



# NEWSLETTER

DEC 2006

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

No. 34



*Season's Greetings*



## SUBSCRIPTIONS REMINDER

Members are reminded that subscriptions (£12; £5 for full-time students) fell due on 1st October last.



*UK taxpayers are kindly requested to pay their subscriptions by Gift Aid as this increases the payment to the Association by just over 28%. The method is simple – contact Ian Wishart (see last page)*

## AGM HIGHLIGHTS

25 persons attended the eighteenth post-inaugural AGM held at the High Commission on 10th November. **Neville Linton** was returned unopposed as President, and existing Vice-Presidents (**John Rafferty, Lloyd Bascom, David Man, Ron Hall, Clive Lloyd, Sonny Ramphal, Frank Williams, Trevor Phillips, Henry Edwards** and **Derek Hugh**) reappointed. **Ivor Ying**, whose work for the Association is well known, was newly appointed a Vice-President. The seven members of the Management Committee, returned unopposed, are: **Claire Carballo, Chris Chunnillall, Mark Dalgety, Peter Fraser, Bruce Nóbrega, Lawrence Stewart** and **Ian Wishart**. At the first meeting of the Committee held on 15th December, Ian and Claire were re-elected Chairman and Secretary, respectively, whilst Peter was elected Treasurer. In addition, **Mark Adamson, Praveen Hanoman** and **Anthony Joseph** were co-opted onto the Committee. Praveen will continue to keep the Association's accounts, and any monies due to the Association should be sent to him. (See last page for Committee contact details.)

## QC TOPS CARIBBEAN AT CSEC ONCE AGAIN

Top places in the Caribbean region at the 2006 CSEC (O-level/GCSE) examinations have once again been secured by QC students. **Shirvanie Persaud** was declared most outstanding student overall, whilst **Valencia Bailey** was the most outstanding in the sciences. Shirvanie obtained 12 grade one and one grade two passes, and Valencia obtained five grade ones in science subjects, four other grade ones and one grade two. (The above information is from the November QCOSA *Newsletter*. However the earlier (August) *Stabroek News* report states that Valencia secured 11 grade ones and one grade 2.)

Top national performers in the Caribbean Advanced Proficiency Examination (A-level) included QC students **Ravina Ramesar, Mekeisha Naughton** and **Cristel Cheong**.

Our congratulations to all these high achievers. It is clear that despite its problems (including a shortage of teachers – see the report on the ICQC meeting, page 3) QC continues to maintain its reputation as a centre of academic excellence.

In an article in the QCOSA *Newsletter*, former Headmaster (and a former Vice-President of this Association) **Clarence Trotz** remarked on the very small numbers of entrants for the arts and humanities in the sixth form. The overwhelming majority of the entrants offer science subjects. This is interesting, because it is the exact opposite to what is happening in this country where students are eschewing the 'harder' (including science) subjects for the various permutations of 'studies' (media etc.). Reportedly, the Caribbean Examination Council are resisting the 'dumbing down' trend allegedly taking place in this country.

#### SALVETE

We welcome as new members: **Ron(ald) C Savory** (QC 44–51), well-known artist resident in St Lucia; **Rod(erick) A Westmaas** (QC 70–4), a founder member of the Florida Association now living in the UK; and **H Fred(erick) Weston** (*Friend*), son of the late master (Freddie aka 'Taffy') after whom Weston House is named (see 'A Pilgrimage to Queen's', p 5). Also Mesdames **Pat(ricia) F Brewster** and **Susan L (Belgrave) Matheson** (widows, respectively, of former Treasurer Ken Brewster and Secretary Jimmy Matheson) who have graciously consented to become Honorary Life Members. **Vivian Lawrence** has converted to life membership, and **J Samantha Griffith** (QC 85–90) has rejoined the Association.

#### VALETE

**Geoff(rey) R Chung** (QC 49–56), *Life Member*, *d.* 23.9.06; **R Oscar Duke** (QC 30s–early 40s), *b.* 25.2.24, *d.* 12.12.06 in Guyana; Dr **Lloyd R M Kerry** (QC 44–52) *d.* 5.6.06 in Canada; **George Persaud** (QC mid 50s–early 60s as pupil, later served as French master), *d.* 31.10.06 in Guyana; **Joseph ('Budsy') Phang** (QC 35–40), *d.* 28.8.06; **J A (Joe) Sanders**, formerly **Singh** (QC 47–54), *d.* 8.9.06 in Canada; **Laurence Taitt** (QC 43–c. 52), former UK champion hurdler who participated in the 1964 Olympics, *d.* 19.10.06.

