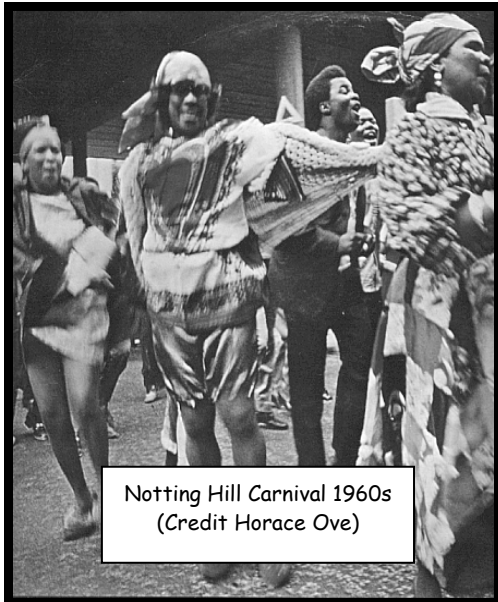


**40 YEARS OF THE NOTTING HILL CARNIVAL:
AN ASSESMENT OF THE HISTORY AND THE FUTURE**



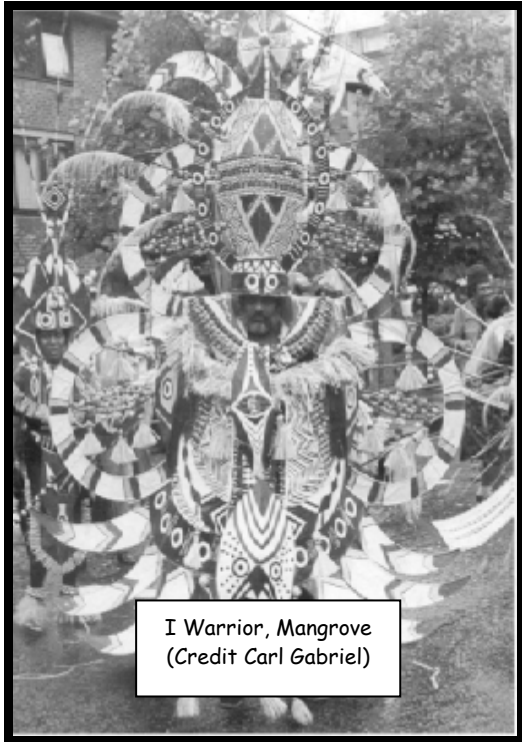
Notting Hill Carnival 1960s
(Credit Horace Ove)



TASPO
London 1951



Claudia Jones



I Warrior, Mangrove
(Credit Carl Gabriel)

BY MICHAEL LA ROSE - JULY 2004
Submitted to Joseph Charles Media Publishers of Soca News
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The Notting Hill Carnival has survived 40 years. This fact alone is a testament to the men and women who have stood up for Caribbean culture and established the Notting Hill Carnival against fearsome odds. It was clear that the British establishment was aggressively against this two day "occupation" of part of the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea (RBKC) and the Borough of Westminster in the heart of London. The Metropolitan Police, members of Parliament, Home Secretaries, Fleet Street newspapers, TV programmers, the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea and some local white residents all wanted Carnival stopped, off the streets, banned or imprisoned in a park. As late as the 1980s, a Carnival chairperson was invited to the House of Commons and offered limitless amounts of money if the Notting Hill Carnival could be re-located to Brixton and out of the Royal Boroughs. Despite all of this what has been achieved at Notting Hill Carnival is a festival of popular culture unsurpassed anywhere in Europe. It is an explosion of Black cultural creativity and organisation in Britain.

Boy, Ah don't know how we reach, but we reach!

By the time I first attended Notting Hill Carnival in 1973, the festival was nearly 10 years old. But what did I care, I was just happy jumping up behind Ebony Steelband on the Harrow Road. We were all chipping, my brother, my mother and my cousins from Brooklyn. It was exciting, it was intoxicating, it was freedom, it filled us all with pride. Carnival was 'we ting'. Caribbean culture at its most creative and expressive. As we wined, chipped and jumped - up, the inhospitable streets of London were ours. We looked in the faces of the English spectators and saw amazement, confusion, wonder and admiration. Our hearts filled with pride. This was ours. This was how we did things!

Yes, we are 40 years old and the history of Notting Hill Carnival and its future can be summed up in a joke my brother Keith and I make about a rough air flight from London to Port-of-Spain; "Boy. Ah doh know how we reach, but we reach!"

The 40-year history of the Notting Hill Carnival is complex and is an example of our cultural resistance. Where did the Caribbean Carnival in Notting Hill come from? The answer is in the mass migration of Caribbean people from all over the Caribbean to England in the 1950s. They came to make a better life and to answer the call of Britain's economy that was desperate for workers after the ravages of the Second World War. We came on invitation, we were recruited. This fearless Caribbean generation brought with them in their heads the fantasy of the Caribbean mas (masquerade) tradition, in their hands the steelpan beating art, in their blood the pulsating Caribbean rhythms and dance, on their lips the calypso and in their hearts and souls the organisation, commitment and love for Caribbean Carnival culture.

Caribbean Roots

The author of the iconic history of Carnival "**The Trinidad Carnival ; mandate for a national theatre**" (New Beacon Books), the late Errol Hill , memorably described Carnival as 'The theatre of the streets' But the Caribbean Carnival had to be fought for in Britain. So it was with Carnival in the Caribbean. Let us look at the history of the most developed Carnival in the Caribbean, Trinidad Carnival.

After the ending of slavery in 1834, ex-slaves, descendants of Africans forcibly brought to Trinidad, acted out the **Canboulay** (French Cannes brulées - burning cane) a night procession with call and response singing, drumming, dancing, stick fighting, and the carrying of lighted torches. This procession drew on their African ritual and masquerade traditions and was their commentary on their survival and therefore victory over the slave system. The ex-slaves implanted the Canboulay in to the white planters' Mardi Gras Carnival celebrations. The white planters had abandoned the Mardi Gras Carnival straight after emancipation. The ex-slaves immediately claimed this new creative space and transformed the European Mardi Gras Carnival forever into the Caribbean Carnival, which drew on their African artistic roots.

Ironically, the European Mardi Gras Carnival celebrations were adopted by the Roman Catholic church from pagan Spring festival traditions borrowed from the previous Roman and Greek

civilisations who got their cultural guide to the **Carne vale** (Latin - farewell to the flesh) pre lent festival from the Ancient Egyptians in Africa!

By the 1850s, Trinidad's British colonial authorities regarded the Camboulay Carnival as raising dangerous tensions in the society. They attempted to ban and then to control the festival. The transformed Caribbean Carnival was eventually forced to restrict the Camboulay to the early darkness at the beginning of the Carnival. The Camboulay became **Jouvay** (from French 'Jour ouvert' – start of the day) which incorporates the "old mas", "dutty mas", "jab molassie" and "jab jab" African mas tradition that recounts the hell of slavery and which still opens the Carnival in Trinidad and other Caribbean carnivals today.

By 1881, the opposition to the Carnival created by the ex-slaves in Trinidad came to a head. Special paramilitary police were drafted in from England under the infamous Captain Baker to crush the Carnival and take it off the streets of Port-of-Spain. The **Jamettes** (French diametre - the other side of society) the poor and dispossessed with their bandleaders organised themselves in opposition. A raging battle exploded on the day of Carnival between the British police and the Carnival bands' members. Both men and women fought on the Jamette side. This was the physical battle to keep Carnival on the streets, to play mas in their cultural and artistic tradition. The Jamette's stones, stick fighters and guerrilla warfare in the narrow streets of Port-of-Spain routed Captain Baker and his police. The fighting was fiercest in the area around what is now Trinidad All Stars pan yard on Duke Street in East Port-of-Spain. These defenders of Carnival culture came mainly from the area known collectively as 'Behind-the-Bridge'. This famous victory has been recently re-enacted in Trinidad by cultural activist and theatre director Tony Hall.

