



NEWSLETTER

DEC 2005

The Queen's College of Guyana Association (UK)

(Registered Charity No. 801250)

No. 32

SUBSCRIPTIONS REMINDER

Members are reminded that subscriptions (£12) fell due on 1st October.

UK taxpayers are kindly requested to pay their subs by Gift Aid as this increases the value to the Association by just over 28%. The method is simple – contact Ian Wishart (see p. 8).

POLITICALLY CORRECT SEASON'S GREETINGS TO ALL OUR READERS

Being cognizant of the difficulties in the modern world of crafting statements without causing offence, the Committee consulted one of m'learned friends, who drafted the following statement of greetings:

Please accept with no obligation, implied or implicit, our best wishes for an environmentally conscious, socially responsible, low stress, non-fattening, non-addictive, gender-neutral celebration of the winter solstice holiday, practised within the most enjoyable traditions of the religious persuasion or secular practices of your choice, with respect for the religious/secular persuasions and/or traditions of others, or their choice not to practise religious or secular traditions at all. We also wish you a fiscally successful, personally fulfilling, and medically uncomplicated recognition of the onset of the generally accepted calendar year 2006, but not without due respect for the calendars of choice of other cultures, and without regard to the race, colour, creed, age, sex, physical ability, religious faith, or sexual preference of the wishee.

By accepting this greeting, you are accepting these terms:

This greeting is subject to clarification or withdrawal. It is freely transferable provided there is no alteration to the original greeting, in which case the law of copyright may be invoked. It implies no promise by the wisher to actually implement any of the wishes for her/himself or others, is void where taxed or prohibited by law, and is revocable at the sole discretion of the wisher. This wish is warranted to perform as expected within the usual application of good tidings for a period of one year or until the issuance of a subsequent holiday greeting, whichever comes first, and such warranty is limited to replacement of this wish or issuance of a new wish at the sole discretion of the wisher.

(For this, thanks go to Bobby Hunter (son and grandson of old boys), Jamaica.)

Nevertheless...

  *Happy Christmas and a Prosperous New Year*  

SHORT REPORT ON THE RECENT AGM

Turnout at the AGM held on Friday 11th November was somewhat disappointing, with only 21 members and two guests. **Neville Linton** was returned unopposed as President, and all Vice-Presidents re-appointed: **John Rafferty** (*Immediate Past President*), **Lloyd Bascom**, Brigadier **David Man**, Dr **Ronald F Hall**, **Clive Lloyd**, Sir **Shridath Ramphal**, Dr **Frank Williams**, **Trevor Phillips**, **Henry Edwards** and **Derek Hugh**. The foregoing are all non-executives.

The Management Committee – the executive – (also returned unopposed) are: **Mark Adamson, Claire Carballo, Mark Dalgety, Praveen Hanoman, Anthony Joseph, Leila Persaud** and **Ian Wishart**. A ‘Friend’ member of the Association, Claire is presently Secretary of the BHS Alumni Association (UK/Europe); her late father Cecil Mongul and her uncle Frank were/are old boys. In keeping with the constitution, the Chairman, Secretary and Treasurer will be elected at the first meeting of the new committee.

Highlights of Chairman’s and Treasurer’s Reports.— Current paid-up membership is 119, including 82 Life Members. Summer Reunion attendance, and therefore profit (£970), was down, probably due to the terrorist attacks on London Transport the previous week. A successful new co-operative venture with Bishops’, the ‘Carnival Fête’ –the brainchild of Mark Dalgety and Anthony Joseph – was held at the Lola Jones Hall, Tooting Leisure Centre, on the Sunday of the Notting Hill Carnival. There was a good turnout, and the Association’s share of the profit was £1130. Total donations to the school and its pupils was £6000 (as reported in the May *Newsletter*, No 31). Funds in the Association’s bank accounts amount to £23,032.

