

**LEST WE FORGET**

1950



2010

1999



2009

**HISTORY OF THE  
ASSOCIATION OF SURGEONS OF  
EAST AFRICA (ASEA)  
AND THE  
COLLEGE OF SURGEONS OF EAST,  
CENTRAL AND SOUTHERN AFRICA  
(COSECSA)**

COSECSA 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary  
Kigali, Rwanda  
December 2009

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## **PREFACE**

Writing the history of The Association of Surgeons of East Africa - ASEA - and the College of Surgeons of East, Central and Southern Africa - COSECSA - has simply been a labour of love. I suppose I was given the privilege because of my long association both with ASEA and COSECSA. Having been elected a Fellow of the Association in 1961, I held various positions on the Council, starting as member for Kenya, then Treasurer, President, Archivist and finally as its representative on the COSECSA Council. The last position gave me an insight into the workings of the College from its very inception. Also as Chairman of the Finance & General Purpose Committee of COSECSA, I saw first hand the financial problems of the fledgling College. I also doubled up as examiner for MCS and FCS General Surgery from the time COSECSA started conducting examinations. That way I saw the College carry out its core function of producing well trained surgeons to serve the people in our region.

Finally as Chairman of the Merger Committee, which initiated the process of merging ASEA & COSECSA, gleaned the best from their two constitutions and successfully fused them together and eventually steered the two bodies to merge, I had the singular opportunity to watch ASEA fade gracefully into a glorious sunset and COSECSA rise like the fresh morning sun. It was a fascinating experience to see both these great organisations gradually converging to a greater single identity.

So when I was requested by both - members of the Council of ASEA and COSECSA - to write this history, it did not come as a surprise. In fact I half expected it! As the senior most living repository of events related to both organisations, I was best placed to face the challenge. And challenge it has been!

It was no mean task to sift numerous historical documents, pore over the Minutes of the Council Meetings and AGMs of the Association and the College, peruse the Proceedings of ASEA, Newsletters, East and Central African Journal of Surgery, talking to all those connected with ASEA and COSECSA, stealthily making notes at the first available opportunity thereafter and incorporating them appropriately into the text. The result is the treatise that follows.

I had to use my discretion as to what to include and more importantly what to exclude. An error in the former could have led to a voluminous edition rather than the brief - and hopefully an easily readable account - which I have endeavoured to make it. Too much use of surgical scissors or scalpel to achieve the latter would have meant compromising with the history itself - a crime no writer wants to be accused of. So I do hope that in walking the tight rope, I have not been either too verbose or stingy with the facts. As it is often said, truth is a tall order and one must be careful that in abbreviating, it, one does not distort it.

Naturally the history of ASEA has occupied more space than that of COSECSA. This is partly because ASEA was in existence for much longer than COSECSA has been. It may also be because I have cohabited with the former for longer than with the latter. Hopefully in 50 years time - a Fellow of the College will take time out to write an elaborate and more detailed history of COSECSA.

Finally - my vote of thanks. This work is essentially a result of many verbal and written communications. It would be invidious of me to name them all except for one person who needs special mention.

He is the late Imre Loeffler. He and I jointly wrote a paper entitled "ASEA - First fifty years" which I read on behalf of us both at the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of ASEA in Nairobi in December 1999. COSECSA was formally inaugurated at the same historic meeting. Imre also wrote and published a paper in the Proceedings of ASEA in 1978 under the title 'Historic Notes'. Those two papers provided me with a fund of information, which I have used avidly in this document. Finally thanks are also due to my long suffering wife, who was used to my three other wives - surgery, Rotary and writing. This work was like a mistress who lured me into my study every evening for hours on end. The "affair" has been going on for over a year and Marie will be delighted to see the back of her!

Finally the last word must indeed come from Socrates the great Greek philosopher who said that every time a writer dips his pen in the inkpot, he leaves a piece of flesh behind. In this case, the writer has left his flesh, blood, memories and nostalgia behind!

Happy reading!

## Lest we forget

The history of the Association of Surgeons of East Africa (ASEA) and the College of Surgeons of East, Central and Southern Africa (COSECSA).

ASEA was formally inaugurated in Nairobi on the 9<sup>th</sup> November 1950. It was officially merged into COSECSA on the 5<sup>th</sup> of December 2007 when the joint AGMs of both bodies unanimously voted in favour of merging the two organizations. Since COSECSA is a child of ASEA, let us start with the history of the parent body. This will then logically lead us to the history of its worthy offspring.

