 31

Sunday 1st February 2009.

Today started with High Mass at 9am in the Chapel. I took the first part of the service, then assisted in the second part of the service with the Headmaster. For High mass we have four servers and with such a small chapel, we are always falling over each other in the sanctuary.

After Mass George, a student from Sherborne School and I went into Welimada to get some stuff and check my emails. It is a while since I checked my mail, because of illness, and the difficulty of finding internet. I am going to try and send some photos by internet but not quite sure how to, plus there are so many photos they really have no description marked for them.

What I may do is send a copy of the disc to Peter Green who is the editor for my web page at Bognor, so that he can download them on to the web page, and perhaps label them a little.

The rest of the day was quiet. I later had a general chat about this and that with the headmaster at his house.

Monday 2nd February 2009.

Please forgive me if my reports to my website are not so long at the moment but with illness, pressure of work and catching up time is short, but I am hoping to have more time to write to you soon.

Today the Headmaster conducted Morning Prayer in the Chapel at 730am. One of the senior boys came into the Chapel at 7.20am and said the senior boys may be a little late this morning because breakfast is late.

I just smiled, - not my problem, the headmaster is taking the service this morning, next minute the senior boy had gone and smack on 7.30am all the senior boys were in Chapel.

Infact it was some of the juniors who were missing, they have no excuse so the headmaster this morning is playing hunting the bad boys who did not turn up.

I had to go and order a new College ID card, this morning, because my old one got eaten. I also had go through all the students files to get their

birthdays, the headmaster suggests that we should mention birthdays during the service.

We have had a candle rack made for the Chapel so that people can light a candle and stick it in the sand, heaven knows where it will stand in the Chapel, I have also suggested that we have a small pin board next to it so that people can write down the names of those they want us to pray for. Tonight I am cooking a English meal for the headmaster and two other tutors, that will be fun. Going to attempt Chips, mashed potatoes, and bubble and squeak.

Must also see the headmaster for the venue for Bible Classes, at last we have the names of those who are interested in Bible Classes, which have to be approved by the headmaster, so they can be dismissed from their dorms in the evening, he will decide which are genuine and which ones just want to get out of the dorms to lark about.

There will be classes for all three languages.

I am also starting a SCM on a Monday night. The other Anglican Colleges all have SCM meetings, and gather together for talks, activities and to arrange events for the SCM, so the Bishop thinks it fit for us to have a group here at St. Thomas' the only College which does not. I am also starting a evening of Prayer and devotion once a week on the life of St. Francis.

I soon will also be organising and starting confirmation classes.

Tuesday 3rd February 2009.

The supper for the headmaster went well, we just all agreed that it was not the healthiest of meals, and the headmaster complained there was no beer.

'Beer is English' he said, so with 'English meals, English drink'

Guess what, tomorrow yet another public holiday, tomorrow is National Day, another day to have a bank holiday. That is 5 this year already.

So today we had a National Day assembly seeing that there is no College tomorrow.

Every pupil in the College in the smartest white uniforms had to attend with all the staff.

The assembly was outside in the sunny weather, in front of the main offices next to the flag poles. It is very hot here.

All the classes which were in lines by grade stood to attention while The headmaster and myself took the platform.

Here we have to be careful how we conduct the service, even so it is an Anglican College, we must not offend the other faiths. Even so we have to let the students know it is an Anglican College.

I started the service with a prayer designed to fit all the four faiths.

We then had four pieces of scripture read each by a pupil for each of the four faiths.

We had some music played by the students on the Indian drums and organ which is played by air where you have to keep pushing the organ in and out to produce sound, can not remember what they call the instrument, there was also singing with the music, it sounded nice.

We then had two minutes silence for all those who have died during the problems in Sri Lanka, especially in the recent bombings last month which killed 22+. This was followed by the Sri Lankan National Anthem which is always sung by the students and staff in great dignity, arms straight down by their sides with fists clenched and heads up. I then took the closing prayers, the first an Christian prayer, second a prayer for all, and thirdly the prayer for Sri Lanka National Day. The headmaster gave the blessing, then there was silence whilst the Headmaster and myself left the platform.

Here because I am in the Franciscan Order, everyone addresses me as 'Brother' at all times, staff may address me as 'Brother Michael' All staff are addressed as Sir or Miss at all times, never by their Christian name or sir name, all pupils are address as 'Master followed by their surname' and the girls are just addresses by their Christian names.

All clergy are addressed as 'Brother' if in some Anglican Order or Deacons Order, and all Priests are addressed as 'Father' The title of 'Rev'd' is never used and no Church Minister whether 'Brother' or 'Father' is addressed by his name with out Brother or Father been said first, you either address the minister by either Brother or Father alone or Brother or Father followed by the Christian name, no clergy is addressed by Rev'd here in Sri Lanka.

I am so used now of either been addressed as Brother or Brother Michael, I am never addressed by just Michael, not even by the headmaster in private, it is bad manners if you do not address a person by his title first or his title alone.

After Assembly I had an hour spare before having to go into the office to sort some things out, so whipped down to the pool side stripped my cassack off and straight into the pool for 10 slow relaxing lengths, I felt good afterwards, I was prepared I had my swimming trunks on with my tee-shirt under the cassack all ready, because I intended jumping into the

pool after assembly. No one can see what you were under your cassack, I even took a service of Morning Prayer the other day with my pyjamas on under my cassack, because I had over slept and had to rush to Chapel, No one ever knows unless you show them or tell them. Shhhhhhh

I try and dip into the pool as much as possible, but there is certain times you should use the pool. The staff get a little more allowance for time in the pool. I try and avoid the pool during break times or students free periods because if I go in during that time all the pupils want to come in especially the youngsters, no pupil is to enter the pool unless one of the qualified instructors is present.

But when they see me, they presume that they can come in and start shouting if they can come in, they know the rules, but even then try it on by saying the headmaster says it is OK, or that they are aloud in with any member of staff. They know the game but they never stop nagging you to let them in, and I am talking about up to 70 students at least.

To day I had to go into Welimada for business, so at the same time took the opportunity to get on to the internet and send emails so that I could at least write to you.

Please forgive me if I write to you in bulk, but I have limited time so have to send one email to several of you at once, but I do try my best to write to you individually if I can, especially to those who write to me regularly. I do try my best honest.

This afternoon I felt happier knowing that I had got my latest report for January emailed to Peter to put on to my web page, and to reply to my friends who have sent me 'get well' emails.

Do not worry I am fine, I am struggling a little and sometimes get tired and pain, but my work is important and I must always keep going, I am relied on so much. Every minute is taken up, I even write my monthly reports for my webpage during the night to get them done.

I was sat down in peace for only a while when I got a knock on the door, from one of the young students. 'Brother they are up in your fruit tree again'

They know they are not aloud to be up in the tree, I have mentioned before the incident of the fruit tree, in past reports if people have read them.

