

Eastleigh Secondary School Alumni
Diamond Jubilee Reunion (1956-2016)
The Langley, Watford, 23rd October 2016

The Diamond Jubilee Reunion of ex-students and teachers was held on Sunday 23rd October 2016 at the Langley Banqueting Suite in Watford from 12:30 pm to 6:00 pm.

The aim was to bring them all together under one roof for an afternoon of music, food and drink, memories and nostalgia!! The other aim was to welcome the Kenya High Commissioner and the current Principal of Eastleigh High School, Nairobi as our Chief Guests.

On the day, there were as many 186 participants, including wives and friends of nearly 110 ex-students. The participants' pack included the souvenir magazine, the Programme, a list of participants, a specially designed name badge and a Feedback Form.

On behalf of the organisers, Vijay Patel, the Secretary, welcomed everyone. He introduced the Chairman of ESS Alumni, Jayant Tanna. Jayant thanked HE Mr Lazarus Amayo, the High Commissioner of Kenya to the UK, Mr Abdi Mohammed, the First Secretary of KHC and Margaret Lesuda, the Education Attaché. He also welcomed Mr Fred Awuor, the current Principal at Eastleigh High School, Nairobi. Mr Awuor, at the suggestion of Jayant Tanna, had come a week earlier. Jayant took him to visit three schools in London – Alperton Community School, Nower Hill High School and Claremont High School. These school visits were most interesting and fascinating for Mr Awuor. He was most thankful and was planning a whole host of changes and improvements at Eastleigh High on his return.

Jayant thanked all the alumni present, particularly those from overseas – Parvin Syal, Prem Sharma, Rajeshwar Luthra, Deepak Bedi, Mahendra Patel, Narinder Mann from US & Canada, Gurcharan Gill and Vijay Patel from Nairobi and Ehsan Malik from Spain. He also thanked the 17 ex-students from other Nairobi schools - Duke of Gloucester or Jamhuri School, Duchess of Gloucester or Pangani Girls School, Highway Secondary and Technical High schools. He talked about his memories of his school days and how his teachers had influenced his personal, professional, social, cultural and moral life.

Jayant talked about the work done by ESS Alumni to support the school including raising funds to buy new computers, library reference books, supporting orphans in the school and in giving the school a facelift. They were now trying to raise funds to replace the old desks and chairs from 1956.

Jayant reminded the meeting about the excellent website that many had appreciated. It has profiles of students, staff, all past school activities, sports and results etc. Jayant then talked about the Sunday Lunchtime get-togethers organised in a variety of places around London, Leicester and Birmingham. The Accounts were in a healthy position as a result of careful spending and meticulous record-keeping by our Treasurer Nisar Butt. We had 90 Biennial Members and 45 Life Members.

Jayant thanked all committee members, advertisers, all donors, Parvin Syal for photo collage and the front cover of the magazine; the Head teachers at Nower High School Pinner, Claremont High in Kenton and Alperton Community School in Wembley for offering school visit to Mr Fred Awuor; Karam Bharij for his voluntary services providing photography for this event; Anup Dhall for arranging the Golf Tournament at Stanmore Golf Club; all Raffle donors; Liquid Bubble Ltd our printers; Anuradha Shukla and Kiran Thakrar for the entertaining melody and music; Neha Gudka of The Langley for their lovely venue, food, organisation, support and co-operation.

The Chief Guest HE Mr Lazarus Amayo thanked Jayant for inviting him to the function. He paid a rich tribute to the work done by ESS Alumni to support their alma mater, Eastleigh High School and wished it good luck in continuing to do so in the future. He praised the Asian community's contribution to the development of Kenya in terms of schools, hospitals, commerce, business and in a range of professions. He urged members and the wider Asian diaspora to return to Kenya to offer their skills, expertise and investment. The government

had now made it possible for those born in Kenya to be eligible for a kind of 'overseas citizenship' that would help them to buy and invest in Kenya. It is a young and fast growing economy and has a lot to offer. If not, he urged everyone to at least visit Kenya to see its many tourist attractions and to enjoy the beauty of Kenya's national parks and beaches.

Mr Lazarus praised the decision of the ESS Alumni committee to open the event up for ex-students of other Nairobi schools. He was also happy to learn that the current Principal Mr Awuor had been invited not only to join in the event but also be a part of education visits to three different high schools in London. He hoped that in future, the Alumni would organise similar projects for young people from Nairobi as well.

The Chairman responded by saying that as a part of the school visits he made with the Principal, they had discussed with London schools the possibility of joint ventures and visits with Eastleigh High School.

The Principal, Mr Fred Awuor spoke next. He was also thankful to the Chairman and committee for inviting him a week early to visit 3 different schools before joining everyone for the day's Reunion event. He was thrilled to see ESS alumni in such large numbers and thanked them all for their help and support to the school. He outlined some of the successes achieved by the school in terms of pupil performance in academic and extra-curricular activities.

The Principal spoke about his visits to the 3 schools in London. He was impressed by the dedication of the staff and pupils as well as by the range and quality of resources. He was hoping to build closer links with these schools as well. Mr Awuor also mentioned the fact that the school needed to replace the students' desks from 1956 and he was glad that Mr Gurcharan Singh Gill, a Nairobi based alumni, had already started delivering some new desks. However, the school also had some needy pupils who could not afford school fees. The fees amount to roughly £200 per year. He requested the members present to make contributions to support these pupils.

After a sumptuous meal, the music band Strings provided some beautifully melodious songs, both current and vintage. It was not long before a huge number of members were on the dance floor, singing, dancing, tilting and swinging! There were some lovely numbers sung by Anuradha and her colleagues. The music was top class and very authentic. As the evening approached, some of the emotional and memorable Bollywood songs of our school days of the 60s and 70s brought the event towards the final part. The Raffle prizes were announced and the lucky ones shrieked with delight while others muttered under their breath. The prizes were wonderful – Kenwood blender and Prestige kettle from Vijay Patel and family, Red Head Ranch shirt and Stenson(?) hat from Mahendra Patel (USA), Darlington beer goblet, champagne glasses, gourmet kitchen collection and silver plated glass dish from Varinder Seth, 2 copies of 'Mysteries of Kenya Revealed' and a photograph of Ahmed the Elephant from Harish Luther, hot chilli plant from Anil Lakhani and a bottle of whiskey from Pradeep Luther.

Finally, Jayant reminded everyone to complete their feedback forms. He thanked everybody for attending the function and all those including the committee, the band, the venue, the caterers and many others for making the event such a huge success. All members left with lovely smiles on their faces bidding their old and new friends good bye!