Before I go into the chronological history of ASEA, it is salutary to recall some of the vicissitudes that the Association underwent during its existence for over half a century. As a Fellow of ASEA since 1961, I witnessed most of them. It all happened because ASEA was born and evolved during a period of dynamic and continuously changing times in our region.

During the 50 years of existence of ASEA, our region underwent cataclysmic changes. We lived through coups, counter-coups, border closures, strict visa regulations, changing political systems and political climate, currency restrictions, devaluations, wars, landmines, financial mismanagement, poor governance, human rights violations and even genocide. We lived through it all and survived. In fact, we did better than that. ASEA initially started with three countries which constituted the then East Africa Community – Kenya, Uganda and Tanganyika, which later merged with Zanzibar and became Tanzania. We as an Association stayed steadfast in spite of the fact that the region was disintegrating and fragmenting. ASEA not only consolidated but also gradually extended into Zambia, Zimbabwe, Malawi, Mozambique and Ethiopia.

In time, the politicians saw the folly of their action and are now trying desperately to rectify their errors and are regrouping into larger economic and political blocks.

Reverting back to the formation of ASEA: Though informal discussions on the formation of the Association started in 1945 soon after World War II, a formal meeting took place on 24<sup>th</sup> January 1950, in the house of a renowned Nairobi orthopaedic surgeon, Kirkaldy Willis. Thus the actual conception of ASEA can be precisely pinpointed to that date in 1950 in Kenya. It was decided at that fateful meeting to write to every surgeon in Kenya, Uganda, Tanganyika, Zanzibar (now Tanzania), Nyasaland (now Malawi) and Northern Rhodesia (now Zambia) to inquire if there was an interest in the formation of an East African Association of Surgeons.

Just under a year later, on 9<sup>th</sup> November 1950, an inaugural meeting was held in the Council Chamber of the City Hall in Nairobi. Mr. Cliff Braimbridge took the chair and Mr. Kirkaldy Willis acted as the Hon. Secretary. 19 other surgeons were present. At that meeting after his opening and welcoming remarks, Braimbridge said, 'You all know the idea which is the underlying reason for our meeting together this afternoon and you have all given your approval in principle to the formation of an East African Association of Surgeons. The Acting Secretary in his report will give you a brief history of what has happened and what has been done. After that, I shall propose a resolution from the chair to the effect that this meeting is in favour of the formation of such an Association. If this resolution is passed, it will then be necessary for us to draw up a constitution for ourselves and elect a Governing Body.'

The proposal was passed unanimously. In the African tradition, all those present promoted themselves to the status of Council members. The first resolution of this "instant" Council was to the effect that all those who had replied to the exploratory letter in the affirmative should become Foundation Fellows. There were thus 34 foundation Fellows elected. The three office bearers were:

## CHARTER OFFICERS

1950

C.V. BRAIMBRIDGE : PRESIDENT

KIRKALDY WILLIS : HON. SECRETARY

G.E. NEVILL : HON. TREASURER

To insert a personal touch, I myself met Mr. Braimbridge at the Nairobi Hospital in 1963 just before he died. According to a very senior surgical colleague, Mr. Andrew Hicks who read a paper on Mr. Braimbridge at the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of ASEA, Mr. Braimbridge obtained the Fellowship of the Edinburgh College of Surgeons in 1929. Obviously the connection of ASEA and COSECSA with the College started with the Foundation President! He was not only a paragon of that dying breed of "general surgeons" but he also did anaesthetics. His official qualified anaesthetist was Dr. Carman. On routine operating days, twice a week, Braimbridge did major cases before lunch with Dr. Carman giving anaesthetics. They then had a lunch consisting of tea and sandwiches prepared by their wives alternatively. In the afternoon session, they changed roles. Dr. Carman did minor surgical operations and when necessary, Braimbridge administered anaesthesia! His son Mark Braimbridge was a surprise visitor when I was recuperating from a pleurectomy done on me for a right spontaneous pneumothorax at the Brompton Chest Hospital in London in August 1963. My surgeon Mr. Paneth went away for the weekend and requested his colleague, Mark Braimbridge to keep an eye on me. Imagine my surprise and delight as he breezed into my room greeting me with "Jambo" and a broad smile on his face which usually goes with that mode of greeting in Kenya. To conclude the Braimbridge saga, the Braimbridge Prize, detailed later in this account was named after him.