I went out and caught six of them in the tree, all the pupil including the girls stood round watching. Even before I said anything the fear of look shone on those stood around the tree, even some fleeing. The boy's in the tree did not notice me until I really bellowed out to them, I think the shock nearly made them fall out of tree, then they scramble down the tree so fast

they must of scraped their legs and arms. When they were down they stood in front of me shaking, it was good in away, because they must also see the fear in me as well as the fun side of me, and know that I am serious with matters as well as been soft hearted.

I just said 'let's go and see the headmaster and see what he says'

They were terrified, 'O no Brother, please, we promise we will not climb the tree again for fruit' So I let them go.

But like I said, they are also crafty. Blow me they are back an hour later throwing sticks into the tree, they kept their word, but were still determined to get the fruit, little sods.

Really they are just so mischievous as well as been little saints, looking so innocent in their neat white uniforms.

The evening passed quietly with a couple of tutors I had invited across for hot Chocolate and chat.

Wednesday 4th February 2009.

Well here again, another Bank Holiday, 'National Day' and blow me they have another on Monday also, 'Navarn Full Moon, Poya Day'

I wonder if Gordon Brown as ever seen the Sri Lankan Calendar, and wondered, hmm, I will have to think of some special dates and make them into Bank Holiday's, for England. Yea, OK, in our dreams, I was only joking, we can not even come to find one extra holiday which they have been talking about for the last two years. Sri Lanka have 38 bank holidays to our 10 bank holidays.

At St. Thomas' College, when it is Bank Holiday, day pupils are aloud home, but boarders have to remain in College, the headmaster makes it clear that they must not leave site even with Family, but family are welcome to come and visit. During the day prep classes are provided, and the boys are free more a less. Chapel Morning Prayer is 9am instead of 730am. But the day is more relaxed. The children tend to play sports all day or just sunbathe on the grass or swim.

Hikes are organised by the senior boys for all the College, but a list of names have to be given to me or the headmaster and signed and given approval only if tutors and staff are available, so first thing this morning I had 3 lots of groups come round for hiking with list of names. I agreed to say yes providing they wore there shorts, because of heat, that they had proper shoes on, and a full bottle of water each and some kind of cap on their head, and that they had tutors to assist with first aid kits and that they

left after 9am after Chapel service.

So they all rushed of to get shorts and shoes on. At first they insisted no shorts but jeans, I said 'no shorts no hike' It is far to hot for them in long trousers. In the end after Chapel all with hiking shoes, shorts and rook sacks with water and biscuits they were off.

This afternoon was also the Tutor v Students Cricket match. The Tutors won.

I was unable to take part due to other work and other commitments, and was not aloud to take part on the hiking because of health problems.

Apparently one of the young tutors who took one group was completely done in. He said he was not too sure of the rout therefore relied on the students who took him through the wilds, they came back covered in bruises, cuts, and mud, they loved it but the tutor did not.

About 5pm I grabbed a spare hour and went to the pool and got a nice relaxing 10 lengths in the pool. The pool is right at the other side of the College from the Chaplains House, so is a good long walk. Compline was at 8pm.

Thursday 5th February 2009.

Sherborne School, in Dorset one of the leading Public School's in England, and has connections to St. Thomas' College Gurutalawa College, mainly for financial purposes. St. Thomas' College is really financially struggling now and losing pupils, because parents are not paying the fees. Sherborne School, will also support the College in other ways, and will send students across from Sherborne for 1 month experience courses in working at St. Thomas' helping with the English language and supporting the sport activities and giving other support to the College best they can. We already have one student who is on gap year before he goes to university, spending a month here.

The College here is very keen on teaching its students English and getting the students to learn to mix and work with different cultures, especially the British which the Sri Lankan's are so much involved with.

I am personally attached to the Parish of Bognor Regis in England as a mission partner, where I send monthly letters back giving details of mission life and work out in Sri Lanka and a diary of day to day life of my work in my ministry in Sri Lanka.

Sherborne College is already sending donations and supporting the College financially, my aim is to get sponsors and people to support the

Chapel, which needs improving so much.

We need so much, a new sanctuary lamp to hang from the ceiling over the altar where the consecrated sacraments are always reserved. We do not have one yet. We are also looking for two new chancel 5ft floor candle sticks, the two we have basically have fallen to bits. We also need 4 new matching lectern and pulpit falls, for the four colours, red, green, purple and white/gold. Eventually we also would like to raise and find money for 6 new small candle holders for the altar, but these six candles are not essential, as such at the moment. The old wooden lectern is also falling to bits and is collapsing now and again which is stuck together by tape.

All these are so cheap to buy in India and Sri Lanka but the College just do not seem to find the finance to bare the costs.

I am hoping to get a catalogue and price list from India for these object we need for the Chapel. So I know how much to raise and find.

So please if anyone would like to support our small beautiful College Chapel dedicated to St. Francis of Assisi please help. Perhaps you may like to send a small personal donation as an individual, or as a group do some kind of sponsor organisation or event to raise some money, or perhaps you may like to give a gift in memory and thanksgiving of someone or some organisation or establishment, which a plaque can be attached. Or perhaps some organisation like the Mother's Union or Sanctuary guild or individual person would like to embroider a matching pulpit and lectern falls for one of the seasons of the four colours required.

I ask please help us with our Chapel which needs restoring so much, it is used at least twice each day and is given so much love and pride by our students who care for it so much, and give as much as they possibly can in what small change they have and by cleaning and caring for the Chapel which they use daily.

We have just been given a new stand for placing candles on to light and burn for people who wish to light a candle for someone, the students are so proud of it and delighted to have something new for the Chapel.

To furnish the Chapel with the things we so desperately need will mean so much to them, especially if it is connected to England.

One Parish is already sending a gift of new hymn books which they will dedicate to the Chapel as a gift from their Parish Church.

So please help restore our lovely small Chapel which is used and loved so much.

I conducted Compline at 8pm. It is difficult sometimes for the students, From 530pm they have prep or private tuition and then at 715pm they have

supper followed by inspection by the prefects, Sometimes the prefects can be awkward and hold them back, so they have to race to get to Compline for 8pm. The headmaster is now hard on discipline and if you are not in Chapel on the dot when the service starts you are not aloud in. There is no interruption aloud to take place with people coming in late, that is a rule. All services have to start prompt whoever is there.

The Headmaster as praised me for my discipline, time keeping and strictness. The students love me but have also learnt to fear me.

I will not tolerate any nonsense or bad timing, but both the Headmaster and myself are changing that, and students, slowly but surely are getting that into their heads.

They really like me a lot but also fear me, especially when I am angry and give punishment out for slackness and time keeping. But they also trust and respect me so much. It is so moving especially when you see all the young 5-7 year olds when they pass me take of their caps and slighty bow and say good morning brother.

To day I instructed all 23 sacristans and servers to turn up for serving rehearsals at 6pm and told them any who did not turn up would be off the serving list, I told then if there is no discipline, time keeping or commitment for their duties, then they need not serve because they are not serving God with dignity, which they are taught to do in their position. Chapel is taken with great respect by all the pupils and I look after the Chapel and conduct services with great dignity and seriousness, no one even dare sneeze in Chapel when I am present. Dress also is very important in Chapel, their uniforms have to be spotless or they are sent to the headmaster. They do not have to wear uniform for Compline, Saturday Morning Prayer or holiday services, but have to look spotless.

