

LEEDS WEST INDIAN

CARNIVAL

40 Years and the Bi-Centenary Year...



2007 Carnival Prince and Princess

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Produced by the
Leeds Bi-Centenary Transformation Project
in association with the
Leeds West Indian Carnival Committee



Introduction

During 2007 and 2008 Leeds Bi-Centenary Transformation Project (LBCTP) supported Leeds Carnival as a conduit to tell the past and present stories of African/Caribbean history and culture interrupted by 300 years of trans-Atlantic enslavement. Carnival floats, troupes and music were linked to the general theme of *History and African/Caribbean Survival and Transformation*. In practical terms Leeds Carnival Committee were supported by LBCTP to provide Historical Outreach Consultants and Costume Designer Consultants who assisted perspective Carnival troupes with historical, philosophical, cultural, musical and practical workshops.

Two Carnival troupes were specifically commissioned from LBCTP support; RJC Troupe and Harrison Bunday Troupe, each with 100 participants; and an additional 4 troupes of 25 each were developed with the assistance of the LBCTP Carnival workshops.

LBCTP also supported the Bradford and Huddersfield section of Leeds West Indian Carnival-on-the-Road programme.

Contents

- A:** Introduction
- B:** About Leeds Carnival
- C:** Costume Workshops
- D:** Pre-Carnival Exhibition and Reminiscence Evening
- E:** RJC Workshop and Troupe
- F:** 2007 Prince & Princess
- G:** Harrison Bunday Troupe
- H:** Post-Carnival Exhibition & Workshops
- I:** About LBCTP
- J:** A Message from LBCTP Committee
- K:** Trans-Atlantic Enslavement and Abolition
- L:** Useful Bi-Centenary Resources

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About Leeds Carnival

B

Started in 1967, Leeds Carnival was the first Caribbean Carnival in the UK. In 2007 Arthur France, Leeds Carnival Chairperson considered that his:

most lasting achievements has been his promotion of the first ever Leeds West Indian Carnival in 1967, reflecting his feeling that amongst the political activism there was still room to have some fun. Carnival, of course still maintained the Caribbean tradition of celebrating the emancipation of black people from slavery and colonial oppression. This event has been supported by the community in every subsequent year and in its 40th year has become a Leeds institution.

Arthur also believes that Carnival:

Reminds us of our roots, the struggles our ancestors had to endure and the oppression of our leaders and great role models. But we can rest assured that their efforts were not in vain, for while we continue to celebrate Carnival, their achievements will remain with us forever.



Carnival Queen/07
Charlene Smith displaying Hughbon
and Gloria Condor's creation,
Man on Hos Back

Costume Workshops

C

Eight historical and 12 practical Carnival workshops were facilitated by Hughbon Condor, Arthur France and Rhian Kempadoo-Millar.

The historical workshops toured participants through the historical birth and continuance of Carnival from African traditions. The place of Leeds Carnival was discussed highlighting important and significant Carnival costumes and their relation to social and political historical moments.

The practical workshops explored the design, development and construction of Carnival costumes, troupe dance and the practical logistics of running and maintaining a troupe on Carnival day.



Arthur France

Workshop Images



Rhian Kempadoo-Millar



Hughbon Condor

Sharing Knowledge



Pre-Carnival Exhibition & Reminiscence Evening



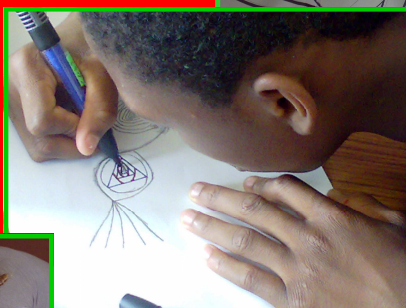
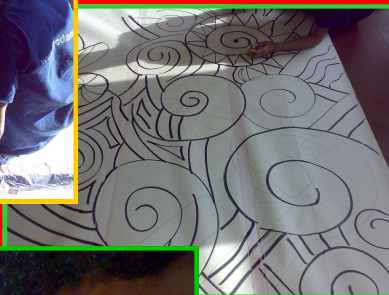
At the end of June/07 LBCTP organised a week of pre-Carnival events at Leeds West Indian Centre. This consisted of an exhibition of selected past Carnival costumes, music and photographs, with presentations by Hughbon Condor, Arthur France and Rhian Kempadoo-Millar.

