



NEWSLETTER

DEC 2007

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

No. 36



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)

IT'S 20 YEARS SINCE WE FIRST MET

Whilst on a visit to the UK in 1987, QC Old Students' Association President **Aubrey Bishop** spoke to **Henry Edwards** and Guyana's High Commissioner **Cecil Pilgrim** about the problems then afflicting the school. Contact was made with **John Rafferty** who convened a meeting of former pupils at the High Commission on 11th December. Present were: Mark Adamson, (the late) Cresswell Barker, Lloyd Bascom, Henry Edwards, Ronald Hall, Neville Linton, Cecil Pilgrim, John Rafferty, Lloyd Roberts, Blaise Westmaas, Ian Wishart, Michael Wishart and Ivor Ying. A steering committee was formed which called a general meeting on 12th February 1988 at which, among other things, the name of the Association was agreed. The rest, as they say, is history.

AGM HIGHLIGHTS

27 persons, including four guests, attended the nineteenth post-inaugural AGM held at the High Commission on 9th November. A special welcome was given to 'friend' member **Fred Weston**, son of the master after whom Weston House is named. **Neville Linton** was returned unopposed as President, and existing Vice-Presidents **John Rafferty**, **Lloyd Bascom**, **David Man**, **Ronald Hall**, **Clive Lloyd**, **Sir Shridath ('Sonny') Ramphal**, **Trevor Phillips**, **Henry Edwards**, **Derek Hugh** and **Ivor Ying** reappointed. The seven members of the Management Committee, all returned unopposed, are: **Claire Carballo**, **Chris Chunnillall**, **Peter Fraser**, **Praveen Hanoman**, **Anthony Joseph**, **Bruce Nóbrega** and **Rod Westmaas**. At the first Committee meeting on 11th December, Peter, Claire and Praveen were respectively elected as Chairman, Secretary and Treasurer, whilst **Mark Adamson**, **Mark Dalgety** and **Ian Wishart** were co-opted. Following the meeting, **Jillian Griffith** (QC 79-86) was also co-opted.

(See last page for Committee contact details.)

VALETE

Dennis Douglas (QC 1930s), died in Canada in his 86th year; **L Ernest Dow** (QC 38–41), *Member*, master 42–8, *d.* early Nov. 07 in The Bahamas; **J A D (Tony) Downes** (QC 47–58), *d.* early Nov. 07 in Guyana; **T D H (Tommy) Eytle** (QC late 30s–early 40s), *b.* 16.7.26, *d.* 19.6.07 (see obituary below); **E A (Ted) Hubbard** (QC 49–mid 50s), died in Guyana; **Ronald L Langevine** (QC 50–7), *b.* 8.5.39, *d.* 27.8.07 in New Jersey; **Errol Lee** (QC 49–mid 50s) died in Guyana; **Horace Mitchell**, died in The Bahamas; **Robin Douglas Owen** (son of the Colonial Secretary, briefly at QC late 30s/early 40s), former member, *b.* 1930, *d.* 8.4.07; **Lala L Rai** (QC 40–48), taught maths in the 60s, *d.* 13.7.07 in New York; **Angus P B Richmond** (QC 36–44), master late 1940s, former member, *b.* 1925, *d.* 8.8.07, his funeral on 22nd August was attended by Committee members Mark Adamson and Ian Wishart; **Dennis Yeung** (QC 69–72, Guyana Scholar), died in Guyana; **Clement P ('Balance') Yhap**, joined QC Staff from St Stanislaus Staff in 1951, headmaster 69–71, *d.* 14.12.07 in Hamilton, Nova Scotia.

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

OBITUARY

TOMMY EYTLE

Tommy Eytle was a musician and actor who achieved national prominence on UK television in the 1990s playing Jules Tavernier in the BBC soap *EastEnders*. He came from a generation of gifted Guyanese artistes which included actors Norman Beaton (old boy), Carmen Munroe and Ram John Holder, as well as painter Aubrey Williams, writer Wilson Harris (old boy) and musicians Mike McKenzie, Frank Holder and Iggy Quail.

