

# FRIENDS OF SERAMPORE

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Serampore College (and University), India  
Founded by Carey, Marshman and Ward, 1818  
[www.seramporecollege.org](http://www.seramporecollege.org)

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February 2012

Dear Friends,

**We still wait for news of a new Principal**, after the retirement of Dr Lalchungnunga at the end of October, so **this must be the first matter for prayer**. Four candidates were short-listed and interviewed, but none was appointed. The latest news from the Vice-Master, Mrs Hilda Peacock, in mid-January, was that "There is no sign of a Serampore Council meeting in the near future to appoint a Principal, so that will take a while, as we have not yet found a candidate who is suitable."

It is a very large task, with many facets, and **Lalchungnunga** has been a fine Principal. It is significant that when he was appointed in 1999, he was the only one of the candidates who had not himself put his name forward, but he and Hliri had offered to their own Church in Mizoram for missionary service. As the Arts-Science-Commerce department at Serampore is state-funded, he has had to retire at 60. We wrote, "We wish you the very best as you return to your home in Mizoram and then as you seek God's will for the next phase of your pilgrimage. We are sure that we also speak for all the Friends of Serampore in saying this."

It will be helpful to repeat some of an email of his that we quoted in our last newsletter:

*We have no specific plan but wait on the Lord for direction. We go 'home' to Mizoram on 1st Nov, and settle into our small home at Aizawl Then on 12 Dec. go to Texas to be there for the birthdays of our 3 grand children. We think that we will be open to take up pastoral ministry, if any is there for us, in summer of 2012, either in India or anywhere God leads us and people can accept us. **We will appreciate if any of you Friends of Serampore can specifically pray about this.** We feel by God's grace we can still be of some use to God for the next 5 to 10 years, our health permitting.*

Nearer at hand there are also **changes for Friends of Serampore**. For some time we (Edward and Rosemary Williams) have felt that we should hand over the running of *Friends* while all is still well with us, rather than waiting until some crisis made handing over difficult. So far, so good, but Edward will be eighty this year!

You will see from the heading of this letter who is taking over. We are extremely grateful that our daughter Jenny is willing to do the secretarial side, with the assistance of her husband Steve - they spent a couple of months in Serampore in 2001. We are similarly grateful to Andrew for taking on the financial side, as well as continuing to look after the website, originally set up by Steve - anything to do with donations, contact Andrew. He was the youngest of the family who were our next-door neighbours at Serampore during most of our time there in the 1960s. Jenny and Andrew may not thank us for showing their picture here!



We last wrote just before the **William Carey 250th anniversary celebrations**. BBC Sunday Worship from Northampton was delayed when the broadcasters had to respond to the August riots which had just broken out, but the fine service was eventually broadcast in October - led by Roy Jenkins, with *Friends of Serampore* member Margaret Williams reading, BMS World Mission's David Kerrigan preaching and others taking part. We have a photocopy, if anyone wishes to see it. (The service led to an interesting contact with a certain Professor John L. Brockington; we have a PDF file which we can

forward to anyone interested, of a substantial article of his entitled "William Carey's Significance as an Indologist".)

At Serampore itself, for the celebration of Carey Day they chose a theme linking the 250th anniversary of Carey's birthday with the 150th anniversary of Tagore's birthday. "All the speeches, exhibition, Essay-writing competition and Painting Competition focused on the theme. The Professors of ASC and Theology Departments were sent out to give special lectures on Carey among the students of neighbouring colleges and schools, and among our first year students of ASC. Two hours of Cultural programme closed the Carey Day. We could not have sport events as the playing field was spoiled when the State Assembly Election was held; tents were pitched on the ground and the ground made uneven."

**Another new building** has been started, this time by the Senate. Dr Ravi Tiwari, the Registrar, writes:

*17 October, 2011 witnessed the Ground Breaking Ceremony for Department of Research/SATHRI (South Asia Theological Research Institute), in the Serampore College campus beside the Carey Library. This new building will have consultation and study rooms for National Professors and scholars. The project will cost about Rs.3 Crore (₹400,000) of which Rs.1.3 Crore has come from the sale of Bangalore SATHRI Office.*



Prayers beforehand



Ravi on left and (above) between Hliri and Lal



Lalchununga about to begin

After the ceremony



A few other glimpses from a recent Senate report:

*Senate has approved two new degree programs – Master of Christian Studies, for anyone who has completed BCS course and would like to go for further studies, and Bachelor of Missiology, a three years degree course to give an academic understanding of Christian Mission in a pluralistic world.*

*It is imperative to keep the vision of the pioneers of Serampore College and make theological education relevant to the context of Asia. We need to identify the manifold challenges we face in*

