

St. John's College, Jaffna

Media Report – the Bishop Paul Slater, Bishop of Richmond and Mrs. Beverley Slater, from the Diocese of Leeds (UK) Visits St. John's

The Bishop Paul Slater, Bishop of Richmond from the Diocese of Leeds (UK) (please look at last page for a brief biography) and his wife, Mrs. Beverley Slater, visited St. John's College on 27.11.2017.



March towards the Peto Hall

A quick special assembly was convened where, after the College Hymn, Student's Prayer and Student's Oath, the Principal expressed his happiness to invite 'the Royalty.'



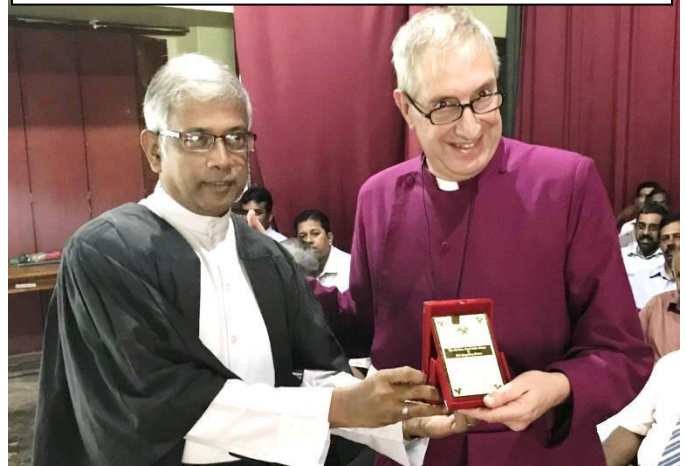
Standing for the College Hymn

The Principal also talked very briefly about:

- the close links the College had with the United Kingdom since its establishment 194 years ago and extended a very warm welcome to the special guests who hailed from the same soils.
- how the old boys all over the world and well-wishers are getting ready to kick start a series of projects during the 195th year, in preparation to realize the 'Visions of 2023' – as the College enters into its third century of existence.

Saying that the College rejoiced at the arrival of the two personalities, the Principal, on behalf of the College, presented the Bishop with a memento and invited him to the podium.

One more reason to remember the visit to St. John's College!



The Bishop, in his address said, 'It is really good to be with you in Jaffna.' After a quick introduction, he slowly took out a cricket ball from his attire and asked the students to imagine it was the globe. He pointed to where Sri Lanka was, near the seams of the ball which he compared to the equator, and to the whereabouts of England in the Northern Hemisphere. Tracing the route from the UK to Sri Lanka, he said, 'I have travelled over 8000 miles in 26 hours to be here with you. It took your founder more than 6 months in rough waters to be here.' This made the students better appreciate the sacrifice the Rev. Joseph Knight made almost two centuries ago to lay the foundation to what is now one of Sri Lanka's best schools.



The insignificant globe in the large expanse of the universe

He then talked about the famous astronomer, Carl Sagan's concept of time. He chronologically arranged the 13.8 billion years of the Universe's age and compressed it down to the timescale of a single year to

help people understand just how far apart on a time scale events in the Universe are. Saying that the Earth's age is 4.5 billion years, while the Sun's age is 4.6 billion years, doesn't actually seem to express how large that gap really is! It's difficult for humans to wrap their heads around such time intervals thanks to our puny lifespan of barely 100 years. Therefore, compressing time into a single year can help us better grasp when the major events took place.



All ears...

In this visualization, the Big Bang took place on January 1st at 12 a.m., while the present moment is midnight on December 31st. The condensation of 13.8 billion years into 365 days means there are 438 years per second, 1.58 million years per hour and 37.8 million years per day. In other words, an actual second is 13,812,768,000 times longer than a Cosmic Calendar second.