No one is aloud into the chancel except ministers, servers and sacristans, then they have to remove their socks and shoes.

Jason a senior pupil is head sacristan and is a real good lad, he is my assistant in many ways and works hard, he is keen, and does well to say he is just a student with his full time studies and classes, his job as sacristan is very demanding, it also includes making sure everyone gets to Chapel and behaves. He is great help to me and really shows respect in his duties.

To day in morning assembly the headmaster blew up and gave the greatest command of discipline and time keeping. The pupils looked at both the headmaster and I in our white cassacks with fear because they know we are serious and take no nonsense.

Even the other tutors slack in time keeping and discipline.

Tonight at Compline the students were falling over each other to get into Chapel for the last bell at 8pm. Compline is compulsory for all Christian senior students, but the others are free to come at will, but encouraged to come. Tonight I had 77 in Chapel for Compline.

There is Morning Prayer at 730am and Compline at 8pm every week day, which are well attended. Compline is in English and Morning Prayer is in English Mon, Wed, Fri. Sinhala on Tuesday and Tamil on Thursday, I seem to cope with Sinhala but struggle with Tamil, we have to speak all three languages, but try to encourage English.

Friday 6th February 2009.

Today is a day of madness. This weekend our sister College, St. Thomas' from Mount Lavinia, Colombo is joining us, when I say joining us, I mean their Choir, Warden, Chaplain and some of the students and their family about 150 in all, they will stay Saturday to Monday Morning, and the main issue and importance for the weekend is worship.

Mount Lavinia, is again like our College, Anglican, and is the leading College in Sri Lanka, their dignity, respect, worship exam results are first class. They are also very High Anglo Catholic in worship and produce supposedly the best choir in Colombo, it is a boys College only.

As well as many other things and work on my mind my main priority is the arrangements of the services for the weekend.

Sunday 9am Communion will be High Mass. The Chaplain of St. Thomas' Mount Lavinia, myself, the Headmaster of St. Thomas' Gurutalawa and Fr. Goodchild will conduct the service.

I will also read the Gospel or should I say chant the Gospel in plain song, assisted by the Cross Bearer, both Acolyte's, book bearer, Thurifer and boat boy.

At Communion the sanctuary bell and the main bell outside will be rung at the appropriate times and most of the other parts of the service especially will be chanted, so all week I have been practicing my plain song chanting, my chanting sounds a bit like a horse needing desperate attention in the stables, so it should be fun. I am nervous. Other parts of the service will be said in Sinhala, but not Tamil. The Creed, The Gloria and other parts will be sung by the choir.

I am also responsible for most activities and arrangements for our guests, the headmaster as basically left the arrangement to me.

So this morning was spent most of time sat in the headmasters office or in

my office back at the Chaplains House making arrangements for weekend and preparing the service. We will also have candle lit Compline on Saturday night.

I did manage to get down to the village for my hair cut, and buy some vegetables. Today also had a meeting with the servers at 4pm to give instructions for Sunday we will also be having a full rehearsal on Saturday night after Choir practice. Also tonight had a meeting at 8pm with the teachers for Bible Classes, we have three Bible Classes in English, Sinhala and Tamil on Sunday afternoons.

There has been more Tamil attacks and fighting at Kandy the nearest major town to us, 11 were killed there is yet again more concern, the fighting and killings are getting worse at the moment.

[Saturday 7th February 2009.](#)

Today on the whole this morning was quiet, but this afternoon our guests from our sister College of St. Thomas, Mount Lavinia arrive. The whole weekend will be packed with entertainment and worship which is naturally very important in both the College's life. Mount Lavinia is again an Anglican College, which I have already pointed out. It is our sister College. Gurutalawa College was founded in 1945 because of the war when the pupils from Mount Lavinia had to move to a new site because of the bombing of the College during the air raids on Sri Lanka. They moved to land, a farm given by a rich man in Gurutalawa. From then on history speaks for itself, which you have probably seen on the College website which I have given out before in my earlier reports last year. The history of both Colleges are interesting. I am not sure what the webpage for Mount Lavinia is at the moment, but I am sure you could find out if you were interested.

I will leave the history of the two Colleges for now you can look them up yourself on both the College websites.

This morning I got into the pool again for a swim, I try and get my 10 lengths of the pool in each day if I get half hour to a hour free, which is most days. Staff can use the pool when they wish but pupils have certain free periods when they can use it but only when staff will assist them. So you always get requests from the pupils asking if you are going to swim so that they too can join in. It is a big pool and 10 ft deep at the deep end. You will see several pictures of it when I download my photos on this website in the next couple of weeks so keep your eyes posted on this website for

pictures and naturally up dates of my reports.

There is at least a 1000 (thousand) photos of the College and its work and life to download, once I have filed them all into order. A lot of them were taken for Sherborne School, who is now in partnership with our College in missionary work and support.

I met the Chaplain of Mount Lavinia this afternoon, and the pupils who have come to share in our worship and sports. So many sport organisations have been arranged for the weekend. We had a rehearsal in Chapel with the choir and servers tonight at 6pm for tomorrows Mass, It should be interesting, more a less the whole service will be sung. The Choir of St. Thomas' College, Mount Lavinia, are supposed to be the best in all of Sri Lanka, even East Asia, they are good, but I would not go that far to say they are rated as they are supposed to be.

When I am asked what I think about the choir after listening to them on tape, I just politely say they have a fine organ, and say no more.

The practice for tomorrow went well, just hope it goes well on Sunday.

What we are hoping for will be tight because the Chapel is to small. For example I will be chanting the Gospel with the Cross Bearer, two Acolyte's Thurifer, boat boy and book bearer all stood round me in such a small space. There will be all five of those people, plus 4 other servers and 4 ministers in the service also, in such a small space.

After the practice I chilled out back at my den, the Chaplains House.

For the last couple of weeks I have not really kept my routine for meals at the Keble College due to my time table and work, I am also still not eating right. So I just grab what I need when I need, which is not good. My position is very demanding in many fields and time is very limited, again I am writing this report at 5am to be able to fit the time in. The headmaster now also wants me to represent him at a couple of Education and Church meetings which he is unable to attend himself, and these are some distance away.

We have also had problems to day 3 young boys have run away because they were home sick, so there is concern because they are only very young, but in the last week both the headmaster and myself have had young students come to us sobbing because they want to go home, not used to boarding away from home.

[Sunday 8th February 2009.](#)

High Mass went well, I was pleased with the performance of the servers

etc, I am so much trying to get the standard of worship and Chapel life back to how it should be, the pupils know that I am strict and now fear me a little, but they are also learning that it too is a benefit to them and they are learning things and learning to respect their positions in Chapel more, they also respect the changes.

The standard of worship and Chapel was so poor it is now changing so much. Remember this is also a Anglican College, its worship and Chapel life is very important, even so we also have to look after the other faiths we have here.

It felt so good to have High Mass today at its highest. On the first Sunday we try and make it High Mass to the best we can, with what we have and what the Children know, and it is always conducted in English only.

