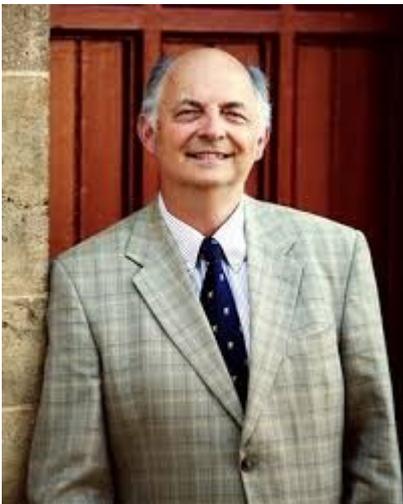


Friends of Vellore, Victoria

A division of Australian Board of Vellore Christian Medical College
& Hospital Support Fund ABN 65 125 097 974



February 2017 Newsletter



From the President David Runia

The committee of our Victorian Friends of Vellore group is very pleased to present the first newsletter for the year 2017. These newsletters are the main way of telling our members and other interested persons about our activities on behalf of the College and the Hospital and also about developments that are taking place there. But we also want to convey something of our deep respect and admiration for the splendid work that is done in Vellore and of our enthusiasm for assisting that work in whatever ways we can.

As you can read in a brief report on our AGM in October, last year saw a number of very successful activities. There was a very pleasing increase in the amount of money raised for Vellore, all of it being designated for projects that give support to patients and trainees who belong to the poorest levels of Indian society. The summary of the treasurer's report gives the figures for the past financial year of 2015-16. We are working hard to ensure that the present financial year 2016-17 will do even better. At the AGM all present were fascinated to hear about Dr Nathan Grills' research on the use and misuse of medication in India. You can read about his talk below.

It is important to stay abreast of the exciting developments that are occurring at this very time in Vellore. Recently the Development Office published a new issue of CMC Pulse with the most important recent news. In this newsletter we have included summaries of some of its contents. Two years ago at our annual dinner the Director Dr Chandy spoke to us about his vision of a new hospital at Kannigapuram, which would contain a world-class trauma center to care for the huge numbers of road accident victims. Everything is now ready for the building process to start. This is wonderful news indeed.

I encourage you all to study the contents of this Newsletter and consider how you can offer your support for the magnificent work that takes place in Christ's name in Vellore.

-David Runia

Annual Dinner Diary Note – Saturday 12th of August 2017

The dinner this year has been moved from May to August to coincide with the visit from Hugh Skeil, the Director of Development at the Christian Medical College & Hospital (CMCH). We are looking forward to hearing Hugh's news about developments at CMCH and how our donations have been used. The date to put in your diary is **12 August 2017**. Your invitation to the dinner will be sent out in due course and we hope you will be able to attend.



Photo of CMCH Director Prof Sunil Chandy and Hugh Skeil

Report on the AGM held in October 2016

The AGM, held at Queen's College, was very well attended with 25 present. David Runia was returned to the office of president and all other officers were returned to their positions too.



Dr Nathan Grills – stock photo

David Runia thanked both Dr Helen McNamara and Assoc. Prof. Odette Spruyt, who have resigned from the committee, for their past contributions.

The guest speaker Dr Nathan Grills spoke on the misuse of medications in India based on his experiences working in India and particularly some research work that he is carrying out in collaboration with colleagues in Vellore. He gave a wide-ranging and very interesting review of health and medication issues in India. He highlighted the continuing high rates of infant mortality and the death of women associated with child-bearing.

India, he said, is the “world's pharmacy.” There are some 40,000 drug companies and the possibilities of misuse of readily available medications is very high. 50% of health care costs can be attributed to unnecessarily prescribed medications and unnecessary treatment. The issue, he suggested, is not poor regulations but poor enforcement of regulations, as well as corruption.

Nathan also described a new initiative in which people from rural backgrounds are trained in basic healthcare so that they can go back to their villages and use their new-found knowledge to help their communities, for example in the right use of medication. This program can help alleviate the problem of the severe lack of doctors and nurses in India, especially in rural areas. Nathan answered many questions and was thanked enthusiastically for a very enlightening talk.

