Hartley College

175 years and counting...
Celebrating the idea, dedication, perseverance, sacrifice and success of our beloved college.

Hartley Principals

1838-60 Rev. Dr. Peter Percival 1971-73 C. Rajathurai
1861-68 Rev. D. P. Niles 1973-75 P. Ahamparam
1868- Samuel Hensman 1975-85 W. N. S. Samuel
1878 J. C. T. Sherrard 1985-93 P. Balasingam
1906 S. A. Paulpillai 1993-97 K. Nadarajah
1906-12 S. S. Kanathiapillai 1997-99 P. Venugopal
1912-15 E. S. Abraham 1999-00 N. Gunaseelan (Act)
1915-43 C. P. Thamotheram 2000-02 M. Sripathy
1943-67 K. Pooranampillai 2003-05 V. Pathmanathan
1967-71 S. Ratnasabapathy 2005- Theivendraraja
THE STORY OF HARTLEY COLLEGE

Point Pedro or Paruththi thurai in Tamil, is a small town within the Vadamarachchi district, bordering the Palk Strait, to the north (Coordinates 9°49′39″N 80°13′57″E). At one time it was a busy port; exporting cotton and Palmyra timber to India, Burma and Penang.

History

In 1838 the British Methodist Missionaries started an English school, on a piece of land where the present day Methodist Girls School is located. And it was named as Point Pedro Wesleyan Mission Central School. By the turn of the nineteenth century it had attained the Secondary School status, following a phenomenal growth.

The secret of the success of our treasured school can be attributed to the vision and the tireless efforts of its founder, Rev. Dr Peter Percival, his successors, teachers and the whole hearted support from the people of Vadamarachchi. Rev. Dr Peter Percival was an eminent scholar, linguist, educationist and missionary. In addition to his missionary work of founding and upgrading schools, he found the time to compile the English-Tamil and English-Telugu dictionaries, and also wrote a book titled “The Land of the Veda.”. And on top of all this, he was instrumental in translating the Holy Bible into Tamil Language.

With the passage of time, as changes took place during the British rule (availability of government jobs and the growth of knowledge-based society), people had to change their lifestyle. This created a desire for education, among the middle class. The growth in the size of the middle class resulted in an increase in the number of children seeking admission to the school.
In 1875 the Point Pedro Wesleyan Mission Central School was shifted to the site where present day Hartley College stands, while allowing the old site to be used for the girls’ school. It is at this juncture Mr. J.C.T. Sherrard became the Head Master of the school. He was a methodical man and a painstaking teacher. He studied the people of the area, and also identified their needs. This made him to work hard for the development of the school, and in the course of time it was upgraded, enabling the worthy candidates to prepare for and sit the Entrance Examination of the Calcutta University.

Mr. J.C.T. Sherrard was so deeply involved with the development of the school and so popular among the parents, the Point Pedro Wesleyan Mission Central School was referred to as “Sherrard’s School”.

In 1912, the Wesleyan Mission Central School, Point Pedro, was renamed as Christ Church School. After five years, in 1917 following the laying of the foundation for a Science Laboratory and six classrooms by Rev. Marshall Hartley, the then Secretary of the Methodist Mission for the East, the Christ Church School became Hartley College. The following year the Chemistry Laboratory was in operation.

Following the nationalisation policy of the Government of Ceylon (Sri Lanka, was known as Ceylon, prior to May 1972) the majority of the schools in the island were taken over by the Department of Education. Hartley College was brought under the Management of the Director of Education, as a publicly funded school on 1 December, 1960. Now it is a provincial school having both Tamil and English mediums in GCE Advanced Level.