After the defeat, the British governor called in the Carnival bandleaders and promised that no more attempts would be made to ban the Carnival if peace was restored and certain regulations on the Carnival were conceded. This deal established Carnival in Trinidad forever.

The Trinidad Carnival is the blueprint for Caribbean carnivals globally. The form of Labour Day in Brooklyn New York, Miami Carnival, Washington Carnival, Toronto Caribana in Canada and many other carnivals in cities in North America are based on the Trinidad Carnival. Carnivals in Europe especially Notting Hill Carnival and the carnivals all over Britain, are organised within the Trinidad tradition. Caribbean countries have adapted the Trinidad format with local additions to produce "reunion" Carnivals in Grenada, 'Vincy Mas' in St Vincent, St Lucia, Antigua, Jamaica, 'Cropover' in Barbados and Dominica to name a few.

Carnival in the cold; the first Carnival in Britain a response to racist murder

Britain's exposure to Caribbean Carnival cultural and artistic traditions came with the televised recording of Lord Kitchener singing a calypso, "London is a place for me" in 1948, from the deck of troop ship SS Empire Windrush as it docked at Tilbury with the first wave of Caribbean (West Indian) migrants looking to make a new life in Britain. Many were ex-service personnel who had put their lives at risk for Britain during the War. Later, in 1951 there was the Festival of Britain at London's South Bank. The sensation of the festival was a steelband made up of all the best pan players in Trinidad. It was called the Trinidad All Steel Percussion Orchestra TASPO. Amongst the players were Sterling Betancourt and Philmore "Boots" Davidson, who would later play an important role in the development of steelbands in Britain and Europe and in the development of Notting Hill Carnival itself.

The first Caribbean Carnival in Britain was organised in 1958 as a response to the Notting Hill Race Riots and the racist murder of an Antiguan carpenter, Kelso Cochrane, in North Kensington. The West Indian (Caribbean) community in the area were systematically attacked by racist Teddy boy gangs. They were supporters of Oswald Moseley's White Defence League from their Latymer Road base. They attacked black men, black women and white women who went out with black men.

The West Indian community rallied after the first day of these organised attacks. The riot immediately threw up new community leaders like the uncompromising Hubert "Baron" Baker a

Jamaican ex-serviceman. They planned, organised themselves and joined together to attack their enemies. Bajans, Trinidadians, Grenadians, Antiguan, Jamaicans, Dominicans and others united for the first time as one Caribbean community and aggressively attacked the white racist gangs. As the West Indians got the upper hand with their Molotov cocktails and street fighting skills the police intervened to defend the gangs as they were routed. The police arrested the West Indian conquerors. This established the long negative relationship between the police and the Black Community in Britain.

Caribbean governments were incensed at the attack on their nationals by racist gangs and the police. Norman Manley then Chief Minister of Jamaica visited the area. Learie Constantine, a West Indian cricketer and Trinidad ambassador, raised the issue with MPs and parliamentarians. Amy Ashwood Garvey the wife of Marcus Garvey organised social and political action after the Notting Hill Riots. Another able political and cultural activist was Claudia Jones she also organised a cultural and political response. Through the paper she edited 'West Indian Gazette', and the organisation connected to it, she put forward the idea of having a Caribbean Carnival in London.

Claudia Jones was born in Trinidad and was a political activist deported from the USA to Britain. She understood the artistry and creativity of the Caribbean Carnival. She understood the unifying power of Carnival. She felt that it was important to build on the unity of Caribbean people forged in the fight back during the Notting Hill Race Riots.

Claudia got together a committee of people to organise the Caribbean Carnival. Their stated aim was to show the British population the creativity that Caribbean people possessed and would contribute to Britain. They also wanted to show they had no intentions of being intimidated by racists. As would be the case of future black political struggles in Britain, the Caribbean Carnival won the support and commitment of progressive British white people. In this case they were the high profile writer Bertrand Russell and MP Fenner Brockaway.

Mas in London 1958; Claudia Jones' Carnival

The first Carnival in Britain was the West Indian Gazette Caribbean Carnival at St Pancras Town Hall in 1958. These were indoor Carnivals because it was too cold in Britain at the pre-Lenten Carnival season time, which is usually January, February or March. The committee also organised a small out door procession in Powis Square, Ladbroke Grove, North Kensington. Other people had tried to have carnival processions in the past, but had been beaten by the cold weather.

The West Indian Gazette Caribbean Carnival organising committee drew on the resources of the Caribbean community and their friends and supporters. Carnival patrons included the High Commissioners of Ghana, India, Haiti and Nigeria along with Fenner Brockway MP, Marcus Lipton MP, Pansy Jeffrey, Nadia Catousse, Dr David Pitt, Jan Carew and Pearl Connor. Others, like Mrs Paul Robeson, Andrew Salkey, Althea McNish and Cleo Laine, contributed as Carnival judges.

The format of the annual Caribbean Carnival consisted of a Jouvay presentation choreographed by Alistair Bain, which officially opened the Carnival with Jouvay costumes. There was a Carnival masquerade competition, including small bands and steelbands. Live music was provided with performances by artists such as the Mighty Sparrow, Elaine Delmar and the Curtis Pierre Trinidad Steelband. It also included a Carnival Queen beauty contest organised by Carmen England a leading beautician and businesswoman. The Caribbean Carnivals' sponsors included Wray and Nephew Rum, Desnoes and Geddes distributors of Red Stripe Beer, One dagger and Appleton Rums, others were Cosmos Beauty Salon, Melodisc Records, Grimaldi Siosa shipping line and John Martin of London, distributors of Mount Gay rum

The West Indian Carnival was a great success and moved from hall to hall. The Carnival was held in venues that included Seymour Hall and the Porchester Hall. The Carnivals continued for 7 years until Claudia Jones' death of chronic heart disease in 1964.

Notting Hill Carnival from the slums of North Kensington

The North Kensington area in the 1960s was a slum. It was a derelict area with predatory landlords like the infamous Peter Rachman. The houses were dilapidated and had no bathrooms, no hot water and as late as the late 60s, no electricity. The poor and the dispossessed sought out this area. It was very multi-cultural, with Caribbean, Spanish, Portuguese and Irish residents. North Kensington was also at the epicentre of the cultural and social revolution in Britain known as the "swinging sixties" or the 60s revolution. The area attracted non-conformist white people to the flower power and hippie lifestyles. Uniquely for the North Kensington area, these young bohemians were also the sons and daughters of the establishment. They were very instrumental in using their powerful connections and wealth to strengthen the social, cultural and political struggles of the oppressed immigrant populations of the area.

Rhaunie Lasletts (Miss Las) was a white social worker committed to the welfare of immigrants in the North Kensington slum. With friends, she founded the London Free School, an advice centre at 34 Tavistock Crescent, which gave 24-hour free legal advice and assistance to the local population. Later she formed the Shanty Town Project.