Finances – An extract from the treasurer’s report to the AGM

This year has been notable for the significant contribution of \$57,500 that FOVV has made to Vellore CMC.

Standard Contributions from FOVV – \$37,500:

\$25,000	CMC Development Fund for People on low incomes
\$9,000	Community-Lay Leaders Health Certificate Course Dr Sydney Paul
\$3,000	Contribution from indirect earnings to Australian Vellore Board General Fund For AVB administrative costs
\$500	Howard Norman Nursing Scholarship Jean Downing / Norman Foundation



Special Contributions from FOVV – \$20,000:

\$10,000	Ted & Edna Gault Nursing Scholarship Endowment Fund John Gault
\$10,000	Geoff Charlesworth Paramedical Scholarships Endowment

The FOVV Annual Giving Program was launched by President David Runia at the May 2016 Annual Dinner, with and has already met with considerable success.

The first proceeds from the program were transferred to Vellore CMC in August 2016 and will be reported in the next financial year.

How our donations are being used

CMC produces a newsletter for Friends of Vellore called CMC Pulse, and we were most interested to read in the December 2016 issue about a family who have benefited from the **Emergency Fund** (one of the options for FOVV Annual Giving Program). The couple have had five children. The first one died within a week of birth, and the second developed a haematological problem at the age of 10 and died 2 years later. The third child also died of the same problem. The two youngest children are brought some distance to CMC for even minor ailments. The mother has been unwell and needed admission for investigations. The Emergency Fund was used to pay for her treatment. TB was diagnosed, and with treatment she is recovering.

One of CMC’s key roles is to help train the skilled and caring medical professionals who are desperately needed for hospitals throughout remote and rural areas of India. The educational fees are probably the lowest in the world for a private institution and students from economically disadvantaged backgrounds are helped still further through

scholarships (another option for the FOVV Annual Giving Program) that can cover all fees as well as hostel accommodation and food. This ensures that no one needs to be burdened by an educational loan to study at CMC, and many can then go on to serve in deprived areas of India.

Free and subsidised healthcare given at CMC



The vision at Christian Medical College Vellore is that it should never turn away anyone who needs medical assistance just because they have no money. However the scale of need in India is huge, and the cost of providing good quality healthcare continues to increase, so we rely on our partners and friends to help us. During 2015/16 the value of free and subsidised healthcare given at CMC amounted to Rs.164 Crores [about 32 million AUD]. This was provided in a number of ways, including:

Community Outreach—top quality care is provided at nominal rates through Community Health and Development (CHAD), Rural Unit for Health and Social Affairs (RUHSA), Low Cost Effective Care Unit (LCECU), College of Nursing, Palliative Care, Eye Camps, and many other teams.

Free Bed Scheme—1,740 patients all treatment costs covered up to Rs.1 lakh. All general hospital beds are automatically subsidised.

Free Work—CMC doctors write off all or part of the fees for those who cannot afford the full amount. The Centenary Endowment Fund gave Rs.10 Crores in grants of up to Rs.2 lakhs for local patients needing major operations.

Person to Person Scheme (PTP) — Rs. 1.26 Crores to help more than 2,000 people with small grants.

Emergency Grants 2016/17: 131 Grants worth Rs.82 Lakhs [about \$160,000 AUD] approved. All this money came from gifts from Friends of CMC Vellore and others.

General News from CMC

Construction of the Kannigapuram Hospital is starting



Architect's impression of the planned hospital

The new hospital will be at Kannigapuram, on the outskirts of Vellore (as you approach from the Chennai direction). Planning permissions and environmental clearance have been granted, the budget agreed and the contractors selected. Phase one will include the international standard trauma centre, a vital necessity given the sheer number of road accidents, as well as all the other emergencies that overwhelm the existing casualty facilities in the main CMC Hospital. There will also be comprehensive facilities for cancer treatment, neurosciences and cardiovascular diseases, amongst others. The initial focus will be on “lifestyle” and non-communicable diseases that are becoming the primary causes of illness and death. Future phases will see the addition of all specialities, and educational and research facilities.