After Mass all the important and invited guests came to breakfast in the main Dining Hall after Mass. For me the rest of the day was just staying in the Chaplains House catching up with work and preparing. At 6pm was Bible Classes, I take the English classes at the Chaplains House, Tamil Bible Classes are taken in the Library and Sinhala Bible Classes are taken in the Chapel. Most of the Boys in my group are taking Luke as their research work, so we have decided to study Luke for our Bible Class.

[Monday 9th February 2009.](#)

Yes yet again, another Bank Holiday, because of full moon. All the boarders have to stay on site, most teachers go home, so we have extra work of looking after the pupils. 83% of the pupils are boarders.

They still have to take College discipline and rules and have so many hours prep work, but they do not have to wear uniform and they also get a lot of free time, which they do sport or take other activities, because they are not allowed to leave site, but on the other hand the site is big enough. The Students here are crazy on sport and activities, and one of their favourite activities is hiking. If they want to hike they have to make a list of no more than 15 pupils then take it to the headmaster to agree and sign, after this with the approved signed list they have to find a member of staff to take them or they are not aloud to go. So most of the morning you get groups of Students banging on your door begging you to take them hike, they are several groups.

They go crazy and arrange 15-20 mile hikes for the day and take pack up with them, they are so active and you can never get them tired what ever you do.

The headmaster as barred me from hikes because of my health, so I can not go with them, not just that but I just do not have the time anyway. The other boys just play basket ball, rugby, cricket, and football, or badminton. They are all keen sports students, especially basketball. The girls like just hanging around the College farm with the horses, or washing their clothes or just playing on the swings and chilling out in the relaxing play areas. The Keble boys just like playing cricket in the playground or annoying me in trying to take them swimming, or by climbing that blasted fruit tree, they are not aloud in the pool without me.

The Keble College (junior/infant) and girls section is next to the Chaplains House, so I never get any peace, with noise and running about.

You can guess as well that they are mischievous little sods, so you always have to have your eyes open.

The fruit trees in the Chaplains House garden is always a problem. They are not aloud to climb in the tree or they get into trouble. But you know what they are like, they never learn, they are always in the trees if they think that you are not watching.

The funny thing is every evening you get a bang on your door, you open it and stood there in front of you are a couple of 6 year olds looking terrified saying, 'Brother we have been good today we have not been in the fruit trees' but you know with there terrified faces and little put on innocent faces that they have, they are just checking to make sure that you have not seen them and going to punish them later.

I just look at them and say 'now are you sure', 'Yes brother we have not been in the fruit trees' they reply. In the end they do sometimes come out with it if I keep asking and looking them in the eyes saying 'now you would not lie to me' When they come out that they have they always blame it on each other that they were told to go up. 'But only today' they say, another lie.

They then ask me how do I know with guilty looks but wide open eyes. I reply 'Remember I am the Chaplain, I have the gift off extra eyes' The boys eyes open even more and walk away more worried, as they walk away you can hear them saying, 'Is God always watching us in the fruit tree and then telling Brother Michael' in great seriousness, they are only six years old.

When they suddenly see me watching them in the trees, they nearly fall out of the tree trying to scramble down with so much fear on their faces, it is so funny to watch, they must have plenty on scrapes on their bare legs and arms coming down so fast and their clothes must be covered in bark stains.

Again quietly while the students were in prep I got my 10 lengths in the pool, but as soon as you hear the bell, you have to be out quick or they all gather round the pool wanting to swim with you.

In the afternoon I went down to Chapel and updated the parish records and other things which needed doing in the vestry. The children are always in the Chapel cleaning it and the girls putting flowers in the vases. I then went to see the headmaster, who updated me with the latest and gave me more duties.

This week I have a deanery meeting at Bandarawela, and more work on my never ending programme. Who says a Ministers job is easy they only work on Sundays, they want to swap jobs one day.

I have never felt or experienced so much exhaustion in my life, I am just so tired and exhausted, and some days feel so ill with my heart problems. To night Fr. Salmon took Compline for me to give me a break because he saw that I was tired. Fr. Salmon is head of Theology and Divinity lessons, and is very good with me, in return I sometimes stand in for his lessons. Just so much on today and so tired not even thought about food, so not eaten, never get chance to go over to Keble College for meals or to help the girls with their homework so much now because of work.

[Tuesday 10th February 2009.](#)

This morning started with Morning Prayer in the Chapel followed by a short assembly outside the main office where the children line up in their forms and the headmaster speaks from the platform, this only occurs as mentioned before when the headmaster needs something important to say. The main assembly in the hall itself takes place on a Wednesday usually proceeded by a staff meeting in the Library. I do have some photos of these that I will eventually down load onto my web page when I have sorted them out.

I managed to go into the next town Welimada by bus afterwards to get my prescription and other essential things I needed, was back by 11am. The afternoon was bad, again feeling very weak and having a lot of heart pain. But must carry on, rested when I could, but lots of things to prepare for, sermon to write for Sunday and other reports to write up and other stuff to sort out, managed to end the day by taking Compline, but really struggled, especially walking from the Chaplains House a good 10 minute walk to the Chapel, which I found difficult with weakness. The walk back was even worse, I did not even try and swim one length today, the thought of the

pool was just not on my mind. My friend had made me a sweet and sour for supper, but I could not eat it, have had nothing all day, not hungry. It is now Wednesday morning 2am can not sleep and only have this time to catch up on writing these reports for my website.

Wednesday 11th February 2009.

Quite busy today. No Morning Prayer, because of assembly. After first lessons and breakfast there was first a staff meeting at 730am in the library. The Headmaster really put his foot down on the teachers for time keeping and commitment. After The staff meeting we had the main indoor assembly at around 815am, all teachers and staff have to attend. Today in the assembly, all the prefects and other senior positions were announced and then sworn in by oath holding the College flag. Other matters were also announced.

During the most of the day I had a lot of catching up to do. At 3pm we had the diocesan and finance secretary for the diocese of Ripon and Leeds visit the College. It was my duty with the headmaster's wife to show them around the College after a short meeting and tea at the headmasters house. The diocese of Ripon and Leeds as mentioned before are mission link diocese to the diocese of Colombo, it is the diocese of Ripon and Leeds who have sponsored me for some of my work here.

It was interesting talking to the finance secretary, she knew quite a few ministers I know, and to my shock I discovered she had also been a teacher at my old Grammar School in Tadcaster and left just before I began in 1974.

I ended the day with taking Compline at 8pm.

For supper we cooked chips and sweet and sour pork.

Thursday 12th February 2009.

This morning after Morning Prayer at 730am, I had to go to Welimada to get some important things. The headmaster is not well, and a little stressed, I hope he will be well. At the moment we have a few problems in College, which naturally I can not discuss, but it is affecting a few people which is not good.

On the return journey from Welimada on the crazy bus, I and another member of staff, George, who was with me, nearly did not get home. The bus was so over loaded that people were even hanging from the top of the

roof, the tyres looked dodgy before we started the journey, the gear box was not healthy, and the bus had bits missing here and there, missing mudguard the grill on the front of the engine hanging off one of the headlights hanging off showing the wires, the bus probably from the 1930s was even well tilted to one side before it set off and the seats in the bus were just wooden benches.

