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# Contents

	Page
<b>Introduction</b>	4
Windrush	5
Upholstery	8
Master Tailor	12
Architect	17
Builder	22
Electrician	31
Gardening	34
Electronics	37
<b>Reminiscence</b>	
Shoemaker	41
Photographer	42
<b>Conclusion</b>	45

# Illustrations

## Drawings – Photographs:

1-5	A Dope Point of View	13	Evening Standard	46-50	A Dope Point of View
6-7	Audrey Allwood	14-16	Elle Magazine	51	Audrey Allwood
8	A Dope Point of View	17	Elle Magazine	52-55	A Dope Point of View
9	Audrey Allwood	18-19	Audrey Allwood	57	Provided by Dawn McKay
10	A Dope Point of View	20-30	Provided by Aaliyah Kaka	58-59	A Dope Point of View
11	Audrey Allwood	31-45	Audrey Allwood		
12	Provided by Joe Allen				

# Introduction

## Skilled Trades

This small book contains information about migrants from the West Indies to Britain during the 1940s to 1970s and their descendants, and their involvement in the skilled trades.

In recent times the narrative regarding this section of the British population, in respect of work, has tended to highlight the contribution to society in the national health service, civil service, transport and local authorities, in the main. We are also aware of other areas such as athletics, and cooking, in the public domain but less concerning involvement in the skilled trades.

This project shares the personal stories of trades people and fills the gap regarding documenting their contributions to Britain's workforce.

## Legacy

This 'Windrush Generations Trades People' publication contains twelve profiles, telling the familiar and unique experiences of trades people, associated work and their resilience. It provides an education resource for everyone, showcasing skills and the legacy of their work.

## Contributors

This booklet results from collaboration between Dr. Audrey Allwood, anthropologist, and Tony Cealy of 492 Korna Klub, arts and social justice practitioner and trainer. It contains information from workshops held jointly by Tony Cealy and Dr. Audrey Allwood, and five additional individual interviews by Dr. Audrey Allwood.

Funding to undertake workshops, interviews with people, and to produce this small book was obtained from the Windrush Day Grant 2021. Age UK

Lambeth supported the project as a nurture organisation.

## Images

The photographs in this production were taken by A Dope Point of View, Dr. Audrey Allwood and submitted by the individual participants. There is also a video of images taken at workshops, by A Dope Point of View.

## Booklet and Launch

This booklet, designed and written by Dr. Audrey Allwood, incorporates comment by Tony Cealy, and editing comments by Age UK Lambeth. It is launched in association with Lambeth Libraries, as an activity hosted in their Black History Month events 2021.

Free copies of this self-published booklet are available through Age UK Lambeth, Brixton Library, the Black Cultural Archives, and Goldsmiths University of London.

# Windrush

## Migration

We now commonly refer to the adults and children who came to Britain, between the late 1940s to the early 1970s, by the all encompassing term 'Windrush generations'. The journey was made in response to an invitation to help rebuild Britain after WW11. Further, there was a need to create a workforce to develop the infrastructure, as well as public services in Britain.

Over half a million people came to Britain at that time, with dependant young children, or soon sending for those left behind, with more born here. Some were skilled workers but on arrival many could only obtain menial jobs in relation to their talents. Others came and entered into training such as within the National Health Service , so that it could be developed and expand

nationwide. While others worked in factories and a multitude of other jobs.

## Employment

This project documents some of the experiences of those working in skilled trades areas of work. However, it is also important to recognise the importance of character as well as talents used for employment. For without strong resilience to find a way to live and earn wages, many would not have been employed, and the reason they came to Britain would not have been fulfilled.

## Shared experiences

We were delighted when people with different experiences came to the Windrush Trades People Workshop, and when others took part in interviews. However, while we celebrate these skills, it was also obvious that a shared story lay behind the participants. There is a general

pattern of people exercising the pursuit of excellence, persistence to achieve, overcoming obstacles to thrive. Alongside this motivation is a general shared experience of moving from one job to another in order to maintain an income when employment is challenged, lost, or they seek expansion. Fay Gordon, who came to support the workshop and Caribbean community, worked in health and social care, and education where she supported others. She highlights the varied attempts to achieve her aims, and how she navigated training, formal qualifications and work experience.

## Fay's journey

Fay's journey to becoming a Basic Skills Tutor involved her self-belief, courage, and determination to succeed.

Fig.1



## Nurse training

When Fay Gordon arrived in Britain she went straight into training to become a nurse, between 1971 and 1973. However, her training in mental health nursing at Banstead Psychiatric Unit ended abruptly because of difficulties she encountered with colleagues.

I did the test for State Registered Nursing (SRN), and they claimed I had not met the test standard for a pass.

Not being able to progress within general nursing, Fay looked for other avenues and courses.

## Further training

After leaving Banstead, Fay saw a booklet about nursery nursing in the library. She applied and obtained sponsorship from Lambeth council

through the PATH initiative, as a pathway into professional social work that she undertook between 1974 and 1975. Although Fay successfully passed her exams, and applied for nursery nurse work, she could not get a reference from Lambeth and this hindered her progress at that time.

At that time, Lambeth said that they could not afford to lose a member of staff.

## Resilience

Fay did not let that set back, hold her back. She examined how she could pursue a better opportunity, so looked at health visiting. Although 'O' Level qualifications were required to pursue this career, and Fay did not possess even one, she overcame that obstacle.

Therefore, Fay decided to obtain 'O' Levels, and enrolled in college to study six 'O' Levels. So she studied at night, while working through an employment

agency during the day. By this time Fay was also caring for her eighteen month old daughter.

Fay worked as an unqualified Social Worker, working with child minders, in an office based job, providing administration such as organising registration and training. Fay was also involved in the women and work group and under-five's campaign.

Fay continued her education and went on to the access course at Thames Polytechnic, and continued on to study for a degree in Sociology, with grant aid that assisted her financially. However, after the second year of the degree Fay left and went to East London Polytechnic but that did not work out, so she returned to Thames Polytechnic to complete the course and passed the Sociology degree.

Fay entered into social work, working at a One O'clock Club and play groups. She also worked supporting those with special needs and the elderly

in care homes, while being a mother to three children.

Fay also obtained a Certificate in Education at Roehampton University, and became a Basic Skills Tutor.



Fig. 2

This became a long-term career occupation, but it was hard work, requiring travel to different boroughs in London. Nevertheless, it was also rewarding work, where Fay became supervisor and trainer to other tutors. It was particularly enjoyable because she worked in community settings with young people, teaching them and

encouraging them to find employment. Often, training in the trade professions involved attending community based learning.

### *Determined*

Many people of Afro-Caribbean heritage travel on the path of life with a determined stride. Pushing through obstacles and difficulties, seeking to survive as well as rise. Being prepared to study and improve their level of qualification and skills, alone and supported by benevolent people.

Many, on the move constantly seek new opportunities and jobs, to improve and maintain an income to continue looking after their families. Fay's story, and her will to succeed, is characteristically similar to the following stories.

### *Future Generations*

Nevertheless, not all of the people who travelled to Britain, neither some of their

descendants, sought or seek employment in a company or organisation long term. Alternatively they remained or navigated into self-employment.

### *Get a Trade*

Many people who migrated to Britain had trade skills, in a wide variety of areas. So knew their value and thought they could use those skills to gain employment. Sadly, many could not use their previously acquired skills in Britain. Nevertheless, children were encouraged to learn a trade, to be a skilled professional, and gain an education, believing these could offer better and more stable employment opportunities.

The stories in this small book highlight the paths taken, and success obtained from training and working within a skilled trade.