Meanwhile the main hospital will continue to provide all the services currently offered, but with the eventual benefits of more space and a quieter environment.

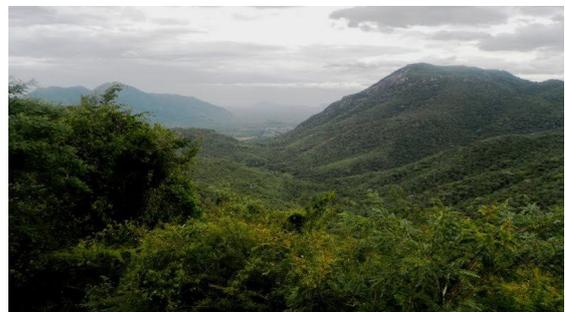


Emergency Medical Facility at Katpadi Railway Station

CMC has posted a 24x7 Emergency Team at Katpadi railway station, to provide first aid to any train passengers and patients in medical need who arrive there.

Jawadhi Hills Initiative—Model Villages

The Community Health Department has been working with people living in the Jawadhi Hills area since the 1980s. Although close to Vellore, the hilly terrain makes many of the small villages and hamlets inaccessible by road; health indices and general development lag far behind the rest of Tamil Nadu. We work in partnership with the Don Bosco Society—CMC provides healthcare, they are helping develop agricultural income and small business opportunities; together we are trying to improve children’s education. Our latest initiative is to focus on five villages that we hope will become pathfinders and models for others. Through discussion with the communities and village leadership we are helping them to improve sanitation through building toilets, set up safe water supplies, train community health workers and run regular clinics, and equip and organise children’s education centres.



Meanwhile mobile clinics and community visits, after-schools education programmes and summer camps continue. We are seeking help to develop the CMC clinic in the Hills, so that it can offer a 24-hours service, and we are providing scholarships to several young people from the Jawadhi area who are studying health-related courses at CMC and elsewhere. We hope that they will become the core team of health workers for their own communities.

Louise Joy – presentation to the Kilmore Historical Society



Louise Joy, pictured attending the most recent committee meeting.

Dr. Ida Sophia Scudder, I always thought, was seventh generation medical missionary Scudders in India. I had lost the biography, *Dr. Ida*, by Dorothy Clarke Wilson so resorted to Google for confirmation. Not so. Born in India, Ida Sophia Scudder was granddaughter of Dr. John Scudder, first American medical missionary in India, who with his seven sons all became medical missionaries. Not 7 generations but 7 sons.

As fellow historians you will know how easy it is to make mistakes which are then perpetuated over time. My family, the Gaults, were convinced of our Huguenot ancestry; we knew the persecution of French Protestants, forced into exile or hiding by the 1655 Revocation of the Edict of Nantes. The original Edict of Nantes 1598 signed by Henri 1V, confirmed by the Edict of

Nimes 1629 signed by Louis XIII had granted Huguenots the right to practice their religion without persecution, restoring internal peace in Europe, torn by Wars of Religion.

According to one family story, which I find hard to believe, they travelled from France to England in a barrel. A fifth cousin from Ireland, bent on family history, has come to Melbourne with tales of Viking origin for the Gaults who marauded Scotland and Ireland. Such ferocious forebears I prefer not to claim. We have had lively family discussions. The strong Methodism of the Gaults in Melbourne is evident in the founding by my grandfather, Edward Leslie Gault of the Layman's Methodist Missionary Movement in 1910 and his brother Lieutenant Colonel Padre James Gault OBE who became famous in World War One for keeping the troops amused at Le Havre before they went to the Front. "Padre Gault's Stunt Book" was a best seller in 1918. It is no wonder that two Gaults became medical missionaries in India.