Kirkaldy Willis left for Australia just before Kenya became independent. I was Gerald Nevill's senior surgical Registrar for two years. He continued to live in Kenya and died a few years ago – handing over his practice to Mr. Loeffler who also sadly passed away in March 2007 in Nairobi.

So to give it a historical perspective, ASEA was born on 9<sup>th</sup> November 1950 – 4 days after Guy Fawke's day. Before leaving Kirkaldy Willis, it is interesting to note that he carried the "Secretariat" of ASEA in a small leather brief case for quite a few years because ASEA had no permanent office of its own!

According to ASEA constitution, the President of ASEA held office for only one year. There were no "Life Presidents" as often happened at that time in our continent. ASEA has had a new President every year except for three legitimate exceptions. They are: -

Mr. Braimbridge as the Charter President held the office for  
The first three years.

Gerald Nevill and Sir John Croot of Makerere University were  
Presidents for two years, not consecutively but with a gap in

between.

The first lady President was Prof. Ann Bailey of Lusaka, Zambia. She is working as a priest in London – mainly counselling HIV/AIDS patients in her parish. This is appropriate because while she was Professor of Surgery in Lusaka she did considerable research on HIV/AIDS just about the time when it was considered a new disease in Africa. The first President who can claim to be a “son of the soil” was Prof. Kyalwazi of Makerere who has also passed away.

Since its inception ASEA has had an annual general meeting and scientific conference. It also held regular council meetings to conduct the business of the Association. For twenty years the venue of the conference rotated between Nairobi and Kampala– capitals of Kenya and Uganda respectively. The first conference to be held in Dar-es-Salaam, Tanzania was in the year 1974. In the same year Zambia became a constituent country, the first to join the original three East African countries.

Let us now divert from the mainstream and peruse two important historical facts: -

The penchant to invite political leaders to open our Annual Conference was present even in the early life of ASEA. There is a letter in the ASEA Archives from Sir Patrick Renison, the then Governor of Kenya. Sir Patrick is historically remembered for publicly calling Kenyatta the leader of death and darkness a few months before the British Government decided to release Mzee from detention in Maralal.

I met Sir Patrick Renison in person in the foyer of a theatre in Nairobi a few minutes before the show started. I was officially introduced to him and found him a humourless man – a staunch believer in the perpetuity of the British Empire on which he believed that the sun would never set. He was invited to open our conference in Nairobi on 3<sup>rd</sup> February 1960. The letter from his private secretary apologises for his inability to open the conference because he was called to London to attend the Kenya Constitutional Conference at Lancaster Hall!

The Conference was a prelude to Kenya’s Uhuru! In fact Sir Patrick was recalled to London soon after. One might call it a classic example of not reading the writing on the wall!

The other letter is from one Denis Burkitt, dated the 19<sup>th</sup> October 1959 in which he is requesting a slot at the conference to present his papers on "strange lumps he had noticed in African children". Those strange lumps later on came to be known as Burkitt's lymphoma!

The Minute Book of ASEA and the archives contain correspondence, membership lists, programmes of scientific meetings, photographs and even menus of annual dinners. In the formal minutes are also evident certain concerns which were the focus of ASEA Council from the very beginning. These are medical education, postgraduate teaching, training, surgical degrees, surgery in the rural areas, surgical research relevant to the region and of course dissemination of knowledge.

#### MEMBERS OF ASEA COUNCIL – DECEMBER 1961 IN KAMPALA

Included in the Council Minutes of 21<sup>st</sup> May 1959 are two important decisions which were made at that crucial meeting. One was to propose an ASEA tie, maroon in colour with the logo of a zebra head and two crossed artery forceps.

The artery forceps signify surgery and the zebra was included to denote the multi-ethnicity and multi-nationality of the Fellows and Members. This logo with certain modifications is now incorporated into the College (COSECSA) logo and tie. The other resolution is to hold Council meetings in Soy – ostensibly because it was a place equidistant from Nairobi and Kampala. The resolution did not mention the presence of a magnificent golf course in Soy. Neither does it mention that some Council Members were better golfers than surgeons!