# Lee Brown

## Introduction

Lee currently teaches people upholstery and how to repair furniture, which he thoroughly enjoys. However, he has been doing this work in the past five years, so it is interesting to hear about his previous experiences and about his journey.

## Growing up

Lee's parents migrated to Britain from Jamaica. Lee was born in Britain, and he grew up as an average, happy go lucky kid, but says he was lost in terms of how he felt, and what expectations he could dream of for himself. His early teen years were particularly difficult regarding self-identity because as a black male teenager, society began to

see him differently. He therefore felt the effects of other peoples' responses to him. Such as when passing some people they would clutch on to their bags, in fear of losing it to street robbery, by a young black male. In meeting new people, Lee remarked that they would ask, 'where are you from...before London?' That enquiry questioned his British identity.

Therefore, he felt uneasy about being accepted in British society, and felt in a position that he describes as being, 'visible and invisible at the same time'. By this comment he is expressing a situation that he feels renders him too black and too urban, as an authentic member of society at the localised street level, thereby becoming invisible. However, he is visible and included when markets focus selling commodities to black people like him. Nevertheless, he firmly says, 'I never wanted to fit in'.

*We need more mentoring, and support to strengthen our character...we will face barriers and have doubts.*

Lee is full of creative ideas now but this was not always the case. Lee says that he was not an academic person, or artistic, when he was growing up because everything was on pause and his energy was focused on survival on a daily basis. Nonetheless, he knew that he wanted more than to settle for the everyday basic living experience. Although Lee's family, and specifically his uncles, were fashion conscious, and dressed smartly when attending family and other events, (as he says, they were 'dapper'), it took a while for him to find his path and creativity.

## Finding self

Looking back on his mid twenties, Lee was soul searching, trying to find out who he was and what he wanted to do. Some of his peers in the community went on the pathway of engaging in criminal activities to make money, and this was not a path he was going to walk down. He adhered to his parent's guidance when they told him, 'don't bring the police to my door'.



Still, growing up and maturing as a young man was painful. It was a period that Lee describes as, 'growing up in a void'.

*I had to try and find out more about myself, and what I could do because I did not want to be part of the 'rat race' anymore.*

Therefore, during his mid twenties he focused on building his character. He likens his journey to the 'Walk About' that Indigenous Australians do. He set about enlightening himself about his background to develop his identity, and to be discerning. He embarked on reading various books, to learn more about black history. To go beyond the first encounter he had at school, when he was told the history of black people from the perspective of the brutal chattel enslavement period.

*How can you grow without any foundation? I need to be authentic.*

Lee said he read the classics by authors such as Marcus Garvey, Maya Angelou, and Alice Walker, learning from writings from the black male and female psyche perspectives. He delved into uncovering his own perspective as a working-class black man. Through this quest he learnt to love and believe in himself.

Lee embarked on working in the fashion industry, expanding into retail as a buyer, stylist, and merchandiser. He worked in fashion when he was in his mid twenties up to 2000 when there was a downturn in the industry. He was also exhausted, so took time out to find out what he wanted to do next, and how he could establish himself.

## *Recycle*

Lee is concerned about the environment, the pollution, and waste occurring as a result of the modern throw-away society lifestyle. So five years ago he decided to recycle furniture of varied sorts, and use creative ideas to reproduce new items. He now teaches people how to repair and restore furniture in Hackney at the Hackney Community Project, called the Loop.

*I want to give back to the community that raised me. I now want to teach and inform others, and tell them, 'you can do it for yourself'.*

## Entrepreneur

Seeing that people liked his work, and that there is a market for his work, Lee became an entrepreneur with his own business. He worked on creations such as a reconfigured travel van by creating a new fold-up bed, and remodelled the interior. He has aspirations and ideas to design his own furniture range, and to remodel the interior of a housing association flat to the original layout of the first ones found on a Peabody Estate in the early twentieth century.

*I never went to business school, but I said I would open up my own business. There is no mystery to running your own business.*

Although Lee did not undertake formal training in upholstery at college, he uses his gift and innate skills. He

remodels furniture and items that people have thrown out using off-cuts of material sourced without cost, to restore items. He also wants to inspire others and reflect his Black, African, Caribbean and British identity in his work.

*My stuff...is bold and bright.*

Lee has crafted out his own style, for people who are attracted to it. He is not trying to appeal to everyone because his work is not just about the money, for his restorations harbour historical stories of objects used in everyday life that he wants to bring out.



Fig.4

*We saw items as old and trashy, but the next person can see the value.*



Fig. 5





Fig.6



Fig.7



Fig.9



Fig.8



Fig.10

# Joe Allen

## Introduction

Joe Allen is resident Master Tailor on Cross Street, Islington, in London. His family have been in business for over forty years in that area. Therefore, Joe is part of a successful inter-generational family business, in existence since the 1890s. Consequently, Joe continues to inspire younger generations.

## Background

Joe's parents, James met Mary, met at school and they later married in 1950, and left to go to Curacao. Joe was born in Curacao and spent his early years there. Aged four his parents took

him with his two siblings to Montserrat, to stay with his maternal grandmother and aunty. His parents migrated to England in the 1950s to continue their work in tailoring.

Both Joe's grandmother and aunty were tailors, and their parents were tailors since the 1890s. In fact, Joe's grandmother, Missy Khora, provided tailoring in Montserrat, making garments for the Islands nobility. She also taught her daughter, Mary, and his father, James tailoring. James started learning the trade when he was 14 years old.

## Early childhood

While Joe was a young boy in Montserrat, he admits he had a keen interest in looking after the garden, animals and having fun. He had his sights elsewhere. Therefore, he says, 'I wanted to become a mechanic but I do not like getting my hands dirty'. Nonetheless, the tailoring seed was being sown in him.

You see what's happening around you all the time...when Grandma and Aunty were teaching apprentices I was watching...but I did not realise I was doing that.

## Migration

Aged thirteen, Joe and his siblings joined their family in England. Joe's father had already started his own business. He decided to become self-employed because on arrival in England he obtained a job working for Burton's. However, he soon realised that his assistant was paid at a rate three times more than his salary, so he left. He began working from his home, above a betting shop called Ron Needle. When the betting shop closed he acquired the space for his tailoring business that opened in 1969 at 228 Blackstock Road, in Islington, called J.

Allen and Sons. James Allen was the first black person to open a tailoring shop in England.

On arrival, Joe went to Highbury Grove School. Joe remarks, 'I was interested in art and maths when I arrived'. Nevertheless, after three months his entry into tailoring formally started. Joe's father ran evening classes, teaching tailoring, but one evening, feeling ill with gastric pains and sweating, he was unable to perform. Joe, felt confident to teach the lesson, and although his father was quizzical that he could, his mother was encouraging. After teaching the class, Joe continued to teach and help with tailoring tasks, alongside his siblings, in the evening after school and completion of his homework.

Indeed, he learnt the mysteries of Sartoria from his father, a master tailor. Joe therefore wore tailored mohair suits to school when he was aged sixteen years old. Later, one of the teachers

commissioned their father to make him a suit.

Joe obtained 'O' Levels and after leaving school he attended Stoke Newington College where he studied 'A' Level art. He went on to the London School of Fashion to study tailoring, pattern cutting, and design, and obtained a formal qualification. Throughout his studies he continued to work with his parents. In addition, continuing to perfect his craft. He also went on to lecture at the London School of Fashion, Gloucester College of Art, the Royal College of Art and the American College in London.

