

# Friends of Vellore, Victoria

A division of the Australian Board of Vellore Christian Medical College and Hospital Limited, ABN 18 110 916 375

## FEBRUARY 2015 NEWSLETTER

A Meeting of the **Australian Vellore Board** is scheduled for **22nd August 2015**, and it would be helpful to have members who could meet some of the delegates at the airport, and perhaps offer accommodation to some.

Please let Louise Joy know if you are able to help in these ways.

The Annual **fund-raising dinner** will be held on the evening of 22<sup>nd</sup> August, and further information about this will be included in the next newsletter.

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FOVV Executive for 2015 is looking for a Treasurer and a Secretary.

Please contact Louise Joy if you are interested in helping.

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### Thank you

Evelyn Lehman and Dr John Gault resigned at the last AGM, and will be formally retiring as FOVV Co Treasurers at the end of March 2015. Thanks are due to them for all they did as FOVV Co Treasurers.

Evelyn coordinated, with Queen's College, the fund-raising Vellore Dinners, preparing the notices and menus and organising the silent auction of the Kashmiri embroidery donated by the widow of Professor Elliott Forsyth, She organised an Indian film fund-raising event in Eaglehawk and a visit to Deniliquin for public meetings on Vellore with Dr. John Gault and Rev. Colin Honey as speakers.

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Dr. Sydney Paul is a General Practitioner in Deniliquin and has built up a network of support for CMC in Deniliquin. He has donated regularly towards a rural health training programme run from CMC.

Evelyn also organised for John to speak at the Rotary Clubs of Heathcote and Bendigo.

She always had beautiful sandwiches and coffee from Loretta, at John's room in Bendigo, for the FOVV Executive meetings. With

John's retirement from Cardiology practice after 40 years we have transferred the FOVV Executive meetings to Queen's College

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There has been a request for a longer version of the talk by Rev Colin Honey at the AGM. (From notes taken by Louise Joy at FOVV AGM 11 October 2014)

Colin spoke of the path which led him to interest in Bioethics and CMC Vellore. As a young trainee Methodist Minister, Colin was influenced by Rev. Austin James, former missionary in North India alongside Drs. Edna and Edward Gault at the Christian Hospital for Women in Azamgarh founded by Ted Gault's sister, Dr. Adelaide Gault. One day at Queen's College Austin introduced Colin to Ted, who by this stage was Foundation Professor of Pathology and Dean of Men at the Christian Medical College Vellore South India. "This is a man you must meet." said Austin to Colin.

When Colin became Master of Kingswood College, the Methodist College at the University of Western Australia, he found that the former Master was also Chair of Friends of Vellore West Australia, a role he was expected to fulfil and which he did for 25 years. When Colin returned to Victoria after his theological studies at Cambridge University UK, his first appointment was at the East Doncaster Methodist Church, Victoria, where the most attentive members of his congregation were Dr. Adelaide Gault and her niece Louise Joy.

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Colin noted that BioEthics began in Christian theological circles, the world's greatest BioEthicist being Alistair Campbell, under whose supervision Colin studied in Edinburgh in the 1970s.

Outlining the premier position of CMC Vellore in India, Colin pointed to the number of "firsts". The Christian Medical College Hospital was founded to provide women doctors to treat women, was the first to treat patients with leprosy and tuberculosis, the first to treat AIDS patients and in so doing was prepared to do what no other hospitals were prepared to do. Now CMCH is the first hospital in India with a BioEthics Centre.

Colin is very impressed with Dr Anu, who arrived at Vellore with a Masters Degree in BioEthics from the McGill University, Canada, and as a community health doctor demonstrated her commitment by walking up to five miles to villages after leaving her vehicle, the next day lecturing to students, attending to the crowds of patients who gathered each day, waiting till 11pm before responding to her emails. Anu is the Director of the CMCH Vellore BioEthics Centre funded by the Ken and Isabel Gilbertson Trust of Melbourne, Uniting Church Presbytery in the western suburbs of Melbourne, Friends of Vellore Victoria and individual donations (including *from Colin himself*). It should be noted that doctors at Vellore are paid at missionary wages whereas nurses, supported by a Union, are often paid more than doctors.