A major shift in the location of Council meetings took place in 1970 when Sir. Michael Wood, founder of the Flying Doctors' service was elected ASEA President. The golfers capitulated to the pilots. The pilots were – Sir Michael Wood, Imre Loeffler and John Jelles.

This change fitted well with the need to take surgery to rural areas and District hospitals because small aircrafts could land even in makeshift airfields.

These Council meetings were funded by the Commonwealth Foundation. Since then, Council meetings have always been held in smaller places and combined with regional meetings and mini-conferences. The first such Council meeting took place on 19<sup>th</sup> February 1971 in the year of Sir Michael Wood's presidency. Since then the Council has been hosted in most provincial and district hospitals in the seven constituent countries which comprised ASEA then. This trend has proved very beneficial to promotion of good surgery in small places and hopefully will be carried on by the College. It has also made the surgeons in rural areas feel a part of the Association and eschewed the feeling of being abandoned.

There are many interesting events and developments that took place in the life of the Association. It is difficult to relate them all but the following few are significant and need to be recorded:

- (1) **1961:** ASEA became a member of the International Federation of Surgical Colleges.
- (2) **1963:** In memory of Mr. Braimbridge the Founding President of the Association, ASEA set up a prize for the best paper presented by a surgeon within 10 years of him or her obtaining the basic medical degree. It is known as Braimbridge Prize and the award consists of a medal and a cash prize.

- (3) **1975:** At the Moshi meeting on Friday 10<sup>th</sup> March 1975, the Hon. Secretary, John Jelles proposed that ASEA should publish its Proceedings. A journal on the lines of the Annals of the Royal College of Surgeons was suggested and it was envisaged that revenue for it would come from advertising. As often happened, John Jelles the proposer was unanimously voted in as the Editor and the first volume of the Proceedings was published in 1978. Since it was not peer reviewed and could not be included in the Index Medicus, in 1995 it was replaced by the East and Central African Journal of Surgery. In 1998, an additional publication was introduced. This was the Newsletter edited by various Past Presidents of ASEA and produced in Edinburgh courtesy of Ethicon / J&J.

- (4) **1983:** At the first ASEA Council meeting held in Bulawayo, the Chairman's prize was established with the help of Bulawayo Trust. It is awarded to the best overall paper at the annual conference. Initially it was a cash prize of Zimbabwean Dollars 500. In view of the difficult times Zimbabwe is going through and the record devaluation of its currency, ASEA is financing this award now.
- (5) **1987:** Three important events took place in that year.
- (a) The Royal College of Surgeons held a joint meeting with the AGM of ASEA in Nairobi in the first week of December. Tom McNair was the President of the College and most College Council members travelled to Nairobi.

Arising from this joint meeting with the oldest surgical college in the world (established in 1505 and celebrated its Quincentenary in 2005) many areas of mutual activity were established which are still continuing.

Rahima Dawood Travelling Fellowship was established whereby a distinguished surgeon would be sponsored to visit various countries comprising ASEA, give lectures and teach at the local university hospital and other hospitals and finally deliver an eponymous oration at the advent of the Annual Conference of ASEA. Happily the Royal College of Surgeons of Edinburgh decided to collaborate on the project and sponsor the Fellow in alternate years. ASEA Council decided to host the fellow in the country visited. Thus the fellowship acquired the long winded name – Rahima Dawood Travelling Fellow of the Royal College of Surgeons of Edinburgh and the Association of Surgeons of East Africa. With the inauguration of the College, it has been agreed that the Rahima Dawood Travelling Fellowship will continue with the name of the College incorporated in place of ASEA.

The same Rahima Dawood Foundation sponsored an annual cash prize for the best student in final surgery examination at the various universities in the region. This has now been converted to the prize for the best student at MCS and FCS examinations conducted by the College.

The longest ASEA Council meeting took place in Jinja on Friday the 2<sup>nd</sup> October. It lasted from 9am to 6pm and deliberated and decided on important constitutional changes.

Finally, it is important to note that there are certain concerns which have been the focus of the Council from the very beginning. They are undergraduate medical education, postgraduate surgical education and appropriate degrees, surgery in the rural areas and surgical research relevant to East Africa. For example in the late fifties it had become apparent to the Council that the solitary Makerere Medical School in Kampala would not be able to satisfy future needs of East Africa. Thus a vigorous debate about the necessity of establishing a second medical school in Nairobi under the aegis of the university of East Africa was already raging.