A black political activist from Guyana, Andre Shervington was her trusted advisor on the Caribbean community. With her numerous Caribbean friends and clients it is hard to believe that Miss Las had not known about Claudia Jones' West Indian Carnival. Nevertheless she famously claimed she had a dream of a multitude of people in colourful costume that was her impetus for starting the first Notting Hill Carnival. But this Carnival wasn't initially the Caribbean Carnival of Claudia Jones, although the festival had similar aims. In an interview, Rhaunie Lasletts set out the cultural position of her Carnival "It was for an emergence of an oppressed and disadvantaged people waiting to express itself. It was to prove that from our ghetto. That we were not rubbish people. It was also a very healthy way of relieving pent-up emotions in music and dance. It was also the integration of the country regardless of race or creed" *Caribbean Times August 1989*. She approached Chief Inspector Perry of Harrow Road police station who gave his approval.

The first Notting Hill Carnival in 1965 was a multicultural affair with a parade and show. Participants included the New Orleans Marching Band, Ginger Johnson and the Afro-Cuban Band, Irish dancers and someone in a costume of Nell Gwynne, from Madame Toussauds, riding in a horse-drawn orange cart. There was also a variety show in All Saints Hall and an inter-pub darts match.

But the dynamic element within the parade was Russell Henderson's steelband combo. Andre Shervington advised Miss Las to invite them to represent West Indians. They had a regular spot playing jazz on a Sunday at the Colherne Pub in Earl's Court. This hot Caribbean music session was known as the 'Sunday School'. Russell Henderson was an accomplished pianist and pan player. The pan soloist in the combo was Sterling Betancourt, who had stayed on in Britain after the TASPO tour other musicians in the band were Vernon "Fellows" Williams who played percussion, Fitzroy Coleman and Ralph Cherry. When this band hit the Notting Hill Carnival parade, all hell was let loose. Ecstatic Caribbean people left whatever they were doing to come out and jump up behind the steelpan combo, which was electrifying the streets. Reports say that people left their dinners burning on the stove to go and jump-up. Others recalled that people came out of their houses and danced with shampoo still wet in their hair. The Caribbean elements of the festival needed no second thought they were galvanised and committed to the one-off Notting Hill Carnival.

The first form of Caribbean masquerade in the early carnivals were Dominican women in their national dress including dweyette along with last-minute jouvay style mas. This was memorably photographed by Trinidadian photographer and filmmaker Horace Ove. Rhaunie Lasletts was inundated with ideas and plans on how to make the Carnival "better next year" from the Caribbean carnival lovers. This uneasy relationship drove the Carnival on until 1970 when Rhaunie Laslett

gave up the leadership of the Notting Hill Carnival. By this time, the Notting Hill Carnival consisted of 2 music bands, The Russell Henderson Combo and Selwyn Baptiste's Notting Hill Adventure Playground Steelband and 500 dancing spectators.

Caribbean Carnival in 'De Grove' develops

By 1970, the Caribbean community in North Kensington, which increasingly became known as "**De Grove**", was establishing its own institutions. There was the political activity of the Black Power movement with the Black Panthers, Black Liberation Front., and Black People's Information Centre all based in the Grove. Restaurants like the "Rio" founded by Frank Crichlow then later the "Mangrove" on All Saints Road with "Backyard" run by Rhoden Gordon from Grenada, were social as well as political meeting places. The Rio Restaurant had established a Rio Steelband as early as 1964. The relationship between blacks and police was very poor because of 'nigger-hunting' and 'fitting up' practiced by officers from within Notting Hill Police Station. The court victory of black political activists arrested by police during a black power demonstration in the Grove, the famous **Mangrove 9 trial**, gave a new confidence to black people in their constant battle against police malpractice in the area. You cannot separate the development of Notting Hill Carnival from the politics of the area or the relationship between black people and the Metropolitan Police.

There was a new Caribbean leadership for the Notting Hill Carnival in the 1970s. Here is what the Notting Hill Carnival meant to people at the time. "Carnival was a means of shaking off the shackles of oppression and racism and engaging in a celebration of Blackness – cultural identity – freedom" *City Limits August 1990*. Again the new Carnival leadership was assisted in helping the festival exist by progressive and radical whites living in the area. Organisations like North Kensington Amenity Trust who provided the offices for the Carnival, St Mary of the Angels Church, Pat Smythe from the Notting Hill Adventure Playground all supported Carnival and later the new alternative press like Time Out and City Limits.

The Notting Hill Carnival up to this point had steelbands and calypso brass bands, but no real mas bands. It was a community festival born out of the experience of the Grove. There was a succession of Carnival 'impresarios' and early attempts to form Carnival organisations. Attendance was from the die-hard Caribbean community from all over London, who loyally turned up for their annual Carnival reunion. Attendance was still in the hundreds.

By 1973, a new young dynamic Carnival leader took the Notting Hill Carnival to the position of a national festival of popular culture. He was a young Trinidadian called Lesley "Teacher" Palmer. He was also a calypsonian and writer known as 'Wounded Soldier'. His plan was to increase attendance at Notting Hill Carnival. He wanted to attract the British born young blacks who were more interested in Reggae and sound-system culture. He also recognised that the masquerade side of the Notting Hill Carnival needed developing. Lesley Palmer encouraged, cajoled and recruited people to make mas bands. He convinced Lawrence "Stretch" Noel, a gifted mas maker from South Trinidad to bring out mas. Noel worked closely with Mack Copeland, another skilled mas man, to produce costumes for Notting Hill Carnival. Peter Minshall, a theatre designer from Trinidad, was encouraged by Dexter Khan and others from the Metronomes Steelband to make costumes for their band. It was Peter Minshall's debut at making Carnival masquerade. He later went back to Trinidad to become one of the leading mas designers of his generation. Mas had now arrived with glamorous themes like 'Head hunters' and 'To Hell With You'.

By now there were many more steelbands and Soca brass bands at Notting Hill Carnival. They included Metronomes Steelband, Ebony Steelband, Zagada, Crescendos, Tropicana, The Brothers, Arawaks, Percy and Company, Bay 57, New Sensation Steelband and City Twilights. Lesley Palmer approached the community of Reggae bands in the Grove to take part in the Carnival. They included Family Affair, Acklamites, Black Slate, Whorp Factory 1 and a young Aswad. He also approached local rock bands. He arranged for them to play in the bays under the West Way flyover motorway that dissected the Grove. He invited the local reggae sound systems, to set up along Acklam Road and in Acklam Hall. He encouraged the only two soca sounds at the

time, Lord Sam and Shadow HiFi to take part in the festival. Lesley Palmer had transformed the Notting Hill Carnival in 1973, to a massive festival of popular culture. An estimated 150,000 people now attended the Notting Hill Carnival.

But this success attracted the attention of the police, because of the presence at Carnival of large numbers of black youths. It also stirred organised opposition amongst some white residents Associations opposed to the Carnival growing in their area. Palmer continued with his development plan for the Carnival and in 1974 along with Mack Copeland and Lawrence Noel, he went to Trinidad and asked the Trinidad Carnival Committee to send costumes for use in the Notting Hill Carnival.

The forces against the Carnival were getting louder and were clamouring for action by the government to stop or to ban the Notting Hill Carnival. They included the Metropolitan Police, the local MP, Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea, the Cambridge Garden Residents association and George Clarke and his local paper the "The Golbourne". The Carnival community knew they had to respond to this real challenge to the very existence of the Notting Hill Carnival. They founded the Carnival Development Committee CDC with a democratic constitution, organisation and elections. It was the first organisation of Carnival Bands formed to organise the Carnival.