The growth of Hartley College as an educational institution continued, thanks to the untiring efforts of many of its past principals and teachers; and it earned its position as a prestigious school in the island, through excellence in studies and extra-curricular activities. Hartley College is one of the schools in the Northern Province of Sri Lanka that attracted students from all communities and regions in Sri Lanka. It is one school where Tamils and Sinhalese sat together in the same class to learn, and also forge friendships for life.
Hartley Principals

Mr C.P. Thamotheram (1915 - 1943)

Our Alma Mater has been blessed with many dedicated principals and resourceful teachers, in the past one hundred and seventy five years. However, it is to be acknowledged that the part played by Mr. C.P. Thamotheram before the Second World War and that of Mr. K. Pooranampillai after the War were defining moments in the growth of our school. From 1915 to 1943, it was the era of Mr. C.P. Thamotheram. He was a charismatic and energetic person in that he was able to raise funds through well-wishers and build additional classrooms and also expand the scope for science education. Those who had the privilege of being at Hartley College during CPT era, fondly talk of a Principal who loved his cigar and the school football!

It was during Mr. C.P. Thamotheram’s tenure as Principal, the Synod of 1920 decided to continue Hartley College as a Secondary School on condition that it does not seek financial assistance from the Missionary Society. Mr. Thamotheram took up the challenge, and dedicated himself to run the School without any assistance from the Missionary Society. As a result of his tireless efforts and resourcefulness, the hall was renovated and more classrooms were built. And what is more a piece of land was bought, to be used as a playground; the hostel too was shifted to the land in front of the playground. The last move in particular enabled the students to indulge in Football, Volleyball, Cricket and Athletics.
Mr. Pooranampillai’s ability to lead, organise and provide relief at short notice to the refugees who were shipped to Point Pedro from Colombo, in June 1958, following the communal riots was a testimony to his skills. It was a coordinated effort in which many leading members of the Vadamaradchi area volunteered their time and the resources to see to its completion. Mr. Pooranampillai along with the members of the staff and the school prefects was at the forefront to receive the refugees at the pier, provide them with refreshments and thereafter send them by bus to the respective destination. However one of the refugees who was a stranger to Point Pedro was Mr. Miranda. He was given temporary accommodation at the Hartley Hostel, to start with. Thereafter he was found employment in the Chemistry laboratory. The rest is history. Mr. Miranda did not leave Hartley for many more years. I can still see in my mind’s eye Mr. Miranda, an amiable man, clad in white sarong and white shirt and sporting a smile.

Mr. Marcus Thambiah, an Old Boy of Jaffna Central and residing at Point Pedro, in the 50s and 60s was entrusted with the task of grooming the young schoolboys into promising cricketers. Mr Pooranampillai couldn’t have chosen a better person for this job. There is one other person who should be remembered for the services he rendered to Hartley. To all of us he was Kanapathipillai Annan, the groundsman. He was a very knowledgeable and energetic man who loved his work.
Late Mr. K. Pooranampillai, as Principal of Hartley College was blessed with three very senior members of the staff, who were not only great teachers but also splendid public relations men. They were Messrs S.T. Samuel, R.M. Gunaratnam and V. Gunanayagam.

In 1967 Mr. K. Pooranampillai retired as principal of Hartley College, and was entrusted with the task of being the principal of St. John’s College, Jaffna.

**Mr S Ratnasapapathy (1967 –71)**

Mr. S. Ratnasapapathy, the new principal of Hartley was of a different make-up. He loved teaching, especially Mathematics and the students of Hartley responded brilliantly. Over a three year period, under the guidance of Mr. S. Ratnasapapathy there was a surge in the number of Hartleyites who entered the University, to do Engineering and Medicine.

Mr. S. T. Samuel, the vice-principal, in verty, national and shawl was an immaculate and imposing figure. And his mode of transport was a bicycle. As a teacher of English Language and Literature, he was in a class of his own. The ease with which he used English and Tamil to explain certain finer points was a hallmark of his language skills. As someone skilled in dramatics, he would switch over to a bit of ‘play acting’, should the need arise! Mr. S. T. Samuel was in charge of attendance; a task which he carried out with flair.

Mr. R. M. Gunaratnam, the deputy-principal was a splendid teacher of mathematics and physics. His method of teaching was unique in many ways. Starting with the basics of the subject, he would move on to applications of principles to the sums. As for the geometrical problems, he would conclude his mathematical proofs with the notation of QED,
which in Latin means *quod erat demonstrandum* (which was to be demonstrated, or proved). The corrupted version of QED is “quite easily done.” Though he was a hard task master, at times he could be a bit light-hearted. His exploits in the classroom are many!