CMCH Vellore has been under pressure from the secular Government of India not to give preference for choosing a quota of Christian students. The High Court challenge by Vellore to this pressure was successful and could be maintained as Vellore was not dependent on any Government subsidy.

Nevertheless it is necessary for Vellore to move from a primarily religious outlook to a more acceptable secular ethic of care. The Government is saying, "We don't want theology. We want moral guidance."

Colin lectured to nurses, realising in practice how moral values change over time. As a Sunday School boy he recalled injunctions not to have sex with girls who would be left holding the baby. With the discovery of the contraceptive pill a new ethic of respectful relationships between the sexes became necessary. The essential values are now maintained but in different ways. So too in many ways values are realised across cultures.

Colin believes there is a need for a new book "BioEthics in the Subcontinent" demonstrating cultural sensitivity and some practices which are the reverse of those in the West. These are the finest of issues such as the support to babies with extremely low birth weight. There is a kind of Reverse Triage as patients with too many severe problems have to be left untreated because they would consume

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all the resources of the department. Colin met doctors in the Emergency Ward who had sleepless nights over some of the decisions they had made.

An influential group of decision makers at CMCH Vellore are senior Christian medical staff who think and pray and discuss cases.

There are difficult decisions. How to decide whether and when to turn off a Life Support Machine? No pregnancy terminations are allowed at Vellore. How do doctors respond to a woman who has been raped in Chennai and now faces an unwanted pregnancy? Financial support from American Protestant groups might dry up if abortions were allowed at Vellore.

The dilemmas are not black and white. Doctors need to handle the tension of ambivalence and uncertainty. In these dilemmas they are helped by the BioEthics Centre. Firstly doctors are trained to get the facts. What is the status of an embryo? How are competing rights assessed? What is really happening? Secondly, what principles are at stake? We must think about the way in which we perceive things given our own interests.

CMCH Vellore Director is a Cardiologist, used to making decisions from a position of power and influence with experience and wisdom far beyond the capacity of students who can learn from him. Students use the BioEthics Centre to provide a venue for questioning. (Suffering from a heart condition himself, Colin particularly noted the Cardiology decisions.)

At Vellore there are 20 full time Christian Chaplains, some of whom demonstrate great skill in juggling complex ideas. With all the chaplains, Colin observed the powerful relationship with patients when the chaplains listened carefully and walked alongside the patients who effectively came to their own decisions with the facilitation which the chaplains provide.

The process of skilling suggested by Colin involves - 1 Get the facts, - 2 Identify the issues, - 3 Find the values that are at stake, - 4 Run some hypotheses to see what would happen if particular values are applied, - 5 Choose a suitable outcome, - 6 Commit to the choices and be in a position to justify that choice.

Colin then turned to the disturbing issue of Truthfulness in the Australian situation where one view is, "If telling a lie causes no harm then that's all right." Colin said he thought that truthfulness in medicine is so important that there have to be very good reasons indeed to withhold the truth, or to deliberately tell a lie. Although mistakes will still be made, every effort must be made to arrive at the best possible outcome on the day.

In stressing the importance of sound method, Colin said one outcome that is

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Especially valuable is to be able to justify your decisions in such a way that someone of a different view is able to understand and respect your decision. There are many new developments. The Social Work Department in the Faculty of Medicine Dentistry and Health Science University of Melbourne has developed a Memorandum of Understanding with CMCH Vellore with the purpose of providing guidelines for student placements. Bioethics now has an academic basis in the courses at Vellore. There are conversations and classes in Bangalore and Delhi. Teaching and research are integral to the work in Vellore with one research study asking incoming medical and nursing students to list what they consider to be the important moral and ethical issues, the same questions being asked at the end of their course. The hope is that the students will become better clinicians at the end of their course, able to make more complex decisions because they take account of the moral issues and context.

Colin ended his talk with two striking illustrations of the dilemmas faced by doctors at Vellore. A poor village woman brings her young child requesting that an arm be cut off as this will make the child a better beggar. When the doctor refuses she goes around to the local butcher. The child develops septicaemia and is brought back to CMCH. A grandmother with tuberculosis is living with her family in the village where she wants to continue living and to die there. She refuses to take treatment. The village has open drains so that others will catch the disease most probably if she stays. These are hugely difficult questions which students can be helped to consider in the BioEthics Centre.