ICQC: REPORT ON THE 2005 MEETING

The 2005 meeting of the International Committee of the QC Alumni Associations (ICQC) was held in New York on Saturday 3rd September. The date was chosen to fall on the US Labor Day weekend, and a full programme of events was arranged by the organisers. Unfortunately no one from this Association was able to attend, however a report was submitted. NY Association Immediate Past President **Gordon Wilson** writes:

On behalf of the New York Chapter, I wish to thank all who attended and participated in the 2005 ICQC Business Meeting and Reunion, concluded in New York just about a week ago. To all intents and purposes, the meeting was a success, despite the very few logistical setbacks encountered. New York wishes to extend sincere apologies to anyone who experienced any discomfort as a result of those setbacks and wishes to assure that those matters have been reviewed with and by the relevant personnel. Generally, we thank everyone for their patience and understanding, but we are also confident that the resultant positives far outweighed the negatives.

The meeting achieved one of its main objectives, that is, the effecting of a brand new ICQC Constitution. This is indeed a milestone in the history of ICQC and gives new meaning and structure to that body as it seeks to harness all alumni skills and resources to benefit our alma mater. Sincere praise and thanks must again go to **Lloyd Houston** of the Florida Chapter, for the time and energy he so freely devoted to this matter. Please note that Guyana elected not to be a part of ICQC's management at this time, as its ratification of the Constitution will depend on the discussions/decisions of its proposed amendments by the ICQC management committee. The committee, unanimously elected, is as follows:

President (Host Chapter): **Alfred Granger**

Executive Secretary: **Gordon L. Wilson** (New York)

Deputy Executive Secretary: **Leyland Muss** (Canada) [Toronto]

Recording Secretary: **Leyland Grant** (Washington, DC)

Fund Raising Coordinator: **John LaRose** (Florida)

Chapters’ Delegates:* **Neville Linton** and **Peter Fraser** (United Kingdom)

Lloyd Houston and **Desmond Lee Own** (Florida)

Leyland Grant and **Keith Hendy** (Washington, DC)

Eden Gajraj and **Gerald Alleyne** (Toronto)

Alfred Granger and **Louis Kilkenny** (New York)

* Chosen by the respective Associations.

NEWS FROM QUEEN’S

New Principal Appointed

Ms **Friedel Isaacs** was recently appointed Principal of Queen’s College. She has had 24 years of experience as a Head Teacher at a number of primary schools and subsequently at North Georgetown Secondary.

Physics Lab Update

As reported in the last *Newsletter*, a donation of £4000 was made towards the purchase of physics lab equipment for the school. This was supplemented by £2300 from the New York Association. The bulk of the equipment has arrived at the school and is in use, and the rest is due to be air-freighted late November.

A donation of £5000 had been made to QCOSA in the 2003–04 year, only a small proportion of which had initially been spent on printers for the school. The remainder was recently spent on helping to fund the first phase of the ‘Physics Laboratory Rehabilitation Project’, a QCOSA initiative headed by **Clarence Trotz***. The phase 1 items (lecture bench, platforms, graph boards, poster boards) were handed over to the acting Headmistress, **Gem Rohlehr** at a ceremony in the lab on 3rd June (see photograph below).

In her report on the ceremony, QCOSA Secretary **Sharon Singh-Kreuter** wrote: “On behalf of the students, Prefect **Kurt Da Silva**, in brief but well-chosen words, thanked the overseas chapters for their material contributions to the school, and the local chapter for acting as liaison to the overseas members and channelling assistance to the students. He promised that they did indeed value the new furnishings which would enhance their studies, and that they would care the equipment. He particularly requested that the local chapter convey their gratitude to the London chapter for the items and also to the New York Chapter for their support in the next phase, which will comprise a large and varied quantity of equipment for the labs.”



Physics Lab Rehabilitation ceremony: **Clarence Trotz** shakes hands with **Gem Rohlehr**. In the background between them is **Sharon Singh-Kreuter**. To the right of Gem, in the dark shirt, is school administrator (old boy) **Jim Holder**.

E O Pilgrim Centenary

April 2005 was the 100th anniversary of former Deputy Principal **E O ‘Bogus’ Pilgrim** joining the staff. Old boy Dr **Vibert Cambridge** (Associate Professor of Telecommunications and Chair of the Department of African American Studies at Ohio University) wrote an article about the Pilgrim family in the November 13th issue of *Sunday*

* QCOSA committee member, former QC Principal, and a former Vice-President of this Association.

Stabroek (available on the internet: http://www.stabroeknews.com/index.pl/article_sunday_features?id=35976009).