RMG loved sports. At inter-school football matches you could see him running along the boundary line, in line with the ball, and at times cheering or scolding, depending on the skill of the player in possessing the ball or not! However, I must confess that he had a soft corner for sportsmen!

Mr. V. Gunanayagam, compared to RMG and STS was an easy-going type of teacher. He taught History and Tamil. But should the need arise, he would gladly teach Mathematics, as a relief teacher. While solving problems in geometry, he would refer to the relevant theorem from Euclid’s books.

**Mr P Ahamparam (1973 – 75)**

There was one other teacher who played a vital role at Hartley, for well over twenty-five years. It was late Mr. P. Ahamparam. He was a brilliant chemistry teacher. As a student one not only studied chemistry but also the nuances of the English Language, from him. Thanks to Mr. Ahamparam, the metal copper and the way you pronounce it is still in my memory. All because of an answer from one of my classmates in the HSC class. We have in Tamil a word for “father” (in the third person) which sounds very similar to copper, in English!
As the prefect of games, Mr. Ahamparam had to shoulder a lot of responsibilities, on and off the sports arena. He did it manfully with dedication, even though he was not paid a cent for this additional work. Mr. Ahamparam loved listening to test match commentary. And naturally, John Arlott, the versatile English journalist, author, poet and wine connoisseur was his pet commentator. Those who wish to know more about John Arlott can get in touch with Mr. V. Shanmuganayagam, a product of Hartley, now residing in Canada.

**Eminent Hartleyites**

Hartley has produced many eminent personalities, over the years. They are to be found in top echelons of various disciplines and walks of life, locally and globally.

It was late Mr. K. Alvapillai, a distinguished son of Hartley, who through his sheer brilliance in studies and later as a Civil Servant made our Alma Mater a household name in Sri Lanka. In 1915, at the age of ten he lost his father. Despite all the hardships at home, he excelled in his studies. He passed his Senior Cambridge Examination with distinction and honours.

Thereafter he graduated from Ceylon University College, and went to University of London, where he graduated with a first class honours degree in Mathematics. In 1929 he joined the Ceylon Civil Service as a cadet. In 1953 he was appointed as Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Agriculture and Food. After retirement in 1965, he served as chairman of state-owned corporations.
Late Prof C.J. Eliezer, who studied at Hartley in the 1920s and 1930s, was an outstanding mathematician of international repute, who served in Sri Lanka, Malaysia and finally in Australia.

His passage through Hartley College, Ceylon University College and University of Cambridge was a trail-blazer. By nature he was a very humble person. The posterity will always remember him with gratitude for the time he spent and the energy he displayed in furthering the interests of the Tamil community, with distinction and decorum, throughout his life. Prof. C.J. Eliezer was awarded the Member of the Order of Australia in recognition of his services to the community at large.

In 1936 a boy 12 years old and hailing from a small village in Anuradhapura joined Hartley as a hosteller. For eight years KB Ratnayake not only studied but also excelled in sports, especially cricket. He was a college and hostel prefect, as well. He went on to captain the Hartley Cricket Team. After leaving Hartley he worked as a Village Cultivation Officer for many years. Then he took to politics, and rose steadily in the SLFP hierarchy. In 1994 KB Ratnayake was elevated to the post of Speaker to the House of Parliament. He continued in this post for six years. He was a simple uncomplicated man who always maintained his links with Hartley.
In 1952 another Hartleyite by the name of A. Thurairajah entered the Faculty of Engineering by becoming first in the island of Ceylon (Sri Lanka) in the university entrance examination. Few years later he obtained his Ph.D from Cambridge University and developed into an internationally acclaimed scientist in Geotechnical Engineering and served as dean of Engineering faculty at Peradeniya and vice Chancellor of the University of Jaffna. His death in 1994 at the age of 60 was an irreparable loss to one and all.

On 24 December 1994, six months after his death, the University of Peradeniya conferred on Late Prof. A. Thurairajah the Honorary Degree of Doctor of Science, in recognition of his lasting contribution to Engineering Education in Sri Lanka.

Another distinguished Hartleyite was late Prof. K. Kanapanathipillai. He was the Professor of Tamil Language at the University of Ceylon.