Comments and Questions after Rev Colin Honey's talk.

Dr. Nancy Nicholas spoke of her experience with Distance Education from Vellore including Christians, Hindus and Jains. Students from different faiths did not object to the Christian influence at Vellore, which answered the question on Hindu perceptions.

Louise Joy commented that Dr. Ida Scudder, founder of training for Christian women doctors at Vellore 100 years ago, would be so thrilled to hear of the BioEthics Centre at CMC.

Introducing Ted Gault as first Warden of Men students at Vellore, her feminist supporters in the US refused to make further donations but she had the courage to go ahead with the decision for co education even though her initial focus had been training for women alone.

Following distribution of the October newsletter, Hugh Skeil, Manager of the Development Office at CMC Vellore, wrote to correct some inaccuracies.

“Thank you for all you have been doing to let people know about the Bioethics Centre here, and we are very grateful to the support we have received from the Australian FOV and from Rev. Colin Honey.

However there have been some inaccuracies in the reports that have been circulated. I don't know if these were in Rev. Colin's actual presentation at the FoVV AGM or in the subsequent reporting of this.

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Rev. Colin didn't found the Bioethics Centre here; it was an initiative from within CMC arising out of our long-standing engagement with ethical issues, in several CMC Departments, including General Medicine and Palliative Care. The Community Health Department has had regular ethics case discussions for students and faculty for many years.

The current faculty of the Bioethics Unit are the founding members, namely Dr. Kuryan George, Dr. Anna Pulimood, Rev. Dr. Arul Dhas and Dr. Anuradha Rose. Since it is only a unit and not a department, there isn't an actual Head, but it comes under the Principal (not Dr. Anuradha Rose). Dr Rose did her Masters in bioethics at the University of Toronto (not McGill). So far there's only been one survey for medical students and no interaction with nursing students. So far they have

developed an integrated curriculum for UG (Undergraduate) students and this is in the process of being implemented. The Unit is now working on curricula for PG (Post graduate) students.

There haven't been any collaborations regarding introducing Bioethics at Medical Colleges in either Delhi or Bangalore, although they are working with St. John's Medical College, Bangalore on a national bioethics conference. They are also hoping to enter into a MoU with TCB - The Center for Bioethics - a Christian group which links together all the big Christian organisations like EHS, St. Stephens College, etc.

If there is an opportunity to correct some of these errors, perhaps in the next newsletter, that would be appreciated.

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The following was sent to Louise Joy from Ian Weeks, about her parent's lives. (I guess that many of you will be familiar with most of this information, but as a newcomer to FOVV I was interested, and thought there may be others who would like to read this too. - Editor)

Gault, Edward Woodall (Ted) (1903–1982)

By Suzanne Parry

This article was published in Australian Dictionary of Biography, Volume 17, (MUP), 2007

Edward Woodall (Ted) Gault (1903-1982), medical practitioner and medical missionary, was born on 15 March 1903 at Carlton, Melbourne, second of three children of Edward Leslie Gault, a medical practitioner from Manchester, England,

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and his Victorian-born wife Gertrude, née Woodall. Ted was raised in a devout Methodist home: his father was a founding member of the Laymen's Missionary Movement (1909) as well as the Royal Australasian College of Surgeons (1926). After his mother's death in 1906, Gault and his sisters were cared for by her cousin, Dora Swanton, who later married their father. Educated at Wesley College, Ted enrolled at the University of Melbourne (B.Sc., 1925; MB, BS, 1928; MD, 1931, MS, 1934), gaining a rowing Blue, living for several years in Queen's College and becoming an active member (president, 1926) of the Australian Student Christian Movement. He completed his internship at the (Royal) Melbourne Hospital, where he was appointed house surgeon, registrar and, in 1929, resident medical officer.