### *Other interests abroad*

In need of a break, Joe went on a two week holiday to the Virgin Islands, visiting his sister who ran a seafood restaurant and guest house. His holiday elongated and he stayed seven years. In that time his fiancé joined him and they married. He worked doing freelance design for a company called

Java Wrap. He also worked with his sister at her restaurant and bar. In addition, Joe opened his own restaurant and bar, as well as a laundry and dry cleaning business.

### *Return to Britain*

Eventually, Joe's father visited the Virgin Islands and persuaded him to return to England and work in the family tailoring business.

While Joe was away the business had moved to 20 Cross Street in 1978 when the building they occupied was going to be demolished. His father remained there until he retired. Over time, their reputation and business grew, and they were invited to embassy parties and mixed with dignitaries.

I actually opened the door to my Dad's shop.

For a while, Joe and his brother, Charlie, worked in the tailoring



business together, but soon branched out to pursue their individual tailoring businesses. Other siblings are in the trade with Sharon, a dressmaker, and brother, Johnny, who worked as Head of Bespoke Tailoring at Kigour on Savile Row.

Our father raised us to run a business...we all want to be the boss.

Certainly, the family legacy continues. Joe opened his shop at 44 Cross Street twenty years ago, and he is still there.



Fig.11

### Famous elites

Joe has worked with designers such as Darla Jane Gilroy, and Katherine Hamlet who recommended him to teach at the RCA, Comme Des Garcon, Voyage, Luella, Taishi Nobukuni, and various big clothing firms. He has designed many garments including suits and garments for Princess Anne, and made some garments for Ringo Starr from the Beatles pop band, see Fig. 12.

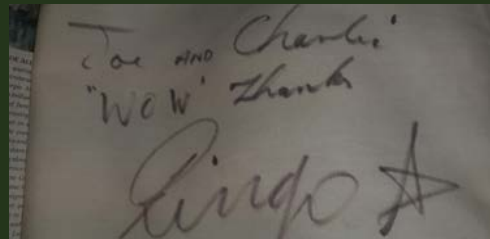


Fig.12

Joe has also made other items of clothing for other people in the entertainment business, such as reggae singer John Holt, Lulu, Terence Trent D'arby, Sade, Anne Lennox and Dave Stewart from the Eurythmics, as well as members of other pop groups, like INXS (Fig.13) and Madness. Other

customers include film director and comedian Mel Smith, and other members of the Royal Family.

Joe has collaborated with Vogue magazine, the International Wool Secretariat, Royal College and Giorgio Armani, staging the RAC show of the finest clothes that was sponsored by Laura Ashley. In addition, his work has been featured in Harpers and Queen, and Elle magazines. Further, the V and A Museum displayed one of his suits that as submitted by Annie Lennox.

I never have a sale because everything I make is original, or made in very small quantity.

Other work in the fashion world includes his modelling assignment for Comme Des Garcone in 1995 that also featured his father (Fig.14) and his brothers Charlie (Fig. 15), Johnny, Roger, and Joe (Fig.16). Locally, Joe has also worked on the Islington

Mayoral robes, and many other designs (Fig.17).



Joe's designs - INXS  
Fig.13



Fig. 14



Fig. 15

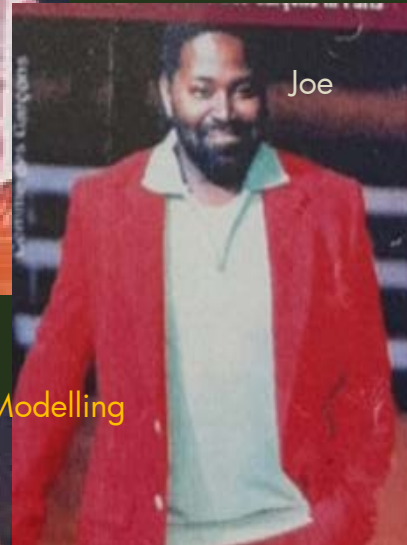
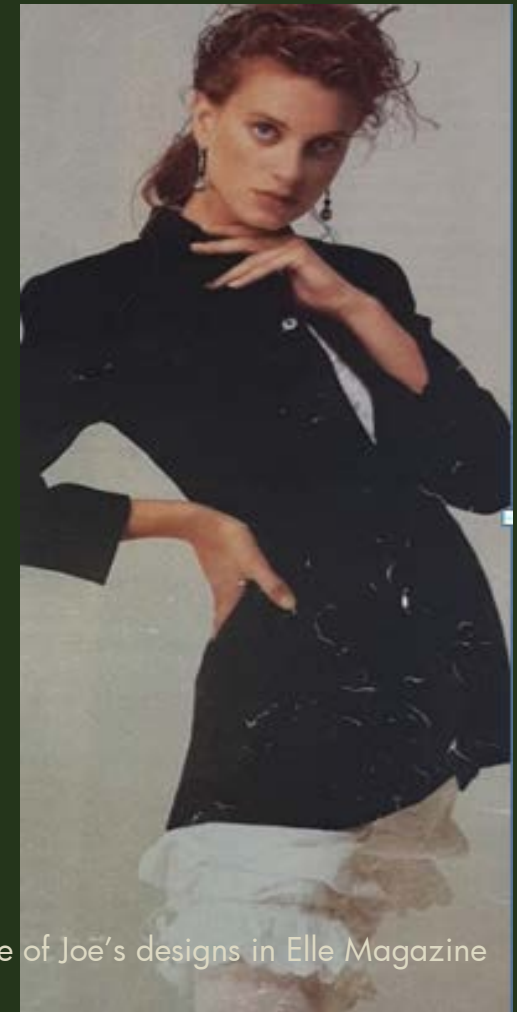


Fig. 16

Charlie Modelling



One of Joe's designs in Elle Magazine

Fig.17

## Joe's legacy

Reputation is very important to Joe, and he maintains his reputation by delivering to a high standard. He says, 'my daughters call me, 'the real McCoy', for being a genuine and good tailor. Certainly, Joe has longstanding and inter-generational customers, and he has made wedding dresses for the children of his original customers.

Joe describes himself as a craftsman, working from concept, through design, to making the garment without subcontracting out tasks. He has an assistant working with him, who supports him to ensure all garments are made to perfection.

Where my label goes into garments, I or my quality control consultant has to oversee it.

Certainly, the family has been recognised and are part of the fashion

elite, attending Merchant Tailor events, most recently in 2019.

I have done my job, I have taught my children. I look forward to them taking over the shop and workshop, continuing the family business.

Joe's two daughters, Jade and Jillian, have joined the family trade. Jade's label (E.g. design Fig.18) is called Missy Kora, honouring her great grandmother.



Fig.18

Like his father, Joe also runs courses teaching others tailoring, and is keen to attract more young people to learn the craft of tailoring, and become an expert crafts person, undertaking worthwhile jobs.

Take pride in your work and know your worth.



Fig.19

Lastly, Joe remarks that his most treasured memories include Princess Anne wearing a dress he designed to open the airport in Montserrat in 2005 and that his daughters' are continuing their master tailoring family legacy.



# A aliyah Kaka

## Introduction

Aaliyah always had a creative aspect to her being from a young age. So, after looking at other possible career paths, she decided to become an architect. She is also very insightful and philosophical about life.

Why are we moving so fast forward with life, rather than living with it?

## Background

Aaliyah is very much inspired by her family, and as a child she started to explore her creativity with doodling, similar to her mother who also doodled. For Aaliyah, doodling is the beginning stage of an opportunity to develop a bigger design. Certainly, doodling lets out artistic expression and is free flowing. Aaliyah says, 'I do what my mind tells my hand to do' (Figs. 20-23).

Aaliyah is greatly influenced by her Nan, who is very independent, having migrated from Northern India with her five children, and solely brought them up in Britain, where Aaliyah's mother met her Caribbean father.