Mr. Kirubaharan, alias Ian Kiru Haran who studied at Hartley in the 1950s was the Minister of Economic Affairs for Hamburg, Germany. He moved to Germany in 1970, after studying in UK. What he has achieved in life, over the years, is a lesson to anyone aspiring to be a doer.
Many Hartleyites made the ultimate benevolent sacrifice for the betterment of Tamil community. They remain near and dear to our hearts and remember them as we celebrate our 175th Anniversary. *Lest we forget*

**Overcoming Challenges**

Hartley has faced many calamities in the past. Firstly it was the cholera epidemic of 1850-1855, in which many lives were lost; and then the two World Wars, followed by the cyclone in 1960 and culminating in the thirty year old ethnic strife. During the ethnic war, in 1982, the Sri Lankan military occupied the school premises. The school was displaced and had to seek temporary solace at Puttalai Maha Vidyalayam. The school library with about 6,690 volumes of books, accumulated over a period of 30-40 years or so was set on fire; a deliberate act of cultural genocide. Nevertheless, it was the resourcefulness of the then Principal of Hartley, late Mr.W.N.S.Samuel, Mr.S.P.Balasingham along with the other teachers and the well-wishers that enabled Hartley to function as a school at Puttalai, despite the shortcomings that were unavoidable at that time.

We record here our special gratitude to Mr.C. Tharmalingam, Principal of Puttalai Maha Vidyalayam, a distinguished and loyal Hartleyite for his hospitality and resourcefulness in making possible the functioning of Hartley as a school at Puttalai. Many came forward to shoulder the responsibility of making the transition, a smooth one. Our thanks to all of them for their splendid effort.

In 1989 Hartley College was able to move back to its home turf, surrounded by age old familiar buildings and the sea breeze wafting from the north. Following the flurry of building activities within the school premises, funded by various agencies (GTZ Germany and SDC Swiss) and donors, in the past few years, today Hartley presents a new picture. To someone like me, who studied at Hartley.
from 1952 to 1960, our Alma Mater of today is new in many ways. Those beautiful mahogany trees that stood on either side of the main gate are no more. Likewise the old assembly hall and next to it the tennis court are things of the past. Anyhow let us take heart in the fact that no condition is permanent. Therefore let us rejoice that Hartley is now back to where it belongs, beautifully ‘decked out in all her finery.’ And the school is teeming with young and energetic students, led by a capable and dedicated Principal. Let us hope and pray, that what Hartley had to experience in the last few decades is over, and done with.

A source of encouragement to all of us is the initiative taken by Mr. Ian K. Karan (Kirubaharan) to build a new hostel in place of the old one. The construction work is in progress now. The old adage is still valid; if there is a will there is a way.
Our future

Let us look to the future. Any institution of learning has to come up with new thinking on what it can offer to the future generations. It is an ongoing exercise. Given the scale of displacement of the human population as a result of the ethnic conflict, and the consequent loss of skilled craftsmen and artisans to the community, is an issue that has to be addressed in the near future. This would call for a lot of commitment from past pupils, the HCPPAs and well-wishers. Let us work together with the Principal and other past people associations to achieve this.

There was a time in the past, nearly 50 – 60 years ago, when the public sector was the main source of employment. Not anymore. Self-employment through creation of small industries is a viable option. Those who studied under late Mr.K.Pooranampillai will remember what he used to emphasise quite often: ‘The dignity of labour’

Fiat Lux

Compiled by
N Karunakaran with contributions from P Elango
Notable events in Hartley’s life

1838: Rev. Dr. Peter Percival, Scholar and Educationist, who compiled the English Tamil Dictionary and translated the Bible into Tamil found the School with the name "Wesleyan Mission Central School."

1848: The Central Schools Commission recommends grant to the School for its good work.

1860: School remains closed for part of the year owing to difficulties.

1861: Mr. D. P. Niles, B. A., re-starts it, and puts it on a strong footing, becomes Principal.

1874: The School is shifted to the present site. In the old site a Girls Boarding School is started by Rev. W. R. Winston - presently known as Methodist Girls' High School.