SALVETE

No new members, but *Friend Member Malcolm Gibbs* has transferred to *Life Membership*.

VALETE

Ian ‘Juggie’ Walcott (late 60s–early 70s), played cricket for the school, son of Sir Clyde, *d.* Sept 05 in Barbados; Dr **J K Makepeace Richmond** (QC c. 1930–38), former President of the Guyana Dental Association, *d.* 23.9.05 in his 87th year, in Guyana; **Allan Winter** (QC 1940s), *d.* 3.11.05 in St Lucia.

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

OBITUARY

PRYOR RONALD MURPHY JONAS

Pryor Jonas was born of humble parentage in Georgetown on 21 June 1929, but spent his childhood in the Corentyne. The family then moved back to Georgetown after his father, a policeman, was transferred there. He attended Freeburg Scots School in Wortmanville, where he won a Government County Scholarship (he was placed second in the Colony) which took him to Queen’s College in September 1940.

By the time Pryor turned 16, in 1945, he had obtained his School Certificate (the forerunner of ‘O’ levels and the present GCSE) and had matriculated. In those days matriculation – the qualification to enter a British university in the intermediate year – could be gained by securing seven ‘credits’ in the exam. Two years later, in 1947, he passed the London University Higher Certificate examination with exemption from the inter-Arts examination of that university. He repeated the London Higher Examination in 1948 in a second attempt at the Guiana Scholarship, but his performance could not surpass that of Jocelyn D’Oliviera of St Stanislaus College the winner in that year (Jocelyn was later to teach at Queen’s). His ability, however, had to be somewhat better than just ordinary, since he was also competing with the likes of Martin Carter, Fred Wills (1947 Guiana Scholar) and George Narayan, all now deceased, as well as with intellectual giants like Rashleigh Jackson, Brynmor Pollard and Sonny Ramphal, perhaps the best known of his contemporaries who are still alive.

What was remarkable about Pryor, however, is that in spite of the intellectual challenge which he faced in offering Latin, French and Pure Mathematics at this level, he still found time and had the energy to pursue sport in no ordinary way, and to play a full part in other departments of life at Queen’s. He became Pilgrim House Captain in 1947, excelling at sport, especially at cricket which was perhaps his first love. It is believed he adopted (by deed poll) the name ‘Pryor’ (perhaps suggested to him by admirers) after his near namesake Prior Jones, the Trinidad and West Indies fast bowler. The fact that Jones was fast right arm, and Jonas slow left arm did not matter. Pryor is believed to have been the first schoolboy to take 100 wickets in a season in the Wight Cup competition. He also played football for the school’s 1st XI. His contribution to the sporting life of the school was fully recognised in 1947 when he was awarded colours for cricket and football, the only recipient of double colours in that particular year.

On leaving school Pryor trained and qualified as a Land Surveyor. He, however, continued to keep his eye on matters academic, and abandoned Land Surveying after a few years to pursue an external London University degree course, and subsequently, in 1971, a degree in mathematics at UWI’s Cave Hill campus, Barbados.

Pryor had joined the staff at Queen’s as an assistant master in the late 1950s, and his mathematics degree took him back to his alma mater in 1971 as a graduate master. During his stints at Queen’s he again identified himself with sporting and other extra-curricular activities. He was Games Master in 1965 and 1966, running a rigorous programme in both cricket and football, as well as in other forms of sport. He also supervised the activities of the Christian Fellowship Society for four years in the sixties and early seventies.

A practising Christian, Pryor invariably showed his concern for the human being, whether young or old. He would offer and deliver free academic help to students who needed it, but who could not afford to pay, and would also give material help to the financially weak, wherever this help was pressing or severe. The respect he earned in his lifetime from students as well as the general public was in large measure due to this humanitarian spirit of his, his

straightforwardness, his integrity, and his abiding belief in justice and fair play in the classroom, in the office and on the playing field.

In 1974 Pryor was seconded to the Office of the Prime Minister as his Special Assistant, and subsequently appointed Principal Assistant Secretary. In this role he had responsibilities in the areas of Education, Administration and Sport. He later returned to teaching and promoting the cause of sport in various other schools. He also wrote newspaper articles and gave talks on radio on sport, particularly cricket. His last series of broadcasts on sport was “Brother J on Sport”, which lasted well into 2003 before ill health intervened. After he could no longer play cricket or football he took up umpiring and refereeing. He methodically compiled statistics on West Indian cricket, and was once president of the umpires’ association.