Tommy was born in Georgetown, the youngest of four boys, all of whom attended QC. His brother Ernest, a barrister and journalist, established the Eytle name in England in the war years as a broadcaster noted for his cricket commentaries. Another brother Leslie was a Lewisham borough councillor and former mayor.

Tommy studied the violin as a child, but became a professional singer and guitarist after his move to London in 1951. He worked as a surveyor and draughtsman, but was soon playing music with his brother Julian, a double bassist, becoming involved in the nightclub scene. In 1956 he toured New Zealand with Jamaican saxophonist Bertie King's Sepia Aces.

The growth of African and Caribbean independence movements caught the imagination of BBC producers and provoked demands for black-themed dramas in which Tommy did radio work as both actor and instrumentalist. The various groups in which he played included the West Indian Students' Union band then led by the late Ivan Chin (a former 'friend' member of this Association), and Tommy was a frequent visitor to the West Indian Students' Centre in Earl's Court (now the offices of the Dominican and St Lucian High Commissions). Carousing with friends Beaton and Holder, Tommy became a regular at (Trinidadian) Russ Henderson's afternoon sessions at the Coleherne in Old Brompton Road.

Although he continued to lead a trio and travel to the continent for cabaret, acting increasingly dominated Tommy's career. He made his stage debut in 1959 before joining Edric and Pearl Connor in the Negro Theatre Workshop; many roles on the London stage followed. Television provided parts in many shows culminating with *EastEnders*, but illness was to eventually curtail his appearances, although he was never written out of the series.

He is survived by his wife Avis.

[The above is condensed from *The Guardian* obituary, 27.7.07.]

QC STUDENT TOPS REGION AT CSEC FOR SECOND CONSECUTIVE YEAR QC RECEIVES REGIONAL SCHOOL OF THE YEAR AWARD

For the second year running, a QC student has topped the Caribbean region in the CSEC examinations (equivalent to GCSE/'O'-level). **Wainella Isaacs** achieved this distinction by gaining 13 grade 1 and one grade 2 passes. She received her award in St Lucia on 6th December. Another QC student, **Arvindu Sukhram**, received an award for an outstanding performance in business education with 11 grade 1 passes, whilst Queen's received the School of the Year award. So despite the school's problems, the students continue to shine (see President's report on the recent ICQC Business Meeting, this page). A congratulatory email has been sent to the school.

CANCELLATION OF ANNUAL DINNER EXACERBATES FUNDING SHORTFALL

Following falling profits from the last three Summer Reunions and last year's Chinese Dinner, together with the loss made on the 2006 Dinner-Dance held jointly with Bishops' High School Association (BHSA), the cancellation of this year's Dinner will have a significant impact on the Association's funds. The impact is somewhat mitigated by the moderate profit from the joint August Carnival Fête, which would have been greater had members sold more tickets (BHSA sold more than 2½ times as many tickets as ourselves, and under the terms of our agreement took 60% of the profits).

It is hoped to hold the dinner on 22nd February, the day before Guyana's Republic Day, provided the New Loon Fung restaurant, still closed for refurbishment, re-opens in time.

CONGRATULATIONS/THANKS

Belatedly to **Philip Allsopp** (former member) and his wife **O'Donna** who celebrated their golden wedding in February;

To **Avis Belizaire** (Jackie Wishart's sister), **Inge Veacock**, and members **John Dodshon** and **Fred Weston** for their donations to the Association (Fred's is earmarked for the Scout Troop of which his father was a former Scoutmaster and Colony Commissioner for Scouts).

PRESIDENT'S REPORT ON ICQC MEETING

President Neville Linton represented our Association at the Annual Business Meeting of the International Committee of QC Alumni Associations (ICQC) and associated events held in Georgetown on 25th–30th September. The following is a 'bullet point' summary of his report, the full version of which was emailed to members and presented at the AGM.