1878: Mr. J. C. T. Sherrard becomes head master under Rev. Napp. Seventh Grade is the highest class and there are only a big hall and two class-rooms. He becomes so popular that the College is known as "Sherrard's School."

1896: The School is up-graded and allowed to prepare pupils for the Calcutta University Entrance Examination.

1906: Mr. S. A. Paulpillai, B. A., is appointed Principal, while Mr. Sherrard is Head Master. Mr. Paulpillai passes away and Mr. Kanapathippillai becomes Principal.

1912: Mr. E. S. Abraham B. A., becomes Principal. The school is called "Christ Church School."

1915: Mr. C. P. Thamotheram becomes principal.

1916: Rev. Marshll Hartley, Secretary of the Methodist Mission for the East visits the school and lays the foundation for a science laboratory. The School is re-named HARTLEY COLLEGE

1917: Chemistry Lab is completed and six other class-rooms are put up.

1920: A Play Ground is provided and more class-rooms are put up. Hartleyites win Science Scholarships to the University College.

1923: The Boy scout movement is started.

1930: The Hostel building is put up. Cricket is started.

1933: Hartley College O.B.A. is inaugurated.

1938: The Colombo Branch of the College O.B.A. is inaugurated.

1943: Mr. K. Pooranampillai, B. A. becomes Principal.

1944: Pupils appear of the H. S. C. Examination. Prefects System is introduced.

1963: Hartley is adjudged the best Cricket Team of the North and wins Cup.

1967: Mr. K. Pooranampillai leaves for St. John's College and Mr. S. Ratnasabapathy takes over.

1971: Owing to the Over 55's being retired by the Government Mr. Ratnasabapathy leaves and Mr. C. Rajadurai, BSc. succeeds.

1973: Mr. C. Rajadurai leaves as Chief Education Officer and Mr. P. Ahamparam, B. Sc., succeeds him.

1975: Mr. W. N. S. Samuel, B. A., succeeds Mr. P. Ahamparam

1979: Four Hartleyites win four Distinction Passes at the GCE A/L Exam.

1980: Thamotheram Memorial Laboratory is completed and opened.

1982: At the 1982 GCE (A/L) Exam, three get four Distinction Passes.
1983: The Pooranampillai Block is opened. The Principal inaugurates a branch of the Hartley College O. B. A. in London.

1984: The Library with 6690 Books and a few class rooms are burnt.

1985: The School is shifted in to a village 3 Km away to Puttalai MV. Mr. W. N. S. Samuel retires and Mr. P. Balasingam, B. A., becomes the Principal.

1987: Hartley is made a Core School under the Cluster System embracing fourteen schools and the Principal is appointed as the Head of the Cluster.

1988: Amidst severe hardships and acute shortage of staff, Fourteen pupils obtain distinctions in all the 8 subjects and thirteen obtain distinctions in 7 subjects in the 1987 GCE (O/L) Examination and in the GCE (A/L) one obtained 4 A’s and several obtained 3 A’s.


1990: Entire school is shifted back to the old site. Constriction work stalled due to the eruption of war.

1993: General Knowledge Quiz team wins Luther Jeyasingam Memorial cup for the 2nd year in succession.

1994: Interact Club formed at College. GCE (A/L) Commerce Union publishes the magazine ‘Vanika Viyalalan’.

1995: Prof. A. Thurairajah block stage 1 was opened.

1997: Mr P Venugobalavanithasan became principal of the college

1998: The first Hartley College Home Page on the Internet is launched from Ottawa, Canada.
1999: Mr. P. Venugobalavanithasan was promoted as the Zonal Director of Education and Mr. N. Gunaseelan looked after the administration. Four students S. Sivothaman, B. Piratheepan, P. Kantharvan and S. Ravishankar from G.C.E AIL passed away during an educational excursion in Point Pedro Sea.

2000: Mr. M. Sripathy became the Principal. Activity room was constructed. Boundary line has been defined.

2001: Thurairajah Block - Stage II was completed and opened.

2002: Global Trust was inaugurated.

2003: Mr. M. Sripathy went as an Assistant Director of Education at the Zonal Education Office, Vadamaradchy and Mr. v. Pathmanathan became the Principal. A computer lab was constructed under the SEMP Project.