Pryor retired from active duty in 2003 after being involved in a serious vehicular accident outside his home. This accident left him somewhat shaken. His general health thereafter deteriorated and after being seriously ill earlier this year, he died peacefully, if suddenly, in the morning of Sunday 8 May 2005.

Pryor is survived by his wife Joyce and (adult) children Marion, Timothy and Martin.

(The above is based mainly on the eulogy delivered at Pryor’s funeral by Clarence Trotz.)

A CORRECTION

In his tribute to the late Ken Brewster in the last issue of the *Newsletter*, Mark Adamson inadvertently claimed to have known Ken longer than anyone else in the Association. Mark wishes to point out that that honour actually goes to *Life Member* Michael Isaacs, who was at primary school with Ken before they both went to Queen’s in the same year.

WALTER RODNEY AT QUEEN’S COLLEGE

by

Robert Moore

(This piece by Bobby Moore was written as a contribution to the series of events held in Guyana on 18–14 June to commemorate the 25th anniversary of Walter Rodney’s assassination. Slightly abridged, it is reproduced with the author’s kind permission. A monument was unveiled and a memorial established in Hadfield Street to honour the late WPA leader, and on 13th June, the actual anniversary of Walter’s death, President Jagdeo announced that the National Archives would be named after him. Prominent in the organising committee was Dr Alissa Trotz, QC 1978–85, first female Head of School, currently an assistant professor at the University of Toronto.)

I was told it was an exceptionally bright group, and I looked forward to meeting them. At 15, these boys had just entered what was termed, with a pronounced British touch, the “upper fourth classical”. The year was 1957. I had been at Queen’s College just two years, brimming with missionary zeal acquired at the University College of the West Indies, to awaken young minds to the West Indian heritage.

The history syllabus for that form prescribed three terms of British imperial history. Not my cup of tea at all. With all the talk of self-government and eventual independence in the air it seemed preposterous. Preposterous that these bright young minds would still have to be taught how the British acquired the empire on which the sun was obviously setting. So I decided to be audacious and approach the Principal with an alternative plan. I was treading on tricky ground, I knew, but it was worth the try.

Mr. Sanger-Davies was most receptive. Yes, I could do two terms of West Indian history – provided in the last term I doffed my cap to imperial history with a cursory look at one of its themes. So to the upper fourth classical I went with the good news. And the boys responded with predictable enthusiasm. I told them that we would be looking at two systems of domination: slavery and indenture in the British West Indies. And by way of comparison we would glance at apartheid in South Africa as a modern derivative of those two earlier forms of racial subjugation.

I did notice one boy sitting near the back of the class, with strong eyes, a questioning face and a fine athletic figure. He was clearly assessing me to see if I had anything of value to offer. For the first three weeks he said almost nothing. But I was to hear a great deal from him later on. That was Walter Rodney. As I launched into describing the classic features of the slave system, the class began to pepper me with questions, revealing minds that were both keen and quick. I knew I was in for an exciting ride.

That impression was confirmed when I set about marking the first set of essays I had assigned them. Practically all their efforts were good, and an impressive number of them were a delight to read. Walter's contribution immediately established his credentials: it was lucid, beautifully structured, sparkling and succinct. Subsequent essays also demonstrated his knack of relating the past to the present, a feature which was to become his hallmark as a historian and one of the reasons his writings appeal to such a wide variety of people. What was equally gratifying, he and a number of his classmates often used the Guyanese history resources of the Georgetown Public Library when preparing their assignments.

As the course proceeded, I made references to apartheid in South Africa and lent the class *Naught for Your Comfort*, a book written by Trevor Huddleston, an Anglican priest who had been expelled from South Africa in 1956. He had blown the whistle on apartheid, exposing its brutalities and its systematic denial of human rights to black South Africans. Unbidden, Walter did a review of the book and asked me to read it. The writing was precocious and pointedly promising. Two things stood out in that review: "the African condition" concerned Walter deeply; and his style gave a foretaste of that incisive irony which was later to become a favourite weapon in his rhetorical armoury. By the end of the first term, Walter was a member of a group from the class holding lively discussions on slavery, indenture, apartheid and related issues in a mauby shop at the corner of Camp and Middle Streets!