My Nan is my biggest inspiration.

Aaliyah definitely has an ambition to succeed that was nurtured in her by her Nan.



Fig.20



Fig.21



Fig.22

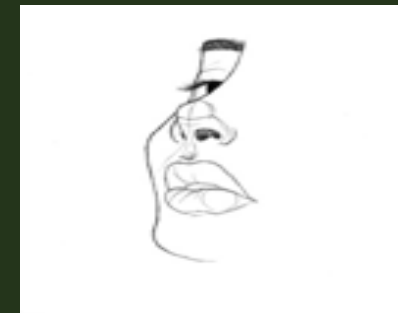


Fig.23

## Artistic

Aailyah's creativity started at a young age, in primary school. Although briefly exploring athletics, she returned to artistic explorations.

I didn't know what I wanted to do, but I like art and drawing, and my Nan suggested architecture.

Her interest in art involves a wide spectrum of activities that includes taking photographs, although this was not pursued as a career option. Aailyah also has a keen interest in cooking, influenced by her Nan's cooking, that she has adapted to her own blend. Indeed, she views cooking as artistic and in some way would like to develop this interest, and interweave it with her architecture.

## Career decision

When she was thirteen years old, Aailyah researched architecture. Initially finding the gothic style, but she did not like this design type. Yet, using her inquisitive nature, she wondered how designs are created.

When she was fifteen, the work of architect Frank Lloyd Wright caught her eye. His work married architectural infrastructure with the natural world, with his use of earthy colours that took from nature and gave back to it. Wright's use of glass served as a conduit bringing the outside world closer to the inside of buildings.

Therefore, later, when Aailyah was faced with choosing options for her 'A' levels she chose Fine Art, 3D Design, ICT, and in addition tried Business Studies but only for a short while. By this time, she had confirmed within herself that she was a creative and expressive person.



Fig.24



Fig.25

She enjoyed working with different mediums, such as wood that can be sculptured. Similarly liking measuring, and mapping out space that can be turned into designs for buildings (Figs. 24- dance studio, 25 - building).

## University

After college, Aaliyah selected a university to study architecture.

I was the first person in the family to go to university, and I felt that I needed to do well.

Aiming high, Aaliyah looked at the top 5 universities in the Russell group, and decided to go to the University of Nottingham, where she could maintain her focus. Accompanied by her sibling's father to the open day, she was inspired by his advice to her when he said, 'think about where you are going in life'.

At first, she says that she felt a bit out of place at university, but drew strength from recalling the aforementioned advice.

Her journey through university was demanding. After initially working part-time in retail while on the course, she soon left the job to maintain her focus, and the high grades she was getting for her assignments.

Ultimately, Aaliyah concluded her degree course achieving a respectful 2.1 grade.

## Building a nursery

While at university, Aaliyah was part of a group of twenty four students that went to Limpopo, in South Africa, on a mission to build a nursery. They built the new nursery in a place with more land around it, where people could grow plants and vegetables. Certainly, Aaliyah is keen to work on sustainable projects (Figs 25-27 - nursery, Fig. 28- with a toddler in South Africa).



Fig.26



Fig.27



Fig.28

We need to use the sun for energy.



Fig.29

### Job seeking

As part of the opportunities made available to graduates at the university, they were invited to exhibit their work, and representatives from different firms visited, that could open opportunities for employment. Sadly, Aaliyah was disappointed when representatives passed by her, but did not look at her exhibits. Nonetheless, she continued to make applications to various firms. Then, the Covid-19 pandemic hit in early 2020 causing many job losses in different work areas. Not perturbed, Aaliyah continued to keep an open mind.

I was waiting so long, praying on it, Nan was praying on it...my world lifted when Iketecture replied to my request.

It was after Aaliyah saw an entry by the architecture firm Iketecture, responding

to a competition online, that she sent them an email asking if they were hiring, or would take someone on for work experience. This connection changed her fortune. She met with the firm on Google Meets, and was set a task to design a dream building, or improve an existing house. She chose to create a drawing improving the home she shares with her Nan, turning it into two houses. This was successful and she obtained a job, which also provided training for Part 1 in architecture. Her Nan also liked the concept she created, which has influenced her thinking about improving their home.

Iketecture works within London's diverse ethnically mixed communities, and with clients in the Ivory Coast, enabling that culture to influence designs.

Aaliyah has been working on design concepts at Iketecture since February 2020, and is looking ahead to completing her Master's degree in Architecture. Although for the next

stage in her professional development, she might undertake the apprenticeship route to formally complete her training to become an architect, because she enjoys learning alongside work experience. Thereafter, she envisions completing the final exam requirement.



Fig.30

## The Future

Aaliyah dreams about continuing to help people. She wants youths to know that there is opportunity out there, and there is a growing need for new buildings.

It can be tedious working on the same architecture project for one year, so you need to have patience.

Looking ahead, Aaliyah would like to own her own architecture firm one day, empowering black people and women to join the profession. Perhaps expanding and blending her architecture and cooking interests in a new venture. Showing enterprise, she has created her own website, [aaliyahkaka.com](http://aaliyahkaka.com) that serves as her profile and showcase for her creative ideas. Although busy, Aaliyah balances her work with enjoying tranquillity and

peace derived from being around plants and animals.



# Michael Cowan

## Introduction

When Michael left Jamaica and migrated to Britain, his intention was to take up a new occupation. Definitely, his new endeavours ultimately complemented his former work, as he continued to use established skills, and develop new ones.

## Background

Michael had already worked in the building industry in Jamaica. His father, a builder, was instrumental in teaching him skills in the building trade while he was in high school. He would accompany his father on the jobs he undertook at the weekends, and in the summer holidays, assisting him with his work so gaining knowledge and skills. He learnt a lot of his carpentry skills

from his father. For example, he could proficiently fit a door in place by himself when he was fifteen years old.

Although not his dream profession, after Michael left high school he got a job with a company called ELA Jones and Associates, building houses.

*I didn't want to go into the building trade, because I did not think it was sophisticated enough, although I did not know what I wanted to do. I thought of doing something in an office, sitting behind a desk.*

One day, his boss at work rewarded him for his good work. He offered Michael a blank cheque to cover the cost of formal training, and Michael

accepted it. He took the cheque to the college, and paid his tuition fees for the Eciton Civil Engineering course. While attending college in Mandeville, Jamaica, Michael continued to work for his boss gaining valuable hands-on practical experience, and eventually qualified as a civil engineer.

## Business

After obtaining his formal qualification Michael purchased fifty per cent of the company, and became equal business partners with his former boss at ELA Jones and Associates. He brought a complementary balance to the company with his practical engineering skills in the field, managing construction of the calculations and designs in the civil engineering work plans.

The company was successful, primarily working on industrial buildings, and was the first company in Jamaica to work on the cooling towers installation at Bogue in Montego Bay, for the American firm called Cooling Towers

Technologies. Plus, ELA Jones and Associates undertook renovations and built domestic dwellings.

### *Entrepreneurial expansions*

Besides holding a business partnership, Michael also had a hardware store, employing a store manager.

In addition, Michael travelled and expanded outwards to New York, where he extended ELA Jones and Associates. He taught other people the skills of the multi-trades, similar to his experience of being nurtured.

Michael worked in ELA Jones and Associates in Jamaica for thirteen years, and built his own home, moving in when he was twenty nine years old. He then sold his part of the company to embark on a new adventure, and travelled to Britain.

On arrival, Michael got a job, but at the end of the week, after receiving his

wages, he left because the funds did not meet his expectations.