To the bereaved relatives, the Association extends its sincerest condolences.

The Association also extends its deepest sympathy to the family of the late **Gloria E M Hector** who died on 24.8.06 after a long battle against cancer. Renowned for the standard of her cuisine, Gloria, helped by her family, provided the catering for several Association functions from 1991 onwards. St Mary's Parish Church, Acton, at which her funeral service was held, had probably not seen such a large gathering for many a year. Several Association members were present. Ian Wishart read a short tribute from former High Commissioner and Association President Cecil Pilgrim, whilst Mark Adamson led the QCA group in singing 'He who would valiant be' (hymn number 515 in *Songs of Praise*) at the reception.

#### CONGRATULATIONS / THANKS TO:

Old boy Professor **Jamal Deen** on being elected a Fellow of the Royal Society of Canada (Dr Deen is an internationally recognised researcher in micro-electronic and opto-electronic devices);

**Arif Ali** (see Book Reviews, p. 6), **John V Dodshon** (*Member*), **Roberta Hart** (BHS old girl), **Milton B Jones**, **A A (Al) Karim** (*Member*), **Neville Linton** (*President*), **Leila Persaud** (*Member*), and **Fred Weston** (*Friend member*) for their kind donations to the Association – five by Gift Aid, increasing the amounts donated by a further 28% courtesy of HM Revenue & Customs.

#### QC WINS CARIBBEAN YOUTH SCIENCE FORUM DEBATING COMPETITION

Guyana attended the annual Caribbean Youth Science Forum (CYSF), held in August at the UWI St Augustine Campus in Trinidad, for the first time since its inauguration. The delegates, all QC sixth formers, proved that their skills were not limited to the scientific domain, but also extended to debating.

**Michelle Astwood, Devendra Bhagwandin, Rajendra Ramgobin, Kavindra Singh and Aidan Smith** (see photo) defeated the Trinidadian and Jamaican teams to take first place as proposers of the resolution 'that nuclear energy is the best way to meet the ever-increasing needs of the planet'.

The CYSF is a regional body which every year brings together sixth form science students from the Caribbean for a week of activities including lectures, field trips, projects, debates, sports, social activities and interaction with scientists.



L-R: Devendra, Kavindra, Michelle, Rajendra & Aidan. [Courtesy Stabroek News].

### **QC SCOUT TROOP RE-ESTABLISHED**

Scouting came to Guyana in December 1909, the year after Baden-Powell established the movement in Britain. The QC Troop, the first in South America and the Caribbean, was started by Sgt-Major George T Manley, a permanent staff instructor seconded (from a British regiment) to the BG Militia. Troop 1, as it then was, must have at some stage been disbanded and then reformed, because the QC troop subsequently became Troop 27. Disbanded again in the early 1980s, the troop was re-established in September this year.

Troop leaders are appealing for assistance in procuring equipment. **If scouts of yesteryear (or anyone else) are interested in helping, please contact Ian Wishart.**

### **PROFESSOR NIGEL HARRIS ELECTED CXC CHAIRMAN**

At a special meeting of the Caribbean Examination Council (CXC) held on September 22nd, UWI Vice-Chancellor Professor **Nigel Harris** (QC 1957–64) was elected Chairman of the Council. Formerly Dean and Senior Vice-President for Academic Affairs at Morehouse School of Medicine, Atlanta, Nigel brings a wealth of experience in education to CXC.

Known internationally for his work as a rheumatologist, Nigel's academic achievements and personal qualities have earned him leadership positions in (US) national organisations including the Association of American Medical Colleges and the Association of Academic Health Centers. He has received many honours and awards including the National Medical Association of America's Centennial Award for Contributions to Medicine in 1995. (See also *Newsletter* No. 28, Jan 2004.)

### **ICQC ANNUAL MEETING & REUNION TORONTO, 4-7 AUGUST 2006**

The annual business meeting of the International Committee of QC Alumni Associations (ICQC) was held under the auspices of the Toronto Association on Sunday 6th August. All 'chapters' were represented. The social programme, which had conveniently been planned to coincide with the annual Caribana weekend, consisted of a harbour cruise and dinner-dance on the Friday, Caribana on the Saturday and the 'Last Lap Lime' on the Monday. This last, highly popular annual event is organised by the alumni associations of five Guyana schools: Queen's, Saints', Bishops', St Rose's and St Joseph's. In celebration of 40 years of

Guyana's independence, a special booklet was published which included messages of greeting from the Canadian Prime Minister and the Mayor of Vaughan ('The city above Toronto') in whose municipality the event was held.