Some of my colleagues on the staff, intrigued by the extraordinary dynamism of these fourth-formers, began providing them with clippings on apartheid from British newspapers, and alerting them to BBC programmes focused on it. Dr. Elsa Goveia, the renowned West Indian historian at Mona, showed her delight in the whole venture by sending us papers on slavery and indenture authored by herself and her colleagues.

Not surprisingly, the boys were generating a momentum of their own. That came to fruition towards the end of the school year when, with Walter as editor, they ambitiously produced a collection of essays on topics of West Indian and Guyanese history. With a refreshing touch of professionalism and some financial help from parents, they commissioned the Chronicle Printing Company to bind two typed copies of their work between cloth covers. The Principal was delighted enough with the production to show his copy to the then Minister of Education whose admiration of the contents was matched only to his incredulity about the age of its authors.

They were a remarkably articulate lot, this upper fourth classical contingent, and I realised that such articulacy must be directed to good purpose. Accordingly, with the agreement of my colleagues in the history department, one period every two weeks was devoted to the arts of public speaking and debating. The boys welcomed this departure from the norm, eager to add some formal training to their facility with words. As for Walter, whether with straight presentations or in the cut and thrust of debate, this was his metier and he flourished in it. In time he became a luminary of the Queen's College Debating Society. This met every Friday night in term time when debates with teams from other schools would be the only business on the agenda.

By the time he had reached the VIth Form, Walter's reputation as a stellar performer had reached far and wide. Audiences gathered with high expectations when the word got around that he was debating. He was as comfortable with them as they were with him. With his accustomed clarity and freshness of approach went his talent for couching complicated ideas in clear, lively language. He deployed a light-fingered approach to tough intellectual themes and his wit was ever ready to keep his listeners fully engaged. Also, he had the enviable knack of thinking brilliantly on his feet. Which meant that the surprise tactics of an opposing team could not stump him. On top of all that he was a gracious debater much liked by those who found themselves opposing him. It goes without saying that the Queen's College team he led won, in 1959, the Patrick Dargan Shield, Guyana's highest debating trophy.

In 1960 Walter won the expected open scholarship and entered the University College of the West Indies. His reputation both as an outstanding scholar and a superb debater had preceded him, and his four years at Mona proved that the reputation was handsomely justified.

At school, Walter was popular with his peers and very much liked as a prefect. Being a high achiever never went to his head. He loved a good lime, was at home in a good party, and his wit was always ready to keep the fun flowing. He enjoyed life at Queen's, and like most of his contemporaries, was adept at caricaturing and mimicking the oddities, idiosyncrasies and eccentric mannerisms of his teachers. Slim and fit, Walter was active on the sports-field where he was an above-average athlete and high-jump champion. *Mens sana in corpore sano.*

Walter's time at Queen's prefigured much of what he later became: a world – renowned scholar and a charismatic intellectual with a profoundly common touch. Whether he was lecturing on the African past or the Caribbean present he remains for me one the three most memorable speakers I have ever heard.

(Walter Rodney attended Queen's College from 1953 to 1960.)

CONGRATULATIONS / THANKS TO:

Playwright and *Life Member* **Michael J Abbensetts** (QC 1952–56) on his recent marriage – see Mark Adamson's article below;

Dr **Charles E Denbow** (QC 1955–64), Professor of Medicine at UWI Mona and Consultant Cardiologist, on the publication of his book *The Clinician's Guide to the Cardiovascular Examination* (see photograph p. 8);

Brynmor T I Pollard, SC, (QC 1940s) on being appointed judge *ad litem* (i.e. for a particular case) to the international tribunal established to try persons accused of war crimes in the former Yugoslavia;

Dr **Clem Seecharan** (QC 1965–7), professor of Caribbean History and Head of Caribbean Studies at London Metropolitan University, on being awarded the 2005 Elsa Goveia Prize for Caribbean History;

Miles Stoby (QC c. mid–late 50s) on his appointment as CARICOM's representative to the UN;

Dr **Albert Fortune** and **A A (Al) Karim** (*Member*) for their kind donations to the Association.