The challenge to Notting Hill Carnival's existence and the 1976 Riot

Before Carnival 1975, Chief Superintendent Patterson was armed with 500 signatures on a petition by local residents wanting the Carnival stopped or taken somewhere else which he displayed to the eager press. The residents said there was too much noise and that people used their front gardens as toilets. They were threatening a high court injunction should the festival be allowed to continue. The Metropolitan police used the excuse that there was too much crime at Carnival, they said Carnival was a hotbed of pick pocketing. The black community wearily thought of the regular clashes with the police all over London especially the mass attacks at Brockwell Park in 1974 and the Cricklewood Club in the same year. The CDC countered the false accusations used against the Carnival. They pointed out that there was more violence and arrests on a Saturday at football matches and they were not banned. They argued that more public toilets should be provided for the festival. Pickpocket crime figures showed that there was more pick pocketing in Oxford Street on any weekend than there was on the 2 days of the Notting Hill Carnival. They were publicly supported by a local white group the Notting Hill Social Council who passed a resolution supporting the campaign that Notting Hill Carnival should be held on the streets of Notting Hill. The 1975 Notting Hill Carnival went on without incident. But the whirlwind was about to hit.

Patterson was not giving up; He issued an aggressive threat to take Notting Hill Carnival 1976 off the streets of the Grove. "If the Carnival were held in the streets this year we would have to think in terms of not hundreds but thousands (of police). Police leave might have to be cancelled not just here but throughout the metropolisI am 100% convinced that the Carnival has outgrown itself and is no longer suitable for the streets of Notting Hill or any other London streets in its present form." *Race Today September 1976*. This sounds depressingly familiar and has resonance for Carnival today.

The 1976 Carnival was being planned as usual. The CDC elected Selwyn Baptiste as its chairperson. The CDC was made up of Frank Bynoe, Junior Telfer, Pansy Jeffrey, Victor Crichlow, Granville Price, Bigger Hamilton and Edgar Renee. Pre- Carnival activities included the fantastic Panorama in the open space of the playground of Isaac Newton School in Lancaster Road dutifully recorded every year by Guyanese pan lover and archivist Carl Kirton. The exciting Carnival gala, the money making activity for the committee, was being held in the prestigious viewing galleries of the Commonwealth Institute and was as usual well attended. There was a Blocorama at the end of Carnival where all the bands gathered in Powis Square and in turn provided music for the last lap carnival revellers. The Pan player and photographer (now mas maker) Carl "Bugsy" Gabriel beautifully recorded the Carnival culture and events of this period. There were other gifted

photographers like Armet Francis who used the photos of his native Grove festival to produce graphic children's books on Carnival.

The Notting Hill Carnival area now stretched from Bayswater Road in the south, to Harrow Road in the north. The centre of the Carnival was the Acklam now called Portobello Green or 'under the bridge'. This was the junction of Portobello Road and the Flyover where the steelbands sounded the sweetest. It was also the site of the most "wining" and "wukking-up". It is important to remember that the bands used to parade along Portobello Road, Ladbroke Grove, Powis Square, Pembridge Villas, Ledbury Road, Talbot Road, Westbourne Park Road, St Luke's Road, Lancaster Road, Tavistock Road, Oxford Gardens, Great Western Road, Acklam Road, Golbourne Road, Westbourne Grove, Cambridge Gardens and all roads in between. Bands criss-crossed this area with their sections of wining masqueraders and crowds of jumping non-costumed followers.

Alex Pascal and his **Black Londoner's** Programme on Radio London transmitted live broadcasts from the Carnival. Capital Radio also broadcast Greg Edwards' soul show from Portobello Green. A fledgling Soca music industry developed, led by the Jamaican Sonny Roberts and his Orbitone & Tackle Record Labels. They made available to a British buying public Calypso and Soca from the Caribbean. Artists like Ed Watson and the Brass Circle, Explainer, Swallow, Nelson and Sparrow had their music released in Britain. The leading British Soca artist was Roy Alton from Dominica with hits like "Tell them" and "Mas in de Grove". Orbitone also had a massive hit with "Gypsy Love" by Belinda Parker. There was also the popular unofficial Grenadian national anthem "Grenada God Bless You" by Charles and the Kalabash. Sparrow and other top calypsonians came regularly to London to perform. People from all over Europe flocked to the Grove for Carnival. People from the Carnival Diaspora flew in from the Caribbean, the USA and Canada.

The 1976 Notting Hill Carnival saw blue banks of policemen invade the Carnival street corners like an occupying army. 3,000 had turned up when the previous year there had been 300. Patterson had made good his threats. He also refused stallholders permission to set up stalls and vowed to carry out arrests on those who sold alcohol illegally. The police were behaving aggressively and with calculated provocation telling carnival spectators to "Move On! Move On!" People felt there were more police than people. There were green coaches packed with police parked menacingly on strategic corners and side streets throughout the Grove.

There are numerous urban myths about where the trouble started but the inevitable happened. A full-scale battle broke out between the police and black youths on the streets of Notting Hill Carnival. There were shocking photos and film footage of hundreds of policemen with dustbin lids for protection on the run from their young black tormenters. The black youths won the fight for the control of the streets that day. The Metropolitan Police never forgave the Notting Hill Carnival. The heavy police presence has been constant ever since. The Clash made the punk record "White Riot" about the white youth involved in the fighting, Aswad made the reggae song "Three Babylon". Notting Hill Carnival was catapulted to the top of the political agenda in Britain.

There were many voices calling for Carnival to be banned in 1977. The CDC countered the hysterical propaganda against the Carnival. Political activist and Race Today editor Darcus Howe became chairman of the CDC, and Selwyn Baptiste became director. They publicised a democratic structure, programme and policy for the CDC and produced a newsletter 'Mas'. Most importantly, they produced a detailed document 'The Road Make to Walk on Carnival Day; the struggle for the West Indian Carnival in Britain'. It was a clear and powerful answer to the enemies of Carnival. The Carnival community was fighting back. It was a critical moment in British history and the organisation and abilities of the CDC were able to stop the Notting Hill Carnival being banned. But the war was not over. The Carnival movement became split from within and has never recovered that original unity.

Two committees and civil war in the Carnival community

The Community Relations Council CRC and the Royal Borough of Kensington funded a rival Carnival committee, the Carnival Arts Committee CAC, led by Vijay Ramlall and later Louis Chase.

I was elected vice chairman of the CDC in this difficult period. The police publicly supported the CAC. There was civil war in the Carnival movement with lifelong friendships shattered or put under strain with divided loyalties for the two rival committees. This was classic divide and rule tactics. At the same time an attempt was made to get people to go to another Carnival formed in Finsbury Park north London under the leadership of Pastor Rupert Morris. But this diversion failed miserably within 2 years. The people wanted a real Caribbean Carnival on the streets.

By the end of the 1970s the CDC was being crippled economically and could hardly operate. The Carnival once self-sufficient economically was now dependent on Arts Council grants. The CDC's income was sabotaged by the closure without notice of the Tabernacle in Powis Square and the weekly income of the Sunday dances that were held there was taken away. The other major income earner for the CDC was the Carnival Gala shows at the Commonwealth Institute, this was snatched away when the annual credit was withdrawn.

By the early 1980s, the CDC folded but had been victorious in keeping Carnival on the streets. The mas bands and steelbands had multiplied in the Carnival with innovative and diverse mas like Larry Forde's Sukuya, the short lived RaceToday Mangrove -Renegades, Lion Youth was the next generation, ELIMU came out from the Harrow Road, Lord Eric introduced mas and music from Ghana in Sugumugu Sunday, Cocoyea was taking part in Trinidad mas competitions and the Shortnee mas from Grenada stamped out their call and response chants through a cloud of talcum powder on the streets of the Grove. The Rokel record label made the charts explode with the Hi - Life anthem by Bunny Mack "Let Me Love You " and the whole world wined down to "Sugar Bum Bum" by Kitchener. More people were playing Soca and other Caribbean and African music on soundsystems in carnival like Black Patch, China Funk, Peoples War Sound System, One Unity, Renegade and Fats Mangrove. A panorama competition had been established. More steelbands were being formed like Paddington Youth and Glissandos. Steel and Skin an innovative combo of steelpan and African drumming joined the Carnival. The steelbands had formed two associations London Brotherhood of Steel LBS and Pan Players Academy. A democratic organisational structure had been put in place so that the carnival bands could elect their leadership and could make decisions on the direction of the Notting Hill Carnival.

