



NEWSLETTER

SEP 2013

The Queen's College of Guyana Association (UK)
(Registered Charity No. 801250)

No. 47

A WEEKEND IN CELEBRATION OF OUR 25TH ANNIVERSARY

The Association was formally established on 3rd June 1988. In recognition of this important anniversary, the International Committee of QC Alumni Associations (ICQC) agreed to hold their Annual Business Meeting (ABM) here in London, although it is not really our turn, having hosted the event in 2011.

The first event will be a **Reception** at the High Commission on **Friday 11th October** starting at 7 pm at which refreshments (drinks and buffet supper) will be served. Admission will be £10 each for paid-up members (plus one guest), overseas visitors and special invitees; £15 for others. It had been hoped to hold a Cultural Evening – which had become an annual event – on that day, but organiser Rod Westmaas will no longer be available.

The principal event will be a **Joint Dinner-Dance** with **Bishops' High School Alumni Association** (who are also celebrating their 25th anniversary) on **Saturday 12th October** at the **Grand Connaught Rooms, 60–65 Great Queen Street, London WC2**. This will be a black tie event, with tickets costing £60. **Numbers are limited to 110, so book your tickets early**. A separate flyer is being circulated.

On **Sunday 13th** the ICQC ABM will be held at the High Commission starting at 11am. Attendance is restricted to delegates and paid-up members of the Association. There will be a buffet lunch. Cost £10.

It is essential that persons intending to attend the Reception and the ABM inform Ian Wishart not later than Wednesday 9th October (see back page for contact details).

ASSOCIATION VICE-PRESIDENT 'SONNY' RAMPHAL WINS PRESTIGIOUS COMMONWEALTH AWARD

Sir Shridath Ramphal, Commonwealth Secretary-General from 1975 to 1990, was presented with the Commonwealth Life Time Achievement Award 2013 during a gala ceremony in London on 27th June. He is the second recipient of the award, first bestowed on the legendary Nelson Mandela last year. The award was presented by the present Secretary-General Kamlesh Sharma before an audience of some 200 persons representing various organisations in the Commonwealth.

The citation recalled that Mandela had said of Sir Shridath: "... he is one of those men who have become famous because, in their fight for human justice, they have chosen the entire world as their theatre". It continued: "Elected three times by the Commonwealth Heads of Government, he served for 15 momentous years as Secretary-General – the only person to have so enjoyed the confidence and trust of the leaders over so long a time."

(Sonny's achievements, particularly in helping to facilitate resolution of the problems in southern Africa, and in moulding the ACP – African, Caribbean and Pacific – former colonies into an effective negotiating group under the first Lomé Convention, are set out in *Sir Shridath Ramphal: The Commonwealth and the World*, reviewed in *Newsletter* No 38, December 2008, which can be found on our website.)

A congratulatory email was sent to Sonny by Association Chairman Mark Dalgety.

ROD IS LEAVING US

Association Secretary Rod Westmaas will shortly be returning to Guyana to manage a family estate in the Pomeroon. A founder member of the South Florida Association, Rod has been a member of the Management Committee since his move to the UK in 2007. He was the instigator of two successful annual events: the Brunch and the Cultural Evening. We wish Rod well in his new endeavour.

VALETE

We regret to announce the deaths of: Dr **Kenrick Orrin Evans Barrow**, CCH (QC 47–57), founding president of the Association of West Indian Gastroenterologists, past chairman of the Medical Council of Jamaica and past president of the Medical association of Jamaica, *b.* 27.11.38. *d.* 4.6.13 in Jamaica; **Maurice Charles** (QC 1930s), retired member of the Canadian judiciary, *b.* 6.8.20, *d.* 8.6.13 in Canada; **Malcolm deVere Delph** (QC 33–43), asst master late 40s–early 50s, master c. 58 until he transferred to UG, *d.* 19.7.13 in Florida in his late 80s; **B B (Barry) Hope** (QC 47–56), senior athletics champion '54 & '55, head prefect 55–56, *d.* 25.3.13 in Washington DC; **Assad Ishoof** (QC c.57–64), entrepreneur, had the privilege, as a junior GDF officer, of placing the national flag on Mt Ayanganna, Guyana's highest point, on Independence Day 1966, *b.* 12.9.45, *d.* 31.7.13 in Miami; **Nadir ('Rufus') Khan** (QC 61–68), *d.* 21.4.13 in Canada; **Charles McDavid** (QC c. 54–61), retired Dean of the Faculty of Science & Agriculture at UWI's St Augustine campus, *b.* 1943, *d.* 19.7.13 in Trinidad; **Paul Smith** (QC 52–60) *d.* 14.6.13 in Canada; **Mark Swingler** (QC 1940s), *d.* ca. May 2012.

