

Rev. Walter Stanley Senior, Chaplain 1933 – 1937



Walter Stanley Senior was born on 10 May 1876. His father was an Anglican priest: Rev. Walter Senior, Vicar of St. Thomas' Church, Nottingham, England. The young Senior attended Sheffield Royal Grammar School 1888-91, where his uncle Edward was the Head Master.

He continued his education at Marlborough College, obtaining a scholarship to Balliol College, Oxford, 1895–99, holding a prestigious College scholarship in Classics, also known as Greats: Classical Exhibitioner. He took a First Class in Classical Honour Moderations (Intermediate Exams) and a Second Class in Greats (Classics or Philosophy).

Balliol records lists recreations as: Fives, music, chess. He was noted by Balliol as the runner-up (Prox. Acces) for the Junior Hall-Houghton Greek Testament Prize, still awarded today 2022.

In 1900 he entered Wycliffe Hall, Oxford, obtaining Second Class results in Theology. He went on to hold two Assistant Master teaching posts, from 1900 to 1903 at St. Peter's School, York, (which claims to be the fourth oldest school in the world, founded in 627 AD), and then very briefly at Gresham's School, Holt, Norfolk.

In 1903 he entered the Bishop's Hostel, Liverpool, to complete preparation for ordination. Ordained deacon, he served a curacy at the parish of Christ Church, Toxteth Park, Liverpool, being ordained priest in 1904.

Soon after, he was appointed Chaplain and Tutor at St. Aidan's College, Birkenhead. This suggests that his skills as a theological educator with pastoral abilities were much sought after.

He had been a member of CMS since 1896, while still a student at Oxford. In 1906 he set sail for Ceylon (Sri Lanka, since 1972), with the support of the CMS, to serve as Vice Principal of Trinity College, Kandy, (TCK) at the invitation of Rev. A.J Fraser, the Principal. Shortly after his arrival, Mr. Fraser was ordered home due to ill-health and Mr. Senior deputised as Acting Principal until Mr Fraser's return the end of 1908.

With the appointment of Mr. Senior, TCK emerged as a public school with a scholastic reputation. Quoting from a 1938 article written by one of Sri Lanka's foremost journalists and authors, H A J Hulugalle: *"His earliest students included two University Scholars, Mr. L.M.D. de Silva, KC, and Mr. J.L.C. Rodrigo, who succeeded him as Classical Lecturer at the University College, (where Mr. Senior was, in later years, Registrar and classics lecturer). Many of his pupils adorned various walks of life but several times that number cherish the memory of a beautiful character."*

Mr Senior married Miss Ethel May Poole, in 1907 at Holy Trinity Church, Nuwara Eliya. She was a missionary in Ceylon, daughter of Bishop Arthur William Poole (1852-1885) – the first Church of England Bishop in Japan. They had four children.

The portrait above was painted by the Eurasian artist David Paynter, himself a student of TCK. The original hangs in the TCK Library, and the pulpit of the TCK chapel, constructed after his time, is dedicated to him.

After 10 years at TCK and influencing hundreds of young lives, in 1916 Mr. Senior moved to Colombo, as Vicar, Christ Church, Galle Face. Quoting from the TCK's Centenary magazine 1972: *"The Rev. W.S. Senior is still held in such reverence by so many old boys and others who had the good fortune to sit at his feet."*

Hulugalle's 1938 article states: *"Not only was he a great scholar and moulder of youth, but he was also an arresting preacher. The spirituality of his countenance and the beauty of his voice with its cultured tones enhanced the appeal of noble thoughts and striking utterance. He was one of the pioneer slum-workers and carried on a mission in Slave Island for many years."*

In 1919 Mr. Senior resigned, to move to the University College, the precursor to the first University in Sri Lanka. To quote from his lifelong friend, Hulugalle, Mr. Senior's *"interest in education prompted him to accept the post of the first Registrar of the University College and Lecturer in Classics"*. *Such was the man, according to his friend, that "the material aspects of office and security had no appeal whatever to a man of his fine sensibilities."*

In 1927 Mr. Senior and his family left Sri Lanka for England taking up an appointment as Vicar of St. Olave's, Ramsey, Isle of Man. The family next moved to Swanwick, Derbyshire, appointed Vicar of St. Andrew's Church from 1929 – 1933

Rev. Walter Stanley Senior was appointed Chaplain to Holy Trinity Geneva in 1933, where he served for 3 years, returning to England, due to poor health, to take up a "living" at All Saints, Hoo Allhallows, in Kent.

For a detailed article on Rev. Walter Stanley Senior including his time in Geneva, see:
<https://holytrinitygeneva.org/the-rev-walter-stanley-senior-he-loved-ceylon/>

Mr. Senior died in Essex, England on 23 February 1938 at the age of 61. At his request, his ashes were taken to Ceylon for interment at the most picturesquely situated St. Andrews Church, Haputale.