When leaving the bus station the driver even asked a couple of his friends to give the bus a push start whilst he clanked into first gear and away. Never thought I would get home, The worse part is climbing the very steep hill for three miles of town, the bus kept just stopping when changing gear, some of the people hanging on the outside had to keep jumping off so the bus could get going again, then run after the bus and jump on again as it was slowly moving away. The gear box was placed in the middle of the bus, so there was one mighty long gear stick running halfway down the bus in the middle to the drivers seat, the bus was only small and seated 32 people.

Amen.

That is today's sermon, 'God guideth our bus home'

No in great honesty that story is totally true, you just have to experience it. I have down loaded over 1000 photos of my work, the College, the Cathedral and College activities etc, and posted them down to Peter Green, my friend from Bognor Regis who will down load them on to the web page, so will not be long before they are down loaded.

Ended the day with taking Compline in the Chapel which we have Mon-Thurs. at 8pm, never get less than 60 turn up.

[Friday 13th February 2009.](#)

Today started of giving a firing sermon for Morning Prayer, based on the Bible Story of the five wise and five foolish bridesmaids, the reading gave me follow up on the facts of reliability and time keeping, which are very important here, not like the bridesmaids who had no oil who had to scarp off to find some and therefore were late back and locked out and missed out.

I reminded our students one day you will either miss out or be turned away because you are late, it could even mean losing your job after leaving College, (well it would in England) which so many of the students here want to go on to study and work in England.

I also reminded them never rely on others and expect they have what you

want, and gave a few examples which I am not going to give now. There were a few thoughtful faces when leaving Chapel after the service.

Today we also had a serious situation with behaviour in the Keble College, which the headmaster, Head of Keble College and myself had to deal with and sort out. Punishments and strict talks had to be given, not really a nice sight we like to see, but that is part of College life.

We do suffer and feel stressed with our jobs in times like this it is not always easy. I have learnt so much with responsibilities, my duties, and positions I hold. I am completely a different person.

My position includes authority, giving orders, punishment, and decision making, and an important position, which I have to hold with dignity, respect and trust.

The rest of the day just preparing for several meetings and other works.

On Tuesday I will represent the College for the deanery synod, our College remember is an Church College, so we are involved in all Church matters.

[Saturday 14th February 2009.](#)

With the problems at Keble College, which I can not go into, I now spend as much time which I have spare with the staff and pupils, the headmaster has also asked me to visit each evening to check upon the dorms and make sure everything is OK. My work is already full, but help especially in discipline is needed here, especially at Keble College.

The headmaster respects me for my views on discipline and time keeping. I was proud of myself to day I swam 42 lengths of the swimming pool, the best since leaving school nearly 100 years ago, well it seems that long anyway. Still having eating problems, but now and again sneak a couple of Chips which I make in my kitchen, the headmaster loves my chips, so instructions are given to send chips on to his house when I cook them, I do not think his wife is too impressed. We have a joke about it.

I met a couple of the headmasters friends from England today who are stopping with him for a few days.

The Headmaster re-visited me later. With the problems recently at Keble College, of some miss-behaving and because there is shortage of staff etc. I have been asked to concentrate more on looking after Keble College because of this problem, I am to force discipline and punishment if possible.

Each morning I have to now do a daily round of Keble College, (5-10 year olds and all the girls) to make sure everything is OK, to talk to the

children, to speak and check that the teachers are OK and to report back any serious problems. On an evening I have to inspect the Keble dorms, including the girls dorms. When visiting the girls dorms I have to check first that they are decent and then have one of the female staff or senior girls present with me.

I am now available to have my meals more often at Keble College and pay all my spare time on the Keble College, which with my timetable is difficult.

I am also instructed as part of my duties to spend at least one hour just touring the lessons and talking to the students in the middle and senior College, the headmaster himself will check the middle and senior dorms each night which he has always done anyway.

Discipline and time keeping is now even more stricter than before.

The staff are so much happier at Keble College that I am able to help and support them more. It gives so much more ease with me around and knowing I am around with my strict discipline but at the same time with the children respecting me, giving more respect.

The Children seem to be settling and behaving much more better than before. The headmaster also reminds me it is not just the Chapel I am responsible for but the liturgy of the services, pastoral and spiritual side, and responsibility of the pupils with the headmaster of the discipline and care of both tutors and pupils. It is to my discretion of how deal with it and to my timing when I take my duties, and fit them round each other.

[Sunday 15th February 2009.](#)

Today we had Mass without the incense at the 9am service in all three languages, I took the first part of the service and assisted the headmaster in the second part of the service, the prayers were sung and chanted.

The first part of the service was in English. The service went well, we have a list of 18 servers and 8 sacristans, which I train and look after well, Jason the senior sacristan is so professional, and such a help, I rely on him a lot.

At the moment we have a serious outbreak of flu, virus and sickness going round the College. At the Keble department alone there are 13 children in bed very poorly, 8 have gone to hospital and 3 home, and that is just the Keble section. The middle and senior sections are not yet so bad.

So most of my Sunday is been spent at Keble College been with the sick and helping support the staff, helping give the children their medication and just sitting with them in their dorms, some just crying others just been

sick, others just laid there shivering. It is more like a hospital at the moment. Very few are eating. Only 6 of the girls are really suffering, the other's are the 5-10 year olds.

Like I have mentioned some have had to go to hospital and we have had the doctor round. I also have to visit the sick in the middle and senior College.

The Keble students and girls are so pleased and happy that I have put myself out to be with them. They respect and trust me so much.

I have also been trying to fit my other duties around this which is difficult. The older girls who are not sick, are such a help, and have been acting like mothers, to the younger children with their pills, and feeding them and giving them cuddles and helping supervise. You honestly would think that they were like mothers to them. The girls which I have mentioned before are so caring for the younger ones, boys and girls, and they seem so professional at it, and love it. I always give them great credit for it. They are so good to me.

Monday 16th February 2009.

Very tired spent most of the night at Keble College with the sick and helping keep an eye on the other active children. Staff is short, some of them been sick and grounded themselves. My duties make things difficult to spend time with the Keble College, for example here is a list of my duties day just for an day to day idea.

5am alarm Clock.

6am spent time with the girls in prep.

645 - 715am breakfast with the Keble students.

730am Morning Prayer in the Chapel.

750am Outside Assembly.

810am Daily meeting with the headmaster.

845 - 945am Back at the Keble College talking to the staff and visiting the sick in the dorms, both boys and girls, spending at least 5 minutes with each one of them, they were all very poorly in bed.

945am Visited the other Keble students in the classrooms, 7 classes in all. These students vary from the age of 5. So some noisy children, but it was good to see them well.

1030am had some reports and work to check, and staff to see and deal with in the office.

11am My routine visit and chat with the middle and senior children in prep

work and lessons. (later than usual)

1140- 1220. Lesson - teaching grade 11 divinity.

No time for lunch.

