



Outing to Isika, East Bank Essequibo By Rachel Hibbin

It is hard to believe that another year has passed and we Seniors gathered again at Bishops' for another outing, hoping to have some fun and laughter as we interacted with each other. This time, Stanley Ming's development on East Bank Essequibo was our destination. Some of us envisaged a housing development but we were greeted by a "work in progress" with not a house in sight! Those of us on the first bus wondered where we were going to be accommodated since all we saw was a tent. Before long, the staff had set up tables and chairs. We disembarked the bus provided by Mr. Ming and settled in.

Some of us took the opportunity to wander around and inspect the very old machinery that littered the development, asking each other what they may have been used for. After much speculation, we learnt that a sawmill had been located there. One of the old machines was a steam boiler that was used to power the sawmill. Two others were used to pull the logs that were floated down the river to the land and eventually to the sawmill to be cut for building houses, bridges or whatever dressed lumber was used for. Two pieces of the substantial cast iron machinery bore the name of John McDowall & Sons of Johnstone, Renfrewshire, Scotland. The company did indeed build machines and steam engines for the wood working industry as early as 1823. Maybe this particular sawmill made railway sleepers for the rail network in the United Kingdom.

A lot of earth works were being done and what looked like an earthen dam was being erected along the river so that the river was almost obliterated from view. We could not figure out whether it was to keep the Essequibo out or whether it is intended to be a road along the river because we had seen vehicles driving on the dam. The second bus with all the food, etc. took what seemed like ages to arrive but arrive it did to cheers. That's when the day's activities truly began. In quick order the tablecloths were laid out and soon the delicious meal was served along with a welcome glass of wine. Being very dry, clouds of dust were whipped up by the ever present breeze and trucks bringing earth to the development. We were glad to see a tractor with one of those large black tanks filled with water which proceeded to dampen down the dust.

After lunch we ventured further on the property. Some of us collected the "drop awara" from the many trees scattered around the development. The parrots and macaws must have a feast when they come down to the river in the evenings. I was disappointed that I did not see many birds but maybe that was because of all the work going on.

Just before we left, members of the Seniors Committee thanked Janice Jackson for all she has done for the seniors, presenting her with a mug which bears a photograph from one of our outings. Also, Renata Chuck-a-Sang who has joined the Committee and Monica Agard Greene, an incoming member of the Senior Class, were recognized.

At the end of an enjoyable day, we boarded the buses for our return journey. The disappointment at not being able to stop at the plant shop was soon forgotten as we looked forward to upcoming events, especially September Affair.



Phyllis Thompson's Centenary: A Visit from Geraldine!

Maybe it was the bag that I was carrying which gave it away. As soon as I asked the security guard to direct me to the ward for 'Long Stay Patients', she immediately said, "Have you come to see the lady who is 100 years old today?" Indeed, I was going to see Phyllis Thompson who was 100 years old on April 4, 2016.

When I arrived at the ward, I was directed to Phyllis by the nurse in charge. As I got to her bed, I realised that she must have had many other visitors that day. On the table at the foot of her bed were many bouquets of flowers and cards. Phyllis was nicely dressed and smiling. She was ready to receive any visitor on her special day.

I had gone to visit Phyllis on behalf of the Seniors Committee and had taken a gift. I spent some time with Phyllis and when I left, I felt very privileged to have been in the company of a centenarian.

WE SALUTE PHYLLIS!!!



The Happiness Bank

The 92-year-old, petite, well-poised and proud lady, who is fully dressed each morning by eight o'clock, with her hair fashionably coifed and makeup perfectly applied, even though she is legally blind, moved to a nursing home today.

Her husband of 70 years recently passed away, making the move necessary. After many hours of waiting patiently in the lobby of the nursing home, she smiled sweetly when told her room was ready.

As she maneuvered her walker to the elevator, I provided a visual description of her tiny room, including the eyelet sheets that had been hung on her window.

"I love it," she stated with the enthusiasm of an eight-year-old having just been presented with a new puppy.

"Mrs. Jones, you haven't seen the room just wait."

"That doesn't have anything to do with it," she replied. "Happiness is something you decide on ahead of time. Whether I like my room or not doesn't depend on how the furniture is arranged.. it's how I arrange my mind.

I already decided to love it. It's a decision I make every morning when I wake up. I have a choice; I can spend the day in bed recounting the difficulty I have with the parts of my body that no longer work, or get out of bed and be thankful for the ones that do.

Each day is a gift, and as long as my eyes open I'll focus on the new day and all the happy memories I've stored away just for this time in my life.

Old age is like a bank account: you withdraw from what you've put in.

So, my advice to you would be to deposit a lot of happiness in the bank account of memories.

Meet the Seniors

Joy O'Jon

Joy O'Jon was born to George and Lily (née Jacobs) O'Jon in Northern Rhodesia, now Zambia, in 1935. Joy lived in Northern Rhodesia until she was 4 years old. After the death of her maternal grandmother, Joy was sent to Buxton, British Guiana (BG) to be a companion to her mother's twin sister, Ivy. She travelled to BG via Bermuda with a missionary, Laura Francis; Laura fell in love with life in BG and remained for many years.

Joy's life in Buxton was rich. She entertained residents with her singing of African choruses in the Chibemba language. She attended Buxton Congregational School where Mr. G. S. L. Payne, father of alumnus Audrey Payne, was the Headteacher. Every holiday Joy and her aunt visited relatives. Joy once got into a fight. After a cuff landed in her back, Joy vowed "never again". She was given the opportunity to welcome a celebrity, Madame Denny, to her school. Quite proudly she said, "Welcome Madame Malindy" using the name of someone who was popular at that time. The audience was in shock. Soon after, everyone burst into laughter.