Dinosaurs ruled the Earth 0.23 billion years ago. According to this timescale, it falls on 25th December. After the dinosaurs had roamed the Earth for 5 days, on December 31, was the dawn of the primates. Jesus Christ was born at 23:59 hrs and 55 seconds. 'Joseph Knight would have undertaken his long journey to Sri Lanka, probably one second before midnight, in this timescale,' said the Bishop

We humans appear on the cosmic calendar so recently that our recorded history occupies only the last few seconds of the last minute of December 31st. Every person we've ever heard of lived somewhere in there. All those kings and battles, migrations and inventions, wars and love - everything in the history books happens here, in the last 10 seconds of the cosmic calendar.

The Bishop's speech made the audience realize the insignificance of time spent on Earth. The speech made one comprehend that humanity is quite literally a blip on this calendar.

After the function, the entourage went on a tour of the College.



Moments after the Assembly



Meeting the students in the Technological Faculty



Meeting the students who are being trained for the NVQ exams



Fourth Storey of the Technology Block



Inside and outside the First Four-Storeyed Technology Block in the Island (at School Level)



Bullet-ridden holes in the wall – grim reminders of the past...



Principal gives details of the community-based projects sponsored by old boys and well-wishers in support of war affected children.

Grade	No. Prayers	No. Fairs	No. Meals	Living	No. Prayers	No. Fairs	No. Meals	Living	Total
C1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	01
C2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	01
C3	01	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	01
C4	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	01
C5	01	03	01	01	-	-	-	-	06
C6	01	03	01	05	01	-	-	-	12
C7	01	02	02	20	-	-	-	-	25
C8	01	02	02	11	-	-	-	-	16
C9	-	03	-	20	02	01	01	01	26
10	-	07	-	22	-	01	01	01	31
11	01	04	01	22	02	01	01	01	33
LVI	03	04	01	12	02	01	01	01	23
UPVI	02	01	03	10	01	02	02	03	20
SPVI	-	04	-	11	-	04	-	-	19
University	01	01	-	01	07	13	05	22	44
Total	11	35	03	15	7	13	05	22	74

Update: July 2017

Donors	Total
Canada & USA	1312.15
Eagle Nest - (UK)	15,30.43
Johnsons of 47 Bath	41.01
Sydney	32,42.94
Colombo 008	14 - 10
Other Individuals	18,144.43
Need Sponsor	30,721.04
Grand Total	18,144.43

Inside the College Library



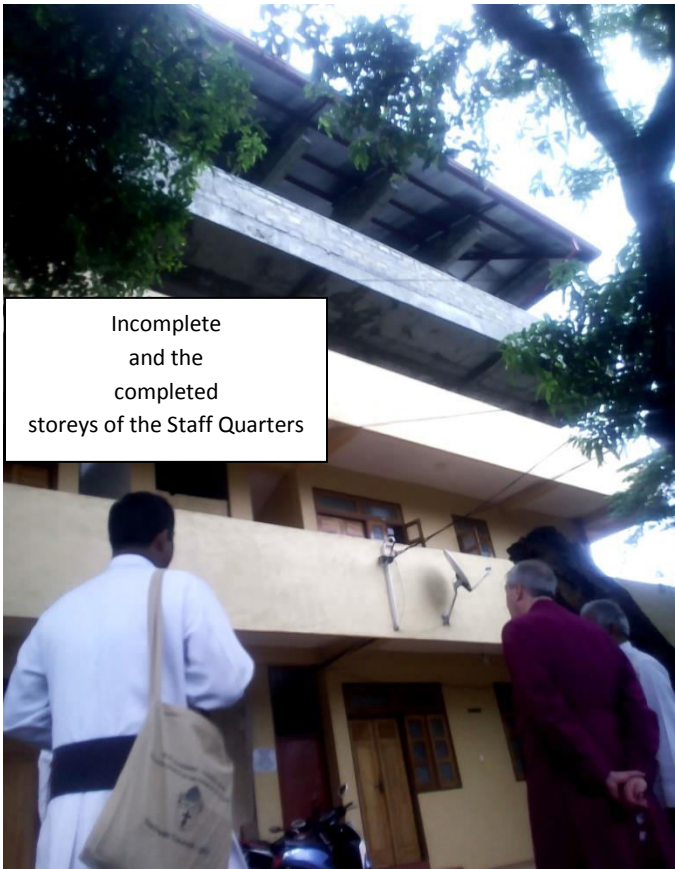
A quick look at the building where Mahatma Gandhi stood years ago



At the grounds where many a ground record had been broken



Outside the towering new addition to St. John's



Incomplete and the completed storeys of the Staff Quarters



In the Primary School where the Bishop heard 'happy sounds.'