*I am general builder, I do loft conversions, extensions...plumbing, electrical, carpenter and joinery work... anything in the building industry.*

### *New training and opportunities*

Michael enjoyed training people, so decided he wanted to pursue a career in education, teaching vulnerable youths at risk of harm. So, he obtained employment with Mears and other organisations, as a carer helping people in their homes.

*I am not just a builder, I am into customer service – the building is a by-product of what I do.*

Soon, Michael embarked on a psychology degree course, while he continued working as a carer. He simultaneously worked in maintenance for East Surrey Hospital, for a year, while he was a student. He was a busy student, alongside day and night jobs.

After passing his assignments on the degree course, he only had the final dissertation project to complete. Sadly, his computer crashed while compiling his dissertation, and this assignment containing months of work was irretrievable. Consequently, Michael was disheartened so he could not complete the final dissertation assignment.

Moving on, Michael soon obtained a job as a handyman, with Fantastic Services, so he set up a company with limited status, and it supplied him with assignments. In recognition of his good work and aptitude, he achieved employee of the month, after the first month in this working relationship.

However, after six months, the company asked Michael to put their company logo on his vehicle, or lease their vehicle and pay rent for using it, so he left this work arrangement.

*I sell myself as confident, and I know I have to get it right.*

Nevertheless, with true grit, Michael started a new company undertaking building work. This business continues and he currently collaborates with five other trades people who he works with constantly. He also became a property manager, and continues to manage properties.

*I don't think any job is too small.*



Fig.31

Michael is a talented and trusted individual, who is keen to expand his horizons. He is also happy to continue

learning on the job, and will ask for advice and assistance as required.

He is happy to undertake jobs at all sizes. Often being asked to change a light bulb, hang a chandelier, or mend a toilet, has led to further requests to undertake larger building work such as erecting extensions and undertaking renovations. Those job referrals also lead on to other fruitful opportunities.

Reflecting on what he learnt while undertaking the psychology degree, he acknowledges that it has helped him in his building work, regarding developing and harnessing good customer relations. Michael is proud of his opportunities and accomplishments.

So far, his career has kept him busy, and he states that he has made many friends and associates, providing him with a number of lasting memories.

*We will never have a fall out over money because we will come to an agreement.*



## Looking ahead

Michael is currently undertaking building work for Croydon BME Forum. He has previously renovated their Health and Wellness Centre, created office space and meeting rooms for therapy and counselling out of an empty space, and updated the bathroom. Michael put in partition walls and decorated the place.

Due to his skills, work ethic, and engaging and caring personality, Michael has constant requests for diverse engagements.

However, he is also looking forward to enjoying the fruits of his creative labour. Certainly, Michael expects to return to Jamaica when he retires from work in Britain, and he has the home he built waiting for him to occupy.



Fig.32



Fig.33



Fig.34

# Trevor Elliot

## Introduction

Trevor thoroughly enjoys his work, and has built up a good reputation over the years. He has fine tuned his talent, being a multi talented craftsman. He is also helping younger generations to develop their aptitude and skills.

## Background

Trevor grew up in the borough of Lewisham, belonging to a big family consisting of nine children. Sadly, his father died when he was fifteen years old, as well as one of his brothers when he was a teenager. They were greatly missed and Trevor says that his mother

had a broken heart. Reflecting on his younger self Trevor says that losing his father changed his life, and he quickly shifted his perspective as he grew into a young man. Wherein, Trevor and his siblings looked after their mother and each other.

I had to become a man.

## Seeking

While at school Trevor enjoyed wood work and metal work and obtained grade 'B' in these exams. However, it took a while before he settled on his path. Trevor says he juggled (did bits and pieces) for a while, such as working on the development of sound system equipment. Also, remarking that it was difficult for young black men to obtain opportunities for employment.

When I was seventeen, there was nothing for us to do.

Trevor also recalls that he wandered around wondering what he could do.

## Training

Soon, Trevor found a community based organisation situated in Lower Sydenham and at Algernon Road in Ladywell, funded to work with young men who had experience within the criminal justice system, to help them into employment. Although Trevor did not have any engagement with the criminal justice system he found favour, and was accepted to join the training programme with his brother Max.

After a short time learning in the workshop, one of the workers, Peter, suggested to Trevor that he should attend college to further develop his obvious talent. Trevor was willing to access further training but did not have the finance to do so. Fortunately, for Trevor, his place at college was funded by a loan from the parents of his girlfriend at that time. Soon, Trevor and a couple of others from the project

attended college. After studying for three years Trevor passed the course, and repaid the loan.

## Work

Therefore, at twenty years old, Trevor was in a good place professionally, but did not have a job, so he went to the careers office. He saw a note on the notice board that said, 'carpenter required'. Confident to apply, Trevor did not ask the careers office to introduce him because he took down the information and went to the address of the employer.

He was interviewed at Standage and Co. on Crystal Palace Road, by Mr. Brain, a South African. He was sent out on a test to a school, and asked to hang a door and fix the frame.

I did it, although I had never done that type of job before.

Although this task was new to Trevor, he succeeded, so after inspection he was offered the job.

Trevor was the only black person working for that company, which had contracts to do maintenance work in schools. He met Mr. Brain's family, went to dinner at their home, and says he was treated like a son. Consequently, when he moved into his first flat Mr. Bain helped him to furnish it.

Tragically, when Trevor was twenty one, his mother died. Fortunately, his big sister, Rose became the head of the family, kept them together, and helped them on the right road.

## Self employed

Trevor continued to excel in his work, and after being employed by Mr. Brain for sixteen years, he became self-employed, obtaining work on a sub-contractor basis with Standage and Co.

He worked on the development of Chelsea and Westminster Hospital for the duration of the build, over three years.

Progressing further, he purchased a white Ford Escort Van, and proudly put, 'T. Elliot' on it.

That's when I know I was progressing in my trade.

He adds, 'I then went out on my own, being fully independent and winning my own jobs'. Although he printed business cards, Trevor says he got all of his work by 'word of mouth', on the reputation of his personal goodness and excellent work.

## Specialise

Trevor was able to perform multi-trade work. However, he wanted to specialise and perfect an aspect of his broad range of abilities. So he chose to

specialise working as a Kitchen Fitter and Cabinet Maker, focusing on under stairs units, wardrobes, and fitting bathrooms. In addition, he made out houses creating everything from the foundation to the roof, and continues to perform other carpentry tasks.

You got to keep your clients happy. It's what makes me what I am.



Fig.35

Kitchen



Fig.36



Floorboards

Fig.37

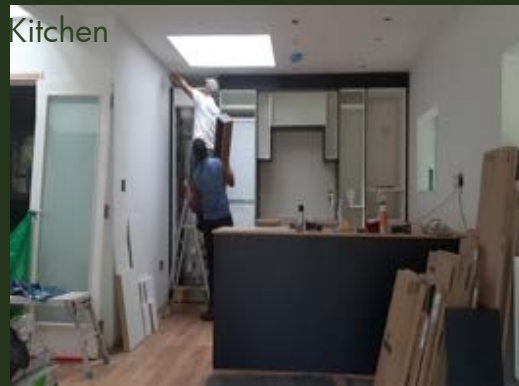


Fig.38



Fig.39

In addition to other clients, Trevor has worked on his brother, Maxi Priest's home in Britain and in Jamaica, fitting in the wardrobes and kitchen.

It's disappointing for the youngsters. They need to learn a trade.

Trevor is very successful and supports other young men to develop their skills in the trades, by taking on apprentices. So far he has taken on a few apprentices. One apprentice called Tony has created his own multi-trade company, and another called Cameron is working for a London borough council. His other apprentice, Tristran, was recruited by Cameron, and is currently working with him.