The first formal discussion concerning this took place on 28<sup>th</sup> September 1961 in Parliament Buildings in Nairobi and this was followed by a more practical discussion in October which was covered by ASEA. Promotion of surgical research in East Africa was also a major concern. In this connection as early as February 1959, the Council agreed to support Mr. John Cook's application for a grant to establish a tissue culture unit at Makerere for the study of the behavior of Kaposi's sarcoma in-vitro. It is indeed true to say that information and knowledge concerning any disease peculiar to our part of the world was first presented at the ASEA Annual Conference and then found its way into journals and text books. This is true for Bantu volvulus, phycomycosis, pyomyositis, urethral strictures, hepatocellular carcinoma and Buruli ulcers.

The reading of the first paper on Burkitt's lymphoma by Denis Burkitt himself has been referred to along with the letter he wrote to obtain permission to present it!

There are many important events and developments which took place during the very interesting life span of ASEA. Relating them all would make this history voluminous. The following however are worthy of mention: -

One of them is the development of local surgical bodies in countries which comprise ASEA. Initially it was believed that they would compete with ASEA and divide its scanty resources. However it was soon realised that they were complimentary and were easily and directly able to deal with problems at the country level. As a result ASEA shepherded and nurtured them and they formed the basis of country representation in ASEA and now into the College.

Let us now go into the history of the College and trace it from its conception to the point where it is now. The first official reference to a Surgical College in our region is found in the ASEA President's address delivered in Lusaka, Zambia on 3<sup>rd</sup> December 1986. At this point I must declare my interest. That President happened to be myself! I was formally elected as the President of ASEA at that meeting and chose the theme of my inaugural address after the title of my recently published book "Yesterday Today and Tomorrow". I used it to signify the past, present and future of ASEA. When I came to "Tomorrow" or my future vision of ASEA, amongst other predictions I made, one was as follows and I quote: 'I can visualize one day a College of

Surgeons arising out of the Association.’ Little did I know then that it would be so soon and that it would come into being in 1999 - merely 13 years later! My audience quite rightly thought that I was carried away by the exuberance of the historical personal event in my life. Others thought that I was dreaming. Whatever it was, it proves that dreams do come true. But by the time they come true – we have forgotten them!

Concrete steps to set up the College were taken at the 25<sup>th</sup> Regional Health Ministers Conference held in Mauritius in November 1996 when the following resolution was passed.

Resolution 10:- The Conference urges the Secretariat to extend to all the other Health Professionals the support it had given to the Nursing and Midwifery profession which had enabled it to organize & manage the ECSA College of Nurses (ECSACON) The need to establish a Regional Academy of Medicine with a College of Surgeons as one of its Chapter was agreed at this meeting. Francis Omaswa, a distinguished Past President of ASEA, in his position as Director of Medical Services in Uganda was present at this meeting and planted the seed in the minds of surgeons at a subsequent ASEA Council meeting. As a result, at the 46<sup>th</sup> AGM of ASEA held in Harare, Zimbabwe in December 1996, approval was given for establishment of the College of Surgeons of East & Central Africa. In April 1997, a letter was written to the Regional Secretary of Commonwealth Regional Health Community by the Hon. Secretary of ASEA, seeking support for the establishment of the College of Surgeons. This was endorsed by Deans of the East African Medical Schools in the same year and the Edinburgh College of Surgeons agreed to help the proposed College with training and examinations. Interestingly, a consultancy report by Prof. Nhonoli in July 1997, stipulated that a Regional Postgraduate College of Medicine of which the College of Surgeons was a proposed Faculty must have:-

- (1) A physical Secretariat with a permanent core of administrative staff.
- (2) Regular and reliable source of income for its activities.
- (3) Well defined & specified objectives and responsibilities.
- (4) Its Fellowship Diplomas must be recognized by the health Ministers & the Higher Accreditation Boards of member Countries.