MICHAEL MARRIES AGAIN

Congratulations to *Life Member* **Michael Abbensetts** (a Weston House old boy) and his new bride **Elizabeth (Liz) Miller** who were married at Southwark Registry Office, London, on Saturday 22nd October last. It's a case of second time round for Michael and also for Liz who has two grown up children from her first marriage. Michael's first wife sadly died some years ago. The wedding ceremony was followed by a champagne reception for family and close friends at the nearby home of the bride's sister. The main reception took place that evening at a fashionable restaurant, with more champagne, a delicious buffet and dancing afterwards.

We wish the happy couple all the best in their future life together.

Contributed by Mark Adamson

WEAPONS OF MATH INSTRUCTION

At New York's Kennedy Airport today, an individual later discovered to be a school teacher was arrested trying to board a flight while in possession of a protractor, a T-square, a slide-rule and a calculator.

At a morning press conference, Attorney General John Ashcroft said he believes the man is a member of the notorious Al-Gebra movement. The man is being charged by the FBI with carrying weapons of math instruction.

"Al-Gebra is a fearsome cult," Ashcroft said. "They desire average solutions by means and extremes, and sometimes go off on tangents in a search for absolute value. They use secret code names like x and y and refer to themselves as unknowns, but we have determined they belong to a common denominator of the axis of prime-aval with co-ordinates in every country. As the Greek philanderer Isosceles used to say, there are three sides to every triangle", Ashcroft declared.

When asked to comment on the arrest, President Bush said: "If God had wanted us to have better weapons of math instruction, He would have given us more fingers and toes. I am gratified that our government has given us a sine that it is intent on protracting us from these math dogs who are willing to dis-integrate us with calculus disregard. Murky statisticians love to inflict plane on every sphere of influence. Under the circumferences, we must differentiate their root, make our point, and draw the line."

President Bush warned: "These weapons of math instruction have the potential to decimal everything in their math on a scalene never before seen unless we become exponents of a Higher Power and begin to factor-in random facts of vertex."

Attorney General Ashcroft added: "As our Great Leader would say, 'read my ellipse'. Here is one principle he is uncertainty of: though they continue to multiply, their days are numbered as the hypotenuse tightens around their necks."

(Our thanks to old boy Brian Smith, Canada, for finding this gem.)

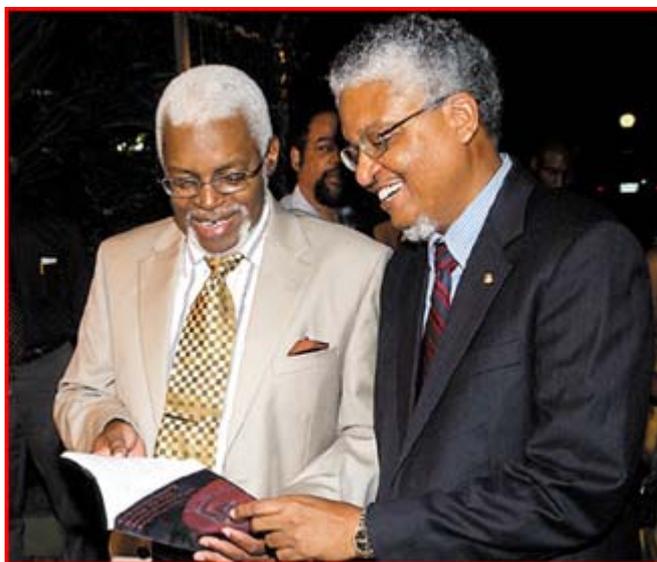
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QC WEBSITES

www.queenscollege.org (Board of Gov.); www.qcosa.org. (Guyana);
www.qcalumnifl.org (Florida); www.qcguyana.org (New York);
<http://www.geocities.com/qcmagazine/index.html>.

VISIT: DALGETY'S TEAS & HERBS www.dalgety.net



Old boys Professor **Charles Denbow** (left) and UWI Vice-Chancellor Professor **Nigel Harris** (QC 1957–64) peruse a copy of Charles's book at the book launch at which old boy Dr **Orrin Barrow** (QC 1947–57) acted as master of ceremonies.