

CACOEU TALK

CARIBBEAN COMMUNITIES IN EUROPE

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CACOEU exists to investigate, develop and record the cultural aspects of Caribbean life in Europe.

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NEW-- CACOEU TALK - on line?

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*A PUBLICATION of CARIBBEAN COMMUNITIES in EUROPE
BASED AT GOLDSMITHS UNIVERSITY OF LONDON-DEPARTMENT:STaCS
Lewisham London SE14 6NW*

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ONLINE ISSUE NO.2- HAPPY 15th BIRTHDAY January 2000-January 2015

ISSN 1478-1514

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HAPPY 15TH BIRTHDAY!

Congratulations!

Feliz Cumpleanos!

Gelukkige Verjaardag

To All

From,

All of us

Who worked to set it up, then continued to keep her alive and flourishing.

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DEDICATION

This issue is dedicated to those who made a great contribution to CACOEU in general, from its early stages of development in particular.

Over the last two years they left us in this world for another, where they wait until we join them:

Duncan Bailey

Melvina (Dolly) Brisco

Woolia Beckford-Brown

Asquith Gibbes MBE

Jessica Huntley

Professor Stewart Hall

Gone but not forgotten

You are

Gone but not forgotten

Tribute to

Jessica Huntley 1927-2013

CACOEU'S life long and most valued member
Who left for the parallel world and where she is waiting for us

Jessica we salute you in verse

You took your leave just as we were admiring the beautiful autumn leaves;

Was it that your work here was done and you had to leave to become one with those fallen autumn leaves?

Indeed, you lived an active life and your work did cause you some pain and strife,

But you stood strong against those things that were clearly wrong and left a legacy that is strong,

Your friends were sad to see you go but your life's work will be remembered and celebrated wherever they go,

With kindness and intelligence you were blessed and your legacy will continue and enable others to progress.

We are thankful that you were our friend and our thoughts will be with you to the very end,
And when autumn comes around each year we will remember that you are quite near.

Cynthia Gaynor-Bailey

Caribbean Communities in Europe (CACOEU)

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

CACOEU in general, this 2014-2015 leading to the 15th Birthday of CACOEU in particular, is indebted to a number of people, many of whom are non- Caribbean members. With their support, on a voluntary basis we are able to have this year's issue: having lost some of our key and most reliable active members who died during the last two years.

We also appreciate Goldsmiths University of London through its Department, STaCS and its Centre for Community Developmental research.

CACOEU would like to acknowledge that this journal is produced and paid for by CACOEU membership fees and contribution in kind.

FOREWORDS

This issue of the annual journal is self-help, prepared and presented mainly on-line by CACOEU members and friends. We collected then edited among ourselves, but only major, if any, official grammatical errors and unclear comments have been changed, with permission of the presenter. We deliberately avoided, for this specific work the “professional editor” advertizing on line. This is because of our concern of our personal voice being in danger of lost being. So we did it ourselves. A small team leading was supported by others'

The said team is:

This special issue was compiled and edited by a small team

Barlow Massay	S.
Breinburg	P.
Canzius	S.
Hinds	D.

Contributions are from CACOEU members and friends

Old cover design complements, Mr M Wilson

SECTION ONE:

VOICES IN VERSE

CONTRIBUTORS

Pascal

Elsa Background: Cathcella

Gaynor-Bailey

Cynthia.....Explanation of “*If We Must Die*” Poem by Claude McKay

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Bi-LINGUALS

Breinburg

Petronella..... proverbios GATOS y RATONES (Spanish/English)

Breinburg

Petronella.....Explanation of “*KAKAW*” by Winson .J.Loe
Sranan /English -Petronella

BACKGROUND

Cathcella
©Elsa Pascal

I

DID YOU KNOW?

1495 – Christopher Columbus shipped Taino Indians to Spain
Educated they were at Seville's Royal Court
Though *Cannibals* he described them to be
And open to conversion to Christianity.
And at the time non-Christian Africans were considered 'heathens'
And as such could be bought and sold at will.

II

AND DID YOU KNOW?

(Cultural life of enslaved Africans a la Edward Long 1774)

In Jamaica, enslaved Africans mixed heavily African dialects with English
And chose African names for their children:

Born on: Monday: male named Cudjoe; female - Juba
Tuesday: male - Cubbenah; female -, Beneba
Wednesday: male - Quaco; female - Cuba
Thursday: male - Quao; female - Abba
Friday: male - Cuffee; female - Phibba
Saturday: male - Quamin; female - Mimba
Sunday: male - Quashee; female- Quasheba.

In latter times when asked when her child was born for enrolling at school

Up quipped the mother: '*Teacher, ee fet ehn tehn peh peh ay zehn fahn ehn tell say camawad lee*'.

III

History taught from others' perspectives

Fundamentally flawed

He/she knows it who feels it

Go tell it to those with ears to listen

Go spread it far and wide
Our collective consciousness says
We tell it from our ancestors' eyes
We hear it from their voices
Come seek the truth
Gather up from beyond the sea
For in your hands - strength and power
Turn your eyes o little ones
Come unite the ancestral spirits
The battle is far from over
Stand with confidence

IV

Their foremothers, forefathers, sisters and brothers, ancients all
We wrenched and spirited them away from kith and kin
Now survivors of that lot
Can ring bells to summon all
To break chains that still restrict
But who will rally round and answer their call to walk along and ride the Freedom Road?
To do this requires courage, friends, wisdom and understanding of
The discord, division and dissidence so cleverly intertwined

V

As long ago as the 15th Century when we disturbed
Tainos and Kalinagos' modes of existence at one with Mother Nature
We rudely interrupted theirs with our shenanigans
We the European money-makers
To make King Sugar reign
And before him Prince Tobacco
What can they learn from these times?
What is their legacy for the 21st Century?

VI

(Misery described in enslaved Africans for sale, Lagos, Portugal, 1444)

Captives: *'some white enough...fair...'*

others: *less white like mulatoes...*

others: *as black as Ethiops and ugly...'*

Measure of their sadness:

'heads bowed low...

Faces bathed in tears...

They looked one upon another...

Others stood groaning...

Daughters, grand-daughters

Lead the way to the Valley of Blessings.

This is our legacy - our truth

Stay blessed we continue our stories - *Zicack – (Ixora), Korosol Deabl, Noni – (Morinda), Kaka Pool – (Madagascar periwinkle)*

Image of Madras Print.



The Madras image would serve as a poignant memory to the soldiers of the myriad of colours associated with what they left behind in the Caribbean.

If We Must Die

©Claude McKay

If we must die—let it not be like hogs
Hunted and penned in an inglorious spot,
While round us bark the mad and hungry dogs,
Making their mock at our accursed lot.
If we must die—oh, let us nobly die,
So that our precious blood may not be shed
In vain; then even the monsters we defy
Shall be constrained to honour us though dead!
Oh, Kinsmen! We must meet the common foe;

Though far outnumbered, let us show us brave,
And for their thousand blows deal one deathblow!
What though before us lies the open grave?
Like men we'll face the murderous, cowardly pack,
Pressed to the wall, dying, but fighting back!

II

The explanation

The poem was written in 1919, shortly after the ending of the War. The author, who was born in Jamaica, was inspired not only by the events of the War but more significantly because its ending had become a trigger for the outbreak of smaller wars between labour and capital and between black and white people. These smaller wars between black and white people, or race riots to be more precise, were taking place in many British and American cities.

The Legacy

Caribbean history is interlinked with the history of the various colonial empires that had enslaved black people and colonized the Caribbean Islands for many centuries. Consequently, the political, linguistic and cultural legacies from the various empires are reflected in the works of Caribbean authors, poets and in many other areas of the arts.

The poem was read by Cynthia Gaynor-Bailey after which there was a brief summary of the Caribbean contribution to the Great War.

No Lye

© *Scherin Barlow Massay*

Clasped between our mother's knees,
We sit patiently,
Afro comb, hair oil and comb;
Back and bottom aching,
As our hair is pulled
And stretched into submission.

Clasped between our mothers knees,
We sit patiently,
Waiting for cornrows, twists, or plaits.
Wanting to touch
But fearing the comb slap.
Our pride and honour in our hair.

Clasped between our mother's knees,
We sit, dreaming of when
Our hair was soft, shiny and curly.
Waiting for ribbons, beads,
Hair bands and clips
To adorn our crown.

Clasped between our mother's knees
We learn about good hair; bad hair
Pretty hair, picky hair,
Mixed messages of inferiority based on
An, "I am better than you"
Value system.

But when I am grown
And released from my master's knees.
My mind will be free to embrace and reclaim who I am
And my beauty will not be defined
By the wig, the weave
Or the lye.

Proverbios

©P.A Breinburg

GATOS y RATONES

Los gatos no matan a los ratones.

Es los ratones que los matan auto.

NOTA

Cuando un gato ve un ratón, se da la persecuio, cuando se capture su juego comienza.

El gato juega con el ratón
poco bofetada de un lado a otro
traqueteo primero la célula en su cuerpo
a continuación, las de los cerebros del ratón

Las luchas de ratón que goza el gato.
El gato se pone su enorme pata en la cola del ratón.
Las luchas del ratón y mayor es la lucha.
Cuanto mayor es la diversión para el gato.
El juego termina cuando el ratón agotado establece.
El gato orgulloso, tuvo su juego.

NOTA

El gato no mato al raton
Es el raton que matarlo auto

Proverbs

Of CATS and MICE

©P.A Breinburg

Cats do not kill mice.

It's the mice that kill themselves.

NOTE

*When a cat sees a mouse, it
Gives chase, when caught
Its game begins.*

*The cat plays with the mouse.
Lightly slapping it from side to side.
Rattling first the cells in its body.
Then those in the mouse's brains.*

*The mouse struggles, which the cat enjoys.
The cat places its huge paw on the mouse's tail.
The mouse struggles, and the greater the struggle,
The greater the fun for the cat.
The game ends when the mouse, exhausted, lays.
The cat proud, has had its game.*

NO

Cats did not kill mice

It's

Mice that killed themselves

Extract from the review (work in progress) -P Breinburg



© Photo. S Barlow Massay

Opening stanza read (in Dutch), and commented on in English
By Petronella Breinburg.

KAKAW

©*Winston. J. Loe*

Sranan-----

English

te na kakaw preti opo	When the cocoa (pod) break open
a no siri e komoto	it's not seeds that are coming out
ma naden fesi nanga sweti	But sweaty faces
hebi lai na tapo den baka	with heavy load on their back
wipi sa e piki	the whips they received
Opo, opo wroko, boto musu lai	get up, get up Move! The boat must be loaded
tyari gwe de gudu	to take away the goods

(Here is a switch of thoughts from that of the ruler's to that the workers)

Pe un brodo	where our blood
nanga sweti libi lon	and sweat run

Comment:

Surely by here the theme of this narrative poem is clear?

What Winston J. Loe is describing in verse, is an image of the Kakaw (cocoa) packed not with seed but with human beings.