A year later at the 26<sup>th</sup> Regional Health Ministers Conference held in once again in Mauritius, in 1997, Resolution 31 read as follows:-  
Member States should explore & facilitate the development of a College of Medicine for the Region and mandate it to

- (1) award postgraduate degrees
- (2) set up standards of Postgraduate Training
- (3) accredit new training programmes, institutions & schools

Since the College of Surgeons was envisaged as a faculty of the College of Medicine, with their characteristic initiative and drive the surgeons in ASEA went ahead and established the College of Surgeons. Thus on 1<sup>st</sup> December 1999, as we were entering the new millennium at the golden jubilee celebration of ASEA, the College was inaugurated at the AGM of ASEA held in Nairobi, with the blessings of the governments of the region. It was attended by Ms. Olive Njanja of the Commonwealth Secretariat in Arusha and Prof. Maran, the then President of the Edinburgh College of Surgeons. It was resolved to publicise the college, recruit Foundation Fellows and register the College in each of the constituent countries of ASEA and identify training hospitals and trainees. It was initially baptised COSECA – College of Surgeons of East and Central Africa. The name was changed to COSECSA – College of Surgeons of East, Central and Southern Africa – at the first COSECSA AGM held in Lusaka on the 5<sup>th</sup> December 2001. It was renamed at the suggestion of the Health Ministers of ECSA, East, Central & Southern Africa to fall in line with the political regional grouping. The interim Council was elected and held its meeting in Maputo on 7<sup>th</sup> December 2000. The following officers were elected.

President	Francis Omaswa
Vice-President	Josephat Mulimba
Secretary General	Jimmy James
Treasurer	Ignatius Kakande
Asst. Secretary General	Dr. Terezia Couto
Chairman Examination & Credentialling Committee	Chris Lavy
Chairman Finance & General Purpose Committee	Abedi Kinasha
Chairman Education & Scientific Committee	Prof. Maguti
ASEA Representative	Yusuf Kodwawwala

The syllabus and constitution of COSECSA prepared by this Council were presented and published at a meeting held along with the AGM of ASEA in December 2000 in Maputo.

Another important development took place at a special meeting held on 28<sup>th</sup> February- 1<sup>st</sup> March, 2001 which was addressed by Dr. Shongwe, Regional Secretary of CRHCS, Commonwealth Regional Health Community Secretariat. He suggested that the COSECSA Secretariat be set up within CRHCS in Arusha and this was accepted. The College secretariat was established there in May 2002 and is still located there.

The interim Council met again at the Mombasa Beach Hotel in Mombasa on 20<sup>th</sup> September 2001. This was replaced by substantive Council on 7<sup>th</sup> December 2001 at the first formal AGM of COSECSA in Lusaka Zambia. It is appropriate that the first AGM of COSECSA was held in Lusaka where the idea of the College was mooted merely 15 years earlier in 1986.

The aims and objects of the college as formulated then were as follows and they are still valid: -

- (1) Organise training programmes in recognised institutions.
- (2) Organise examinations in various disciplines of surgery.
- (3) Promote and encourage postgraduate education, relevant to the Region.
- (4) Organise workshops, seminars, lectures, conferences to bring surgeons together in Fellowship and promote the art and science of surgery in the region.
- (5) Perhaps above all – set up the highest ethical standards and promote the honour and dignity of surgical and allied professions.

Happily the College has continued doing that with vigour, diligence and dedication.

The College logo and tie were approved at the COSECSA Council meeting on 3rd April 2002 held in the Board Room of the Nairobi Hospital. The logo was designed at the Medical Illustration Dept. of the Edinburgh Medical School. It has the head of a youthful zebra set over crossed scalpels, with an open book above, the year 1999 to its side within a circle of gold, surrounded by the name of the College set within a circle of red. The zebra has the same significance as it had on the ASEA emblem, the scalpels signify surgery and the book indicates the function of the College. For the record, the first logo was suggested by Prof. Kakande at the Interim Council meeting held in Mombasa Beach Hotel on 20<sup>th</sup> September 2001. It included the time honoured staff and serpent of Aesculapius and also had scalpel and scissors. This first model underwent quite a bit of metamorphosis before the final design was approved. The tie is blue with the COSECSA logo set in white and black repeated as diagonals and separated by gold and red stripes.

At this meeting it was also decided that the first MCQ examination for MCS will be arranged in individual countries in October 2003. Those who passed will be offered the clinical and oral examination in Kampala in tandem with the AGM due to be held there in December 2003. It was also agreed to continue with this tradition so that the Council members who attended the AGM could double up as examiners. The criteria for accreditation of training hospitals were approved and a list of training hospitals was submitted.