To the bereaved relatives the Association extends its sincerest condolences.

SALVETE

We welcome **J M (Josh) Ragnauth** (QC 47–54) as a new member.

CONGRATULATIONS

To QC student Akeila Wiltshire for securing the under-17 female title in the Junior Caribbean Squash Championship recently held in Trinidad. Guyana retained all the team titles.

DONATIONS

The Association is grateful for the donations recently received from: **Chris Chunnillall, John Dodshon, Bruce Nóbrega, David Pollard** and **Gary Ramprashad**.

BRUNCH AND BARBECUE PROFITS DOWN – IS THE LATTER EVENT WORTH PRESERVING?

Attendance at the annual Brunch has been declining year on year along with the profits. Last year there were 84 attendees (including 4 children), but only 63 (6 children) this year. Profits were down from £578 to £438, though, admittedly, our estimate of 100 attendees (the basis on which the caterer was paid) was far too high.

The situation with regard to the Family Barbecue is far more serious. Despite a small increase in attendance (102 against 96 last year), this year's profit was well down: £106 compared with £376 last year. This was partly due to a significant fall in the profit from the food stall. (In 1993, the first year we held the barbecue at the present venue, the profit was £1300!) Next year's Committee will need to give serious consideration on whether to continue with this event.

One saving grace was that certain members made donations in lieu of attending. This will net an additional £133.75 inclusive of HMRC's 25% tax rebate.

BOOK REVIEWS

The reviews that follow are by **Peter Fraser**.

Eusi Kwayana **Gang Gang Twenty-two African Guyanese Proverbs** (In actuality 20, two being Asian) [Birmingham, Robert-Lalljie Publishers, 2008, 36 pp; original edition printed by Red Thread Women's Press, Georgetown]

Robert Lalljie (ed) **A Bouquet of Guyanese Flowers** [Birmingham, Robert-Lalljie Publishers, no date.]

Clem Seecharan **Mother India's Shadow Over El Dorado: Indo-Guyanese Politics and Identity 1890s-1930s** [Kingston & Miami, Ian Randle Publishers, 2011, 524 pp)

These three publications all illuminate Guyana's history in a variety of ways. Kwayana's pamphlet draws on an initiative by the then Minister of Education, Brindley Benn, to get school children to collect sayings and proverbs; the larger collection is still to be published. In the meantime Kwayana's pamphlet, re-issued by Robert Lalljie, joins Joyce Trotman's wonderful revision of James Speirs' 1902 work (**The Proverbs of Guyana Explained** [London, Bogle-L'Ouverture Press, 2006]) in providing some insight into the folk-wisdom of Guyana.

Lalljie's anthology has not the coverage of Guyanese poetry that he had hoped for: some people would have nothing to do with it for reasons the editor sets out in his introduction. Those disinclined to believe him might want to take note of the recent controversies in Guyana over the publication of poetry and search for a letter by David Dabydeen in which he denounces as doggerel the efforts of a number of Guyanese writers. Controversy has always been part of literary history: hitherto in the Caribbean it has tended to revolve around Vidia Naipaul. In any case the anthology has A.J.Seymour, Martin Carter, Stanley Greaves (even Eusi Kwayana who wrote at least one remarkable play) as well as others. It is the editor's selection and a good one, but we could do with a new anthology (including all the poetical factions) since A.J.Seymour's anthology is now over four decades old. It is useful and reminds us that poets are the most puzzling architects of a nation (unless they write doggerel or, like Shakespeare, plays).