Joy was awarded a Buxton scholarship but had it taken away the very next day to be given to someone else about whom her aunt had expressed sympathy. The next year, she won a Government scholarship which, as it turned out, had better rewards.

Joy's achievements were celebrated by her Aunt Ivy who was a teacher at the school. For example, when Joy won the Government scholarship, her aunt treated all the students in the school to a bun and a drink. When she passed her 'O' Levels, she was rewarded with a lovely party.

At the Bishops' High School, Joy enjoyed playing netball. Her classmates included Wilma Benning, Chandraka Singh, Peggy King and Patricia Dearlove.

With advice from the Headmistress, Molly Harris, Joy gained a conditional scholarship to the University College of the West Indies (UCWI) at Mona, Jamaica where she obtained a BSc General in Chemistry, Botany and Zoology and a DipEd in Biology. Some of the other BHS alumni at UCWI at the time were Marjorie King, Shirley Field-Ridley and Audrey Payne. Joy remembers the horrified reaction of the staff of the radio station where she was recording Christmas greetings to be aired at home when she said that the work at UCWI wasn't hard. Inter-Varsity Christian Fellowship was a family away from home for Joy.

Since the conditional scholarship required recipients to serve their homeland for five years, Joy joined the staff of BHS as a teacher of science subjects. Here she was a colleague of persons such as Carmen Jarvis, Lucille Campbell, and Eileen Chan who had taught her. She "lived in the lab" like when she was in Sixth Form. She received a British Council scholarship that enabled her to gain an MEd in Biology from Chelsea University. Joy was appointed Headmistress in 1978. She considers Sheila Fox, the Deputy Headmistress, her "Rock of Gibraltar," as Sheila was a great influencer, passionate about collaborating for the benefit of the school, so adopting strategies for achieving the results desired.

In 1980, Joy was seconded to the Science-Mathematics Unit of the Ministry of Education. She also served as the Territorial Coordinator of a Curriculum Project implemented by the Caribbean Examinations Council (CXC) in collaboration with the Association of Caribbean Community Colleges and the Canadian International Development Agency. Her responsibilities enabled her to travel extensively in Guyana as she supervised science teachers in training.

Retirement afforded Joy the opportunity to function as a volunteer science teacher at Hauraruni All-age School. Intending to spend three years there, Joy used the extended period of seven years to establish a science department. She was able to revel in the students' success at the CXC examinations. Students were entered for the Basic Proficiency level of the examinations. However, their performance in Integrated Science led to their results being upgraded to the General Proficiency level. Joy exclaimed, "Praise God!"

Not one to sit back and twiddle her thumbs, Joy readily collaborated with Florine Dalgety who had the vision to establish a private school, Dominion Schools, to provide ordinary children an opportunity to get quality education with Christian mores at affordable cost. In 2001, enrolment began with two children; it now stands at 30 students. Two tenets of the school are that children know God and can pray effectively and that children can read before they leave the nursery level. The school has a staff of seven, four of whom are retirees. For Joy, her purpose is devoting energy to helping with the school.

Joy's two sisters, Eirene O'Jon and Gertrude Sampson née O'Jon attended BHS.



Elise Brathwaite née Jonas

Elise Brathwaite is the daughter of the late Virginia (née Gomes) and Ronald Jonas. She was born at Whim on the Corentyne coast. Her family moved to Georgetown when she was about five years of age. As a young girl, Elise loved to fly kites. She recalls one special kite which her father made. It sang and soared while she held on to the string tightly.

In Georgetown, Elise attended Freeburg Anglican School then transferred to Smith Church Congregational School before entering the Bishops' High School in 1943 where she spent seven years. Her classmates included Margery Trotman Arthur, Esther Burrowes, Gloria Duke Beaubrun, Shirley Fernandes Jackman, Jocelyn Ho-Shu and Gwendoline Stephenson Mitchell.

Elise certainly enjoyed her time at BHS. She loved to play netball for her form and Mary House, serving as goal keeper and goal shoot. She also liked cooking classes where she learned to make cupcakes and rock buns. She enjoyed Sixth Form since she was challenged by the work.

One can't imagine BHS without pranks played by the students. Elise recalls one played by the students in her form. One day, Ms. Pieters came to class with her hair in braids. Almost immediately, the girls copied her hairstyle. Not surprisingly, they all got into trouble. However, the girls did not mind the ensuing consequences for they had so much fun being naughty.

Elise also remembers the swings under the Oswald Parry Hall. They were the favourite pastime during break period. At her Fifth Form graduation party, she did not know how to dance but learned quickly; she still loves dancing. As a Ranger while in the Sixth Form, she got the opportunity to visit other parts of the country when the group went camping. She specifically remembers the bicycle ride to Madewini, a 25-mile journey. In addition, Elise liked playing the piano and attended church every Sunday.

After high school, Elise went to the Teachers' Training College. Upon graduation, she taught at St. Pius and, Our Lady of Fatima Roman Catholic Schools; she eventually served as Deputy Headteacher at the latter school.

She was one of the first students to attend the University of Guyana from which she graduated with a BA in English. Then she moved to the USA where she earned Masters and PhD degrees in English from Howard University. While at Howard, Elise was a Graduate Assistant in the English Department and worked in the Morland Foundation of the Founders Library.

In 1975, Elise moved to Delaware and joined the faculty of Delaware State University where she taught English language and literature. During the time there, she was also Director of African-American Studies. She retired after 26 years of enjoyable work.

In the meantime, Elise joined Phi Beta Kappa, an education sorority. She is still an active member of her Chapter, Alpha Pi. A member of the Caribbean Association of Professionals and Scholars, Elise served as the editor of its publication, New Horizons.

She is the proud mother of four children and grandmother of four.

Elise's nephew, Timothy Jonas, attended BHS.