- The small Florida Association has increased its membership by a quarter.
- Washington announced it has ca. US\$30,000 available for disbursement.
- Teaching at QC is unsatisfactory and most students take extra private lessons out of school hours; accordingly extracurricular activities, including sport, are neglected.
- Despite the apparent poor teaching, QC remains in the top league nationally and regionally. The explanation is that the top schools get the best students who, in Guyana's case also take intensive private tuition. However they do not obtain a rounded education (*mens sana in corpore sano*) as is true of the other top schools in the region.
- Today's poorly paid teachers are unwilling to give time to extra-curricular activities, but there is also an absence of a sense of belonging to a special place. There are presently no teachers at the school who went there, and so none are in a position to pass on a tradition, the unique school spirit.
- Staff indiscipline is a problem, and there is a worry that this is spreading to the students.

- At a meeting with the Board of Governors, ICQC stressed its concern about the quality of education, and encouraged the Board to look at flexible ways of providing teaching such as distance learning and the use of retired teachers/students in the diaspora – the Alumni Associations were prepared to facilitate this.
- Washington were willing to support funding for a Games Master. They also offered to create an ICQC website.
- ICQC meetings would continue to be held annually, but reunions would only be held every five years when the meeting was held in Guyana.
- Suggested that QCOSA facilitate an orientation course for incoming teachers on QC's history/culture.
- Florida to host next annual meeting.
- ICQC's executive for 2007–09: President (until 2008) – **Laurie Lewis** (QCOSA President), Executive Secretary – **John Yates** (Florida), Deputy Exec. Sec – Sharon (Singh) Kreuter (QCOSA), Recording Secretary – **Leyland Muss** (Toronto), Fund-raising Co-ordinator – **John LaRose** (Florida).
- UWI Vice-Chancellor Professor Nigel Harris (QC 55–64) delivered a keynote address at the Public Assembly held at the school.

**SYNOPSIS OF KEYNOTE ADDRESS BY UWI VICE-CHANCELLOR
PROF. NIGEL HARRIS TO THE ASSEMBLY AT QC, SEPTEMBER 2007**

Professor Harris began by saying how deeply honoured he was to have been invited to deliver the address, and reminisced about his school days, teachers and colleagues. QC had been a reality in his life long before he went there – his father, author Wilson Harris, was an old boy and his mother [author Jan Carew's sister] a BHS old girl, and they fully expected their son to follow in his father's footsteps; also, his primary school had an honours board listing pupils who had gained entrance to QC.

What was so special about QC, and were there lessons to be learned that would strengthen and enhance Caribbean education today? He identified and expanded upon four main characteristics: a sense of community, a striving for academic excellence, an opportunity to shine in other fields, and the encouragement of an openness of mind – in short providing the opportunity to be a well rounded person.

Concluding his address, Professor Harris cautioned that the clock could not be turned back – it would be futile to try to re-create the QC of yesteryear. The images, values and aspirations of today's students are conditioned by a shrinking world, not only travelwise, but where communication and access to information are seconds away with a keystroke. It was important that students be encouraged to leap beyond the confines of racial, religious or national prejudice and bigotry; to counter the fear of change; and to avoid timidity in the face of opportunity. We should be judged not by the degrees and awards we have won, or by the situation in life to which we have risen, but by the value we have brought to the communities in which we work and live.

DONATIONS TO QC

Computers for IT classes and the school's admin are presently a major requirement. Accordingly ICQC Exec. Sec. John Yates suggested that each overseas 'chapter' make a donation of US\$5000 towards the purchase of computers in the US. This was approved at the first meeting of the 2007–08 Committee, and £2500 has been sent to the Florida Association for the ICQC Fund-raising Co-ordinator to make the necessary purchases.

BOOK REVIEW

THE FIRST CROSSING

being the Diary of Theophilus Richmond, ship's surgeon aboard the Hesperus, 1837–8

edited by David Dabydeen, Jonathan Morley, Brinsley Samaroo, Amar Wahab & Brigid Wells

[The Derek Walcott Press, £10]

Theophilus Richmond, a young recently qualified doctor, was employed by Sir John Gladstone (father of the British Prime Minister) as ship's surgeon on board the *Hesperus* which set sail from Liverpool in June 1837 for India, via Mauritius, to collect the first batch of indentured labourers to be shipped to Gladstone's estates in Demerara.