The CAC was now able to organise the Notting Hill Carnival unopposed to the delight of the authorities and funders. The Metropolitan Police continued to swamp the Carnival with police and used the opportunity to try out new surveillance and crowd control techniques at the Notting Hill Carnival. The media in Britain continued to run negative stories about the Notting Hill Carnival just months before each approaching Carnival. Their articles raised doubts about whether Carnival would be on that year, destabilising the festival.

CAC Carnival, mainstream acceptance and the second crisis

In the early 1980s, Alex Pascal became chairman of the CAC. His vision was to raise the profile of the Notting Hill Carnival, making it acceptable. He organised greetings from political leaders from all political parties in the annual Carnival magazine. He affiliated Notting Hill Carnival with European Carnival Cities organisations. The CAC worked closely with the police. Crucially, carnival had new additional funding from the new money provided by Ken Livingstone's Greater London Council GLC. Carnival had a more positive profile. But the media would not relent and continued to judge the Notting Hill Carnival on the number of arrests and crime figures. The police continued to push the line that Carnival was a public order problem. As late as 1987, the Evening Standard ran with the banner headline "Ban the Notting Hill Carnival".

Nevertheless, the Carnival grew stronger and for the first time 1 million people attended the Notting Hill Carnival. More bands emerged Design in Mind, Bayie Basufo, Kuumba, St Clements and St James Carnival Band, Mas-o-rama, Flamingo, Spektakular, Flyover, Emashi, Misty, P.A.T.O (Pioneers And Their Offspring) band, Dallaway Mas and Flamboyan. Vernon "Fellows" Williams' Genesis band was well established. Randolph Baptiste formed Stardust Steelband and Mas band and Frank Critchlow founded the Mangrove Steelband. I became designer and bandleader of the Peoples War Carnival Band. There was now a London Schools Steel Orchestra

consisting of pan players taught to play pan through an ILEA programme in their schools. Steelbands like Pantonic, Nostalgia and Eclipse emerged and were joined at Panorama by Phase 1 from Birmingham and North Stars from Huddersfield.

The Cocoyea organisation invited renowned Trinidad designer Wayne Berkeley to design their costumes and started promoting Soca fetes for the next generation of Carnival people at the Swiss Cottage Centre. The biggest Soca and Calypso promoters were L&H Promotions led by cousins Keith Lackhan and Danny Holder. They established the annual festival of Calypso and Soca artists from all over the Caribbean called '**Socalypso**' at the West London Stadium on Wormwood Scrubs in 1986. Soca Brass Bands like Masquerade, San Carlos, Marabuntas and Inner Force were making things hot all over London, Britain and Europe. Soca had burst in to the charts on a number of occasions. First was Kitchener's "Sugar Bum Bum", and then from Monserratt Arrow's "Soca Rhumba", "Hot Hot Hot" and "Long Time", "Lorraine" by Explainer and Director's massive "Sousey" from Barbados rang out on the airwaves, clubs and parties. Soca Massive, Rude Boy Aaron, Bambino, Hot Wax, Mike Forbes, Ken Youngblood dominated the DJ scene. DJ Smokey Joe expanded his Hot Vinyl and SMJ record labels releasing Soca in Britain. Eddy Grant's Ice Records released material from the emerging Soca stars of Barbados, Grynner and Gabby along with the British Soca of his brother Rudi Grant.

Choreographer Greta Mendez's Battimamzell organisation assisted mas bands with their dance presentations on the road. The Carnival was opened with prayers every year on the plaza outside All Saints Church on Talbot Road. Alex Pascal's most important achievement was the promotion of Carnival Culture and Arts all over the country as director of the **Caribbean Focus '86** – a national 9 month long programme of education and cultural events initiated by the Commonwealth Institute. For the first time 1 million people attended the Notting Hill Carnival.

Despite these steps forward, the police, under Paul Condon still wanted more control of the Carnival. They wanted a circular route restricting the bands to certain streets and blocked off other "sterile streets" all in the name of public order. Congestion and crushing was introduced. They imposed an 8 pm finish on the Carnival and demanded a seat for the police or Home Office representative on the Carnival organising committee. The CAC refused. By 1988, a false smear campaign in the press about incompetence and corruption in the CAC, backed up by a Coopers and Lybrand report, finished the credibility of the CAC committee lead by Alex Pascal and Victor Crichtlow. Simultaneously there was a raid on the Mangrove and the arrest of Frank Crichtlow, its radical owner. The charges brought by the police were later proved to be unfounded in court. This was a huge crisis for the Notting Hill Carnival with weekly banner headlines in the local and national press and police raids on the Carnival offices. Again not a single allegation was found to be proven but the damage had been done.

CEC/NCL Carnival and the commercialisation of Notting Hill Carnival

In 1989, Claire Holder was elected as the new chairperson of the CAC. She promptly dissolved the organisation and formed the Carnival Enterprise Committee, CEC. The police were much happier with this new Carnival leadership with its conservative business enterprise outlook. The CEC programme seemed to put Carnival in the hands of big business.

The 1989 Notting Hill Carnival was again heavily policed but this time the police felt they could intervene and dictate the actual parade of the bands. They set up temporary barriers across the streets to stop people jumping up behind the bands. The police called it "The Best Carnival ever". Carnival supporters had a different view "Years ago there were only two police to each band. We used to give them food and drink and they enjoyed themselves. These ones now behave just like Alsatian dogs at last year's carnival, and I'm really bitter about it. Nobody has insulted me the way they did. I still can't get over it." Female Carnival participant *City Limits August 1990*. The Carnival movement responded strongly and we formed the Association for a People's Carnival, APC, to challenge the plans of the new committee and to inform and educate people in Britain and throughout Europe about the history, traditions, music, costume, art and culture of Carnival. The APC consisted of supporters and spectators of the Notting Hill Carnival along with individual members from Peoples War Carnival band, Dallaway mas, Emashi, Mangrove mas and pan,

Ebony Steelband, Cocoyea and other bands from the Carnival. This part of Carnival history is recorded in the publications, 'Mas in Notting Hill; the struggle for a democratic Carnival' and 'Police Carnival 1989'.

There was a lot to challenge in this new Carnival leadership that acted as if it was disconnected from the consensus of the Carnival community. The promises of economic financial development of the Carnival never materialised. In fact, the short-term sponsorship of Orangina, Lilt / Coca Cola and Virgin looked like big businesses got all they demanded and the Notting Hill Carnival, especially the mas bands and steel bands got very little, apart from a free case of the sponsor's fizzy product. The CEC later rebranded Notting Hill Carnival Ltd, NCL, cancelled the Carnival Gala and poster publicity for the Notting Hill Carnival. They gave the contract for the annual Carnival magazine to the Evening Standard to make as much money as they wanted out of advertising. The same Evening Standard that for most of the Notting Hill Carnival's history had printed headlines opposing the existence of the Carnival. Finally fees collected for the hire of stalls in the Carnival increased dramatically and the money went straight to the London borough of Kensington and Chelsea.

