

## THE RETURN OF THE NATIVES



As we scramble to go into print and meet the deadline, another milestone is reached at GSIS. BACK 2 ROOTS, a Herculean endeavour is accomplished.

BACK 2 ROOTS had been brewing for the past year. Ever since Kushalappa, Anil and friends (batch 1984) came by for a visit to their Alma Mater, the process of bringing them all back to where they belonged, had been on the anvil with Anila Ann and Julie Pradeesh striving to make it happen.

Technology (FACEBOOK) and human will conspired and they all came trooping in on the 17th, 18th & 19th of April and the outpouring of fond glimpses of the past took our breaths away. Sepia – stained blotches came to 70mm Eastman-colour life and the busy executives of today metamorphised backwards into

kids again. Whoops of loud noisy laughter reverberated the campus throughout the 3 days, and the 5th & 6th graders of Fernhill exchanged knowing glances and smiled indulgently at them.

They walked around memory lane (literally) and moments from the past flashed and criss – crossed the nooks & crannies of the Baroda palace, like laser beams, lighting up the dark corners filled with snapshots of yesterday.

Here a forgotten episode, a familiar fragrance there. Remember this! Remember that! The years fell away like unwanted garments, impatiently shed, and they were little boys & girls again, rushing back to those adored haunts. They dragged their teachers, by the arms along with them – Mr. Victor, Mr. Swaminathan,



Mr. Milton, Ms. Uma. Forgotten nicknames – “blooming freaks”, “shameless watermelon thieves” surfaced, accompanied by delighted gurgles & hoots of undiluted mirth.

They spoke of forgotten leaves of yesterday’s woods; they spoke of passions & longings. They spoke of crushes, they spoke of flings; of painful chapters that had hurt for long. Many a wound was reopened, wounds that had healed without salve. But today Madam’s cooling hand on the brow brought much - awaited relief. Apologies and forgiveness came hand - in - hand. Old rivals back- slapped each other with brotherly camaraderie, promising ever lasting love. All is forgotten – let’s just get back home, Sir is waiting for us!

As they walked out of those gates that had opened its heart to them, there was no doubt that the journey had been a cathartic one for many. The stops they had visited were ready for them; nay, had been, for years waiting patiently for them with open arms and the warmth they found there held an assurance that nothing had indeed changed – nothing will ever change! Even though the wings they had grown here, have taken them far away, the nest will always be there, waiting. Their roots were deeply entrenched here and the pull will constantly drag them back to this home, the one that they had made for themselves – away from their own.



*Back<sup>2</sup> Roots*