At the Council meeting held at the Nairobi Hospital on Wednesday 2<sup>nd</sup> April 2003, the constitution of the College was circulated. The idea was for Council members to put forward suggestions and refine the document and put forward for adoption at the next AGM.

For some years COSECSA and ASEA ran parallel Council meetings and AGMs. However it soon became apparent that there was great amount of duplication at all levels. This entailed almost double time and money. It was also realized that ASEA & COSECSA were carrying out complementary functions with the common aims of education, training examinations, research and fellowship. Therefore as early as 2003 the idea of merging the two organisations was mooted. To be precise, at the Council meeting in Songhor in Mozambique held on the 7<sup>th</sup> August 2003, the issue was raised for the first time. To digress a little, also at this meeting the College ties and scarves were ready and were shown for the first time to Council members.

The first paper on merger was prepared by the author and presented to the ASEA Council and subsequently the AGM held on Wednesday the 3<sup>rd</sup> December 2003 in Kampala.. At this meeting a Merger Committee comprising of three council members from ASEA and three from COSECSA with the author as chairman in his capacity as ASEA representative on the COSECSA Council was formed. The committee deliberated on the feasibility and practicality of the merger proposal and regularly brought the matter level for ratification to the two Councils and the two AGMs as the vision gained credibility and momentum.

The revised College constitution was tabled for approval at the AGM in 2004, held in Harare. It was passed unanimously. Also the old Council had run its course and the new Council was elected with Prof. Mulimba as the President. By now there were a total of 463 Fellows and Members of the College, including 288 Foundation Fellows.

Once the idea of merger was approved, many long hours were devoted to fusing the two constitutions without in anyway adversely affecting the aspirations, aims and objects of either organisation. Naturally the fused constitution took the best out of both constitutions and learnt also from the mistakes of both. Marathon meetings were conducted by the Merger Committee and its efforts bore fruit on 27<sup>th</sup> November 2005 when at the AGMs of ASEA and COSECSA held at Muhimbili Hospital in Dar-es-Salaam, the merger was unanimously passed by both the bodies.

Once again it was time to elect a new Council and this was done at the AGM in Dar with Prof. Krikor as the new President..

The fused constitution of what was now called COSECSA (ASEA) was approved at the AGMs in Mombasa of both COSECSA and ASEA on 5<sup>th</sup> December 2007 making it a historic day. Both ASEA and COSECSA are right now in the phase of trial marriage and as always happens, they both are at their best behaviour! The trial period runs for three years and a final irrevocable merge will take place in December 2010 after an approval is obtained at the AGM of COSECSA (ASEA). In the meantime the Council of ASEA formed in 2007 is keeping a watching brief on the combined operations of the fused organization.

The College first started its core function of conducting examinations and conferring the basic qualifications of MCS – Membership of the College of Surgery. Soon FCS General Surgery and Orthopaedics were added and last year in Maputo, FCS examination in Urology and Plastic surgery were held in addition to General and Orthopaedic surgery. Neurosurgery examination at FCS level is in the offing.

As per the constitution of the College elections take place every two years, the last one was held at the AGM in Mombasa at the Whitesands Hotel on 5<sup>th</sup> December 2007, when Dr. Abedi Kinasha was put in the chair.

At the Council meeting in Butare, Rwanda on the 6<sup>th</sup> August 2008, two momentous decisions were taken. The appointment of a College Registrar as enshrined in the College constitution was made. Past President Krikor was unanimously elected to hold this onerous post with the proviso that he will have an administrative assistant to help him. As an example of sacrifices various Council members have made for the College in its formative years, the newly appointed Registrar will work on a “refund of expense” basis until the College finances allow for a suitable remuneration. The second decision was to admit Rwanda as a constituent country. This was ratified at the AGM held in Maputo in early December 2008, making Rwanda the ninth constituent country of COSECSA (ASEA) and the first country to join after ASEA merged with COSECSA .

Another important development in the College activities was the fact that last year The College held an examination in a predominantly Portuguese speaking country. An official graduation ceremony is being planned for 2009 at the AGM in Kigali Rwanda. All this shows that the College is both enterprising and innovative and fully prepared to take on new challenges.

At this point it is appropriate to gratefully acknowledge the assistance given to the College by Edinburgh and Irish Surgical Colleges and the Association of Surgeons of Great Britain and Ireland. In addition in the formative years, CBM - Christofel Blinden Mission - and GWHFA came to our aid. Ethicon and Johnson & Johnson have supported ASEA for many years and have now enhanced their support for the College.