At the Congregational Church, Killara, Sydney, on 22 February 1932 Gault married Edna Isabel Baylis (1904-1992), also a medical practitioner, whom he had met through the ASCM while she was a student at the University of Sydney (MB, BS, 1929). They were both committed to medical missionary work in India but a downturn in family finances delayed their planned departure; in the meantime, they established a general practice at Surrey Hills, Melbourne, and pursued specialist training; he also taught at the university to supplement their savings and in 1935 was admitted a fellow of the RACS. In October 1937 they sailed with their two children for Azamgarh, northern India, where Gault was to work as medical superintendent for the Methodist Missionary Society of Australasia's Christian Hospital for Women. His elder sister, Adelaide Gertrude Gault (1899-1977), had founded this hospital in 1923 and had been its first doctor; the strain of work there had forced her back to Melbourne in 1924.

Gault's appointment broke the practice of using only women doctors and gradually the hospital was expanded to include male patients. He created a laboratory, greatly improved the hospital's surgical department, supervised a building program that extended bed capacity, and routinely visited outlying villages to preach and provide medical care. In the process, he learnt Urdu—the first of several Indian languages in which he became fluent—and developed a keen awareness of the challenges of taking 'the healing ministry' across religious and traditional boundaries

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In 1943 Gault became eligible for furlough: the family travelled first to Britain, where he sought treatment for a recurrent depressive illness, and then to Melbourne, where he advocated changes to the White Australia policy to allow limited migration from India and began preparing for his next appointment. He had been named foundation professor of pathology at the Christian Medical College,

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Vellore, southern India, which was being converted from a women's to a co-educational medical training college. Under Gault's leadership from 1944 to 1962, the pathology department was recognised as a training institution for doctors completing postgraduate studies at the University of Madras. He was largely responsible for raising funds to support this development, partly through the Friends of Vellore groups that he had set up throughout Australia. Staff and students valued not only the extensive medical knowledge but the warmth and understanding of their high-principled, compassionate professor. In 1960-61 he served as president of the Indian Association of Pathologists; in 1973 the chair in pathology at Vellore was named in his honour.

Returning to Australia, Gault and his wife established a home and garden at Warrandyte. He began work (1962-68) for the RACS, providing courses and advice (particularly in pathology) to postgraduate students, initiated a registry of soft tissue tumours, and created a museum for the college. In 1969-73 he held a part-time appointment as senior demonstrator in pathology at the Austin Hospital, Heidelberg; he was later commissioned with Alan Lucas to write its centennial history—A Century of Compassion (1982). Tall, fair and lightly built, with an enduring enthusiasm for athletics and sport, Gault was zealous and yet often whimsical in temperament; he continued, however, to wrestle with worsening depressive episodes. Ted Gault died on 13 October 1982 at Heidelberg and was cremated. He was survived by his wife and their son and daughter.

### Select Bibliography

■R. Winton, *An Amazing Man* (1987)

■B. McLaughlin, *A Very Amazing Life* (1993) ■Sun News-Pictorial (Melbourne), 18 Oct 1937, p 11, 13 Nov 1943, p 25 ■Medical Journal of Australia, 5 Feb 1983, p 144, 6 Sept 1993, p 343.

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### Death Notice

Pamela Norman, who was a former committee member of FOVV, died recently, and it is planned to include an Obituary in the next newsletter.

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### FOVV EXECUTIVE 2014 -2015

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Associate Professor Odette Spruyt: Head of Department Palliative Care Peter McCallum Cancer Institute; Founder and Chair Australian Palliative Link

International: Jim Richardson:

Newsletter Editor: Dr Nancy Nicholas – Email [fovvnewsletter@gmail.com](mailto:fovvnewsletter@gmail.com)

(I am to spend a few days at Vellore CMC soon, before helping with a contact program at Chennai for the students doing the two year Distance Education course in Family Medicine which CMC have been running for about 8 years. By the next newsletter I'll know more about it all and may tell you more about the course. I think there are plans to use the same course material in other countries.  
Nancy Nicholas - Editor)

### Website addresses which you may find interesting.

<https://vellorecmc.org>

[www.cmch-vellore.edu](http://www.cmch-vellore.edu)

[www.australianfov.net.au](http://www.australianfov.net.au) has a section for Victoria.