Some new mas bands emerged like Dragons, Shade Makers from Germany, Jamboulay, Mudders, Burokeets, Tropical Isles, Ruff Diamonds and Beerahar. Economically, Carnival bands, especially mas bands, were finding it difficult to survive, they were left to their own devices, to market forces. Some formed projects, some trusts, some were attached to existing community or arts projects; bands like Mahogany Arts, Flamboyan, South Connections, Perpetual Beauty/Masquerade 2000, Yaa Asantewa mas band and Ebony Steel Band Trust, others went to the wall. The spontaneous creativity and diversity of the types of mas bands that existed in Notting Hill Carnival were quickly melting away into oblivion. The Metropolitan Police in contrast was spending £3 million to police Notting Hill Carnival each year.

The Arts Council and to a lesser extent the London Arts Board, was now being very selective in what type of bands they supported with the pittance of money available for Notting Hill Carnival. This is in comparison to the amount of money used to fund the English National Opera. Mas bands were being pushed further down a strictly commercial future. The Carnival community of spectators, artists, musicians, mas makers and supporters recognised the growing commercialisation of all aspects of the Notting Hill Carnival. Through the APC, they opposed the NCL's proposal to make spectators pay to come to Carnival. The APC demanded open accounts from the NCL, democratic elections and accountability. The NCL was fully supported by the uncritical funders and authorities.

Notting Hill Carnival was still very popular with 1.5 million turning up on the 2 days of the festival. But you were not sure what the people were turning up for. Was it the now prolific sound systems that brought their supporters to the unique atmosphere of the Carnival but hardly recognised or related to the Carnival culture that produced it? They played RnB, Jungle, Reggae, Bashment, House, and Garage, everything except Soca or related music. Radio stations like Kiss FM, Radio 1, and Djs like Westwood, Rampage and Good Times had popular sound stages and sites in the Carnival to promote their artists, promotions and products. There was no concession or promotion of the Carnival culture that they were milking.

The development of the Caribbean Carnival, i.e. masquerade, steelbands, calypso and brass band culture within the Notting Hill Carnival festival was being neglected, and was eroding. But there was some hope. The mas bands reformed their defunct organisation and were demanding more say in the organisation of gala. The steelbands formed a solid organisation in the British Association of Steelbands BAS. With Pepe Francis at the helm. The Soca sounds formed Caribbean Music Association CMA driven on by Victor Crichlow. Britain produced new Soca artists like SW Storm, Kerwin Dubois and Caibo. Promoters like Cocoyea, Faluma and Leaders of the Old Skool were packing clubs in London fronted by a wave of new DJs. Rough Neck, Zoomer D, Vinny Ranks, DJ Matthew, Shakatak, Feminine Touch, Saga Boys, Techniques, Gold Finger Freddy, Ninja Man Lloyd, Dee T, Bajie, DJ Vern, Soca Professor, Willi B, Langniappe Sound,

Master T, DJ Wax, Rebel D, Che in d mix, Chapperney D, DJ Slic and Martin Jay were bursting on to legal and pirate stations playing Soca, Zouk, Soukous and Bouyon.

Soca music provided the musical fuel for the Notting Hill Carnival and broke into the music charts along the way. Krosfyah from Barbados lead the Bajan music invasion with the global hit tune "Pump Me Up" which cleared the way for Square One, Rupee and other acts from Barbados. Bahamen had a worldwide hit with the remake of "Who Let the Dogs Out!!" by Anselm Douglas from Trinidad. The latest big soca tune comes from St Vincent in Kevin Lyttle's "Turn Me On" with its masquerade-dominated music video. There were a number of record shops in London where you could buy just Soca, Zouk or Bouyon music. There was the long established Harry's Record Stall in Ridley Road market, Dalston and Websters in Sheperds Bush market. They were joined by Lloyd Bertrand and Zouk Records, Terry Joseph brother of Smokey Joe had TJ records, the Saga Boys formed Tan Tan Records, Master T's Jam and Wine records was in Acton, Hot Wax provided an import record service and Barbados Music Promotion Services provided tunes from Bim. These were all important places where Carnival bands could recruit for masqueraders and Carnival events could be promoted.

Individual entrepreneurs like Joseph "JC" Charles and Robbie Joseph formed "Soca News" and "Pan Podium" respectively, monthly magazine publications on Carnival news and events. The Association of British Calypsonians ABC, led by Ashton "Tiger" Moore, with the support of Shabaka Thompson at the Yaa Asantewa Centre in Paddington, was committed to developing a Calypso Tent in London. Panorama still survived and was supported by the hundreds of young pan players who now bristled the ranks of the steelbands. Lambeth Youth Steelband turned into South Side Harmonics. The Caribbean Carnival was spreading to the other boroughs of London. Monty Ward of Phoenix Arts developed Lambeth Carnival, Hackney Mare de Gras was organised by Emmanuel Ameror and Waltham Forest Carnival had the support of Lawrence Noel's Trinbago. Ebony Steelband represented Britain at the World Steelband Festival in Trinidad along with steelbands from Europe developed over the years by the work of Sterling Betancourt. The great Len "Boogsie " Sharpe became Panorama arranger for Mangrove steel Orchestra. North Stars from Huddersfield became joint Panorama winners. Carnival masquerade and steel orchestras took part in the Millennium celebrations at the Dome and chipped down the Mall in front of Buckingham Palace as part of the Queens Jubilee celebrations.

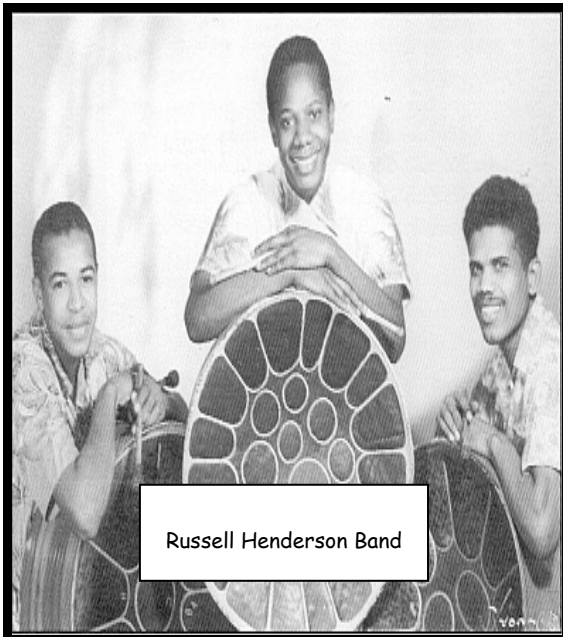
There was an ignominious end to the reign of Claire Holder, the longest serving Carnival chairperson. The NCL trustees locked her out of the Carnival offices. This internal palace coup is still swathed in confusion and counter claims. What was clear was that the leader of Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea publicly attacked the NCL chairperson and her organisation. The Greater London Assembly GLA one of the funders was also critical. It was the GLA who made public irregularities in the appointment of trustees to the NCL Board.

In 2000, there were 2 murders at the Carnival and the old cycle of bad publicity in the media restarted. What was clear was that Ken Livingstone's GLA and the mayor's consultant Lee Jasper had a new interest in the Notting Hill Carnival. A public review of the Notting Hill Carnival initiated by the GLA was a welcome analysis of the situation of the Notting Hill Carnival. Many others and I produced detailed submissions to this review, but disappointingly, the main recommendation highlighted from the report was that the GLA had plans to change the Carnival route so that it would become a procession ending in Hyde Park.