Attendance included 100 children from Hillcrest Primary School, 20 children from Primrose Hill Primary School and 40 children from Bracken Edge Primary School. The week ended with a Carnival Reminiscence Evening on the 29 June/07.



RJC Workshops and Troupe

E





Costumes designed by Rhian Kempadoo-Millar and RJC Dance Youth Provision were judged as best Prince and Princess for Leeds Carnival 2007. The Prince costume was *Jab Molassi*, worn and performed by Kael Onyett-Alleyne. The Princess costume was *Canboulay*, worn and performed by Alexa. RJC troupe was 100 strong.

2007 Prince & Princess

F





Harrison Bunday Freedom Troupe

G



One hundred strong!





Post-Carnival Exhibition & Workshops

During mid-April/08 two days of post-Carnival exhibition and workshops at Roscoe Methodist Church Hall in Leeds provided the opportunity for all age groups to view the costumes that were developed with the aid of LBCTP support. Workshops for young people and children were run by Shelia Howarth and Hughbon Condor.

There were also scintillating performances by Carnival Queen/07 Charlene Smith displaying Hughbon and Gloria Condor's creation, *Man on Hos Back*; and RJC's *Shack Out Too*. More than 150 people attended this 2-day event.



About LBCTP



LBCTP is a collaborative community initiative to highlight African achievements, liberation and aspirations in commemoration of the British Parliamentary Abolition Act of 1807.

This Act helped to end the capture and transportation of African people from the continent of Africa to be enslaved in the Caribbean and the Americas.

During a 2-year period LBCTP staff and management committee have delivered a range of education, spiritual, arts and cultural programmes to local communities and some regional audiences.



LEEDS BI-CENTENARY TRANSFORMATION PROJECT
Leeds West Indian Centre, 10 Laycock Place, Chapeltown, Leeds LS7 3JA

LBCTP Committee & Staff

PRESENT

Arthur France MBE

Rev Gloria Hanley

Ian Charles MBE

Tony Stanley

Mahalia France

Debra Jeffers

Terry Moran

Grace Inniss

Gary Grant

Joe Williams

Chairperson

Vice-Chairperson

Chair, Churches & Abolition

Hon Treasurer

Hon Secretary

Hon Vice-Secretary

Chair, Media

**Chair, Legacy &
Community Development**

Chair, Arts & Culture

PAST

Dr Carl Hylton

Maureen Baker MBE

Sandra Johnson

Claude Hendrickson

Lucina Nisbett

Dalia Gabay

Paul Auber

Jacqui Warner

Carine Feuzeu

Fatou Badji

Michelle

Scally-Clarke

Khadijah Ibrahiim

Fiona Cosson

Will Jackson

Dr Sewa Singh Kalsi

Michelle Wittleton

Saluka Saul

Dr Carl Hylton

Paul Auber

Director

**Finance & Monitoring Officer
Education & Museum Coordinator**

**Arts, Carnival, Legacy
& Churches Coordinator**

PATH Trainee, Admin

French/Senegalese Placement Student

Writers-in-Residence, Schools

Indentured Labour Researchers

Curriculum Development Officers

A MESSAGE FROM LBCTP COMMITTEE

J

In 2005 meetings were held at the Leeds West Indian Centre, Chapeltown, by those concerned with making African and Caribbean voices heard in the forthcoming 2007 commemoration of the bi-centenary of the abolition of the trade in enslaved Africans.