Bibliography

Winston J. Loe was born in 1951, in Suriname, South America, where he was a head-teacher and an accomplished poet and guitarist. He now lives in Amsterdam and his work appears in old Sranan, Surinamese and Nederland's.

I highly recommend the PUWEMA PETI, Netherlands (DUTCH) which can be Goggled in Sranan and English. Detail Jules rijssen.

SECTION TWO

Barlow Massay.

Scherin..... **No Lye: Commentary**

Canzius

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Hansemuye..... **I am a Prisoner**

Barlow Massay

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Dalrymple

Maria.....**Ode to the Black Cake**

Breinburg

Petronella..... **The Caribbean Islands**

Breinburg

Petronella..... **Review of: A touch of slavery. A play by the Ballfire Elders**

Members Activities.....

No Lye: commentary

©Scherin Barlow Massay

The theme of the poem is about being in bondage; it is about having to sit still and sometimes painfully absorb all of the negative messages about race superiority and inferiority. It is about the psychological indoctrination of a system that places a hierarchy on the texture of African hair which has been perpetuated from generation to generation within the Diaspora.

The same lines are repeated in the first four stanzas of the poem which is used to reiterate a continuation of a cycle. It is traditional to have the child sit between the woman's knees when it is having its hair braided. This position is most comfortable for the one braiding the hair, and with the use of the knees the child can be controlled or physically restrained. However, for the child having to sit in the same position for hours and having its movements restricted can be physically uncomfortable. The act of hair braiding is a leveller because it removes distinctions and no matter a person's social or economic status; it is a process that has to be adhered to maintain the hair. It is a rite of passage that all women (and some men) of African origin and the Diaspora go through as children. It also heightens the bonding process between mother and child.

Far from being a modern invention, the Afro comb is more than 6,000 years old and can be found in many different African cultures and countries. It is used to part, detangle and pick the hair.

Cornrows are a traditional way of wearing the hair among women of African descent and such styles have been found in cave paintings that date back to the Bronze Age. Traditionally the hair is first parted and lubricated with oils to stop it from breaking because it is far more delicate than European type hair. It is then combed to detangle it and styled and adorned with beads, ribbons or cowrie shells. Because the process can be long and drawn out children often touch their hair to get an idea of how long it would take before the hair is finished and this is when the child's hand can be slapped with the comb as a warning not to touch it. "The comb slap" is also a metaphor for the fact that when a woman has natural hair, the assumption by women who have processed their hair, is that it needs fixing to conform to the concept of beauty they have accepted. This in turn is an insult to those who have made a conscious decision not to relax their hair.

In some cultures in the Caribbean and in Guyana, there is a superstitious belief that when two or more people have their hand in an individual's hair, it will bring ill fortune to the household and so the slapping of the hand with the comb is to stop the child's actions bringing about bad luck.

It is during these bonding and nurturing sessions that children in the Diaspora often overhear

remarks by other adults or are told directly about the texture of their hair and a value system is placed on the type of hair they have. The nearer it is to European, or any other mixture i.e. Indian or Chinese the better quality is deemed. During the 1940s caustic soda or lye, a corrosive substance was the main ingredient used to unplug blocked drains. However, in their quest to conform to a European standard of beauty, many people resorted to such methods to straighten their hair, risking permanent skin damage.

The Ancient Egyptians used wigs to protect the hair and adding extensions to hair has always been part of the African form of adornment. However the emphasis on three types of changes to the hair, emphasize how enslavement and colonialism changed the African concept of beauty. Here, the wig, weave and the desire to straighten the hair are symbolic of a rejection of the natural self and a desire to conform to an acceptable universal stamp of beauty. In so doing many are living the lye (lie).

In the final verse of the poem, the poet talks about being released from the master's knees. This signifies that she has been held down for a long time by the indoctrination of her mind by those who have exerted power over her; her mother and the system which has indoctrinated her into believing that everything about her is inferior.

Freedom comes only when the individual goes through a process of self knowledge that embraces her cultural identity, and then metaphorically she is able to release herself from the kind of bondage that controlled her thinking.

Thirty-six year old, Boris Nzebo's painting, Chateau d'Eau, captures urban life in his hometown of Douala in the Cameroon. His primary subjects are the elaborately constructed hairstyles worn by both men and women which are inspired by the hand painted advertising leaflets found in West African hair dressers salons. I like this picture because of the different colours of the cornrows and the simplicity of its representation. The scenes in everyday aspects of African styles like cornrows



My Hair Journey via Social Media

©Sade Canzius

Long hair. Short hair. Straight hair. Curly hair. Weave. Hair extensions. Braids. Wigs. If it's one subject that has the power to unite or divide black women, it's definitely hair. We're so used to seeing our favourite celebrities with an array of different hairstyles; the majority of which include weave or wigs and relaxed hair. Although many young girls have emulated style (and hair) icons such as Rihanna and Nicki Minaj in the past, other prominent figures such as Solange Knowles (younger sister of Beyonce) and singer Janelle Monae have been in the limelight recently, embracing their natural hair. This in turn encourages a lot of the younger, up and coming generation to do the same. Seeing images of these women can only breed and emphasise a positive attitude towards natural hair amongst the community of black girls, right? It's easy to realise just how influential these singers and actresses are. So perhaps the familiarity of black women embracing their natural hair will provide confidence and inspiration for the young women growing up and seeing them? Well, this has proven to be true, especially when it comes to the Internet and social networking sites. Nowadays, there is a new community of women online who have opted to take the 'natural' route, inspiring their fellow 'sistas' or 'naturalista's along the way. Instagram, YouTube and Twitter are now dominated with women of colour who are sharing their hair tips and regimes in order to help others to go natural. This article will focus on the rising trend of young black women deciding to embrace their natural hair and also my personal interest in whether I feel like I, too should finally give up a lifetime of false hair and accept my own real hair.

Growing up, I only noticed one hair book in my household, which was a book called 'Kids Talk Hair.' There were all types of hairstyles and even some tips on how to care for children's hair; however I still don't think there was enough information and details on how to properly care for our hair. Throughout primary school and early secondary school, I would wear my hair in cornrows. However, when I got to mid-secondary school, I started to wear hair extensions. This grew my hair quite considerably as I wasn't handling it as often as I had been during the early years of secondary and primary school. Halfway through college, I made the transition into wearing a weave. I loved how quick it was to get my hair done and also the fact that I felt I had a more mature look, now that I was getting older. I briefly wore a wig for a few months which I felt had pros and cons. The pros were that I could easily access my natural hair and could wash and grease it when I wanted to. However one of the main cons was the fact that I never found my wig as secure as I found my weave. I dreaded windy days, as I felt like my wig could come off at any minute and would also feel quite nervous around people for fear that they would realise it was a wig. So, I went back to wearing weaves for about another year after that. Nowadays, I wear a custom-made wig, made from

an easily breathable wig cap and good quality hair extensions. I guess it was around this time, that I developed an interest in caring for my own natural hair again, and wanted to give myself the opportunity to be able to do so. But where would I start?

I first started noticing the increase in women of colour and their hair regimes, a few years ago on YouTube. YouTube can be a source of many helpful, educational tutorials such as applying make up, caring for hair and how to achieve certain clothing styles. As an avid internet and social networking user, I set out to find out what I could discover about natural hair on these social media platforms. I started with a basic search on Google, typing in 'black hair types.' One of the first things I found out was about all the different hair types and textures. After searching through a couple of blogs, I was able to identify my hair as a cross between 4B and 4C. Our hair is categorised by the texture and curl pattern. According to, blacknaps.org, when it comes to classifying our hair, 'the easiest to follow and the most visually descriptive system would be the Andre Walker's hair typing system.' The Andre Walker hair classifying system varies from straight hair to curly hair, ranging from the numbers 1-4 and letters A-C. Number 1 is straight hair, 2 is wavy hair, curly hair types start at number 3 and afro hair is number 4. The letters signify the tightness of the curl. A denotes a spirally curl, B demonstrates kinky curl and the letter C means the curl is coiled. For example, hair that is 4B, which is my hair type, typically tends to be afro hair, as defined by the number 4 and the curl pattern is kinky, which is signified by the letter B. Each hair type has a different regime and hair care routine, as each type takes to different products and treatments in a different way.

Having identified my hair type, I decided to take to YouTube in order to conduct some more research. I found that there was a lot of information to be taken from the internet, for females who need some help with their natural hair. I came across videos on YouTube from women such as 'Naptual85' and 'Afrolengths' who offer tutorials, tips and testimonials based on hair. 'Naptual85' has just over half a million subscribers on YouTube, and promotes her page as 'Simple. Natural. Hair Care.' I have watched a few of her videos and already noticed that there's a lot to be learnt! She demonstrates how to effectively wash, trim and explains how to achieve the hairstyles she has, with her natural hair. Seeing her videos has also inspired me to take better care of my hair as she makes having healthy hair seem so attainable. Another video entitled 'How I got my 4b hair to waist length in 3 years' by 'Afrolengths' explains that in order to have healthy long hair, the key factors are: protective styling, water and silica. Protective styling is a style where the hair is concealed or protected from manipulation as much as possible. This can include, but is not limited to: braids, weave and cornrows. Additional factors include, deep conditioning, moisturising the hair and cleansing the scalp. A lot of the videos and posts I came across, also encouraged a healthier lifestyle

such as drinking a lot of water, because of the fact that our hair needs plenty of hydration. These 'naturalista's also encourage the use of natural oils such as castor oil, coconut oil, avocado oil and olive oil. I also came across a picture on Instagram which identified exactly how these oils help to care for afro hair; castor oil increases hair growth, thickens hair, reduces and prevents damage and adds sheen. It is also great as a deep conditioner and moisturiser. Coconut Oil is another essential product in the quest for healthier hair. The benefits are said to include: prevention of hair loss and dandruff. It also strengthens hair and reduces protein loss. Avocado oil restores hair, locks in moisture, and adds sheen and softness. Avocado oil is also recommended for scalp massages or as a leave in oil. Finally olive oil, which improves hair elasticity, conditions and promotes growth. This oil is also strengthening and penetrates the hair.

I was learning a lot of information on the Internet about my type of hair and the products I should be using in it; however I decided to interview my own niece Cole, as I had seen the results of her own hair journey, firsthand. I was additionally interested in knowing more about what encouraged her to grow her hair after such a long time of being bald and whether she felt like the Internet had played a part in her decision.

Cole Interview

What made you decide to embrace the natural hair journey?



For me, it was a personal test. I had been bald for so long and never given myself a chance. Recently I saw lots of girls on the street with natural hair and I guess I just liked the way it looked.

What hair regime do you have?

I co-wash my hair once a month. I co-wash with Hello Hydration (Herbal Essences) which basically means putting lots of conditioner in your hair for about 20 minutes and scrubbing it. 'Hello Hydration' has been recommended by a lot of the girls in the online black hair community, so I decided to try it too. My hair routine has been quite trial and error, and through this I have learned that I have quite a dry scalp, so I have to wash my hair once a week with medicated shampoo. After I wash my hair, I leave it wet and add some Shea butter and castor oil. Then I twist it or cornrow it, as a protective hairstyle. After this I sleep in a silk/satin hair bonnet. If I don't use this material, the hair will break. The satin/silk locks the moisture in. I also use a mix of coconut oil,

olive oil and water and spray my hair with this concoction, about 3 times a day, whilst in the protective style.