In Notting Hill Carnival 2004 there are plans for the re-introduction of Jouvay in to the start of Carnival. This is one of the essential rituals of the beginning of any Caribbean style Carnival. There have been Jouvay at Carnivals in the past but there has always been resistance by the authorities. The Notting Hill Carnival today still has a tight choke leash around its neck. Development of the carnival is constantly jerked back by the paranoid authorities in fear of the expression and popularity of the festival. The struggle for a culturally authentic carnival must continue. 2004 also sees the introduction of the wealthiest and commercial carnival masquerade bands from Trinidad in a splash of publicity. Poison UK and BBC 1Xtra have joined together to produce a show on the eve of Carnival with Trinidad's leading Soca artiste Machel Montano and

Xtatic along with other high profile Soca artistes from Trinidad and Barbados. Poison and Legends and in the future other similar bands will introduce their high level of organisation and moneymaking to the Notting Hill Carnival. Poison had 8,000 masqueraders in their band at this year's Trinidad Carnival. Trinidad mas bands have long co-ordinated a carnival industry exporting their costumes and organisations to Carnivals in the Caribbean region i.e. Cropover, St Lucia Carnival, Jamaica Carnival and to North America; Caribana, Washington, Miami, Labour Day etc. Some mas bands in London are importing whole costumes and costume sections from Trinidad or flying in Trinidad Carnival designers for their mas bands. Mas may therefore tend to be more commercial and more uniform in this period and the Notting Hill Carnival may have to look at its judging categories to include the participation of this kind of mas band in the future and categories for encouraging more creative masquerade. The controversial 40-year history of the Notting Hill Carnival continues!

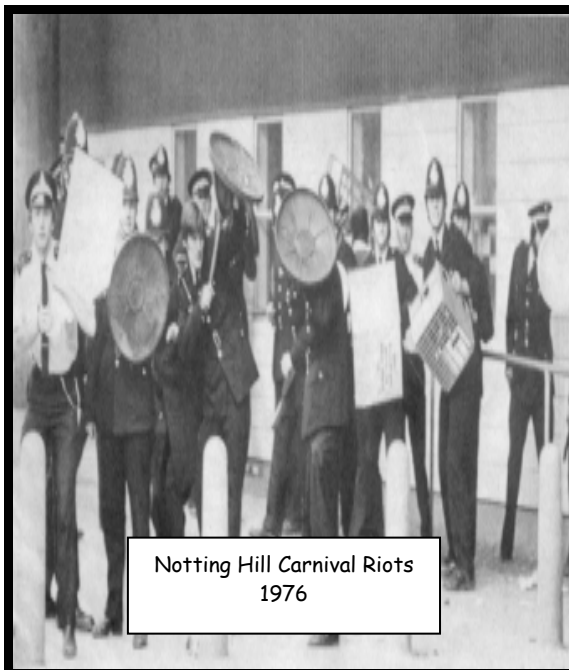
LOOKING AHEAD TO THE FUTURE



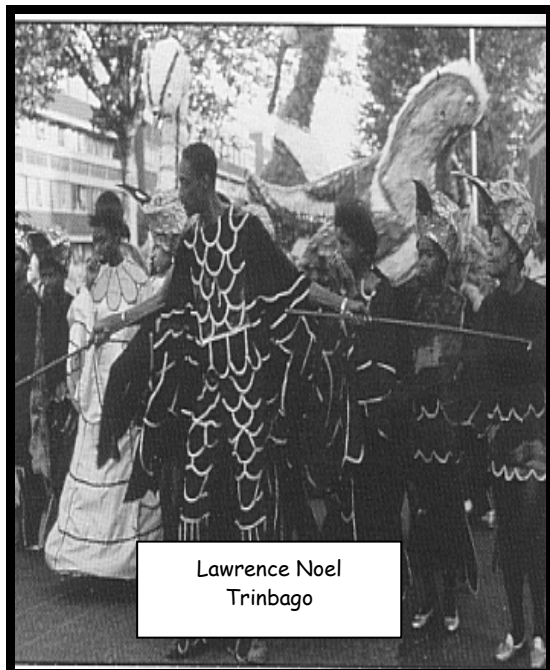
Russell Henderson Band



Soca & Calypso cds



Notting Hill Carnival Riots
1976



Lawrence Noel
Trinidad

Notting Hill Carnival and the future

We are still in a battle to define and control the form of our Caribbean Carnival Festival the Notting Hill Carnival. What kind of Notting Hill Carnival will we have in the future? The future of the Notting Hill Carnival depends on what this generation of carnival bandleaders, designers, DJs and musicians do. The challenge for this generation is what are they willing to fight and struggle for? As the song goes “ If you don’t stand for something you will fall for anything “

The encouraging thing is that the coming generation has produced bandleaders having learnt skills from their parents. There is a transfer of skills from one generation to the next. I am thinking of people like Roland Noel of Trinbago, son of Lawrence, Ian Khan an organiser of the Cocoyea band promotions and son of Dexter Khan, Rhonda Baptiste (Stardust), daughter of the late Randolph Baptiste, Kevin and Simone children of the late charismatic Vernon “Fellows” Williams are leading the Genesis mas band. My own son Renaldo is “DJ Redz” of BMG Smooth Connection providing Soca music on the road for a mas band, Matthew Phillip current manager of Mangrove Steel Orchestra is the son of previous manager Clive “Mashup” Phillip and Princess Rollock and her siblings, children of Frank Rollock run London All Stars Steel Orchestra.

Giving our support to the next generation of emerging young mas bandleaders, mas designers, steel pan players and soca and calypso singers, DJs and musicians will insure carnival’s future. There is so much to be done. People who love the ritual, art, culture and creativity of Carnival should be clear on what the priorities for Notting Hill Carnival are.

Caribbean Carnival Diaspora and culture

There is a need to recognise Notting Hill Carnival as part of an international circuit of Caribbean style carnivals. Carnivals which include “Labour Day” in Brooklyn, USA, Miami Carnival USA, “Caribana” in Toronto, Canada, “Vincy Mas” St Vincent, “Cropover” Barbados, Jamaica Carnival, St Lucia Carnival, Dominica Carnival, Antigua Carnival, Grenada Carnival and “Mash” in Guyana. We go there, and they come here. Members of this global Caribbean Carnival community tend to visit a minimum of two carnivals annually. More and more people from Britain participate in this circuit. Young third generation Carnival lovers born in Britain fly out regularly to participate, wherever there is a Carnival, to Trinidad Carnival, Labour Day, Cropover, Vincy Mas, St Lucia all over.

We must agree that Notting Hill Carnival is not an open door for everybody and anybody. The Notting Hill Carnival has cultural and artistic traditions. These must be defined and respected. Everybody must understand what Carnival is and what it is not!

Funding for development and the economics of Carnival

We must get proper funding for the development of the Carnival Arts emanating from the Notting Hill Carnival. We may have to form our own trusts and charities to do this because the funding bodies have in the past played too many games and divided band against band. The aim should be to provide mas-making and steelband scholarships and training for young people involved in Carnival bands to produce the next generation of young pan players, young arrangers, young masquerade designers, young masquerade band managers, PA engineers etc. This could be done in conjunction with experienced Carnival artists in Britain or through Carnival groups in the Caribbean and North America. The Caribbean must be recognised as the source of all Carnival culture.

Carnival bandleaders must prepare a united strategy for securing fixed premises for ALL mas bands, steel orchestras and music bands that participate in Notting Hill Carnival. They must be given training to deliver outreach programmes, Carnival arts programmes, and education programmes in schools and community centres in Britain about the artistry and history of the Notting Hill Carnival. Some bands have been doing this essential work for many years. All bands must make it part of their activity. Standard.