Fig.40

# Tristan Mitchell

## Introduction

Tristan is becoming more confident daily as he pursues his apprenticeship with Trevor Elliot. I was privileged to observe them together in their workspace where I conducted my interviews with both of them. There is an obviously respectful, nurturing, and fun engagement between Trevor and Tristan.

## Background

Tristan is settling in well in his training and has achieved confidence in his performance so far. He says he feels grounded and is happy that he has

found a trade that will be his future career.

Tristan informed me that his early years were difficult. He was born in Jamaica, and grew up with family members. He did experience moving between households, and eventually travelled to England when he was fourteen years old to be with his mother.

However, growing into a young man was not easy and it took a while for him to find a pathway to secure his future.

## Employment

Prior to undertaking his apprenticeship, Tristan was employed for two and a half years working at a hotel. However, he worked long hours at the hotel, and that was incompatible with parenting. For, being a young father with childcare responsibilities, like engaging in taking and picking up his child from school, it was a gruelling schedule.

I realised working in a hotel was not for me.

In addition, he did not really want to continue working in the hotel. He had a desire to work in the building trade, so had taken the test and passed obtaining his CSI card that enabled him to work in construction. He also picked up some trade skills so he was already able to perform some tasks. This ignited his interest and excitement to learn more.

## Apprenticeship

Therefore, on recommendation, he became Trevor Elliot's apprentice, and continued learning more while working on jobs. Tristan has been working with Trevor just over a year and has reached a proficient level in fitting kitchens and flooring.

I am good doing the rough stuff, so that's what I think I should stick to.

Tristan firmly believes that working in an office environment is not for him, he feels suited to work that is more hands-on, in a physical sense. He is definitely keen to progress, and is inspired by Trevor.

One day I would like to be as good as Trevor, he is brilliant at everything.

### Looking ahead

Tristan is motivated to improve and be a master at his work. He is also inspired by his mother, who has returned to Jamaica and built two houses there.

Tristan is confident to finish his apprenticeship, and similar to Trevor, branch out and become self-employed.

When I feel fully comfortable, I would rather work for myself.

He also wants to return to Jamaica and rekindle his connection there. He looks forward to his return and to undertaking leisure pursuits such as hiking in the mountain, swimming, as well as going to the river and beach.

He happily reminisces, 'you wake up and feel you are alive, whereas in Britain it is mostly hard work'. However, he is not shy of working hard, but seeks a balance and to return to his roots. Certainly, he sees a bright future ahead, and is on the path to fulfilling his dream, and working in his chosen profession.

I see my future in building and construction.



Fig.41



# R

Richard  
Baillie

## Introduction

At an early age Richard knew that he wanted to work within the trades, and eventually managed to have a successful career within this field. Now retired, he maintains an interest in developing youngsters on a personal level and continues to advise them on technical matters.

## Background

Richard was born in Jamaica, in Franklin Town, Kingston, and travelled to England when he was eleven years old. When he arrived in Britain he had

to adjust to the new society, and deal with the issues faced by the Caribbean community at school, and when he started to work. Nevertheless, he overcame the obstacles and thrived.

## School

On arrival, Richard continued his education, and attended Samuel Pepys secondary school, describing it as a 'racist and tough school' in the 1960s. It was most difficult when he started, with only five other black students.

He was placed in a low level stream, with children said to have 'special needs'. His parents knew this was an incorrect placement and made a complaint. Afterwards Richard moved up to the middle stream level.

Soon, there was an influx of black people from the Caribbean and many more black students arrived. The students supported each other in the tough environment, and were even known as the 'untouchables', in an

environment segregated by choice. Reflecting on 1967, Richard recounts managing the situation where black pupils sat on one side of the class, and white pupils on the other. Few sat mixed together in the middle.

Undeniably, Richard was a good student, and became a Prefect and Deputy Head of House. He was especially good at woodwork. He remarks that his friends were brilliant, they were good at fighting, and also excelled in athletics, representing the school at county level. Happily, he says he maintains contact with them.

## Started work

Richard finished sixth form at school, obtaining 'O' Levels, and was ready to find work. He initially wanted to be a carpenter but did not enter this trade.

My father told me to go and learn a trade, but not carpentry, in this country you will only work on a building site.

His father was a furniture maker in Jamaica but when he arrived in England he became a conductor on the bus. His mother worked as a conductress. Nonetheless, Richard looked elsewhere.

Initially, Richard interviewed unsuccessfully for a technical job with the Post Office. However, it was his maths teacher, Mr. Mills, who got an interview for him with the Metropolitan Water Board (MWB) that opened the door to employment. He took a test and obtained an apprenticeship with the MWB.

I was confident, and I knew I impressed them.

The apprenticeship lasted four years, and Richard attended Willesden Technical College throughout. Although he passed the course, and became a qualified electrician, he was not offered employment, but told, 'we haven't got any jobs within travelling

distance for you'. Nevertheless, remaining sociable, Richard also maintained contact with the other black apprentices he met and continued to look for work.

He obtained employment with Highgrades, a sausage and hamburger company in Peckham, as an electrician. Unfortunately, the Foreman, a fellow black man sacked him because they did not get on well. Yet the Governor, a white man, overturned it and he stayed with the company for a year. Richard worked long days, and all days of the week, so when he requested a half day off on a Sunday and he was denied, he walked out.

His next employment was with London Silver Vaults, working in maintenance as an electrician. Here he worked on installing lifts on building sites, and at Guy's Hospital when it was being built. He added to his knowledge, learning the mechanical side of installations. He expected to be promoted after two years, from a mate level to lift engineer.

After three years he was verbally abused and told, 'if we were in Africa, I would have kicked you down the shaft by now.' So being disgruntled Richard often arrived late at work and eventually got the sack.

The racism and things I had to put up with... they just wouldn't promote me.

Yet he was worried on the day he was sacked because he had a home, a wife and a child to maintain, and these responsibilities were on his mind. So on his way home he went into Catford Library, saw a job advertised, called the company, went to an interview and was offered the job at United Lubricants, where he stayed for fifteen years.

I was good at my job, and when I cared about it I was even better.



Richard was promoted to a Foreman, in charge of eight men. Again he worked hard, even doing unpaid overtime, and covered shifts for other employees. So when he was made redundant, with a meagre package he stopped looking for employment and became self-employed.

### Self employed

Richard obtained £1,000 through a business start-up scheme, printed cards and got tools. Richard would now work for himself, in R.B. Electrics, specialising in work on residential and commercial buildings. Initially, there was one reply to his business card advertisement but that led to a further two years work on army barracks and the Territorial Army buildings. Thereafter, he got work from his good reputation and recommendations from friends, so he expanded onwards.

It's a challenge and personally satisfying to win a job, and deliver, with the customer happy.

Being a good colleague, one of Richard's apprentices remained assisting him for twelve years.

Certainly, Richard has seen good and bad times, been bankrupt and built back stronger. He worked in self-employment steadily for nearly thirty years, until he retired.

Reputation is important, and being trustworthy and honest is vital. People must be able to trust you and to leave you in their property alone.

Richard has worked on rewiring and installations in his home and in his families' properties (Figs. 42-45).

Fig.42



Fig.43



Fig.44



Fig.45

### Giving back

Richard says he is a football fanatic and Spurs supporter. He has always played football and joined workplace teams when he worked at MWB and United Lubricants. He also engaged in youth work at Bells Gardens Youth Club in Peckham, doing football training with youngsters. He is keen to assist youth development, although he says 'some are beyond help'. However, he still wants to reach out to youngsters and help them develop into purposeful and meaningful people.