#### BUSINESS MEETING (6 AUGUST)

**Chapter Reports.** Most chapters reported a year of vigorous activity. **QCOSA (Guyana)** thanked all chapters for their support, and circulated a draft 'needs list' obtained from the Headmistress. Progress on completion of the stage for the auditorium was slow but steady. The next area for consideration would be for a 'Students' Centre' – a separate building to be used for extra-curricular activities. There was a continuing problem in finding a suitable Games Master. Regarding gifts to the school, it was pointed out that by law these are subject to the approval of the Education Minister. However the Minister had recognised that QCOSA did not require routine approval.

**President's Report.** Outgoing President Alfred Granger (NY) noted that chapters had entered a new phase of constitutionality and over the last year had held three teleconferences. He felt that there had been a 'diminution' in relations between chapters and QCOSA. Other chapters felt that this was overstating the case, the only serious problems being between NY and Guyana. After a frank and wide-ranging discussion (during it was recognised that no problems existed between our own Association and the others), the two delegations agreed to put their misunderstandings behind them.

**The Role of ICQC.** It was reaffirmed that ICQC's role was to assist and promote the school, and not seek direct involvement in matters relating to its governance. There was also the view that, additionally, ICQC should be sensitive to issues relating to the welfare and development of the school, however this did not arouse much support and was put on the back burner.

**The State of Affairs at QC.** The auditorium had some shortcomings and needed to be air-conditioned. There were very serious **staff shortages**: currently there were 27 vacancies particularly in science posts. This led to suggestions concerning subsidising teachers' salaries – the majority view was that this would have complications, but should be further studied – using retired teachers, tapping into donor states'/agencies' aid programmes, and using foreign teachers.

**Administrative Problems.** It was reported that there have been major administrative failings, and a serious discipline problem amongst teachers. Two members of the Board of Governors have been spending a considerable time on site helping with day-to-day problems. However despite those major problems, the academic quality was being maintained, and the school continued to be in the forefront nationally and regionally. [See 'QC Tops Caribbean ...', p. 1.]

**ICQC's Constitution.** Canada proposed a wording amendment designed to overcome Guyana's reluctance to accept the draft constitution. This effectively gave QCOSA a leading role in identifying and targeting the school's needs, due to its physical proximity. The amendment was accepted by the meeting. [QCOSA has since ratified the constitution.]

**Publication Initiative.** The Toronto Chapter is proposing to reissue Norman Cameron's *History of QC*, with an added, updated section, and invited comments. Drafts were circulated to all chapters. [QCA's draft is with the Committee; Ian Wishart has already sent comments to Toronto, and suggested that *Life Member* Dr Laurence Clarke – author of the *QC Book of Records* – be included in the loop.]

**2006–07 Executive / 2007 Meeting.** President *ex officio*: **Lionel Mann** (President of Toronto (host) Association); Executive Secretary: **Gordon Wilson** (NY); Deputy Executive Secretary: **Leyland Muss** (Toronto); Recording Secretary: **Leyland Grant** (Washington); Fundraising Co-ordinator **John La Rose** (Florida). **The 2007 meeting and reunion will be held in Guyana**, date to be announced.

— Neville Linton (President), QCA representative at the meeting

## A PILGRIMAGE TO QUEEN'S

by H Fred Weston (*Friend Member*)

From 1935 to 1941 my father Frederick Thomas Weston was a master at Queen's. He left in 1941 to join the RAF. Sadly, on 31st August 1943 his plane came down at a farm in Wales, killing both him and his pilot. However he left many things behind, including me (born after his death) and several photographs contained in three albums. They were mostly of his time in Guyana, featuring the college, staff, pupils and college activities.

For many years as a teenager, young man, and up to the present I have often looked at them, familiarising myself with names and places. Earlier this year I said to myself, 'If you don't go now you never will'. So I contacted The Travel Shop, and with the assistance of Rob [Guyanese owner Robert Aidat-Sarran] was put in touch with Ian Wishart. I received a very friendly response from Ian who put me in touch with Lloyd Bascom and Karl Brown. I must say I was overwhelmed by their reception, and should like to thank them for the very kind way in which they spoke of my father. Lloyd's voice was overcome with emotion when he spoke of how my father had helped the boys in their athletic endeavours, and Karl was equally warm in his recollections of some of the humorous moments and how well my father got on with the boys.