We must have a financial strategy for the future development of the Notting Hill Carnival. It is estimated that £22 million is generated by the Notting Hill Carnival for London and local businesses every year. The Notting Hill Carnival must secure some of that money for the development of the Carnival bands and the festival. Commercial advertisers should be encouraged to advertise with, or sponsor the steelbands, Carnival bands and their music trucks. No one should be allowed to advertise commercially without a fee, of which some or all would go to the Carnival bands. They would also have advertising opportunities at the 3 judging points

Building institutions; Carnival Hall of Fame and a Carnival cultural education programme

This is the time in the history of Notting Hill Carnival when we must build institutions. We must inaugurate a Notting Hill Carnival Institute sited in the Grove. It should be an exhibition space, a museum, information and data source, archive and research institute. We must honour and commemorate the significant people in the history of the Notting Hill Carnival, those who struggled to make it possible and survive for 40 plus years, starting with a statue in Powis Square or the grounds of the Tabernacle to Claudia Jones. We must specially honour Rhaunie Lasletts, Leslie "Teacher" Palmer, Selwyn Baptiste, Alex Pascal and Lawrence Noel.

We must put up National Heritage Blue plaques or our own Carnival versions of a plaque on significant locations in the history of the Notting Hill Carnival. The Mangrove on All Saints Road, Carnival offices 5 Acklam Road, The Colherne in Earl's Court, Metro Youth Club the corner of St Luke's and Tavistock Road, The Tabernacle Powis Square, The Crypt in Paddington, Acklam Hall, The Albany in Great Portland Street and "Under the Bridge" at the junction of Portobello Road and the Fly over.

We must inaugurate a hall of fame for the pioneers of Notting Hill Carnival. Men and women who have contributed to the art and culture of the Notting Hill Carnival. I propose the first on that list should be in alphabetical order Frank Alexander, Roy Alton, Hubert "Baron" Baker, Randolph Baptiste, Miguel Barradas, Jean Bernard, Sterling Betancourt, Sonny Black, Errol "Lord Cloak" Brown, Pedro Burgess, Rock Byron, Lawrence Chambers (Lord Sam), Ashton Charles, Trevor Charles (Shadow), Vivian Comma (Golden Cockerel) "Zigilee" Constantine, Mack Copeland, Irvin Corridan, Victor Crichlow, Frank Crichlow, Gloria Cummins, Steve Dallaway, Philmore "Boots" Davidson, Bertie Delandro, Martha Fevrier, Larry Forde, Gerald Forsyth, Louise Forte, Festi Francis, Pepe Francis, Bernice Francois, Anise "Halfers" Hadeed, Russell Henderson, Zac Herbert, Anton Holder, Danny Holder, Len Homer, Darcus Howe, Patrick "Lucky" Humphrey, Kenrick Isidore, Basil Jarvis (Black Patch), Pansey Jeffrey, Barbara Joseph, Adrian Joseph (Smokey Joe), Dexter Khan, Carl Kirton, Fitzroy Lewis, Keith Lackhan, Lord Eric, , Merle Major, Ashton "Tiger" Moore, Terry Noel, Ruby Noblemunn, Michael "Bubbles" Olivierre, Michael Olton, (Soca Massive), Arthur Peters, Granville Pryce, Johnno Roberts, Sonny Roberts, Frank Rollock, Errol Romilly, Shadow individual mas man from Liverpool, Ethenia Smith, Rudy "Two Left" Smith, Eaman Thorpe, Vernon "Fellows" Williams, Leslee Wills, Biggs Yearwood. There are many others this is not the final list. Who would you nominate? People should know more than the names they should know about these individuals the bands they belonged to and their contribution to the Notting Hill Carnival. We must encourage and support the existing work in this area carried out by Shadow and his "Barbergreen Committee Awards" and the "Soca Music Awards" organised by Soca News.

It is vital that we record our history. The Carnival pioneers are dying. We have lost Randolph Baptiste, "Zigilee" Constantine, Philmore "Boots" Davidson, "Johno" Roberts, Vernon "Fellows" Williams, to name just a few in the recent years. We need to interview and record the history of individuals, mas bands and the themes they played, their designers, mas makers, the membership of the steel bands and their musical history. The bands must do it themselves as part of an essential activity. Good work is being done by Celia Burgess Macey with Lambeth Teachers, Alex Pascal, Kensington and Chelsea Community History Group, the Victoria & Albert Museum and most recently Ezra Blondel's book for school children on the Bann Mové mas from Dominica. We must also encourage academic research in the social history, economics, art, music and organisation of the elements of the Notting Hill Carnival. All aspects of Carnival culture have to be linked to the education system at all levels. We must embark on a Carnival cultural education programme.

Appointment of an artistic director and the important role of television in promoting Carnival

An artistic director with significant powers should be appointed immediately to the Notting Hill Carnival to revitalise the Carnival and plan its presentation to the spectators at Carnival. Part of the remit should be to pressure the BBC, ITV, Channel 4 and the Cable TV stations to focus on the art and culture of Notting Hill Carnival. The masquerade bands, steelbands, Carnival fêtes, calypso tents, international Soca/Calypso artists, Panorama and the Gala, represent this. The Carnival deserves proper coverage and better representation. Television is important in promoting Carnival and Carnival culture.

TV programmes on Notting Hill Carnival have lacked advice, comment and analysis from Carnival experts. There are many Caribbean Carnival experts in Britain or from abroad. This same expertise is required for future planning and presentation of Carnival programmes. The TV programmes produced in the last 5 years have been terrible e.g. "Carnival street". It is not sufficient merely to have black faces that have no knowledge or interest in the Carnival, fronting programmes. We need informed articulate presenters. An annual Notting Hill Carnival highlights programme is obvious. Coverage of Carnival live is usually disastrous. Highlights and magazine type programmes work best. The Ebony BBC Pebble Mill programme of Notting Hill Carnival in 1989 and the BBC TV coverage of the Windrush celebrations may be the models and benchmark of what is necessary. BBC Radio especially BBC London Live and Radio London before it, have shown continuing interest and commitment to the festival.

We need a purpose built Panorama venue

We must plan to inaugurate a purpose built venue to hold the Panorama, the steelband competition. The present venue on Kensal Road is a disgrace. People still show a healthy interest and enthusiasm to hear pan at its best. We must improve the current terrible arrangements for Panorama; it is one of the jewels in the crown of Notting Hill Carnival. The focus must be on providing a venue with great acoustics for hearing pan and adequate arrangements for viewing the bands must be paramount. A short-term suitable venue for a panorama must be found fast in the meantime. St Mark's Park on St Mark's Road could be an alternative.

Carnival culture, culture of resistance

If the next generation of Carnival people fail to address these cultural and economic issues, the consequences will be very serious for the future of Notting Hill Carnival. Carnival will continue to slip into being a festival we no longer recognise.

The Carnival art and culture that I have described is a culture of resistance. Carnival is politics, Carnival is art, Carnival is culture. It is not one or the other, it is all of these. We must seek out all our allies and supporters in British society; some may be in the GLA, to carry out the struggle for a democratic, representative, financially independent and artistically vibrant and diverse Notting Hill Carnival.

Yes, Carnival culture is definitely a culture of resistance. When you are wining in a band, jumping to a steelband or laughing at a calypso, remember who went before to make this possible. Cultural

resistance has taken place from slavery in the Caribbean to the streets of London. We have produced a festival of popular culture unsurpassed anywhere in Europe. We must, record its history, defend it, help it to progress and survive. We promote the beauty of our art and culture as our contribution to British society. We must want a Notting Hill Carnival for our children and children's children

Michael La Rose July 2004

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