



One Year Later

As I write this, I am pondering upon the fact that it has almost been a year since the Class of 2005 graduated from Bangkok Patana School. At precisely this time last year, we were all frantic about taking our final IB exams and were in utter disbelief that we were soon to be Patana graduates. Having been at Patana for 14 years, I was never able to imagine leaving Patana, a place I truly called my home.

Now here we all are, gone our separate ways, making our mark in the world, and the memories still remain. I joined the University of Melbourne in July 2005, right after graduation, and life has changed tremendously since then. It may seem (a little) too soon to write in the Alumni section here, but in this short while I have accomplished more than imagined: I have recently won two writer awards amongst all the residential colleges in Melbourne - 1st place in Fiction and 2nd in Poetry and I am currently working towards publishing my first children's picture book - both, a far off dream that's only just being realised. Doing the Bachelor of Creative Arts at Melbourne University is more enjoyable than ever, and it has been a great first year as a university student.

Being a Patana Alumni does really give a great sense of pride, and moreover, being able to keep in touch with everyone at Patana still makes it our first home. A large number of us in the Class of 2005 are here in the 'land down-under' so, on behalf of them all, I would like to say hello to Bangkok Patana and say that WE MISS YOU!

Purnima Ruanglertbutr

Bangkok Patana School November 1991-May 2005

News from David Meredith

I am now Head of a school in Luton, Beds UK. It's a lovely old primary school of about 600 pupils with an attached nursery and Children's Centre. The school serves children of mainly Bengali, Pakistani, Turkish, African and eastern European backgrounds - so quite like working in an international school really - unfortunately we've no Thais! The school has suffered from very low standards of attainment and we are gradually improving expectations and the children are doing a lot better, but it's hard work and very intense.

Last year I was found to have cancer of the head and neck which was quite a shock. I had a sore throat whilst I was on holiday in Phuket and a swollen gland in my neck. I was given antibiotics and the sore throat went, but the lump stayed. Back in UK the GP and then the hospital said it was nothing to worry about, but after some months and the actual removal of the swollen lymph gland it was found to be cancerous. The removal of the lymph glands on one side of my neck was followed by six weeks of radio therapy which is (I'm afraid) really as bad as people will tell you. The only good thing is that it does end and you do recover.

Now it's 11 months on and so far so good. Cancer is a big wake-up call and I am thinking very carefully about the stress and strain of being a Head Teacher here in England. It appears that perhaps I'm not alone in that, as there are hundreds of schools without Head Teachers and even salaries of £75,000 plus don't seem to draw big fields. Yes, we all work very hard over here in England, but maybe the slightly more relaxed way of the Thai people is better?

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Keep your fingers crossed for me!

David Meredith

Head of First School 1997-2000