1230 back to Keble College to help with supervise with dinner break just sat on the swings with a coffee when either forced to play cricket basket ball or had the girls round me talk talk talk talking about England and Prince William and with them trying to see how high they can send me in the air on the swing with out me spilling my coffee.

1.15pm at last peace for 30 minutes which I managed to get a dip in the pool, 20 lengths today.

Followed by standing in to cover for the last lesson for the day. Grade 8 for English.

3pm had students round at the Chaplains house wanting me to go through bible readings and intercessions with them for next week, at the same time able to nibble some biscuits, first food since breakfast.

4pm now tired a bit, but back to Keble College to check up on the staff and pupils especially the sick. 5pm 6pm my own preparation time for my work I need to prepare for.

6pm Visit to the senior boys for chat and personal discussions some wanted to talk about.

700pm Supper, tonight in the senior canteen seeing that is where I was at the time.

8pm Conducted Compline in the Chapel.

830pm Visit to the Keble dorms to make sure everything is OK. (The head master checks the middle and senior dorms)

Left the Keble dorms 945pm.

Thank God I had no time in the afternoon so did not have to play football with the seniors which I get caught out to do, just had no energy today.

[Tuesday 17th February 2009.](#)

Took Morning Prayer at 730am. Then visited the Keble College. Still a lot of ill children, Several bed ridden. After visiting the Keble College, visited the classrooms at the senior end of the College, then visited the dorms in the junior, middle and seniors. Some children poorly with fever.

Later on in the afternoon after other work I had to deal with, re-visited the Keble College and its dorms.

The boys dorms (two sections) still had a few poorly boys in bed, but not so bad, but the girls dorms section (three sections) in the Keble College

seem to have their beds full with more girls with the fever. I sat and spoke to each pupil who was sick in bed, ending with the girls. I had just got to the last girl who was sat up in bed but looked ill, when she just suddenly fainted and blacked out completely and fell out of bed, it happened so quick did not have time to catch her. 6pm.

Matron insisted that when she came round she would be OK and should rest. I insisted and demanded she should be taken to hospital, they had no choice but to do what I said.

The College bus came round immediately and I with the driver and two other senior girls I went with her to hospital.

She was very ill, and they were glad that we had taken her and they kept her in, she was now just partly conscious.

We left her at Boralanda hospital which is only 2 mile away if that, ten minute ride in the bus.

After I returned to Keble from the College 8pm. I stayed a little in the dorms, some of the younger boys were crying in pain, and some girls crying with what had happened. I left about 10pm and just as I had arrived to my quarters, the headmaster had rang me and said that Father Bruce had just arrived to the College quarters, could I go and bring him back to the my quarters and feed him before he returned to his quarters for the night. I was tired and had just fallen asleep.

I went and collected him and his driver who had brought him up from Colombo and fed them supper before he and his driver returned to their quarters.

Father Bruce a clergyman from the diocese of York in England who was partly responsible for me coming here he visited the College for a couple of days. He is one of the commissaries for the diocese.

[Wednesday 18th February 2009.](#)

Started the day with staff meeting in the library at 730am, this was only a short meeting, basically again giving instructions on discipline and time keeping. At the moment there is quite a few serious matters which are taking place, which I can not discuss, even with staff. What I discuss with the headmaster is always in confidence.

The staff meeting was followed by the weekly assembly in the main hall. I have already given you details of what the assembly consists of.

After Assembly had finished at 830am I was given the instructions of looking after Father Bruce up till 1000am. So I took him with me on my

day to day duties which I had. First we went to the Keble College to visit the sick young children and the girls in their dorms, today there are a lot of sick children, I am not happy, some are really sick, I will check on them again tonight.

I then took Father Bruce a tour of the classrooms in the Keble department, 7 classes in all, I introduced him to the children and teachers. He was so surprised when we walked in they stood up to attention slightly bowed and said good morning Brother Michael, good morning Father. Discipline is not kept like this in England.

I then took him on the long 10 minute trek to the other side of the College to introduce him to the middle and senior classrooms and their teachers, on the way, showing him all the main parts of the College as we passed them, e.g. the Chapel, library, farm shop and a thousand other things which make up the College.

After 1030am when he had to see the headmaster I took a quick dip in the pool which caused wolf whistles from the girls when walking by.

I then went to the hospital to visit the girl who had fainted the night before, after I returned had lunch with the headmaster and Fr Bruce at the headmasters house, and then visited all the College dorms 8 in all, to check upon the sick who were in bed with this virus bug. A lot of the boys are stressed and just hope that they can go home soon, the girls are better behaved more like adults but have that sorry look on their face to let you know that they are poorly for attention some of the better girls hide under the covers giggling before showing their face.

The girls and younger boys just race to you hug you and start crying, 'brother Michael stay, you take care of us' It is so moving when you get compliments like that.

They come to you and let you know how much they respect and appreciate you, telling me that I care for them and thank me for seeing that they are ok everyday, going to the hospital to see the sick children and making sure they get food and are cared for. They look on me as their chaplain and father figure who they can trust and who cares.

Again I checked all the dorms in the College before retiring for the night at 8pm after taking Compline.

Thursday 19th February 2009.

Today visited the Keble dorm. Wednesday night after I checked the dorms were the worse, a lot a the students, especially the girls were very sick and

ill during the night. More children taken to hospital during the night. Very few in Chapel this morning due to sickness. Went to hospital to make sure our students were OK and had food. Here in Sri Lanka if you go to hospital it is your responsibilities to provide food and blankets etc. Not like in England where they have meals sent round or beds made etc. After coming back went and checked the other dorms. Now feeling very tired and exhausted and not well, having difficulties with my own personal and general illness which I suffer from. I went back to rest and try and sort some papers out which the headmaster had given me. I had to ask Fr. Saman if he would take Compline because I was not well. Made some Chips and custard for myself to try and have something I liked to build up my energy, as I was not eating well. At the same time made some for the Keble staff (4 staff) they are always asking me if they can try English food.

Friday 20th February 2009.

Had Mr. Bastian to take Morning Prayer for me at 730am this morning in Chapel, because I was up during the night across at Keble College with more students who were sick and having to take them to hospital first thing in the morning. It is at the moment like the plague.

Headmaster away for a few days, so my work even more difficult. I have just basically run myself down to the ground.

During the day tried to get as much rest and sleep as possible, but not easy. Spent some time at the main office doing this and that which needed sorting out, but on the whole just kept myself quiet and rested, best I could. The Keble pupils, especially the girls who also reside there as well as the infants were very concerned about me. They take great care of me, as I take care of them.

Managed to eat some lunch but not much, and managed to walk to the village just out of the College gates to post some letters and my discs of the photos I had taken of the College to Peter Green at Bognor Regis to download them on to my web page, so soon you will be able to see some photos (over a 1000) and some film of the College.

I was instructed to take the rest of the day off for rest, so had an early night.

Saturday 21st February 2009.

No Morning Prayer on Saturday Mornings, so slept in a little. Had breakfast at Keble College about 8am. After breakfast I went to visit the middle and upper grades Dorms and the College sick bay to see the students who were sick and not in hospital but still on College campus. It is a long walk round the College. With the heat (been very hot) and not feeling well it was a bit of a struggle.