The first part of the book is a lengthy and informative Introduction covering Gladstone's scheme to bring Indian labourers to BG, Richmond's family background, the progress of Indians in the Caribbean, and the repatriation of those who chose to return to India (and the misery of those returnees who realised too late that they had made a mistake).

The Diary itself is an interesting account of life aboard a sailing ship and of the places visited. In Mauritius Richmond becomes enamoured of the Creole beauties and, seated at a dinner between one such and a young, attractive French woman is reminded of lines from *The Beggar's Opera*: "How happy I could be with either,/ Were t'other dear charmer away!" In India he displays the disdain of his class for local customs, and engages in what today would be viewed as very non-PC escapades.

The first mention in the Diary of his responsibilities occurs a week before they are due to sail: "... my services are required tomorrow to examine the Coolies who are now in all readiness for their embarkation", but there is no record of that first meeting with his charges.

A week out of Calcutta, cholera breaks out. Richmond is transformed. His competence and resourcefulness combine to limit the death toll to around half a dozen (including one seaman) out of a total of over 200 persons on board, of whom 170 were Indians (including seven women and eleven children). His compassion becomes evident in his description of a stricken mother lying with a baby (who is being kept alive with sago) and two other children, and whose "affectionate and wretched husband" keeps unceasing watch over them, "fanning their feverish brows [and] moistening their pale and shrivelled lips" despite threats and endeavours to keep him away. One child dies, but mother, baby and the other sibling survive. The surviving child "who is not yet 4 years old, took within the space of 16 hours, the entire contents of a teacup full of strong Rum [!]"

However the Diary ends abruptly in Ascension Island, some 2000+ miles short of their destination. I had turned the page in anticipation of reading 'Scenes in Demerara', only to find it to be an Appendix discussing Richmond's illustrations (some of which are reproduced in the book). There is nothing about the arrival in Georgetown or Richmond's impressions of the place – and no editorial explanation of why this should be. The promise implied by the book's title covers a mere 11 (diary) pages out of 99. An anti-climactic ending to quite a readable book.

Richmond spent two months in Guyana, dying of yellow fever, age 23, on 5th July 1838.

Ian Wishart

About the editors.—

Poet and novelist **David Dabydeen** (*Life Member*), who should need no introduction to members, is Professor of Literary Studies at Warwick University and Guyana's Ambassador to UNESCO.

Jonathon Morley edits the Macmillan Caribbean Writers series and is a researcher at Warwick working on Caribbean literature and modernism.

Brinsley Samaroo is a Senior Research Fellow at the University of Trinidad & Tobago, and formerly Head of History at UWI's St Augustine Campus.

Amar Wahab previously taught at the University of Toronto and is now engaged in research on the visual culture of the Caribbean.

Brigid Wells read History at Oxford, and is a retired headmistress. She is the great-great-niece of Theophilus Richmond.

THE NEWSLETTER'S GUIDE TO LONGEVITY

Q: I've heard that cardiovascular exercise can prolong life; is this true?

A: Your heart is only good for so many beats. Don't waste them on exercise. Everything wears out eventually. Speeding your heart will not make you live longer – that's like saying you can extend the life of your car by driving it faster. Want to live longer? Take a nap.

Q: Should I cut down on meat and eat more fruits and vegetables?

A: You must grasp logistical efficiencies. What does a cow eat? Grass and corn. And what are these? Vegetables. So a steak is nothing more than an efficient mechanism for delivering vegetables to your system. Need grain? Eat chicken.

Q: Should I reduce my alcohol intake?

A: No, not at all. Wine is made from fruit. Brandy is distilled wine. That means they take the water out of the fruity bit, so you get even more goodness that way. Beer is also made out of grain. Bottoms up!