Greatly impressed by the support of the Alumni of St. John's College



100 years of Scouting



Ready to have a look at the Viewing Gallery



A steep climb to the Viewing Gallery of the Staff Quarters



Inside the Viewing Gallery – a tranquil place with a picturesque scenery all around



After some walking, climbing up and climbing down, it was decided to give the muscles in the legs some rest.

In the Principal's room, the Bishop was asked about what his sentiments were on his visit to Jaffna. He had the following to say:

- 'Our primary purpose is not to enjoy but to learn more about the Diocese of the Bishop of Colombo, the Rt. Rev. Dhiloraj R. Canagasabey; to discover the work that goes on here in churches and educational institutions under his purview. We also came to look at how the Diocese is caring for and helping people in difficulties.'
- 'St. John's College, opening its gates to take in children from war-affected areas when already operating at full capacity, is an unmatched act of kindness for others.'
- 'What I see at St. John's College is a fantastic piece of education work. I encourage all the teachers and staff to continue to support the education of these young children.'
- 'I am seeing Christian faith in action in the North. What I am seeing here is a visible manifestation of a commandment in the Bible – I am seeing here a demonstration of unselfconscious natural love.'
- 'Everything here is very orderly and well-organized; everything is done with a caring and pastoral manner.'
- 'The atmosphere was quite lively. We heard children talking in the Primary school. It was definitely "happy sound."'

'Thank you for the lovely hospitality and we thank the school for presenting us with a commemorative plaque to remind us of our visit to St. John's College,' he said, before concluding his thoughts.

The Principal had the following to say:

- Until recently we were even unable to communicate with Colombo. Now that the situation is normal, we wish to link with as many schools as possible. Exchange of musical, games skills etc is welcome. Missionaries and members of the clergy from UK too are welcome. We look forward to exchange programmes with institutions in UK.
- St. John's is open for students in the UK who might wish to come for a taste of the Sri Lankan experience during their summer vacation. Accommodation will be provided to students who visit during June to August.

- Programmes to young leaders in the UK to prepare them for future leadership and managerial roles are sought after.
- The vision of the founder missionaries was to prepare local people for missionary work. Government's greater control over the schools led to the tapering away of this vision. Not wishing to be side-tracked, we formed the Faculty of Christian Studies and Sports Management. Through this, we try to train students in leadership, to understand God's calling.
- We want to train youngsters to support the church with their secular jobs. We wish to help our students get both a secular degree and a theological degree. We want there to be engineering priests, doctor priests and banker priests. This is a challenge to the church and to the school - to produce such men and women!
- Christian students with leadership qualities identified by local parishes are admitted to St. John's.
- A few years ago, five students were sent by the FCS to the Theological College. They will soon come out as priests.
- This year, ten students of all denominations are following courses conducted by the FCE & SM (Faculty of Christian Education and Sports Management).

The Bishop was quite impressed with the visions and aspirations of the Principal. He promised his support in the future.

At 7:15p.m., as scheduled, they were back at St. John's College – this time in the Conference Hall for a meeting with the students of the FCE & SM of St. John's College.

As an ice-breaker, everyone present, including the Principal introduced themselves. After the introduction, a few questions about the Bishop, the Church of England and the British Parliamentary System were asked. The Bishop gave eloquent answers.



Meeting the Students of the Faculty of Christian Education & Sports Management

'My task is to help churches in Leeds to grow. I pursue programmes that build resourceful churches. I devise systems where stronger churches help the weaker ones and they both grow together.' He added, 'Our diocese has had close links with the Diocese of Colombo and the Diocese of Kurunegala. I have come here to strengthen this partnership.'