2005: Mr. V. Pathmanathan and Mr. N. Gunaseelan retired and Mr. M. Rajaskanthan, Senior Sectional Head looked after the administration for a couple of months. A computer lab was donated by NSW branch. Library and G.C.E (OIL) Block were completed by the GIZ.

2006: Mr. N. Theivendrarajah, B. Sc took over as Principal of the College. A field study centre was built by the Ministry of Education.

2007: Group Song in Tamil won the first place at the National Level Tamil Day Competition. Vimalanathan Rajeevan was placed third in the island in Mathematics Stream in G.C.E (AIL) Exam. Vadiveswaran Hari-karan secured the 2nd place in Under 17 Discus throw cleared a distance of 47.29m at the National Level Competition. L-block stage-II, New Principal's Office Block, Staff Room were constructed by SDC. Geometry Competition was started among the students from Grade 10 and 11 students and is sponsored by Mr. M. Thiruneelakandan.

2008: Vadiveswaran Harikaran won the Colours Award (41.60m) at National Level in discus throw. Art teacher Mr. T. Jeyatheeban won first place at National Art Competition.

2009: John Niraj secured second place in G.C.E (AIL) in Mathematics Field at the National Level and felicitated by his Excellency the President & participated Olympiad Competition held in Taiwan. 14 students went to Engineering Faculty and 4 students went to Medical Faculty. Vadiveswaran Harikaran won the gold medal and Colours Award in National Level in Under 19 discus throw (42.67m). Folk and Group Song in Tamil Day Competition won National 1st prize. Assembly Hall Stage -I foundation was laid by NECORD.
2010 Balagobalan Gohulan secured 3rd place at National Level in G.C.E in the Bio Stream. Vadiveswaran Harikaran won Gold Medal and Colours Award in U 21 discus throw and Thuralingam Balakumar won Gold Medal and Colours award in U 19 pole-vault at National Level. Jeyarajah Kapilananth won the Board Prize in Under 15 all Island Schools Chess Tournament. Mas.N.Thinesh a Cadet Sergeant of the College was felicitated by his Excellency the President at the National Level Cadet Corps Assessment. The sports spot was built in the grounds by Swiss Development Corporation.

2011 Thurailingm Balakumar won the Silver Medal in U 19 pole vault at the National Level Competition. Kanagasabai Mahinthan was selected in the National Level Olympiad Competition in Mathematics and won the Merit Certificate at the Asian Level held in Bali Indonesia. Vamathevan Jeyaprasanna won the 1st place in National Level Essay Competition. Thanabalasingam Gohulan secured 1st place in G.C.E OIL Exam in district level in English Medium. Hartley College was placed in the best schools among the 3 Tamil schools in G.C.E (OIL) performance Island wide declared by the Department of Examination. New Hostel building construction has been inaugurated by the German Senator and the Past Pupil Iyan.K.Karan. Boundary wall was built around the school by the UMCOR and the parents equally shared. Hartley College Past Pupils Association Vanni Electorate was formed. 40 brand new computers were donated by the HCPPA Canada and USA branch. Adjoining land of 6 hundred thousands was purchased by the Trust.

2012 Balagobalan Kabilan secured 3rd at the National Level in G.C.E (AIL) in Mathematics Stream and felicitated by his Excellency the President. Hartley College was placed in the 4th rank in G.C.E (AIL) performance III Mathematics Stream in the Island wide. Cadet Corps won the 1st place at 20th Battalion Cadet Corps Assessment. A Group song secured the 1st place in the National Level Tamil Day Competition. Inner Road was constructed under the Governor's fund and declared open. Urinals and toilets were constructed by IFRC. Canteen construction work was done by tUK Branch. A water tank was built by UNICEF An adjoining land between the courts and the school was purchased with funding of SDS and HCPPAs. 8 hundred thousands land was transferred from the trust to school. A small cycle park was built by the DCB.

2013 A Basketball court was constructed by the China Corporation and the School Community. Extension of Library, Assembly hall stage-II, Cycle Park was constructed by ENRep. A computer lab was sponsored by Canada & USA Branch.