# Hilda Castillo- Binger

## Introduction

Hilda migrated to Britain from Trinidad in the 1970s, aged twenty, to train as a nurse, and had a fruitful career until she retired in 2010. Thereafter, she got involved in gardening, and this has enabled her to extend her care for self, and others by assisting them to look after their well-being.

## Background

Hilda arrived at the Hastings School of Nursing, as a boarder, and started her training. Although she took the exams to progress to be a State Registered Nurse, she remained suspicious that she

never passed, so could not proceed until years later after successfully completing her Midwifery training at Carlisle, and Psychiatric Nurse training, and subsequently moved to Gravesend.

Despite initially being told at work that she would never become a State Registered Nurse, she achieved it and was also promoted, to being in charge of a ward.

Hilda says that her nurse training and performing tasks, such as holding the hand of dying patients, strengthened her character. When she faced discrimination, or fellow black colleagues were pelted with faeces by some patients, they supported each other. They coped by taking the day off when they felt stressed.

*Two to three patients died at night...so nurses had camaraderie, and supported each other.*

Hilda also provided nursing care through working for agencies. The extra money enabled her to travel to Trinidad, where she helped her father in her native rural area, to reap crops.

## Family

After courting her husband for ten years, Hilda got married and had two sons. Her husband arrived in London at sixteen years old. His uncle was a mechanic and helped him to become a mechanic, and he subsequently, worked on Rover cars at Keen and Sons in Battersea.

## Retirement

In her last nursing job, Hilda worked as a specialist nurse and Team Leader with Sickle Cell patients. However, after retirement in 2010, she compiled a treasure trove box of memories. She also completed the six weeks course, called the Expert Patient Programme,

and went on to be a volunteer tutor with people living with chronic conditions such as diabetes. As well as treating herself to a holiday by going to Trinidad for two months.

Fig. 46



Fig.47



Fig. 48



Fig.49

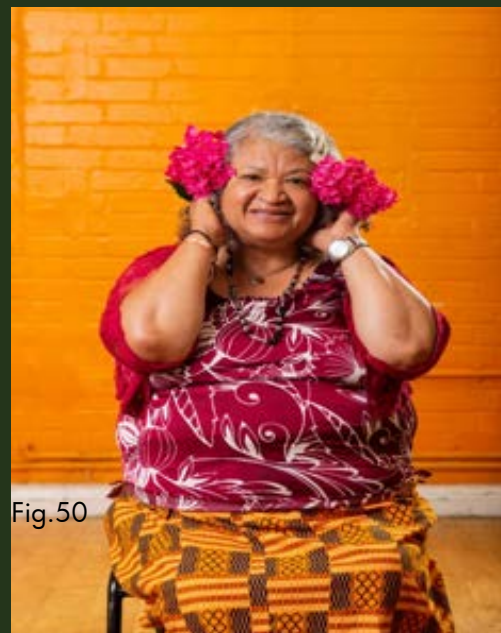


Fig.50

## Gardening

Hilda grew up in a rural agricultural area in Trinidad, and helped her father reap harvests, and maintained a keen interest in farming and gardening. Therefore, in 2012, Hilda started to work with Lambeth GP Food Coop, and completed the intensive Master Gardening course, and learnt to grow and sell food. Hilda is involved in three projects, as team leader at Lambeth Walk, Stockwell Estate and on the 12 week collaborative pilot project held at Katakata cafe.

In this role Hilda is working with GPs, and some of her clients have been referred to help them to manage their health and wellbeing.

Hilda's first gardening project was in 2013 at Lambeth Walk. She also visited allotments with the gardening group at Loughborough Farm, Brockwell Park Community Garden, Oasis at Guys and St. Thomas, in addition to networking with the South

London Botanical Institute. As well as being involved with a mentoring scheme at Age UK Lambeth.

With the Lambeth Garden Museum, Hilda attends an annual picnic at the Rookery in Streatham, and is also involved with the museum on a project looking at what Caribbean people are growing in London.

Hilda most recently began leading a twelve week gardening group, working with asylum seekers at Katakata on Brixton Hill. This is a group of diverse people, with language and cultural differences. The sessions also include mindfulness to manage mental health wellbeing. They are making disposable pots, and planting herbs in pots. They use toilet rolls and newspapers to the make disposable pots.

*I have not taken formal qualifications, but I am learning about gardening*

### *Hilda's garden at home*

Hilda's husband, Earl, was also a keen gardener and her garden at home is filled with a variety of growths. He particularly liked roses, and adorned the garden in the front of the house with them. Her back garden is varied, and includes apple, banana, and pear trees. There is a grape vine and numerous flowers and herbs. She has a Japanese banana plant, castor oil plant and is keen to grow other medicinal herbs and plants.

### *Master Gardening*

Hilda is looking forward to attend a Master Gardening course, to learn more about soil, seeds, and seasonal herb growing. As well as acquiring deeper knowledge of organic gardening, planting trees, and fermentation, and is keen to recruit more people to learn about gardening.

She would also like to learn more IT skills and be more artistic, so Hilda is thinking about doing a course in garden design.

With her interest in gardening deepening, Hilda is also seeking a role on the Board of Trustees for a community garden project, to have more of a managerial and strategic planning role in gardening projects.



Fig.51



# George Lewis

## Introduction

George migrated to Britain as a teenager and lived with his father and step-mother. As a young man he embarked on a career in electronics, but later had to change direction from it.

## Background

When George Lewis' father came to Britain, he was left in Jamaica with his mother. He was a bright, talented youngster and won a scholarship to study at the prestigious Jamaica College when he was eleven years old.

Unfortunately, when he was fourteen years old his mother died. So in 1965 he had to leave the college and travel to Britain to be with his father in Balham.

Sadly, despite being bright, he was not able to continue learning at the high standard that he previously achieved, but was downgraded in his new school in London.

*I was too bright for the class. I already learnt what was being taught in my new secondary school, in primary school in Jamaica.*

George also encountered problems at home with his father and step-mother. He describes his father as very studious and also like a military man, being very

strict on discipline. However, he always talked about the importance of having a good education. Nonetheless, due to the financial pressures of raising four children, when legally possible George's father told him that he had to leave school and go to work.



Fig.52

## Boxing

George enjoyed boxing, having taken up amateur boxing as a school boy. He later became a professional boxer in 1972. George represented England a couple of times, as a member of the Boxing club in Chalk Farm.

Other prominent boxers were on the scene at this time, such as John Conteh and Frankie Lucas. Unfortunately, it was difficult to remain in boxing because George was not making any money from it and needed to do so, particularly later when married with a family to support.

## Training and employment

As a youngster George was influenced by his father, who was a carpenter and joiner. He also had dreams of becoming a civil engineer but this did not materialise, so at seventeen years old George got his first job as an

apprentice in telecoms working for British Relay. He attended night school at Norwood College studying electronics. George moved on to work at the Post Office (which later became British Telecom (BT)) working within telecoms. He worked on underground cables in the City at Farringdon, Holborn and Chancery Lane, as well as working on the exchange. After spending two and a half years in this employment George left.

During this time, as a young man, socialising and attending Caribbean entertainment, he was pleased that he could use his skills to make amplifiers for his friends' sound systems.

*Edgware Road was my church, and I was there every Saturday morning without fail, looking for my favourite brand of electronic items – Bang and Olufsen.*

## Changes in the electronics industry

Throughout the 1970s George worked freelance, obtaining work from employment agencies and enjoyed higher wages, than those in permanent employment. By this time George had married and was looking after his wife and children. Unfortunately, the marriage did not last long and ended, leaving George with three children to support. Continuing to draw an income was therefore vital to him, especially to maintain the private school fees he paid to Rosendale Primary School in Dulwich for his three children.