How important do you feel the internet has been in this natural hair journey? What role has social networking/media played?

Without the internet I wouldn't have a clue about anything, literally anything. It's hit and miss with a lot of things; some things work on some girls and not others. I check blackgirllonghair.com everyday which is a blog and it has sections that specifically cater for all the different hair types. I also use CurlyNikki.com, another blog. When it comes to YouTube; there are so many girls with so many tips and information, that I just generally use them all. On Tumblr, I search hair type tags such as 4C and TWA (teeny weeny afro) which helps to keep me motivated because of the other girls who are going through the same stages as me.

Which YouTubers inspired you?

There are so many girls on YouTube; there's a big black hair community on YouTube. I watched girls that related to the stage of hair growth I was at; girls who had done the 'big chop' and just followed their hair journey to keep myself inspired and motivated. In those early days, it's quite disheartening because there's not a lot of growth and not much you can do with your hair.

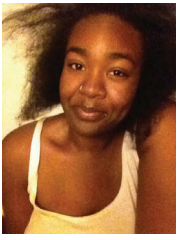
Are there any celebrities with natural hair that you follow?

I feel really inspired by Solange Knowles; she's my natural hair idol and Chrisette Michele. I'm also inspired by Erykah Badu and Jill Scott, who wear fake Afros and wear their natural hair too.

Do you have a personal goal when it comes to your hair journey?

Initially, the goal was to have long hair. However since being in the community and reconditioning my mind, I'm realising the goal doesn't have to be length. I'm realising that I can just have natural hair and cut it into a style; it doesn't have to be long hair. I feel like there's a lot of pressure for black women to want to have long natural hair, but I might decide to just have mine in a high top style. The great thing about afro hair is that it is so versatile. So I definitely don't feel limited at all when it comes to my hair.





So with all of this information I had found, I wondered to myself: should I go on this natural hair journey too? I had been wearing my hair in weave for the last 5 years and while this would be encouraged as it is a protective style, I rarely used to take care of my natural hair underneath the weave. Having watched some of these videos and read up a bit more about the ways in which I can start to properly take care of my hair, inside and out, I feel inspired to embark on the journey myself. I feel like I have a great starting point, with all the tips I have read up about and products which have been available to me for a long time. Here's a current image of what my hair looks like. Wish me luck on my hair journey!



Revision of not the Windrush alone!

© Donald Hinds

Since 1973, which was the twenty-fifth anniversary of the docking of the MV Empire Windrush at Tilbury and the disembarking of its passengers, who were still being styled as *Jamaicans*; that occasion has been considered as the starting pistol which sent *West Indians* racing to England. Let us examine the facts. At first one must assert that despite the fact that Jamaica is the largest of the British Caribbean Islands it alone does not constitute all of the West Indies. Secondly, if we believe that the sailing of the Windrush from Kingston in 1948 caused a rush to England then the statistics ought to bear this out. Apart from Jamaica movement of peoples from the Leeward and Windward Islands and British Guiana (Guyana) were not sufficient to warrant published government figures until 1951 when 102 left those colonies for the Mother Country. As for Jamaica the two years following the sailing of the Windrush showed a distinct falling off of emigration for example 547 in 1948 to 307 in 1949 and 367 in 1950. Jamaicans in particular will remember the destructive force of “Hurricane Charlie” on Friday 17th of August 1951 which devastated the island. That year 898 Jamaicans left for England. Should we dismiss the “Windrush”? Far from it but we should never forget that events in history are rarely ever caused by one single act. In the case of emigration to Britain we should be reminded that there were three significant events which contributed to this in the same year 1948. A point ignored by the promoters of the “Windrush Generation”.

The British Parliament introduced the **Nationality Act** which was passed into Law in **April 1948**. This gave all British colonial citizens the right to be considered British citizens...**Civis Britannicus Sum**. So having procured their fares payable to the Travel Agents and their passports issued by the governor proclaiming proudly that they be allowed **without let or hindrance, and to be offered any help that they may stand in need** was a great contrast to the United States

Of America where the quota system was a hindrance to entry into this close and very rich neighbour. The confirming of citizenship meant that stowaways on board ships heading for Britain were not returned to their original port, but were allowed to disembark in British ports providing they could pay the fares to the shipping company. Stories abound that fellow passengers frequently had a “whip round” to pay the erstwhile stowaway’s fare. The Act provided easy entry to Britain in comparison to the United States where the majority would prefer to disembark.

Second of the three events which contributed to the increase of emigration was the **MV Empire Windrush**. At this point one should know what effect this mainly Jamaican event had on the rest to the so called Caribbean colonies. Did they know that 492 passengers left Jamaica for the Mother Country? Was it reported in the *Trinidad Guardian*, the *Barbadian Advocate* and other colonial newspapers of the region?

There has been no published research to prove or disprove this point on which hangs the Windrush

argument. Certainly there was a reception given by the Mayor of Lambeth at the Brixton Astoria. The Mayor was acting on a suggestion from the Colonial Secretary. The newcomers were addressed as Jamaicans. The reception included Brixton MP Colonel Marcus Lipton and Norwood's Mr Chamberlain; all continued to address the new arrivals as Jamaicans.

The third event which undoubtedly encouraged immigration was the establishment of the **National Health Service** in July 1948. The authorities were soon to discover that the great expectations for which the NHS was created was being hampered because it was woefully short of nurses and other workers it needed if this show-case piece of legislation was going to live up to caring for citizens from cradle to the grave. This opened the gates particularly for women who were capable of passing the tests for the State Enrolled or the State Registered Nurses and the equally necessary but not considered as upwardly mobile, the cleaners, porters and ward maids.

To emphasise that the sailing of the *MV Windrush* out of Kingston harbour was foremost a Jamaican event we must read the words of Lieutenant JH Smythe a Sierra Leonean who had been the welfare officer for Jamaican airmen and women who were demobbed recently in Kingston. He seemed to have continued the role of welfare officer for the emigrants on their way to Tilbury.

“I could not honestly paint a very rosy picture of your future; conditions in England are not as favourable as you think. Various reports you have heard about shortage of labour is not general. Unless you are highly skilled, your chances of finding a job are not good. Hard work is the order of the day in Britain, and if you think you cannot pull your weight you might as well decide to return to Jamaica even if you have to swim the Atlantic.”

Lieutenant JH Smythe would no doubt have known where his charges came from seeing that airmen were demobbed at islands in the Leeward and Windward colonies before heading for north-west for Jamaica. In any case the Captain of the *Windrush* offered the special cheap fare to Britain only when he arrived at Jamaica. There is a ‘truism’ that: “We left Jamaica and became West Indians once we reached the Mother Country.” It might also be true of the other former colonies. In fact the only thing which was truly West Indian then was the cricket team and even more so today since players from all over the region are now legible to play while erstwhile the team consisted of Barbados, Trinidad, Guiana and Jamaica.

The immigrants from the *Windrush* did not all head for Brixton. Most of the passengers went to cities where they were stationed during the war, or where they already had friends. There were other ships before the *Windrush*. The writer of this article knows for a fact that his stepfather sailed in the *Almanzura* for Britain in November 1947.

Those who went to Brixton and were without anywhere to live were temporarily housed in the old air raid shelter at Clapham. There was a clash between the Mayor of Lambeth whom it seemed proposed the idea and the Mayor of Battersea in whose jurisdiction the deep shelter was and who

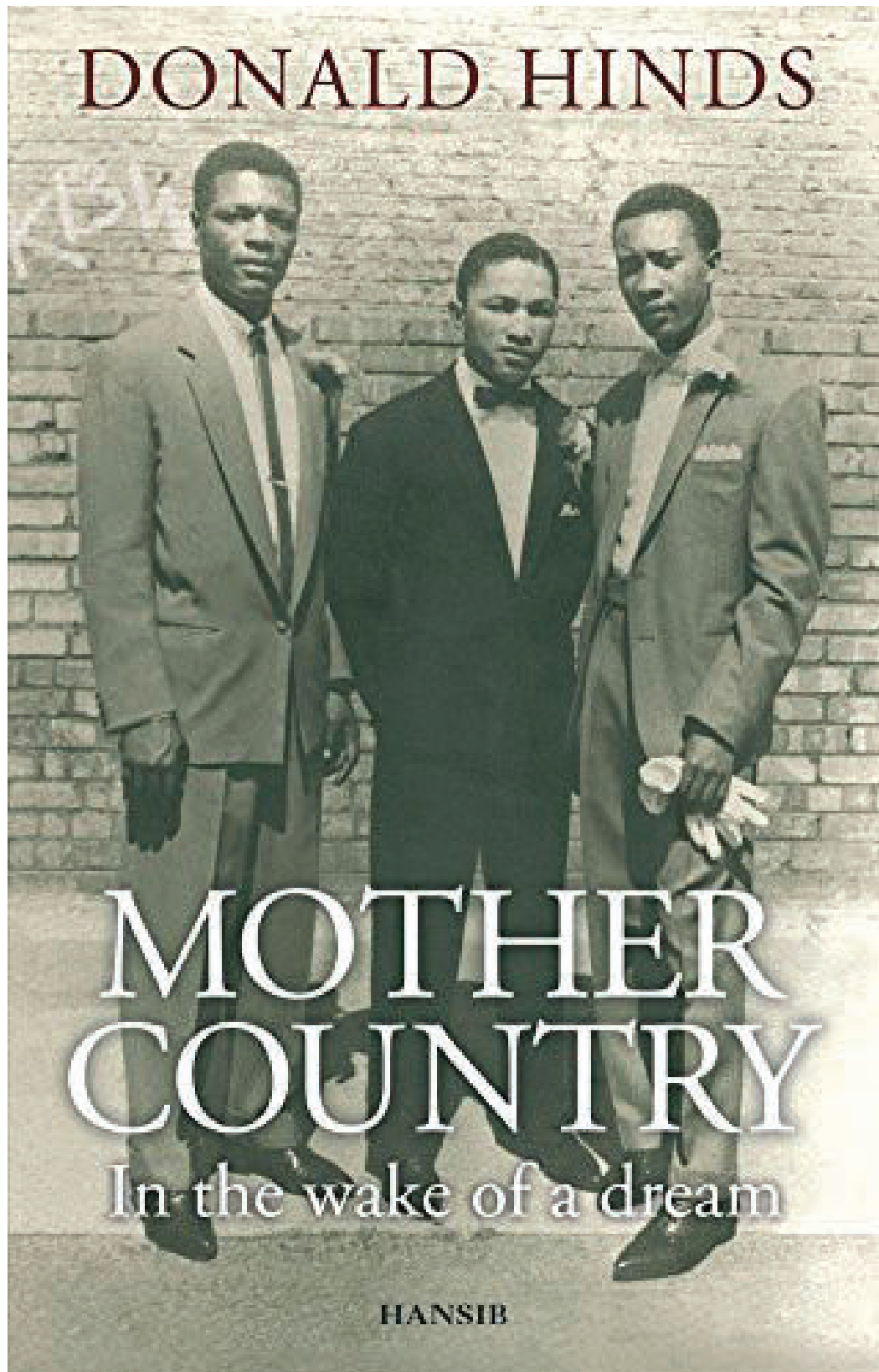
did not want these homeless Windrush immigrants on his patch. However, before long the police were saying that these *Jamaicans* at the Shelter had not ventured far and were mixing with the wrong people. Still there was no sign of a Windrush organisation to which future migrants could appeal for help. There was of course, the Caribbean Labour Congress an organisation founded by Ex-Service personnel. It was a political group and at various times had people of the calibre of Michael Manley, Dudley Thompson, and Forbes Burnham et al. There is nothing that we could hang the tag of “Windrush Generation” on. Of course, people begat children producing the next generation, but so did those who came on ships of the Grimaldi/Siosa line: the Auriga, the Begona, the Castel Verde etc which called at all the West Indian colonies picking up passengers for the Mother country. Apart from the Caribbean Labour Congress there was no organisation around to speak for West Indians when a year after the arrival of the Windrush a serious racial riot erupted in Deptford, South London between the local citizens. The reports in Local press made no mention of the valiant Windrush pioneers.