My wife and I flew into Georgetown on Thursday 26th October, and I was met the following morning by my contact [QCOSA President] Laurie Lewis. I had asked Ian to arrange a visit to Queen's, little suspecting what I was about to experience.

We arrived at Queen's and pulled up alongside the new auditorium. I could see that morning assembly was taking place, so stopped outside. Laurie took my arm and said, 'Come on Fred', and led me inside. There were a number of students standing on the stage. As we walked slowly towards it, the students left the stage to reveal a table and chairs. The emotions that were going through my head were now joined by stage fright. Laurie led us onto the stage where we were introduced to the assembly. I began thinking, 'Please don't ask me to speak.' He did, and somehow I muddled through. Laurie then presented me with a Weston House tie and college tiepin [see photograph below] – Weston House having been named after my father. I feel that he would have been proud to see the students assembled before me, resplendent in their school uniforms – a credit to themselves and the college. I received a very warm welcome from them, and walking off that stage to a standing ovation is a memory that I will cherish forever.

My grateful thanks to Ian and Laurie for making this possible. I hope to return to Guyana for another holiday, but nothing could ever exceed that wonderful day.



Fred receiving tie and tiepin from Laurie Lewis. [Courtesy Dominic Gaskin]

## BOOK REVIEWS

### **GUYANA**

Edited by Arif Ali

[Hansib Publications, 240 pp]

Commissioned by the government of Guyana, this coffee-table book is the latest addition to Hansib Publications' 'Nations' series. It contains over 300 colour photographs, of really first class quality, with well written supporting articles on different aspects of the country by prominent Guyanese.

Arif brought along some copies and introduced the book at the recent AGM, offering to donate £5 to the Association for each copy sold. No fewer than 25 books were sold (averaging one for each person present) – an indication of the book's quality – netting £75 for the Association. Thank you Arif!

The book may be obtained for £25 from Hansib Publications Ltd, PO Box 226, Hertford SG14 3WY; tel 020 8523 0888; email info@hansib-books.com.

### **'A MEMBER OF THE RAF OF INDETERMINATE RACE'**

by Cy Grant

[Woodfield Publishing]

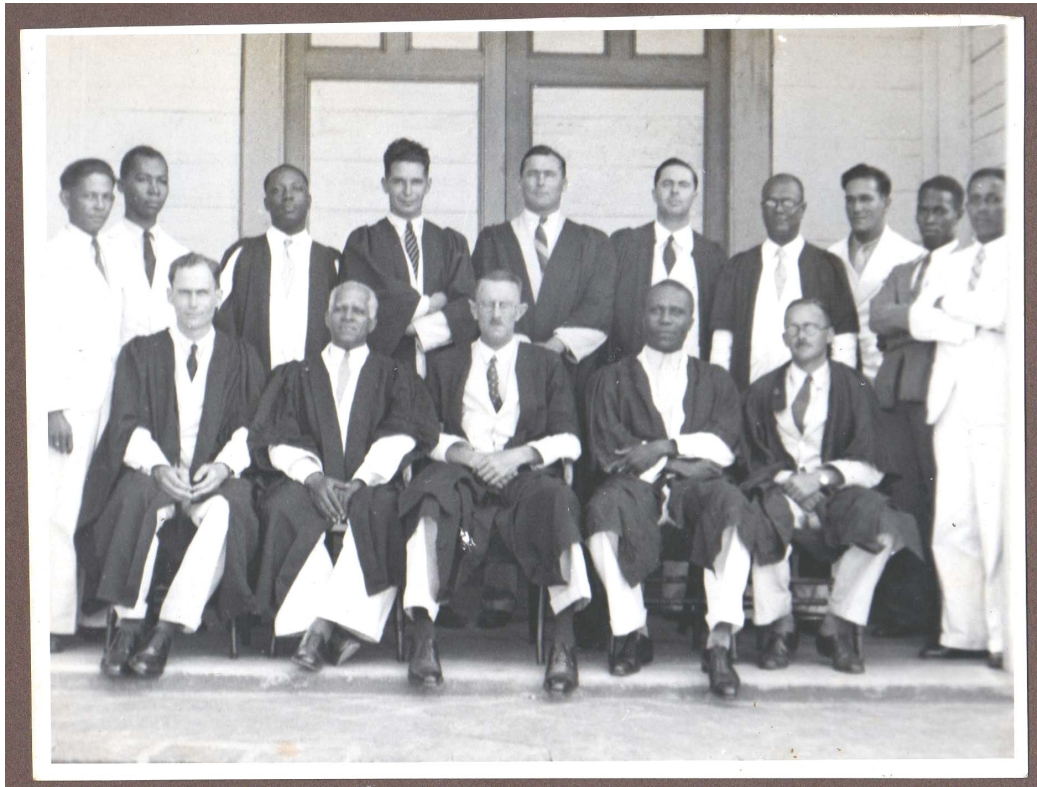
Oldies like the reviewer will remember Cy Grant as an actor and entertainer from the 50s and 60s. What some may be unaware of is that Cy was one of the 'black few' who volunteered for service and qualified as aircrew with the RAF during WW2. Cy travelled up in 1941 on the same boat as Vice-President Ron Hall and Fred Weston Sr [information from Ron Hall – see also 'A Pilgrimage to Queen's', p. 5]. Cy made the mistake of excelling in navigation during his training, and was accordingly commissioned as a navigator in Bomber Command (he wanted to fly Spitfires), where he rose to the rank of Flight Lieutenant. In 1943 Cy's Lancaster bomber was shot down over Holland returning from a night raid on the Ruhr. He duly bailed out, but was captured and sent to a prisoner of war camp in eastern Germany (now part of Poland). The core of the book is a highly readable narrative of life in the camp, the eventual forced march away from the advancing Russians, the exhilaration of liberation (by the Russians) and the anti-climactic wait for repatriation. Astoundingly, the German camp commandant had been to British Guiana pre-war, and whenever he chanced to meet Cy during his rounds, would pay him the compliment of a salute! The title of the book derives from the caption to a photograph of Cy that appeared in a Nazi newspaper, presumably intended to demonstrate the degeneracy of the British, reduced to commissioning members of an inferior race in the elite RAF. (The commandant gave him a cutting from the paper, which Cy still has.)