So anything I say today, I preface by the saying, "So the story goes." The story of Dr. Ida Sophia Scudder (December 7th, 1870 – May 23rd, 1960) which I heard often as a child was a romantic story I believed and have found confirmed when I obtained a copy of *Dr. Ida* from Readings. In 1890 Ida returned to South India to help her missionary mother who was not well. One night, three men, a High Caste Brahmin Hindu, a Muslim and a man from the Mudaliar caste, having heard that she had just arrived from America, came in turn to ask for her help as their wives struggled in child birth. She told them she was not a doctor but would bring her father. All three refused a man to touch and look at their wives. In the morning, Ida heard the funeral bells and vowed to start medical education for women at Vellore South India. Ida had always said she would not follow the medical missionary tradition of her family in India but this experience changed her from wanting a lively social life in New York.

Google refers us to the original voice recording on You Tube in which she tells her own story. She returned to USA, completing her medical education at Cornell University. In 1900 she started the Licentiate medical course for women at Vellore, later upgraded to MBBS. The Scudder origins were in the Dutch Reformed Church (Reformed Church in America). This resonated with my supposed Gault Huguenot origins of persecuted French Protestants.

Always a broad minded thinker, Ida realised that the Vellore Medical College should be extended to include men. Her feminist supporters in America disagreed and refused to supply further funds. Ida stood firm. This is where my family comes into the picture. My family had been posted by the Australian Methodist Church to the Christian Hospital for Women in Azamgarh, founded by my aunt, Dr. Adelaide Gault, in 1927. After only one year, she returned to Melbourne suffering a complete breakdown in physical and mental health. In 1937 my parents took up the reins at the Azamgarh hospital. Repeating Dr. Scudder's story, my father was not allowed to touch the women patients in this Muslim area. My mother did all the medical work while my brother and I were cared for by Elenie Thistlethwaite, a trained kindergarten teacher friend from my mother's home church in Killara NSW.

Missionary stories are always full of drama and it so was for my Father. He was more highly qualified than my mother who could not perform a cataract operation, which he agreed to do on condition that the woman patient covered her face. He performed the operation under these conditions and next morning called to confirm her progress. He found the woman sitting up in bed, her face uncovered. "I've decided that you're not a man or a woman. You are a doctor." My father's fame in the district was established and he started medical work.

Dr. Scudder was looking for a Professor of Pathology and Dean of Men to include men students at the Christian Medical College and Hospital, Vellore South India. Accepting the challenge, my Father returned to Australia for Pathology training under Peter (later Sir Peter) MacCallum returning to CMC Vellore in 1944. My mother, always an adventurous person, took over when needed in the departments of Skin, Venereal Diseases, roadside medicine, Psychiatry. She arranged for me to complete my final three months field work for the Social Work qualification from the University of Melbourne at the CMC Vellore Mental Health Centre.

I have brought copies of CMC Newslines which list the many prizes won by staff members of the College, including the Hunterian Fellowship in the UK, named after John Hunter, founder of modern surgery. A previous winner was, Dr. Paul Brand for his work in trans-plant surgery. This technical brilliance was allied with a deep faith and care for the poor.

Let me finish by mentioning the book "The Man Who Knew Infinity", a biography of the South Indian mathematical genius Ramanujan, who came from a high caste Brahman family in South India which the author describes as the "purest" form of Hinduism. Recently it has been made into a film starring Jeremy Irons and Dev Patel. Both the biographies of Ramanujan and Dr. Ida describe the culture, religion and geography of the area brilliantly. It struck me that this Hinduism of "Plain Living and High Thinking" coalesced with the similar Protestant Reformed missionary background of Dr. Ida Sophia Scudder in the unique CMC Vellore. I picture the brilliance of a Hindu civilisation meeting the brilliance of Western Christianity to create the premier Medical College and Hospital in India, the Christian Medical College in Vellore, founded by Dr. Ida Sophia Scudder now well over a century ago

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For the Annual Giving Campaign, please select the program/s you wish to fund:

- Development Department Emergency Fund
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For further information on this campaign, please contact the Secretary.