After a short rest and after my inspection I had to go to Welimada to do some shopping and for other matters.

Went by crazy bus. Then later went by bus again to Boralanda Hospital the bus was packed with everyone standing to a full bus. But with wearing my cassack, everyone who is sat down offered me a seat. When everyone sees you in cassack you come first, In Sri Lanka it is expected and only respect and manners. Religion is taken very seriously here, as already mentioned when ever you wear your cassack you are taken with the greatest respect. After visiting hospital I came back for about 4pm and started to prepare for supper later, because I promised a couple of people I would prepare an English dish tonight.

At 6pm every Saturday night is Sunday preparation and rehearsal for the Sunday morning worship, all the sacristans, servers and main leaders of worship, turn up to go through the hymns, readings and duties for the Sunday. This which I have already explained is taken by Fr. Goodchild, a retired Chaplain who lives on Campus and is nearly 90 years old.

A lot of those who should have been there were still playing cricket and did not turn up till gone 630pm.

Here discipline and time keeping is essential, so I had to give stern words out and dish out punishment and even reports out for the senior pupils who should have been there.

I do not enjoy giving out punishment and having to give warnings but it is my job.

The pupils of all grades and what ever punishment and for ever what reason they are punished for take it with great heart, they do not argue or disagree but take their punishment with dignity and respect but with great sorrow.

They accept their punishment with knowing they deserve it but they take it with great hurt knowing they are bad and do not take it as a joke as if they did not care.

After Chapel rehearsals I returned to the Keble College for my evening duties in inspecting the dorms and checking out any other problems which

needed doing.

The boys (aged 5-10) were naughty, when they should have be resting in bed they were just jumping up and down on the bed throwing pillows and teddy bears at each other and shouting, so I lost my temper soon as they saw me and heard my voice, they just stopped their bad behaviour immediately and got into bed with out a word. I made them all get out of bed and stand to attention at the side of their beds (it was just like boot camp) and walked up and down the long dorms, passing each pupil (50 in all) and every now and again stopping and asking what the meaning of their bad behaviour was for, they just stand in silence, then in quiet voices started blaming each other which they do at that age. Some were really in tears, because they knew they were bad. They love me and respect me, but also fear me which is good, they know when I am angry and they hate it because they like to please me with been good.

The only two people they really worry about is me and the headmaster, because when we get angry they know the worse, because of punishment we give out.

Some of the younger ones started crying and begging, please do not report us to our parents or mark us in the discipline book which are just some of the punishments we give out.

They hate been bad, but still try it on, after all they are still only young. Every boy I looked at his eyes just lit up with worry of what I might say. After my stern lecture I just said into bed and not one more word or else you will know about it. They all said one by one, ‘yes brother, thank you, goodnight’

Not a whisper from them for the rest of the night.

The main matron is off duty and the young assistant is in charge so they try it on with trying to work her up. But it is a different matter when I turn up. The girls, are usually well behaved, but when they are supposed to be in bed asleep, you can hear their personal stereo on and some times dancing. But the girls are on the whole really good.

[Sunday 22nd February 2009.](#)

Had breakfast at he Keble College at 730am before Mass at 9am, but I am always in Chapel by 815am to make sure the sacristans and servers are preparing everything.

I took the first part of the service up to the peace and then assisted at the Communion.

Quite a few were missing because of the virus going round the college. After Mass I spent some time going round the senior and middle dorms before returning to Keble College for a while. The boys seemed to be better behaved today. We had chicken for lunch, but as always it had to be spiced with pumpkin and other sort of spiced food.

It is really difficult to enjoy a good meal unless you cook it yourself. I actually had a good sleep most of the day, still not very well, but I dare not go for a check up at the hospital because every time I do they keep me in for about 3-4 days at least.

The headmaster is still away until tomorrow.

I was in bed by 8pm, I feel sleepy and good in bed, but keep waking up with really bad heart problems, and other effects, especially my breathing. I am slowly still losing weight and have now lost 21kg in weight. Which is about 3 stone since I have been here.

Had supper at the Keble College but did not enjoy it. Like the last two days had to sit in between the young girls who have not been well to make sure they eat their meals and take their tablets which they do not do if you do not watch them. The boys do not have a problem eating or taking their tablets even if they do not feel well, at least one thing the boys behave themselves with.

Monday 23rd February 2009

Guess what? Yes another bank holiday, that is the sixth now since New Years Day, and there is still another one in a fortnights time. They have bank holidays for all the religious feasts, and do not forget that there are 5 main religions here so plenty of feast days and holidays. Every full moon is a holiday because it is a feast day, but I am still convinced that it is something to do with werewolf's.

So today is like a normal Saturday for students.

Today I had to shout and punish most of the boys from Keble College, they just will not learn and they tend to feel they do not have to listen.

Firstly, during prep period they do not have teachers always or the teachers sit in and not pay attention they just go and study quietly and catch up on work on their own in quietness, well they are supposed to do, but the boys instead of using prep for the right reasons, have got it into their heads it is a time to make paper planes and paper watches, and lark around, so I had to tell them what prep was really about and told them that I will be watching, that is all I had to say on that matter.

Secondly, behind the Keble dorms is a large bit of land which they nick name the 'jungle', it is fenced off for safety reasons, because there are swamps, rats and snakes among other things in there, and most of the area is well over grown with trees also, so you can not see anyone in there. They have found gaps in the fence and go in when they are not supposed to do. So they have had good telling offs by me to day, you only have to shout 'by your beds now' and they scramble to their bed sides in no time. To be honest at the moment the boys are just been bad, taking advantage. I later spied on the boys through the windows during their prep period, they did not see me but seemed to be doing their prep, one of the boys then saw me, and said look brother is watching, they all looked and lifted their books up to say we are doing prep and not playing. All our pupils are now out of hospital, but some are still suffering and are bed ridden, some have gone home on leave. No Compline today because of holiday. Went to bed after final visit at Keble College dorms. Not feeling really strong at the moment, a little exhausted and also feel I may have a little of this bug coming on, after all a lot of my time at the moment is been dealing with those are suffering with the virus.

Tuesday 24th February 2009.

Started the day with breakfast at Keble and a check on the dorms at Keble before Chapel at 730am, not too good today so I asked Fr. Saman to take the service for me, had a short meeting with the headmaster. We also had an outside assembly for five minutes where I have described they all line up outside the offices for the headmaster to say some short words which need to be said from the platform, this followed by the Sri Lankan National Anthem.

You will see from some of the photos which will be down loaded shortly the pupils lined up outside the offices for this event.

After assembly I had the first two lessons of English/Divinity for grade 10 to take, the first lesson we had in the classroom and for the second lesson I took them down to the library to do some private research on the work we had been doing.

I then escaped to Welimada on the bus to get some shopping in, I have already described the half hour mad bus journey there and half hour mad bus journey back. Coming back is worse because it is up hill, it surprises me so much how the bus makes it.

