

FIRE TRAGEDY HITS IFIL ROAD AGAIN IN LESS THAN 6 MONTHS!

It was around 2.30 pm on Tuesday March 27th 2007 that elderly Mr. Cleophus Best lost his home to fire - for the second time in less than 6 months. It was September 2006 that Mr. Best and 2 other houses on lower Ifil Road Flagstaff burned to the ground, and once again in another case of 'deja-vu' Damon Corrie of neighbouring Highgate Gardens scaled his fence to rush to the aide of Mr. Best.

In Corrie's own words:

"My wife shouted for me to look at a fire over in Flagstaff again, I saw thick black smoke billowing over the roofs of the two houses between Mr Best's property and my eastern fence which separates the Highgate Gardens and Flagstaff communities; I did not have time to put on my shoes so I jumped my fence and ran barefooted to the scene - thinking to myself that this cannot be happening again in the same area for the fourth time in my life.

On the way I passed 2 Lower Ifil Road residents who were using their garden hoses to save their properties from any spreading of the fire engulfing Mr Bests house, and I reached a bewildered looking and clearly burned Mr. Best holding a garden hose trying to save his home, a natural gas cylinder was in front of Mr Best and mere inches from his burning front door; the heat emanating from the house was so intense my skin was getting burned and I thought that it would only be a matter of time before the gas cylinder exploded.

I picked up the cylinder and ran with it to the north eastern edge of the property then ran back and told Mr Best to give me the hose and get as far away as he could, and he headed in the direction of the gas cylinder the last time I saw him.

I quickly soaked myself with water as just holding the hose 10 feet away from the burning house was burning my hand and face, I was unlucky in that no-one was available to help me spray the house and the water pressure was very low - probably due to a split in the PVC pipe connected to the tap where the hose was attached.

In less than five minutes the first Barbados Fire Service tender arrived on the scene about 2.35 pm - and the officers quickly brought the fire under control with their high pressure hose; but unfortunately the small house was already gutted and apart from a spray can in the un-damaged outhouse, the gas cylinder, a pair of rubber boots and the damaged clothes on his back - all of Mr. Best's material possessions appear to have been destroyed."

Residents stated that Mr. Best was in his late sixties and had 'just been complaining about having to return a leaking gas cylinder, and was having trouble lighting his stove with the new one when there was a loud explosion was heard and his home burst into flames, Corrie stated that as soon as the fire was put out - and literally while the the building was still smoldering - preliminary investigations were started by Fire Service to determine the exact cause of the fire - as can be seen in the photograph.



Mr Best was taken by ambulance to the QEH around 3 pm.