Seecharan's most recent work is an exploration of what the French historians call *mentalities*: ways of looking at the world that are neither religious nor ideological but composed of some elements of those as well as folk-wisdom. The book is structured around an exploration of how prominent, middle-class Indo-Guyanese imagined India and their relationship with India, the effect of these imaginings on their approach to politics and the responses of the rest of the Guyanese people. It is a pioneering work in this respect and we now need to explore other versions of these imaginings, especially the nationalist one of El Dorado.

If these works do nothing else they can divert us from reading Guyana newspapers: there is much to be said for seeking a refuge in the past.

BOVINE ECONOMICS

Most of you will have read the old definitions of the economic "isms" (I think I first came across them as a teenager in *The Reader's Digest*):

FEUDALISM – you have no cows.

SOCIALISM – you have two cows, the government makes you form a co-operative and share the milk.

COMMUNISM – you have two cows, the government takes them and sells you the milk.

FASCISM – you have two cows, the government takes them and shoots you.

CAPITALISM – you have two cows so you sell one and buy a bull.

Alumnus Allan Lee (Toronto) sends the following additions, expanding on the different varieties of capitalism, to which I've added the last. *Ian W.*

VENTURE CAPITALISM – You have two cows. You sell three of them to your public listed company, using letters of credit opened by your brother-in-law at the bank, then execute a debit/credit swap with an associated general offer so that you get all four cows back, with tax exemption for five cows. The milk rights for six cows are transferred via an intermediary to a Cayman Island company secretly owned by the majority shareholder who sells the rights to all seven cows back to your listed company. This confuses the auditors who sign off the annual report which says that the company owns eight cows, with an option on one more.

AN AMERICAN CORPORATION – You have two cows. You sell one and force the other to produce the milk of four cows. Later, you hire a consultant to analyse why the cow has died.

A FRENCH CORPORATION – You have two cows. You go on strike, block the roads and cause general mayhem because you want CAP subsidies for three cows.

AN ITALIAN CORPORATION – You have two cows, but you don't know where they are, so you decide to have lunch.

A SWISS CORPORATION – You have 5000 cows. None of them belong to you. You charge the owners for storing them.

A CHINESE CORPORATION – You have two cows. You have 300 people milking them. You claim you have full employment and high bovine productivity. You arrest the newsman who reports the real situation.

AN INDIAN CORPORATION – You have two cows. You worship them.

A BRITISH CORPORATION – You have two cows. Both of them are mad.

AN IRAQI CORPORATION – Everyone thinks you have lots of cows. You tell them you have none. Nobody believes you, so they bomb the crap out of you and invade your country. You still have no cows, but at least you have democracy.

A GREEK CORPORATION – You have two cows borrowed from French and German banks. You eat both of them. The banks call to collect their milk, but you cannot deliver, so you call the IMF. The IMF lends you two cows. You eat both of them. The banks and the IMF call to collect their cows/milk. You're out getting a haircut.

A UK HEDGE FUND – You have no cows. Peering over the hedge you spot a dairy. You buy the dairy for an inflated sum (borrowed from the bank), which allows the previous owners to retire in luxury. You then lumber the dairy with the debt from the loan, open a company in Ireland which charges the dairy royalties for using the trade mark "pasteurised milk" – thereby minimising UK corporation tax – and hire more milkmaids than you need, on zero-hour contracts, thus improving the employment statistics. You are awarded a life peerage.

DIARY DATES

11–13 OCT 25th ANNIVERSARY & ICQC EVENTS – see p.1

SAT 23 NOV AGM & Social, High Commission, 3 pm

SUN 1 DEC BHSA Carol Service, 3pm, Wesley's Chapel, City Road, EC1

SUN 26 JAN ANNUAL DINNER, The Bunga Raya Restaurant, Thornton Heath (details later)

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