Notting Hill, West London and Robin Hood Drive, Nottingham exploded in the summer of 1958 apart from The *West Indian Students’ Union* and the *West Indian Gazette* edited by Claudia Jones there were no other organisation speaking for the Windrush pioneers. Of the two afore mentioned organisations one was for our then privileged sons and daughters studying at British Universities; the other was the long awaited journal with news culled from the colonies and providing a link with immigrants scattered over the British Isles. Sheila Patterson the author of *Dark Strangers* said if there is a leader of the newcomers, then it had to be Claudia Jones. Why did she not mention the Windrush and its leaders? Who were they if at all they existed?

So what caused emigration from the other Caribbean colonies other than Jamaica? We know that in Jamaica after the sailing of the Windrush one market lorry owner had “*SS Empire Windrush*” emblazoned on the cab of his lorry. There were also lorry owners who were willing to show their politics and preferences “*Jomo (Burning Spear) Kenyatta*” and “*Mahatma Ghandi*”, “*Errol Flynn*” and “*Tyrone the Power Plant*”.

Did the Windrush and its sailing from Jamaica have such an impact in other parts of the Caribbean? It seemed to be forgotten that many British firms including London Transport and British Rail established recruitment centres in Trinidad, Barbados et al. Proof of their impact can be seen in the emigration figures: 2000 in 1954; 5,000 in 1955 and 9,139 in 1956.

This we know the Windrush brought Jamaicans to Britain. Did the emigration of some 500



Jamaicans cause other Caribbean peoples to scramble for their passports? The challenge is for others to produce the evidence.

TRAVELS IN AFRICA (abridged version)
©Tom Dalgety (Guest Writer)

Within the last 20 years and particularly after 2003, I have visited many regions of Africa and strengthened my faith as a human being. My father's father was a European. My father's mother was of African descent. My mother's father and mother were of African descent. However, all four of them were victims of slavery in British Guiana and the colonialism by Britain that followed the era of slavery.

My visits to Africa may have been triggered by my awareness of the reaction of my parents to the oppression of slavery and colonialism. They reacted to this oppression by joining the Negro Progress Convention, NPC, the leading African cultural organization in British Guiana in the 1930s. The NPC staged events and also strategized in culturally and mentally liberating Africans from British oppression in the 1930s.

My parents never made physical contact with Africa. Africa was the geography of their fore-parents. But through the NPC my parents made the spiritual repatriation to Africa through competition, speeches, books and addresses. In 1934, my mother won the British Guiana best speaker's prize in a competition organized by the NPC.

Africa's proud legacy for the descendants of the enslaved Africans in Guyana is civilizations and faiths. The names of African civilizations have passed down through generations – Carthage, Giza, Zimbabwe, Meroe, Benin, Ife, Sahara, Timbuktu, and Zululand. These civilizations were rich in civil works such as temples, schools and pyramids, in communications as seen in the hieroglyphics on the walls of ruins, in cosmological conceptions that resulted in the calendar, in music and dance, in religions and beliefs such as the concept of 'One God', in the dynamic balance of economic, political and social structures.

Because this legacy was told to African Guianese in the 1930s, some began to journey to Africa. African Guianese fought for the liberation of "Abyssinia" from the Italians between 1936 and 1941 (Ethiopia was sometimes called "Abyssinia" by African Guianese). When the Italians were driven out of Ethiopia and Emperor Haile Selassie re-entered his capital city Addis Ababa on the 5th May, 1941, African Guianese were there to applaud. African Guianese fought with Sudan and Ethiopia warriors at the Battle of Gondar in November 1941 and helped to drive the Italians from Somaliland in 1942. African Guianese fought with the West Indian regiment in West Africa. Guianese, Cyril

Griffith of Buxton (known as ‘Honey in the mouth’) adapted the new name Ras Makonnen and returned to live in Ethiopia in the 1940s and 1950s. During the early 1930s the Christian Brethren church with headquarters in Bath, UK, sent out a team of men from British Guiana to Northern Rhodesia to build systems which would allow water from the Zambesi to be made available to countless communities. The husband and wife pair, George & Lily O’Jon went to Northern Rhodesia (Zambia) where all their children were born between 1933 and 1942. Their daughter Joy O’Jon is a stalwart educator in Guyana and once headed the Bishops’ High School. Eusi Kwayana’s father worked in Portuguese Mozambique and died there.

Africans also came to British Guiana in the 1950s. Claude Denbow, John Carter and Carlye Miller of the League of Coloured Peoples, LCP, made possible the visit of Eze Anyanu Ogueri II of the Obibi-Ezena tribe in December 1950. He was the first royal ruler from Africa to visit his kin in British Guiana and crowds of Africans turned out to see an African king. Soon after, the Portuguese brought in a Statue of the ‘Virgin Mary’ and paraded it throughout Georgetown so as not to be outdone by Africans. They wanted to show their catholic heritage.

Kwame Nkrumah’s struggle in Ghana in the 1950s was very impressive to his generation of African Guianese. For the first time that generation of African Guianese knew that Africa was not a “Dark Continent”. And the Algerian struggle in North Africa to end France’s tyranny was to attract a Caribbean fighter without equal. His name was Frantz Fanon of Martinique.

At Queen’s College in the 1950s essays were written such as ‘A long journey’. Such titles were in English text books e.g. Ridout, book 4. An essay, like the competition speech of my mother’s era, introduced me to Africa. Essays helped college students to discover Africa.

I first visited Nigeria, West Africa, during 1992 and stayed in Badagry. I had lunch with the Emir of Kano and toured his capitol. I mingled with the folk of Enugu and surrounding villages. I crossed the Niger delta, gazing at the colour of the river and had lunch in a Guyanese medical doctor, Rosebud McKinnon’s home in Benin City – she attended the Bishops’ High School. I returned to Nigeria twice this year, 2014 – first, for a funeral in February then for a traditional wedding in May. I stayed in Port Harcourt and mostly in the village of Umuaku, Isuochi, Abia State. At the funeral, burial of the dead took place in the family’s compound – some of this is still the practice in Mahaicony and West Berbice. Do you know that the Ibo people had a four day week before the Europeans conquered them and brought in the seven day week? The Ibo week of four days are Ere, Orié, Afor and Nkwo. I also travelled to Calabar and had a good time. When I returned in May for

the wedding 'good' elevated to 'joyous' because most days I wore Nigerian designed clothing. I danced at the traditional wedding, when the bride, with palm wine, searches for the groom (whose family had previously paid the bride price) and brings him to her father, kneels down with him, to be blessed by her father 'in the presence of God and all the witnesses to the marriage'. The bride's father after blessing them tells the groom he can now take his daughter. This is the act that makes the ceremony 'whole'. The opposite takes place at our Que-Que wedding ceremony in Guyana where the boy searches for the girl.

I went to Aswan, Egypt, North Africa, on holiday in 2003 and boated on the river Nile to Luxor, to the Valley of the Kings, was guided to the archaeology of ancient civilizations one above the other and also drank tea in the dwelling of a Nubian family.

In 2004 and 2006, I visited Zimbabwe, Central Africa, boated on the Zambezi River, and set my eyes on the 'Big 5' animals of Africa – elephant, rhino, hippo, giraffe and lion. No other continent has produced animal life of such immense size. No other continent caters to fertility like the African soil! In Zimbabwe, I was stunned by the audacity of Cecil Rhodes who arranged to be buried in a rock at 'world view' – the top of that country's highest mountain. Standing on that peak I also dreamed 'from Cape to Cairo'.

In free South Africa in 2005, I stayed at a bed and breakfast in Black Soweto and listened to stories of white soldier patrols of that prison community during apartheid. Across from Black Soweto is White Johannesburg. A single road connects the Black community to the White city lined by army buildings with White soldiers. I returned to South Africa in 2012 and this year, 2014. In 2012, I stayed in Johannesburg. I was told then that the real name for the land that the Dutch called Pretoria is Tshwane and that the Africans want back their name that is still being denied them. In 2014, I slept in Highveld, Centurion and flew to Durban, Kwazulu-Natal to inspect an old rice mill. Kwazulu-Natal is the province of Shaka the famous military general who defeated the British at the Battle of Blood River.

In 2005, I saw on the shore of the Indian Ocean in Kenya, East Africa, Fort Jesus built by Portuguese for slave trading hundreds of years ago. Also on the shore of the Indian Ocean in Kenya is old Mombasa city, built by Africans for their economic and social wellbeing thousands of years ago. Old Mombasa is a 'living legacy' of a city created by African people.

Fort Jesus in East Africa and Elmina Castle in Ghana, West Africa are the ugliest buildings I have

seen in all Africa. I would like them to be demolished. Construction philosophy within Europe questions the life of a building beyond 25 years. Buildings are demolished and rebuilt with newer modern materials. When will our science philosophy outline a relevant construction philosophy? In any event beauty is in the eyes of the beholder.

I returned to Kenya in 2012 and this year, 2014. In 2012, I toured three micro and mini hydroelectric plants in Kikuyu country. In 2014, I attended an appropriate technology conference at Kenyatta University. I gazed upon the rift valley on the journey to Hell's Gate national park. Within Hell's Gate is the devil's bedroom. I washed my hands at a hot spring. Do you know that geothermal energy will someday surpass hydro as the main source of electrical energy for Kenya? The fifth geothermal plant was pointed out to me. In Hell's Gate, I saw two giraffes fighting and the graceful secretary bird. But the 'untold' story I was told by a Kenyan was about an attempted coup in 1982 against the then government. I was told that the coup was planned by the Kenya Air Force officers who did not do reconnaissance for the British military base in the country. British soldiers in tanks entered Nairobi and massacred native army, navy and air force military and supporters of the coup and restored the then government to power. What an untold story!