It would be impossible to pay the full tribute deserved to our African ancestors in such a short space of time; so whilst we are proud of our efforts - a dignified memorial and other tributes are still yet to be achieved. The work to tell our past and ongoing story continues.

Many of us knew little of what the bi-centenary was really about, but by working toward common targets we were all able to share our learning locally and with wider communities. Led by Arthur France MBE - the majority of original committee members stayed the distance - all passionate to pay tribute to African ancestors who contributed to the industrial revolution and economic development of the West.

Having never worked together as a group before we set out to raise appropriate funding and are enormously grateful to the Heritage Lottery Fund, Joseph Rowntree Charitable Trust and Education Leeds. Then it was wonderful to eventually see staff take their positions and show their talents, all bringing individual elements of success to make 2007 an unforgettable year for many.

It has not been an easy path, but very much a worthwhile one. Together we realised the importance of being able to tell our own stories and learn from those who came before us.

Through ups and downs we have delivered a programme that has brought awareness, joy, pride and a deeper understanding of our complex history. Our greatest achievement is in introducing quality African British history projects and resource materials into Leeds schools. Highlights of the project include a 30-week history course, carnival troupes, seminars, exhibitions, concerts, plays and a inspiring and spirited Emancipation Day closing ceremony.

As a committee we would like to thank our funders, project partners, staff, guest speakers, facilitators and of course – all the public who helped to make the Leeds Bi-Centenary Transformation Project a memorable period of time. We hope you enjoy this and future carnivals to come.

Trans-Atlantic Enslavement and Abolition

Whilst the year 2007 saw the commemoration of 200 years since the end of British slave ships, which meant the end of the British-sponsored transportation of enslaved African people across the Atlantic, it did not mean the end of slavery itself.

Between 1450 and 1900 more than 10 million Africans were enslaved, sold and transported from the West coast of Africa across the Atlantic to North and South America and the islands in the Caribbean. A triangular trade developed, using enslaved African labour to grow and produce cotton, sugar, tobacco and rum in what was known by Europeans as 'The New World' and is now the Southern States of North America, the Caribbean and Brazil. These lucrative items were then shipped to Europe where they financed western industrial revolutions and trade goods such as textiles, beads and guns: which in turn were used to barter for more enslaved Africans.

The 1st August 1838 (Emancipation Day) marked the official end of African enslavement in the British controlled Caribbean region. While there were European humanitarians in Britain who campaigned for the end of the slave trade, added to the need to end African enslavement was the actions of free and enslaved Africans. Pressure from abolitionists such as Olaudah Equiano, Sarah Parker Remond, Frederick Douglass, Ignatius Sancho and Quoba Ottobah Cugoano; and the ever-present fear of enslaved African uprisings as occurred in 1760 in Jamaica led by Tacky and in 1831 led by Samuel Sharpe, was a poignant reminder of the cost of African enslavement.

Useful Bi-Centenary Resources

L

Auber, P. (2007) *The Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade*, Afrikan Curriculum Development Association and Leeds Bi-Centenary Transformation Project

Connor, G. (2007) *Carnival Messiah: The Book*, Chichester, Dido Press

Equiano, O. (1995) *The Interesting Narrative and Other Writings*, London, Penguin Books

Farrar, M. France, A. and Charles, I. (2007) *Carnival: The People's Art*, Chichester, Dido Press

From Abolition to Commonwealth: West Yorkshire Remembers Indentured Labour in Africa and the Caribbean (2008) Leeds Bi-Centenary Transformation Project pamphlet, Leeds, Gbakhanda Publishing

John, G. (2006) *Taking A Stand*, Manchester, The Gus John Partnership

Lynch, W. (1999) *The Willie Lynch Letter and the Making of a Slave*, Chicago, USA, Lushena Books

Reddie, R. (2007) *ABOLITION! The Struggle to Abolish Slavery in the British Colonies*, Oxford, Lion Hudson PLC



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