*My father used to say, 'education, education, education'. It is very important.*

His short term work assignments included jobs for the electronics company called Vision Hire, fixing appliances and televisions that the company rented to its customers.

During this period new technologies and computers were being used and this affected work opportunities for George. Therefore, he sought a steady job and secured employment with British Rail.

Working at British Rail George felt respected by fellow workers and enjoyed a good salary. This job took him around the country, working in Doncaster, Newcastle, and other places, as well as on the Three Bridges train station.

*I would rate myself one of the top three 'wire' men working with British Rail at Western House.*

Throughout the 1980s digital technology continued to expand and companies often employed graduates to provide necessary skills. However, similar to many of his Caribbean peers, George was not afforded the opportunity to train in the new technologies.

*We were not offered new training, and we were squeezed out bit by bit, so came to nothing.*

It was an incident that occurred between George and his Boss at British Rail that led to him being sacked and losing secure employment. The incident took place at break time, when George went to the mess room to drink the ginger beer beverage that he brought to work and left in the fridge. On opening the fridge, the drink was missing. However, George saw his boss drinking the ginger beer. He says he felt so angry that he punched the

wall and left a big hole in it. George said that he explained what happened but they did not care, so he was sacked on the spot for damaging British Rail property.

*The Governor said, 'can you play cricket?' I replied, 'yes'. He said, 'you are out – sacked.*

So, without permanent employment, and unsuccessful at finding opportunities in his previous type of work, George called on his diverse skills to earn money to continue paying the private school fees and to maintain his new wife, and the three children they had.

## *Painting and Decorating*

George's father bought and sold houses, so as a youngster George also

acquired painting and decorating skills, from helping his father to decorate the properties that he rented.

*Every summer time we had to paint houses. We had to watch our father decorate, and learn the skills quickly.*



Fig.53



Fig. 54

George worked as a cab driver alongside painting and decorating. He also became a publican for two years, at the Balham Hotel. George remarks, 'as a publican you perform a lot of roles, such as a marriage broker and counsellor, and the pub is like a community centre or a church'. It was certainly an interesting job and he met a lot of people, in addition to those he was already familiar with from being a long standing Balham resident.

He worked very hard in multiple roles that unfortunately affected his health, resulting in him having a heart attack.

## Retirement

George is now in his seventies and retired from work. He is looking forward to going home to Jamaica, to live in the house that his father built.



Fig.55



# Dawn McKay

## Introduction

Dawn was born in Jamaica and migrated to Britain with her family. She has memories of her father's work as a multi-skilled tradesman. However, on migration to Britain, his work opportunities changed.

## Background

Dawn's father learnt his skills in Jamaica and had already created his own business, providing goods for the community. He was a creative and a talented craftsman, being a shoemaker and upholsterer.

*On migration my Britain, my father could only get menial work.*

*My father had his own business in Jamaica. He came to Britain to work for three and a half years, to earn money, return to Jamaica and build up his business.*

Although, Dawn's father was able to undertake some work using upholstery skills, he could not build a business. There were other family members who migrated with trade skills. Dawn's uncle was a carpenter and builder in Jamaica, and was able to continue working as a builder in Britain.

Fig.56



Fig.57

## Shoes and accessories

Dawn was treated to many items made by her father. She fondly recalls a special occasion when her family were invited to a function and her father made items for her and her sister. Smiling fondly, and speaking with pride Dawn says that her father made lovely co-ordinating items. The items were a pair of shoes, with matching handbags for the siblings using tools in Fig. 57.

## Civil Service

Eventually Dawn's father sought secure employment and obtained a job working for the Civil Service, until he retired at sixty five years old, and returned home to Jamaica.

# Dunstan Creavalle

## Introduction

This story highlights the legacy of engagement in photography, as one generation influenced another.

Dunstan currently works as a tutor, advising people about business development. However, he has a keen interest in social history and uses photographs to document concerns in the black community in Britain.

## Background

Dunstan's father was a photographer, and started taking pictures after he was gifted a Box Brownie Camera when he

was fourteen years old in Guyana. When he came to Britain he continued to work, as a self-employed photographer. He worked hard at this labour intensive craft taking pictures and developing the film in a darkroom.

At that time most people did not own a camera so relied on using professional photographers to take pictures of their family and important events, such as weddings and christenings. Therefore, his father was in great demand and became well known for his work in his local community in West London. His status was respected and he was always busy taking photographs. People would recommend him and he obtained assignments on his reputation and word of mouth.

## My father the photographer

Growing up, Dunstan was often the subject when his father took photos trying out new cameras and perfecting his skills. However, sometimes Dunstan found this frustrating but he became

accustomed to his father's requests, and Dunstan remembers being asked to 'sit still...move your head this way and that way'.

*When using the camera my father was confident, otherwise he was a shy man.*

In addition to working as a photographer Dunstan's father was also employed as a welder. He worked for Saunders and Fosters in Stratford, as a welder, until he was made redundant. Being a married man his father was keen to look after his wife and children. Therefore, he gained employment in security work and other jobs but he could not obtain secure, solid, and regular work.

## Dunstan taking pictures

The first camera that Dunstan used to take pictures belonged to his father, the

new digital camera, the Canon 20e. His photographs served to document what was going on in the black community.

Dunstan took pictures, and took the negatives to the photography and video store called Jessops to be developed and printed.



Fig.58

In 1989 Dunstan joined the Executives and Professional Network that brought like-minded people together, who met

to discuss topical issues affecting the black community such as those pertaining to work experiences, unemployment, education, experiences with the police, and mental health.

The network also organised other social networking events, such as book launches, readings and signings of prominent black authors such as Alice Walker that he documented using his camera.

*Dad used his camera to take picture of people and celebrations, and I used it to document social issues.*

Dunstan also wrote reviews of the events taking place within the black community, publishing articles with his photographs in publications such as The Voice, New Nation, and London Extra.

As a member of the Executives and Professional Network, Dunstan was concerned about encouraging positive developments in the black community, and specifically uplifting and mentoring children.

His concern for the welfare of youths led to joining and serving as the President of the 100 Black Men of London, one of the chapters of the 100 Black Men of America, during 2017-19. As a participant in the group he undertook motivation and mentoring programmes for young black males. In addition, he became the official photographer for the group.

# Acknowledging skills and crafts



Figs. 59  
Trades People Workshop Event



# C onclusion

## *Introduction*

This booklet portrays the stories of twelve people who migrated to Britain from the Caribbean during the 1960s and 1970s. This period has assumed the iconic term 'Windrush' that is used to describe the mass migration movement.

## *Contribution*

Through the sharing of personal experiences by people working in specialised and skilled trades, the contributors to this small book show that they were able to be creative and

perform to the best of their ability, despite challenges along the way. We appreciate the sharing of their personal stories, with thanks.

They have already contributed to the development of Britain's infrastructure, in both public and private buildings and concerns in fashion, upholstery, electronics and electrical work, gardening, architecture, and other creative ways, while also looking after their families. Of course, the dream to return home to the Caribbean remains for some of them with homes available for them to occupy.

## *Future generations*

There is a strong desire to support the development of the younger generations. In recognition that they have a lot to offer those beginning to explore and find their way in life so they engage in groups in the community, mentoring and guiding youngsters. In addition, they offer training pertaining to their trade

through workshops and courses. While encouraging future entrepreneurs by offering apprenticeships that give those disadvantaged opportunities to learn skills. Finally, there has been and there continues to be, encouragement of family members to join their craft, thereby leaving a legacy that is multi-generational.