I went from Ghana to Benin, West Africa, in 2010. In Benin, I travelled along the slave route where I motor-cycled from Ouidah town to the shore of the Atlantic Ocean. There, I witnessed a lady in white clothes worshipping the water spirit. I once asked an African what was his religion and he answered that anything that has long life he worships so I understand now why many Africans see spirits in all things created by God – the water, the air, the sun, the earth and all living things. Observing Voodoo worshipers in Benin made me reflect on the concept of the soul and the invention of trading people and slavery. The victims of slavery and the Trans-Atlantic slave trade are the most tragic expression of a degenerate mental condition in man between the 16th and 19th centuries.

Ganvie village on Lake Nokote, Benin is a monument to freedom. Black Star monument in Accra, Ghana is a monument to freedom. Monuments to freedom are in the desert of Sudan. I breathed the desert air and sang on my way to the learning centre of Musararat, the lion temple at Naaga and the pyramids at El Bajarawia. These five monuments belong to all Africans. They are legacies of free Africa.

Yet, the most beautiful region in Africa that I have visited is Rwanda, Central Africa. I went there in 2008. Kigali is green and built on hills. The road to Lake Kivu gives the view of mountains. On

the mountain slopes are crops similar to those grown in Guyana. From a motor boat on the lake, I looked at a project that scrubbed the methane gas oozing from the bottom of the lake. On the bank of Lake Kivu are generators that use the methane to produce electricity for the town. Those Guyanese who know Tumatumari hydro project and its projected supply of electricity to Mahdia will appreciate this story.

Khartoum, Sudan and Juba, South Sudan, I visited in 2012. Juba is on the White Nile. The White Nile joins the Blue Nile in Khartoum. Khartoum was occupied as an administrative and military capital by the British invaders during the colonial era. Omdurman, on the White Nile, is the heritage city of the Sudanese and the burial place of their nobles and rulers. The road that links West African tribes to Cairo passes through Omdurman. This was pointed out to me. Along this road from north to west and vice-versa the victims of slavery were transported by Islamists. It was (and is) always 2-way. Arabs took Blacks south to the Atlantic Coast and north to Arabia from the belly of Africa to slavery.

Now-a-days, Black women and children are moved north for servitude in Arabia and this is the *raison d'être* of the present armed struggle between South Sudan and Sudan, between Darfur and Sudan, among Christians, Islamists and other religionists. Do you know that the Arab League is executing a plan to have Arabic spoken throughout Africa? Their vehicle is Islam. South Sudan is at the front line fighting this new Arab conquest.

I returned to Sudan in July 2013 to discuss placer mining and issues associated with mining. I was driven south to the rain-agriculture belt that is bountiful with biblical images. There is a legacy of untold stories of civilizations for the victims of Trans-Atlantic slavery from this Nile region of ancient Africa.

The victims of slavery and the Trans-Atlantic slave trade were Africans transported from all the locations I visited. They were proud of their nations and ancestry, culture and education, engineering and industry, and agricultural and economic pursuits. They slaved with a historical memory like mine allowing a rich oral tradition which helped them to hold their own after abolition. They remembered stories of civil works, philosophy, joys and sorrows, wealth, security and politics, how to know when to expect rain and its importance to agriculture, how to know when an animal will give birth. I was given a lesson of how to prepare ground nut stew/soup in Ghana. I roasted beef in Zimbabwe. I was dressed as a Maasai warrior in Kenya. Nothing compares to it! I think that celebrations by Africans should include a return to storytelling; the oral traditions of

Africa. Those stories should inspire the next generation to value relationships, embrace adversities and turn them into experiences that push growth and development, and give the will to do what is necessary and noble. Here's to a brilliant future!



Tom Dalgety

Biography

W.T. Dalgety attended Queens College. With GCE (Lond) A Levels in Chemistry, Physics and Pure Mathematics, he attended the University of Aberdeen after spending four years there he returned to Guyana in 1970.

He taught science subjects at Government Technical Institute while pursuing his Dip Ed., at the University of Guyana. As a scientist he worked in the bauxite industry where he researched clays, kaolin, sand, bauxite and mineral processing. As development engineer he worked on pelletization of bauxite dust.

He started, **Dalgety Processing Enterprises Ltd.**, in 1981 where he manufactured sodium silicate, refractory mortars, potter's clay, as well as products to stop leaks and putty for wood. During that time he also studied Management of Technology in India where he spent two months working on a sodium silicate plant.

He is a director on the Board of the Guyana Geology and Mines Commission researching mining issues and appropriate technology.

He belongs to the International Network of Appropriate Technologist (INAT) and has published several articles in their journal.

Lakoe Ancestral tale told in Music and Dance

Toen hoorde ze het geluid van de **Lakoe-drums**. Ze dreunden een ritme en Trude sloeg op dat ritme haar armen uit.’

De winst van het Lakoe-spel is de Nederlandse vertaling van *Gertrude, the girl from Beekhuize* geschreven door Petronella Breinburg (1928, Paramaribo -Suriname), essayist, taalwetenschapper, onderwijskundige en succesvolle kinderboeken schrijfster die al vanaf de jaren 60 van de vorige eeuw in London woont.

(Profit from Lakoe drama) is the Dutch translation of *Gertrude, the girl from Brook Huize* written by Petronella Breinburg (Born.1928, Paramaribo -Suriname), essayist, linguist, educator and successful children's book author who has lived in London since the 1960s.



Trude is woonachtig in de multiculturele arbeiderswijk Beekhuize en heeft naast Creoolse vrienden en burens ook Hindostaanse, Javaanse en Chinese vriendinnen. Via de ogen en ervaringen van Trude maakt de lezer kennis met Paramaribo van de jaren 40-50. Om van Beekhuize naar Paramaribo te reizen kon ze gebruik maken met de trein of de bussen van de familie Lagadoe. Trude wordt geconfronteerd met discriminatie en pesten als ze in de stad naar de middelbare school gaat. Ze wordt geconfronteerd met uitsluiting, armoede en ongeluk. Maar ze redt ook een kind van de verdrinkingsdood en had dat ongeluk met het veer in de geest al zien gebeuren. Niemand die acht op haar slaat toen ze hen daarvoor wilde waarschuwen. Op school worden zij en haar vriendin Sue gezien en behandeld als achterlijke meisjes uit de achterlijke buurt Beekhuize.

Trude has been living in a multicultural working-class neighbourhood, Beek Huize and besides Creole friends and neighbours also Hindustani, Javanese and Chinese friends. Through the eyes and experiences of Trude the reader acquainted with Paramaribo during the 1940s-50s. To Beek Huize

travel to Paramaribo, she could use the train or the bus to the family Lagadoe. Trude is confronted with discrimination and bullying when she goes to high school in the city. She faces exclusion, poverty and misfortune. But also saves a child from drowning and had that accident with the spring in the mind see all happen. No one heeds her when she tried to warn them before. At school she and her friend Sue are treated like retarded girls from the backward area, Beek Huize.



© photograph S. Barlow Massay

Belief

©Lenny St. Luce. Amsterdam

I know why you believe in god.

I understand it makes it better to believe that there's a plan

That somewhere over yonder there's a white haired, bearded man

Who knows it all, who knows you and who has the answer why

And his blue eyed son will hold you, when his angels take you to him when you die

I know now why.

I know why we get so angry, I understand why we rage

Life seems often fruitless, cruel and pointless

With no hope or education it's easy to feel caged

Few possibilities ever amount to something that will raise us past our knees

I know why the screw turns inwards as we rot from our dis-ease.

I know why we erode ourselves away.

I understand the reasons for the choices that we make.

If I hate me, your hatred cannot cause me pain

If I beat loathe and detest me, maybe you'll go away.

If I cut off one hand and foot will you let me use the other?

If I rape and kill my sister will you let me keep my brother?

Is this why I hate me? So your hatred cannot hurt

If I can't go any lower no one push me further in the dirt.

I know why people need to believe in god

Why they pray for his mercy, his forgiveness and his love.

But none of those will pay the rent

Or return the money that we didn't have, that's already been spent.

The tax man don't know mercy

Forgiveness doesn't touch the judge's tongue

And too often love is exchanging your body

I, the hope of finding what you didn't get from your mum.

I know why tears creep through your eyelids and coat your cheeks as you pray

That maybe tomorrow will be easier than today
And that next week will hold more promise than you experienced yesterday.
I know why we pray to end the wars but never bother to vote
I know why we eat 'til our tummy's hurt and drink 'til our livers burst
Food and drink can't ease this hunger or quench this thirst
And we both know why.
I thought knowledge smoothed the passage, I hoped our pain would set us free
But sometimes I maim my compassion, cripple my courage and imprison my belief.
I know why but, sometimes my faith falters, I can't seem to touch my love
I will take responsibility for achieving change, not look for help from above.
But I do know why you do.
I see that you feel comfort through the dark and lonely days
I understand that you feel lighter when you lift your voice in praise
I do know why.
However, I choose to see my life with all the resources in my hands.
To persevere from within myself to actualise my plans
My situation may not seem different or any better from where you stand
But I will hold my power and with it, I will prove my mansion is not built on sand.



I am a prisoner

©*Hansemuye Ohemaa Amba*

I am a strong black woman
preserve my beautiful self in a golden cage
and throw away the key
I am a prisoner
I am a strong black woman
crying in the dark
but shining in the light, for too long
I have been okay for too long
for too long I have been strong
holding up my head, trying to breath without air
I am a prisoner
I am a strong black woman
too long
my ocean has run over
too long
I have been under that spell of being strong, black and woman
for too long
for long
yet
I am weak,
I am not strong
I am trying to be bold, solid
But needy I am
I am running, trying to be perfect in every flow
I've got my self trapped into
I am all over the place
trying to stand my ground
Against all odds, I've made it, still making...

The Evolution of the Black Cake

©Scherin Barlow Massay

The Caribbean Black cake is a celebratory cake and has for centuries been eaten to celebrate special occasions in the Caribbean and its Diaspora. The history of cake making is almost as old as mankind. The first reference to cakes were made in relation to worship and the raisin cake was not only made for human consumption when travelling and to sustain marching soldiers but also as sacrificial offerings to various gods since such foods were thought to have fertility powers. Raisin cakes were made by the people living in the Levant (ancient Canaan) and the surrounding areas and were used as sacrificial cakes to the “queen of the heavens”. Such religious rites were a family event, where women baked cakes; the children gathered the wood and fathers lit the fire. Inanna, whose name means “queen of the heavens”, was worshiped in Sumer, in ancient Mesopotamia and was the goddess of war, fertility and love. When this worship spread to other parts of the then world, her name changed. In Babylonian, Akkadian and Assyrian cultures she was worshipped as Ishtar, while in Ancient Egypt the queen of the heavens became Aset (Isis) and her worship was later embraced by the ancient Greeks and Romans. Many of those practices continue today under the auspices of Easter, where the practice of eating spiced buns or raisin cakes is as popular today as it was in antiquity.