The Principal invited the members of the Faculty of Christian Education and Sports Management to brief the invitees about the programmes / projects they have undertaken. The students got up one by one. They had the following to say:

- 'We have sports ministry through which we try to spread the Good News. This ministry is divided into three – Kids Ministry for kids; Teenagers Ministry for those in their teens; In Sports Ministry for existing sportsmen and athletes. Sports is a good way to reach people.'
- 'After engaging in Sports with the others, we sit back and have a casual talk about what we did right and what we did wrong. Through this discussion, we let the participants acquire gospel values.'
- 'The twelve-lesson Victorious Living Journey programme we went to was quite enjoyable and amazing!'
- We are now trained to see the difficulties and challenges in others' lives. We are now tuned to 'See it,' 'Feel it' and 'Change it.'
- 'We have done community service projects before and are planning to do some more soon. We are presently in the process of identifying needs. Once we work out a project plan, we will be implementing it soon.'



Project briefing by a member

Asked how the Faculty of Christian Education and Sports Management can ensure that people are not snared by drugs, pornography, social media and other vices, the Bishop replied, 'One has to make sure there is a strong link between his/her prayer and real life.'

Building a very close relationship with God can help one face the challenges of life. People can also be guided to share their problems with one another – a healthy rapport with a trusted friend could go a long way.'

The dinner bell rang. The Bishop led everyone in prayer. He prayed for the food, for the cooks. Then he prayed for the Principal, administrators, staff and the children of St. John's College. Imploring God to help everyone grow as good Christians, he finished his prayer with an Amen.



After the meeting and dinner, they bade 'Good night' and parted ways...

A Short Biography of Bishop Paul John Slater



Paul John Slater is an Anglican bishop. Since July 2015, he has been the Bishop of Richmond, a suffragan bishop in the Diocese of Leeds. He was Archdeacon of Craven from 2005 to April 2014 and Archdeacon of Richmond and Craven from April 2014 to July 2015.

Bishop Slater was born on 22 March 1958. He was educated at Bradford Grammar School, then a direct grant grammar school in Bradford, Yorkshire. He studied chemistry at Corpus Christi, Oxford and graduated with a Bachelor of Arts (BA) degree; this was promoted to an Oxford Master of Arts (MA Oxon) degree in 1983. In 1981, he entered Cranmer Hall (part of St John's College, Durham) to study for ordination. He graduated from Durham University with a BA degree in theology in 1983 and completed a further year of training for ministry at Cranmer Hall. He was ordained in the Anglican ministry as a deacon in 1984 and a priest in 1985. From 1984 to 1988, he served his curacy at St Andrew's, Keighley, in the Diocese of Bradford. He was then Priest in charge of St John the Evangelist, Cullingworth and Director of the Diocesan Foundation Course between 1988 and 1993. He then became the Bishop of Bradford's Personal Executive Assistant from 1993 to 1995 and was also Warden of Readers from 1992 to 1996. He served as the Rector of St Michael and All Angels Church, Haworth from 1995 to 2001, and then the Bishop's Officer for Ministry and Mission from 2001 to 2005.

He was appointed the Archdeacon of Craven in 2005 and the acting Archdeacon of Richmond on 2 February 2014, before becoming the Archdeacon of Richmond and Craven when the two posts were merged on 20 April 2014. His residence was Kadugli House, Keighley.

On 18 June 2015, it was announced that Slater is to be the next Bishop of Richmond, a suffragan bishop in the Diocese of Leeds. The bishopric of Richmond had been in abeyance since 1921. He was consecrated during a service at Ripon Cathedral on 19 July by John Sentamu, Archbishop of York. This was the first consecration to take place in Ripon Cathedral since that of Thomas de Kirkcudbright as Bishop of Galloway in 1293.

Bishop Slater is married to Beverley who works in the National Health Service. Together, they have two adult sons.