In conclusion, let me reiterate that the College is a worthy successor to ASEA. It is appropriate to have an analogy from the writing of the great Indian leader Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru. His father Motilal Nehru was a great man in his own right but of course the son, Jawaharlal Nehru went much further. Side by side with Mahatma Gandhi, he fought for the freedom of India and went on to become the first Prime Minister of independent India. Not known for modesty, Jawaharlal Nehru in the very first sentence in his autobiography describes himself as the "greater son of a great father". In time, COSECSA will prove to be a greater son of a great father – ASEA.

#### **PAST PRESIDENTS**

<b>YEAR</b>	<b>NAME</b>
1950-53	C V Braimbridge
1954-55	A J Boase
1955-56	H J Croot
1956-57	G V W Anderson
1957-59	L W J McAdam
1959-60	W H Kirdaldy Willis
1960-61	W C Barber
1961-62	G E Nevill
1962-63	H J Croot
1963-64	J R M Miller
1964-65	P P Clifford
1965-66	P A James
1966-67	J A S Green
1967-68	S K Kyalwazi
1968-69	P D O'Donoghue
1969-70	R R Trussell
1970-71	A M Wood
1971-72	A M Odonga
1972-73	S D Sethi
1973-74	F M Bulwa
1974-75	M W Warambo
1975-76	I J P Loeffler
1976-77	D Kisumba
1977-78	P R Hiza
1978-79	G E Neville
1979-80	J K Shija
1980-81	J E Jellis
1981-82	J W Carswell
1982-83	J W M Kiryabwire
1983-84	A C Bayley
1984-85	G B Sande
1985-86	W B Nganwa

## PAST PRESIDENTS

YEAR	NAME
1986-87	M Y D Kodwawwala
1987-88	F C O Omaswa
1988-89	L F Levy
1989-90	B Kirei
1990-91	K C Rankin
1991-92	L J Eshleman
1992-93	Z Gaya
1993-94	R C Hepworth
1994-95	P I Garrido
1995-96	J A O Mulimba
1996-97	I Kakande
1997-98	B Mauchaza
1998-99	L N Gakuu
1999-2000	R Barradas
2000-01	A Kinasha
2001-02	E Naddumba
2002-03	M Okech
2003-04	J Langa
2004-05	J Kahamba
2005-06	J de Miranda
2006-07	Nyengo Mkandewere
2007-08 Vice President ASEA (2007-2010)	Fredrick Mutyaba

## RAHIMA DAWOOD TRAVELLING FELLOWS

NAME	FROM	YEAR	TOPIC
Mr Peter Bewes	Birmingham UK	1988	Wounds
Mr J A R Smith	Sheffield	1989	Antibiotics
Mr Yusuf Kodwawwala	Nairobi	1990	Breast Cancer
Mr Neville W Harrison	Brighton UK	1991	Urology
Prof Sean Hughes	London UK	1992	Spinal Surgery
Rev Ann C Bayley	London & Zambia	1993	AIDS in Surgery
Mr Jimmy James	UK & Malawi	1994	Plastic Surgery
Prof Laurence Levy	Zimbabwe	1995	Neurosurgery
Mr Raymond Donnelly	Liverpool	1996	Chest Surgery
Prof. Johns E Jellis	Zambia	1997	Trauma & AIDS
C J Cutting A&E	Cancelled in Nov.	1998	Too late to find replacement
Prof J Shija	Dar es Salaam	1999	Paediatric Surgery
Mr John Knottenbelt	Harrow UK	2000	A & E Trauma
Mr Imre J P Loeffler	Nairobi	2001	Surgery in the Developing World
Prof Patrick Bradley	Nottingham	2002	ENT
Miss Christine Evans	Wales	2003	Urology
Prof Larry Hadley	Durban SA	2004	Paediatric Surgery
Mr Ian Ritchie	Stirling Scotland	2005	Training & Orthopaedics
Prof Adelolo Adeloye	Nigeria	2006	Neurosurgery
Mr Ali Bakran	Liverpool	2007	Transplant Surgery
Mr Robert Lane	Winchester	2008	Surgical Education
Mr Fanus Dreyer	Dumfries, Scotland	2009	Surgical Research & Safe Surgery