About this practice, Alan Davidson, in the **Oxford Companion to Food** wrote: “*Hot cross bun, a round bun made from a rich yeast dough containing flour, milk, sugar, butter, eggs, currants, and spices, such as cinnamon, nutmeg, allspice, and cloves. In England, hot cross buns are traditionally eaten on Good Friday; they are marked on top with a cross, wither cut in the dough or composed of strips of pastry. The mark is of ancient origin, connected with religious offerings of bread, which replaced earlier, less civilized offerings of blood. The Egyptians offered small round cakes, marked with a representation of the horns of an ox, to the goddess of the moon. The Greeks and Romans had similar practices and the Saxons ate buns marked with a cross in honor of the goddess of light, Eostre, whose name was transferred to Easter. According to superstition, hot cross buns and loaves baked on Good Friday never went mouldy, and were sometimes kept as charms from one year to the next*” [Oxford University Press: Oxford] 1999 (p. 114)

From a Sausage to a Cake: its British development.

The British Christmas cake has taken centuries to evolve into what it is today. It originally evolved from the English sausage, a dish where fat, meat, spices, fruits, vegetables and grains were all mixed together, then stuffed into the stomach and intestines of animals. From those beginnings, it morphed into other dishes before becoming a staple food in the Caribbean and its Diaspora on special occasions.

One of its transformations was a food named pottage; a thick stew that was simmered for hours and which later became the forerunner to the figgy or plum pudding. Pottage was a mish-mash of ingredients made from whatever poor people had at their disposal to eat and had been around since medieval times. Later, dried plums (prunes) were imported and added to the pottage, making it the first dried fruits to be used in savoury recipes.

Plums had been introduced into Western Europe by the crusaders when they returned from fighting the crusades in the areas of Palestine, Jerusalem and Syria (ancient Canaan) The Italians had learnt to preserve plums by drying them in the sun and it was during the reign of Queen Elizabeth I, that plums were first imported from Italy to England. Such dishes became very popular and many other dried fruits and spices; including cinnamon and cloves (brought into England by the East India Trading Company) were added to meat dishes making it more of a spicy broth.

However it was earlier, during the 15th century, that the generic name for a dish that contained dried fruit was called a “plum pottage” regardless of whether or not it contained plums. By the end of the 16th century dried fruit had become more popular in England and so the savoury ingredients were used less.

Religion was a major factor that influenced the customs of this popular dish. Before the Reformation, when Catholicism was the state religion, the Roman Catholic Church had decreed that puddings should be made on the 25th Sunday after Trinity and made with thirteen ingredients, symbolising Jesus Christ and his 12 apostles. This date became known as ‘Stir it up Sunday’ because each member of the family was required to stir the pudding before it was cooked. The last Sunday in November or first Sunday in December, was the time for baking puddings and cakes before Christmas.

It was during the early 17th century that plum pottages stopped being an everyday food because cooking it became a lengthy process (boiling for up to 9 hours) and could not be undertaken on a

regular basis. Therefore, it became the tradition to eat it on special occasions on the Christian calendar.

Earlier during the 16th century, a different view of Christmas and its customs emerged and rapidly spread amongst non Catholics. The Western schism began in 1517 and gained momentum in England when Henry VIII broke away from the Catholic Church and became the Head of the Church of England in 1533. In 1583 the English pamphleteer, Philip Stubbes, a Protestant, attacked the practices associated with Christmas in the book *Anatomie of Abuses*, after spending seven years travelling throughout the land and observing social practices. He wrote about Christmas: “*That more mischief is that time committed than in all the year besides, what masking and mumming, whereby robbery whoredom, murder and what not is committed? What dicing and carding, what eating and drinking, what banqueting and feasting is then used, more than in all the year besides, to the great dishonour of God and impoverishing of the real.*”

When the Protestant Puritans came to power under Cromwell in the 1640s, they made an attempt to ban Christmas in 1656. They thought that Christmas was a pagan festival that had evolved from the Roman Saturnalia and they wanted to eradicate all traces of Catholicism along with the practices they considered unscriptural. They thought the day should be spent fasting instead of feasting and they also tried to ban the foods associated with Christmas, including the plum pottage and mince pies. The Puritans hated those foods because it was customary to present the priesthood in the Vatican with sweetmeats as symbols of devotion. Therefore, such practices the Puritans associated with Catholic idolatry.

During the next 150 years, meat and plums were gradually replaced by currants, raisins and other dried fruit that had become popular in England since 1592, when the Levant trading company were given exclusive trading rights by Queen Elizabeth I to trade in currants. However, although the ingredients changed over time, some form of alcohol was always added to the recipe to help in the maturation process.

The Victorians introduced lots of rituals surrounding the way the pudding had to be stirred and people often stirred it in a circular movement from east to west, which was meant to represent the way the Magi travelled to visit the infant Jesus. Each person in the family had to put in a charm for luck once the mixture had been stirred. The practice of adding charms was probably started during the mid 17th century. The most popular charm that has survived with the plum pudding is the silver coin, although other emblems such as rings, thimbles, horseshoes and anchors were once used.

Whoever got the slice of pudding with the coin was said to receive good luck and wealth.

Black Cake

Black cake is a fruit cake that evolved from the British figgy pudding. During the reign of Queen Victoria, the cake and the figgy pudding became two separate entities in England, while in the Caribbean, the figgy pudding evolved into Black or rum cake. The recipe was taken to different Caribbean islands and mainland Guyana by the plantocracy who taught it to enslaved women who were put to work as cooks in the homes of their enslavers. This continued during colonial times.

Today, a traditional British Christmas fruit cake is often crumbly and dry and if alcohol is added, it is brandy. On the other hand, a traditional Black cake is velvety, soft and moist, and made with lashings of rum and fruit that has often been soaked months in advance.

Rum and molasses; ingredients of many Black cake recipes, were by-products of the slave industry. As a result of boiling cane juice to make into sugar, a thick viscous residue was left. The planters saw no fit use for this industrial waste, so gave it to enslaved people and animals as food. Later it was discovered that fermented molasses could be made into rum. Flour was not readily available to enslaved people in the Caribbean therefore the first figgy puddings would have been made from foods that the slaves grew for their own consumption. Such foods as cassava and yams would have been made into flour and molasses added to these rudimentary recipes. Rum, another by-product of the slaving industry was readily available.

The Black cake over the years has become the main cake for all special occasions including weddings, Christmas and birthdays. Each culture, from Aruba to St Vincent, and mainland Guyana, all have different ways of making the Black cake and each nationality would tell you that their method and recipe is the best.

Anecdotal stories about Black/rum cake

“I remember when I was seven, my mother used to make Rum cakes. Then she would go to my grandmother and they would make seven. I used to wonder why they made so many but I never knew.” **Susan Thomas** (Jamaican Parentage)

“All I can remember is when I was living with my grandma, she use to buy fruits in October and three bottles of cherry wine and soak the fruits until December and two days before Christmas she would get out a white bucket and throw all the fruits in it with the rind of a lime, about 12 eggs, vanilla essence, mixed essence, butter and lots of sugar. Nutmeg...she loved nutmeg in everything... a little flour and she use to brown sugar on the stove and throw that in, then mix up the batch with her hands, I use to laugh to see her whole hand disappear in the bucket. She use to bake cake in old cookie round pans ...there were two types for the kids with only fruit and the other with plenty cherry brandy...guess which one we would eat out? I was 4 years old, then I went to live with my mum for 8 years then back to my grandma, the method never change. The mixture was very runny. I always wondered how it came hard when it came out of the oven...but it tasted so good and most times, she knew when we stole the cherry brandy one because we used to be very sleepy afterwards.” **Shasta Adams** (Mount, St George, Tobago)

“It was either my grandmother or mother who taught me to make Black cake. My grandmother was a cook in the house of some white people, so she might have learnt it there. In Guyana when people have birthday parties, the person whose birthday it is, is fed cake by their sweetheart. Nowadays even young children take part in this tradition. The custom springs from the bride and groom cutting the cake and feeding each other with it which symbolised the sharing of a new life together, so I don’t know why children take part in it.” **Pearl Evelyn** aged 89. (Originally from Guyana)

“When I was a child my brother and I use to help my mother with the Black Cake. We use to have to take the grains out of the raisins and take the stones out of the prunes. Then my mother would use a mincer and grind the fruits, including cherries, we used to have to stir it a special way. She use to burn the sugar to make the cake dark, maybe that is why they call it Black cake and she would grate lemon and orange peel to put in the cake. She used empty biscuit tins to bake the cake and we were allowed to grease the tins. My mother baked at night and when we woke up in the morning, there was cake! When I started making cakes for myself, for many years I followed her methods but I used to get fed up with turning the arm of the mincer. Now, with the improvement of technology it is easier to bake cakes and I use a food processor. I never use raisins; I prefer to use sultanas in my cakes because I still remember having to pick the bits from the raisins. I also remember my mother breaking the seed of the prunes and using that as well. It had an almond bitter taste.” **Anise Jarvis** (Antigua)

“Black cake!” I don’t know anything about Black cake. I have heard of rum cake though.”

Chad Smith (British born of Jamaican/ Guyanese parentage)

“When I was small, my mom would be in the kitchen cooking or baking, and anytime she was there, I would go because I always loved my mommy’s cooking, still do. She would get a grinder and grind the ingredients and add liquor. It was a pleasure for my mom to teach me how to cook. Even though I can make it, sometimes I ask my mom to make it [cake] because I love her hand better.”

Simone Canzius (Born in Guyana but resident of America)

“Making Black cake was a year round thing, to make it when you feel to eat it. But mostly Christmas holiday seasons. Christmas without Black cake wasn’t Christmas at all. I can remember flour, eggs, rum fruit and butter; I did love to melt the butter into the eggs.” **Shauntelle Webster.**



Carrot cake, Jamaican rum cake, Guyanese black cake.

© Photograph. S |Barlow Massay

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ODE TO THE BLACK CAKE

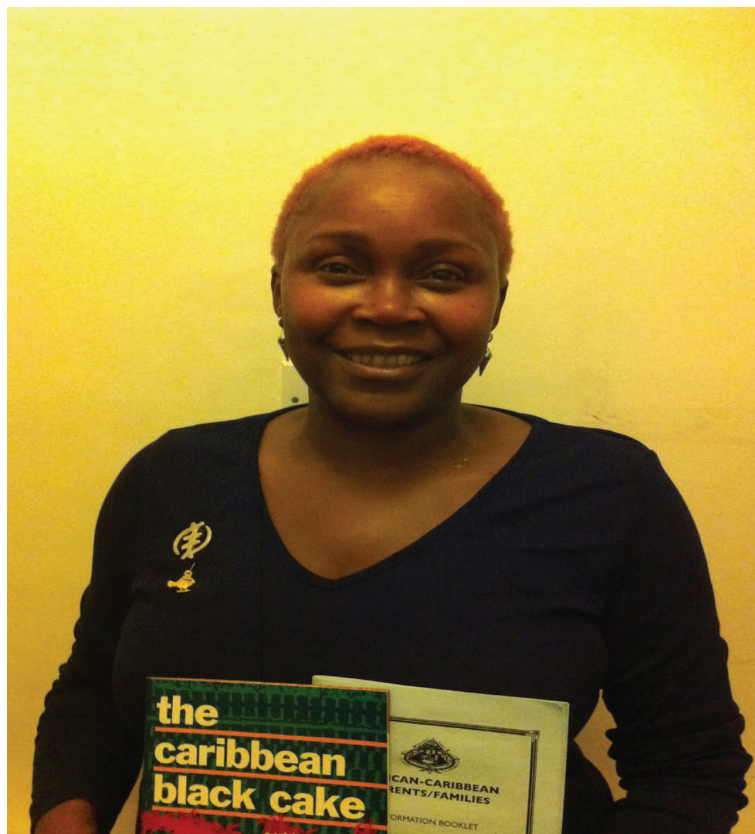
To the Caribbean Black cake

©*Maria Dalrymple*

You sit proudly
on the table, the pride of the place.
Proud and flamboyant a beacon to your
cause-a wedding, a christening or a special day.