No sooner had I got back and sat down for half hour to chill out, that I got a message to go to the Keble College, that there was a problem. To my surprise it was the girls this time. Like in most cases when it is serious I can not go into great details for several reasons. But I can tell you in this case it was one particular girl who was causing upset. All the girls have their dorms in Keble College, even so from grade six upwards have their lessons in the upper College. This particular girl had been causing trouble by gossiping untrue stories to the staff in the upper College where she was studying, this caused other pupils to be unnecessarily punished causing the teacher to criticise the staff and matron of the Keble College which were lies. (Matron is the title used for the person who takes charge of the live in students) This caused the other girls great stress and when they returned to the Keble College after lessons, a lot of crying arguing started to take place.

I tried to comfort the girls best as possible and try and bring the matter to a conclusion, the matter was very serious so I had to bring in the Headmaster.

The girls respect and listen to me, for this matter it was serious.

After the meeting with headmaster and the girls and staff at Keble College (7pm) I stayed for supper, and was to meet the headmaster later over other College matters which we had to sort out. But I just took the turn for the worse I just keeled over before I went to supper so went back to my place and was very ill, had to cancel the meeting with the headmaster. I had been not well for the last few days, but now I could not even stand.

[Wednesday 25th February 2009.](#)

Sorry no report to day, stayed in bed all day, did not do a single thing.

Went to the doctor in the nearby village or Boralanda who insisted that I went to hospital my blood pressure was 205 over 170, very high. But I persuaded him to give me some extra drugs and let me return, he agreed providing that I made a deal and returned on Friday for a check up.

To day as we know, or should know, is 'Ash Wednesday' the first day of Lent. I was supposed to have conducted and preached at the service in the Chapel tonight at 6pm, but was put on sick and the headmaster took charge.

On the way back from Chapel the girls called to see if I was OK, and reminded me that I have to take my pills and food with them. They seem to care about me more than I care about them.

The boys respect me in their own different ways like asking me to get well so I can play football, it is their way of saying come on get well with out been sissy like the way the girls look after me.

Thursday 26th February 2009.

Today the organisers from the Gideon Bible Society visited us at 730am Prayer Service. They took part in the service and then after distributed small New Testament Bibles either in English, Sinhala or Tamil to each student. Afterwards the Headmaster and myself invited the four guests to breakfast in the main Dining Hall. We then had a discussion in the headmasters office followed by a tour round the senior classrooms which I gave, the headmaster tied up with other matters. After half hour touring the senior classes they left for other appointments. I then went to the village to get some drink and then went to Keble College for a check up. During the afternoon the headmaster dismissed me and gave me orders instructed by the bishop, to rest for 5 days with no work of any kind at all because I was not well. However, later I checked on my duties at the Keble and turned up to take Compline, where the headmaster was waiting with anger. He marched me back to the Chaplains House with instructions not leave but rest. This last couple of weeks I have really been struggling with heart problems and dizzy spells with other complications in health. I had to see the doctor who was persistent that I stayed in hospital, no way am I going to that hospital again, so I disagreed. However, the bishop as given instructions that if I do not improve in the next 5 days he will call me to Colombo and put me in a proper hospital himself.

Friday 27th February 2009.

Well as usual nothing goes by plan. I am still up and working instead of resting. This morning two students arrived from Sherborne School, Dorset, on a two week replacement to help and get experience with supporting sport activities here at St. Thomas', as explained earlier we have connections with Sherborne School. We have already had one student from Sherborne School for two weeks who left last week, now we have two more, for a fortnight, they two later will continue on in touring India after taking part in their two week replacement work here. So this morning instead of resting with sick, I was showing the two boys

around the 45 acres of land of our college. At the time the college was busy with lots of parents of the children coming into college to pick up the last of the children to take them home for half term and meet staff who teach them. So it was very busy this morning, with people everywhere. It was a bit like a busy village market day, with all the classrooms full and other activities taking place.

At 1145am I managed at long last to get back to the Chaplains House with the two students and get out of my cassack and relax. The students will be stopping with me at the Chaplains House for the two weeks.

In the afternoon I took them by 'crazy bus' to Welimada to look around the nearest local town from Gurutalawa. They also wanted to go to the internet café in the town to check their mail.

But as they arrived a power cut occurred and so the town was more or less at a stand still, obviously the computers were not also working. So we just decided to collect a couple of beers from the shop to take home with us and have for the evening and left because we had no idea how long we would have to wait before the power would come back on. It could be any time between a minute and hours for power cuts, you never can tell. So no sooner had we arrived to town we returned. We decided to have a quick dip in the swimming pool after returning, when we bumped into the headmaster who was at the pool side.

During the evening we had a real English night in. We made chips and had our beers, hmmm bad boy.

[Saturday 28th February 2009.](#)

The headmaster is happy to see me pick up but still a little concerned. Even so I am not 100% right I can not afford to rest and neglect my duties and responsibilities I have.

Today is the start of the long weekend of the 'Guru Old Boys Weekend' Every year all the old boys of the year get together and return for the weekend and celebrate with all kinds of events, dinners, a cricket match against with what very few present students who have not gone home, and lots of other events. We are expecting up to 300 past students to come. Even some of the first students back in 1944 are expected. This year is the 65th anniversary. All the 35 remaining students (all boys) who have stayed in College, have moved across to Keble College to the dorms for the next couple of days so that all the other dorms are available for the former students to crash out in for the weekend who are coming for the 'Guru Old

Boys Weekend'

Everyone all first went down to the College Sports field which is right at the end of the College in the last field of the 45 acres of land, this is about a 20 minute walk. On the way you pass down the small hamlet of 6 houses and a couple of small shops. You can either take a short cut through the woods or go by the two mile road which curls round the houses and shops.

The sports field and pavilion was already packed with old students, friends, guests including governors and other people of position. Waiting for the cricket match to start, old students against the present students, (those who did not go home) on the grounds were also set up beer tents, ice cream stalls, food stalls and other entertainment. It was a bit like a small gala.

After the match everyone returned to the College itself and just seemed to wonder around the large area of the grounds of the College bumping into old friends and just having an afternoon of entertainment, most had gathered around the pool with just their shorts on eating, drinking and smoking and catching up with gossip with old friends they had not seen since last years meeting. I was introduced and spoke to a lot of the old boys some nearly 60 years old who were gathered around the pool and parts of the College, they all seemed to have drinks with them, a beer tent had been set up. Everyone I met, especially by the pool offered me a whisky or some other interesting drink including bottles of lager, it was just really like a gala and an outside party, lots of laughter, talking and entertainment. In my white cassack I was just mingling with the crowds and small groups of parties who were drinking, and talking and getting to know old students. The pool was full all day with students.

After a big lunch in the Main Hall everyone just continued in the afternoon gala until the AGM meeting at 530pm. Which I did not have time to go to with other commitments I had.

In the late afternoon I was introduced to old staff at the Headmasters House. In the evening I opted out of evening entertainment in the Foster Memorial Hall and just had a quiet evening at Keble College with our students watching Rugby on TV, and having supper.

Just like the sports day, race day, these events are so entertaining and full of life and fun like gala's. The weather is always hot and good for these events. Today was absolutely scorching.

Here endeth the latest report.

I will start a new report for March.