Q: How can I calculate my body/fat ratio?

A: Well, if you have a body and you have body fat, the ratio is one to one. If you have two bodies, your ratio is two to one, and so on.

Q: What are the advantages of participating in a regular exercise programme?

A: Can't think of one, sorry.

Q: Aren't fried foods bad for you?

A: YOU'RE NOT LISTENING! Foods are fried these days in vegetable oil. In fact they're permeated with it. How could getting more vegetables be bad for you?

Q: Will sit-ups help prevent me from getting a little soft around the middle?

A: Definitely not! When you exercise a muscle it gets bigger. You should only be doing sit-ups if you want a bigger stomach.

Q: Should I swim to keep my figure trim?

A: If swimming is good for your figure, explain whales to me.

Q: Is getting in shape important for my life style?

A: Hey! 'Round' is a shape.

Well we hope this has cleared up any misconceptions you may have about food and diets. Remember, life should not be a journey to the grave with the intention of arriving safely in an attractive and well preserved body, but rather to skid in sideways, beer (or the beverage of your choice) in one hand, chocolate in the other, body thoroughly used up, totally worn out, and screaming "Whoo Hoo!"

(Received some years ago from Allan Lee (QC 46–54) who lives in Toronto)

GUYANA–SURINAME MARITIME DISPUTE SETTLED

This may be stale news to many, but not all of our readers keep abreast with news about Guyana.

Back in June 2000, Surinamese military gunboats expelled an oil rig drilling off the Corentyne coast. Guyana accordingly took arbitral proceedings against Surinam. In September this year the Hamburg-based Court of Arbitration issued a ruling according Guyana two-thirds of the disputed area. What was even greater in Guyana's favour was that in the most promising part of the disputed area, Guyana received 85% of the acreage. The tribunal also issued a condemnation against Suriname for their 2000 action.

“Non Campus Mentis”.

The following gems, all from real exam papers in the US and Canada (not QC!), are from a book of this title compiled by Dr Henriksson, a professor at Shepherd's College, near Washington DC.

History is a record of things left behind by past generations started in 1815 [thus enabling those in the present day] to view historical times as the behind of the present [and acquire] incite into the anals of the past.

Mankind woozed out of the Nile about 300,000 years ago. The Nile was a river that had some water in it. Every year it would flood and irritate the land.

The history of the Jewish people begins with Abraham, Isaac and their 12 children.

Judyism was the first monolithic religion. It had one big God named Yahoo. Old Testament profits included Moses, Amy and Confucius, who believed in Fidel Piety.

One of the reasons Confucius was born was because of a Chinese tradition.

Elizabeth I was the foremost monarch in the Elizabethan era.

One major source of conflict has been Israel's relations with the Parisians. The Carter administration found itself face to face with this problem during the so-called Hostess Crisis.

Stalin, Roosevelt, Churchill and Truman were the Big Three.

The European Empire can be traced back to when the Europeans felt the need to reach out and smack someone.

James Cook located the perfect navel spot near Africa's bottom.

[During the times of witch hunts in Britain, the females most likely to be targeted were] older post-marsupial women unable to bare children. Those arrested were torchured until they told a story. The worst of this could be the rack or burning with hot porkers.

Europeans in India inhabited designated spots where they could practise their imperialist values on one another.

[Pre-World War I was the period when] the five European grade powers were England, France, Germany, Russia and Australia-Mongolia.

Winston Churchill was an African-American civil rights leader.

DIARY DATES

22 FEB	<u>POSSIBLE DATE FOR DEFERRED ANNUAL DINNER</u>
9 MAY	SPRING EVENT, FILM 'GUYANA 1838' (the story of the indentured Indians) AND SOCIAL AT THE HIGH COMMISSION
6 JULY	SUMMER REUNION – USUAL VENUE
24 AUG	CARNIVAL FÊTE – USUAL VENUE
14 NOV	AGM AT HIGH COMMISSION
5 DEC	ANNUAL DINNER

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