Your origins are
sacred, you have come
a long way, it takes us on journeys from
across the sea and back again. Caribbeanised
and sometimes Europeanised with an almond skin (paste).

So today,
we come together to celebrate
your place at the table your sense of us,
your history and ritual, your true symbol of Love.



THE CARIBBEAN ISLANDS

The **Caribbean islands** are those islands that border or are surrounded by the [Caribbean Sea](#) as well as islands in the nearby [Lucayan Archipelago](#), organized by the political entity to which each island belongs.

There are **thousands of islands** that are part of the [island countries](#) of the broadly defined Caribbean region:

QUESTION -Are they all the same by language, tradition, cuisine, dress, size and population

IF YES-how do we know?

NUMBER OF BROADLY DEFINED CARIBBEAN ISLANDS

<u>Name</u>	<u>number of Islands</u>
Anguilla	21
Antigua-and-Barbuda	37
Aruba	4
The Bahamas	501
Barbados, into Barbados	3 formerly but Pelican Island is now absorbed through land reclamation, 1956–1961)
Belize	(many)
British Virgin Islands	43
Cayman Islands	12
Cuba	23
Dominica	7
Dominican Republic	2
Grenada	39

Guadeloupe	38
Haiti	12
Honduras	6
Jamaica	26
Martinique	3
Netherlands Antilles	25 (this includes half of Saint Martin)
Puerto Rico	142
Saint Barthelme	13
Saint Kitts-and-Nevis	20
Saint Lucia	17
Saint Martin	8
Saint Vincent- And -the-Grenadines	39
Trinidad-and-Tobago	21
Turks-and-Caicos Islands	58
U. S Virgin Islands	81

Some continental countries also have islands in the Caribbean, including:

Colombia	10 (known as San Andrés-and-Providencia)
Mexico	4 Islands
Nicaragua	4
Venezuela	15

This list is not exhausted

Source:
The Wikipedia, free encyclopedia. Research -Petronella Breinburg

A TOUCH OF SLAVERY

By

BALLAFIRE ELDERS

On 25th October a presentation from Vista Reminisce Elders Group brought CACOEU's one day conference for Black History 2014 to a close. The BALLA FIRE is the dramatic wing of Vista Reminisce Elders Group, based in South East London. Vista, for short, is open to anyone over 50 years of age who shares its aims and objectives, regardless of gender and ethnicity. In reality though, it appears to have a membership of people, mainly females from the Anglophone Caribbean Islands, of which there are around 40 according to geographical maps. Other members hail from Barbados which is inside the Atlantic Ocean and Guyana which borders the Caribbean Sea. The Vista Reminisce Elders Group is said to have been the brain-wave of Melina (Dolly) Briscoe, who brought together a small group of people from the ex-British colonies living in London. Now, a successfully well run organisation, Vista supports other local organisations including CACOEU.

But the play which at a glance took me back to the early days in Suriname and the LAKOE SPEL has to be explained. In the Lakoe play the whole story is told in dance, folksong, drumming, sketches and many satirical comments from memory. The story lines and songs were handed down from older to younger generations. And there is a plantation setting for the backdrop. At first the Lakoe play was performed in the open-air, now, it is performed on stage, with artistically produced village settings

The play '**A Touch of Slavery**' performed by the Ballafire elders is not like a traditional main stream play or even a traditional amateur dramatics. It is more like an event of a mixture of folk songs, some sketches, at times reading with script in hand with some movement and jokes. That, to a great extent is similar the LAKOE play which I had performed in as a child, and wrote a school play about when a teenager, but there are also differences. The theme of '**A Touch of Slavery**' was not just about the slavery, and assuredly transatlantic, since they were and still are other forms of slavery. It was of the abuse of a young female and the advantage taking of helpless people which are still going on in society today.

On the evening of Friday 16th January 2015 I saw the play and was impressed by what I saw. Here's the synopsis of the event.

A TOUCH OF SLAVERY

SCENE ONE

Good evening to everyone

We welcome you to short a play

Called "A TOUCH OF SLAVERY"

Let's put our hands together for the BALLAFIRE ELDERS

1st Song -Swing low sweet Chariot... *sung by the cast.*

1st Poem- The journey to slavery read by: *Norma, Sheila, Merle and Sinclair*

SCENE TWO

1st Poem

Some memories of being a slave.

Read by *Peggy and Sheila.*

2nd Poem

My Ancestor performed by *Lecreta Lappell* MBE

BREAK

Then the sketch

Emma's journey to the slave master's house.

SCENE THREE

NARRATOR:

It was a very tedious journey to the slave master's house. Mary-Lee wept when she saw the huge stone house because she knew that she would have to work night and day without hardly and rest and barely and food.

CLOSING

The cast song-

'KYMBA YA MI LORD'

Then Exit

COMMENT

CAST

Slave master -*Joy*

Slave girl -*Peggy*

Mother with baby brother – *Merle & black doll.*

Song by Sinclair and his song group.

I was honoured to have been invited to say a few words. Thanking the group for inviting me, I went on to first congratulate the members of VISTA in general on its good work over the years, the BALLA FIRE group, in particular.

I then pointed out.

a) The similarity and difference to the LAKOE play of my childhood which tells a similar story in song, dance, poetry, short narrative and the roar of the APINTY talking drums.

b) “A TOUCH OF SLAVERY could be a short film, (video) and beamed across the ex-colonial Islands

c) This play could be taken to Amsterdam / and the Amsterdam Surinamese society (who would understand English anyway) invited to bring their own similar play to London e.g. NA GOWTU DU (the Gold do) so similar to LAKOE (booklet in three languages one is English).

What a good culture-exchange that would be - said Elsa the M.C. of the night, later.

Sources

1. WINST VAN HET LAKOE SPEL (Benefit of the Lakoe Play; as in Drama)

© Petronella Breinburg (Written in Dutch but summary in English is in this journal)

NA GOWTO DO - © Thea Doelwijt; Ruben Muringen; initiative Christine Henar.

MEMBERS ACTIVITIES

©Scherin Barlow Massay

The Saatchi Gallery is a large and spacious art gallery located near Sloane Square, at the Duke of York's headquarters. There are fifteen different galleries exhibiting contemporary art located on four floors. The current exhibition is the second part of the Pangaea exhibition (first exhibited last year) and features art from African and Latin America. Nineteen artists exhibit pieces that range from ceramics, lino cuttings, photographs, plastic bags and works on canvas.

I found some of the pieces inspiring and my appetite was rekindled to put paintbrush to canvas. Others forced me to rethink and embrace different mediums as a channel for my artistic expression. And while some pictures bordered on the pornographic and ridiculous others needed a broad stretch of the imagination to believe that something so rudimentary could be construed as art and in my opinion, smacked of the Emperor's New Clothes syndrome.

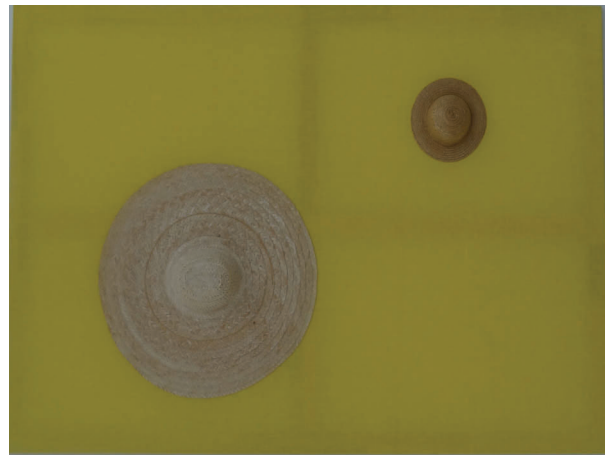
Here are two of my favourite pieces.



Francios Bole da Cunha

Everything must Go! 2014

This piece is made from plastic bags placed over a frame.



Jean Alexandre da Cunha

Nude V1, 2012

I like the simplicity of this piece. It is just three sunhats in a yellow background

Elsa Pascal

Lewisham Ethnic Minority Partnership (LEMP) is a network of organisations and individuals in Lewisham. LEMP's remit is to disseminate information of black and minority ethnic interest. As such we facilitate networking events on themes of relevance and interest not only to our members but to the general public at large. The spring event was to see a film produced by The Latest.com about the experiences of veterans of WWII. Prior to the arrival of the film we read an extract of Dr Martin Luther King Jnr's famous '*I have a dream speech*' and discussed the theme of multiculturalism in our society today. As March 20th is designated World Day of Happiness as well as for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, we also discussed personal experiences of what made people happy.

I have a dream (short version)

So even though we face the difficulties of today and tomorrow, I still have a dream. It is a dream deeply rooted in the American dream.

- I have a dream that one day this nation will rise up and live out the true meaning of its creed: We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal.
- I have a dream that one day on the red hills of Georgia, the sons of former slaves and the sons of former slave owners will be able to sit down together at the table of brotherhood.
- I have a dream that one day even the state of Mississippi, a state sweltering with the heat of injustice, sweltering with the heat of oppression will be transformed into an oasis of freedom and justice.
- I have a dream that my four little children will one day live in a nation where they will not be judged by the color of their skin but by the content of their character. I have a dream today.
- I have a dream that one day down in Alabama with its vicious racists, with its governor having his lips dripping with the words of interposition and nullification, one day right down in Alabama little black boys and black girls will be able to join hands with little white boys and white girls as sisters and brothers. I have a dream today.
- I have a dream that one day every valley shall be exalted, every hill and mountain shall be made low, the rough places will be made plain, and the crooked places will be made straight, and the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together.

This is our hope.

This is the faith that I go back to the South with.

- With this faith, we will be able to hew out of the mountain of despair a stone of hope.
- With this faith we will be able to transform the jangling discords of our nation into a beautiful symphony of brotherhood.
- With this faith we will be able to work together, to pray together, to struggle together, to go to jail together, to stand up for freedom together, knowing that we will be free one day.

This will be the day when all of God's children will be able to sing with new meaning:

My country, 'tis of thee, sweet land of liberty, of thee I sing.

Land where my fathers died,

land of the pilgrims' pride,

from every mountainside, let freedom ring.

And if America is to be a great nation, this must become true.

And so let freedom ring from the prodigious hilltops of New Hampshire.