After the war, Cy qualified as a barrister at Middle Temple but was unable to find an opening in chambers – in marked contrast to how he had been welcomed when the chips were down. Fortunately, Cy came from a traditional family in which the children were encouraged to learn a musical instrument and, coupled with his good looks, he was able to find employment in show business – the thespian qualities of barristers has long been remarked upon.

A recommended read, the book is obtainable from, among other outlets, New Beacon Books Ltd, 76 Stroud Green Road, London N4 3EN, tel 020 7272 4889, price £9.95 + p & p.



### QC Staff 1935 – 1937



Standing L-R: J N Chung, A P Thorne, N E Cameron, W R Clark, F T Weston, C H Coats, H V Taitt, S Fernandes,  
C E Barker, C I Drayton.  
Sitting L-R: G P Dartford, E O Pilgrim (Deputy Principal), H Nobbs (Principal), H A M Beckles, J H Bevis.

*[Courtesy H F Weston]*

### 1937 Senior Athletics Champion



Lloyd 'Sparks' Bascom *[Courtesy H F Weston]*

## ENDPIECE

### LONDON REMEMBERED

Contributed by Richard L King (QC mid 40s–early 50s) who lives in Canada.

In 1962 I left Guyana in a hurry – something about a girlfriend in London who had put off plans to come home because of the troubles. So picture me, late of the BG Mutual as their sales manager, driving an Austin van in London, selling soft drinks. A lost soul.

I am driving my van in my usual aggressive manner when, screaming into the Earl's Court roundabout, out of the corner of my eye I saw this huge lorry trying to race me for right of way. At the last moment both of us realised that there were two crazy drivers behind the wheels, and we slammed on the brakes. I slid across the seat, wound down the window, and politely screamed, 'You stupid rass, I had the right of way'. The lorry driver was big and black and, perhaps mistaking me for a native, opened his eyes wide and said with evident surprise, 'Hey man, where you from?' in a Jamaican accent. By this time horns were blowing, and there were some furious drivers behind us.

'Georgetown', says I, 'and you?'

'Kingston, man, how long you been up?'

'Six months. Boy this place cold.'

I swear the conversation went on for a minute or two, and did not end until we heard car and truck doors slamming behind us, and knew we were in trouble. I honestly think both us lonely souls had lumps in our throats as we drove off.

That incident has never failed to bring back memories of three tough, but memorable, years in London.

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