*the economic, social, cultural and religious realms and equip individuals and the churches for effective ministry. One of the main objectives of theological education is to communicate the liberative Gospel of Christ so that large number of people who are being oppressed, like Dalit/subaltern and tribal, will experience freedom.*

*The new curriculum is meant to develop the capacity to respond meaningfully to the Gospel within the framework of one's own situation.*

*A few colleges have been admitting students without affiliation and later pressurizing Senate for the sake of students to do something; i.e. to grant affiliation to the erring colleges.*

*(There are concerns that) supervisors are not given adequate time for properly guiding the doctoral students and that the standard of our DTh is falling. It is also a matter of concern that a new kind of competition is developing among post-graduate colleges... in offering as many branches in MTh studies as possible, in spite of the fact that they are depending upon supernuated/part-time/visiting professors. Oh dear!*

Within **Friends**, we are very sorry to have to tell you that **Colin Catchpole** died on 14 October after a long struggle. The Catchpoles' long-standing interest in Serampore stems from close friendship with Leslie and Freda Wenger during their retirement – the Wengers were our own "Senior Friends" during most of our time in Serampore. We are grateful for a generous gift from Colin's funeral, and our loving sympathy goes to Ros.

How have we done in **our giving of money for the College?** We were able at the end of 2011 to send £4281, a slight increase over most previous years (except 2010, which for several reasons was exceptional). So thank you, everyone who has sent donations during the year.

However, we started 2011 with a substantial buffer of nearly £1800, and now have less than £750 in hand. So we do appeal for your generous giving – at the end of this year, let's be in a position to give much encouragement to the new Principal, whoever that may be. Here is a reminder of how to do so:

- If your gift is £40 or more and you have made a Gift Aid declaration, make your cheque payable to 'Broadmead Baptist Church' – send to Andrew Hudson at the address given in the heading.
- For all other gifts, make your cheque payable to "Friends of Serampore" and send to Andrew.
- Contact Andrew also if you wish to *make* a Gift Aid declaration, or to set up a Standing Order (very helpful).
  
- For membership and all other matters, contact Jenny Bunning. Please also send her any relevant news

As always, we are most grateful to Broadmead Baptist Church for helping us and enabling Gift Aid through their support for the College. And we **thank you for all your support** during the 15 years that we have been your secretaries/treasurers – we are sure that you will do the same for Jenny and Andrew, but above all that you will support the College by your gifts, your interest and your prayers.

Edward

Rosemary



PS When there is news of a new Principal, we will send this by email where we have addresses (rather less than half of you). If you have email but are not sure if we have your address, please let Jenny Bunning know.

The set of pictures on page 2 was taken from [www.senateofseramporecollege.edu.in/groundbreaking.html](http://www.senateofseramporecollege.edu.in/groundbreaking.html)

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|---|----------------|----------------|
| <b>INCOME</b> in 2011, summary  |                |                |
| B/f from 2010   | 1780.39        |                |
| Gift Aided donations and subs, via Broadmead Baptist Church,<br>incl. tax refund of 411.25; also CAF Vouchers | 2181.25        |                |
| Other donations, subscriptions and bank interest:   | <u>1253.61</u> | <u>5215.25</u> |
| <b>EXPENDITURE</b> in 2011, summary   |                |                |
| To Serampore College for Theol Dept, incl. £625 earmarked for Scholarship                                     | 4281.25        |                |
| Journal subscriptions   | 27.54          |                |
| Expenses: Newsletters, postages and computer use, bank charge, etc  | 166.80         |                |
| C/f to 2012   | <u>739.66</u>  | <u>5215.25</u> |
| As always, the 'inspected accounts' are available if anyone wishes to see them.                               |                |                |

Nearly two years ago, Edward was urged by the principal of one of Serampore's affiliated colleges to write his Memoirs. These would be (in part) a record of our experience in a key institution during the closing years of the "missionary era" in that land. It is being published both locally and in India.

Although Edward had to overcome an embarrassed reluctance to write such a book, now that it is a *fait accompli* we would like to sell as many copies as possible! Once the set-up costs are covered, there will be a good profit that will go to Serampore College.

You can purchase it on-line (Amazon website) or by ordering from any bookseller (we will not ourselves do any postal sales). Details are:

***Building Bridges, Crossing Cultures,***  
**Edward H B Williams** (ISBN 978-1-905795-97-0), £10.

One of our street-wise sons-in-law tells us that a good way to boost sales is by putting reviews on the Amazon website. If you are happy to do so, may we encourage you!

We think you may enjoy reading the book.

Many thanks, and best wishes, Edward and Rosemary