Let freedom ring from the mighty mountains of New York.

Let freedom ring from the heightening Alleghenies of Pennsylvania.

Let freedom ring from the snow-capped Rockies of Colorado.

Let freedom ring from the curvaceous slopes of California.

But not only that, let freedom ring from Stone Mountain of Georgia.

Let freedom ring from Lookout Mountain of Tennessee.

Let freedom ring from every hill and molehill of Mississippi.

From every mountainside, let freedom ring.

And when this happen, when we allow freedom ring,

When we let it ring from every village and every hamlet,

From every state and every city,

We will be able to speed up that day when all of God's children, black men and white men, Jews and Gentiles, Protestants and Catholics, will be able to join hands and sing in the words of the old Negro spiritual:

Free at last. Free at last. Thank God almighty, we are free at last.

‘I have a dream’ - Dr Martin Luther King Jnr - 1963

For YOUR consideration:

1. Is the context of Dr King’s speech still relevant in today’s society?
2. Is the conquest of racial prejudice nearing completion?
3. How widespread is black poverty in the world today?
4. Are black and/other minority ethnic (BME) people still sadly crippled by chains of discrimination?
5. What is the collective experience of BME people?
6. What might be their shared destiny?
7. How likely is it that a black person may still be living on a lonely island of poverty?
8. How often do people of BME backgrounds find themselves exiles in their own land?
9. Are all people guaranteed the unalienable rights to the pursuit of happiness?
10. How far have we risen from the dark and desolate valley to the sunlit path of racial justice?
11. How can we lift nations from the quick-sands of racial injustice to the solid rock of brotherhood and sisterhood with dignity and discipline?

Can we walk alone?



© Photograph. Scherin Barlow Massay

Travelling - A Memorable Trip, Highlighted By a Personal History of the Panama Canal

© *Cynthia Gaynor-Bailey*

In January, a family member and I set off for a trip where we would spend roughly five weeks in Jamaica and three weeks in America.

This journey was triggered by the death of my 94 year old father, and we went to Jamaica to arrange a memorial service for him. To date, my father holds the record as the longest living member of his family. The event attracted over 100 people, including three aunts and an uncle whom I had not met previously.

It had been our intention for many years to visit the Panama Canal to pay a tribute to my late paternal grandfather who worked on the construction of the canal over 100 years ago. He worked alongside many other people, including other Jamaicans and people from other Caribbean Islands. We therefore decided that this would be a good time to see the canal in its original form. There is currently work in progress to widen the canal to allow access to larger ships; the project is due to be completed by the end of this year. We had hoped that there would be a ship sailing from Jamaica to Panama but in the event that was not the case at that time of year.

Whilst in Jamaica, I learnt that the sister of my paternal grandmother also went to Panama at about the same time as my grandfather. Apparently, many Caribbean women also went to Panama to set up 'cottage industries' at the time when the canal was being constructed. Although my grandfather returned to Jamaica in reasonably good health this was, sadly, not the case for my grandmother's sister. My grandmother, I understand, spent the remainder of her life wondering what became of her dear sister.

After leaving Jamaica we flew to Los Angeles via Atlanta, spending two nights in Los Angeles, California, where we drove around Hollywood and Beverley Hills looking at the homes and shopping areas of some of the rich and famous. This held no particular appeal to me and I could not help thinking that I certainly would not be doing this if my dear husband was still alive. He would have ensured that we planned our time in advance, enabling us to take tours that were more suited to our interests. I would however add, as you would imagine, that this well-heeled area was very attractive and well-presented. In addition, we did exchange a wave or two with the widow of Peter Faulk as she tended her front garden, suitably attired with a hat to keep the burning sun off her face.

Her late husband played Lt. Colombo in the television series Colombo and, as you may remember, he often referred to comments made by his “wife” which would put him on the right track in solving the particular crime! He died in 2011.

We then embarked the Island Princess Ship in Los Angeles for a 15 nights cruise to Panama via various Central/Southern American countries and also Aruba, which is in the Caribbean. The Island Princess is a Panamax ship, which means that it is one of the mid-sized ships that were specifically built for passing through the lock chambers of the Panama Canal.

Five days after embarking the ship we arrived at our first destination: Puerto Quetzal, which is a city on the Pacific Ocean in the South of Guatemala, Central America. Amongst the attractions are the World UNESCO World Heritage-listed city of Antigua, coffee plantations and many views of active volcanoes.

Two days later, we arrived in Puntarenas which is the capital and largest city in the province Puntarenas, on the Pacific coast of Costa Rica, and is one of the country’s most important tourist regions. Costa Rica is located in southern Central America. Of great interest is a small ‘old town’ where the buildings are of both historical and architectural interest.

Most Afro-Costa Ricans, about 3% of the population, descend from Jamaican immigrants who worked on the construction of the railroad from the capital city of San Jose to what became the Caribbean port of Limon. The project was completed in 1890.

After a further two days at sea we disembarked in Fuerte Amador (Panama City) located at the Pacific entrance to the Panama Canal. Fuerte Amador is an artificial peninsula jutting out into the Pacific from Balboa, which connects four small islands to the mainland. Places to visit include: Panama Viejo / Casco Viejo, Panama's oldest settlements where museums, archaeological ruins, colonial streets, churches, and monuments tell the story of the city's tragic past.

Had I carried out some previous research, it may have been possible for me to access my grandfather’s personal record while I was in Panama, although not all employees had an official personal record. As we are aware, people from the Caribbean were treated appallingly. The highlight of the cruise came the following day as the ship began to transit the canal. As was the case for many other passengers, it was a very early rise and breakfast for me as I did not want to miss anything as the locomotives, also known as “Mules”, were lined up alongside the ship in readiness to pull the ship through the canal.

People were vying for prime viewing locations for photographs or simply to just sit back and watch one of the civil engineering wonders of the 20th century as the vessel progressed through the three locks of the canal, which took many hours.

I was to learn later on that the competition for a position of vantage was so fierce that there was nearly a fight between two fellow passengers. The matter was investigated and adjudicated on by members of staff, after they gave due consideration to several witness statements!

It is my understanding that the Panama Canal is the one place in the world where a ship's captain, hands over control of his/her ship to another captain - the Canal Pilot. For the full duration of the transit there was an excellent running commentary from the bridge.

When the ship had transited through the first lock we poured two glasses of champagne in the canal as a tribute to my grandfather and all the other Caribbean people who had worked on the canal, including those who had lost their lives during its construction. I had previously sought permission, via the ship's personnel, to throw a rose in the canal but this was refused by the Panamanian Authority.

The very next day, we arrived in Cartagena, which is a large beach resort city on the northern coast of Colombia in the Caribbean Coast Region. Colombia is generally situated in South America. There is a stark contrast between the more recent skyscrapers that have been erected and Cartagena's colonial walled city with its amazing architecture, such as the Vaults that were originally built as dungeons.

From 1851, the Colombian State promoted the ideology of miscegenation. This whitening of the African population was an attempt by the Colombian government to minimize or, if possible, totally eliminate any traces of Black African or any indigenous descent among the Criollos (mulattos). In order to maintain their cultural traditions, many Africans and indigenous peoples went deep into the isolated jungles. I understand that many still speak their original native African language.

Our penultimate destination was to be Oranjestad, which is in the Southern Caribbean and the capital of the small island of Aruba. This country is regarded as a special municipality within the Netherlands, which means that it is not yet fully independent. The original inhabitants were Arawak Indians but today the people generally reflect a very mixed race heritage.

The island is volcanic with a dry climate and a cacti strewn landscape. It has a history of very few

hurricanes.

Because it has one of the highest standards of living in the Caribbean region, and a low level of unemployment, it has seen substantial migration from neighbouring American and Caribbean nations. In fact, I went shopping in the market and the first trader that I came across was a Jamaican.

The Aruban legal and educational systems are based on the Dutch model. Although the official languages are Dutch and Papiamentu (Creole), children in secondary schools are also given the opportunity to study Spanish, English and French. Those pursuing a higher, professional education will often study in Europe or the USA where there is a wider choice of subjects to study at that level.

I went on a tour which included a visit to the very impressive Casibari rock formation with giant boulders. The government has placed walking trails through the rocks which can be negotiated if one is reasonably fit and is wearing sensible shoes. Although I regretted that my most suitable pair of shoes was left behind on the ship on that occasion, I could not resist the challenge of aiming to climb to the top of the rocks, which promised to reward my effort with a wonderful view.

I was half-way through the climb when I was suddenly struck with the fear of coming into contact with snakes and Iguana lizards, and I had simultaneously convinced myself that they were lurking in the crevices of the rocks. Thus far, I had been extremely lucky in that no such creature had presented itself as yet, and I certainly did not wish to tempt fate any further. Within a split second I made the decision to abandon my climb and get out of the rocks as fast as possible and I thought no more about the promised wonderful views.

As far as the creatures are concerned, I understand that there are three types of snakes on the island, including Boa Constrictors and also a poisonous variety. With regard to the Iguana lizards, they are pretty much everywhere and some are quite huge.

Although the practice is now illegal, I was told that some people still hunt the Iguana to make soups and stews which they regard as healthy and delicious. It was pointed out to us that chickens will eat anything while Iguana lizards eat only green vegetables and a little fruit and for those reasons it is better to serve Iguana soup in preference to chicken soup when people are sick (the moral here is that the creatures are simply what they eat). Personally speaking, I will stick with the chicken! Our cruise ended in Fort Lauderdale, Florida. We took a taxi to our pre-booked hotel in Miami

Beach where we spent two nights. On the first day, we booked ourselves on a Big Bus tour of Miami Beach and city and later on, met up with my sister, who lives in Florida. The second day was mostly spent relaxing on the beach. Prior to our departure for the airport, we treated ourselves to lunch at a restaurant that specialized in Southern American cooking where I had grits for the first time. The main ingredient is ground cornmeal and it is to a degree similar to the Jamaican turned cornmeal, the Bajan coo-coo and the Italian polenta. We arrived back in the UK on 24th March and it felt good to be home on British soil.



EASTER or ISHTAR where did the tradition of celebrating Easter originate?

Researched

By

Lenny St Luce

An author exposed the hidden accounts of the original Easter festival which was initiated several thousand years ago - many years before the birth, death, and resurrection of Jesus.

The name Easter actually comes from Ishtar / Easter who was worshiped as the moon goddess, the goddess of spring and fertility, and the Queen of Heaven. She is known by so many other names in other countries and cultures that she is often referred to as the goddess of one thousand names. Millions of people are unknowingly worshiping and praying to this pagan goddess today.

The Pagan Origin of Easter

The Babylonians celebrated the day of Ishtar / Easter as the return of the goddess of spring – the re-birth or reincarnation of nature and the goddess of nature. Babylonian legend says that each year a huge egg would fall from heaven and would land in the area around the Euphrates River.

In her yearly re-birth, Ishtar would break out of this egg and if any of those celebrating this occasion happened to find her egg, Ishtar would bestow a special blessing on that person. Does this explain the origin of our modern-day tradition of Easter eggs and baskets and Easter egg hunts?

